



The University of Texas at Austin  
Environmental Science Institute

*Hot Science - Cool Talk # 109*

***Human Mating Behavior:  
An Evolutionary Perspective***

**Dr. David M. Buss**  
**October 27, 2017**

Produced by and for *Hot Science - Cool Talks* by the Environmental Science Institute. We request that the use of these materials include an acknowledgement of the presenter and *Hot Science - Cool Talks* by the Environmental Science Institute at UT Austin. We hope you find these materials educational and enjoyable.



ITION

# Florida Study

Guy propositions a Girl:



Girl propositions a Guy:

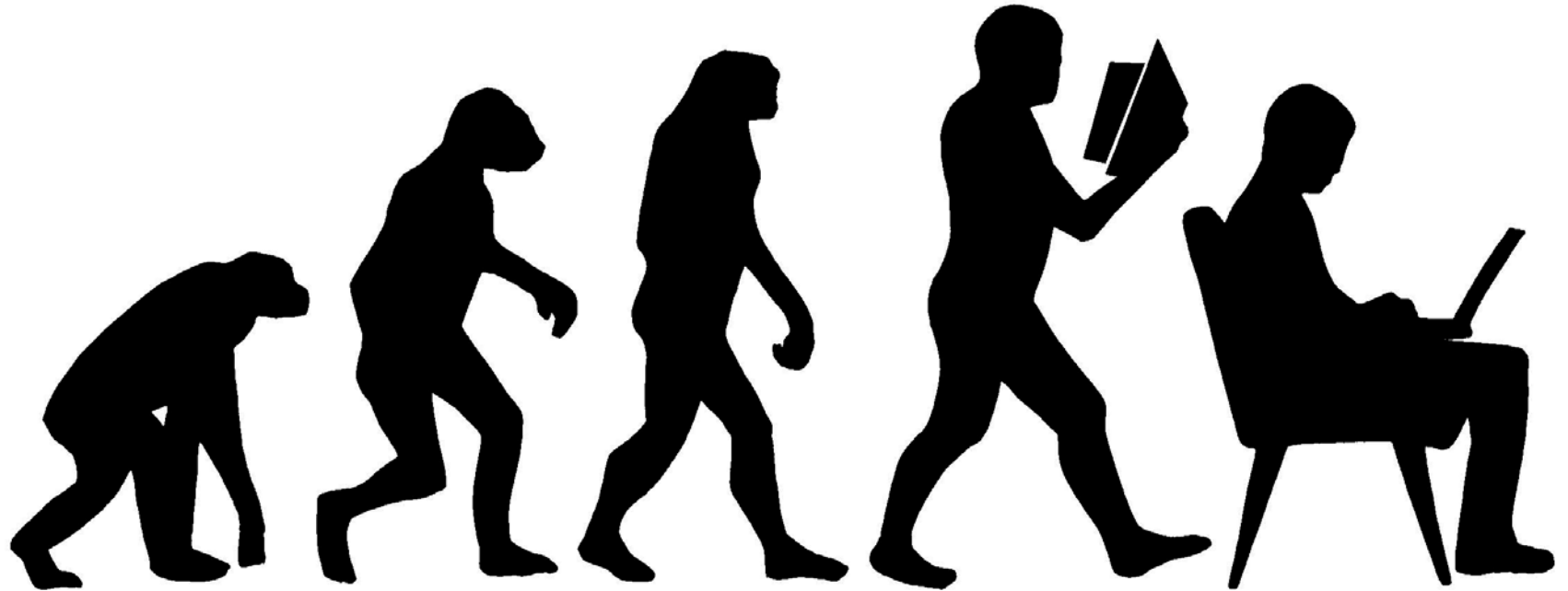


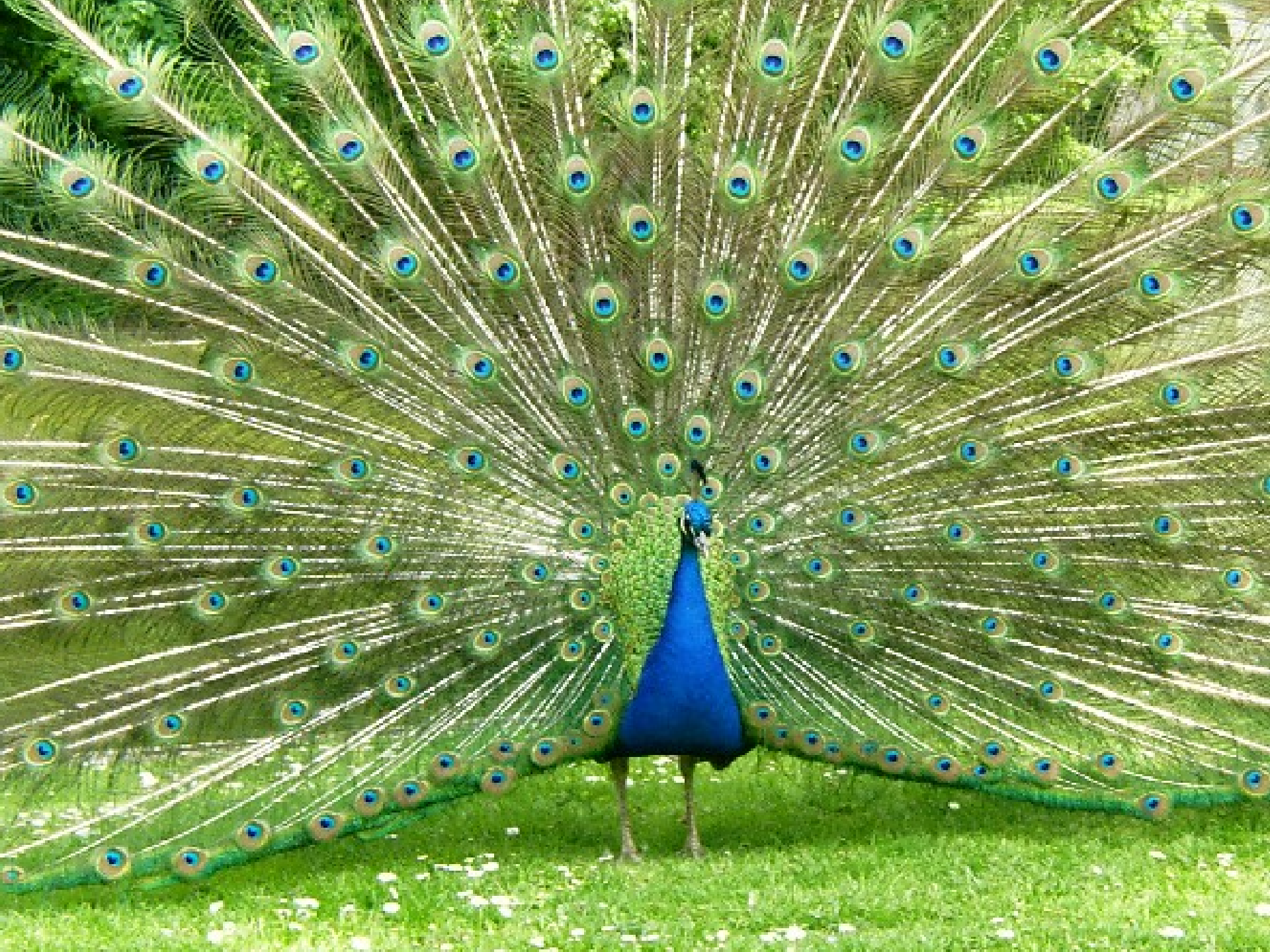
# What is Evolutionary Psychology?





# Evolution by Natural Selection





“The sight of the peacock gives  
me nightmares”

