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9 **Chimpanzee Ethnography Reveals Unexpected Cultural Diversity**

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48 **Abstract**

49 Human ethnographic knowledge covers hundreds of societies, whereas chimpanzee ethnography
50 encompasses at most 15 communities. Using termite fishing as a window into the richness of
51 chimpanzee cultural diversity, we address a potential sampling bias with 39 additional communities
52 across Africa. Previously, termite fishing was known from eight locations with two distinguishable
53 techniques observed in only two communities. Here, we add nine previously unstudied termite-
54 fishing communities revealing 38 different technical elements as well as community-specific
55 combinations of three to seven elements. Thirty of those were not ecologically constrained,
56 permitting the investigation of chimpanzee termite fishing culture. The number and combination of
57 elements shared among individuals were more similar within than between communities, thus
58 supporting community-majority conformity via social imitation. The variation in community-specific
59 combinations of elements parallels cultural diversity in human greeting norms or chopstick etiquette.
60 We suggest that termite fishing in wild chimpanzees shows some elements of cumulative cultural
61 diversity.

62

63 **Introduction**

64 Comparative cultural studies are hampered by the fact that humans are by far the most intensively
65 studied species with many hundreds of well-known different societies¹⁻², while non-human species
66 are mostly known from a few populations reaching one dozen in the second most studied species,
67 the chimpanzee^{3,4}. Notwithstanding, chimpanzee cultural abilities have been proposed to be limited
68 to simple elements that could be invented independently by each individual performing a given
69 technique⁵⁻⁷. Multiple captive studies with chimpanzees and other animal species tend to support
70 this conclusion, and suggest that culture, if present, is not based on a faithful learning mechanism
71 nor any form of teaching, limiting it to simple elements⁵⁻⁷.

72 Studies on chimpanzee communities have frequently revealed undocumented behavioral variants for
73 the species, such as algae fishing, accumulative stone throwing, water dipping, cave use, or
74 sequential tool use⁸⁻¹². Additionally, recent research on neighboring chimpanzee communities has
75 revealed the persistence of cultural differences within the same environment^{13,14}. Both suggest that
76 incomplete sampling could lead to underestimated chimpanzee cultural complexity⁴. In an attempt
77 to overcome this limitation, we launched a large-scale cross-sectional study with the aim of sampling
78 additional chimpanzee communities for addressing questions about cultural complexity and their
79 potential ecological and social drivers¹⁵. Here, we present a detailed ethnographic analysis of
80 chimpanzee termite fishing observed at 10 communities, with the three following goals: 1) document
81 the technical elements used by chimpanzees when extracting termites living in a) aerial (epigeal), and
82 b) underground mounds, 2) test whether community-specific techniques are present, and if so 3)
83 assess inasmuch these community-specific techniques could represent a case of cumulative cultural
84 evolution. Given that we investigated variation in the termite-fishing techniques of chimpanzees, any
85 evidence for conformity (i.e., a pattern of within-group homogeneity), in the absence of ecological
86 constraints, would support process-oriented imitation rather than end-state emulation or trial and
87 error learning^{5,16} since termite extraction was successful in all instances.

88 We collected a total of 1,463 one-minute camera-trap videos of chimpanzee termite fishing from 10
89 communities (range: 14 to 184 for aerial termite fishing; 60 to 336 for underground termite fishing).
90 These videos were analyzed by CB, who has over 40 years' experience observing wild chimpanzees.
91 The termite-fishing ethogram describing individual technical elements was created by CB was tested
92 for reliability with SP, an expert on great ape gestures, on a randomly chosen 10% of videos (N=169)
93 from all 10 termite-fishing communities without SP knowing the community nor the element
94 distribution between communities. Inter-observer agreement in the classification of termite-fishing
95 behaviours was 85% for technical elements, 90% for body part(s) used to fish, 100% for body part(s)
96 used for support and 64% for position of the wrist (Cohen's Kappa test: all $p < 0.001$). In addition, two

97 additional independent observers blind to the aim and hypothesis of the study, naïve to the
98 ethogram, and to the origin of the videos, coded the same videos with an average inter-observer
99 agreement of 93% (average Kappa=0.657; N=31 technical elements, with a Kappa higher than 0.8 for
100 11 of them and 30 out of 31 Kappa values reaching significance at $p \leq 0.05$; N=73 videos). An open-
101 access video library demonstrates the variation in the technical elements coded for termite-fishing
102 behaviour for the different chimpanzee communities (see
103 www.eva.mpg.de/primat/staff/boesch/termite-fishing-video-library.html). For all elements
104 identified, we further inferred whether the element could potentially be explained as the
105 chimpanzees' response to ecological challenges presented by the termite mound structure, and if it
106 was not, we assumed differences reflect social preferences (see Supplementary Table 3 for details).

