

DISTRIBUTION AND FUNCTION OF SEPARATING INTERVENTIONS AS A POLITICAL BEHAVIOR IN CAPTIVE BONOBOS (*PAN PANISCUS*).

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Primates compete for reproductively important bonds by engaging in rank struggles and by forming close associations with others that can impact their reproductive success. Political maneuvering is well documented as important for success in male-male bonding and male-male competition in chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*) but is less apparent among male bonobos (*Pan paniscus*). Bonobo females also differ from chimpanzees in being highly bonded with each other and can be highly bonded with males. Third-party interventions are an important component of political behavior in primate social groups and can be used to study the social strategies of individuals. The present study investigates the function and distribution of separating interventions in a captive group of 14 bonobos. In 236 hours of observation, 73 separating interventions were recorded. Adult male-female dyads were the most prevalent type of dyad separated ($p < 0.001$). Adult males performed a significant majority of the separating behaviors recorded ($p < 0.049$). Separating interventions were employed, primarily by adult males, as a counter-strategy to the establishment of their closest rivals' inter-sexual bonds. Separating interventions were also used as an alternative mechanism to agonistic conflicts in the establishment of a dominance hierarchy. Unlike chimpanzees, the male bonobos competed for these reproductively valuable bonds by engaging in rank struggles and by forming close associations with females. Separating interventions performed by bonobo males functioned to thwart bond formation by competitors. This study highlights the differences between the social systems of bonobos and chimpanzees, and demonstrates the importance of females to bonobo male success.

Keywords: bonobos, social behavior, political maneuvering, triadic interactions.