– Charles Darwin



ARKive  
www.arkive.org



© Elio Della Ferrera / naturepl.com

Hamadryas Babboos



Red Fur Seals

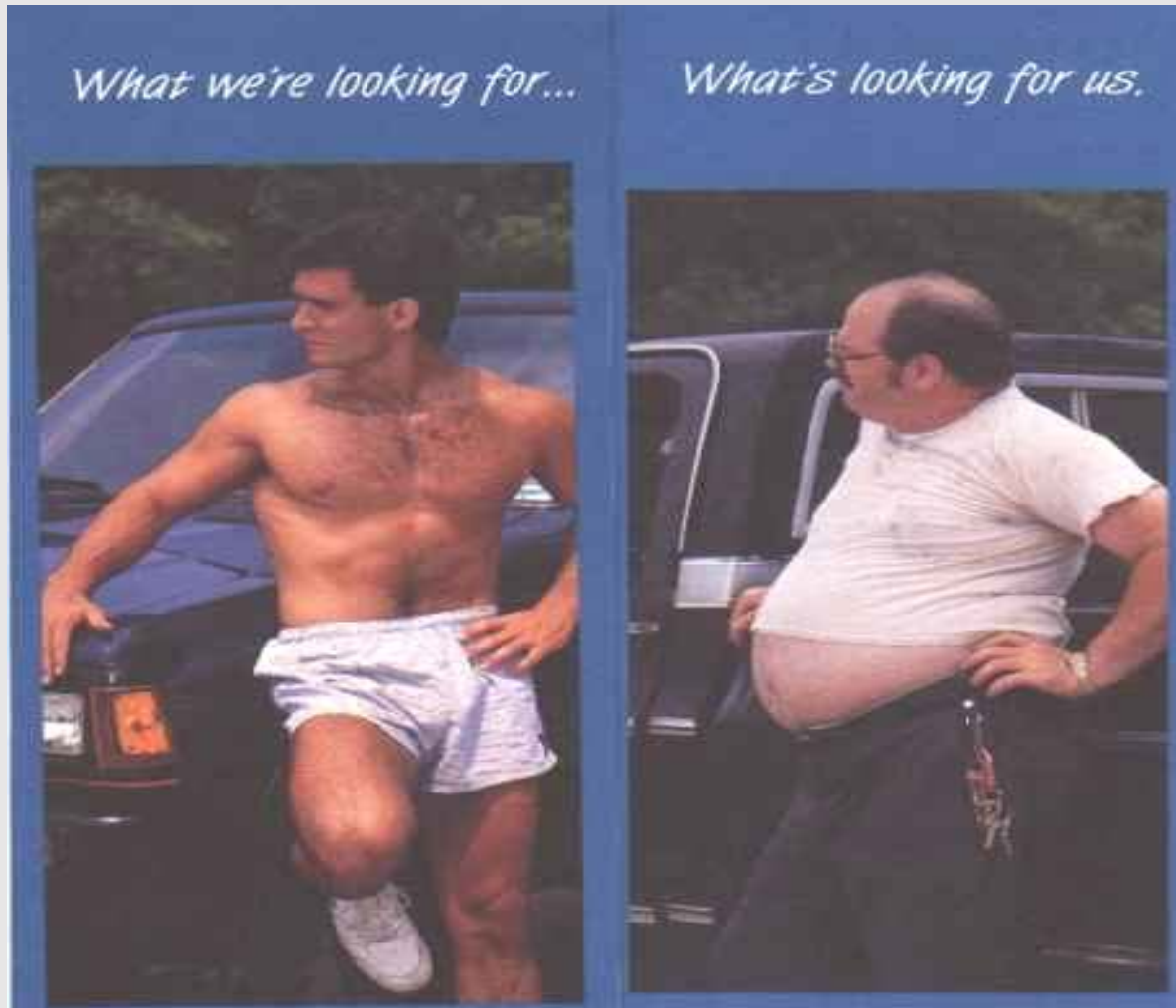


# Sexual Selection

- Same-Sex Competition
- Intersexual Selection



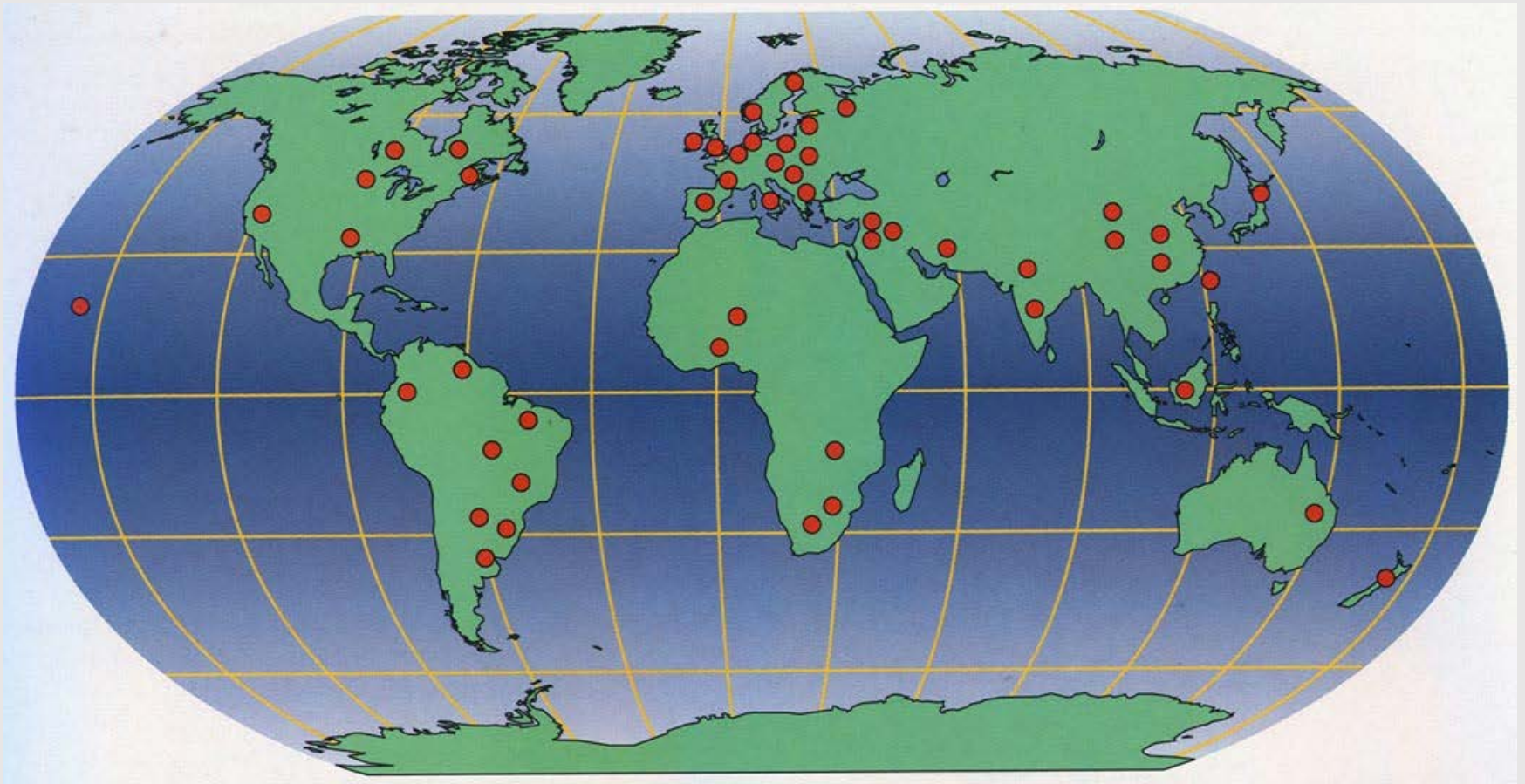
# Intersexual Selection: Preferential Mate Choice



# Humans Have a Complex Menu of Mating Strategies

- Long-term committed mating
- Short-term opportunistic mating
- “Cheating”: Extra-pair copulating (EPC)
- Serial mating over time
- Mixed mating strategies

