

THE REBOUND EFFECT: THE USE OF SHORT-TERM MATING STRATEGIES AFTER
THE DISSOLUTION OF A SIGNIFICANT,
LOVING RELATIONSHIP

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ABSTRACT

Previous studies have defined rebound relationships according to retrospective accounts based on the length of engagement, time elapsed since previous relationship, or simply denied their existence in total. The goal of this study is to better understand the concept of the rebound relationship and to determine how pursuing a rebound relationship differs from other types of romantic engagements. The current study poses that rebound relationships reflect a change in mating strategy which is evident in a temporary shift in the characteristics of the pursued mate and the benefits gained. The current paper hypothesized that rebound relationships are intentionally short-lived relationships, with a unique set of pursued partner qualities and benefits. It was further hypothesized that rebounds reflect a change in mating strategy which is evident in a temporary shift in the characteristics of the pursued mate. This change in mating strategy was expected to be associated with a change in cognitive processing and an increase in mating effort while maintaining long-term partner preferences. Participants were psychology students from a mid-sized Midwestern university and participated in either a survey style study or an experimental study based on relationship status. Results from the survey indicate that rebound relationships are a unique pattern of partnering according to participants' responses, both intentionally short-term in length and based on partner characteristics more indicative of short-term mating. But results from the experiment failed to identify the anticipated shift in mating strategy or uncover the expected patterns in cognitive processing or mating effort.

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CHAPTER 1

THE REBOUND RELATIONSHIP

Breaking up is hard to do. Recommendations for handling heartbreak come from many sources, including friends, family and even the media. Time is an apparently critical element and we are often warned against returning to love before resolving ex-related emotions and re-‘finding’ ourselves. The idea is not a new one, reference to returning to love too quickly can be found in 19th century folk music, “It is good to be merry and wise, it is good to be honest and true, it is best to be off with the old love, before you are on with the new” (Cunningham, 2009, p.73). Counseling professionals similarly advise against entering another relationship too quickly. For instance, Dr. Ginger E. Blume (2004), psychologist and relationship advisor, warns against “jumping into yet another relationship before you’ve had time to mourn, recover, or understand the last relationship... history will continue to repeat itself when you don’t take the time to examine a past failure” (p.1). Relationships that follow quickly on the heels of a break up even have their own name, they are dubbed “rebound” relationships. This reflects a common perception that they are somehow unique or different from a ‘normal’ (non-rebound) relationship. The above statement represents a commonly held negative view of rebounds. For Blume and many others, rebound relationships are viewed as not only ineffective in the present, but also damaging to future relationships (Myerscough, 2002; Radwan, 2006). In sum, the consensus is that a rebound relationship is a band-aid that will distract us from dealing with

unresolved emotional issues related to our previous relationship. A band-aid can only stay in place temporarily and when ended, reveals a still unhealed wound.

In common language, the “rebound” refers to a new relationship that follows the breakup of a significant relationship very closely in time (Myerscough, 2002; Radwan, 2006; What is a Rebound Relationship, 2011). Researchers, however, have not coalesced on this as central to the concept of the rebound relationship. Rather, various criteria have been used in their definitions. Studies have defined rebounds according to the length of engagement (usually limited to a number of months) and time elapsed since the end of an individual’s previous relationship (generally less than six months), or by the inadequate emotional resolution of the prior relationship before the start of the new one. These relationships are almost always defined retrospectively. Because of this lack of definitional clarity, some researchers have even denied their existence as a unique and meaningful category of relationship.

Part of the problem is that there is no clearly defined “recovery period” within which a newly formed relationship would be considered a rebound. Advice from films, television and online support groups range from waiting a month per year of the prior relationship to 1 year for every four years of the prior involvement, though these are intended only to ensure that the individual does not ‘jump’ into something inappropriate (Biassier, 2011). Another limitation is that there is substantial variability in ‘recovery’ times. One longitudinal study of undergraduate students investigating forecasting error found that of the participants who had ended a two month romantic relationship, the majority of them reported improved well-being after only 10 weeks. These improvements, however, were less likely in individuals who reported being very much in love with their partners or who had a difficult time imagining dating someone new (Eastwick, Finkel, Krishnamurti, & Loewenstein, 2008). In fact, researchers have found a variety of

predictors for emotional recovery after a break up which include not only love for the previous partner, but also length of the previous relationship, attachment style and situational factors such as continued contact with the ex-partner. They have not provided a particular, advisable time frame to serve everyone (Locker, McIntosh, Hackney, Wilson, & Wiegand, 2010).

Regardless of their negative reputation, ‘rebounds’ remain common in our society. Fifty percent of divorcees reportedly return to dating before the divorce is even filed and another 21% are dating or in new relationships within 60 days of filing (Anderson et al., 2004). In fact, studies of relationship scripts suggest it is normative to enter new relationships even prior to the dissolution of the old relationship (Richard, Datteri, & Lord, 1998). Why are rebounds so common if they are ‘bad’ for us? Their prevalence suggests that rebound relationships are either difficult to avoid, or that they provide benefits to the individual.

The goal of this paper is to better understand the rebound relationship. I seek to provide some definitional clarity and in particular to explore the possible psychological function of rebounds. I will discuss social and evolutionary perspectives on relationship dissolution and initiation as they relate to rebounds and then offer a novel theoretical model of the rebound relationship which clearly outlines the possible adaptive benefits and processes by which rebounds occur. Specifically, I propose that rebound relationships differ from other romantic relationships in the characteristics pursued in a partner and in the benefits gained by the rebounding partners.

Benefits of the Rebound

While many advisors warn against rebound relationships, others give opposing advice, a ‘back in the saddle again’ strategy (Sherman, 2010). It is believed by these writers that a quick return to the dating scene will boost self-esteem, self-efficacy, mood and appearance (Sherman,

2010; Unknown, 2011). Whether exaggerated or not, people with high self-esteem report feeling more liked, more attractive and happier than individuals low in self-esteem (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003). Furthermore, individuals with high self-esteem tend to report better quality relationships and more control over presenting positive impressions on others (Baumeister et al., 2003). Relationship dissolution, particularly if it is unexpected, is known to serve a blow to the self-concept and to self esteem (Campbell, Trapnell, Heine, Katz, Lavallee, & Lehman, 1996; Lewandowski, 2003; Perilloux, & Buss, 2008) and it has been hypothesized that one of the most effective ways of repairing this is to prove oneself worthy and capable of successfully obtaining a new partner. Beginning a new dating relationship not only improves an individual's self esteem, but also seems to allow individuals to move past feelings of attachment to their former partner (Spielmann, MacDonald & Wilson, 2009).

It has been well established that engagement in a new relationship after a break-up both promotes subjective well being and reduces negative psychological effects such as anxiety (Rhoades, Kamp Dush, Atkins, Stanley, & Markman, 2011; Saffrey & Ehrenberg, 2007; Spielmann, MacDonald, & Wilson, 2009). This effect is exacerbated in anxiously attached individuals and related to a resolution of feelings towards the previous partner (Wang & Amato, 2000; Saffrey & Ehrenberg, 2007; Spielmann, MacDonald, & Wilson, 2009; Simpson, 1987). Engagement in a new relationship also seems to allow the individual to prevent depressive states often associated with social exclusion (Allen, & Badcock, 2003). In fact, Locker and colleagues (2010) found that only a shorter length of previous relationship and quickness of returning to a relationship were related to improved social adjustment when evaluated along with a variety of situational factors including social support. In other words, quickly engaging in a new

relationship is more effective in promoting a return to positive adjustment and relational recovery than more traditionally accepted methods such as spending time with family or friends.

Traditional social psychological models have proposed that this improved self-esteem is the “goal” of the rebound relationship. Evolutionary theorists have proposed that improved self-esteem is only a proximate route toward a more ultimate goal. According to the sociometer hypothesis, self-esteem acts as a subjective indication of an individual’s social value generally and mate value in particular, that is how an individual measures up against other single, same sex individuals in the dating pool (Shackelford, 2001). When an individual is faced with rejection or the threat of rejection he or she experiences a resultant reduction in self-esteem (Leary, 1990, 2003; Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995). The diminished self esteem motivates the individual to adjust their behavior, in this case mating expectations, in line with their own reduced ‘value’, thereby promoting “realistic reengagement” in mating. This reduction then prevents one from expending resources and energy toward a target which is unlikely to yield positive results. Rather, we can direct our attention and efforts toward the highest quality partners that we can feasibly obtain (Kenrick, Groth, Trost & Sadalla, 1993).

To support re-engagement, previous research has assumed that rejection from a relationship leads to a change in the criteria sought in a mate, specifically a lowering of standards to more closely match one’s own mating value. Whereas individuals with no barrier to success (i.e. likelihood of rejection) would always pursue a perfect “10” in a mate (Berscheid, Dion, Walster, & Walster, 1971; Wong, McCreary, Bowden, & Jenner, 1991), this adjustment to self-esteem following rejection may be the mechanism by which we all end up “matched” with someone of similar mate value. Several researchers have examined the prediction that people lower their expectations of a potential mate following a break-up (Kirkpatrick, & Ellis, 2004),

and as expected, their research has appeared to find that a reduction in self-esteem following rejection leads to an individual's 'compromise' on mate quality (Berscheid et al., 1971; Kavanagh, Robins, & Ellis, 2010). It is unclear, however, in what ways our mating strategies are adjusted. Participants in these studies selected partners of 'lower' physical attractiveness, less preferred personality characteristics, or a conglomerate of multiple mating preferences (both physical and dispositional) (Kavanagh, Robins & Ellis, 2010; Taylor, Fiore, Mendelsohn, & Cheshire, 2011). While these findings may reflect a compromise in mating expectations it is important to note that researchers have not asked subjects to characterize their expectations about these relationships. Researchers seemed to assume that the 'lowered standards' sought in a new partner represent changes in criteria for choosing a long term partner. It is also possible that these findings reflect a shift in the type of relationship sought with these partners. Not all mating effort is directed toward long term goals, and it is well established that people have different standards for the selection of a long term and short term partners. Individuals focusing on short term strategies attempt to gain sexual access to multiple partners and avoid long term commitment (Bjorklund, & Shackelford, 1999; Rowe, Vazsonyi, & Figueredo, 1997). The apparent changes in desired partner characteristics following a break up may in fact represent a desire for a shorter term relationship, rather than a change in long term partner preferences. The current project examined whether the reduction in overall mate quality witnessed after a break up really reflects this change in the type of relationship sought rather than a compromise in long term mating preferences.

Human Mating Strategies

Biologists and evolutionary psychologists have distinguished various patterns underlying human mating processes. Mating strategies, inherited through the successful reproduction of our

ancestors, are strategic solutions to the myriad of reproductive challenges which they experienced. Historically confronting different adaptive challenges, men and women differ in their solutions and preferences (Buss, 2002). These sex-specific preferences include the qualities valued in a mate, the amount and consistency of desire for short term relationships and differences in the expression of sexual jealousy (Buss, 2010).

