Human Mating Strategies

Dr. David Buss
September 6, 2013
The Evolution of Desire

Strategies of Human Mating

“A DROP-DEAD SHOCKER.”
Washington Post Book World

David M. Buss

REVISED EDITION WITH TWO NEW CHAPTERS BY THE AUTHOR
Talk Outline

- Diverse Mating Strategy Contexts
- What Men Want
- What Women Want
- Etc., Etc.,
Mating Strategies Have Diverse Contexts

- Different species
- Various Cultures
- Ecologies
- Unique experiences (father absence)
- Surplus of one gender
- Different genders (male, female)
- Different mate values
Windows on Desire

Attraction Tactics

Harmony Between Sexes

Keeping a Mate

“Putting Down” Competitors

Causes of Divorce

Intra-Sexual Competition

“Breaking Up”

Conflict Between the Sexes
Evolution By Natural Selection

Source: www.puffin.com
“The sight of the peacock gives me nightmares”

– Charles Darwin
Sexual Selection

- Same-Sex Competition
- Intersexual Selection
Intersexual Selection: Preferential Mate Choice
Humans Have a Complex Menu of Mating Strategies

- Long-term committed mating
- Short-term opportunistic mating
- “Cheating”: Extra-pair copulation (EPC)
- Serial mating over time
- Mixed mating strategies
Locations of 37 Cultures in International Mate Selection Project: Total # of People = 10,047
Universal Desires

- Love
- Exciting personality
- Good health
- Kindness
- Intelligence
- Sociable
- Easy going
Culturally Variable Desires

Virginity:
No Previous Sexual Intercourse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestinian Arabs</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Buss (1989)
Cultural Change in China: Importance of Virginity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>1983</th>
<th>2009</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.36</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

₀ = irrelevant
₃ = indispensable

Source: XXXX & Buss (2011) TO BE UPDATED
Meta-Theory of Sex Differences

Adaptive pressures dictate similarities and differences between men and women
Recurrently Different Adaptive Problems of the Sexes

- Internal female fertilization
- Paternity uncertainty
- Parental investment (men vs. women)
- Misdirected parental investment
- Breast feeding
- Concealed ovulation
- Cyclic ovulation
Have Humans Evolved Psychological Adaptations to Sex-Linked Adaptive Problems?

- What is the empirical evidence?
THE MALE BRAIN

FOOTNOTE: the "Listening to children cry in the middle of the night" gland is not shown due to it's small and underdeveloped nature. Best viewed under a microscope.

Source: paklinks.com
THE FEMALE BRAIN

FOOTNOTE: The "Put Oil into the Car" and "Be Quite During the Game" glands are active only when the "SHINY THINGS AND DIAMONDS" OLFactory has been satisfied or when there is a shoe sale.

Source: alyhawkins.com
So What Do Men Want?
Ideal Number of Sex Partners Desired

Figure 4. Number of sexual partners desired. (Subjects recorded in blank spaces provided how many sexual partners they would ideally like to have for each specified time interval.)

Source: Buss & Schmidt (1993)
Likelihood of Agreeing to Have Sex With Someone You Find Attractive as a Function of Time Known

“100% Sure!”

“Absolutely Not!”

Source: Buss & Schmidt (1993)
Florida Study: Clarke & Hatfield (1989)

- Informal re-enactment on UT’s Campus: “Want to go back to my place?”
  - Guy propositions a Girl: “Yes” and a High-Five!!!!
  - Girl propositions a Guy: “No"

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qkkQxy9m0R8
More Psychological Evidence for Short-Term Mating

The “closing time phenomenon”

Source: Pennebaker (1989)
The Assessment Problem

People.com

Rottentomatoes.com

photobucket.com, by Trunks
Logic of the Evolution of Standards of Attractiveness

**Cues**
- Full lips
- Clear skin
- Clear eyes
- Lustrous hair
- Muscle tone
- Sprightly gait
- Symmetry
- Health
- Youth
- Etc.