# Locations of 37 Cultures in International Mate Selection Project: Total # of People = 10,047



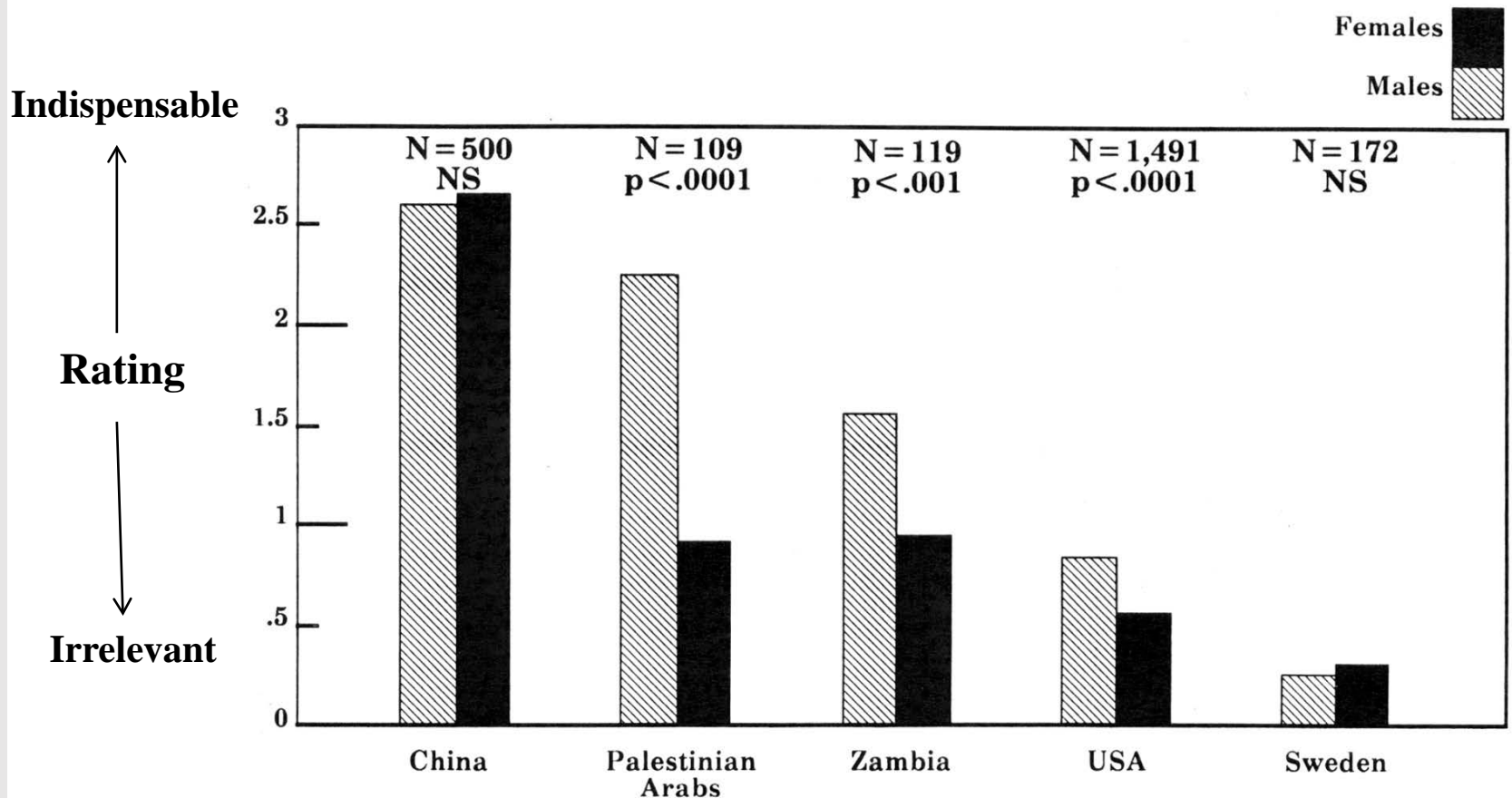
# Universal Desires

- Love
- Exciting personality
- Good health
- Kindness
- Intelligence
- Sociable
- Easy going

# Culturally Variable Desires

## Chastity:

No Previous Sexual Intercourse



# Meta-Theory of Sex Differences

**Men and Women Are Similar:** When there exists a recurrent evolutionary history of similar adaptive problems.

**Men and Women Are Different:** When there exists a recurrent evolutionary history of different adaptive problems.

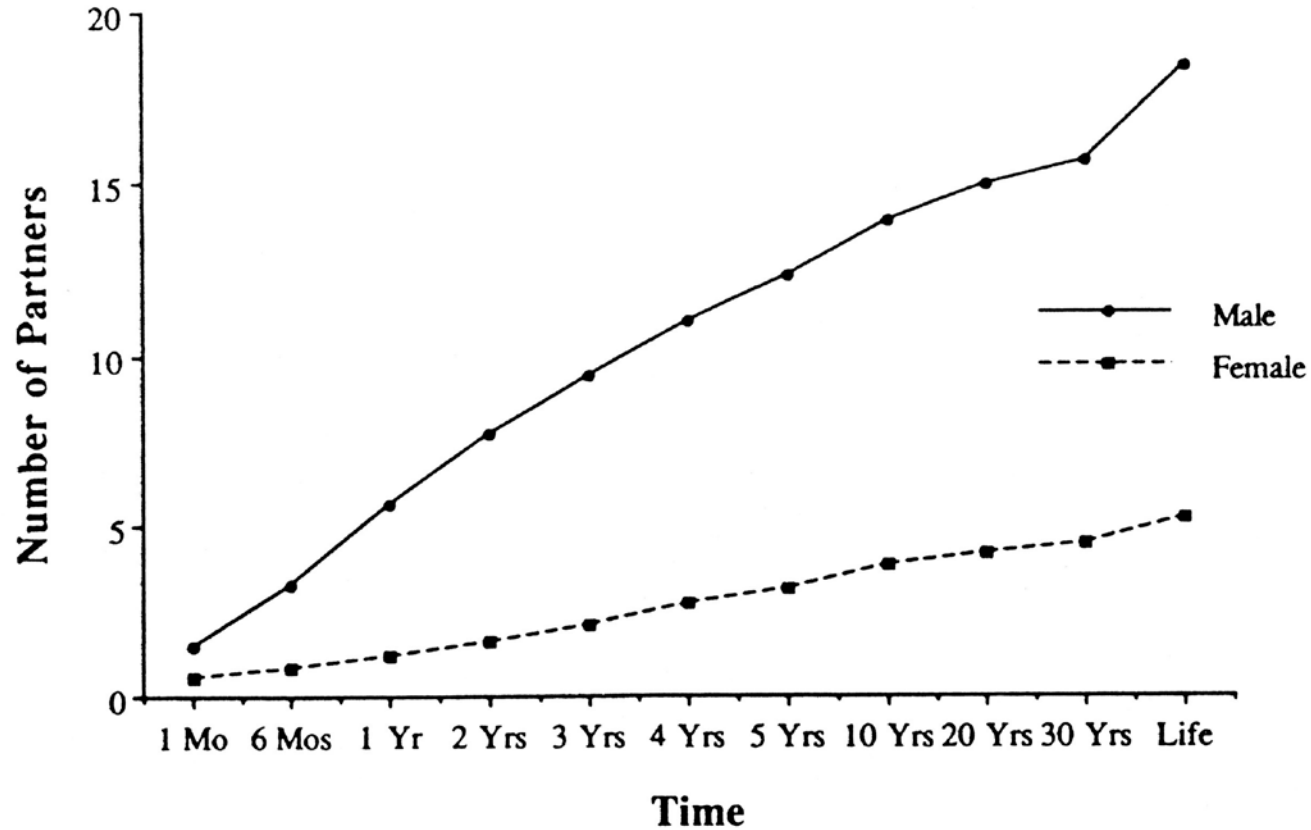


# Recurrently Different Adaptive Problems of the Sexes

- Internal female fertilization
- Paternity uncertainty
- Misdirected parental investment
- Obligatory parental investment
- Fertility curve over the lifespan
- Breast feeding
- Concealed ovulation
- Cyclic ovulation

So What do Men Want?

# Ideal Number of Sex Partners Desired



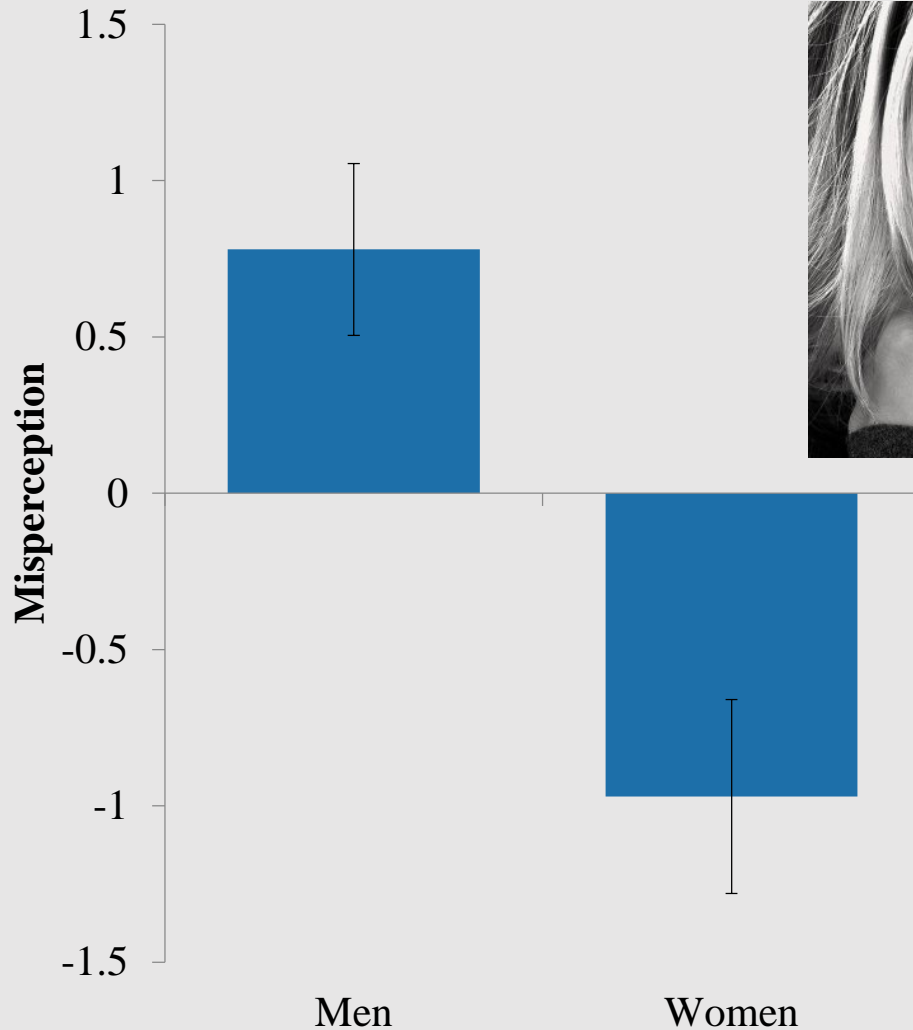
*Figure 4.* Number of sexual partners desired. (Subjects recorded in blank spaces provided how many sexual partners they would ideally like to have for each specified time interval.)