According to Trivers' (1972) parental investment theory, females are choosier in mates because of their greater investment required for reproduction, compared to the male. The human female, for instance, invests a minimum of nine months of gestation, in addition to breeding, breast-feeding and loss of a finite-numbered gamete. In comparison, the human male need only invest time in copulation which may last only minutes. Because of their lesser biological investment in reproduction, males are frequently expected to emphasize seeking mates for copulation, rather than staying around to parent, i.e. a short term strategy. Ancestral females who selected males with strong resource potential and high investing tendencies would yield more successful outcomes for their offspring. Thus, females should have favored longer-term mate investment. Triver's theory predicts that, we should see an increase in males' choosiness as their investment (time or resources) in the relationship and the resultant offspring increases. In fact, the choosiness of males approaches that of females when considering minimum acceptable characteristics in long term dating or marriage partners (Kenrick, Sadalla, Groth & Trost, 1990; Kenrick, Groth, Trost, & Sadalla, 1993).

Despite Triver's theory, the history of our species has appeared to favor long term strategies for mating in both sexes (Little, Burriss, Jones, DeBruine & Caldwell, 2008). Altricial, human infants require a large amount of care, for a long period of time and this further solidifies the need for extended mating, achieved through evolved tendencies for pair bonding (Fisher,

1989). A male's level of investment in parenting may not be considered obligatory following insemination, but it has certainly been found to greatly improve his offspring's ability to survive and thrive. Historical and cross-cultural evidence shows that male absence coincides with an increase in offspring death rate and that paternal involvement increases the child's socialization and subsequent paternal investment in their own offspring (Bjorklund & Shackelford, 1999). Children of high-investing fathers have also been shown to exhibit higher than average IQs, ratings of social mobility and social status (Nettle, 2008). Moreover, not only does the evidence suggest that human infants will be most successful if both men and women engage in long-term investment, both psychological and cultural evidence suggests that humans evolved for long term relationships. Humans are a "pair-bonding" species that forms close emotional ties with mating partners that may last a lifetime. In fact, human marriage with a primary emphasis on the social legitimization of offspring is a characteristic in nearly every human society (Daly & Wilson, 1983).

Further evidence of human long term mating tendencies has been identified by biologists who have compared many species. Humans display characteristics typical of "K" strategists; long-lived organisms that emphasize high quality offspring over large numbers of offspring, many of whom do not survive (Reznick, Bryant, & Bashey, 2002). While biologists neatly categorize species according to their emphasis on quantity or quality of offspring, this dichotomy is rarely present in nature and behavioral researchers have observed that humans do not restrict themselves to only long term mating strategies. Although marriage is a nearly universal human phenomenon (long term mating strategy), infidelity, or the expressed desire for infidelity (short term mating) frequently occurs. Marital infidelity has been found cross-culturally and though at varying rates, appears universal (Buss, Shackelford, Kirkpatrick, Choe, Lim, Hasegawa, &

Bennett, 1999; Tsapelas, Fisher, & Aron, 2011; Wagers, 2003). In fact, while women tend to report seeking short term relationships more often when single, men appear willing to engage in short term relationships whether single or mated (Tadinac & Hromatko, 2006). Although, some theorists have proposed stable individual (as well as gender) differences in adherence to short term versus long term strategies (Figueredo & Wolf, 2009), others recognize that humans may also vary mating strategies across their lifespan. In addition, people may engage in mixed strategies, making trade-offs according to circumstance (Gangestad & Simpson, 2000; Kaplan & Gangestad, 2005). One particular circumstance may be the need to promote inclusion (add, replace or enhance a social connection) after experiencing a break up.

In periods of stress, such as a break-up, individuals focus increasingly on recent events which are relevant to the self, with more attention paid to negative rather than positive events (Jacobson, Follette, & McDonald, 1982). Therefore, after the failure of a long term romantic relationship, the loss of time and other resources invested in the previous partner may feel salient (Collins & Clark, 1989). In response, an individual may increase their mating effort in order to make up for the time and effort lost to the previous partner. Perception of a competitive disadvantage has been theorized to lead to the discounting of long term consequences in favor of short term gains and possibly even engagement in risky behavior (Nunes & Petterson, 2011). Rebounding individuals can increase their fitness, at least somewhat, by focusing their effort toward short term liaisons while they reconsider long term prospects.

It is when considering relationships involving sex, but without commitment, where levels of potential investment are most dichotomous between the sexes and therefore where partner selectivity shows the greatest sex differences. In casual sex relationships, with no presumed commitment men show significantly lower levels of selectivity than women. This sex difference

is maximized because only the woman feels investment pressure; women engaging in sex always have a risk of receiving no paternal investment. Cross-cultural studies have found that while men and women both value intelligence, kindness and dependability in long term relationships, women place a higher importance upon resources and men place a higher emphasis upon physical attractiveness (Buss, 2007, 2010). This follows an evolutionary view of the sexes' roles in copulation and child-rearing where a man's resources are a cue of potential parental investment and a female's attractiveness indicates her health (specifically fertility or reproductive value) and therefore gene quality (Buss, 2007).

Men have psychological mechanisms for promoting short term mating which include a desire for sexual variety, the tendency to let little time elapse before seeking sexual intercourse upon meeting a new available female, and consenting to sex with strangers (Schmitt, Shackelford, Duntley, Tooke, & Buss, 2001; Schmitt, Shackelford & Buss, 2001). In addition, men appear to lower their standards dramatically in the context of short-term mating; focusing only on physical appearance as opposed to qualities desired in a long term partner (Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Kenrick, Groth, Trost & Sadalla, 1993). While men tend to have more favorable attitudes toward short term mating strategies (Oliver & Hyde, 1993), in line with paternal investment and evolutionary theories, this is simply in relation to the effort exhibited toward long term strategies and is not a replacement (of long term strategies). In fact, men who perceive themselves to be at a competitive disadvantage have been found to have less negative attitudes toward rape, the ultimate short term mating strategy (Nunes & Petterson, 2011). Likewise, women on average report more favorable attitudes towards long term mating than men, but this does not mean that females do not also direct effort toward short term mating. The ratio of a woman's effort allotted to a particular strategy may change according to a variety of factors such

as age, relationship status, and societal values (Bleske-Rechek, VandenHeuvel, & Vander Wyst, 2009). Some theories proposing potential benefits for women engaging in short-term mating include genetic quality hypotheses (producing more genetically diverse offspring/ focus on masculine characteristics), mate skill acquisition hypotheses (defining one's type/ clarifying mate preferences) and resource hypotheses (gifting/ immediate resource accrual) (Greiling & Buss, 2000).

Rebound relationships may therefore differ from other romantic relationships in the qualities sought in a partner, with 'short-term' qualities preferred over 'long-term' qualities. Whereas similar changes would be evidenced if people actually "compromise" their long term strategies; more research is needed to distinguish these possibilities. Evolutionary researchers have observed that different characteristics are sought in partners according to relationship type, specifically according to short term and long term mating strategies, but to date, no one has examined whether the 'reduced partner quality' sought after a break-up may be consistent with a switch in mating strategy.

The current study sought to examine whether individuals on the rebound, while appearing to have lowered their standards, are actually pursuing potential mates based on short term qualities. This would be evidenced by men valuing physical traits indicative of fertility and women valuing good genes and the immediate provision of resources. By allowing respondents to identify their preferred qualities for both long term and short term mates independently, studies reported here attempted to address this issue.

Cognitive Processing Style

While changes in characteristics sought in a partner may provide one source of evidence of the short term focus of a rebound, other psychological processes may demonstrate this change

as well. Cognitive style changes are one potential mechanism through which a change in mating strategy may occur and these styles are associated not only with a focus on different types of relationships, but also different qualities in a pursued mate. According to construal level theory, individuals have differing patterns in cognition according to psychological distance from a stimulus concept, be it temporal, spacial, social or hypothetical. When individuals think about things as distal from themselves they tend to use abstract reasoning. When individuals think about things more proximal to them they tend to think analytically. Distal or global processing in addition to operating through abstraction often relates to the individual in the future; goals, ideals and holistic visages of other interpersonal individuals. Proximal or local processing, operating through concrete and analytic processes focuses on the present, immediate needs and actual, observable states and traits of interpersonal others (Förster, Epstude, & Özelsel, 2009; Fujita, & Han, 2009). For instance, the description of an object, such as a book, viewed as distal to the self may be described as ‘life-enhancing’ or enjoyable and that same book viewed proximally may be described by title or number of pages.

We are all capable of holding long term and short term ideals concurrently and utilize abstract and concrete processing in our everyday lives. It is proposed that the long term focus and the abstract processing style associated with it generally suppress the short term motives. It is clear from previous research that humans have evolved psychological adaptations for both short term and long term mating strategies and that the trading off from long term focus to short term focus happens in response to environmental (pathogen rich environments and sex ratio changes) and individual changes (ovulation) (Gangestad, Garver-Apgar & Simpson, 2007; Thornhill & Gangestad, 1999; Low, 2000). The long term goals are generally dominant as they are necessary for pair bonding, which has been shown to promote offspring health and longevity,

in male and female humans (Bjorklund & Shackelford, 1999; Nettle, 2008). Being in a long term, pair-bonded relationship is associated with a focus on long term goals and experiencing love promotes this focus. A break up, indicative of lost love and lost commitment, is an example of an individual change which may lead to a shift from long term, future goals to short term, immediate goals.

Dissolutions of relationships are associated with a variety of negative psychological effects. These effects can vary from anxiety and depression to reduced self-esteem and also vary in intensity according to resilience of the individual and quality of the relationship. Recently neuroscience has drawn a link between break ups and physical pain. Similar brain activity was found when individuals were exposed to physical pain via a hot probe or when looking at a photo of an ex-partner and thinking about a shared experience (Kross, Berman, Mischel, Smith, & Wager, 2011). An evolutionary analysis suggests that pain signals an individual's attention to a situation which requires some form of remedy. In order for this signal to be useful, (i.e. adaptive) it must influence behavior in a manner which promotes survival, quickly if not immediately. In the same way that a burn sensation signals to the receiver that a hand must be removed from a burner, physical pain from ex-related cognitions must be a signal that these thoughts and feelings are not promoting the individual's fitness. In other words, an individual's fitness would better be promoted by directing attention away from the former partner, possibly toward a new romance. Thoughts of our ex-partner cause emotional and physical pain and suppression of these thoughts is unable to offer safety from this pain to the newly disentangled. In fact, the attempted suppression of thoughts is known to intensify and make prominent these thoughts in addition to compromising immunological responses (Petrie, Booth, & Pennebaker, 1998; Trinder & Salkovskis, 1994; Wenzlaff & Wegner, 2000). The pain associated with the break up may lead to

a temporary suppression of long term focus. When long term thinking is blocked, the short term, concrete goals become more salient. In this way the long term goals are not altered, but remain intact and in waiting for future oriented thinking to return.

