The Dominance Dilemma: Differentiating Status from Dominance in the Context of Women's Heterosexual Mate Preferences

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THE DOMINANCE DILEMMA

Differentiating Status from Dominance in the Context of Women’s Heterosexual Mate Preferences

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Psychology
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

by
Jeffrey K. Snyder
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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Approved, August 2003

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ABSTRACT

Two experiments attempted to clarify the distinctions between dominance behaviors and status and examine their relative roles in the process of women’s mate selection. In Experiment 1, levels of dominance and status were manipulated in fictional vignettes of target men presented to 135 college-enrolled women. Low dominance was perceived as less attractive and high dominance was perceived as undesirable in potential romantic partners. Effects of the status manipulation were negligible. Experiment 2 utilized a stronger status manipulation with 199 participants. Results indicated that low status was perceived as less attractive, high dominance was undesirable in short-term mates, and both low status and high dominance were undesirable in a long-term mate with stronger effects for long-term desirability. Limitations and the importance of relationship context are discussed.
THE DOMINANCE DILEMMMA
INTRODUCTION

Mating is universal for all sexually dimorphic species and for virtually all of these species mating includes a discriminatory process of mate selection (Dawkins, 1989). For humans, romantic relationships and pair bonding are the rule rather than the exception. It is clear that humans utilize processes of discriminatory, preferential selection of romantic partners or mates when social norms do not discourage this practice (for example, when arranged marriages are the norm) and often even when it is discouraged (Brehm, Miller, Perlman & Campbell, 2002). Although similarity (Hahn & Blass, 1997; Klohn & Mendlesohn, 1998) is arguably the strongest factor predicting assortative mating (Buss, 1985; Eckland, 1968), a thriving body of literature has utilized biological (Dawkins, 1989), ethological (Trivers, 1972), and evolutionary psychological (Buss, 1994; Miller, 2000; Symons, 1979) approaches to examine heterosexual mate preferences. These latter approaches provide a rich theoretical underpinning that has allowed for specific, distinct predictions to explore differences in motivations, contexts and sex by positing the origin and function of mate preferences.
EVOLUTIONARY THEORIES OF MATE SELECTION PREFERENCES

Triver’s (1972) theory of Parental Investment is derived from ethological observations suggesting that reproductive opportunities for individuals of sexually dimorphic species are not limited by access to mating opportunities but by the amount of energy required to produce viable offspring. Simply mating and producing as many offspring as possible does not lead to reproductive success for most vertebrate species. The offspring of vertebrates often require prolonged periods of gestation, protection, feeding, and training. The amount of energy and resources necessary for fertilization, gestation, and rearing of offspring varies between species and has a mathematically converse relationship to the total number of attempts at mating. In addition, sexual behaviors vary in sexually dimorphic species according to the relative amount of energy males and females invest in the reproduction and rearing of offspring. Trivers noted that when the male of the species is almost entirely responsible for child rearing, (e.g., in bird [Phalaropidae] and seahorse [Syngnathidae] species) males are more selective when pursuing reproductive opportunities. When the female of the species is almost entirely responsible for child rearing, females are more selective when pursuing reproductive opportunities. However, both parents usually share relative amounts of parental investment and indeed, females usually expend more investment on offspring relative to males in most species. Therefore, in most species, male sexual behaviors tend to have an emphasis on the pursuit of reproductive opportunities whereas female sexual behaviors tend to have an emphasis on being selective among pursuant males.
For humans, as in most mammals, reproduction imposes greater biological costs on women than men. Eggs are more costly to produce than sperm and gestation in the womb is exclusive to women, as is breast-feeding. In preliterate and developing societies, breast-feeding offspring often persists for up to three to five years until weaning, when costs outweigh benefits, or until displacement by another infant (Trivers, 1972; Quinlan, Quinlan, & Flinn, 2003). It is likely that these higher costs of reproduction for women relative to men were consistent throughout human evolutionary history. Men and women currently have a great deal of variance with regard to their relative levels of parental investment in child-rearing -- from single fathers and mothers to serial monogamy to lifelong pair bonds. However, throughout the vast majority of evolutionary history, it is believed that serial monogamy was the most stable relationship form in humans, persisting well into the Pleistocene, 1.8 million to 11,000 years ago (Miller, 2000). This relationship strategy entails a much higher parental investment from women in offspring throughout gestation to approximately five years of age with men contributing to the acquisition of resources for his mate and offspring. Within this relationship context, selection would have favored men who tended to pursue reproductive opportunities and favored women who were highly selective when choosing mates (Buss, 1994; Miller, 2000; Symons, 1979; Trivers, 1972).

Variance within the genetic pool of humans would produce men who varied according to their sexual and parenting behaviors and women who varied in their mate preferences. Over tens of thousands of generations, discriminatory mate selections that enhanced genetic survival (for example, low philandering and high willingness to invest) became an evolutionary stable strategy (ESS). Dawkins (1989) defines an ESS "as a
strategy which, if most members of a population adopt it, cannot be bettered by an alternative strategy” (p. 69). Expanding on this biological perspective, evolutionary psychologists have proposed that mate preferences (among other psychological constructs) are functionally domain specific information-processing rules that exist as stable evolved psychological mechanisms and are subject to the influences of natural selection and sexual selection (Tooby & Cosmides, 1992).

Ellis (1992) provides a simplified example of how selection for mate preferences might have evolved for women. If a woman is selecting a mate from a population of two men, these men will differ in their mate value (Symons, 1987). Some examples of factors contributing to mate value are age, physical stature, health, and social standing. Women will genetically vary according to their ability to assess mate value and their preferences for specific attributes contributing to the men’s mate value. When mate selection preferences led to the successful reproduction of viable offspring, these preferences would have been retained by the process of sexual selection in the form of genetic material. Ellis described this process as follows:

... ancestral females who had psychological mechanisms that caused them to find males of high mate value more sexually attractive than males of low mate value, and acted on this attraction, would have outproduced females with opposite tastes. This differential reproduction would continue until such mechanisms became universal and species-typical in women. (p. 267)

Symons (1987) has remarked that this process is analogous to the development of food preferences. Just as food preferences have evolved out of taste preferences for foods that
enhanced survival in ancestral environments, mate preferences have evolved for mates who led to genetic survival in ancestral environments.

Overall, parental investment theory and domain specificity predict sex differences in mate preferences that have been confirmed by several researchers utilizing empirical methods (Buss & Barnes, 1986; Townsend & Levy, 1990; Simpson & Gangestad, 1992), large national samples (Sprecher, Sullivan, & Hatfield, 1994), and a large cross-cultural sample (Buss et al., 1990). Perhaps the most notable work among these researchers was the formulation of Sexual Strategies Theory by Buss and Schmitt (1993). Accepting the premises of domain specificity and parental investment theory, they emphasized the role of adaptive problems in sexual selection. Preferences for mates who have attributes that solve adaptive problems have been selected through the processes of natural and sexual selection throughout evolutionary history. For example, one adaptive challenge women have faced throughout evolutionary history is the acquisition of additional resources during gestation and upbringing of infant offspring. While gestating and raising offspring, women require more resources than usual at a time when they may be less capable of procuring additional resources. According to the Sexual Strategies Theory, adaptive requirements have led women to detect, prefer, and select mates or romantic partners who are able and willing to invest in her and her children on a long-term, committed basis. Buss and Schmitt predicted and provided evidence indicating that strategies of mate selection and sex differences in preferences would differ with motivation and context – specifically, whether the romantic partner is desired for a short-term or long-term relationship. For example, they hypothesized that dominant men are preferred in short-term mating strategies as opposed to long-term mating strategies. They
reported, “men trying to attract a short-term mate were judged the most effective at using self-promotion tactics that suggest dominance and using derogation tactics that imply a lack of dominance and status in their rivals” (1993, p. 1200). Short-term mating strategies allowed ancestral women throughout evolutionary history to evaluate potential long-term mates and/or to obtain an immediate resource such as protection from conspecifics. Short-term mating strategies allowed ancestral men to pursue more reproductive opportunities. Studies have demonstrated that men have lower standards for characteristics in mates when pursuing short-term strategies. Furthermore, men relax their mate-selection standards more than women do when pursuing short-term strategies (Buss, 1994; Buss & Schmitt, 1993).

Finally, it should be mentioned that although Buss and Schmitt’s (1993) Sexual Strategies Theory has included the influence of heritable fitness as only one of several factors in mate selection, other theorists strongly emphasize the role of heritable fitness in mate preferences above other considerations (Trivers, 1972; Miller, 2000). Heritable fitness refers to attributes, qualities, or characteristics of parents that (a) have the potential to be genetically transmitted to offspring, and (b) when genetically transmitted, increase the likelihood of the offspring’s survival. For example, health, reproduction ability/capacity, and status are usually noted as important attributes of heritable fitness (Buss, 1994; Ellis, 1992; Miller, 2000; Symons, 1979; Trivers, 1972).
WOMEN’S HETEROSEXUAL MATE PREFERENCES

As noted above, Sexual Strategies Theory (Buss & Schmitt, 1993) focuses on the identification of adaptive problems and adaptive solutions. Working from this perspective, Ellis (1992) posited that women’s mate preferences are directed toward the achievement of three main goals: (a) assistance with the acquisition of resources for her and her offspring, (b) protection of herself and her offspring from conspecifics, and (c) direct contributions to the teaching and rearing of offspring. Therefore, men who demonstrate high ability and willingness to provide resources to their mates and children, can protect their mates and children from conspecifics, and have the ability and willingness “to engage in direct parenting activities such as teaching, nurturing, and providing social support and opportunities” (p. 268) should be strongly preferred by women. According to Ellis, two of the most important characteristics in men signaling these highly valued attributes to women are status and dominance.

The Role of Status in Women’s Mate Preferences

Ellis (1992) views status as individual variations in influence over others and better control over and access to resources. Although these variations are not necessarily linear or hierarchical in nature, they can equate to social rank. Interestingly, Stone (1989) suggested that status, or social rank, can be considered an important resource. Individuals within groups readily recognize variations in social influence and access to resources. In addition, group members put themselves in close proximity to high-status individuals and offer high-status individuals preferential treatment with the hope of gaining greater
influence or more resources by proxy. Therefore Ellis contended it is possible that
cwomen have evolved evalutative and preferential mechanisms for status in potential mates
during the course of evolutionary history.

Ellis (1992) cited a large body of literature supporting the notion of women’s
preferences for mates who are high in status. In the majority of the literature cited by
Ellis, and indeed, in the majority of the literature examining women’s mate preferences,
men’s status is usually manipulated or measured in terms of financial resources (yearly
income). Most researchers in the field of mate preferences have de-emphasized or
overlooked important social aspects of status, such as social-influence, while paying lip
service to it’s importance in their theoretical overviews. For example, Hill (1984)
measured men’s yearly income as a measure of prestige. (In this case, Hill’s operational
definition of prestige was identical to the construct of status as defined above.)

Specifically, Ellis (1992) provided evidence from multiple disciplines and
methodologies including two early cross-cultural ethnographic reports (Ford & Beach,
1951; Gregersen, 1982). Both concluded that males evaluated female attractiveness
primarily on the level of physical attractiveness whereas females evaluated male
attractiveness primarily on the levels of status, skills, prowess, strength, and bravery,
among other characteristics, rather than on physical attractiveness. Ellis also pointed to
evidence from the content analysis of personal advertisements by Harrison and Saeed
(1977). Similar analyses have confirmed this finding more recently (Wiederman, 1993;
Baize & Schroeder, 1995). All three studies confirmed that women’s advertisements for
male partners most frequently provided information of physical attractiveness and
requested high status males. Conversely, men provided information of status and
requested highly attractive women. In addition, Ellis cited that several studies manipu-
ating ornamental cues of status in men (most importantly Hill, Nocks & Gardner, 1987, and Townsend & Levy, 1990). These studies indicated that status cues led to higher ratings of attractiveness by women compared to manipulations of physical attractiveness. In fact, previous studies (Townsend & Levy, 1990; Townsend and Wasserman, 1998) have established that status manipulations have the ability to attenuate (low status) or increase (high status) women’s ratings of the attractiveness of photographed targets in comparison to pre-ratings and control groups. (See Ellis, 1989 for a comprehensive review of literature addressing female mate preferences and status.)