# More Psychological Evidence for Short-Term Mating The “closing time phenomenon”



# Male Sexual Over-Perception Bias

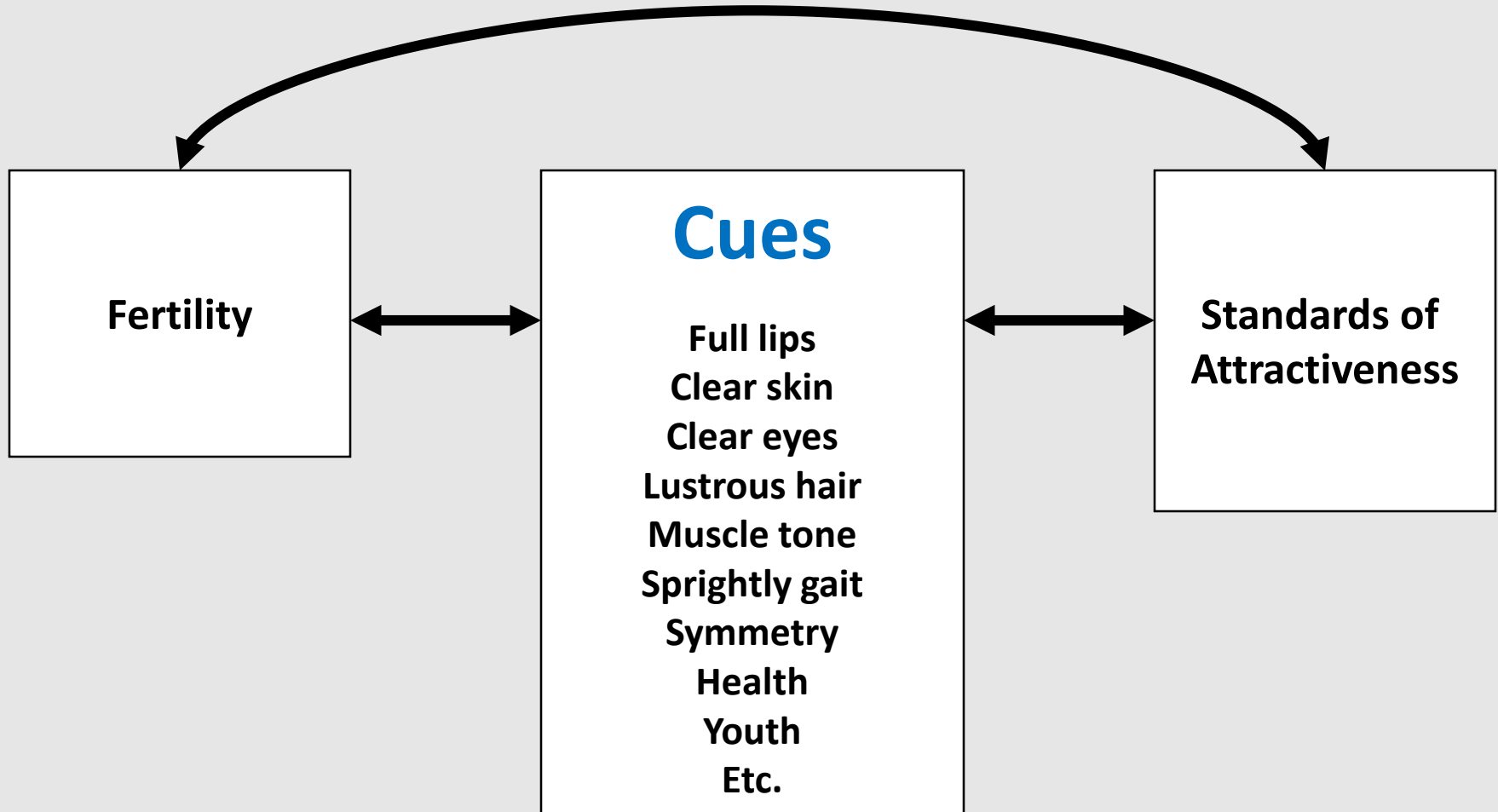
(Perilloux, Confer, & Buss, 2012)



