



Relief over the disconfirmation of the prospect of sexual and emotional infidelity

Achim Schützwohl *

Department of Psychology, Brunel University, West London, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3PH, United Kingdom

Received 19 July 2007; received in revised form 21 September 2007; accepted 27 September 2007

Available online 7 November 2007

Abstract

Two studies tested the predictions that the disconfirmation of the prospect of a mate's sexual infidelity generates more intense relief in men than in women, whereas the disconfirmation of the prospect of a mate's emotional infidelity generates more intense relief in women than in men. Additionally, the intensity of relief was predicted to increase with the likelihood of infidelity. The participants indicated their relief over the disconfirmation of the prospect of sexual and emotional infidelity in a forced-choice response format and on separate rating scales. As predicted, more women than men indicated that they would be more relieved about the disconfirmation of the prospect of emotional infidelity. Ratings of the intensity of relief consistently confirmed the prediction that men are more relieved than women about the disconfirmation of the prospect of sexual infidelity. Additionally, women consistently reported more relief about the disconfirmation of emotional than of sexual infidelity. The impact of the likelihood of infidelity on relief was negligible. Limitations and implications of the present study are discussed.

© 2007 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Infidelity; Jealousy; Relief; Evolved psychological mechanism; Sex differences; Monitoring device; Morbid jealousy

* Tel.: +44 1895266367.

E-mail address: achim.schuetzwohl@brunel.ac.uk

1. Introduction

Evolutionary psychologists view jealousy as a psychological mechanism that evolved because it recurrently solved an essential problem of individual reproduction in our evolutionary history: infidelity in reproductive relationships (Buss, Larsen, Westen, & Semmelroth, 1992; Daly, Wilson, & Weghorst, 1982; Symons, 1979). A distinctive feature of the evolutionary view is the assumption that men's and women's jealousy mechanisms differ because they evolved to solve different adaptive problems. More precisely, according to the evolutionary view the male adaptive problem originates from internal female fertilization and post-zygotic biparental investment (e.g., Buss, 2004; Trivers, 1972). As a consequence of internal female fertilization, men are confronted with paternity uncertainty. Hence, a woman's sexual infidelity could reduce a man's reproductive success because it deprives him of a reproductive opportunity and he risks investing limited paternal resources for the benefit of genetically unrelated offspring. This risk may be signaled by cues to her sexual infidelity. Women, in contrast, could always be certain of their maternity, thus eliminating the risk of inadvertently investing resources in another woman's offspring. However, a woman's reproductive success is endangered if she loses her mate's resources and assistance in raising her offspring. A man's mere sexual infidelity does not necessarily imply a risk in terms of the woman losing his resources and assistance. Rather, women risked losing a man's investment if he developed a deep emotional attachment to another mate to whom his resources could be channeled on a long-term basis. This resource threat may be signaled by his level of emotional attachment to the other female. To ward off these sex-specific threats to individual reproduction, jealousy can be viewed as an evolved predisposition that in men, more than in women, is particularly concerned with sexual infidelity and a corresponding evolved predisposition that in women, more than in men, is particularly concerned with emotional infidelity (e.g., Buss & Haselton, 2005).

The evolutionary view of a sex-specific evolved jealousy mechanism spawned an impressive body of research during the past 15 years that has been primarily devoted to testing the hypothesis that women respond with stronger negative emotions than men to a mate's emotional infidelity whereas men respond with stronger negative emotions than women to a mate's sexual infidelity. This hypothesis was primarily tested by men's and women's self-reports about the strength of the jealousy response elicited by a mate's sexual and emotional infidelity. Basically, two response formats have been used to assess these self-reports. The most widely used response format is a forced-choice between two response alternatives (e.g., Buss et al., 1992; Buss et al., 1999; Buunk, Angleitner, Oubaid, & Buss, 1996; DeSteno & Salovey, 1996; Harris & Christenfeld, 1996; Pietrzak, Laird, Stevens, & Thompson, 2002; Sagarin, Becker, Guadagno, Nicastle, & Millevoi, 2003; Schützwohl, 2004; Wiederman & Kendall, 1999). More precisely, in each of these studies, the participants had to indicate whether a mate's sexual or emotional infidelity would cause more intense negative emotional reactions. Across different cultures, a vast majority of women consistently chose emotional infidelity as more distressing or upsetting. In addition, men more often than women chose sexual infidelity as the infidelity type that would distress or upset them more. However, unlike women's preference, the men's preference for the predicted infidelity event (a) was less pronounced, (b) varied across cultures (e.g., Buunk et al., 1996; Geary, Rumsey, Bow-Thomas, & Hoard, 1995), and (c) increased with the experience of a committed sexual relationship (Buss et al., 1992, Study 3) and infidelity experience (Sagarin et al., 2003; for reviews see Harris, 2003; Hofhansl, Vitouch, & Voracek, 2004; Penke & Asendorpf, in press).

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

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