Sex and love have also been related to concrete and abstract construal levels, respectively. In fact, individuals with a focus on sex perform better on analytical thinking tasks compared to individuals with a focus on love. Focus on love seems to promote feelings of commitment and ideas of ‘forever’ which further promote future-oriented thinking (Förster, Epstude, & Özsel, 2009). The loss of love experienced after the dissolution of a relationship may reduce the suppression of short term thinking, thereby promoting concrete thinking and enhancing the relevance of current needs. Utilization of an abstract construal level also promotes self-control in conflicts, promotes inhibition towards temptations, supports negative attitudes towards those temptations and leads to the application of moral judgments (Eyal, Liberman, & Trope, 2008; Fujita, Trope, Liberman, & Levin-Sagi, 2006; Fujita, & Han, 2009). Therefore, when an individual is utilizing a concrete construal level they have fewer or less intense negative attitudes and less self-control toward temptation. These individuals are also less likely to view their actions or the actions of another from a moral perspective. Individuals with a focus on sex should not only experience less inhibition towards sexual temptation, but also have less negative attitudes towards casual sex than individuals involved in a loving relationship, regardless of their moral attitudes toward casual sex.

Differences in construal levels, specifically temporal distance, have also been found to play a role in the attributions we make about ourselves and others, how we use these perceptions when making predictions, and what information we seek for our predictions. When predicting behavior in the distant future individuals make more global attributions based on dispositional,

apparently consistent traits (Nussbaum, Trope, & Liberman, 2003). Individuals make more positive attributions about the self (than others) and this is exacerbated from a future perspective (distal) (Pronin, & Ross, 2006), which reflects a belief that positive traits will increase over time whereas negative traits will decrease (Heckhausen, & Kruger, 1993; Sedikides, & Hepper, 2009; Heller, Stephan, Kifer, & Sedikides, 2011). Therefore we can expect predictions by individuals generally focusing on the present (proximal), to be more negative, especially about persons other than the self.

Given a particular trait, individuals interpreting events from different temporal distances perceive different levels of consistency. For instance, if presented with a smiling, happy person an individual with a present tense perspective (such as an individual following a break up) will consider this to be an isolated event with very little predictive power. An individual with a future perspective (the expected 'default' setting of most individuals), presented with the same smiling, happy person is more likely to view this individual as 'a generally happy person' who is likely to behave in a happy manner across a variety of situations (Nussbaum, Trope, & Liberman, 2003). The lack of predictive power which dispositional traits hold in the present perspective may account for the focus on observable, relatively constant traits such as attractiveness and wealth which we expect in a 'rebounder'.

In fact, temporal distance also plays a role in what type of information we seek when making predictions, as opposed to only determining how we interpret information that we are provided. Individuals interested in predicting behavior in the present, or near future are more likely to seek contextualized, specific and even observable information and appear to consider this information more relevant to the present (Nussbaum, Trope, & Liberman, 2003). When attempting to predict behavior in the distant future, individuals seek a greater ratio of

decontextualized, global information and appear to consider this information more relevant to the future (Nussbaum, Trope, & Liberman, 2003).

Individuals utilizing concrete construal levels will focus on observable, peripheral qualities such as appearance or observable signals of wealth as opposed to more core, unobservable qualities such as personality or values. Traits such as beauty, youth and resources are those valued in a partner with whom an individual has no long term commitment, yet receives sexual access. These qualities are also considered in the context of a long term committed relationship, but in conjunction with valued traits such as honesty, loyalty, and sense of humor. Relationships formed by individuals 'on the rebound' will be pursued based on superficial characteristics such as physical attractiveness and resources and their behavior will not be moderated by moral attitudes or behavioral inhibition.

Current Studies

The current studies examined whether changes in partner preferences previously observed following the dissolution of a romantic relationship represent a change in mating strategy and desire for short term characteristics as opposed to a compromise in long term mating desires. The first study uses a survey to examine whether a rebound relationship is explicitly expected to be short-term, which may underlie a change in mating partner preference. It is specifically hypothesized that 1) rebounds are short-term relationships and that 2) rebounds are engaged in purposefully. Furthermore, a rather exploratory element of study one seeks to determine if rebound partners are pursued for qualities unlike traditional partnerships and seeks to better understand some unique benefits of a rebound. The second study uses experimental methodology to explore whether break-ups elicit a shift to short-term mating strategies. It was further explored whether this change may be mediated by a change in cognitive processing style;

shifting from distal and abstract to proximal and concrete. It was specifically hypothesized that 3) participants in the prime condition will select a potential date based on short term characteristics whereas participants in the control condition will select a date based on long-term characteristics and 4) participants in the prime and control conditions will exhibit no differences in their long-term partner preferences. Furthermore, it is hypothesized that 5) participants in the prime condition will exhibit more mating effort compared to those in the control condition, 6) primed participants will have higher concrete and lower abstract processing scores than individuals in the control and 7) that individuals experiencing the break-up prime will show evidence of a proximal temporal adherence as opposed to a distal temporal adherence (control).

CHAPTER 2

STUDY ONE

Method

The first study was completed by participants who reported being involved in a romantic relationship and was constructed to assess beliefs about rebound relationships to see whether rebounds were expected to be short-term rather than long-term relationships.

Participants

Participants were 133 students (38 male, 94female, 1 non-reporting) all currently involved in a serious, committed relationship (automatically excluded from study 2 which was accessed via the same internet link) and enrolled in Psychology courses at Indiana State University, a moderately sized Midwestern institution. Most people had been in their current relationship for at least a year (57%), but one quarter (25.2%) had been in their current relationships less than 6 months, and the remainder reported relationship lengths of 7-12 months (17.0%). Almost all male (92.1%) and female participants (97%) identified as heterosexual. Ethnically, participants were 75.7% Caucasian, 18.0% African American, and 6.7 % Other. Participants ranged from 17 to 35 years ($M= 19.84$) in age, with 89.6% being of traditional college age (18-22 yrs.).

Materials

Demographic and Rebound Opinion Questionnaire

The Demographic and Rebound Opinion Questionnaire (Appendix A) consisted of 18 questions assessing experience with a rebound relationship, opinions about what characterizes a rebound relationship and a rebound partner and the revised Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (SOI-R) (Penke & Asendorpf, 2008) on a 1-5 point scale. Responses on the SOI (Appendix B) were summed for a full scale score, with higher scores indicating less restrictiveness. The SOI information was intended to control for individual differences in attitudes towards short term relationships, such as a rebound. The SOI measure was created by averaging all items except the reverse scored item (number 6) because it appeared that participants didn't attend to the change in scale direction. The resulting Cronbach's alpha reliability of the SOI measure was still only .60 ($M=21.35$, $SD= 4.74$).

Procedure

Participants completed the survey online for partial credit in psychology courses. All participants gave consent to participate (Appendix G). Afterwards, participants completed the Demographic and Rebound Opinion Survey. Upon completion, participants were linked to a Debriefing Statement (Appendix H). Participants were then provided with additional information on the study's purpose, specifically the attempt understand a rebound relationship.

Results

The results were analyzed through a series of descriptive statistics and content coding in order to understand participants' beliefs about rebound relationships. Below, I descriptively review the characteristics associated with a 'rebound' relationship highlighting gender and

experience based differences as they are relevant (43.6% of participants reported that they had previously engaged in a rebound; 20 male, 38 female).

Length of Rebounds

In support of hypothesis 1, that rebounds are expected to be short-lived relationships, the vast majority of participants (84.7%) believed that a rebound relationship would last less than 3 months ($M= 2.17$ months, $Mdn= 2$ months, $SD=1.66$) and no participant reported a period greater than 9 months; 24 participants did not respond (17.8%). For comparison, of those responding, 64.9% of participants' current relationship exceeded the longest expected length of a rebound relationship (9 months). So overall, rebound relationships were expected to be short-lived. That this is a defining feature of a rebound was also true for individuals who had experienced a rebound themselves. The length of their 'self-reported' rebounds ranged from one day to three years, but less than three months (71.9%) was most typical ($M= 4.69$ months, $Mdn= 2.00$ months). In contrast, 60% of these participants' current relationships exceeded one year in length. Interestingly, of those reporting rebound experience, thirty-five (60.3%) reported that they were engaging in a rebound at the time. Of those aware of the rebound nature of their partnering, many reported both being the rebounder in the relationship and having pursued the relationship in direct support of hypothesis 2; 82.9% reported being the rebounder in the relationship (or both parties being on the rebound) and 77.2% reported pursuing the rebound (or the pursuit being mutual).

Individuals reporting higher SOI scores, or less restrictive sexuality, were more likely to have engaged in a rebound ($r(132)= -.304$, $p<.005$) and more likely to have been aware that the relationship was a rebound ($r(58)= -.294$, $p<.05$) at the time of engagement; where higher SOI

scores indicate less sexual restrictedness and a 1 as opposed to a 2 indicates having a rebound and having been aware that the relationship was a rebound.

Avoiding a Rebound

Participants also reported how long they felt people should wait before getting involved in a relationship with someone who had recently become single. On average, participants said that they would tell a friend to wait for a couple of months ($M= 2.29$ months, $Mdn= 2.00$ months) while participants themselves indicated that they would wait even a little longer ($M= 6.53$ months, $Mdn= 5.00$ months). In fact, individuals who reported having been in rebound relationships said that they had waited about six months ($M= 5.57$ months, $Mdn= 1.00$; range= one week to five years) before beginning what they reported was a rebound relationship. Individuals with experience in rebounds did not differ significantly in the amount of time they said they would wait ($t(86) = -.265, p > .05$) or in the amount of time they recommended a friend wait ($t(115) = .689, p > .05$) as compared with people not involved in rebounds. Furthermore, in the case of those who had been involved in a rebound, these time periods were unrelated to the length of the rebound they had engaged in (I would wait: ($r(32) = .208, p > .05$); you should wait: ($r(47) = -.028, p > .05$).

Reasons to Avoid a Rebound

Participants also reported reasons why a friend should avoid engaging in a relationship with an individual recently single (see Table 1). From a total of 133 responses, seven categories were created by removing responses provided by only a single participant and by collapsing similar concerns such as 'being used' with 'getting hurt' (in responses in which the reason was not provided or the two items were paired together) and 'attached to ex' with 'make ex jealous' (collapsed into an ex-related category). In instances where 'being used' or 'getting hurt' was

paired with another reason (such as “used for sex” or “getting hurt because the relationship wouldn’t last”), the greater specification was utilized for category selection. In other words, this being used/ getting hurt category was only selected in cases where the participant did not provide an explanation for how their friend was being used or was likely to be hurt. The assignment of participants’ responses by two raters to the seven rater-created categories had substantial agreement (kappa .774, $N= 116$ where N represents a single response, one per participant, which were assigned to one of the 7 categories of agreement) and the scoring of the primary researcher is reported below. The most frequent responses related to the hypothetical rebounder being interested in only sex (27.4%), the participant’s friend being used/getting hurt (17.7%), or related to the ex of the potential partner (17.7%); such as ‘still attached to ex’ or ‘trying to make their ex jealous’. The remaining categories were reported at rates less than 14% and related to the intended short-term nature of the rebound relationship or exhibited a misunderstanding of a rebound (Table 1).