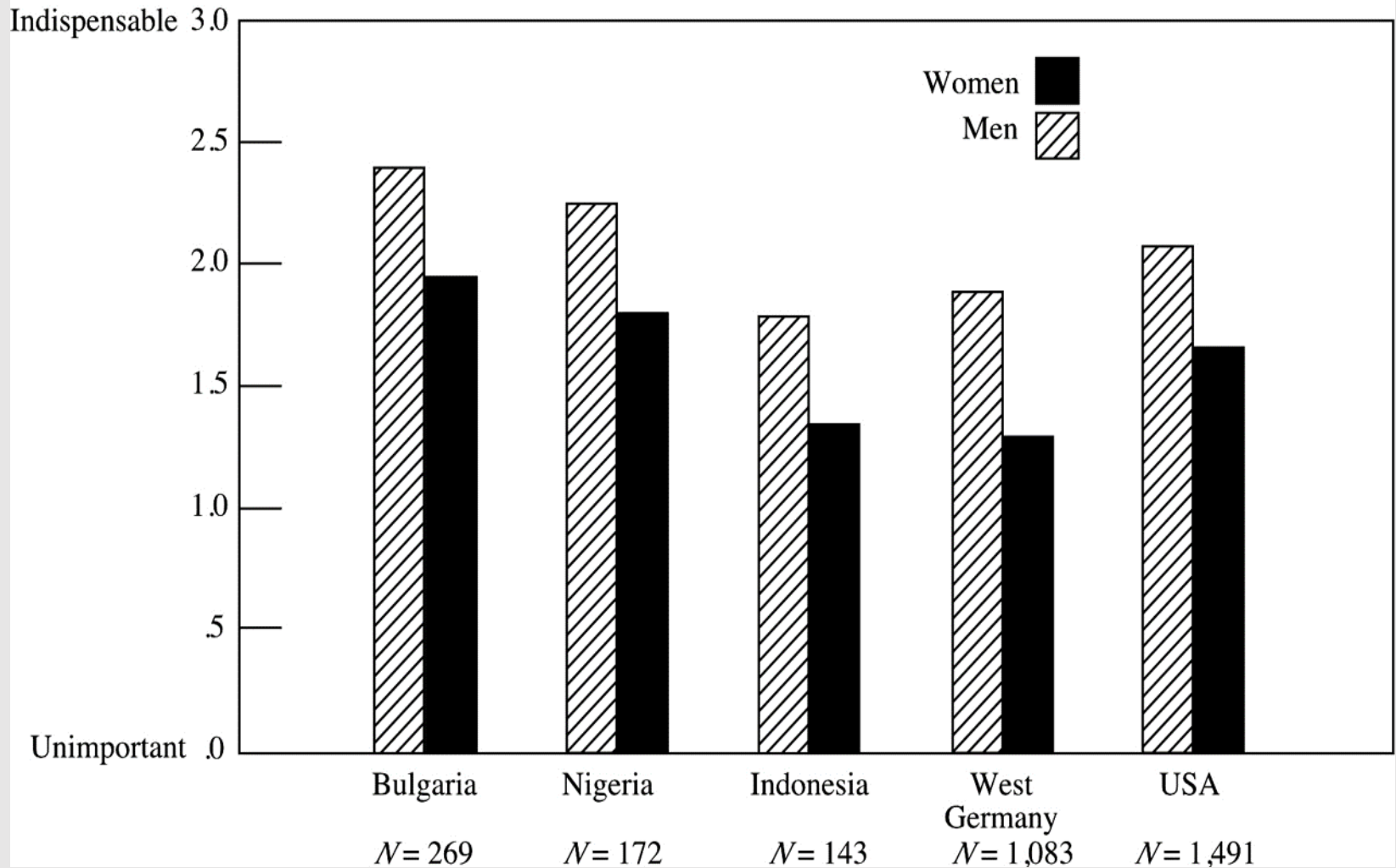
# The Assessment Problem



# Logic of the Evolution of Standards of Attractiveness



# Physical Attractiveness

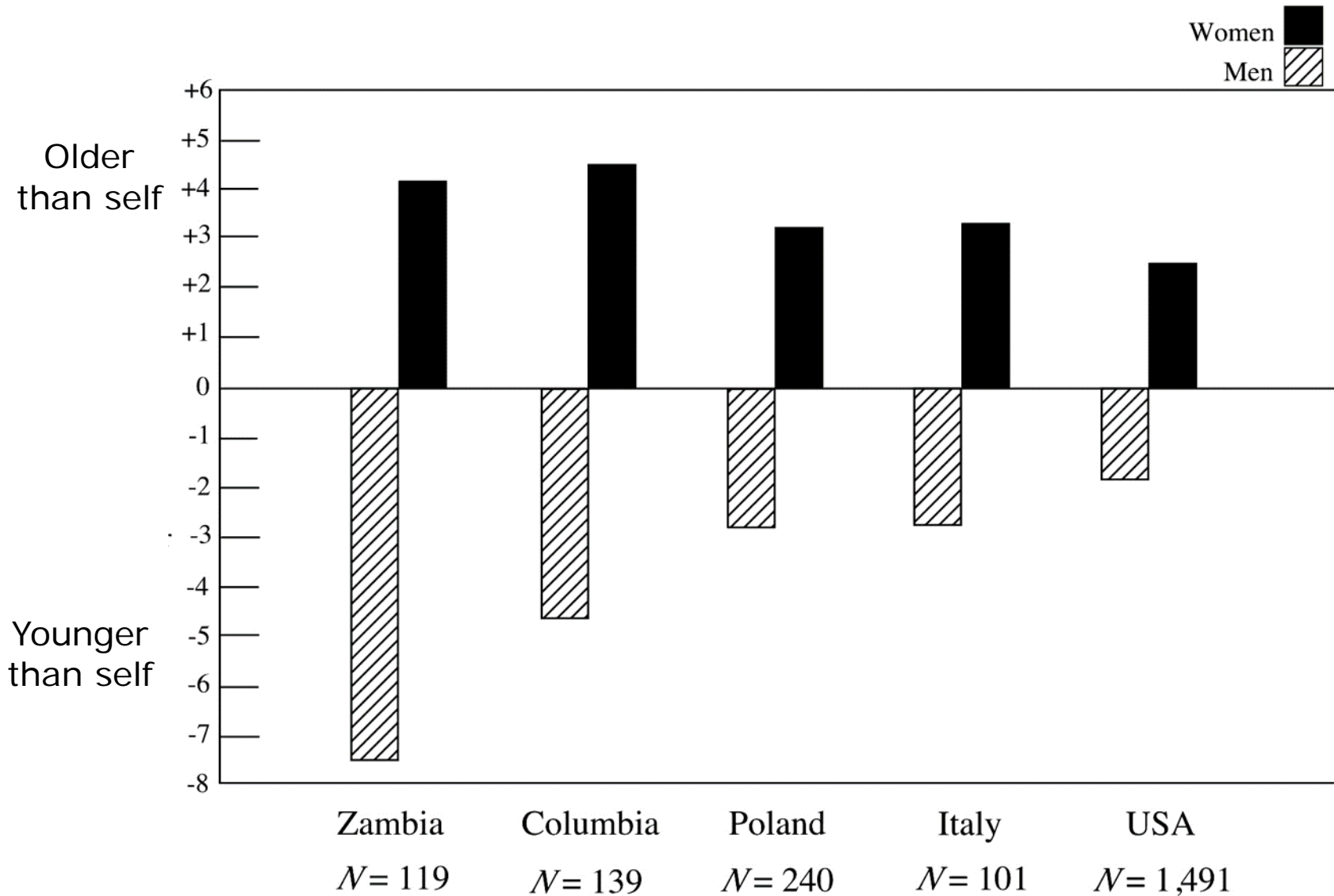




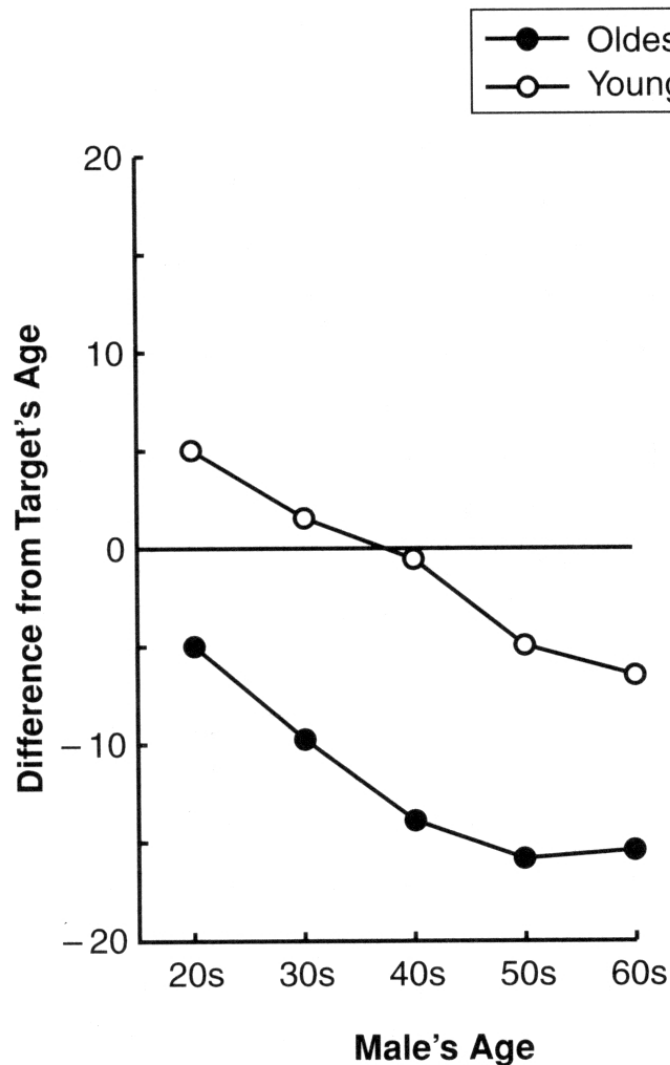
# Standards of Beauty are Consistent Across Cultures



# Age Difference Preferred Between Self and Spouse



# Men's Age Preference as They Get Older

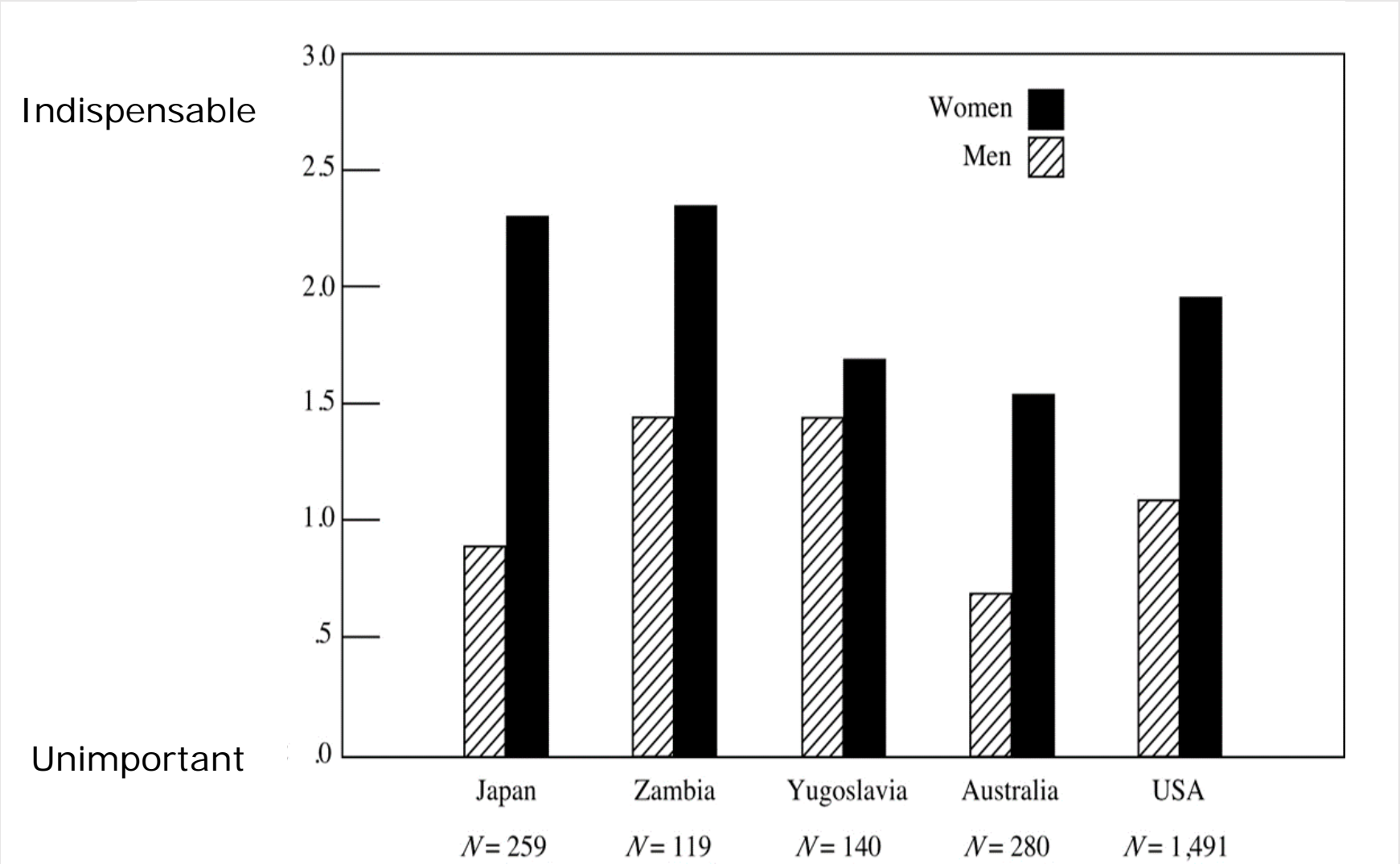


So What do Women  
Want?