107 **Results**

108 ***Aerial termite fishing***

109 Aerial termite-fishing requires an individual to insert one thin twig into a tunnel, deep enough into
110 the termite mound for the soldiers to bite¹⁷. We discovered chimpanzees of three previously
111 unstudied communities performing this technique (Figures 1). In total, we distinguished 17 different
112 elements for aerial termite fishing, of which 14 were inferred to be primarily socially transmitted, as
113 no ecological constraints could be identified to explain the differences (N=476 videos providing 85
114 independent sequences of termite fishing including 116 individuals). There were strong community
115 differences in the combinations of elements observed in the majority of individuals within a
116 community (Figure 1; Supplementary Table 1).

117 ***Underground termite fishing***

118 Underground termite-fishing involves the use of a tool-set comprising two different-sized sticks: a
119 thick one to perforate (or puncture) the ground to gain access into the mound and a thinner one
120 inserted into the tunnel made by the perforator to fish for termite soldiers¹⁰. We discovered three

121 previously unstudied chimpanzee communities performing this technique, all located in Central
122 Africa (Figure 2). We observed 21 different technical elements in some, or only one, community
123 (N=987 videos from 107 independent sequences including 132 individuals; Supplementary Table 2).
124 We found strong community differences in the combinations of elements observed in the majority of
125 individuals within a community (Figure 2), and 16 of these elements were inferred to be social
126 preferences.

127 ***Testing for group-specific combinations in termite fishing***

128 To investigate whether the combinations of elements observed for termite fishing (Figures 1 and 2)
129 were community specific, we first tested whether the frequency of occurrence of technical elements
130 was community specific, and second, whether individuals from the same community shared more
131 elements than with individuals from different communities. Using a Generalized Linear Mixed Model,
132 we found that individuals shared significantly more elements within a community than with
133 individuals from other communities (permutation test of the contribution of the combination of
134 community and technical elements for aerial nests: standard deviation, $sd=3.28$, 95% confidence
135 interval (CI): 2.358 to 4.040, $P=0.001$; underground nests: $sd=11.87$, CI: 13.157 to 23.468, $P=0.001$;
136 Figure 3). As seen in Figure 3, some elements were community specific differentiating them from
137 others, such as 'lean elbow', which was, only detected in Korup chimpanzees, while 'lay side' was
138 specific to the Wonga Wongue chimpanzees. At the other extreme, 'bite' or 'scratch' occurred in all
139 communities but with different frequencies. Repeating the analysis by permuting mounds rather
140 than individuals did not substantially affect the result (aerial nests: $sd=3.21$, CI: 2.253 to 4.163,
141 $P=0.003$; underground nests: $sd=10.97$, CI: 12.336 to 22.599, $P=0.001$). The combination of elements
142 exhibited by an individual was also significantly more similar to those of other individuals of the same
143 community, compared with those of other communities (Sørensen similarity index considering only
144 the putatively socially driven elements, leaving 14 elements for the aerial and 16 for the
145 underground data: average similarity of combinations: aerial, different communities: 0.453, different

146 individuals from the same community: 0.741, difference (CI): 0.289 (0.215 to 0.364); underground,
147 different communities: 0.244, different individuals from the same community: 0.873, difference:
148 0.629 (0.495 to 0.739); both $P=0.001$; Figure 4a). The fishing technique of the Korup chimpanzees
149 was uniquely characterized by always including 'perfore 1h', 'lean elbow', 'lip shake', 'near elbow'
150 and 'head eat', while in Goualougo chimpanzees the 'long stick' is always combined with 'sit' and
151 'support 2h', and in the majority, with 'perfore 2h'. Meanwhile the La Belgique chimpanzees combine
152 'perfore 1h' always with 'long brush' and 'wrist eat' (Figure 3). Finally, a cultural fixation analysis¹⁸
153 confirmed that elements where alternative elements are present clearly deviated from a random
154 distribution (Figure 4c) with some technical elements showing a strong signal of cultural fixation
155 (group 8 and 11 for underground termite fishing in Supplementary Table 3), and others with more
156 moderate separations between communities (group 2, 4 and 6 in Supplementary Table 3).