Traits Desired in a Rebound Partner

Participants were also asked about the qualities they would want in a partner if they were to seek a rebound relationship. There were 484 responses provided to describe an ideal rebound partner. Not all participants generated the five requested traits and 26 participants did not respond to these items. The characteristics desired in a rebound partner were initially classified into 14 trait groups. This was completed by removing those responses provided by only a single participant and collapsing synonyms, for instance ‘mature’ was categorized with ‘responsible’ and ‘pretty’ with ‘cute’. The assignment of participants’ responses to the 14 trait categories was conducted by two raters who showed moderate to substantial agreement (kappa = .587, $N=410$). When disagreement occurred, the scoring of the primary researcher is reported. Table 2 presents

the frequencies of qualities desired in a rebound partner. For descriptive purposes, these are also organized into 5 broader categories. The most common responses seemed to fall under personality characteristics associated with ‘being fun to be around’ and made up 25.7% of the total traits listed (funny, happy, outgoing and entertaining). This was followed by traits referring to physical attractiveness (22.7%) like pretty/handsome, sexy/nice body. The third most commonly reported were personality traits associated with being kind at 20.3% (caring, nice). The fourth most frequent family of traits reported (17.7%) related to the nature of the relationship that the person would like to engage in (non-committal, discrete/trustworthy and sexually adventurous). Finally, participants reported traits related to resources or potential resource acquisition at a rate of 13.6% (smart/educated, mature/driven and wealthy).

To compare these patterns according to rebound experience a chi-square was completed using the 484 responses. The preferred rebound partner preferences were not different for those with rebound experience versus those without, $\chi^2(13, N = 484) = 16.34, p = .232$; rating of specific traits is found on Table 2. There were, however, gender differences, $\chi^2(13, N = 482) = 24.51, p < .05$. Men valued the traits of “entertaining,” “sexually adventurous” and “pretty” significantly more than expected and women valued the traits of “caring,” “nice,” “funny,” “discrete,” and “wealthy” significantly more.

Discussion

As expected, participants thought of rebounds as intentionally, short-lived relationships. Participants indicated that people should allow a waiting period after a break-up before getting involved with someone new; largely to avoid being hurt by someone who was not really interested in ‘them’, as opposed to just wanting to find ‘someone’. Yet, 42.9% of the participants reportedly had engaged in a rebound relationship, which in most cases they had pursued. Based

on the retrospective nature of the tool, however, it is of course possible that participants became aware of the rebound nature of the pairing sometime during the length of the relationship, following the actual pursuit/initiation.

The characteristics sought in a rebound partner seemed to reinforce this lack of ‘seriousness’ in a rebound; characteristics that distract and are entertaining were more commonly desired than traits related to kindness (which is frequently reported as the most important quality in a long term partner). Moreover, 9.7% of participants specifically stated that a rebound partner should be discrete and/or non-committal, indicating recognition of the lack of commitment and longevity entailed in this type of relationship. This stands as clearer evidence of the existence of rebound relationships and of their nature as a unique type of partnership. Study 2 seeks to further understand how the psychology of these relationships differs from typical romantic relationships.

CHAPTER 3

STUDY TWO

Method

The second study was completed by participants who were single (excluded from study one which was accessed via the same internet link based on relationship status) and collected information about their desired long term and short term partner characteristics as a function of the saliency of their break-up. The questionnaire also measured performance on concrete and abstract cognitive tasks, attributions about the self and others, and participant's level of mating effort, to assess changes in construal level that may account for the strategy change.

Participants

Participants were 97 students (34 male, 62 female, 1 non-reporting) enrolled in Psychology courses at Indiana State University, who were not currently involved in a romantic relationship (78.4% of the participants had been in a serious romantic relationship at some point in their lives). Over one third (37.5%) had been 'single' for less than six months, a similar number (37.5%) had been single for 7-12 months, and one quarter had been single for one year or longer (25.0%). Their most recent relationships generally had lasted 6 months or less(41.0%), but nearly a quarter (23.1%) reported relationship lengths between 7 and 12 months duration, and the remainder (35.9%) reported a relationship in excess of a year. Almost all participants (97.1% of men and 95.2% of women) identified as heterosexual. Ethnically participants were:

Caucasian (57.7%), African American (28.9%), and Other (13.5%). Participants ranged in age from 18 to 36 years ($M= 19.94$), with 93.8% being of traditional college age (18-22 yrs.).

Study Two Materials

Groups

Participants were randomly assigned to the prime (14 male, 34 female) or control (20 male, 28 female) conditions. The participants assigned to the prime condition were reminded of a break-up through use of a break-up vignette. The participants in the control condition completed all of the same measures without being reminded of a break-up.

Break – up Prime

The break-up prime (Appendix C) consisted of a short description of a happy, committed long-term relationship that ends as a result of rejection by the agonist's partner. It is not hypothesized that rejection is necessary for the rebound effect to occur, but it was deemed important to ensure that all participants interpret the presence or absence of rejection consistently. After reading the passage participants were asked to try to remember specific events and emotions related to a similar event in their life. If they had not experienced a similar event they were asked to try to imagine what it would be like.

Mating Strategy and Efforts Measure

The Mating Strategy and Effort Survey (Appendix D) was used to collect evidence of short term and long term mating focus, level of mating effort, short term and long term relationship partner preferences and temporal focus. This survey began with a vignette about a blind date.

Participants were provided a pictorial representation of the type of information they could learn about their date and then provided an opportunity rank the importance of the information

(characteristics) which they would like to learn. Selection options included the head or body of a stick figure, a dialogue bubble, or an icon of dollar bills. Participants ranked the order of importance of each piece of information for determining whether they would like to go out on a date with the hypothetical person. Evidence of short term mating focus includes the selection of the lower body region as important in males (evidence of a focus on fertility) and the selection of the dialogue bubble as least important in females (evidence of a focus on genes or resources).

In order to evaluate mating effort, participants selected the amount of money they would be willing to spend on their date (from '0 to fifteen dollars' to 'that is what credits cards are for') and the amount of physical contact they would be willing to engage in with their date (from 'holding hands' to 'sexual intercourse'). Scoring ranged from 0-4 on each item.

Trait Selection Measure

Participants were also presented with a list of 16 traits (8 valued in short term relationships such as physically fit and attractive and 8 valued in long term relationships such as honest and friendly) and asked to rate the importance of each trait (from 0-6), first in regard to a short term relationship and then in regard to a long term relationship. Items were collapsed within each relationship type yielding a score of 0-48 for each type of trait for short term or long term relationships. The 8 short-term traits when evaluated in terms of a short term relationship had a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .751 and the 8 long-term traits when evaluated in terms of short term relationship had a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .870. The 8 short-term traits, when evaluated in terms of a long-term relationship, had a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .771 and the 8 long-term traits, when evaluated in terms of long-term relationship, had a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .804. Absent an ability to predict absolute levels of preferences for each trait, it is

the comparison between the 'prime' and the non-prime group, and between long and short term relationships, in these preferences that provide tests of the study's hypotheses.

Temporal Focus Measure

Evidence of temporal focus was evaluated on a series of measures. First, participants were provided the opportunity to provide three pieces of information about themselves to their potential date. Information of an immediately observable and less than positive nature indicates a focus on the 'present' whereas information related to more constant, global traits with a positive valence indicates a focus on the 'future'. Each piece of information was coded by 6 blind research assistants as either observable, worth one point (temporal focus on the present) or non-observable worth zero points (temporal focus on the future) and negative/neutral worth one point or positive worth zero points (positive valence indicating future focus and a negative valence indicating a present focus). Observable and valence codes were summed across the three items for a total possible score of 0-3 for each measure. Correlations between each pair of raters for observability scores summed across the three items were also computed. One rater showed poor agreement with everyone else (minimum: $r=.152, p=.191$, median: $r=.180, p=.152$), but the remaining ratings were significantly, positively correlated (minimum: $r = .460$, median: $r=.739$) and observability scores for each subject were computed as the average of the remaining 5 raters' scores. Summed across the three items, the valence scores from the six raters were positively, significantly correlated with each other (minimum: $r = .286$, median: $r=.633$) and were therefore averaged to obtain a final measure of valence.

Participants were also presented with one negative and one positive behavior shown by their date and asked to rate the degree to which the behavior was indicative of their date's disposition as opposed to a reflection of the given situation. It is presumed that the more the

subject generalized from the single instance to a disposition the greater they adhered to a 'future' focus. For instance, "At dinner your date thanks the server for delivering beverages", the participants will select the option which most closely resembles their interpretation of the event ranging from "My date just thanked the server" (four points) to "My date is a polite person and must behave this way in a variety of settings" (one point). Responses to these two temporal items were significantly correlated ($r = .234$, $N = 96$, $p < .05$) and higher values indicate a proximal or present-tense temporal focus. Valence scores were poorly (non-significantly) correlated with temporal movie ratings and observability scores. Valence was significantly and negatively correlated ($r = -.31$, $p > .05$) with temporal dinner ratings. Removal of the valence item resulted in a, poor but improved Cronbach's α of 0.379. Therefore, total temporal focus was computed by obtaining the mean of the standardized values of observable, and date-rating temporal scores; for each item and therefore for the mean of the three, higher scores reflect a more present, and concrete temporal focus.

Cognitive Processing Style Survey

(Appendix E) Concrete and abstract processing, which coincide with present and future temporal distance respectively, was more finely assessed through the administration of an additional six questions. Three Graduate Record Examination (GRE) style questions widely viewed as using traditional, concrete reasoning and three questions utilizing abstract and creative reasoning, all from Schooler, Ohlsson & Brooks, 1993) were used to assess processing style. Participants received one point for a correct answer which resulted in scores ranging from 0-3 within each cognitive processing question type (abstract, concrete). Higher rates of accuracy within the Graduate Record Examination style questions indicate concrete processing and higher rates of accuracy within the creative reasoning questions indicate abstract processing. The

concrete, GRE style questions have straightforward and ‘correct’ answers whereas the abstract questions required a certain level of judgment in the scoring process (this process was guided through explanation and instruction by the primary researcher). The abstract processing questions were graded by 6 blind research assistants instructed to rate answers according to accuracy and ‘outside of the box’ thinking. For instance, on the first problem the participants are told that a coin dealer refuses to purchase a coin marked 554 B.C. and asked to explain why. In this problem simply noting that the coin is a fake does not exhibit an understanding of why or show evidence of an “A-ha” moment as described in the literature on abstract reasoning (Solution: A coin would not be dated ‘before’ some future event). Complete agreement between all six raters occurred 83.0% of the time for Problem 1, 61.4% of the time for Problem 2, and 66.0% of the time for Problem 3. The scores from all six raters were averaged (ranging from 0 to 1), thus providing a measure of the ‘degree’ of correctness for each problem.