Perhaps more important to the methodology of the current study is an evaluation of conflicting evidence. Ellis (1992) noted an apparent paradox in the mate preference literature. When women were asked directly how important “favorable social status” and “good financial prospects” were to them in a potential mate, ratings were, on average, below the mid-point of the response scales (Buss et al., 1990). Ellis generated three hypotheses to explain this apparent inconsistency. First, women may have responded with a socially desirable bias to avoid being stigmatized as marrying money rather than an individual. Second, status preferences may be outside conscious awareness, consistent with other domain-specific psychological mechanisms (Tooby & Cosmides, 1992). Third, Ellis proposed the existence of a threshold effect in which women imagine men who are already in their acceptable range of status when responding to questions in which no target is presented.

Two recent studies have explored issues raised by Ellis’ (1992) third hypothesis. Townsend and Wasserman (1998) proposed that men and women have varying
thresholds of initial acceptance when evaluating targets. This tradeoff-threshold model proposes that men select potential mates from a sample who meet the minimal criterion of attractiveness. Only women who are above this threshold are evaluated along other dimensions. In contrast, women are believed to establish a sample of men meeting a criterion of acceptable amounts of “nonphysical characteristics such as ambition, dominance, education, earning power, and occupational prestige” (Townsend & Wasserman, 1998, p. 175). When manipulating status and physical attractiveness independently, they found that women required a sufficient amount of status regardless of the target’s attractiveness – even when pursuing a short-term relationship strategy.

Similarly, Li, Bailey, Kenrick, and Linsenmeier (2002) suggested that men prioritize physical attractiveness and women prioritize status “but only until sufficient levels have been reached. Beyond that, the search for other characteristics should be more important” (p. 948). Two experiments utilizing resource allocation methodologies indicated that women view status as a necessity in men as compared to physical attractiveness, whereas men view physical attractiveness as a necessity in women as compared to status. A third experiment revealed that when participants where allowed to evaluate potential long-term mates, women directed their questions toward obtaining status information, whereas men directed their questions toward obtaining attractiveness information.

The Role of Dominance in Women’s Mate Preferences

In addition to status, Ellis (1992) contended that dominance is among the two most important characteristics in potential mates to women. He stated, “because competition is ubiquitous, and because socially dominant males tend to fare best in face-
to-face competitive encounters, natural selection can be expected to have designed evaluative mechanisms in women to detect and prefer high-dominance men” (p. 274).

Ellis goes on to suggest that mating with a high-dominance man could be advantageous to the genetic survival of the women because high-dominance men provide greater access to resources, protection from conspecifics, and an elevation in their female mate’s dominance ranking. Indeed, several researchers have found that dominant behaviors in men enhance their attractiveness and desirability as a romantic partner (Jensen-Campbell, Graziano, & West, 1995; Sadalla, Kenrick, & Vershure, 1987; Schmitt & Buss, 1996).

Sadalla et al. provided the seminal evidence indicating that women prefer dominant men. They conducted a series of four multi-method experiments that utilized videotaped or written descriptions of high- or low-dominance males and females. Participants rated the targets in terms of perceived characteristics such as desirability as a long-term or short-term mate, likability, and perceived attractiveness. The primary finding of their studies was that women selectively prefer high-dominance males and that dominance in females did not alter ratings of attractiveness by males.

There are two reasons why dominance may appear attractive to women in prospective romantic partners. Empirical testing of Sexual Strategies Theory (Buss & Schmitt, 1993) revealed that status, ambition, income, and generosity are qualities in men that are highly valued by women who are evaluating potential long-term romantic partners. In addition, Buss and Schmitt found that men who are able to offer physical protection and other valuable resources to the family are strongly preferred by women. Presumably these characteristics serve as cues that signal both the ability and willingness to invest. Therefore, the first reason why dominance is a preferred characteristic in men
as potential romantic partners is that dominant behaviors in men may act as indirect cues of social status, at least a willingness to aggress against opponents, good financial prospects, and ambition.

The second reason why dominance is a preferred characteristic in men is related to the genetic fitness of offspring. Trivers (1972) suggested that men utilize demonstrations of dominance over competitors in order to advertise their reproductive capacity to women, parallel to male dominance displays documented in several non-human primate species (Byrne & Whiten, 1988). Miller (2000) suggested that the male traits that have been preferred by females throughout evolutionary history are not only correlated with resource acquisition but these traits are also correlated with heritable benefits. While Miller admitted that men who had the ability to accrue resources would be of high value to women, he contended that this pursuit of heritable fitness would have been a predominant mating strategy for females throughout the Pleistocene in the absence of stable long-term relationships. It is assumed by evolutionary biologists and evolutionary psychologists that dominant behaviors led to increases in social status and females were interested in obtaining the genetic material that would allow their own offspring to obtain higher social status, therefore enhancing the survival of their offspring. It seems plausible that dominant behaviors in men may indicate both genetic fitness and the ability to acquire resources – both of which would be greatly valued and preferred by women though evolutionary history.

Based on this reasoning, Snyder and Kirkpatrick (2003) hypothesized that if dominance includes physical prowess, the dominant man may have offered protection from danger and contributed healthy genetic material to offspring. If dominance led to an
increase in social standing, the woman may have increased her own place in the social hierarchy by proxy. Furthermore, a dominant man’s genetic material may have offered potential socially competitive advantages to offspring. If dominance was related to the man’s resource holding potential (Parker, 1974), again the women may have benefited but only if these resources were shared with her and her offspring.
THE DOMINANCE DILEMMA

Although their findings clearly showed that dominance was preferred by women in their mates, Sadalla et al. (1987) warned, "it would be inappropriate to conclude that any manipulation of dominance will result in analogous effects on attraction. It is clear that the term dominance is semantically close to several other concepts and has multiple behavioral effects" (p. 734). The authors attempted to separate the constructs of aggression and domineering from the concept of dominance through manipulating them independently in Experiment 4 by presenting participants with brief personality profiles (ostensibly, the results of the California Personality Inventory) including characteristics such as high in dominance and low in aggression. The Sadalla et al. predictions that aggressive and domineering behaviors would not enhance opposite-sex attractiveness were confirmed by this experiment.

As Sadalla et al. (1987) postulated, women should seek dominant men who are not characterized by aggressive and domineering behavior. If a mate’s dominance was frequently characterized by being aggressive and domineering throughout evolutionary history, women ran the risk of never acquiring potential resources and ran the additional risk of acquiring significant losses. For instance, domineering characteristics in a man may have included a strict partitioning of resources to his mate and offspring. If the aggression in the man is aimed at his mate or offspring there is a potential loss of resources or risk of physical harm. Therefore the selection of dominance in a male romantic partner may not have been uniformly beneficial or adaptive for women.
Specifically, how men manifest social dominance and to which targets dominance behaviors are directed are crucial considerations when evaluating women’s preferences for dominance in potential romantic partners. Ellis (1992) pointed to this when he cited Hinde’s (1978) distinction between dyadic dominance and group dominance. Dominance in men may have been beneficial to mates as long as the dominance was directed toward competitors, but not directed toward the mate and offspring.

Jensen-Campbell et al. (1995) offered a different but related perspective. Their findings led them to conclude that dominance enhances the attractiveness and desirability of potential romantic partners only when it is characterized by pro-social behaviors. This view is consistent with observations of nonhuman primates. While dominance displays seem prominent in determining mate selection by female primates, male primates will also engage in altruistic, pro-social (sometimes described as Machiavellian) behaviors such as playing with, or providing food and protection to the offspring of females (Byrne & Whiten, 1988).

Hindin (2000) offers an example of the detrimental effects of domineering husbands. She found that women of Zimbabwe who have virtually no contribution to decisions of household expenditures were more likely to have 3 – 7 % lower body mass index. In addition, Hindin found that “When husbands completely control the decisions over major purchases, work, and all domains, women are significantly more likely to have chronic energy deficiency” (p. 1521). In turn, chronic energy deficiency “can lead to poorer reproductive outcomes as well as a decreased capacity to produce food for themselves and their families” (p. 1525). These results clearly indicate that domineering
characteristics in men are at least correlated with the decreased health of their wives in Zimbabwe.

Pasternak, Ember and Ember (1997) reported empirical evidence (Levinson, 1989; Erchak & Rosenfeld, 1994) indicating that several indicators of male dominance predict wife beating. Cross-cultural analysis revealed that wife beating is more common when men are domineering in domestic decision-making compared to households in which decision-making is shared by both partners. This is an especially good predictor of spousal abuse in the United States when men dominate decision-making in the household and are unemployed. Additional predictors of wife-beating related to male dominance are constraints on women obtaining divorces, restriction of widow remarriage by the husband’s family, and “where society lacks female work groups” (p. 184).

Overall it seems that high-dominance men carry both the potential to enhance the genetic survival of their opposite-sex mates, and the potential to impose high costs to women as romantic partners. Therefore, high-dominance men will not uniformly enhance the genetic survival of their mates and offspring. It is this dilemma that has led Snyder and Kirkpatrick (2003) to question previous research on women’s preferences for high-dominance men. First, although high-dominance men may be more likely to aggress against threatening conspecifics, there is nothing about dominance behaviors per se that guarantees the physical prowess necessary to successfully defend mates and offspring. Second, men who display dominance behaviors will not always succeed in achieving status or gain access to resources. Third, Snyder and Kirkpatrick questioned the degree to which high-dominance men can be free of aggressive and domineering behaviors. Fourth, Snyder and Kirkpatrick questioned the degree to which pro-social behaviors offset the
potential costs that high-dominance men bring to relationships. In addition, as stated above, non-human primates also display both dominance and altruistic, pro-social behaviors such as protecting, playing with, and providing food to prospective stepchildren while pursuing mates. Although observing non-human animal behavior is indispensable to the social sciences, human mate selection includes undeniable layers of complexity that do not exist in current animal models.

Status, Dominance, and Prestige

Recent work by Henrich and Gil-White (2001) suggests a useful way of reconceptualizing the problem posed by the dominance dilemma. First, they observed that there is an overriding lack of agreement in the research literature on taxonomy, relevant terminology, and operational definitions of status hierarchies and asymmetries in social standing. They point out that the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, and archeology tend to focus on sanctioned social structures and material indicators of status. The terms power, leadership, status, dominance, and prestige are used interchangeably in psychological literature and are contextually variable -- from detailed explanations of social influence in group interactions to descriptions of stable personality traits. Sociobiologists and evolutionary psychologists tend to evaluate dominance parallel to nonhuman behavioral models. Henrich and Gil-White stated “This leads to calling status ‘dominance’ even when no force or force threat is involved” (p. 166). According to Henrich and Gil-White, prestige and dominance are frequently conflated as equivalent terms for status.

They define status as hierarchies of rewards or displays and that high status provides better access to desirable things. Dominance is always characterized by forced
compliance to leadership for Henrich and Gil-White (2001). Alternately, prestige, "the noncoerced, interindividual, within group, human status asymmetries" (p. 166) includes a recognition of certain abilities by peers which leads to freely conferred status. Henrich and Gil-White stated:

Our ancestral psychology evolved (within physical and phylogenetic constraints) into an increasingly well-organized and specialized battery of biases jointly designed to extract reproductive benefit from the flow of socially transmitted information. Prestige processes emerge from this evolved social learning psychology. Cultural transmission is adaptive because it saves learners the cost of individual learning. (p. 167)

This adaptation took a form similar to a symbiotic relationship in which knowledgeable individuals are conferred status (prestige) by sycophants who, in turn, gain access to the knowledge held by the individual. In contrast, dominant individuals overpower other individuals who become subordinates.

Henrich and Gil-White (2001) detail a variety of differences between dominance and prestige. For example, prestige is usually characterized by persuasive appeals to compliance with the leadership of the high status individual whereas dominance is marked by grandstanding and agonistic methods of leadership. Therefore the prestigious individual is influential, honored, and revered by sycophants rather than feared by subordinates. Sycophants (or the clientele) will put themselves in close proximity to and maintain eye contact with prestigious individuals in order to gain information. In contrast, subordinates will maintain greater distance from and maintain less eye contact with dominant individuals. Sycophants offer praise to prestigious individuals who respond
with self-deprecation. Prestigious individuals freely offer information and counsel. Because of this free exchange of status for information, prestigious individuals may appear to be more kind, generous, and willing to help than dominant individuals.