157 **Discussion**

158 By carrying out an unprecedented ethnographic analysis of one of the best-studied chimpanzee
159 cultural traits — termite fishing — we show that chimpanzee cultural diversity is currently
160 underestimated due to an under-sampling of different populations. By studying additional
161 communities, we have increased our knowledge about termite-fishing variation from two to 38
162 elements found in 10 communities. Our results emphasize that community specificity in termite
163 fishing is not only about the absence or presence of elements, but also about the combinations of
164 different elements in each community (Figures 1 and 2). This adds a completely new dimension to
165 the characterization of chimpanzee cultures.

166 We found that the combinations of elements form community-specific techniques in termite fishing
167 resembled a process of cumulative cultural evolution^{7,19,20}. As our study was cross-sectional rather
168 than longitudinal, we do not have historical records to reconstruct the order of invention and
169 inclusion of those elements over time, nor whether they were invented by one or many individuals

170 (but see^{21,22} for such evidence in other nonhuman animals). However, given the community
171 specificity of the combinations of elements, when alternatives are present within communities, our
172 results are best explained by a high-fidelity social learning mechanism. The mound structure of the
173 most commonly consumed *Macrotermes* sp. varies extensively depending on the local microclimatic
174 conditions^{23,24} and would thus not explain the community-specific distribution of elements. This
175 suggests that in chimpanzees, social influences were stronger than ecological ones.

176 Although some scholars argue that the accumulation of elements should lead to successive
177 improvements in the cultural trait⁷, others recognize that this improvement can also manifest itself in
178 social improvements, comfort or well-being, which remain difficult to measure¹⁹. For example, in our
179 study, comfort may have driven the variation across communities of chimpanzees lying, sitting or
180 leaning whilst termite fishing (Supplementary Table 1 and 2). Thus, at present, our observations are
181 compatible with accumulated culture (sensu Dean et al.²⁰), while a conclusion about true cumulative
182 culture would require data on fishing efficiency being improved by the combinations of elements.
183 The observation that potentially ecologically-dependent technical elements were distributed more
184 widely across communities than socially inferred ones (Supplementary Table 1 and 2) reinforces the
185 suggestion that social transmission is accompanied by a faithful copying mechanism, such as process-
186 oriented imitation⁵, while the response to environmental challenges may be supported by more
187 individual learning mechanisms⁷.

188 The present study is not without limitations. Due to the methodology used, we could only record
189 spatially fixed behaviours. This led us to underestimate technical elements that occurred outside the
190 field of view of the camera, or when individuals were positioned behind the mound or with their
191 back towards the camera. While this may not affect the assessment of cultural diversity whenever
192 we had a large number of videos for a community, this was not the case for Bafing, Kayan and Campo
193 Ma'an. Therefore, we may still underestimate cultural diversity in chimpanzee termite fishing.

194 Limited population sampling has biased our knowledge of chimpanzee culture, preventing us from
195 fully understanding human cultural uniqueness. We showed that chimpanzees have a larger termite-
196 fishing diversity than previously assumed. More importantly, our findings suggest that ‘chimpanzee
197 etiquette’, similar to human forms of etiquette^{25,26}, is likely based on a high-fidelity social
198 transmission mechanism among individuals of a population, resulting in an accumulation of
199 community-specific elements. Therefore, this study notably decreases the gap between chimpanzee
200 and human cultural abilities.

201

202 **Methods**

203 This study uses non-invasive behavioural observations collected on wild chimpanzees as part of the
204 Pan African Programme: The Cultured Chimpanzee (‘PanAf’). All field research complied with the
205 ethical regulations and standards set by the relevant government authorities present within each
206 host country (see Acknowledgements for full list of governmental bodies that provided
207 authorizations for this study). Moreover, no experiments on animals were conducted therefore
208 randomization of experimental protocols was not necessary. The sampling strategy for the PanAf was
209 to conduct a minimum of 1 year of fieldwork on wild chimpanzee communities that were unknown
210 or poorly known behaviourally to scientists to better capture the variation present in this species.
211 The communities were selected following different criteria: 1) a balanced number of communities for
212 each African region, 2) a balanced representation of the main ecosystems inhabited by chimpanzees,
213 3) previous information on the presence of chimpanzees available for the site, and 4) sufficient
214 security for our field teams. After 8 years of collecting data at 46 chimpanzee communities across the
215 species range, for a range of 1-30 months, we observed 10 communities termite fishing, 1 of which
216 was already known to do so (Goulougo). The study examined termite fishing camera-trap videos
217 collected via the PanAf from all 10 communities. Individual chimpanzees were identified both within

