Chapter 6
Short-Term Sexual Strategies

1. Theories Concerning Males’ Behaviors
Economy of S-T Mating

One year of aggressive short-term mating:
   Men: Many pregnancies
   Women: Only one pregnancy

A man with two children:
   One S-T copulation can increase his **Reproductive Success** by 50%

Male Reproductive Success increases more by many partners
   Rather than many children per partner
Costs of S-T Mating for Men

- Disease
- Social Reputation reducing ability to find L-T Mate
- Survival of Children from lack of Paternal Investment
- Violence from Jealous Husband
- Violence from father or brother of woman
- Retaliatory affairs by Woman & Divorce
Adaptive Problems for Men

1. Partner Number
   Motivational
   Relaxation of Standards
   Age
   Intelligence
   Present Involvement of Woman
   Minimal Time Constraints

2. Accessibility – Low demands for Time
   Prudishness
   Inexperience
   Low Sex Drive
Adaptive Problems for Men, cont.

3. Identifying Fertility

Hx:
- Younger Women preferred for L-T Strategy
  Greater Reproductive Value
- Somewhat older women preferred for S-T Strategy
  Greater Fertility

4. Avoiding Commitment
Physiological Evidence for S-T Mating

1. Testicular Size – Per Sperm Competition
   Implies both sexes engaged in S-T Strategies

2. Variation is Sperm Count:
   • Increase with separation
   • At time of increased chance of presence of competitor’s sperm
   • Independent of last ejaculation
   • Sperm count adjusted to replace number lost since last insemination – Maintains constant sperm environment
Physiological Evidence for S-T Mating cont.

3. **Baker & Bellis, *Human Sperm Competition*, ’95**

Cone-headed sperm:
- Swim well, Inseminate egg

Coil-tail sperm:
- Occlude migration pathway
- Increase in proportion when cuckoldry more likely
- Reduces subsequent sperm retention
Psychological Evidence for S-T Mating

1. **Desire for variety:**
   Men desire more partners at every time interval
   1mo. To Entire live
   Difference increases with interval

2. **Duration of Time Knowing Partner:**
   Lower threshold for having sex at every interval
   Convergence at 5yrs.
Number of Sexual Partners Desired

Probability of Consenting to Sex

3. **Lowered Standards for S-T Mating:**
   - Increases number of available partners
   - College Men have 4yr wider window
     - Men: 16-28yrs (vs. 17-25yrs for committed relationship)
     - Women: 18-26
   - Women rate 1/3 of 61 undesirable characteristics more strictly
     - e.g.: Promiscuity, bisexuality (vs. L-T Mating)
   - Only 4 rated more harshly by men:
     - e.g.: Low sex drive, need for commitment, hairiness
       - The last correlates negatively with fecundity
Psychological Evidence for S-T Mating cont.

4. **Closing-Time Phenomenon:**
   Perception of attractiveness increases as bars close
   As availability diminishes
   Occurs in both Males and Females
   Not an Artifact of alcohol (Confound, Secondary Variable)

5. **Sexual Fantasies:**
   More frequent in Men
   More likely to involve strangers, anonymous, changing, and multiple Partners
   Women’s focus on emotionality and personal involvement
   Reflect L-T Strategy
Closing Time

Controlling for Number of Drinks

Those Being Rated

Females as the selecting sex
Behavioral Data on S-T Mating Strategies

1. **Husbands have more affairs:**
   - Kinsey et al. (1953): 50% vs. 26%
   - Athanasiou et al. (1970): 40% vs. 36% (N = 8000)
   - Hite (1987): 75% vs. 70%
   - Hunt (1974): 41% vs. 18% (N = 982♂ & 1044♀)

Consistency across time (incident & frequency)
High variability in percentages reflect sampling differences
Promiscuity, continued

“There seems to be no question but that the human male would be promiscuous in his choice of sexual partners throughout the whole of his life if there were no social restrictions…The human female is much less interested in a variety of partners.” (Kinsey, et al., 1948)

Do you buy it?

Do male homosexuals reflect the unfettered male propensity?

What about lesbians?
  • Less promiscuity?
  • If so, does this reflect an evolved difference in propensity?
Prostitution?

Males the overwhelming consumer in all cultures studied
Kinsey:
   69% of American Males, 15% regularly (sampling?)
Female percentage too low to report
Women’s Short-Term Mating Strategy

A man with 2 children can increase his reproductive success with a single causal encounter.