These characterizations point to a potential flaw in the research methodology employed by Sadalla et al. (1987) and Jensen-Campbell et al. (1995). Both studies attempted to manipulate the dominance of targets using videotape depictions of dyadic, interpersonal interactions. Both studies used characterizations of dominance outlined by Merhabian (1969). The Sadalla et al. dominance manipulation depicted a high-dominant target who sat during interactions, maintained close proximity to other persons during interactions, maintained relaxed body posture, gestured more, and nodded less frequently than the low-dominant target. Jensen-Campbell et al. repeated this procedure in their first experiment. In their second experiment, Jensen-Campbell et al. manipulated both dominance and agreeableness in a factorial design. In addition to presenting the high-dominance target as close in proximity and relaxed in interaction, in the high-agreeableness condition the target “solicited the opinions of his partner, was sympathetic to the perspectives of the partner, and was warm” (432). In their third experiment, Jensen-Campbell et al. manipulated surgency in targets as level of activity, assertiveness, boldness, and talkativeness rather than dominance per se. Ellis (1992) cited extensive evidence that surgency is a highly valued personality attribute in potential romantic partners. Presumably the combined attributes of surgency carry important information regarding ambition and potential social ascendancy. However, the operational definition of surgency clearly differs from that of dominance and can easily characterize both dominant and prestigious individuals. All of these manipulations produce a conflated
presentation of dominance and prestige according to Henrich and Gil-White’s (2001) model. Therefore, it is likely that the participants in the Sadalla et al. first experiment and all three of the Jensen-Campbell et al. experiments responded to cues of both dominance and prestige. Consequently, it is not clear which of these two characteristics women prefer in mates.

Whereas Henrich and Gil-White’s (2001) proposed ethology of status relations is tailored for an adaptive model of cultural transmission, it has at least two important implications when applied to mate preferences. First, because dominance is always characterized by force or force threat, dominant behaviors are always variably related to domineering and aggressive behaviors. Therefore, domineering behaviors and aggression are crucial to the operational definition of dominance itself (F. J. Gil-White, personal communication, October 11, 2002). Second, the only adaptive problem posed to women that is solved by mate selection for dominance that is not better solved by selecting for prestige is physical protection, as prestige does not directly infer physical prowess or willingness to aggress against opponents.

Dominance versus Prestige

Similar to dominance, prestige directly implies social status, good access to resources, and ambition. Status is freely conferred to prestigious individuals because they are potential sources of valuable resources. Therefore, it seemed plausible that experimentation would reveal measurable differences between dominance and prestige in human opposite-sex mating preferences. Specifically, Snyder and Kirkpatrick (2003) hypothesized that women would be likely to perceive highly prestigious men as more preferable potential mates than highly dominant men. In addition, they predicted that
measurable differences in women’s short-term and long-term preferences between dominant and prestigious targets might be observed because Schmitt and Buss (1996) observed that dominance displays intended to derogate competitors are utilized as a short-term mating strategy by men.

Although mate preferences for men center on issues of youth and attractiveness, cues of good parenting skills are also valued by men in heterosexual romantic partners (Buss and Schmitt, 1993). Previous research demonstrated no preference in men for mates that are high in dominance. However, men might prefer women who have access to resources combined with indirect cues of good parenting skills such as kindness and generosity because this combination of characteristics has the potential to increase the chances of the survival of offspring. This particular combination of characteristics may be found in prestigious women (in contrast to dominant women) according to Henrich and Gil-White’s (2001) characterizations of prestigious individuals. Therefore, Snyder and Kirkpatrick (2003) hypothesized that men may also demonstrate a preference for prestige in targets.

Snyder and Kirkpatrick (2003) conducted a series of experiments testing these predictions for both sexes. In their first experiment, participants read vignette descriptions of a high-dominance target and a high-prestige target who obtain social status in ways paralleling Henrich and Gil-White’s (2001) characterizations. Each target became president of the debating club at his or her school. One paragraph described a high-dominant target who took the position by dominating the peer group and grandstanding during meetings. Another paragraph described a target high in prestige who was given the position by the peer group and was casual during meetings.
Participants read these descriptions and rated these targets on a scale relative to each other with regard to attractiveness, and desirability as a romantic partner, among others. Both women and men demonstrated clear preferences for high-prestige targets over high-dominance targets in this experiment.

In Snyder and Kirkpatrick’s (2003) second experiment, participants were presented a two-paragraph vignette in which an opposite-sex target was described with either high-dominance or low-dominance characterizations in the first paragraph and was described with either high-prestige or low-prestige characterizations in the second paragraph. The high- and low-dominance paragraphs were taken directly from Sadalla, Kenrick, and Vershure’s (1987) Experiment 2. In the high-dominance paragraph, a tennis player who possessed both physical and mental attributes associated with dominance and was able to win 60% of his or her matches by mentally dominating opponents. The low-dominance description was parallel to this except the tennis player was not particularly competitive, could have been easily dominated by others in tennis matches, but still won 60% of the matches.

The high- and low-prestige paragraphs were written to be complementary to the dominance paragraphs and attempted to capture the characterizations of prestige outlined by Henrich and Gil-White (2001). The high-prestige paragraph described a target who was conferred the position of tennis team captain. The target was described as relaxed and confident during meetings, happy to speak to his or her group members outside of meetings, and responded with humility when complimented. Sycophants of the high-prestige targets (members of the tennis team) were described as putting themselves in close proximity to and maintaining eye contact with the prestigious target. The low-
prestige target described a member of the tennis team who took the role of sycophant to a high-prestige team captain in a paragraph parallel to the high-prestige target description. Overall results of Experiment 2 indicated that when manipulated independently, prestige and dominance interacted with sex, with both valued more positively by women than men. Dominance and prestige had an additive effect on ratings of target attractiveness and desirability for female participants but had little effect on men’s ratings when dominance and prestige were manipulated in this way.

Because the dominance manipulation in the vignette description for Experiment 2 depicted a tennis player, it seemed likely that dominant behavior in a competitive sports setting would be considered an appropriate context for dominant behaviors and not indicate the potential drawbacks of dominance in personal interactions or potential adaptive costs of a romantic relationship. Therefore, because the dominance manipulation in Snyder and Kirkpatrick’s (2003) second experiment offered only one specific context for dominant behaviors, it was believed that the participants might have easily conflated dominance and prestige.

It is interesting to note at this point that conflation of status and prestige does not occur solely in social science literature. They are terms that are also easily conflated lexically and colloquially. Furthermore, conflation of prestige and dominance is not simply a semantic error. We believe that some individuals adopt both dominant and prestige strategies to acquire status. This observation pointed to an additional shortcoming of the target descriptions of Snyder and Kirkpatrick’s (2003) second experiment. In addition to providing an appropriate context for dominant behaviors, the use of separate paragraphs manipulating dominance and prestige presented two
compartmentalized sets of target behaviors that may have lacked realism and/or external validity.

Therefore, Snyder and Kirkpatrick’s (2003) third experiment was designed to replicate the factorial design of Experiment 2, but vignette descriptions were altered to remove the sport/athletic context from the target description. Because the factorial design demanded that target’s were either dominant, prestigious, both, or neither, potential salience and order issues were circumvented by integrating prestige and dominance manipulations throughout the text to create more coherent, realistic, ecologically valid scenarios. The third study also included additional scales to create separate dependent measures of short-term and long-term desirability as a mate.

All the vignettes described the target becoming president of his fraternity or her sorority. The target’s demeanor was described in the first paragraph with adjectives synonymous with dominance or prestige. The second paragraph of the vignette described the target in social interaction and his or her leadership style in an account of how he or she became president. The third and final paragraph of the vignette indicated that the target became president through the respective strategy (either dominant, prestigious, both, or neither) and that this situation was consistent with other experiences of the target.

Both sexes perceived opposite-sex, high-prestige targets as more attractive than low-prestige targets. Both sexes perceived low-dominance, high-prestige opposite sex targets to be more desirable for both short-term and long-term romantic relations. As predicted, Snyder and Kirkpatrick (2003) also found differences between short-term and long-term preferences. Effects increased in statistical strength from attractiveness to short-term desirability and from short-term desirability to long-term desirability as a mate.
suggesting that the higher the stakes of the relationship, the more low dominance and high prestige were valued in this study. Overall, Snyder and Kirkpatrick’s third experiment, in which dominance and prestige were manipulated independently but used different scenarios from their second experiment, revealed that both men and women preferred high prestige but also preferred low dominance.

All three studies indicated that prestige was preferable in opposite sex targets, but the effects of dominance were variable and more complex. Although more complex, the effects of dominance on mate preferences were not inexplicable. Henrich and Gil-White’s (2001) model offers assistance by considering dominance and prestige to be measurably distinct from one another in contrast to previous literature on dominance. In addition to clarifying mate preferences, the data above provided empirical evidence for a measurable distinction between dominance and prestige beyond the anthropological evidence cited by Henrich and Gil-White.

Dominance vs. Status

The overriding goal of this research program is to examine the specific role of dominance in women’s mate preferences. The primary challenge of exploring dominance is that it is closely related to similar but distinct constructs. Previous research produced counterintuitive results indicating that women have strong preferences for potentially costly behavior in their mates. However, this research was conducted before Henrich and Gil-White’s (2001) model distinguishing the constructs of status, dominance, and prestige. Therefore the specific goal of this research program is to reexamine the role of dominance in women’s mate preferences independent of status and prestige.
The first series of studies in this research program (Snyder & Kirkpatrick, 2003) manipulated dominance and prestige independently and examined the two constructs in direct comparison. The results of this study indicated clear preferences for prestige. However, the results for dominance were more complex and warranted further investigation. Therefore, the current studies explore the extent to which dominance is variably related to status with regard to women’s opposite sex mate preferences.

It should be noted that the relationships between dominance and prestige and dominance and status are not parallel. As described above, Henrich and Gil-White (2001) indicated that dominance and prestige are distinct ways to achieve status. In the case of prestige, status is automatically achieved when group members confer prestige to an individual. In contrast, dominance displays may or may not lead to the achievement of status. Previous studies examining dominance and mate preferences (Sadala et al., 1987; Jensen-Campbell et al., 1995) have assumed that dominance directly and automatically implies status and that is, in fact, what makes dominance desirable in men. Alternately, it may be the case that dominance is only attractive and desirable in men when the behavioral display actually leads to status. Therefore, dominance behaviors and characteristics were examined independently of the status to which dominance displays may or may not lead.

The differential roles of dominance and status within the context of women’s mate preferences were explored by manipulating dominance and status independently in targets in a factorial design. Because women’s mate preference for dominance is the focus of this research program and because both dominance and status have a minimal amount of influence on men’s mate preferences, only women participated in the current
study. Participants were presented with fictional target descriptions in which the target man is described as either high in dominance, low in dominance, or with no dominance information provided and as either high in status, low in status or with no status information provided. The “no information” categories were included to clarify preferences for dominance. Snyder and Kirkpatrick (2003) found clear preferences for low-dominant targets over high-dominant targets in their third experiment; however, it was unclear whether this finding was a true preference for low-dominant target attributes or an aversion to the high-dominant target. The inclusion of a “no information” category will allow mean comparisons of high- and low-dominance target ratings to a controlled set-point.

Because exhaustive combinations of target characteristics in this design dictated a condition in which neither status nor dominance information was presented, a certain amount of constant descriptors had to be provided to participants. Considerable thought and care was taken in the construction of these constant descriptors to make the target relevant and accessible to participants while simultaneously attempting to keep these descriptors independent of the intended manipulations. The importance of relevance and accessibility of targets to participants was highlighted by Townsend (2002) as the most important consideration in empirical studies utilizing convenience samples from colleges and universities.

It was predicted that the dominance and status manipulations would have independent effects, with (a) high-status targets rated as more attractive and preferable for romantic relationships than low-status targets and (b) high-dominance targets rated as less attractive and less preferable than low-dominance targets for romantic relationships.
It was also predicted that (c) this trend of effects would increase in statistical strength from attractiveness to short-term desirability and from short-term to long-term desirability as a romantic partner parallel to the relationship between dominance and prestige found in Snyder and Kirkpatrick’s (2003) study. In addition, order effects were evaluated because it is possible that the participants’ evaluations of dominance information may influence how status information is processed and vice versa.
EXPERIMENT 1

Method

Participants

A sample of 135 female students participated in Experiment 1. One student was excused from the procedure prior to participation due to familiarity with the research program. The students were enrolled in an introductory psychology course at the College of William & Mary and received one half-hour of class credit for their participation. Their participation was solicited via electronic sign-up sheets posted on an on-line database. Students participated in the study in groups of 10 – 40 per session.