218 and across each termite fishing sequence (i.e., across multiple videos). As in previous studies on
219 chimpanzee tool-use using camera-trap data⁹, individuals were identified using a combination of
220 sexual characteristics, facial features, and conspicuous markings or injuries.

221 ***Ecological versus socially inferred behavioural elements***

222 To distinguish whether a technical element is primarily socially or ecologically driven, we used the
223 following two definitions: a technical element for which the chimpanzee had different alternatives
224 which are not constrained by ecological parameters was defined to be driven by social factors. In
225 Supplementary Table 3, the alternative elements are identified by similarly numbered groups. On the
226 other hand, a technical element that was obviously ecologically constrained was defined to be driven
227 by ecological factors (Supplementary Table 3). Examples of ecological constraints include the
228 structure and depth of the termite mound that could affect stick length, the hardness of the soil that
229 could affect perforation technique, or the availability of raw material that could affect stick rigidity²⁷.
230 Detailed studies on the architecture of the *Macrotermes bellicosus* mounds, the most-often fished
231 species by chimpanzees, revealed extensive variability within the same local area due to specific
232 microclimatic conditions^{23,24}. Still, some ecological aspects could partly affect the use of other
233 technical elements, however we classified them as social as long as we observed that chimpanzees
234 possess alternative elements with which they can respond. For example, the defensive behaviour of
235 the termites could affect the stick shaking movements, but since chimpanzees shake the stick in
236 different ways, we classified these elements as being socially driven (group 3 in Supplementary Table
237 3). Similarly, the termites may bite with differing efficiency at a stick with different ends, but since
238 chimpanzees were seen to make small and long brushes, and bite or peel the extremity we classified
239 these elements as being socially driven (group 5 and 9 in Supplementary Table 3).

240 ***Inter-observer Reliability***

241 In order to determine reliability, two raters independently coded 23 technical elements (Christophe
242 Boesch and Simone Pika, and later Julia Riedel and Isabel Ordaz Németh). We only included in the
243 final analyses elements that occurred at a minimum of eight times across different communities and
244 videos. We then measured reliability using Cohen's Kappa²⁸, separately for behaviour, body part,
245 supporting position, body part supporting, and, wrist position. For each of these, we determined
246 Kappa twice, once considering cases in which the second rater did not see an element noted by the
247 first rater as a mismatch, and once excluding such cases. We further evaluated reliability on the level
248 of the individual behavioural elements using a one-tailed binomial test. To this end, we counted the
249 number of times the second rater coded the same behaviour as the first one. We then set the
250 expected proportion of chance agreement to the product of the numbers of times both raters coded
251 the behaviour in question, divided by the squared total of coded behaviours. As before, we applied
252 this approach twice, once considering the cases, in which the second rater did not see an element as
253 a mismatch, and once excluding such cases. Details for the agreement between CB and SP are
254 provided in Supplementary Tables 4 and 5.

255 ***Statistical analysis***

256 *Distribution of different technical elements across communities*

257 As overall tests of whether the occurrence of technical elements was community specific, we fitted
258 two Generalized Linear Mixed Models (GLMM)²⁹ with binomial error structure and logit link
259 function³⁰, one for the aerial termite data and one for the underground termite data. Into these, we
260 included, besides the intercept as the sole fixed effect, random intercepts for the community, the
261 mound, the individual, the technical element, and the combination of community and technical
262 element. This latter random intercept accounts for community-specific preferences for the utilization
263 of technical elements. Furthermore, to account for varying observation times per combination of
264 individual and mound, we included it (log-transformed) as an offset term into the model³⁰. Since

