

## 1 **Killer instincts**

2 (original at <http://www.economist.com/node/16422404>)

3 People are not alone in waging war. Their closest living cousins,  
4 chimpanzees, also slaughter their own kind—in brutal attacks that  
5 scientists increasingly view as strategic, co-ordinated assaults rather than  
6 random acts of violence. But however tempting it is to see these battles  
7 through the lens of human warfare, the motives for chimp-on-chimp  
8 violence are poorly understood. In particular, researchers have long  
9 debated whether the apes fight for land, or for females

10 To understand what motivated this violence, researchers from an  
11 American university studied which chimps were actually attacked. If the  
12 purpose of chimpanzee warfare were either rape or the abduction of  
13 mates, then the expectation would be that adult males would be the  
14 targets of lethal violence. On occasion, they were. But most victims were  
15 juveniles, and of both sexes.

16 Furthermore, chimpanzee mothers were often beaten as the raiders  
17 snatched and killed their offspring. Though these assaults on mothers  
18 were rarely lethal, patrolling chimps were clearly more likely to batter  
19 females than recruit them as mates, suggesting that other motives might  
20 drive their violent behaviour.

21 The researchers therefore asked whether geography offered a better  
22 explanation. They used the Global Positioning System to map patrol  
23 routes and attack locations for a group of chimpanzees. They saw that the  
24 group's patrols were mainly headed beyond their north-eastern border,  
25 into the land of a neighbouring group. Almost all of the killings occurred in  
26 this disputed territory, which had particularly fine stands of the chimps'  
27 favourite fruit-tree. By the time the study ended, the group's campaign  
28 had displaced its rivals completely, annexed the north-eastern lands and  
29 enlarging its range by 22%

## Questions

- 1) What has long been the subject of debates among scientist as far as chimp-on-chimp violence is concerned?
- 2) Explain 'through the lens of human warfare' (line 7).
- 3) What was the assumption of the team of American scientists?
- 4) What does the fact that chimpanzee mothers were badly beaten by intruders from a different chimp group suggest according to the article?
- 5) What is the likely explanation of the observations the scientist have made?
- 6) Do the chimpanzee killings happen at random?
- 7) How did the group of chimpanzees studied by the scientists fare against their rivals?
- 8) Do you think that research like that presented in the article actually has any practical implications? Or is it just an eccentric hobby which costs taxpayers millions in subsidies every year?

## Vocabulary

**it is tempting to see** (line 6) – to be inviting or attractive to understand something in a particular way

**on occasion** (line 14) – now and then; from time to time; occasionally

**drive their violent behaviour** (line 20) – to cause or guide an action; force; compel

**by the time** (27) – used to talk about the period up to a particular time at which something happened or is expected to happen

You can find additional explanation and more examples to help you understand and use English words and phrases at <http://dictionary.reference.com>, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>, or <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

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