Materials

Participants received a three-page packet of materials including a brief description of a fictional male target and a two-page questionnaire. Fictional vignettes described the male target with systematically varying combinations of status information and dominance information in addition to other information held constant across conditions (see Appendix A). Constant information included the target’s age, physical stature, education history, relationship history, and recreational interests. In addition, the target’s yearly income was held constant at $40,000 a year in order to manipulate social status independently of economic status.

The status manipulation consisted of three levels including high status, low status, or no status information provided. Status was manipulated with as little information as possible in an attempt to maintain independence from information tapping into
dominance and prestige constructs. In the high-status condition the target was described as holding an upper-level management position. The low-status target was described as a low-level employee. The dominance manipulation was parallel to the status manipulation, including high-dominance, low-dominance, or no information provided. The dominance conditions were adapted from Snyder and Kirkpatrick’s (2002) third experiment utilizing adjective descriptors such as “direct and forceful” (high-dominance) or “neither commanding nor forceful” (low-dominance). The high-dominance condition characterized the target as highly competitive in contrast to the low-dominance target. All vignettes introduced the target with the constant information. Exhaustive combinations of the high status, low status, high dominance, and low dominance manipulations yielded four vignettes in which status information was presented before dominance information and four vignettes in which dominance information was presented before status information. Four vignettes presented high status, low status, high dominance, or low dominance manipulations alone. One vignette presented neither status nor dominance information yielding a total of 13 vignettes.

The questionnaire consisted of 36 bipolar adjectives to be used as dependent measures in the study adapted from Snyder and Kirkpatrick’s (2002) Experiment 3. These bipolar adjectives were used as anchors for a 7-point scale. Adjectives were intended to provide several measures of the perceived attractiveness of the target, the target’s desirability as a short-term romantic partner, and the target’s desirability as a long-term romantic partner (see Appendix B).
Procedure

The experimental procedure was described and participants were asked if they were familiar with this line of research prior to providing informed consent. Participants were asked to read the fictional vignette descriptions after providing informed consent for the anonymous and confidential procedure. Instructions after the vignette encouraged the participants to pause and try to imagine what the fictional character was like before responding to the rating scales. Instructions for the rating scales encouraged participants to honestly and accurately report their first impressions of the target described in the respective vignettes. Upon completion of the tasks, the questionnaires were collected and participants were offered an explanation of the intent of the experiments. Participants were invited to ask questions about the experiment and were informed that they could obtain information about the results of the study with a request to the experimenter via e-mail. The participants were then thanked for their participation and excused. All instructions and information were read to the participants verbatim from a prewritten script (see Appendix C) to ensure that all participants received the same experimental information.

Results

Construction of Dependent Measures

Dependent measures were reverse-scored when appropriate and aggregated to decrease the probability of Type I error. Selection of dependent measures for aggregation was theory-driven and tested with reliability analysis. Perceived attractiveness of the target was measured with an aggregate of three dependent measures: ugly - beautiful, not physically attractive - physically attractive, and not sexually attractive - sexually
attractive. Reliability analysis of this aggregate yielded $\alpha = .80$. Short-term desirability of the opposite-sex targets was measured using an aggregate of not desirable as a sex partner - desirable as a sex partner, not desirable to go out with – desirable to go out with, not desirable as a date - desirable as a date, not desirable to self as a short term romantic partner - desirable to self as a short term romantic partner, and overall not desirable as a short term romantic partner - overall desirable as a short term romantic partner. Reliability of this aggregate yielded $\alpha = .84$. Long-term desirability of the target was measured with an aggregate of four dependent measures: not desirable as a boyfriend – desirable as a boyfriend, not desirable as a spouse - desirable as a spouse, not desirable to self as a long-term romantic partner - desirable to self as a long-term romantic partner, and overall not desirable as a long-term romantic partner - overall desirable as a long-term romantic partner. Reliability analysis of this aggregate yielded $\alpha = .88$.

Two-tailed tests of the correlations between the three dependent variables were analyzed using Pearson’s $r$. The dependent variable for attractiveness was significantly correlated with the dependent variable for short-term desirability, $r = (N = 133) .62, p < .01$, and the dependent variable for long-term desirability, $r = (N = 133) .49, p < .01$. In addition, the dependent variable for short-term desirability was significantly correlated with the dependent variable for long-term desirability, $r = (N = 135) .82, p < .01$.

Dominance x Status Between-Subjects Analyses

The effects of dominance and status on participant ratings of target attractiveness and short- and long-term desirability as a romantic partner were tested with a 3 (dominance) x 3 (status) analysis of variance (ANOVA) on each dependent variable. All
statistical tests were compared to a significance level of $\alpha = .05$. Mean differences were then analyzed using Tukey HSD for post-hoc mean comparisons.

There were no significant main effects for status nor significant dominance x status interactions ($ps > .05$) for any of the three dependent variables. (Although there were no significant main effects for status, the mean ratings are outlined in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3.) However, analysis of variance yielded significant main effects for dominance for each of the three dependent variables as detailed below.

Participant ratings of the perceived attractiveness of the target yielded a main effect for dominance, $F(2, 120) = 5.77, p < .05$ (see Table 1). Post-hoc mean comparisons confirmed that the low-dominance target ($M = 4.31$) was rated as significantly less attractive than the high-dominance target ($M = 4.90$) and the target for which no dominance information was provided ($M = 4.92$) ($ps < .05$). The latter two conditions did not differ significantly from each other ($p > .05$).

Ratings of the target’s desirability as a short-term romantic partner also yielded a significant main effect, $F(2, 122) = 8.82, p < .05$, such that high-dominance in targets decreased short-term desirability compared to targets for which no dominance information was provided and to the low-dominance targets (see Table 2). Post-hoc mean comparisons indicated that ratings of the targets for which no dominance information was provided ($M = 4.79$) significantly differed from ratings of high-dominance targets ($M = 3.83$) ($p < .05$) but not ratings of the low-dominance targets ($M = 4.33$) ($p > .05$). Mean differences between ratings of the high-dominance targets and low-dominance targets approached significance at $p = .07$. 
Ratings were similar for target desirability as a long-term partner yielding a significant main effect, \( F(2, 122) = 14.13, p < .05 \) (see Table 3). Post-hoc mean comparisons clearly indicated that high-dominance ratings \((M = 3.15)\) significantly varied from the low-dominance ratings \((M = 3.99)\) and targets for which no dominance information was provided \((M = 4.53)\), such that high dominance decreased the long-term desirability of targets \((ps < .05)\). The latter two conditions did not differ significantly from each other \((p > .05)\).

**Dependent Measure x Dominance x Status Mixed Analyses**

In order to test if the ratings varied significantly based on the potential relationship context, perceived attractiveness, short- and long-term desirability were used as a within-subjects measure for a 3 (dominance) x 3 (status) x 3 (dependent measure) mixed analysis of variance (ANOVA). All statistical tests were compared to a significance level of \( \alpha = .05 \). Mean differences for between-subjects tests were analyzed using Tukey HSD for post-hoc mean comparisons. Greehouse-Geiser corrections were used for all tests of within-subjects variables.

The results of between-subjects analysis yielded a main effect for dominance, \( F(2, 124) = 7.38, p < .05 \). Post-hoc analysis of means indicated that ratings of both the high-dominance targets \((M = 3.96)\) and low-dominance targets \((M = 4.23)\) significantly differed from ratings of the target for which no dominance information was provided \((M = 4.74)\) across all the three dependent measures \((ps < .05)\). However, ratings of the high-dominance targets and low-dominance targets did not differ significantly \((p > .05)\). In terms of directionality, high-dominance targets were rated lower across all the three
dependent measures than when no dominance information was provided, with low-dominance ratings occupying an intermediary position.

Within-subjects test results yielded a significant main effect for the dependent measures, $F(2, 213) = 56.95, p < .05$, such that mean ratings on perceived attractiveness ($M = 4.71$), desirability as a short-term partner ($M = 4.31$), and desirability as a long-term partner ($M = 3.91$) significantly varied. A significant dependent measure x dominance interaction, $F(4, 213) = 20.96, p < .05$ revealed a sharp decrease in high-dominance ratings (in contrast to the no dominance information and low-dominance ratings) from perceived attractiveness, desirability as a short-term partner, and desirability as a long-term partner (see Figure 1). The no-information target was preferred to the low-dominance target across all dependent variables. The high-dominance target was rated high in perceived attractiveness ($M = 4.90$), but was rated as least desirable as a long-term romantic partner ($M = 3.15$), with desirability as a short-term partner ($M = 3.82$) rated intermediately. The main effect for status, the dominance x status interaction (see Figure 2) and the dependent measure x status x dominance interaction were not significant ($ps > .05$).

Order Effects

Experimental conditions including no information for dominance or status were excluded in order to evaluate a 2 (order) x 2 (dominance) x 2 (status) design for analysis of variance (ANOVA) for each of the three dependent measures. Analysis revealed no significant main effect for order and no significant interactions of order with the other independent variables ($ps > .05$). Consistent with the analyses presented above, the only significant effects in this analysis were main effects for dominance. For perceived
attractiveness, this analysis yielded a main effect for dominance, \( F(1, 51) = 8.36, p < .05 \), such that high-dominance targets were perceived to be more attractive \((M = 4.90)\) than low-dominance targets \((M = 4.31)\). For ratings of the target’s desirability as a long-term partner a main effect for dominance was revealed, \( F(1, 52) = 6.56, p < .05 \), in the opposite direction with low-dominance targets \((M = 3.99)\) rated as more desirable than high-dominance targets \((M = 3.15)\). Analysis revealed no other significant main effects or interactions for perceived attractiveness, short- or long-term desirability \((ps > .05)\).

**Discussion**

Separate analysis of the dependent measures yielded three distinct findings about the influence of dominance characteristics in potential romantic partners on women’s heterosexual mate preferences. As predicted, ratings of high-dominance targets significantly decreased from perceived attractiveness to short-term desirability and from short-term desirability to long-term desirability. Unexpectedly, however, the evaluation of mean differences for ratings of target attractiveness indicated that low dominance was perceived as a negative target attribute. Ratings of perceived attractiveness were approximately equivalent for the high-dominance target and the target for which no dominance information was provided, with the low-dominance target rated significantly lower in perceived attractiveness.

In contrast, targets who were characterized as high in dominance were rated as less desirable as long-term romantic partners. Evaluation of mean differences indicated that low-dominance ratings were approximately equivalent to ratings when no dominance information was provided, with the high-dominance ratings significantly lower. This
indicated that high dominance was perceived as a negative attribute in targets who were
evaluated as potential romantic partners, as predicted.

In short, dominance appears to be positively valued with respect to attractiveness
ratings, but devalued with respect to long-term relationships. Therefore, consistent with
the theoretical underpinnings of this research program, the effects of dominance are
complex and vary with context. The longer lasting and more serious the relationship, the
greater the potential for dominance behaviors in men to impose costs or prevent benefits
to women. Therefore, the higher the stakes of the relationship, the more dominance
behaviors are devalued. Women may find a partial solution to the dilemma of dominance
by focusing on the benefits of dominance when evaluating the attractiveness of potential
partners, but when considering a long-term mate women may focus on the potential costs
of dominance and choose to avoid very dominant partners.

Overall, it appears that the status manipulation failed. The results were not only
nonsignificant but, in addition, mean comparisons between groups were either
indiscernible or lacked consistent directionality. The clearest representation of findings
with regard to status is demonstrated in Figure 2. Directionality of means indicates that
the high-status target was rated consistently higher than low-status target and the target
for which no status information was provided. In addition, ratings of targets across all
status manipulations consistently decreased across all three dependent measures from
perceived attractiveness to long-term desirability. The directionality of means suggested
that the status manipulation had a limited but promising influence on ratings. The status
manipulation was brief, may not have provided adequate cues of status, or may have
lacked salience compared to the constant and dominance information. Although the
participants were given ample opportunity to withdraw from the study and clearly denied any discomfort when questioned, the participants generally appeared disengaged, pensive, and guarded to the experimenter (JS) during the procedure. The participants may have lacked the attention necessary to detect the status manipulation or may have responded in a way that seemed socially desirable to them – that is, denying that occupational status was a legitimate concern when evaluating potential mates.

Because target ratings decreased linearly across relationship context (from perceived attractiveness through long-term desirability) and across both status and dominance manipulations, it was possible that the constant descriptors were influencing ratings in a systematic way. The theoretical underpinnings of this study suggested that the information most likely to impact ratings was salary. The salary that was provided as constant information ($40,000) may have been too low and negatively influenced the desirability of the targets for potential romantic relationships.

