

RECONCILIATION REDUCES POST-CONFLICT ANXIETY IN CAPUCHIN MONKEYS

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Aggressive interactions are anxiety-provoking events and may jeopardize future cooperation between former opponents. It has been shown that reconciliation, i.e. an affiliative contact between former opponents soon after an aggressive conflict, can reduce postconflict anxiety and restore tolerance between former opponents. Most of this research has been conducted on Old World primates, and only a few studies have been carried out on New World monkeys, often reporting contrasting findings. The aim of this study was to investigate the occurrence of reconciliation and to explore its consequences on postconflict anxiety in a captive group of twelve capuchin monkeys (*Cebus apella*) housed at the Primate Center of ISTC-CNR, Rome, Italy. Former opponents showed higher levels of affiliation with each other within the first minute of observations after the end of conflicts than during matched control observations. When reconciliation did not take place, aggression was followed by an increase in the victim's rates of self directed behaviour (SDB), a behavioural measure of anxiety. Thus, unreconciled conflicts appear to increase the uncertainty about the opponents' future interactions. When reconciliation occurred, SDB rates decreased to baseline levels, possibly linked to a reduction of the uncertainty between opponents. This finding provides the first solid evidence for reconciliation to successfully reduce postconflict anxiety in a New World monkey species. The study was funded by the ESF-TECT project SOCCOP.

Keywords: reconciliation, postconflict anxiety, *Cebus apella*, agonistic interactions