Sociosexuality Measure

Participants also completed the revised Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (SOI-R) (Penke & Asendorpf, 2008) to control for individual differences in attitudes towards short-term relationships. The responses to the items on the SOI (Appendix B) range from one to five (one being the most restricted and five being the least restricted; except for one reverse scored item). SOI scores were created by averaging all items except the reverse scored item (number 6) because it appeared that participants didn’t attend to the change in scale direction resulting in a substantial decrease in alpha. The Cronbach's alpha of the SOI measure without the reverse scored item was acceptable ($\alpha=.67$, $M=22.27$, $SD= 5.83$).

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

(Rosenberg, 1965) Self-esteem was also assessed as a means of determining the effectiveness of the prime. The Rosenberg Scale (Appendix F) includes 10 items (5 are reverse scored), such as “I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others” and “I certainly feel useless at times.” Items are scored on a four-point (1-4) likert ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, removing the tendency to report neutrality and resulting in self-esteem values ranging from 10 – 40 (higher scores representing higher self-esteem) to allow comparison between the control and experimental conditions. The items are face valid with strong reliability and validity, which remains true in the current sample ($\alpha = .764$, $M = 33.79$, $SD = 3.70$). Lastly, participants report their age, gender and answer a few questions about their most recent relationship.

Procedure

All participants gave consent to participate (Appendix G) and were randomly assigned to receive the experimental/prime condition or to skip it (control group). Participants completed the Mating Strategy and Effort Survey, Cognitive Processing Style Survey, Sociosexual Orientation Inventory – Revised and Rosenberg Self-esteem Scales. All participants were presented with a Debriefing Statement (Appendix H) and provided the researchers contact information for queries.

Results

Tests of Primary Hypotheses

The analysis examined whether changes in partner preferences exist following the dissolution of a romantic relationship; specifically whether individuals reminded of a break-up exhibit short term mating strategies as evidenced by a preference for short term characteristics,

compared to control participants. Further analyses determine if this shift represents a change in cognitive processing style and/or temporal focus. Furthermore, it was expected that this focus on short term mating would be accompanied by an increase in mating effort and that relationship dissolution (represented by a break-up vignette) would co-occur with a reduction in self-esteem.

In order to test hypothesis 3, that individuals in the prime condition would focus on short-term mating strategies, the results were first analyzed by 2X2 (Analysis of Variance) ANOVAs (sex X prime condition) examining the rank ordered characteristics (head, body, resources) participants would like to learn about their dates (of course, the fourth analysis, dialogue bubble, is redundant but will be presented for completion). Neither the main effect of condition nor the interaction of gender and condition were significant for any of our measures (Table 3). However, the main effect of gender was significant, $F(1, 76) = 5.20, p < .05$, for the ranking of resources (display item money). Women ranked money as higher in importance than men (Table 3).

In order to test hypothesis 4, that individuals in the prime and control conditions would exhibit no difference in desired long-term partner qualities, the results were analyzed by 2X2(2X2Xs) mixed factor ANOVA (sex X prime condition X (relationship-qualities X relationship-type X subject) examining long term and short term relationship partner qualities. As expected the main effects of gender, short-term and long-term qualities, and short-term and long-term relationships were all significant. Unexpectedly, the main effect of condition failed to reach significance (Table 6). The interaction of partner qualities with both relationship type and gender were significant (Table 6) with greater distinction in long-term and short-term strategies for a long-term relationship and women valuing all relationship qualities more than men, particularly long term relationship qualities as would be expected (Table 5). Contrary to our

predictions, no higher level interactions (involving both partner qualities and relationship type) were significant in interaction with gender, the interaction with condition, or the four way interaction of condition and gender (Table 6; means available in Table 4).

In order to test hypothesis 5, individuals reminded of a break-up will exhibit more mating effort than individuals in the control condition, a 2X2 ANOVA (sex X prime condition) was conducted on participants' anticipated mating effort. Results showed a significant condition and gender interaction effect ($F(1, 90) = 4.63, p < .05$) as well as a main effect of gender ($F(1, 90) = 30.09, p < .005$), while the main effect of condition ($F(1, 90) = 1.85, p > .05$) was not significant. The prime had the unexpected effect of reducing mating effort in men (control: $M = 3.04, SD = .603$; prime: $M = 2.53, SD = .634$) although there was a slight, non-significant increase in women (control: $M = 1.91, SD = .71$; prime; $M = 2.04, SD = .70$). Although there was little evidence of the predicted shifts in mating strategies, comparisons were also conducted on the hypothesized mediating variables as some authors propose that these variable are themselves important outcomes of break-ups.

Tests of Psychological Mechanisms

In order to test hypothesis 6, that individuals in the prime condition will exhibit more concrete processing proficiency and less abstract processing proficiency when compared to control participants, a 2X2 ANOVA (sex X prime condition) was performed on participants' scores on the abstract and concrete problems. The gender x condition interactions were not significant for either concrete processing ($F(1, 87) = 2.19; p > .05$) nor abstract processing ($F(1, 87) = .89; p > .05$) problems. Nor were there significant main effects of condition on concrete ($F(1, 87) = .641, p > .05$) or abstract ($F(1, 87) = 1.68, p > .05$) problems. While there was no main effect of gender on concrete processing ($F(1, 87) = 1.12, p > .05$), there was a significant gender

difference in abstract processing ($F(1, 87) = 6.03, p < .05$); such that women showed poorer performance on these problems ($M = .167, SD = .221$) than did men ($M = .30, SD = .27$).

To evaluate hypothesis 7, that individuals reminded of a break-up will exhibit a more proximal temporal adherence than individuals not reminded of a break-up, a 2X2 ANOVA (sex X prime condition) examined the total temporal score (mean of standardized scores for observability of traits which participants chose to provide about themselves and their judgments about their 'dates' negative and positive behaviors). The gender x prime condition interaction on overall temporal focus was non-significant ($F(1, 90) = 1.16; p > .05$) but was in the expected direction (Table 6). The main effects of gender ($F(1, 90) = 0.88, p > .05$) and condition ($F(1, 90) = 0.26, p > .05$) were also non-significant.

The shift in mating strategy hypothesized to occur following a break-up was also expected to be associated with lower self-esteem scores in primed participants, compared to participants in the control. A 2X2 ANOVA (sex X prime condition) was conducted to test for self-esteem differences. The gender by condition interaction reached significance ($F(1, 90) = 5.55, p < .05$), while there were no main effects for gender ($F(1, 89) = 1.71; p > .05$) or condition ($F(1, 89) = 0.00; p > .05$). Interestingly the effect of the prime (reading of a break-up vignette which involved rejection by the participant's imagined partner) was to reduce males' self-esteem (control: $M = 3.40, SD = .34$; prime: $M = 3.21, SD = .44$) but increase females' self-esteem (control: $M = 3.32, SD = .39$; prime: $M = 3.51, SD = .32$).

The addition of the SOI measure to all listed analyses did not alter the results; i.e. non-significant findings remained non-significant and significant findings remained significant. An ANOVA of SOI did yield a significant gender effect ($F(1,90) = 6.00, p < .05$); results were non-significant for both condition ($F(1,90) = .39, p > .05$) and the gender by condition interaction

(1,90)= 1.60, $p > .05$). Women ($M = 2.38$, $SD = .57$) showed less sexual unrestrictedness than men ($M = 2.70$, $SD = .72$).

Additional Analyses

Due to the apparent failure of the break-up prime to elicit differential reactions, the prior analyses were recomputed using time since their last break-up in lieu of assigned condition by dividing participants in to two groups (those single for 6 months or less compared to those single for longer than six months).

A 2X2 ANOVA (sex X time single) was completed examining the rank ordered characteristics participants would like to learn about their dates. Results replicated earlier findings with use of condition, women valued money more than men and the amount of time single had no effect upon the order in which participants selected characteristics (mate qualities) which they would like to learn about their dates.

In order to determine if there was a difference between groups (those single 6 months or less compared to those single longer) in desired partner qualities following a break-up, the results were analyzed by a 2X2(2X2Xs) mixed factor ANOVA (sex X time single) with the latter two being repeated measures (relationship qualities X relationship type) examining long term and short term relationship partner qualities. As with the primary analyses, main effects for gender, short-term and long-term qualities, and short-term and long-term relationships were all significant, with the main effect of time single failing to exhibit a significant effect (Table 9). As in the primary analyses, the interaction effect between qualities and both gender and relationship type remained significant and all higher order interactions involving time-single, gender, qualities and relationship type failed to reach significance. Interestingly, however, analysis according to time-single did yield significant interaction effects with partner qualities,

relationship type, gender X partner qualities, and gender X relationship type where analysis of the condition effect failed (Table 9). Males single less than 6 months show little distinction in the evaluation of partner qualities. Males single less than 6 months show a great distinction in the evaluation of long-term and short-term relationships (Table 10).

Recomputation of tests for differences in cognitive processing, temporal focus, mating effort, and self-esteem yielded no new information (Table 11).

Discussion

This study explored whether people experience a shift in mating strategies (from long-term to short-term) following the dissolution of a long-term, loving relationship. In order to do this, participants reported the traits desired in a romantic partner after being reminded of a romantic break-up (or not, in the control condition).

First, participants ranked the relative importance of information for a 'blind' date. Results showed no impact of the break-up prime. It is possible, that because the hypothetical date was being proposed by a friend, the participants may have assumed that the date would meet their minimum physical requirements based on their friend's knowledge of their 'type'. In this case, the participant may have felt the freedom to inquire information using the dialogue bubble as a primary source of information when in fact in a real-life stranger encounter the physical appearance may have been more important. Also, friends may have been assumed to screen applicants for broad generalizations such as age, weight, height or even hair color, which would be apparent via the body icon selection.

Next participants noted the importance (or minimum acceptable limits) of various short-term and long-term characteristics in a new romantic partner; be that a long-term or a short-term partner. Participants reminded of a break-up placed greater importance on all listed

characteristics across all relationship types. There was no evidence of the expected reduction in choosiness for short term mates; discrediting the hypothesis that people are short-term focused following a break-up. Rather, these results also disagree with expectations expressed in traditional social models of mating behaviors such as the sociometer hypothesis, which predict a reduction in the expectations for “quality” in a new romantic partner. These results suggest that we may set higher standards after a break-up, perhaps a strategy to avoid making the same mistake twice.

