Workshop SNAAS (Social Network Analysis in Animal Societies)



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Social network in a social corvids, the rooks (Corvus frugilegus)

Living in social groups means more than simply aggregate with others: individuals can favor some partners over others, gain their support, or exchange services and goods. In some species of primates, these transfers can be reciprocated and are often correlated with the strength of the relationship between two individuals or within subgroups of individuals. The need to elaborate social strategies (creating alliance, and acquiring other's support) would explain the evolution of cognitive skills in primates. Corvids are often compared to non-human primates in term of cognitive skills. They live in colonies early in life but in most species individuals leave the colony once they find a mate, limiting the diversity and number of social partners they can interact with. Thus comparing the complexity of the social network in corvids and primates in relation with their cognitive skills can remain arduous. The rooks, Corvus frugilegus, is a social species of corvids where individuals live in a colony even after they found a mate. They are also said to exhibit good performances in physical and social cognition. Thus they provide an interesting opportunity to study the distribution and strength of the relationship within a group, and social complexity. In this work, we studied spatial proximity, social interactions, reciprocal transfers and dominance in a group of captive rooks. Despite a limited number of individual we show that interactions are not limited to one privileged partner. However, we also showed that caution was required when investigating the role of dominance hierarchy on social interactions.

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