# Economic Resources

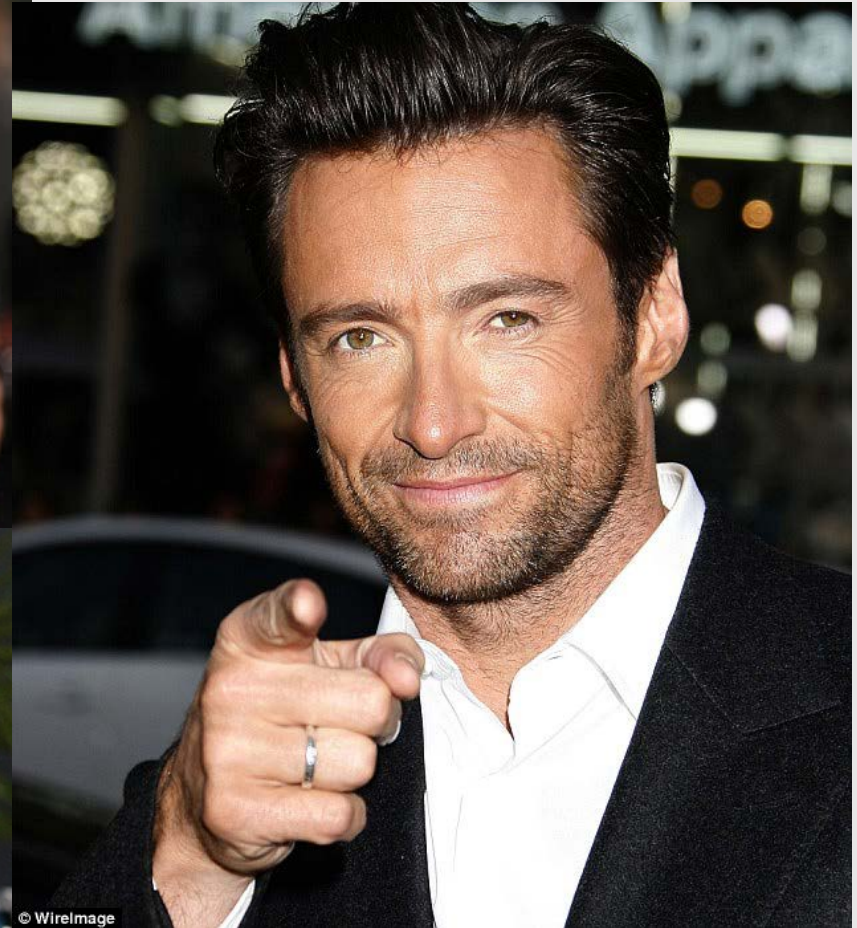


# Good Financial Prospects





# Social Status



# Confidence

- Cue to status





# Who Gets What They Want?





# Ambition and Industriousness





# Preference for Dependence and Stability



# Athletic Prowess

## A Cue to Protection



# Love and Commitment



# Sexual Conflict in Human Mating



# Sexual Conflict Pervades All Aspects of Mating

- Before
- During
- After

Male optimum

Female optimum



**Zone of  
Conflict**



**Time elapsed before  
seeking intercourse**



Male MV

Female MV



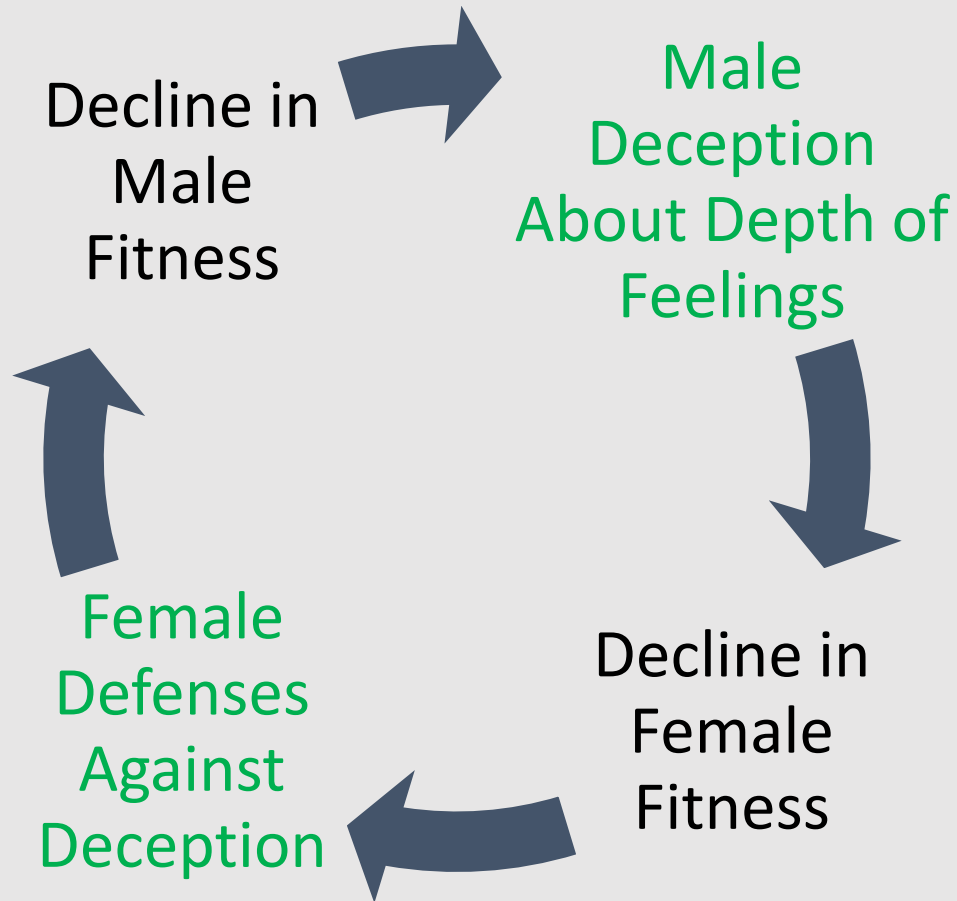
**Zone of  
Conflict**