Overall, both the status manipulation and the experimental procedure were in question. Therefore, the experiment was repeated with a larger sample, an improved experimental procedure, a slightly higher income, and an improved status manipulation. The intentions of these revisions were to increase the statistical power of the analyses, clarify the role of status in female mate preferences, attempt to replicate the differential effects of dominance on perceived attractiveness and desirability as a mate, and determine if order of presentation influences the ways in which dominance and status information are processed during mate evaluation and selection.
EXPERIMENT 2

Method

Sample and Materials

A sample of 199 female students participated in Experiment 2. Eight students were excused from the procedure prior to participation due to familiarity with the research program. Participants were sampled from the same population as Experiment 1 with the same method of solicitation.

Materials were identical to those utilized in Experiment 1 except for three changes. First, the yearly salary given in the constant information was increased to $45,000 per year. In spite of the concerns raised in Experiment 1 that a low salary negatively influenced ratings of desirability, the salary was increased only slightly. In keeping with the original goal of manipulating social status independently of monetary wealth, the salary was provided as constant information and had to be a realistic income for both a low-level and high-level positions of employment.

Second, the status manipulation was expanded (see Appendix D) to describe targets who not only varied according to the position of employment but also received non-monetary benefits in the high-status position, such as a large office, access to a company car, and executive health club membership compared to the low-status position. These changes were intended to reflect Henrich and Gil-White’s (2001) operational definition of status as hierarchies of rewards or displays characterized by better access to desirable things. The size of the target’s office, access to a company car, and health club
membership were intended to present both a hierarchy of rewards and the target’s access to desirable things. In addition, the high-status target was described as making crucial business decisions based on information gathered from employees, whereas the low-status target was depicted as an employee who provided information to higher-level employees. This aspect of the target description was intended to present an explicit hierarchical display.

The third change was the addition of Paulhus’s (1991) Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR), which measures both “self-deceptive positivity” (SDE) and “impression management” (IM), in order to determine if participants were attempting to respond in ways they perceived to be socially desirable. The BIDR consists of 40 propositions (20 measuring SDE and 20 measuring IM) that participants respond to as not true to very true on a 7-point scale. Every other item is worded as a negative proposition (see Appendix E). The BIDR appeared on two separate pages after the dependent measures in a five-page questionnaire packet for participants.

In addition to these changes in the survey materials, the experimental procedure was altered. These changes were designed because, as noted above, participants appeared to be generally ill at ease during Experiment 1, and it is possible that discomfort affected the participant’s responses. Changes in the procedure were designed to engage participants in the procedure, encourage honest responding, and facilitate a more relaxed experimental setting.

Procedure

The experimental procedure for Experiment 2 was similar to Experiment 1 except for the following changes designed to address the concerns of Experiment 1. Instructions
after the dependent measures requested that participants complete the BIDR. Participants were encouraged to be forthright in their responses in two ways. First, the importance of the study as an ongoing research program was emphasized to participants. This emphasis was also intended to engage participants in the procedure. Second, the confidentiality and anonymity of participant responses was emphasized by informing the participants that no one except the experimenters would see the actual questionnaires and that there was no way for the experimenter to match questionnaires to informed consent forms. For Experiment 2, the verbatim script of instructions and information (see Appendix F) was memorized so that the experimenter (JS) could provide the same experimental conditions between experimental sessions but maintain a more conversational tone in an attempt to allow the participants to feel more at ease.

Results

Construction of Dependent Measures

Construction of the dependent measures was identical to the procedure of Experiment 1. Reliability analysis of the aggregated items composing the measure of attractiveness was \( \alpha = .72 \). Reliability analysis of the short-term aggregated measure was \( \alpha = .87 \) and reliability analysis of the long-term aggregated measure was \( \alpha = .83 \).

Two-tailed tests of the correlations between the three dependent variables were analyzed using Pearson’s \( r \). The dependent variable for attractiveness was significantly correlated with the dependent variable for short-term desirability, \( r = (N = 199) .54, p < .01 \), and the dependent variable for long-term desirability, \( r = (N = 199) .35, p < .01 \). In addition, the dependent variable for short-term desirability was significantly correlated with the dependent variable for long-term desirability, \( r = (N = 199) .75, p < .01 \)
Dominance x Status Between-Subjects Design

The dependent measures were tested in three 3 (Dominance) x 3 (Status) analysis of variance (ANOVA) using a significance level of \( \alpha = .05 \). Mean differences were analyzed using Tukey HSD for post-hoc mean comparisons. Participant ratings of the perceived attractiveness of the target yielded a main effect for status, \( F(2, 186) = 4.36, p < .05 \) (see Table 4). Post-hoc analysis of means confirmed that ratings of the high-status targets (\( M = 5.13 \)) were significantly higher than the ratings of the low-status targets (\( M = 4.68 \)) \( (p < .05) \). Mean differences between ratings of the target for which no status information was provided (\( M = 4.93 \)) and both the high-status targets and low-status targets were not significant \( (p > .05) \). The dominance main effect and status x dominance interaction were not significant \( (p > .05) \) for ratings of the perceived attractiveness of the targets.

Ratings of the target's desirability as a short-term romantic partner yielded a significant main effect for dominance, \( F(2, 186) = 24.91, p < .05 \) (see Table 5). Post-hoc mean comparisons confirmed that the high-dominance targets were rated significantly lower (\( M = 3.58 \)) than targets for which no dominance information was provided (\( M = 4.76 \)) and the low-dominance targets (\( M = 4.69 \)) \( (p < .05) \). The latter two conditions did not differ significantly from each other \( (p > .05) \). The status main effect and status x dominance interaction were not significant \( (p > .05) \) for ratings of the short-term desirability of the targets as romantic partners.

Ratings of the targets long-term desirability as romantic partners (see Table 6) yielded a main effect for status, \( F(2, 186) = 5.65, p < .05 \). Post-hoc mean comparisons confirmed that ratings of the low-status targets were significantly lower (\( M = 3.57 \)) than
ratings for the high-status targets ($M = 4.20$) and targets for which no status information was provided ($M = 4.05$) ($ps < .05$), whereas high-status target ratings did not vary significantly from ratings of the targets for which no dominance information was provided ($ps > .05$).

Ratings of the targets long-term desirability as romantic partners (see Table 6) also yielded a main effect for dominance, $F(2, 186) = 58.84$, $p < .05$. Post-hoc mean comparisons indicated that high-dominance ratings were significantly lower ($M = 2.69$) than ratings of the low-dominance targets ($M = 4.48$) and targets for which no dominance information was provided ($M = 4.65$) ($ps < .05$). The latter two conditions did not differ significantly from each other ($ps > .05$). The status x dominance interaction was not significant ($p > .05$) for ratings of long-term desirability as a romantic partner.

**Dependent Measure x Dominance x Status Mixed Design**

Evaluation of mean comparisons from the 3 (dominance) x 3 (status) design above suggested that ratings varied according to the potential relationship context in a systematic manner. In order to test if the ratings varied significantly based on the potential relationship context, perceived attractiveness, short- and long-term desirability were used as a within-subjects measure for a 3 (dominance) x 3 (status) x 3 (dependent measure) mixed design analysis of variance (ANOVA). All statistical tests were compared to a significance level of $\alpha = .05$. Mean differences for between-subjects tests were analyzed using Tukey HSD for post-hoc mean comparisons. Greehouse-Geiser corrections were used for all tests of within-subjects variables.

The results of between-subjects analysis yielded a main effect for status, $F(2, 190) = 5.77$, $p < .05$, across all the three dependent measures. Post-hoc mean comparisons
indicated that low-status ratings ($M = 4.12$) were significantly lower than ratings for high-status targets ($M = 4.60$) and targets for which no status information was provided ($M = 4.47$) ($p < .05$). High-status target ratings did not differ significantly from ratings of the targets for which no dominance information was provided ($p > .05$).

Between-subjects analysis also yielded a main effect for dominance, $F(2, 190) = 32.62, p < .05$, across all the three dependent measures. Post-hoc mean comparisons confirmed that ratings of the high-dominance targets were significantly lower ($M = 3.69$) than ratings of low-dominance targets ($M = 4.68$) and targets for which no dominance information was provided ($M = 4.82$) ($p < .05$). The latter two conditions did not differ significantly from each other ($p > .05$). The status x dominance interaction was not significant ($p > .05$).

Within-subjects test results yielded a significant main effect for the dependent measures, $F(2, 339) = 83.83, p < .05$, reflecting mean differences between target ratings of perceived attractiveness ($M = 4.91$), desirability as a short-term partner ($M = 4.34$), and desirability as a long-term partner ($M = 3.94$) across both dominance and status. A significant dependent measure x dominance interaction (see Figure 3), $F(4, 339) = 32.16, p < .05$ demonstrated the sharp decrease in high-dominance ratings from perceived attractiveness ($M = 4.81$), desirability as a short-term partner ($M = 3.58$), and desirability as a long-term partner ($M = 2.69$) compared to no dominance information ratings for perceived attractiveness ($M = 5.06$), desirability as a short-term partner ($M = 4.76$), and desirability as a long-term partner ($M = 4.65$), and compared to low-dominance ratings for perceived attractiveness ($M = 4.87$), desirability as a short-term partner ($M = 4.69$), and desirability as a long-term partner ($M = 4.48$). The dependent measure x status (see
Figure 4) and dependent measure x status x dominance interactions were not significant 
($p$'s > .05).

Order Effects

Experimental conditions including no information for dominance or status were 
excluded in order to evaluate a 2 (order) x 2 (dominance) x 2 (status) design for analysis 
of variance. Analysis revealed no significant main effects for order and no interactions 
between the dominance and status manipulations and the dependent measures ($ps > .05$), 
indicating that there were no order effects. Consistent with the analyses presented above, 
the only significant effects in these analyses were the respective main effects for 
dominance and status for each of the three dependent variables. For perceived 
attractiveness, analysis yielded a main effect for status, $F(1, 116) = 11.86, p < .05$, such 
that high-status targets were perceived to be more attractive ($M = 5.13$) than low-status 
targets ($M = 4.68$). For ratings of the target’s desirability as a short-term partner a main 
effect for dominance was revealed, $F(1, 116) = 27.75, p < .05$, with low-dominance 
targets ($M = 4.69$) rated as more desirable than high-dominance targets ($M = 3.58$). 
Analysis revealed main effects for both status and dominance for ratings of the target’s 
desirability as a long-term partner. The status main effect, $F(1, 116) = 5.42, p < .05$, 
reflected significant differences between ratings of the high-status target ($M = 4.20$) and 
the low-status target ($M = 3.57$). The dominance main effect, $F(1, 116) = 58.84, p < .05$, 
reflected significant differences between ratings of the high-dominance target ($M = 2.69$) 
and the low-dominance target ($M = 4.48$). Analysis revealed no other significant main 
effects or interactions for perceived attractiveness, short- or long-term desirability ($p$’s > 
.05).
**Social Desirability**

Scores for participant responses were calculated according to BIDR instructions (Paulhus, 1991), including the reverse-scoring of negative propositions and the compilation of separate scores for self-deceptive positivity (SDE) and impression management (IM). Scores were obtained by the assignment of one point for each extreme response (a response of 6 or 7) to the proposition. Then an individual score (ranging from zero to 20) was calculated for both the SDE and IM respectively by calculating the sum of those points assigned for extreme responses. In order to evaluate if participant ratings of the targets were compromised by a response bias toward socially desirability a 3 (dominance) x 3 (status) analysis of variance design was evaluated with SDE and IM included as covariates (ANCOVA). This analysis yielded no significant main effects for the covariates and did not change the pattern of significant findings from the original 3 (dominance) x 3 (status) analysis of variance (ANOVA). For the dependent measure of attractiveness, there was a main effect for status, $F(1, 188) = 4.47, p < .05$. For the dependent measure of desirability as a short-term romantic partner, there was a main effect for dominance, $F(1, 188) = 24.04, p < .05$. For the dependent measure of desirability as a long-term romantic partner, there were main effects for both status, $F(1, 199) = 5.74, p < .05$, and dominance, $F(1, 188) = 56.18, p < .05$. No other main effects or interactions were significant in this analysis ($ps > .05$).