Prior research suggests that break ups also result in a reduction of self-concept clarity (the degree to which an individual’s beliefs about his or herself are clear, consistent and stable) (Slotter, Gardner & Finkel, 2010). This reduced clarity can include negative results such as the tendency to change the content of their selves and feeling that their selves are subjectively less clear or even negative (Slotter et al., 2010). It is possible that the loss of a clearly defined self makes it more difficult to identify the qualities in a partner which would ultimately lead to a satisfying and expanding future relationship. Furthermore, this lack of clarity relates to the individual’s ability to recognize their own strengths, not simply weaknesses and coincides with reductions in self-esteem (Setterlund & Niedenthal, 1993; Lewandowski, Nardone, and Raines, 2010). It could be that the reduced expectations that previous research has appeared to find and the rather confused findings resulting from this study may in fact reflect a poorly-clarified and expanded list of traits which individuals are willing to consider in partners following a break-up.

Participants also reported the level of ‘mating’ effort they would exert toward the new partner. The results on mating effort were inconclusive, as women in the prime condition exhibited higher levels of mating effort following exposure to the break-up prime compared to the control group, whereas men in the prime condition had a slightly lower mating effort

compared to the control group. Rejection, an important element in our break-up vignette, may elicit different reactions in men and women, perhaps because of differing life experiences. The data suggest that women may be more 'willing' to engage in short-term behaviors in order to repair inclusion needs, whereas rejection may cause men to feel less able to achieve success through short-term, sometimes riskier tactics. According to SaccoYoung, Brown, Berstein and Hugenberg (2012), following the experience of social exclusion women show an increase in preference for short-term mating strategies and may engage in effortful mating in order to 're-attach' to others. Alternatively, men seem to engage in more risky, short-term behavior after experiences of social inclusion (Sacco et al., 2011). The increase of these behaviors in men following inclusion (as opposed to exclusion), though 'high-risk' and not considered the 'norm', may help further explain the sex differences observed in this study; that is, an increase in female mating effort and reduction in male mating effort.

Participants also completed measures assessing temporal adherence, cognitive processing, and self-esteem. In light of the increased choosiness of our prime participants, it is possible that the break up vignette actually primed thinking typical of being in a relationship (abstract processing and distal temporal adherence) as opposed to creating the breakup experience intended. Previous research has found that simply thinking about a relationship is sufficient manipulation for the change in temporal adherence and cognitive processing (Förster, Epstude, & Özelsel, 2009) and it may be that thinking about the end of a relationship results in the same effect. This unintended effect of our manipulation would explain the unexpected direction of the change in the importance of mating quality. Further evidence of this relationship priming would include an improvement in abstract processing for the primed participants, which although not significant, did occur. We would also expect a decrease in concrete processing in

the primed participants, but a significant change was only found in women. This effect on concrete, but not abstract processing may have reflected the greater difficulty of the abstract problems and the more imprecise measurement due to content coding.

The lower levels of self-esteem expected in the prime group following the reminder of a break-up compared to the control group also varied by gender, with men experiencing the expected reduction, whereas women experienced a slight increase. Not only does this contradict the hypotheses stated here, but they also contradict other more traditional social relationship models, such as the sociometer hypothesis. In fact, this elevation on self-esteem following a break-up is contrary to all prior research, except in the event of an individual choosing to leave an unhappy or abusive relationship. The prime, however, described a happy, committed relationship which ended as the result of rejection. It was not hypothesized that rejection would be necessary for the rebound effect to occur, but it was important to ensure that all participants interpret the presence or absence of rejection consistently.

Perhaps this unanticipated pattern reflects high self-esteem in the current participants. Individuals with high trait self-esteem react differently to threats of rejection than individuals with low trait self-esteem (Murray, Rose, Bellavia, Holmes & Kusche, 2002) and it is feasible to assume this is true for actual rejection as well. Individuals with high trait self-esteem tend to view other's positive appraisals of them as unconditional, which seems to inoculate them from suffering feelings of insecurities upon possible imposed threats (Murray, Rose, Bellavia, Holmes, & Kusche, 2002). It is likely that these individuals are able to maintain a positive sense of self after a romantic break-up because they believe that the partner, gone or not, shares in this positive view. It is therefore notable that almost all (91.6%) of our participants had average self-

esteem scores of 3 or greater (out of 4) even after imagining a break up, suggesting that any effect of the manipulation was minimal.

Ironically, previous research has also found that dissolutions of happy relationships are less devastating to individuals than break-ups of average or below average relationships (Rhoades, Kamp Dush, Atkins, Stanley, & Markman, 2011). It is possible that we inadvertently buffered our participants against self-esteem reduction by describing a happy and satisfying relationship, possibly one which they would yield long term benefits from outside of the relationship itself. The majority of previous work along these lines has been correlational work with married couples (Spielmann, MacDonald, & Wilson, 2009) and it is therefore difficult to determine if naturally high self-esteem is leading to happy relationships or vice versa. Regardless, individuals with high trait self esteem do not experience the same reduction patterns following break-ups that individuals with low trait self-esteem experience (Waller, 2008).

Overall, the results did not support the primary hypothesis that individuals experiencing a break-up would show a shift to short-term mating strategies. There were no significant gender and condition interaction effects on mating strategy or partner preferences as had been hypothesized. The order in which mate qualities were ranked and the importance of partner qualities (short term and long term) according to relationship type did not follow hypothesized patterns; individuals reminded of a break-up rated all qualities (short term and long term) of higher importance across relationship types (short term and long term). Self-esteem and mating effort seemed impacted by thoughts of a break-up but not in expected ways, whereas cognitive processing and temporal focus did not show the predicted effects.

Limitations

Possible limitations of this study include the number of participants (specifically too few male participants), the unique nature of information which can be gained from examining facial characteristics, the ineffectiveness of the prime, the potentially isolated nature of an on-line study, the exclusive assignment of single individuals to the priming study and the use of mate preference as opposed to mate acceptance.

It is unlikely that our inability to obtain our expected results is a result of overall sample size as analyses involving gender differences reached significance on several measures. The small number of male participants compared to female participants (nearly 1:2), however, was certainly not helpful as our hypotheses were derived largely from theory and research which best explains male mating patterns. In fact, the results showed generally anticipated gender differences on the qualities which individuals would prefer in a partner even while failing to produce the expected change in mating strategy. For instance, women placed a greater importance on resources than men; this held true for analysis according to condition and time single. Furthermore, women valued long term relationship traits more than men, reporting a greater importance for all traits across all relationship types more than men. It is possible that these gender differences in mating preferences and tendencies coupled with our relatively low number of male participants played a role in our inability to yield evidence of our expected mating shift.

The face provides information about an individual which may extend beyond the face itself. An individual may infer information about an individual's build and fertility from the face, such as Body Mass Index and age. Diverse information can be drawn from a glance at an individual's face, such as identity (cultural or ethnic memberships), emotional state, direction of

attention (direct gaze indicates liking) (Ewing, Rhodes, & Pellicano, 2010) and genes important for immune functioning and associated with individual fitness and genetic health (symmetry and genetic diversity witnessed through major histocompatibility complex (MHC; Lie, Rhodes & Simmons, 2010). Evidence abounds that we like to look at faces, a preference beginning at birth (Valenze, Simion, & Cassia, 1996) and believe ourselves to be able to make personality judgments based on these facial appraisals (Hassin & Trope, 2000). It is not, however, clear what traits we are seeking. In general, across genders and cultures, symmetry is deemed as not only beautiful but as a cue of genetic quality. According to Holtzman, Augustine, and Senne, (2011) facial symmetry was correlated with more antisocial traits (such as aggression) and less pro social traits (such as empathy and generosity), which indicates that pursuing symmetry in facial quality involves some short term mating tactics. Therefore, the early selection of the face icon in our mating strategy task may not singularly indicate long-term mating, but another less obvious short-term tactic.

It appears as though the break-up prime failed to elicit differential reactions on any of our dependent measures. In other words, reading a break-up prime had no effect upon participants' ranking of a potential partner's traits, the importance of mating characteristics according to relationship type, the amount of mating effort they were willing to exhibit toward a potential partner, their cognitive processing style, temporal adherence or self-esteem. In contrast, when analyzing partner preferences across relationship type according to participants' actual time single, significant interaction effects were found with partner qualities, relationship type, gender and partner qualities, and gender and relationship type. Consistent with expectations, individuals more recently single are less concerned about partner quality in short-term engagements than their counterparts who had been single longer, while maintaining equal emphasis upon partner

quality in long-term engagements. Perhaps the longer one is single, the more one returns to a long-term mating strategy and a vignette is not powerful enough to return participants to a prior point (just after the break-up).

This study was also conducted online, which allows an individual to complete a questionnaire in complete isolation. Previous research has found varied and important differences in peoples' interactions online and in-person; much like the differences exhibited between strangers and known others. It is possible that some of these subtle, but important differences were exhibited in participants' completion of online questionnaires. In other words, neither the patterns proposed here as 'the rebound effect', nor the lowered expectations predicted by the sociometer hypothesis are expected to manifest themselves in a vacuum. Social pressures including competition may be an important part of the process and the possible completion of the survey in isolation from others may have generated an artificial response pattern.

Another limitation in this study was the exclusive use of single people in the "experiment". It is possible that the break-up vignette may have been more effective, if not singularly effective, on individuals currently in a relationship. If this is the case, the current methodology may have worked directly against our ability to witness the predicted effects. Future research should also seek to avoid the need for a prime, if possible, through a longitudinal design. It is possible that the observance of the rebound effect would be more likely following an actual, naturally occurring break-up. Furthermore, there is more opportunity to learn about the role of self-esteem and changes in mating effort across a period of time which follow a break-up until the initiation of a new relationship; possibly discovering more nuanced relationship stages.

Finally, it is possible that, like in many other walks of life (i.e. negotiating a job salary), individuals may tend to ask for more than they are willing to accept (or even believe that they

deserve) in a partner. In other words, people regardless of relationship status may always seek a high level mate, but become more willing to accept the approach of a less acceptable partner in times of lowered mate value (like a break-up). In the future, research may benefit from measuring individual's willingness to accept a proposed date from partners of differing mate qualities as opposed to simply reporting what they would prefer.

Summary and Concluding Discussion

It is apparent from the first study that rebound relationships do exist, not only in pop-culture references, but also in practice. Participants recommended a waiting period after a break-up before getting into a new relationship, to avoid getting into a rebound which is not expected to last very long. Regardless, rebounds may be more seductive than previously realized and many participants reported knowingly getting into them. Men and women both engage in rebounds and at similar rates. It should be noted that participants seek rebound partners who are fun and sexy and not seeking a committed relationship.

