**The accuracy of ecological measurements: cascading effects to *Pan* evolutionary theory**

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At the heart of *Pan* evolutionary theory is the concept that most of the differences that can be observed between chimpanzees and bonobos are largely derived from the cascading effects of differing ecological conditions. However what do we really know about bonobo ecology, independently and in relationship to chimpanzee ecology? Here, I present several examples how asking the right questions and ensuring that our methods match those questions critically impact the strengths of our conclusions about these two species (or any other species, for that matter!). I use primatology’s favorite index – the food availability index-  as a vehicle for this argument, and subsequently advocate for the re-centering of ecology in socio-ecological theory, and a careful evaluation of the limitations of our methods and datasets.