In addition, analysis of self-deceptive positivity and impression management as covariates in a 2 (order) x 2 (dominance) x 2 (status) ANCOVA did not change the pattern of significant findings from the original 2 (order) x 2 (dominance) x 2 (status) analysis of variance (ANOVA). For perceived attractiveness, analysis yielded a main
effect for status, $F(1, 114) = 11.13, p < .05$. For ratings of the target’s desirability as a short-term partner a main effect for dominance was revealed, $F(1, 114) = 24.16, p < .05$. Analysis also revealed main effects for both status, $F(1, 114) = 6.19, p < .05$, and dominance, $F(1, 114) = 64.23, p < .05$. No other significant main effects or interactions for perceived attractiveness, short- or long-term desirability ($ps > .05$).

Discussion

As in Experiment 1, the effect of dominance varied in Experiment 2 between ratings of perceived attractiveness and desirability. For perceived attractiveness, there was little difference between mean ratings across the high-dominance targets, low-dominance targets, and the no dominance information targets. With regard to desirability as a romantic partner, participants rated high-dominance targets lower than both low-dominance targets and targets for which no dominance information was provided.

Unlike Experiment 1, ratings of status produced significant results, with high-status targets preferred to low-status targets as predicted. However, one aspect of the pattern of mean ratings was not anticipated. Instead of high status being valued as a positive attribute in a potential romantic partner as predicted, ratings of high-status targets closely approximated ratings of targets for which no status information was provided compared to the consistently lower ratings of low-status targets. Therefore it appears that while high-status targets were not valued more as potential romantic partners than control targets, low-status targets were devalued as potential romantic partners. This finding is consistent with the threshold effect discussed above but was not predicted because the methodology of the current study distinctly varied from those of Townsend and Waserman (1998) and Li et al. (2002).
As in Experiment 1, target ratings decreased linearly across relationship context (from perceived attractiveness to long-term desirability) for both the status and dominance manipulations. For target ratings across the dominance manipulations, there was a sharp decrease in ratings of high-dominance targets across attractiveness to short-term desirability and from short-term desirability to long-term desirability. Ratings for the low-dominance category and the no-information category decreased slightly from attractiveness through long-term desirability. For target ratings across the status manipulations, ratings in all three conditions decreased slightly from attractiveness through long-term desirability in a relatively uniform pattern. Apparently, increasing the constant yearly salary of the targets by $5000 did not attenuate this effect first observed in Experiment 1. Contrary to prediction, order of the presentation of dominance and status manipulations did not impact ratings. Measures of response bias indicated that ratings were not significantly influenced by a tendency for participants to respond in an unrealistically positive way or a tendency to alter self-presentation.
GENERAL DISCUSSION

The intent of this research was to evaluate the relative influence of dominance and status on women's mate preferences. In Experiment 1, the status manipulation failed to produce significant results and the effects of dominance varied across the context of the relationship. These results raised concerns about both the method and procedure of Experiment 1 such as the weakness of the status manipulation, the participant's level of engagement in the procedure, and biased responding by participants. Therefore, Experiment 2 repeated Experiment 1 with an improved status manipulation, a procedure that attempted to make the procedure relevant to participants, and encouraged forthright responses.

The results of Experiment 2 point to (a) the success of the dominance manipulation, (b) the qualified success of the status manipulation, (c) limitations in interpreting independence between dominance and status, and (d) unintended variance resulting from the constant information. Both studies underscored the importance of differentiating relationship context, that is, the goal of the evaluator of a potential partner during mate selection (just looking, seeking a short-term partner, seeking a long-term partner) in order to better understand variance in women's mate preferences. Each of these findings is discussed, in turn, below.

First, with regard to dominance, the predicted results were found in both experiments for ratings of short- and long-term desirability of the targets as potential romantic partners. Targets who were described with the high-dominance manipulation
were clearly rated as less desirable romantic partners. Ratings of the target’s perceived attractiveness were less clear in that, contrary to prediction, the results were not consistent with ratings of the targets’ desirability as romantic partners and were not consistent between Experiment 1 and Experiment 2. In Experiment 2, the dominance manipulation did not produce significant differences in ratings in target attractiveness as it did in Experiment 1.

However, it should be noted that attractiveness is not continuous with, or even necessarily parallel to, ratings of desirability as a romantic partner. Perceptions of attractiveness may constitute an initial evaluation of target desirability if the goal state of the participant is to find a romantic partner. However, perceptions of target attractiveness may be independent of perceptions of target desirability as a romantic partner if the participant is not motivated to evaluate and seek a romantic partner. In fact, the measure of perceived attractiveness was weakly correlated to the desirability measures. This weak correlation between the attractiveness measure and the desirability measures was especially pronounced in Experiment 2. Therefore, ratings of attractiveness are likely to be vulnerable to the effects of response variance based on the varying goal-states between subjects. This amount of variance in ratings of perceived attractiveness was not anticipated in these experiments because it was not encountered in Snyder and Kirkpatrick’s (2003) previous series of studies utilizing similar methodologies with a similar sample of participants. The variance observed in the current studies highlights the importance of context and suggests that the internal goal states of participants have an influence on preferences for romantic partners. The internal goal states of participants are likely to vary, which in turn is likely to cause variance in responses according to the
context of the potential relationship. In future studies of this research program, attempts will be made to place perceived attractiveness in a continuous context parallel to perceived desirability and will attempt to measure women's internal goal states.

Second, with regard to the effects of status, ratings of status were not significant in Experiment 1 but demonstrated the predicted directionality. The high-status targets were rated slightly higher than low-status and the no-information targets, with the low-status and no-information categories approximately equivalent. These results suggested that high-status targets would be clearly preferred if the status manipulation was made stronger. Indeed, when the status manipulation was improved, women clearly preferred high-status targets to low-status targets.

However, when more information was added to the status manipulation for Experiment 2, the pattern of mean ratings altered in an unpredicted fashion. In Experiment 2, ratings of the high-status and the no status information targets were statistically indistinguishable while low-status target ratings decreased. This finding implied that the high-status men were not necessarily preferred as romantic partners but that low-status men were avoided as romantic partners.

This finding is consistent with the findings of Townsend and Waserman (1998) and Li et al. (2002) evaluating the role of status in women’s mate preferences as described earlier. The existence of a threshold effect in women’s evaluations of men as potential romantic partners accounts for the differing patterns observed between Experiment 1 and Experiment 2. In Experiment 1, the high-status manipulation was admittedly weak and apparently did not reach threshold of status suitable to participants in potential romantic partners. In Experiment 2, the low-status and high-status
manipulations apparently staggered an acceptable threshold of status so that the high-status targets were rated higher than the low-status targets. It is possible that ratings of targets for which no status information was provided were similar to ratings of high-status targets because participants imagined targets who were in their acceptable range of status when no information was provided, as first postulated by Ellis (1992).

Third, with regard to the independence of the status from dominance, it is necessary to qualify the success of the status manipulation. In hindsight, it appears as if the status manipulation in Experiment 2 was perhaps not independent of dominance but had some conceptual overlap. The high-status target was described as “making crucial business decisions based upon information gathered from his staff.” This statement may have had the effect of making salient the fact that the target would have explicit authority over others. Therefore the target might have been perceived as an individual who holds institutional power rather than a status position independent of dominance and prestige cues (D. M. T. Fessler, personal communication, June 6, 2003). For the purposes of this discussion, institutional power is operationally defined as having authority over an underling that is enforced by a social network that has control over institutionally relevant rewards and punishments. The degree to which dominance is independent of institutional power remains in question. On one hand, leadership styles of those in power will vary in the degree to which dominance behaviors are displayed and used as methods to motivate and control underlings. On the other hand, simply having the power to inflict consequences on an underling may have implied dominance to participants.

This conceptual overlap of status and dominance may have had the effect of weakening the status manipulation and may be the reason that the status manipulation did
not produce significant differences between the high- and low-status targets for ratings as a short-term partner. In fact, it is possible that this partial conflation of status and dominance attenuated the differences between ratings of high- and low-status targets for all three dependent measures. It could be stated that high-status targets were preferable to low-status targets in spite of this limitation. However, we should be conservative in our evaluation of the results of Experiment 2 in terms of the predicted effects of status on women’s mate preferences and the predicted independence between status and dominance behaviors high- and low-status targets because of this limitation of the intended status manipulation.

Fourth, other target attributes limit the interpretation of these experiments. Specifically, it is difficult to determine why overall ratings across dominance and status consistently decreased across relation context. On one hand, women should become more discerning and choosy when evaluating the attributes of a romantic partner as the relationship requires more commitment because the greater the commitment, the higher the risks and costs involved in over-estimating the mate value of a romantic partner. On the other hand, this pattern of an overall decrease in target ratings was not observed in Snyder and Kirkpatrick’s (2003) studies utilizing similar methodologies. Therefore, this pattern of decreasing means remains in question.

As noted above, increasing the constant salary by $5,000 dollars did not attenuate this effect. Careful attention was given to the construction of the fictional target. Because it is difficult to identify clear status positions among undergraduates, it was decided to make the target a recent university graduate who obtained either high-status or low-status employment. It was hoped that the target would still appear accessible to the women of
the sample and represent someone they could easily meet at a party, local bar, or other social event. However, it is possible that participants did not relate well with the fictional target. In addition, it is possible that some other aspect of the constant descriptors influenced ratings. If the relatively low salary caused the rating decrease across relationship context, this would be considered an acceptable trade-off in the interest of isolating economic status from social status. If the targets were perceived as dissimilar, inaccessible, irrelevant, or uninteresting as a potential romantic partner, this would also constitute an acceptable trade-off for the sake of effective experimental methodology. What is far less acceptable is that the specific attribute that caused the decrease in ratings across context can not be determined with a degree of certainty. Future studies in this research program will need to either avoid the potential limitations cited above in the composition of fictional targets or attempt to identify which target attribute attenuated ratings across context with dependent measures constructed to qualify the observed trend.

Fifth, the pattern of significant findings varied for dominance and status in Experiment 2. When perceived attractiveness was used as a dependent measure, low-status targets were perceived as significantly less attractive but the dominance manipulation yielded nonsignificant results. When short-term desirability was used as the dependent measure, high dominance was perceived as significantly less desirable in a short-term mate but the status manipulation yielded nonsignificant results. It was only when long-term desirability was used as the dependent measure that both the dominance and status manipulations yielded significant results, such that low-status and high-dominance were perceived as significantly less desirable in a long-term mate. In addition, ratings of low-status and high-dominance targets decreased from a short-term to a long-
term relationship context. These findings highlight the importance relationship context, suggesting that more stringent evaluative criteria are used by women in the selection of a long-term mate than a short-term mate. This finding is consistent with previous work on women's mate preferences and the theoretical stance and predictions of the current studies. The longer lasting the prospective relationship is, the more important men’s access to resources is and the higher the potential cost of dominance behaviors.

Throughout evolutionary history, the longer lasting the relationship, the greater the access to resources, and the less costs imposed, the greater the odds of producing viable offspring. In spite of the limitations cited above, it is clear that women’s preference for dominance in men varies according to internal goal states, the context of dominance behavior displays, and the context of the potential relationship.

Overall, the findings of the current studies in conjunction with Snyder and Kirkpatrick’s (2003) studies clarify the role of dominance in women’s mate preferences. First, dominance can be preferred in potential mates by women under some circumstances. For instance, high-dominant behaviors were preferred in potential mates to low-dominant behaviors in the context of male-male competition (as demonstrated in Snyder and Kirkpatrick’s Experiment 2), and increased perceptions of attractiveness (as demonstrated in the current studies).

Second, dominance does not have a uniform influence on women’s mate preferences. For instance, dominance did not uniformly enhance perceptions of the attractiveness of men or enhance the desirability of men as short-term romantic partners, but rather appeared to be highly variable (possibly due to internal goal states). In
addition, and perhaps most importantly, high dominance in men was not desirable to
women in the context of long-term relationships.

Beyond the specific findings cited above regarding the role of relative roles of
status, dominance, and prestige in women’s mate preferences, there are two larger
questions at hand. Why is status preferred by women in potential heterosexual mates, and
are the means by which status is obtained relevant to mate preferences? Evolutionary
psychology theories, prior empirical evidence, and the above empirical evidence, suggest
that mate preferences developed from an evolutionary history of mate selection
successfully meeting adaptive needs. Status carries with it information about resource
holding potential, signaling that resources will be available to support offspring, and is
therefore a selected characteristic in opposite-sex mates. Status which is freely conferred
(prestige) can appear preferable to dominance strategies for obtaining status in some
circumstances. Prestige, according to Henrich and Gil-White (2001), is frequently
accompanied by kindness, willingness to help, and generosity signaling the ability to
invest, willingness to invest, and good parenting skills. Furthermore, prestige carries
direct status information in a way that dominance behaviors do not because the
operational definition of prestige is status that is conferred to an individual by another
individual or group. In contrast, displays of dominance behaviors may or may not lead to
the actual attainment of status.