From Study 2, it appears as though the definition of a rebound may require further refinement. Study 2, which incorporated an experimental methodology, did not support a hypothesis that people specifically seek short-term mates following a break-up. How can this be reconciled with the findings of Study 1 that relationships formed too soon after a break-up are expected to be short term? The reader may recall that participants in Study 1 advise a waiting period to avoid getting into a rebound. However, it is difficult to be single in a group of couples and there may be social pressure on people to re-engage quickly. Moreover, the results of Study 2 raise the possibility that there may be psychological benefits (i.e. increased self-esteem and social inclusion) from doing so. It may be that people engage in rebounds to achieve these proximal benefits while continuing to seek a high-quality long-term partner. Their reticence to

recommend such a strategy may reflect an adherence to a social norm that dictates relationships are not about 'fun', but about preparation for marriage.

It would be interesting to continue this work, not only to better ascertain fluctuations in mate preferences, self-esteem and mating effort following a break-up, but also after engagement in a rebound relationship. In this manner, one could determine if the general benefits yielded by a new relationship differ in a rebound as opposed to a traditional relationship, intended to be long term.

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Table 1

Reasons to Avoid a Rebound

<u>Variable</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Typical Responses</u>
Used/hurt	17.7%	“being used”, “getting hurt”
Ex-related	17.7%	“attached to ex”, “make ex jealous”
Sex-oriented	27.4%	“sexually adventurous/experienced”, “one-night stand”
Distraction	13.7%	“something fun to do/ until something better comes along”
Short-term	5.6%	“uncommitted”, “won’t last”
Re-defined	10.5%	“wouldn’t want to be a rebound”
Unavailable	7.3%	“she already has a boyfriend”, “cheater”

Table 2

Qualities Desired in a Rebound Partner

Variable	All Participants	Men	Women
“Being fun to be around”			
Entertaining	9.1%	12.0%	7.9%
Funny	11.0%	8.4%	12.2%
Happy	0.6%	0.7%	0.6%
Outgoing	5.0%	6.9%	4.2%
“Physically Attractive”			
Pretty	9.9%	13.0%	8.7%
Sexy	12.7%	13.2%	12.5%
“Being Kind”			
Caring	12.8%	9.0%	14.5%
Nice	7.5%	5.6%	8.4%
“Nature of the Relationship”			
Discrete	5.0%	2.1%	6.2%
Non-committal	6.3%	6.5%	6.2%
Sexually adventurous	6.3%	11.4%	4.2%
“Resources”			
Mature	6.5%	5.6%	6.5%
Wealthy	1.5%	0.0%	2.1%
Smart/educated	5.6%	5.6%	5.6%

Table 3

Means for Ranking of Mating Qualities According to Condition X Gender Interaction and The Main Effects of Condition and Gender

<u>Dependent Variable</u>	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>		<u>F value, p value</u>		
	<u>Control</u>	<u>Prime</u>	<u>Control</u>	<u>Prime</u>	<u>Interaction</u>	<u>Condition</u>	<u>Gender</u>
Rank of Head	1.73	1.65	1.86	1.43	0.64, 0.43	1.36, 0.25	0.03, 0.86
Rank of Body	1.91	1.94	2.03	2.43	0.61, 0.44	0.84, 0.36	1.72, 0.19
Rank of Money	3.91	3.94	3.62	3.57	0.09, 0.77	0.01, 0.94	5.20, 0.03*
Rank of Dialogue	2.45	2.47	2.52	2.57	0.01, 0.93	0.03, 0.86	0.19, 0.67

* $p < .05$

Table 4

Means/(SD) for Rating of Relationship Qualities According to Relationship Type

Dependent Variable	Male		Female	
	Control	Prime	Control	Prime
Short-term relationship				
ST qualities	4.07 (0.76)	4.11 (0.46)	4.17 (0.79)	4.51 (0.56)
LT qualities	4.30 (0.62)	4.18 (0.95)	4.61 (0.64)	4.79 (0.66)
Long-term relationship				
ST qualities	4.39 (0.88)	4.49 (0.45)	4.69 (0.66)	4.87 (0.51)
LT qualities	4.80 (0.82)	5.01 (0.38)	5.16 (0.53)	5.20 (0.58)

Table 5

Means for Rating of Relationship Qualities According to Relationship Type

<u>Dependent Variable</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Short-Term Relationship			
ST Qualities	4.09	4.34	4.19
LT Qualities	4.24	4.70	4.42
Long-Term Relationship			
ST Qualities	4.44	4.78	4.58
LT Qualities	4.91	5.18	5.02
Short-Term Relationship	4.17	4.52	4.32
Long-Term Relationship	4.67	4.98	4.80
Short-Term Qualities	4.27	4.56	4.38
Long-Term Qualities	4.57	4.94	4.72

Table 6

Mixed Factor ANOVA Results According to Gender, Condition, Partner Qualities, and Relationship Type

Effects	F	p
Condition(c)	1.00	0.32
Gender(g)	8.01*	0.01
ST and LT Qualities(q)	11.43*	0.00
ST and LT Relationship(r)	82.99*	0.00
c X g	0.30	0.58
c X q	1.93	0.17
c X r	0.06	0.80
g X q	6.98*	0.01
g X r	0.20	0.66
q X r	45.85*	0.00
c X g X q	1.50	0.22
c X g X r	2.63	0.11
c X q X r	0.67	0.41
g X q X r	0.49	0.49
c X g X q X r	0.36	0.55

* p < .05

Table 7

Means for Selected Dependent Variables According to Condition X Gender Interaction

Dependent Variable	Male		Female		F-int	p
	Control	Prime	Control	Prime		
Mating Effort	3.04	2.53	1.91	2.04	4.63*	0.03
Concrete Processing	0.43	0.47	0.59	0.44	2.19	0.14
Abstract Processing	0.24	0.36	0.16	0.18	0.89	0.35
Temporal Focus	- 0.05	- 0.13	- 0.07	0.15	1.16	0.28
Self-Esteem	3.40	3.21	3.32	3.51	5.55*	0.02

* $p < .05$

Table 8

Means for Ranking of Mating Qualities According to Time Single X Gender Interaction and The Main Effects of Time Single and Gender

Dependent Variable	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>		<u>F value, significance</u>		
	<6	>6	<6	>6	interaction	condition	gender
Rank of Head	1.86	1.69	1.80	1.59	0.01, 0.94	0.51, 0.48	0.08, 0.78
Rank of Body	1.71	2.00	1.93	2.37	0.08, 0.78	1.76, 0.19	1.17, 0.28
Rank of Money	4.00	3.94	3.53	3.63	0.22, 0.64	0.01, 0.92	5.16, 0.03*
Rank of Dialogue	2.43	2.38	2.73	2.44	0.33, 0.57	0.70, 0.41	0.84, 0.36

* p< .05

Table 9

Means(SD) for Rating of Partner Qualities According to Time Since Break-Up X Gender

Interaction

<u>Dependent Variable</u>	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>	
	<6	>6	<6	>6
Short-term relationship				
ST qualities	3.82 (0.50)	4.09 (0.57)	4.22 (0.81)	4.45 (0.61)
LT qualities	3.53 (1.12)	4.42 (0.65)	4.58 (0.74)	4.81 (0.55)
Long-term relationship				
ST qualities	4.40 (0.68)	4.36 (0.63)	4.69 (0.70)	4.84 (0.57)
LT qualities	5.06 (0.48)	4.91 (0.59)	5.23 (0.69)	5.15 (0.49)

Table 10

Means for Rating Partner Qualities According to Time Since Break-Up X Gender Interaction

<u>Dependent Variable</u>	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>	
	<6	>6	<6	>6
Short-Term Relationship	3.68	4.26	4.40	4.63
Long-Term Relationship	4.73	4.64	4.96	5.00
Short-Term Qualities	4.11	4.23	4.46	4.65
Long-Term Qualities	4.30	4.67	4.91	4.98

Table 11

Means for Rating of Relationship Qualities According to Relationship Type (Mixed Factor ANOVA by Time Single)

<u>Dependent Variable</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Short-Term Relationship			
ST Qualities	4.09	4.34	4.19
LT Qualities	4.24	4.70	4.42
Long-Term Relationship			
ST Qualities	4.44	4.78	4.58
LT Qualities	4.91	5.18	5.02
Short-Term Relationship	4.17	4.52	4.32
Long-Term Relationship	4.67	4.98	4.80
Short-Term Qualities	4.27	4.56	4.38
Long-Term Qualities	4.57	4.94	4.72

Table 12

Mixed Factor ANOVA Results According to Gender, Time Single, Partner Qualities, and Relationship Type

Effects	F	p
Time single(t)	1.75*	0.19
Gender(g)	8.71*	0.00
ST and LT Qualities(q)	32.99*	0.00
ST and LT Relationship(r)	102.73*	0.00
t X g	0.16	0.69
t X q	18.06*	0.00
t X r	13.71*	0.00
g X q	22.00*	0.00
g X r	4.63*	0.04
q X r	30.69*	0.00
t X g X q	4.89*	0.03
t X g X r	4.08*	0.05
t X q X r	0.30	0.59
g X q X r	0.40	0.53
t X g X q X r	2.05	0.16

* p < .05

Table 13

Means for Selected Dependent Variables According Time Since Break-Up X Gender Interaction

<u>Dependent Variable</u>	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>		<u>F-int</u>	<u>p</u>
	<u><6</u>	<u>>6</u>	<u><6</u>	<u>>6</u>		
Mating Effort	2.50	2.90	1.84	2.12	0.10	0.75
Concrete Processing	0.40	0.51	0.47	0.56	0.01	0.91
Abstract Processing	0.14	0.36	0.16	0.18	2.08	0.15
Temporal Focus	-0.11	-0.15	0.28	-0.14	1.11	0.30
Self-Esteem	3.24	3.30	3.38	3.50	0.10	0.76

APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHIC AND REBOUND OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

Gender: M ____ F ____

Age _____

With which of the following cultural groups do you identify yourself?

- a. African-Americans
- b. Asian-Americans
- c. Caucasians
- d. Hispanic-Americans
- e. Native Americans
- f. International Students
- g. Other

Who are you most sexually attracted to?

- a. Men
- b. Women
- c. both
- d. neither

Are you in a significant romantic relationship?

If so, for how long?

If no, have you ever been in a significant relationship?

If so, for how long?

If so, when did this relationship end?

If your relationship broke-up, how long do you think you would wait before you'd be ready to start a new relationship?

Imagine that you are out with your best (same-sex) friend. Your friend tells you they have just met someone they would like to go out with, but your friend is worried about being a "rebound" partner. What is it that you think your friend is concerned about?

How long would you advise your friend to wait before trying to form a relationship with this person?

If your friend were to try to start a relationship with this person "on the rebound," how long do you think it would last?

How long would your friend have to see this new person before he/she could be sure that it wasn't a "rebound."

If you had recently experienced a break-up and were "on the rebound," what five words would describe someone you would like to have a rebound relationship with?

Have you ever been involved in a "rebound" relationship?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Who was "on the rebound" in this relationship?