**Parental Effort**

# Sexual Conflict Adaptations

- Function to influence other sex to be closer to actor's optimum

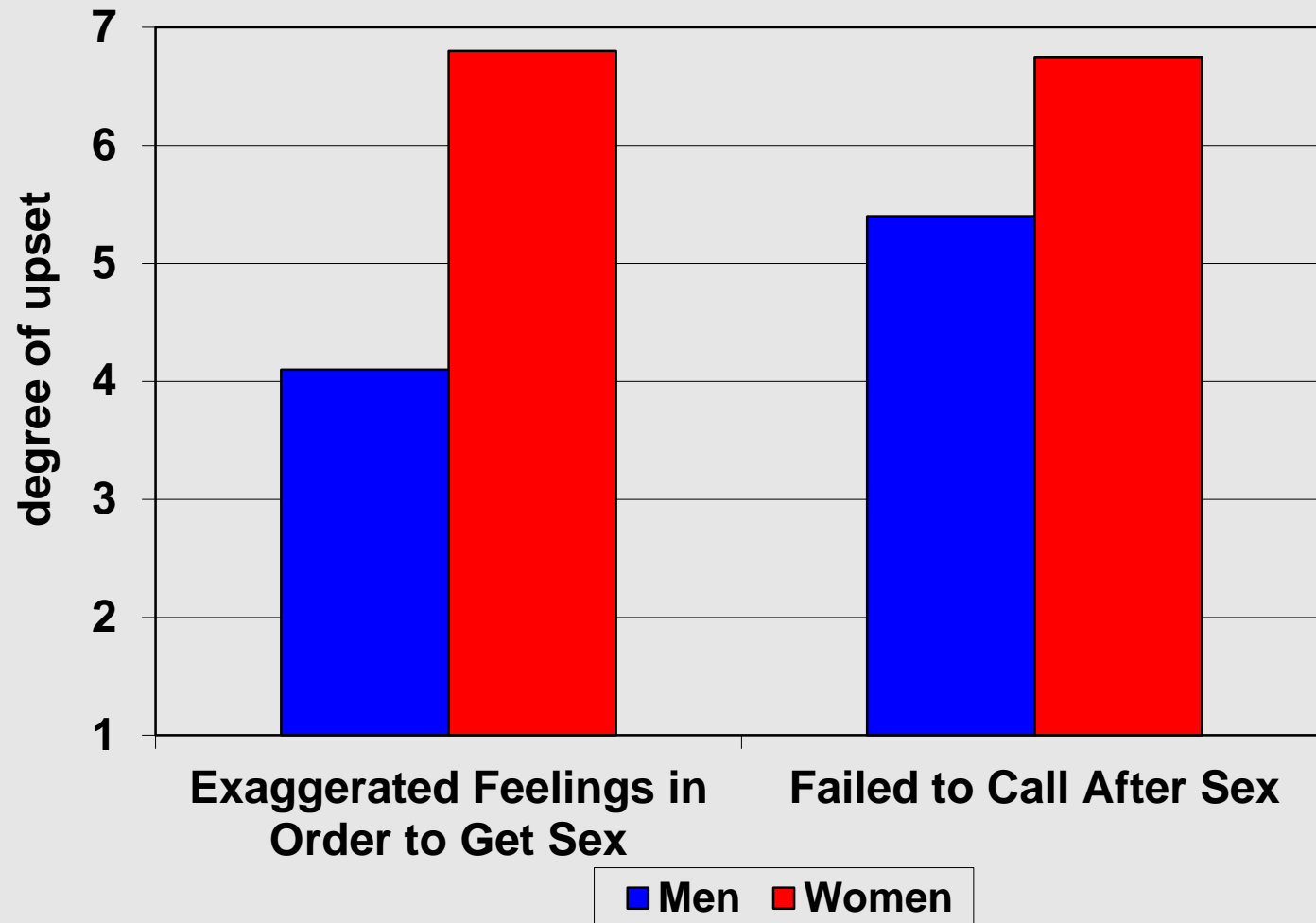
# Male-Initiated Deception



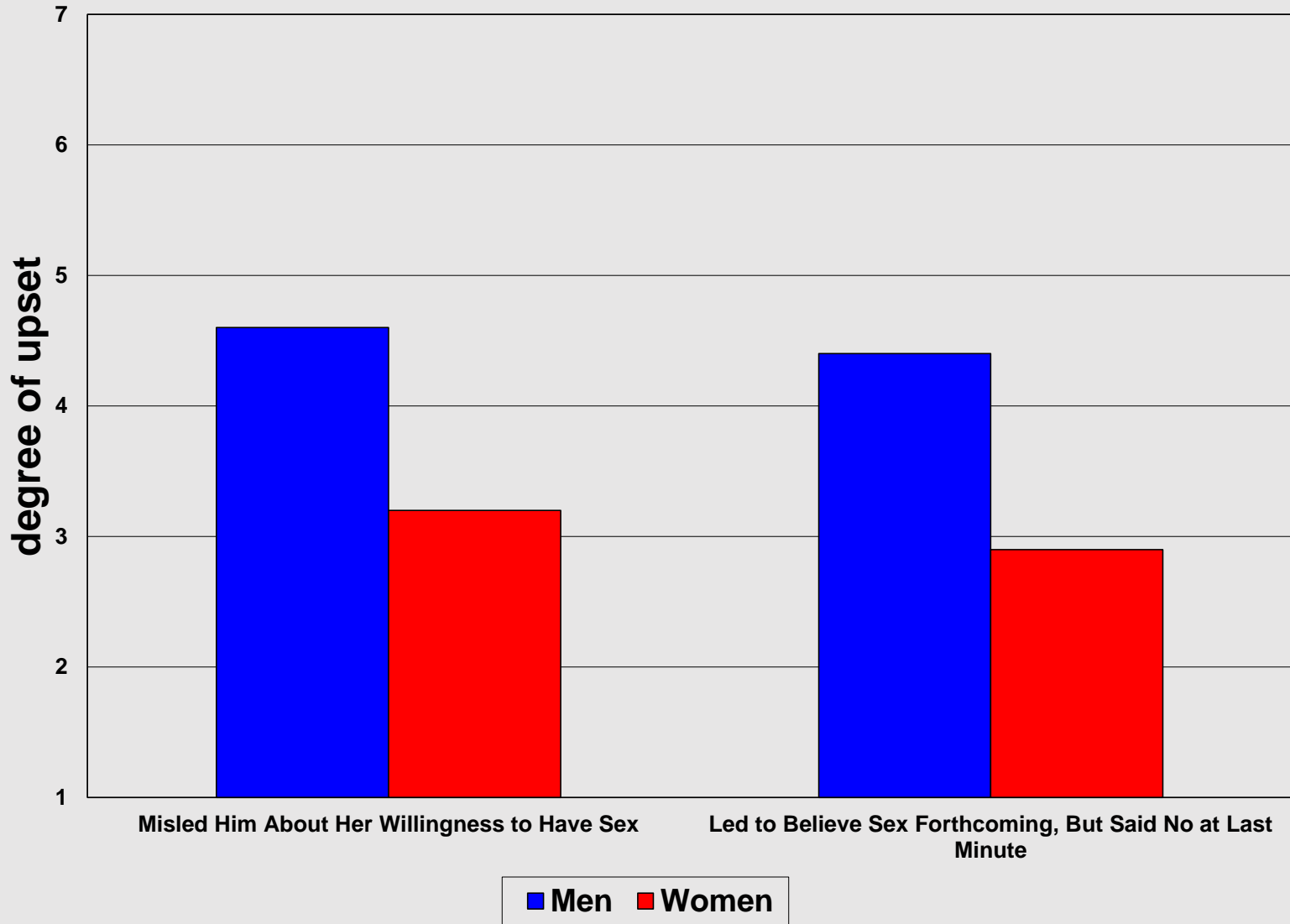
# Female Resistance Adaptations

- Impose longer time for accurate evaluation
- Lower levels of indiscriminant lust

# Emotional Upset About Deception: Pre- and Post-Copulation



# Upset Over Sexual Deception



# Sexual Regret About Missed Sexual Opportunities

(Galperin et al. 2013; Kennair et al.2016; Bendixen et al., 2017)



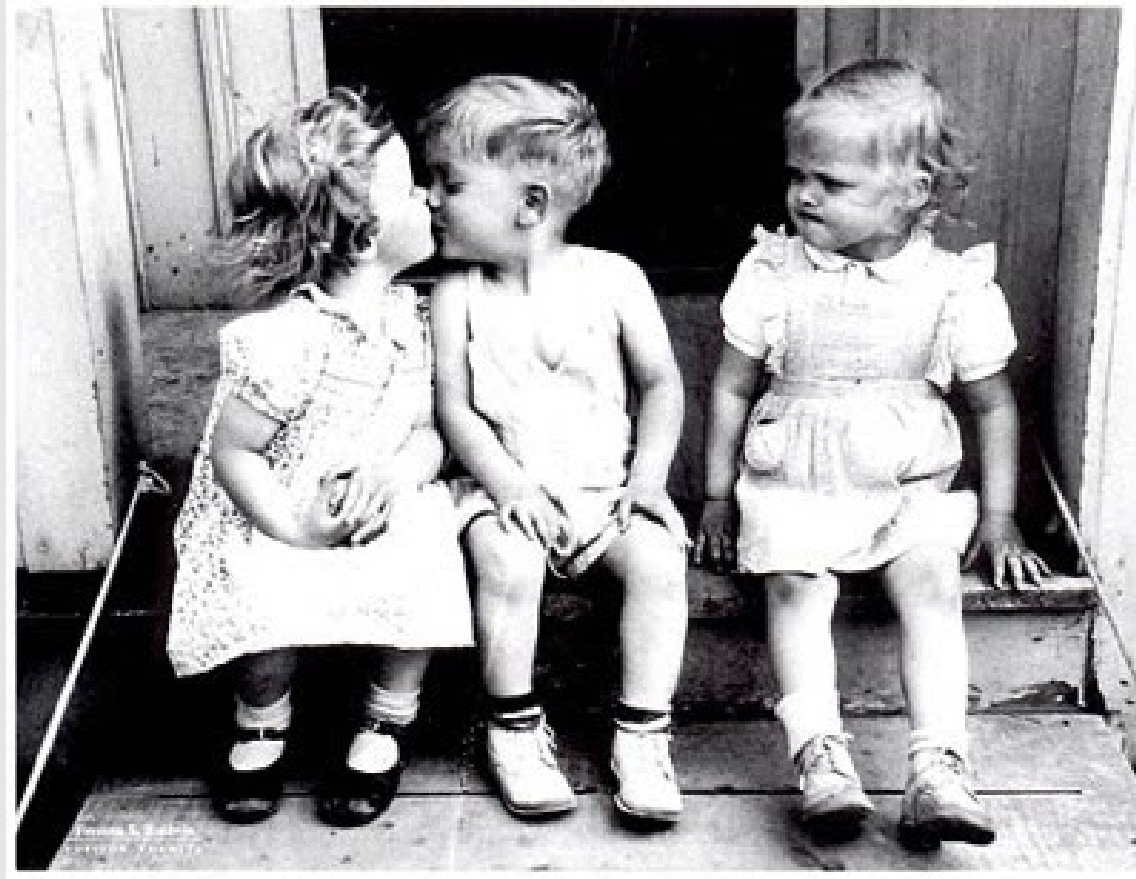
# Sexual Regret About Errors of Sexual Commission

