

White, F. J. Behavioral ecology of Pan paniscus.

Pygmy chimpanzees (Pan paniscus) like common chimpanzees (P. troglodytes) display a fission-fusion social organization. However, these two African pongids show a major difference in their social structure and variations in details of their ecology. This paper reports the results of a two year field study of the behavioral ecology of pygmy chimpanzees in primary rain forest of central Zaire. Unlike P. troglodytes, the nucleus in pygmy chimpanzees is formed by a cluster of socially bonded females. Party cohesion was found to be strongly influenced by female behavior including calling between individuals and parties, female mutualistic homosexual behavior and grooming partnerships. The associations between females were not dependent on the presence of males or infants. The size of feeding associations was related to the size of the food source, as measured by canopy volume.

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