- a. Me
- b. My Partner
- c. Both of us

Who ended the relationship that you were "rebounding" from?

- a. Me
- b. My Partner
- c. It was mutual

How long had it been since your previous relationship had ended?

Did you pursue your new "rebound" partner or did he/she pursue you?

- a. I went after her/him
- b. My partner came after me
- c. It was mutual

How long did this "rebound" relationship last?

Were you aware that it was a "rebound" relationship while you were involved with this person?

- a. Yes
- b. No

APPENDIX B: SOCIOSEXUAL ORIENTATION INVENTORY – REVISED

Just a few more questions. These are about your sexual behavior and attitudes.

Please respond honestly to all of the following questions. Your responses will be treated confidentially and anonymously.

With how many different partners have you had sex within the past 12 months?

- 0
- 1
- 2-3
- 4-7
- 8 or more

With how many different partners have you had sexual intercourse on one and only one occasion?

- 0
- 1
- 2-3
- 4-7
- 8 or more

With how many different partners have you had sexual intercourse without having an interest in a long-term committed relationship with this person?

- 0
- 1
- 2-3
- 4-7
- 8 or more

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following items.

Sex without love is OK.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

I can imagine myself being comfortable and enjoying "casual" sex with different partners

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

I do not want to have sex with a person until I am sure that we will have a long-term, serious relationship

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

How often do you have fantasies about having sex with someone you are not in a committed romantic relationship with?

- Never
- Very seldom
- About once a month
- About once a week
- Nearly every day

How often do you experience sexual arousal when you are in contact with someone you are not in a committed romantic relationship with?

- Never
- Very Seldom
- About once a month
- About once a week
- Nearly every day

In everyday life, how often do you have spontaneous fantasies about having sex with someone you have just met?

- Never
- Very seldom
- About once a month
- About once a week
- Nearly every day

APPENDIX C: REBOUND RELATIONSHIP VIGNETTE

Although you have said that you are not currently in a significant romantic relationship, please imagine being in one again, with a partner you've been involved with or one you'd like to be involved with. Imagine how it feels to be "in love" with that person.

Click continue when you've got this feeling in mind.

**next page*

Now, imagine that you have been with your partner for over a year and you are seriously invested in the relationship continuing. You have had conversations about moving in together or maybe even getting married in the near future. You consider your relationship happy and you and your partner to be matched well. Think about how happy you would be and expect to be for the rest of your life.

Click continue when you've got THIS feeling in mind.

**next page*

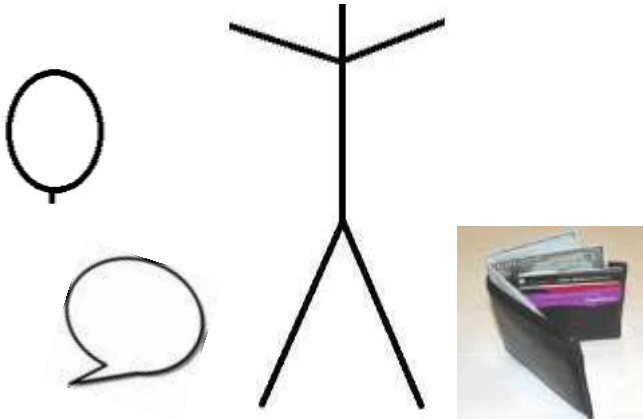
Now, imagine that you come home one day to find that your partner is leaving you. Think about how that would make you feel. Imagine how that's going to impact your life.

Click continue when you've got THIS feeling in mind.

**next page*

APPENDIX D: MATING STRATEGY AND EFFORT SURVEY

Now, imagine that a friend offers to set you up on a blind date with someone they think that you will really like. But there is a catch. You are limited to a certain amount of information prior to deciding to accept the date. Below are four types of information you might try to find out before accepting the date. Please rank them (by sliding the images) from the most important (left) to the least important (right) to your decision.



Your friend then provides the opportunity for you to supply some information about yourself to your potential date. Please list the three things about yourself you would most like to tell your date:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How much would you be willing to spend on this date?

- a. 0 to \$15
- b. \$16 - \$30
- c. \$31 - \$45
- d. \$46 – anything in my wallet/purse
- e. That is what credit cards are for

Which of the following are activities would you consider yourself likely to engage in at the end of the date? Assuming the date goes well.

- a. Shake hands
- b. Kiss
- c. Make out
- d. Heavy petting/foreplay
- e. Sex

At dinner your date thanks the server for delivering the beverages. Which of the following most closely resembles your interpretation of this event?

- a. My date just thanked the server
- b. My date just behaved politely
- c. My date must generally behave politely in restaurants
- d. My date is a polite person and must behave this way in a variety of settings

At a movie your date talks loudly and kicks the seat in front of them several times without apology. Which of the following most closely resembles your interpretation of this event?

- a. My date is disturbing fellow moviegoers
- b. My date just behaved rudely
- c. My date must generally behave rudely in movie theaters
- d. My date is a rude person and must behave this way in a variety of settings

How many opposite sex, single individuals do you believe are available for a date with you here at ISU?

- a. 1200
- b. 2400
- c. 3600
- d. 4800

How many same sex, single individuals do you believe you are regularly competing with for a date here at ISU?

- a. 1200
- b. 2400
- c. 3600
- d. 4800

Gender: M ____ F ____

Age _____

With which of the following cultural groups do you identify yourself?

- a. African-Americans
- b. Asian-Americans
- c. Caucasians
- d. Hispanic-Americans
- e. Native Americans
- f. International Students
- g. Other

Who are you most sexually attracted to?

- a. Men
- b. Women
- c. both
- d. neither

Have you ever been in a significant relationship?

If so, for how long?

If so, when did this relationship end?

APPENDIX E: COGNITIVE PROCESSING STYLE

- Mary won't eat fish or spinach, Sally won't eat fish or green beans, Steve won't eat shrimp or potatoes, Alice won't eat beef or tomatoes, and Jim won't eat fish or tomatoes. If you are willing to give such a bunch of fussy eaters a dinner party, which items from the following list can you serve: green beans, creamed codfish, roast beef, roast chicken, celery, and lettuce.

Please click on the appropriate items.

green beans, creamed codfish, roast beef, roast chicken, celery, and lettuce

Solution: roast chicken, celery, and lettuce.

- Three cards from an ordinary deck are lying on a table, face down. The following information (for some peculiar reason) is known about those three cards (all the information below refers to the same three cards):
- To the left of a queen there is a jack
 - To the left of a spade there is a diamond
 - To the right of a heart there is a king
 - To the right of a king there is a spade

Can you assign the proper suit to each picture card? Please select the three images which are described.



Solution: jack of hearts, king of diamonds, queen of spades.

- The police were convinced that either A, B, C, or D had committed a crime. Each of the suspects, in turn, made a statement, but only one of the four statements was true.
- A said, "I didn't do it."
 - B said, "A is lying."
 - C said, "B is lying."
 - D said, "B did it."

Who is telling the truth? AND Who committed the crime?

Solution: B is telling the truth, and A committed the crime.

A dealer in antique coins got an offer to buy a beautiful bronze coin. The coin had an emperor's head on one side and the date 544 B.C. stamped on the other. The dealer examined the coin, but instead of buying it, he called the police. Why?

Solution: The year 544 B.C. predates the birth of Christ, a coin from that year would thus not be inscribed B.C.

A prisoner was attempting to escape from a tower. He found in his cell a rope that was half long enough to permit him to reach ground safely. He divided the rope in half, tied the two parts together, and escaped. How could he have done this?

Solution: He unraveled the rope and tied the two pieces together.

A giant inverted steel pyramid is perfectly balanced on its point. Any movement of the pyramid will cause it to topple over. Underneath the pyramid is a \$100 bill. How would you remove the bill without disturbing the pyramid?

Solution: Burn or tear the dollar bill.

APPENDIX F: ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that I have a number of good qualities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to do things as well as most other people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel I do not have much to be proud of	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I take a positive attitude toward myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wish I could have more respect for myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I certainly feel useless at times	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At times I think I am no good at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX G: INFORMED CONSENT

DATING BEHAVIORS AND UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE STUDENTS

You are being invited to participate in a research study about dating behaviors in college students. This study is being conducted by Sarah Pierce and Dr. Virgil Sheets (faculty sponsor) from the Psychology Department at Indiana State University. This study is being conducted as part of a thesis. All students age 18 and older may participate. The study will ask questions about romantic relationships you are in or have been in the past, and about your perceptions of relationships in general. Questions will concern how people feel and react to a break-up and may ask you to recall or imagine your personal experiences. There are also questions about sexual attitudes and behavior. We expect that it will take about 15-20 minutes to complete. Whereas break-ups may be unpleasant, you may experience reduced mood while filling out the questionnaires, but beyond a temporary reduction in mood (that you may or may not experience), we do not anticipate any risks to your participation. There are no costs to your participation; nor will you receive any specific benefits. The answers you provide will help us to understand the stages of break-up experiences and how past relationships may impact your feelings about future relationships.

We cannot guarantee anonymity in web-based surveys. However, we do not ask for any identifying information (e.g., name or ID #) on the survey itself. After your answers are submitted, you will be taken to another web-page where you will enter your name and instructor if you are completing this to earn research experience credit in a psychology class. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may leave the survey by "declining" to participate below (or at any other time simply by closing your browser). You incur no penalty for withdrawing from the study except for the loss of this "extra-credit" opportunity. If you do agree to participate, you may skip any question(s) you do not wish to answer.

If you have any questions about participation in this study, please contact Sarah Pierce, Root Hall B-226 (spierce5@sycamores.indstate.edu) or Dr. Virgil Sheets, Root Hall B-205 (812) 237-2451 (Virgil.Sheets@indstate.edu).

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject or if you feel you've been placed at risk by participating in this study, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by mail at Indiana State University, Office of Sponsored Programs, Terre Haute, IN, 47809, by phone at (812) 237-8217, or by e-mail at irb@indstate.edu.

Please indicate your preference below.

- I WILL participate in this survey
- I will NOT participate in this survey

APPENDIX H: DEBRIEFING

In this study we are interested in the strategies individuals use when pursuing a partner, specifically after a break up. These relationships, which following a break up closely, are often referred to as rebounds. We are attempting to create a clear picture of what exactly a rebound is, according to length, purpose, quality and selection of partners.

Specifically, we expect that following a break up individuals will pursue relationships according to superficial characteristics such as good looks. This focus is proposed to be temporary and has no effect upon the individuals preferences in a long term partner, such as a future husband or wife.

Please do not share any of this information with anyone as your friends may become our future participants.

Thank you for your participation in this study. If you have any questions about the study, please contact Sarah Pierce, Root Hall B-226 and spierce5@sycamores.indstate.edu or Dr. Virgil Sheets, Root Hall B-20, (812) 237-2451, and Virgil.Sheets@indstate.edu

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