While dominance behaviors may imply status and access to resources, it may be
categorized by behaviors that are not optimally adaptive to supporting offspring.
Therefore, prestige may be more valued than dominance in certain contexts as observed
in Snyder and Kirkpatrick’s (2003) first and third experiments. In spite of this,
dominance is still a valued characteristic to women selecting an opposite-sex romantic partner in other contexts as demonstrated in Snyder and Kirkpatrick’s Experiment 2. It may be that dominance is only valued when it provides relevant cues to adaptive success. It is possible that dominance displays only project cues to adaptive success when accompanied by pro-social behavior (Jensen-Campbell et al., 1995) or within a socially-sanctioned context. Independent of cues for willingness to invest and parenting skills, dominance displays may project valuable information regarding heritable fitness in ways that prestige does not. According to Trivers (1972), dominance displays projecting heritable fitness information are the predominant mating strategy employed by nonhuman primates although Machiavellian, pro-social behaviors are also used as mating strategies (Byrne & Whiten, 1988). Therefore dominance cues may be very stable psychological mechanisms of mate-selection in females that must have been selected for early in evolutionary history.

As stated earlier, Miller (2001) contended that serial monogamy persisted as the predominant mating strategy for humans throughout the Pleistocene and illustrated why identifying cues of heritable fitness would have been the predominant mode of serial monogamy mate-selection for women when he wrote the following:

Ancestral women may have preferred intelligent, energetic men for their ability to hunt more effectively and provide children with more meat. But I would suggest it was much more important that intelligent men tended to reproduce intelligent, energetic children more likely to survive and reproduce, whether or not their fathers stayed around. In other words, I think that evolutionary psychology has
put too much emphasis on male resources instead of male fitness in explaining women’s sexual preferences. (p. 211)

However, Miller also acknowledged that if the same traits can project both heritable fitness and viable solutions to adaptive challenges, these traits would be highly valued by women. Cues of heritable fitness and solutions to adaptive challenges are not mutually exclusive but are both highly valued and may be reflected in traits that are independent of each other or overlap within the same trait. This being the case, status that is obtained through either dominance behaviors or prestige should provide valuable cues to both heritable fitness and solutions to adaptive problems. However, if a true domain-specific, psychological system exists to evaluate and select for prestige, it must have developed much later in evolutionary history, even if lifetime pair bonding replaced serial monogamy prior to the Pleistocene because prestige hierarchies require a greater level of social complexity than dominance hierarchies.

Snyder and Kirkpatrick’s (2003) findings supported both the hypothesis that dominance and prestige relations involve two independent psychological systems of mate-selection and that while dominance relations exerted more influence on mate selection for women, it is apparent from the Experiments 1 and 3 that prestige influenced mate selection for both sexes. Although these systems were measurably independent, Snyder and Kirkpatrick’s findings also indicated that they were activated simultaneously when observing combinations of behaviors or characteristics. Symons’ (1987) analogy between food preferences and mate preferences is useful to evaluating the relative influences of dominance and prestige. For example, both sugar and fats are independently preferred. Under some circumstances, dependent upon internal states of the organism in
question, sweet foods may be preferred to fatty foods and therefore selected by the organism or vice-versa. However, on other occasions foods high in both sugar and fats are preferred, such as ice cream or cheesecake.

Dominance was known to enhance the attractiveness and desirability of potential opposite-sex mates for women in the absence of aggressive or domineering behaviors (Sadalla et al., 1987) and in the presence of pro-social behaviors (Jensen-Campbell et al., 1996). Snyder and Kirkpatrick's (2003) study that explored the relative roles of dominance and prestige added to this body of evidence that mate preferences also vary according to the context of dominant behaviors. This interpretation is supported by the current series of studies results regarding dominance. The current work highlights not only the context of dominance displays but also the role of relationship context and the relationship's respective level of commitment.

Prestige, although related to status in a similar fashion as dominance, can influence opposite-sex mate selection independently and lead to very different results than when examining dominance alone. Snyder and Kirkpatrick's (2003) work indicated that prestige warrants further investigation as an independent construct and that care should be taken in future studies of dominance to not conflate the constructs of dominance and prestige although they frequently overlap in status displays.

This is not the only way in which dominance differs from prestige. Prestige is embedded in status in a way in which dominance is not. In the case of prestige, status is conferred to individuals based on some attribute of the individual. For the prestigious individual, status is automatic at the time the attribute is recognized and acknowledged by sycophantic behavior. In the case of dominance, there is an added step from the desire to
lead to actually obtaining status – that is the demonstration of force or force threat. The individual displaying force or the threat of force may or may not achieve status through these behaviors.

This stance necessarily constitutes a clear departure from Henrich and Gil-White’s (2000) anthropological perspective (F. J. Gil-White, personal communication, June 6, 2003). For Henrich and Gil-White, dominance is measured by the total number of subordinates and prestige is measured by the total number of sycophants, with both dominance and prestige being taxonomically equivalent to status because of anthropology’s focus on social structures. Although this perspective is important and is useful for some purposes, the focus of the current studies was on dominance behaviors and the outcomes of those behaviors. With regard to dominance, it is possible to display force and the threat of force without achieving status. A person confronted with force or the threat of force may decide to engage the aggressor in competition and consequently become subordinate but this is not the only possible outcome. An individual confronted with dominance behaviors may retaliate, come out ahead, and make the aggressor themselves subordinate. In addition, an individual may choose to avoid confrontation and competition without making themselves truly subordinate to an aggressor. In fact, persons displaying consistently dominant behavior such as talking over others, frequently attempting to impose their will on others, frequently giving advice, and rarely accepting counsel may never achieve status but may simply alienate others. A person that consistently displays high-dominance behaviors may rarely encounter confrontation because they make competition more trouble then it is worth. In effect, the dominant individual may win every battle for imposition of will but lose the war for status.
This dynamic is less clear with regard to attempts at achieving prestige. Individuals confer prestige to a person after observing a demonstration of ability, knowledge, or achievement but these behaviors demonstrating ability, knowledge, or achievement are very likely to vary with context. It may be possible for individuals to try to attain prestige by trying to convince others that they are knowledgeable, that many people look up to them, or bragging of achievements. However, these behaviors are directly the opposite of how prestigious individuals are characterized by Henrich and Gil-White (2000). Prestigious individuals tend to make self-deprecating displays of humility in spite of the fact that obtaining a larger clientele is in the prestigious individual’s best interest. Extolling one’s own virtues, or bragging, typically have the effect of alienating others. Perhaps the rejection of “braggarts” constitutes an evolved mechanism to detect and avoid those attempting to feign prestige so that precious energy and resources are not wasted on an individual that is not capable of transmitting quality knowledge. This may be the motivation for public demonstrations of humility by the prestigious individual. In addition, we would be reticent on semantic grounds to term behaviors such as bragging “prestige-behaviors.” In contrast, because force or the threat of force may lead to a temporary imposition of will without the achievement of a permanent increase in status, operationally defining behaviors associated with force or the threat of force as “dominance-behaviors” makes sense intuitively. Furthermore, this theoretical distinction between dominance behaviors and status reflects externally valid interpersonal dynamics that are likely to effect information processing during mate selection.

Two years of research have indicated that the context of dominance behaviors is the primary determinant of dominance’s role in women’s mate preferences. Future
studies in this research program will continue to clarify the distinctions between status, dominance, and prestige by directly manipulating the means by which status is obtained by men and measuring women's preferences for these targets. In addition, future studies will explore the influence of these distinct constructs on women's mate preferences across the menstrual cycle, among women in economically marginalized communities, and in violent environments.
Table 1

*Mean Ratings of the Perceived Attractiveness of Targets from Experiment 1's 3 (Dominance) x 3 (Status) Between Subjects Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dominance condition</th>
<th>Status condition</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High dominance</td>
<td>High status</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>(0.79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low status</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>(1.16)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No info</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>(1.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low dominance</td>
<td>High status</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>(0.74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low status</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>(0.91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No info</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>(0.81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No dominance info</td>
<td>High status</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>(0.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low status</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>(1.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No info</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>(0.65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 2

Mean Ratings of the Short-term Desirability of Targets from Experiment 1’s 3 (Dominance) x 3 (Status) Between Subjects Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dominance condition</th>
<th>Status condition</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High dominance</td>
<td>High status</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low status</td>
<td>3.94</td>
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<td>No info</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>0.89</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Low status</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>4.47</td>
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Table 3

Mean Ratings of the Long-term Desirability of Targets from Experiment 1’s 3 (Dominance) x 3 (Status) Between Subjects Analysis

<table>
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</thead>
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<td>High dominance</td>
<td>High status</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>(1.37)</td>
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<td>(1.38)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No info</td>
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<td>(1.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.15</td>
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<td>4.33</td>
<td>(1.26)</td>
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<td>Low status</td>
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<td>(1.08)</td>
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<td>No info</td>
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<td>(1.36)</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>High status</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>(1.36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Low status</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>(1.04)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>No info</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>(0.95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Low Status</td>
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<tr>
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</table>
Table 4

*Mean Ratings of the Perceived Attractiveness of Targets from Experiment 2’s 3 (Dominance) x 3 (Status) Between Subjects Analysis*

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<th>Status condition</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High dominance</td>
<td>High status</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>(0.91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low status</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>(0.90)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>No info</td>
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<td>(0.79)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.81</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>High status</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>(1.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low status</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>(0.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No info</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>(0.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No dominance info</td>
<td>High status</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>(0.85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low status</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>(1.09)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>No info</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>(0.80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>High Status</td>
<td>5.13</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Low Status</td>
<td>4.68</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Info</td>
<td>4.93</td>
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Table 5

*Mean Ratings of the Short-term Desirability of Targets from Experiment 2’s (Dominance) x 3 (Status) Between Subjects Analysis*

<table>
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<th>Dominance condition</th>
<th>Status condition</th>
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<td>High dominance</td>
<td>High status</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>(1.18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>(1.06)</td>
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<td>No info</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>(1.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Low dominance</td>
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<td>(0.96)</td>
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<td>No info</td>
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<td>(1.04)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>(0.82)</td>
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<td>Low status</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>(0.99)</td>
</tr>
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<td>No info</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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Table 6

*Mean Ratings of the Long-term Desirability of Targets from Experiment 2’s 3 (Dominance) x 3 (Status) Between Subjects Analysis*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dominance condition</th>
<th>Status condition</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High dominance</td>
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<td>(0.91)</td>
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<td>Low status</td>
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<td>(0.90)</td>
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<td>No info</td>
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<td>(0.79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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</tr>
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<td>High status</td>
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<td>(1.00)</td>
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<td>No info</td>
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<td>(0.79)</td>
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<td>No info</td>
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<td>(0.80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>High status</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low status</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>No info</td>
<td>4.05</td>
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</tr>
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</table>
Figure 1. Dependent measure x dominance interaction, Experiment 1.
Figure 2. Dependent measure x status interaction, Experiment 1.
Figure 3. Dependent measure x dominance interaction, Experiment 2.
Figure 4. Dependent measure x status interaction, Experiment 2.
APPENDIX A

Experiment 1 Target Vignette Descriptions

Constant Information

John is 24 years old, is 5'10" tall, and is 165 lbs. John completed his education at a state university where he majored in business. More than 85% of his graduating class was able to obtain work in their field of interest. John has dated 8 women total in his lifetime including two relatively short-term relationships and one long-term committed relationship. His interests include following college football, listening to music, sailing, and watching movies. Just like anyone else, John is accepted in a variety of social circumstances and has a smaller group of friends that he associates with most of the time.

High-Dominance Description

John tends to try to control and take charge of every situation with his commanding presence. He is direct and overbearing in both formal and informal social circumstances. John generally expects his peers and underlings to respond to his needs and give more importance to his views than their own. When his opinion or advice is challenged, John will attempt to make his competitors look bad, will stare them down, interrupt or talk over them without hearing them out.

Low-Dominance Description

He is not commanding or overbearing in either formal or informal social circumstances. John is receptive to the needs and advice of others even when he disagrees. When his opinion or advice is challenged in some way, John will usually blow it off and allow others to have their way after quietly hearing them out.

High-Status Description

He works for a successful small business as an upper-level vice president with a $40,000 a year salary.