265 tests of random effects are somewhat problematic³¹, and since the elements were in part mutually
266 exclusive, we decided to conduct a permutation test³² of whether the random intercept of the
267 combination of community and technical element significantly contributed to explaining the
268 response. To this end, we randomized the assignment of individuals to communities. We conducted
269 1,000 permutations into which we included the original data as one permutation. As the test statistic,
270 we chose the estimated variance (precisely the standard deviation) in the response attributed to
271 variation among the levels of the random effect of the combination of community and technical
272 element. We determined the P-value as the proportion of permutations revealing a test statistic at
273 least as large as that of the original data. We indicate model estimates (standard deviations
274 associated with the random intercepts effect of the combination of community and technical
275 element) as a measure of effect size and determined their 95% confidence intervals by means of a
276 parametric bootstrap (N=1,000). The models were fitted in R (version 3.4.4)³³ using the function
277 glmer of the package lme4 (version 1.1-17)³⁴, and we bootstrapped model estimates using the
278 function bootMer of the same package. The sample sizes for aerial nests in these models were 1546
279 total presences/absences (comprising 517 presences) of 17 technical elements for 71 individuals
280 from five communities, observed at 23 mounds, and 85 combinations of community and technical
281 elements. For underground nests, the data included 1788 total presences/absences (comprising 490
282 presences) of 21 technical techniques for 90 individuals from six communities and comprising 120
283 combinations of community and technical elements. From both data sets, we dropped combinations
284 of individual and technical elements for which we could not reliably code the presence or absence of
285 the behaviour.

286 However, potential differences between communities could also be largely driven by specificities of
287 the particular mounds rather than individual preferences differing systematically between
288 communities. We hence decided to run an additional permutation test in which we randomly
289 shuffled the assignment of communities (and their individual members) among termite mounds.

290 Since a few individuals had been observed at several different termite mounds, creating
291 complications regarding the random assignment of communities to mounds, we excluded them from
292 this analysis. Hence, this analysis is more conservative due to a smaller sample size in terms of the
293 number individuals included in combination with fewer units (i.e., mounds rather than individuals)
294 being permuted. The sample sizes for these models were 1,064 total presences/absences (comprising
295 350 presences) of 17 technical elements for 62 individuals from five communities observed at 13
296 mounds, and comprising 85 combinations of community and technical elements (aerial mounds) and
297 1,200 total presences/absences (comprising 324 presences) of technical elements for 77 individuals
298 from six communities observed at 29 mounds, and comprising 119 combinations of community and
299 technical elements (underground mounds).

300 *Sharing of technical elements within compared to across communities*

301 To estimate whether individuals belonging to the same community shared more technical elements
302 than individuals belonging to different communities, we measured the dyad-wise overlap between
303 combinations of individuals by means of Sørensen's similarity index³⁵. This is calculated as follows:

$$304 \quad S_{\text{Sørensen}, i, j} = 2 \times N_{\text{sharedPres}} / (2 \times N_{\text{sharedPres}} + N_{\text{only } i} + N_{\text{only } j})$$

305 where $N_{\text{sharedPres}}$ is the number of technical elements present in both individuals i and j , and $N_{\text{only } i}$ and
306 $N_{\text{only } j}$ are the number of technical elements observed only in individual i and j , respectively. It is
307 worth noting that Sørensen's index considers only technical elements present in at least one of the
308 two individuals of a given dyad.

309 We tested whether individuals of the same community shared on average more technical elements
310 than individuals of different communities by means of a Mantel like permutation test³⁶, which
311 permuted the individuals across communities. As a test statistic, we used the absolute difference
312 between the average similarity indices between individuals of the same and different communities,
313 respectively. We conducted 1,000 permutations into which we included the original data as one

314 permutation and determined the P-value as the proportion of permutations revealing a test statistic
315 at least as large as that of the original data. We conducted this test twice, separately for the aerial
316 and underground nest data (Figure 4a and b, respectively). As a measure of effect size we indicate
317 the difference between the mean similarity indices between individuals of the same and different
318 populations. We determined the 95% confidence interval of this measure by means of a non-
319 parametric bootstrap (N=1,000), sampling the individuals. Since the individuals contributed differing
320 numbers of sequences to the data, the bootstrapped data sets usually differed from the original one
321 in terms of the number of sequences. For these analyses, we considered only those individuals for
322 which all the behaviour elements considered in a data set (aerial or underground, respectively) could
323 be reliably coded. Hence, the sample sizes for these analyses are smaller than for the models
324 described above, namely a total 877 absences and 371 presences observed for 86 sequences of 60
325 individuals (aerial data) and 991 absences and 311 presences observed for 100 sequences of 68
326 individuals (underground data).