A woman cannot increase her reproductive success by dozens of casual affairs (assuming her husband is O.K.).

Yet every affair requires an equal number of males & females:

- If males have a greater propensity, some females must be highly promiscuous (V.A. data)
- What are the benefits to females?
Data on S-T Mating Behavior

• Time of extra-marital copulation:
  Tends to coincide with ovulation (N = 3679)
  Confound: Women’s libido increases at ovulation
  • What is increase relative to increased activity with husband?
  • What does being on the pill do to such timing?

• 20%-50% across studies
• Exists in all but most restrictive societies
• Exists in all tribal societies
• Sperm volume in primates (indexed by size of testes) correlates with
  Promiscuity of females (large in human males)
• Orgasms promote sperm retention from 65% to 70%
What are Hypothesized Benefits?

1. Resources:
   - Economic
   - Protection
   - Status elevation

2. Genetics
   - Diverse Genes
   - Sexy Sons

3. Mate Switching
   - Expulsion
   - Replacement
   - Backup

4. Mate Skill Acquisition (learning Techniques & Male Preferences)

5. Mate manipulation (Increasing Commitment; Revenge)
1. **Resources**

Does obscuring paternity lead to increased resources from more than one male?

- Primary male may not be around when protection is needed
- Elevated importance of immediate resources in S-T relationships in women
  
  But finding a more desirable partner (L-T?) ranked only 4th

Sexual gratification ranked highest benefit (Not central to any hypothesis)

Common Context of affair:

- Better financial prospects of new male
- Husband who could not hold down a job
  
  (S-T or L-T strategy?)
2. Genetic Benefits

• Enhanced Fertility, relative to L-T mate?

• Mating with high-status (sexy male) producing sexy male offspring? Enhanced mate prospects

• Genetic diversity of offspring prepares for altering environmental contingencies?

How do you test these hypotheses? No empirical support
3. Mate Switching

Since males tend to divorce cheating mates:

- Tactic to expel & replace mate
- As he declines in **Mate Value** per resource procurement

Data:

Women ranked perceived likely benefits of extra-pair mating:

- Easier to break up  6/28
- Increases likelihood of obtaining more desirable mate 4/28
  (Sexual gratification 1st, but not central to any theory)
4. Mate Skill Acquisition

• Acquisition Skills
• Data Acquisition vis-à-vis what make for a good mate
  Determining what she wants in a male

Short-term mating strategy correlates +0.50 with perceived
  enhancement of mate attraction skills
  (Sexuality Orientation Inventory; SOI)
5. Mate Manipulation

1. Revenge for infidelity
2. Keeping Mate in line

- Rated unlikely to be successful
- Leading cause of divorce across cultures
Within Gender Variance

Women pursuing S-T Strategy perceive benefits more highly

Resources:
- Sexual Experimentation  $r=0.51$
- Orgasm success  $r=0.47$
- More attractive partner  $r=0.39$
- Career advancement  $r=0.40$
- Material acquisition  $r=0.45$  --  $r=0.35$
- Partner Value  $r=0.29$ (fired);  $r=0.25$ (income);  $r=0.24$ (ill)
- Attraction Skills:  $r=0.50$

Such women perceive costs as less:
- Reputation  $r=-0.47$
S-T Strategy & Context Variance

1. **Life Transition**
   Data collection vis-à-vis:
   - Own mate value
   - Effective strategies
   - Practicing skills
   - Determining preferences

   - Adolescence -- Occurs in many cultures, sometimes encouraged
   - Post-divorce – Re-Asses one’s mate value (effect of children?)
   - Status Elevation – Enhanced mate value
2. **Sex Ratio**

Relatively fewer men (e.g. war; differential remarriage with age):
- Males shift to S-T Strategy per many available women
- E.G. Highly Promiscuous Ache males (50% more women)

When males become surplus:
- Both sexes shift toward L-T Strategies
- Stable marriages
- Fewer divorces
3. **Self-perceptions**

High Mate-Value Men:
- Earlier intercourse
- More partners since puberty
- More partners per year
- Receive more solicitations
- More frequent
- Less propensity for attachment to partner
- Higher SOI scores => Greater S-T orientation

No correlations with mate-value among women!
- Same behaviors correlate with Low Self-Esteem
- (Wouldn’t Self-Esteem be correlated with perceived Mate-Value?)