



## Sex differences in the motivation and mitigation of jealousy-induced interrogations

Barry X. Kuhle<sup>a,\*</sup>, Kerrie D. Smedley<sup>b</sup>, David P. Schmitt<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Psychology, Dickinson College, P.O. Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013, USA

<sup>b</sup> Department of Psychology, Lebanon Valley College, 101 N. College Ave. Annville, PA 17003, USA

<sup>c</sup> Department of Psychology, Bradley University, 105 Comstock Hall, Peoria, IL 62625, USA

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 24 September 2008

Received in revised form 21 November 2008

Accepted 27 November 2008

Available online 8 January 2009

#### Keywords:

Jealousy

Sexual infidelity

Emotional infidelity

Interrogation

Mitigation

Sex differences

Evolutionary psychology

### ABSTRACT

Given the differential costs sexual and emotional infidelity posed for each sex, we hypothesized that humans have sex-differentiated damage assessment strategies to investigate the nature of a partner's infidelity. Study 1 tested this hypothesis using a forced-choice dilemma in which participants ( $N = 172$ ) indicated whether they would be more likely to inquire about the sexual or emotional nature of a partner's extra-pair relationship. Results confirmed our predictions that (a) men more so than women inquire about the sexual nature of the extra-pair relationship and (b) women more so than men inquire about the emotional nature of the extra-pair relationship. We further hypothesized that humans have sex-differentiated damage control strategies to mitigate the costs of being caught committing infidelity. Study 2 tested this hypothesis using a forced-choice dilemma in which participants ( $N = 117$ ) indicated whether they would be more likely to deny the sexual or emotional nature of their involvement with an extra-pair partner. Results confirmed our predictions that if their partner discovered that they were involved with someone else, (a) men more so than women deny any emotional involvement with the extra-pair partner, whereas (b) women more so than men deny any sexual involvement with the extra-pair partner.

© 2008 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

### 1. Introduction

Jealousy is an emotion designed to alert individuals of threats to valued relationships. Although men and women are equally likely to experience jealousy, they differ in the weighting given to sexual and emotional input cues that trigger the emotion (Daly, Wilson, & Weghorst, 1982; Symons, 1979). Buss, Larsen, Westen, and Semelroth (1992) predicted and found evidence that (a) men more than women become upset at cues to a partner's sexual infidelity, which can result in cuckoldry, and (b) women more than men become upset at cues to a partner's emotional infidelity, which threatens the loss of resources to a rival. These sex differences have been found in a variety of cultures (Buss et al., 1999; Buunk, Angleitner, Oubaid, & Buss, 1996), with peoples of varied ages (Shackelford, Michalski, & Schmitt, 2004; Shackelford et al., 2004), and via the use of various methods (Schützwohl, 2004, 2005, 2008; Takahashi et al., 2006; see also Table 11.1 in Buss, 2008). Although Harris (2002) questioned whether these sex differences are an artifact of participants being forced to consider hypothetical infidelity scenarios, others have argued and found that these sex differences still emerge when participants retrospectively report their jealous reactions to actual infidelity experiences (Edlund, Heider, Scherer,

Farc, & Sagarin, 2006; Sagarin, 2005; Strout, Laird, Shafer, & Thompson, 2005). Evidence for sex differences in the weighting given to input that activates jealousy is robust (Buss, 2000; Buss & Haselton, 2005).

Here, we explore the nature of jealousy from two different but complementary angles, both of which explore the output side of jealousy mechanisms. We ask two questions: (1) do men and women differ in the way they interrogate unfaithful partners? and (2) do men and women differ in the way they attempt to mitigate their partners' jealousy-fueled interrogations? To answer these questions we conducted two studies that investigated if infidelity sparks sex-differentiated damage assessment strategies in the betrayed and damage control strategies in the betrayer.

#### 1.1. Sex-differentiated jealous interrogations

The behavioral outputs of psychological mechanisms exist because they solved historically recurrent adaptive problems. The output of jealousy mechanisms is somewhat sex-differentiated because after successfully courting and attracting a mate, ancestral men and women faced somewhat different adaptive problems in retaining a mate. Given the differential costs sexual and emotional infidelity posed for each sex, we hypothesize that humans have sex-differentiated damage assessment strategies dedicated to investigating the nature of a partner's infidelity.

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 717 245 1795; fax: +1 717 245 1971.  
E-mail address: [barrykuhle@gmail.com](mailto:barrykuhle@gmail.com) (B.X. Kuhle).

Due to internal female fertilization, a partner's sexual infidelity puts men but not women at risk of incurring cuckoldry costs that include furthering another's genes, losing a partner's reproductive resources, wasted effort devoted to selecting, attracting, and courting a partner, and lowered status and reputation. Interrogations of the sexual nature of a partner's affair would have aided ancestral men in assessing the damage incurred from a partner's transgression by providing information relevant to the decision to continue with, alter, or end the relationship.