327 *Calculating the cultural fixation index*

328 To compare the proportion of variation in technical elements exhibited within and between
329 populations, we calculated a cultural F_{ST} . Cultural F_{ST} is negatively correlated with within-group
330 similarity, meaning higher F_{ST} values reflect more between group differences than within. We used
331 an approach similar to Bell and colleagues¹⁸ but with a modification since the original method leads
332 to F_{ST} values larger than 1 in highly differentiated populations. This modified cultural F_{ST} method was
333 originally developed by Handley and Mathew³⁷ to account for variation in sample size and
334 populations having unique traits specific to them. We calculated the F_{ST} separately for each group of
335 putatively socially driven technical elements and also separately for aerial and underground nests. In
336 order to determine cultural F_{ST} values we processed the data as follows. In a first step, we
337 determined for each sequence of each individual which element of a given group of mutually
338 exclusive elements it had used (see Supplementary Table 3 and Supplementary Data 7 for details of

339 the F_{ST} calculation). This led to two matrices (one for aerial and one for underground nests), each
340 with one row per sequence and one column for each group of mutually exclusive elements. Since
341 some groups of mutually exclusive elements rarely occurred (when more than 50% of the sequences
342 did not have an entry for the respective group), we excluded them from the data and subsequently
343 excluded all sequences in which for at least one of the remaining groups none of the mutually
344 exclusive elements appeared. This subsetting of the data aimed at using the same sample size per
345 each element of a given group of mutually exclusive patterns when calculating the cultural F_{ST} . The
346 final sample for the aerial data consisted of 80 sequences from 53 individuals out of five communities
347 with behaviours from three groups (2, 4, and 6) of mutually exclusive technical elements, and the
348 final sample for the underground data consisted of 78 sequences from 58 individuals out of six
349 communities with behaviours from two groups (8 and 11) of mutually exclusive technical elements.
350 Since some of the individuals varied with regard to which particular element of a group of mutually
351 exclusive elements they used in a given sequence, we then randomly selected one sequence per
352 individual (generating a population of 'haploid' individuals) and then determined the cultural F_{ST} for
353 each group of mutually exclusive elements. In order to remove the effects of any particular random
354 selection, we repeated this 1,000 times and report average results and their variation (Figure 4c). F_{ST}
355 values were small in group 2, 4, and 6 and comparatively large in group 8 and 11 (Figure 4c).
356 Furthermore, particularly within group 4 and 11, F_{ST} values varied considerably between different
357 random selections of technical elements per individual.

358

359 **Data Availability**

360 The data for this study have been uploaded as part of the supplementary files (Supplementary Data
361 1-6).

362 **Code Availability**

363 The custom code used for all statistical analyses has been uploaded as part of the supplementary
364 files (Supplementary Data 7 and 8).

365

366 **References**

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446

447

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466 **Author Contributions**

467 C.B., M.A., and H.S.K., designed the study and oversaw data collection; C.B., M.A., and P.D. compiled
468 data for this study; C.B., R.M., S.P., I.O-N., J.R. and A.K.K. analyzed the data; C.B., R.M. and A.K.K.
469 prepared figures; C.B., A.K.K., M.A. and H.S.K. wrote the manuscript with input from all coauthors.
470 E.A.A., A.B., C.C., V.E.E., J.M.F., D.F., R.A.H.A., V.H., P.K., M.K., M.L., E.N.M., G.M., D.M., M.M., E.N.,
471 S.N., L.J.O., R.O., L.P., A.P., C.S., L.S., F. S., N.T., E.G.W., and J.W. collected data in the field.

472 **Competing Interests**

473 The authors declare no competing interests.

474

475 **Figure Legends**

476 Figure 1: **Cultural diversity when fishing termites from aerial nests in six different chimpanzee**
477 **communities.**³⁸ Only elements observed in at least 50% of the individuals of a community and
478 differing between communities are included (Table S1). For Gombe chimpanzee, no quantification is
479 provided (in brown). Each element in a box interconnects with the other elements present within
480 each community and connections do not reflect a hierarchy, but highlight the combinations of
481 elements in each community. The variation in the combinations observed partly reflects different
482 ecological challenges and social preferences (see Table S1), while the number of elements within
483 each community reflects an assumed accumulation process. I=Issa chimpanzees only.