- Standards of Attractiveness
- Fertility
Physical Attractiveness

Source: Buss (1989)
Standards Of Beauty Are Consistent Across Cultures

Source: TBD
Figure 4. Importance of attractiveness as a function of parasite prevalence across 29 countries. Residual scores; latitude, geographical area, and mean income are partialled out. (from Gangestad and Buss, 1993)
Age Difference Preferred Between Self and Spouse

Source: Buss (1989)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Mean Age Difference</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>N = 119</td>
<td>Older than self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>N = 139</td>
<td>Older than self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>N = 240</td>
<td>Older than self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>N = 101</td>
<td>Older than self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>N = 1,491</td>
<td>Younger than self</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Buss (1989)
Men’s Age Preferences As They Get Older
Body Shape: Waist-to-Hip Ratio

Cue to: youth, health, fertility, and non-pregnancy [\sim .70 = ideal]
So What Do Women Want?
Mate Preferences

- Thousands of dimensions of differences
- Constants do not count
Problems Women Face in Mating

1. Identifying relevant attributes
2. Assessing men on relevant attributes
3. Accurate self-evaluation of mate value
4. Targeting men in mate-value range
5. Avoiding male deception: “players”
Commitment-Related Deceptive Experiences

Source: Haselton & Buss (2005)
Emotional Upset About Deception: Pre- and Post-Copulation

Exaggerated Feelings in Order to Get Sex
Failed to Call After Sex

Degree of upset

7 = extremely upsetting

Source: Haselton & Buss (2005)
Preference For Economic Resources

Source: colourschool.org

Source: iwallscreen.com

Source: colourschool.org

Source: www.PriceyPads.com
Good Financial Prospects

Source: Buss (1989)
Preference For Social Status

Source: biography.com

Source: blog.starcam.com

Source: imdb.com
Men in Positions of Power: Do They Get What They Want?
Deception about Status and Resources

Source: Haselton & Buss (2005)
Preference For Slightly Older Men

Source: aces.showbiz.com
Preference For Ambition and Industriousness

Source: people.com
Source: job-before-success.blogspot.com
Source: victorstuff.com
Ambition and Industriousness

Source: Buss (1989)
Preference For Dependability and Stability

Source: collider.com

Source: eonline.com
Preference For Athletic Prowess

A Cue to Protection

Source: athleteswives.com
Preference For Love and Commitment
Willingness to Invest in Children

La Cerra Study
The Hidden Side of Female Sexuality: Female Short-Term Mating

Source: ruthless.zathras.de
Hypotheses About Potential Benefits of Infidelity for Female

- Low fertility of current mate
- Access to additional resources
- Access to superior genes
- Mate switching: trading up

cookingwiththemovies.blogspot.com
Sexual Infidelity Tactics

- She smiled at another guy in the presence of her mate.
- She told the other guy to “call me” when her regular mate was out of town.
- She told her partner she was going to attend a lecture on human mating strategies.
Women’s Sexual Desire as Function of Ovulation Cycle

Pillsworth, Haselton, & Buss, (2004); Rice (1988)
Ovulation and Women’s Preferences

Hormone Levels

Source TBD
Masculinity in Men’s Faces

Who is most attractive?

Source TBD
Benefits to Women of EPC Mating

Hypotheses Most Supported Across Different Studies

- Mate switching
- Resource acquisition
- Good genes
Men Don’t Always Know What Women Want
What Women Want:
There’s Much More Research to Do
Thank you!
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why women have sex
The Psychology of Sex in Women’s Own Voices

CINDY M. MESTON PH.D. AND DAVID M. BUSS PH.D.
What About Homosexual Orientation?

- Origins (Vasey, 2010)
- Mate preferences (Lippa, 2007)
- Mating strategies (gender differences)
Origins of Homosexual Orientation: Theories

- Kin selection
- Byproduct of unknown modern conditions
- Sexually antagonistic gene selection
  - Reduces reproduction when in males
  - Increases reproduction when in females
Context Effects of Women’s Preferences

Effects of women’s mate value--high MV women more choosy, discriminating
Dr. David Buss

Dr. David Buss is an evolutionary psychology researcher and professor at The University of Texas at Austin. He is also a leading author and speaker at universities, corporations, and public forums. He is currently head of the Individual Difference and Evolutionary Psychology Area at UT, and supervises a lab of evolutionary psychology Ph.D. students. Members of his lab receive advanced training in evolutionary psychology, social psychology, personality psychology, comparative psychology, research methods, and statistics.