Low-Status Description

He works for a successful small business as a low-level employee with a $40,000 a year salary.
APPENDIX B

Dependent Measures Questionnaire

Once you have a clear image in your mind about John and what he is like, please try to answer the following questions about him. There are no "correct" or "incorrect" answers; just try to report honestly and accurately your impressions based on the image you now have in your mind. Answer each question by circling a number of the scale between 1 and 7.

- dominant 1 ........ 2 ........ 3 ........ 4 ........ 5 ........ 6 ........ 7 submissive
- ugly 1 ........ 2 ........ 3 ........ 4 ........ 5 ........ 6 ........ 7 handsome
- unfriendly 1 ........ 2 ........ 3 ........ 4 ........ 5 ........ 6 ........ 7 friendly
- good family provider 1 ........ 2 ........ 3 ........ 4 ........ 5 ........ 6 ........ 7 poor family provider
- desirable sex partner 1 ........ 2 ........ 3 ........ 4 ........ 5 ........ 6 ........ 7 undesirable sex partner
- selfish 1 ........ 2 ........ 3 ........ 4 ........ 5 ........ 6 ........ 7 generous
- aggressive 1 ........ 2 ........ 3 ........ 4 ........ 5 ........ 6 ........ 7 gentle
- nice 1 ........ 2 ........ 3 ........ 4 ........ 5 ........ 6 ........ 7 mean
- interested in sex 1 ........ 2 ........ 3 ........ 4 ........ 5 ........ 6 ........ 7 uninterested in sex
- weak 1 ........ 2 ........ 3 ........ 4 ........ 5 ........ 6 ........ 7 strong
- low social status 1 ........ 2 ........ 3 ........ 4 ........ 5 ........ 6 ........ 7 high social status
- physically attractive 1 ........ 2 ........ 3 ........ 4 ........ 5 ........ 6 ........ 7 physically unattractive
- poorly adjusted 1 ........ 2 ........ 3 ........ 4 ........ 5 ........ 6 ........ 7 well adjusted
- unsuccessful 1 ........ 2 ........ 3 ........ 4 ........ 5 ........ 6 ........ 7 successful
- prestigious 1 ........ 2 ........ 3 ........ 4 ........ 5 ........ 6 ........ 7 not prestigious
- desirable husband 1 ........ 2 ........ 3 ........ 4 ........ 5 ........ 6 ........ 7 undesirable husband
- competent 1 ........ 2 ........ 3 ........ 4 ........ 5 ........ 6 ........ 7 incompetent
- helpful 1 ........ 2 ........ 3 ........ 4 ........ 5 ........ 6 ........ 7 unhelpful
- admirable 1 ........ 2 ........ 3 ........ 4 ........ 5 ........ 6 ........ 7 not admirable
- desirable as a date 1 ........ 2 ........ 3 ........ 4 ........ 5 ........ 6 ........ 7 undesirable as a date
wealthy 1........2........3........4........5........6........7 poor
promiscuous 1........2........3........4........5........6........7 not promiscuous
tough 1........2........3........4........5........6........7 tender
desirable boyfriend 1........2........3........4........5........6........7 undesirable boyfriend
unpleasant 1........2........3........4........5........6........7 pleasant
caring father 1........2........3........4........5........6........7 uncaring father
desirable to go out with 1........2........3........4........5........6........7 not desirable to go out
nonviolent 1........2........3........4........5........6........7 violent
admirable 1........2........3........4........5........6........7 not admirable
sexually attractive 1........2........3........4........5........6........7 sexually unattractive
likeable 1........2........3........4........5........6........7 unlikeable
emotionally stable 1........2........3........4........5........6........7 emotionally unstable
intelligent 1........2........3........4........5........6........7 unintelligent
looked down on 1........2........3........4........5........6........7 looked up to
popular 1........2........3........4........5........6........7 unpopular
lower class 1........2........3........4........5........6........7 upper class

Assuming that both you and John were available, please rate how interested you would be in getting involved in a short term romantic relationship with John.

not interested at all 1........2........3........4........5........6........7 very interested

Please rate overall how desirable you think John is for a short term romantic relationship.

not interested at all 1........2........3........4........5........6........7 very interested

Assuming that both you and John were available, please rate how interested you would be in getting involved in a long term romantic relationship with John.

not interested at all 1........2........3........4........5........6........7 very interested

Please rate overall how desirable you think John is for a long term romantic relationship.

not interested at all 1........2........3........4........5........6........7 very interested
APPENDIX C

Verbatim Script of the Procedure in Experiment 1

Introduction. Hi, my name is Jeff Snyder. The study today is about the ways in which people form impressions of others based on limited information. In this study, you will be asked to read a brief description of a fictional person, and then rate the person on a variety of characteristics and traits based on your impressions. You will not be asked to write your names or any other identifying information on the questionnaires; the data will be confidential and completely anonymous, so you can feel free to be entirely honest. Before I ask you to fill out the informed consent for this study, is there anyone here that is familiar with my previous research? [If yes, excuse participant from study without penalty]

Please look at this “informed consent” form. [Hand out consent forms.] It summarizes your rights as research participants, as well as some of the things I just told you. If you are willing to complete this set of questionnaires, go ahead and sign it and write the date. Thanks. [Collect forms.]

Here is the vignette and questionnaire. It should only take a few minutes to complete them. Don't stop to think about any question for too long -- your first impressions and immediate reactions are what we want. Do you have any questions? [Answer questions, if any.] Just let me know when you're done, OK?

[Participants complete Experiment 1; collect materials]

Debriefing. Thanks so much! In case you're curious, here's what the study was about. Many studies have been done that show that women prefer men as mates who are high in "social dominance." The assumption in much of this literature is that dominance is somehow equivalent to status. Other researchers believe that dominant behaviors somehow automatically lead to status. We suspect that status is actually distinct from dominance and is also preferable to dominance. In this experiment, there were different versions of the vignettes: One described someone who was high in dominance and high in status; another described someone who was high in dominance and low in status, and so forth. By having different people read and evaluate different combinations of these traits, we will be able to statistically separate the ways in which dominance affects people's ratings (such as how desirable they think the person would be as a romantic partner) from the ways in which status affects their ratings, to see if this distinction is really important and whether it suggests that previous research on dominance and mate preferences requires reinterpretation.

We'll be analyzing the data over the Christmas break, so of course I can't tell you yet what we will find. If you would like to know later how the results turned out, feel free to send an email to me near the end of the semester: Here is my email address if you want to write it down. [Write email address on blackboard].

OK, do you have any questions? [Answer any questions.] Again, thanks very much for helping me out!
APPENDIX D

Experiment 2 Target Vignette Status Descriptions

*High Status Description*

He works from a large private office for a successful small business as an upper-level vice president with a $45,000 a year salary. His primary job is to make crucial business decisions based upon information gathered by his staff. As an executive he has access to several privileges not available to his staff such as a company car and membership to an exclusive health club.

*Low Status Description*

He works from a small cubicle among other staff members for a successful small business as a lower-level employee with a $45,000 a year salary. His primary job is to gather the information his superiors use as a basis for crucial business decisions. As a staff member, he does not have access to privileges such as the company car and the executives’ health club.
APPENDIX E

Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (Paulhus, 1991)

Using the scale below as a guide, write a number beside each statement to indicate how much you agree with it.

1 ------------ 2 ------------- 3 ------------- 4 —--------- 5 ------------- 6 ------------- 7

NOT TRUE               SOMEWHA T               VERY TRUE

TRUE

____ 1. My first impressions of people usually turn out to be right.

____ 2. It would be hard for me to break any of my bad habits.

____ 3. I don’t care to know what people really think of me.

____ 4. I have not always been honest with myself.

____ 5. I always know why I like things.

____ 6. When my emotions are aroused, it biases my thinking.

____ 7. Once I’ve made up my mind, other people can seldom change my opinion.

____ 8. I am not a safe driver when I exceed the speed limit.

____ 9. I am fully in control of my own fate.

____ 10. It’s hard for me to shut off a disturbing thought.

____ 11. I never regret my decisions.

____ 12. I sometimes lose out on things because I can’t make up my mind soon enough.

____ 13. The reason I vote is because my vote can make a difference.

____ 14. My parents were not always fair when they punished me.

____ 15. I am a completely rational person.

____ 16. I rarely appreciate criticism.

____ 17. I am very self-confident of my judgments.

____ 18. I have sometimes doubted my ability as a lover.
19. It's all right with me if some people happen to dislike me.
20. I don't always know the reasons why I do the things I do.
21. I sometimes tell lies if I have to.
22. I never cover up my mistakes.
23. There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of someone.
24. I never swear.
25. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.
26. I always obey laws, even if I'm unlikely to get caught.
27. I have said something bad about a friend behind his or her back.
28. When I hear people talking privately, I avoid listening.
29. I have received too much change from a salesperson without telling him or her.
30. I always declare everything at customs.
31. When I was young I sometimes stole things.
32. I have never dropped litter on the street.
33. I sometimes drive faster than the speed limit.
34. I never read sexy books or magazines.
35. I have done things that I don't tell other people about.
36. I never take things that don't belong to me.
37. I have taken sick-leave from work or school even though I wasn't really sick.
38. I have never damaged a library book or store merchandise without reporting it.
39. I have some pretty awful habits.
40. I don't gossip about other people's business.
APPENDIX F

Verbatim Script of the Procedure in Experiment 2

Introduction. Hi, my name is Jeff Snyder. Today you are being asked to participate in a study that is part of an ongoing research program that calls into question previous, frequently cited findings in psychology. Therefore, the impact of this research program is going to be dramatic and far-reaching. In addition, this research is beginning to generate several publications, and is currently being reviewed by the National Science Foundation. So your participation today is very helpful and very important. Before I ask you to fill out the informed consent for this study, is there anyone here that is familiar with my work this research program? [If yes, excuse participant from study without penalty]

The study today is about the ways in which people form impressions of others based on limited information. In this study, you will be asked to read a brief description of a fictional person, and then rate the person on a variety of characteristics and traits based on your impressions. In addition, after you have completed the first task, you will be asked to complete a second questionnaire [turn to BIDR in questionnaire packet and show it to participants] that will give me an idea of your style of responding to questionnaires.

You will not be asked to write your names or any other identifying information on the questionnaires; the data will be kept confidential and completely anonymous, so you can feel free to be entirely honest. Please note, that the only place your name will appear is on the informed consent and that the consent forms are separate from the questionnaires. Therefore, there is no way for me to match your name to the completed questionnaires. That is the procedure that makes your responses anonymous. In addition, no one except the experimenter will see the questionnaires. That is the procedure that makes your responses confidential. So, again, please feel free to be honest with your responses. If at any time you do not feel comfortable enough to give an honest response, you can simply skip the item or feel free to let me know that you wish to be excused from participation and you will be excused from the study without question or penalty.

Please look at this “informed consent” form. [Hand out consent forms.] It summarizes your rights as research participants, as well as some of the things I just told you. [Allow time to read consent forms.] Does any one feel uncomfortable about participating in this study? [Allow time for responses. If yes, excuse participant from study without penalty] OK then, if you are willing to complete this set of questionnaires, go ahead and sign the consent form and write the date. Thanks. [Collect forms.]

Here is the vignette and questionnaires. [Hand out questionnaire packet.] It should only take a few minutes to complete them. Don't stop to think about any question for too long -- your first impressions and immediate reactions are what we want. Do you have any questions? [Answer questions, if any.] Just let me know when you’re done, OK?
Debriefing. Thanks so much! In case you're curious, here's what the study was about. Many studies have been done that show that women prefer men as mates who are high in "social dominance." The assumption in much of this literature is that dominance is somehow equivalent to status. Other researchers believe that dominant behaviors somehow automatically lead to status. We suspect that status is actually distinct from dominance and is also preferable to dominance. In this experiment, there were different versions of the vignettes: One described someone who was high in dominance and high in status; another described someone who was high in dominance and low in status, and so forth. By having different people read and evaluate different combinations of these traits, we will be able to statistically separate the ways in which dominance affects people's ratings (such as how desirable they think the person would be as a romantic partner) from the ways in which status affects their ratings, to see if this distinction is really important and whether it suggests that previous research on dominance and mate preferences requires reinterpretation.

It will take a couple weeks to thoroughly analyze the data, so of course I can't tell you yet what we will find. If you would like to know later how the results turned out, feel free to send an email to me near the end of the semester: Here is my email address if you want to write it down. [Write email address on blackboard].

OK, do you have any questions? [Answer any questions.] Again, thanks very much for helping me out!
REFERENCES


VITA

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