484

485 **Figure 2: Cultural diversity when fishing termites from underground nests in six different**
486 **chimpanzee communities.**³⁸ Only elements observed in at least 50% of the individuals of a
487 community and differing between communities are included (Table S2). Each element in a box
488 interconnects with the other elements found within each community. Some elements are unique to a
489 community (e.g., “peel the bark” of the stick in La Belgique chimpanzees, or “shake with the lips” the
490 inserted stick in Korup (K) chimpanzees), while others are shared among communities. The
491 connections do not reflect a hierarchical order in performing the technique, but highlight the
492 distinguishing features of the combination of elements in each community. The Goulougo (G)
493 technique is typified by 6 elements, including a unique perforation element as well as elements
494 shared with other communities, “sit to fish” shared with Campo Ma’an, Mont Cristal (MC), and La
495 Belgique, while “pull through teeth to make short brush”, “support with two hands” and “insert stick
496 with both hands” are shared with Campo Ma’an and Mont Cristal. WW=Wonga Wongue.

497

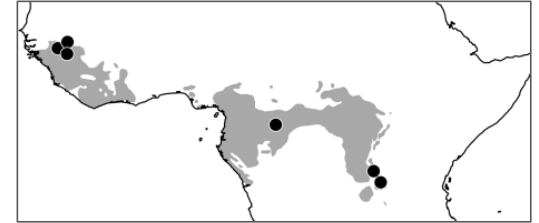
498 **Figure 3: Occurrence of technical elements in 10 different chimpanzee communities for (a) aerial**
499 **termite nests and (b) underground termite nests.** The black fraction of the circles depicts the
500 proportion of sequences in which the respective element was present, and the area of the circles
501 depicts the number of sequences observed (range: 1 to 54; variation of sample size within
502 communities is due to occasional missing values that occurred when it could not be reliably seen
503 whether a given element was present in a given sequence). See also Supplementary Table 1 and 2.

504

505 **Figure 4: Similarity (Sørensen's similarity index) between combinations of putative social elements**
506 **only, compared for individuals belonging to different or the same community, for elements**
507 **observed at (a) aerial and (b) underground nests.** Indicated are medians (thick horizontal lines)
508 quartiles (boxes), and 2.5 and 97.5% quantiles (vertical lines). (c) **Cultural F_{ST} values for five groups of**

509 **mutually exclusive technical elements** (2, 4 and 6 for aerial and 8 and 11 for underground nests, see
510 Supplementary Table 3). Indicated are medians, quartiles, and 2.5 as well as 97.5 quantiles of the F_{ST} -
511 values obtained from different random selection of sequences. F_{ST} values close to 1 indicates
512 complete separation between communities, like for groups 8 and 11, values between 0.1 and 0.4
513 indicates weaker separations between communities, like for groups 2, 4 and 6.

Aerial termite fishing



Arriving at nest

Arrive with 1 stick

Tool type

Rigid sticks

Soft sticks

Tool modification

Bite end of stick

Hand technique

Shake up-and-down
inserted stick

Scratch tunnel
opening with fingers

One hand brings stick
to mouth

Lean on forearm to fish

One hand brings
stick to mouth

Both hands extract
stick from mound

Shake sideways
inserted stick

One hand brings
stick to mouth

Support with wrist
from below

Forearm follows
stick to mouth

Dindéfelo

Goualougo

Gombe

Kayan

Bafing

Issa

Underground termite fishing



Arriving at nest

Use long thick stick

Use short thick stick

Perforation

Perforate with 2 hands + foot

Perforate with 1 hand + foot

Body Position

Sit to fish

Lean on elbow to fish

Lie sideways to fish

Tool modification

Pull through teeth to make short brush

Open fibers to make long brush

Hand technique

Support with second hand to eat

Side wrist supports stick to eat

Tap ground with stick

Move head to eat from stick

Insert stick with both hands

Insert stick near elbow

Move head to eat from supported

Share stick with offspring

Eat termites from support wrist

Shake stick with lips

Share stick with offspring

Goulougo

Campo Maan

Mont Cristal

La Belgique

Korup

Wonga Wongue

G

WW

G

K

WW

G

MC