(Galperin et al. 2013; Kennair et al. 2016; Bendixen et al. 2017)

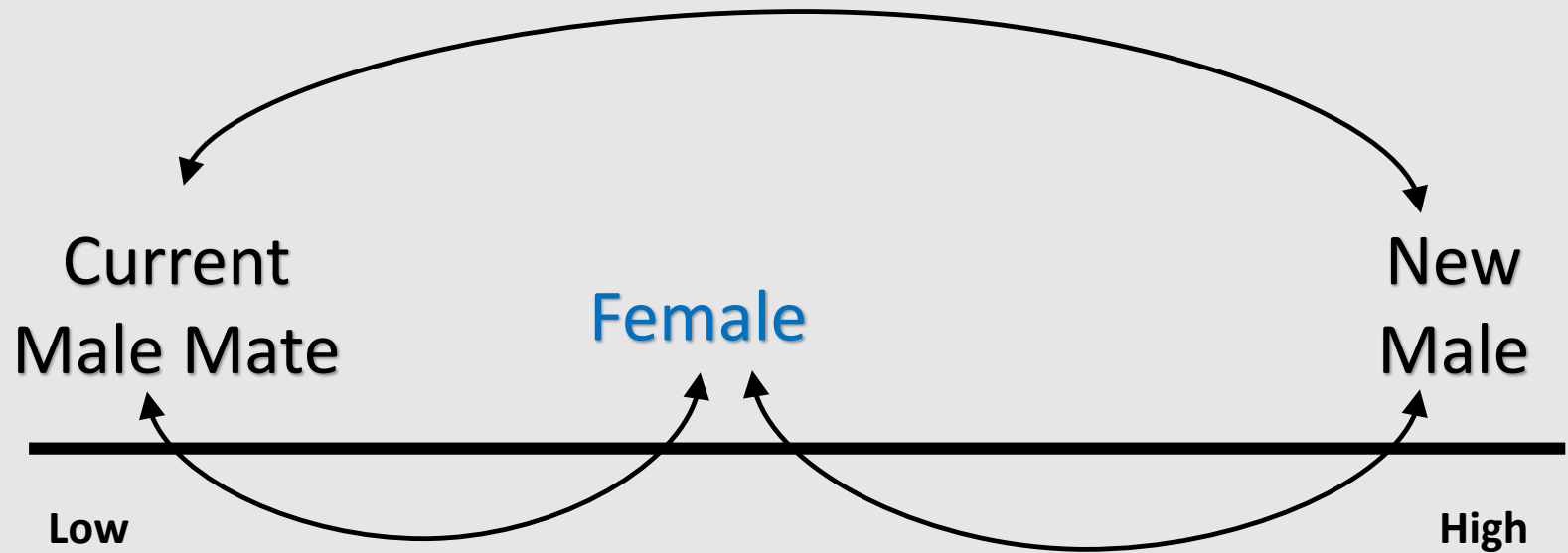




# Triadic Antagonistic Sexual Conflict



# Optimal Mate Switching Level



Optimal Inclination to Mate Switch

# Infidelity

Kinsey et al:

- 50% of married men
- 26% of married women



# Mate Poaching Tactics

- Driving a wedge
- False friendship
- Opportunistic waiting in the wings

# Mate Poaching Experiences

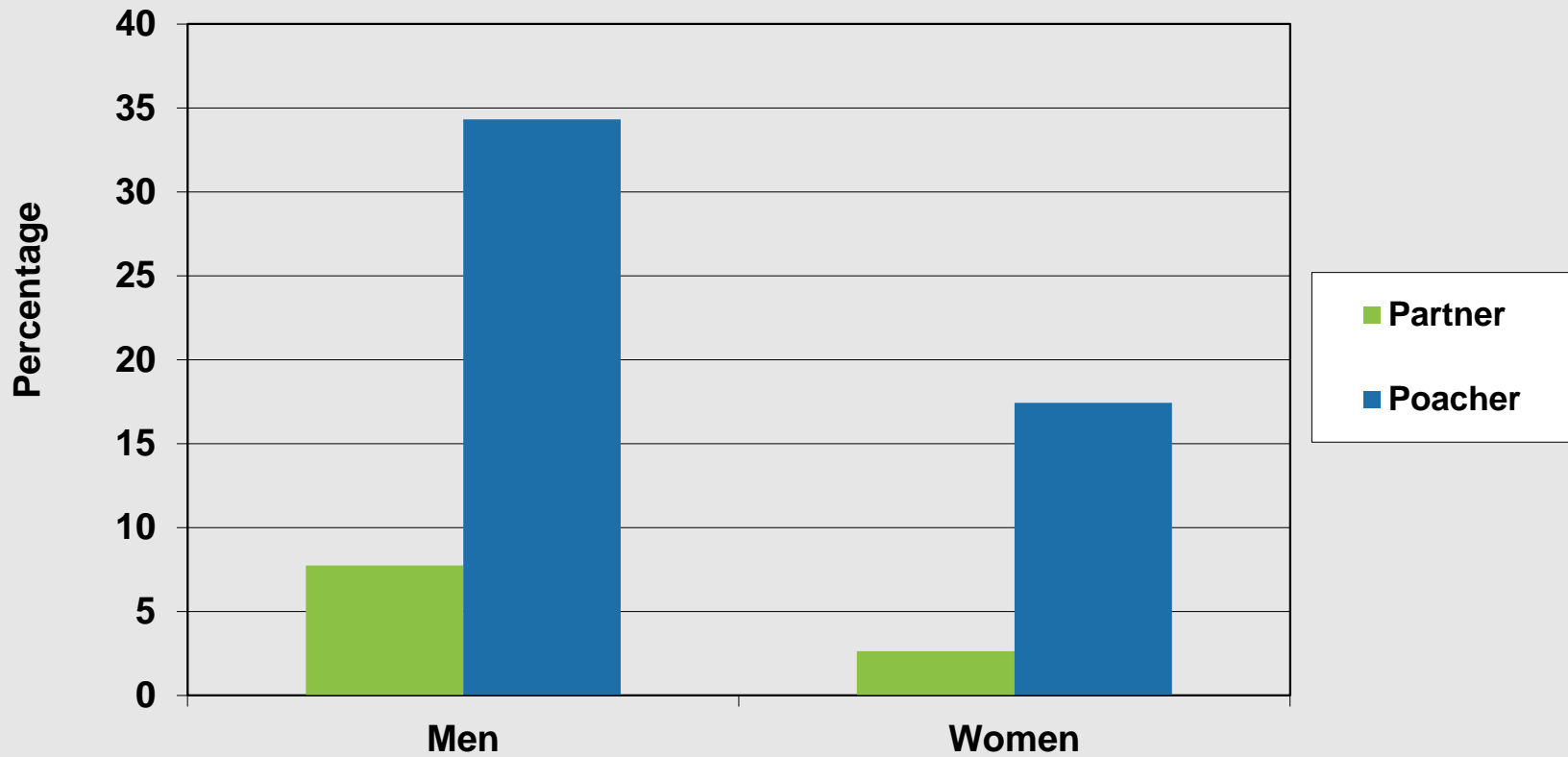
(Schmitt & Buss, 2001; Schmitt et al., 2004)

<u>Experiences</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Attempted to Poach	60%	53%
Received Poaching	93%	82%
Been Successfully Poached Away	67%	41%
Experienced Someone Trying to Poach Your Partner	87%	88%
Had a Past Partner Successfully Poached From You	53%	41%

# When Jealousy Turns Violent



# Homicidal Ideation Trigger – Mate Poaching



N=314





# Female Intrasexual Rival: Homicidal Ideation

*“My boyfriend is always telling me how gorgeous he thinks Kate Moss is. Really, she is just a skinny, drug addict b\*tch. The method: I thought about taking a wire coat hanger and putting it through her eye to make her brain dead. Then I would hang her skinny body up in my closet and show my boyfriend that she isn't so gorgeous after all.”*



# Stalking as a Mating Strategy

(Duntley & Buss, 2012)



# Conclusions

Sexual conflict pervades all aspects of mating: Before, During, and After

# Sexually Antagonistic Co-evolution

- For every sexual conflict adaptation in one sex, there exists at least one co-evolved defense in the other sex

# Triadic Antagonistic Co-evolution

- For every triadic zone of sexual conflict, there exist adaptations to manipulate both other players to be closer to actor's optimum

“We are walking archives of  
ancestral wisdom”

– Helena Cronin

A modern gazelle carries with it  
'knowledge' of its ancestral  
predators.





# Women Living Today Carry With Them

- Knowledge of their ancestral mating environments
- Knowledge of sexual deception, stealth, persistence, and coercion perpetrated by ancestral men
- Memory of the sexual conflict problems of their ancestral mothers
- And the inherited wisdom to solve them, at least sometimes, in the never-ending co-evolutionary sexual arms race.

Thank you!



ITION

For More Info:

[www.davidbuss.com](http://www.davidbuss.com)