Although ancestral women did not run the risk of cuckoldry, their partners' affairs posed a significant adaptive problem. Ancestral mated men who defected from their mates by mating with other women would likely have reallocated resources to the extra-pair partners. As such, women whose partners became involved with extra-pair partners risked losing their partners' time, attention, investment, protection, and commitment. Given the ancestral importance of male parental investment in the rearing of human infants (Hurtado & Hill, 1992), this diversion of resources would have had severe reproductive consequences. Interrogations of the emotional nature of a partner's affair would have helped ancestral women assess the damage incurred from a partner's transgression by providing information relevant to the decision to maintain or terminate the relationship.

Given the cavalcade of calamitous costs springing from a partner's sexual infidelity for men and from a partner's emotional infidelity for women, we make two predictions:

*Prediction 1a:* Upon discovering that their mate has been unfaithful, men more so than women will be motivated to inquire about the sexual nature of the extra-pair relationship.

*Prediction 1b:* Upon discovering that their mate has been unfaithful, women more so than men will be motivated to inquire about the emotional nature of the extra-pair relationship.

### 1.2. Sex-differentiated jealousy mitigations

If humans have evolved mechanisms to minimize threats to valued relationships by interrogating unfaithful partners about the nature of their infidelities, we might also expect humans to have evolved mechanisms to minimize the effectiveness of these interrogations. That is, the evolution of jealousy-fueled interrogations would have provided selective impetus for the evolution of mechanisms to mitigate the costs of being interrogated. This co-evolutionary arms race—betrayed partners attempting to minimize the costs of their partners' infidelities, unfaithful partners attempting to minimize the costs of getting caught—is particularly likely to have transpired in a species with a deep history of long-term relationships punctuated with opportunistic short-term affairs (Barash & Lipton, 2001). As such, we further hypothesize that humans have sex-differentiated damage control strategies dedicated to mitigating the costs associated with committing infidelity.

Given women's greater upset with emotional infidelity (Buss et al., 1992), unfaithful ancestral men could have decreased the likelihood that their partners would leave them if they denied the existence of an emotional relationship with an extra-pair partner. Similarly, unfaithful women could have increased the likelihood of preserving their primary relationship by disavowing the sexual nature of an extra-pair relationship. Evidence that (a) men, relative to women, are more likely to forgive an emotional infidelity and to dissolve a relationship after a partner's sexual infidelity whereas (b) women, relative to men, are more likely to forgive a sexual infidelity and to break up with a partner following his emotional unfaithfulness supports these notions (Shackelford, Buss, & Bennett, 2002). This leads to two additional predictions:

*Prediction 2a:* Upon discovery of their infidelity, men more so than women will attempt to mitigate the costs of their transgres-

sion by telling their partners that they have no emotional feelings for the extra-pair partner.

*Prediction 2b:* Upon discovery of their infidelity, women more so than men will attempt to mitigate the costs of their transgression by telling their partners that they have not had sex with the extra-pair partner.

To explore the postulated co-evolutionary arms race between infidelity interrogation and mitigation we conducted two self-report studies. Study 1 explores the hypothesis that humans have sex-differentiated damage assessment strategies designed to interrogate the nature of a partner's infidelity by testing predictions 1a and 1b. Study 2 examines the hypothesis that humans have sex-differentiated damage control strategies dedicated to mitigating the costs associated with committing infidelity by testing predictions 2a and 2b.

## 2. Study 1: jealous interrogations

### 2.1. Method

#### 2.1.1. Participants

Participants were 172 undergraduates (44 men and 128 women) from a small, private liberal arts college in the United States. Their voluntary participation partially fulfilled a requirement for an introductory level psychology course. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 32 years with a mean age of 20.1 ( $SD = 2.3$ ). The majority of the sample (82%) reported having experienced a serious or committed romantic relationship.

#### 2.1.2. Materials and procedures

Heterosexual students who were at least 18 years old were eligible to participate in a study titled "Jealousy 1." The study was an internet-based, self-administered questionnaire that took approximately 25 min to complete. After reading the informed consent statement, students indicated their willingness to participate by entering their unique, college-issued student identification number. This number was unavailable to the researchers; it was only used by a member of the college's Office of Institutional Research to award course credit for participating and to identify and delete duplicate survey submissions before all data were transmitted to the researchers for analysis. The first section asked for demographic information including age, sex, and relationship experience. The second section involved a forced-choice question with the following dilemma: "Upon discovering that a serious romantic partner has been unfaithful to you, you would likely have many questions for him [her]. However, some questions are more important to ask than others. Which of the following questions are you *more likely* to ask your unfaithful partner?" Participants then selected either "Did you have sex with her?" or "Do you love her?" The order of these options was counterbalanced. The third section pertained to a separate, unrelated study of romantic relationships and involved answering 113 Likert-type rating-scale questions.

### 2.2. Results and discussion

#### 2.2.1. Validity checks

Given the long, self-administered nature of the survey, two of the 113 rating-scale questions from section three were repeated to assess the validity of participants' responses. All data from participants whose ratings on either of the repeated questions differed by three or more points on the seven-point scale were excluded from all analyses. This validity check criterion resulted in the elimination of 14 participants' data. Data from an additional three participants were excluded due to repetition of re-

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

**ISI**Articles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات