

The Effects of Selective Evaluation on the Perception of Female Cues in Sexually Coercive and Noncoercive Males

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Various models have been proposed by which to understand the phenomenon of sexual coercion within dating relationships. Two are reviewed, including the limitations of each. A third, the situational approach, is outlined as more comprehensive in understanding the problem. One aspect of the model, selective evaluation, is experimentally tested. One-hundred eighty-two college students participated in brief heterosexual interactions and rated each other's behavior in terms of sexual expressiveness, flattery, and interest in future interactions. Behavioral data were also collected to evaluate differences between groups and the role behavioral cues play in the expression and attribution of sexual interest. Results support the hypothesis of selective evaluation in men, and in sexually coercive men in particular. Results are discussed with regard to socialization processes, communication of sexual interest, and recommendations for future research.

KEY WORDS: sexual coercion; situational model; date rape; sexual behavior; miscommunication.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of sexual coercion among college students has been well documented, with up to 96% of college women reporting at least one experience of unwanted sexual contact, and up to 42% of college men admitting to having forced or coerced a partner into an unwanted sexual

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liaison (for review, see Craig, 1990a). The psychological and social impacts of these experiences have also been discussed (DiVasto, 1985; Rynd, 1988; Santiago *et al.*, 1985). What has not been adequately explained, however, is how these situations come to fruition. That is, what is it about the man, the woman, and/or the situation that allows for sexual coercion to take place? Research has largely taken one of two approaches: dispositional or interactional.

Dispositional theory holds that within the individual there are relatively enduring traits, or dispositions that guide and direct his or her behavior. In studies of college students, attitudes, peer group influence, and arousal patterns have been found to distinguish between coercive and non-coercive men. (For a full review, see Craig, 1990a.) Although this theory describes coercive men well, it does not appear that these characteristics can alone account for the occurrence of sexual coercion. Men who have a history of sexual coercion do not coerce every woman they date nor do they coerce every time they date a particular woman. In addition, the relationship between these dispositional characteristics and coercive sexual behavior remains correlational, and therefore does not confirm a causal relationship. Thus, the dispositional model is lacking on both explanatory power and testability.

A second approach to studying the phenomenon of sexual coercion is that using interactional theory, which emphasizes the importance of the person's dispositions as they interact with a particular situation. Shotland (1988) has proposed an interactional model of acquaintance rape which focuses on the differences between beginning, early, and relational date rape. In beginning acquaintance rape, which occurs on the first or second date, the male's intent is to rape. If rape occurs later in the relationship, after approximately 4-10 dates, it is, according to Shotland, a categorically different phenomenon. In this type of acquaintance rape, the male does not intend to go against his date's wishes, but rather misunderstands her behavior. Shotland (1985) hypothesized that coercive men and victimized women are at the extremes on the continuum of labeling sexual interest. That is, coercive men are especially likely to mislabel friendly behavior as sexual interest, while victimized women are especially likely to mislabel sexual interest as friendliness. Finally, in relational rape, Shotland's (1988) model focuses on the distribution of power in the relationship. When sex is absent from a relationship, the female is in control. Therefore, to regain the control, the coercive male, regardless of his own values, is likely to introduce the idea of sexual intercourse. If the female resists, he becomes angry and forces her to have sex.

Although this model provides a useful framework for understanding differences in sexual coercion across the relationship, it remains a person-

situation interactional model. That is, it suggests that events are determined by dispositions and situations, and that knowing the dispositions of a given person and the characteristics of a given situation are both necessary and sufficient to make predictions about outcomes. However, when examining social processes, this type of model appears simplistic. Participants in social situations such as coercive sexual encounters are not passive participants; they are not only free to change their own behavior, but by doing so they also alter the situation and thus, their partner's behavior.

Therefore, a third approach to understanding the problem of sexual coercion has been proposed by Craig (1990a), utilizing the situational approach to social behavior (Snyder and Ickes, 1985). The situational model is an active, interactive model of human behavior. It includes individual personality characteristics, situational components, cognitive processes, and behavioral effects of participants in a social situation. This model states that participants bring to a situation certain dispositions, or traits, but they also select the situations and manipulate them to allow for expression of their dispositions. The situational model goes beyond dispositional theory and person-situation interactional theory by allowing the participants to play active roles in the selection and dynamics of social situations (Snyder and Ickes, 1985).

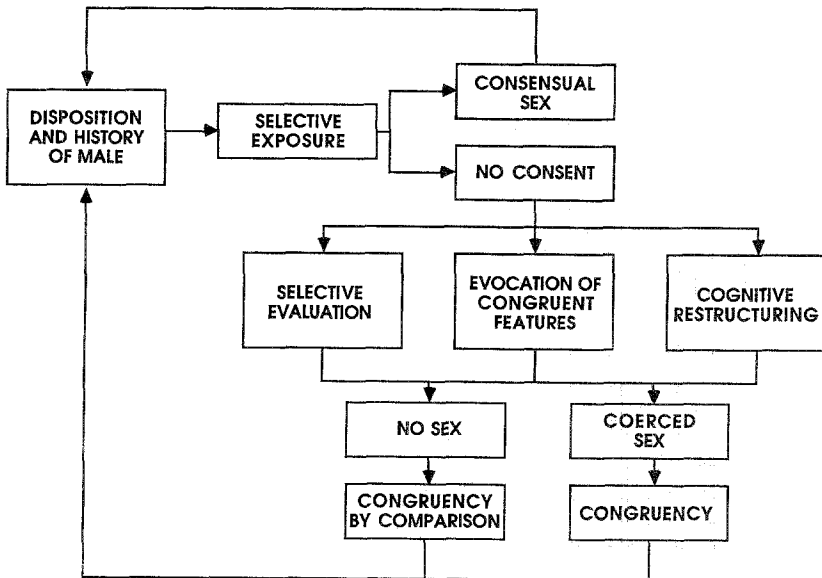


Fig. 1. The situational model of sexual coercion. (From Craig, 1990a.)

This model, applied to the phenomenon of sexual coercion by Craig (1990a), provides an explanatory structure for coercive sexual behavior in dating situations. Through the processes of selective exposure, selective evaluation, evocation of congruent features, cognitive restructuring, and congruency by comparison, coercive men are able to create situations in which they can express their dispositions and attain sexual contact; or if they are unsuccessful, they are able to interpret the outcome as due to external factors. These processes are illustrated in Fig. 1 (from Craig, 1990a).

Examining the model of sexual coercion presented in Fig. 1, the dispositional and selective exposure components are well supported by the literature. However, within the selective exposure literature, there is controversy over the type of female typically chosen as dating and sexual partners by coercive males. For example, Kanin and Parcell (1977) and Korman and Leslie (1982) found that more sexual coercion victims were supportive of feminist ideology than nonvictims. However, Levine-MacCombie and Koss (1986), Poppen (1988), and Lewin (1985) indicated that victimized women were traditional in their beliefs about sex roles and behavior. Similar discrepancies have been found in nearly all coercion "risk factor" research.

One possible explanation for the discrepancies in the literature is that victimization is random, and there are no risk factors for sexual coercion. However, this does not seem likely, as one's choice of dating partner is rarely random. Rather, it may be that the types of measures used to describe these women are not sensitive to the ongoing processes within them. It is possible that women who are selected by coercive men are selected because of their tendency to adapt their personality style to the particular situation in which they participate. This type of person, whom Snyder (1974) has labeled "high self-monitoring," would be a likely candidate for sexual aggression. As she would be sensitive to the desires and expectations of her date and change her behavior to fit those expectations, the coercive man could easily exploit her desire to please. This tendency could also explain the conflicting descriptive data, as the high self-monitoring women would likely adjust their self-descriptions to fit their perceptions of what the researchers expected. The current research examines this question using an experimental design.

Moving beyond the dispositional theory and the person-situation interaction theory however, requires a thorough examination of the remaining components of the situational model. The situational approach places primary importance on the "individual's interpretation of the events that he or she experiences" (Snyder and Ickes, 1985, p. 896), or selective evaluation. In this process, coercive men are hypothesized to place prime importance on those aspects of the situation that encourage them to make sexual advances and

minimize those that would inhibit them; that is, they use a subjective weighting process in their evaluation of their date's and their own behavior.

Examining a similar process, Abbey and colleagues (Abbey, 1982, 1987; Abbey and Melby, 1986) demonstrated that men in general have a more sexualized view of women's behavior than do women. This may be taken as support of selective evaluation of women's behavioral cues. However, when incarcerated rapists are asked to interpret women's cues, the findings are inconsistent (Giannini and Fellows, 1986; Lipton *et al.*, 1987). Therefore, the selective evaluation component of the model has not yet been confirmed.

In the present study, men with and without histories of sexual coercion were introduced to women and asked to rate the women in terms of their sexual cues and availability. Since having information, and the nature of that information, about the woman may influence perceptions about her, half of the men were given information regarding the self-monitoring tendencies of the women with whom they interacted.

Differences in ratings were expected in the attributions they would make about the high and low self-monitoring women. The women also provided information about their own sexuality, sensuality, and sexual availability. The women's information was then used to compare with the men's interpretations to determine whether the men accurately perceived the women's cues, or whether they were selectively evaluating her cues to fit their own schemata and dispositions. Further, since Abbey (1982) found that men attribute more sexuality to themselves than do their female partners, both the men and women rated the man's cues along the dimensions of sexuality, sensuality, and availability.

As a further investigation of the differences in cues emitted by coercive and noncoercive men and high and low self-monitoring women, the interactions were videotaped and coded for specific behaviors that appear to reflect sexual interest (Givens, 1978; Ickes *et al.*, 1982; Meuhlenhard *et al.*, 1986; Patterson, 1982). Comparisons were made between groups, comparing senders' interpretations of their behavior with receivers' interpretations.

This study utilized two separate $2 \times 2 \times 2$ factorial designs to examine the relationships between (i) the sexual history of the male (coercive vs. noncoercive), (ii) the self-monitoring tendencies of the female (high vs. low self-monitoring), and (iii) the amount of information available to the male about their female partners with respect to several outcome variables: the male's ratings of the female's intentions/attitudes toward them; the female's ratings of their male partner's intentions and attitudes; and the behavioral cues that subjects use in making these determinations.

METHOD

Subjects

Subjects were 91 men and 91 women recruited from undergraduate psychology courses. Four men and 4 women were excluded from analyses, based on prior acquaintance. Subjects received course credit for participation. Subjects' mean age was 22.0 years ($SD = 4.06$, range = 18–40). White students only were used, as Abbey (1982) pointed out that race may confound the behavior ratings of participants. Additionally, as sexual experience may affect sexual attitudes (Craig *et al.*, 1989), all subjects had previously engaged in sexual intercourse at least once.

Selection of Subjects

Two screening instruments were used in the selection of subjects. The first was the Sexual Experiences Survey (SES; Koss and Oros, 1982). The SES is a 12-item survey which assesses male subjects' experience with coercive sexual contact. Subjects were classified as coercive if they admitted to having "been in a situation where you became so sexually aroused that you could not stop yourself even though the woman didn't want to [have sexual intercourse]." The scale has demonstrated sufficient reliability and validity, as reported by Koss and Gidycz (1985).

The second instrument used for the selection of female subjects was the Self-Monitoring Scale (SMS; Snyder's 1974). The SMS is an 18-item measure of personality stability across social situations. Subjects are classified as low self-monitors if they remain much the same across a wide variety of social settings. Conversely, subjects are classified as high self-monitors if they adapt their behavior to fit individual situations. Reliability and validity for the SMS were reported by Snyder (1987).

Procedure

Once identified as coercive/noncoercive male and high/low self-monitoring female, subjects were randomly assigned to opposite-sex partners and information conditions. Subjects interacted with their partners in a structured setting for 5 min, after which they completed questionnaires concerning their impressions about their partners and information about themselves. The following describes the experimental procedure in detail.

Upon arrival to the laboratory, subjects were greeted by the experimenter and told that they would be participating in a study on the acquaintance process. They were also told that, as a part of the study, they were to write brief essays for their partners to read, describing how they react in initial social encounters. The purpose of this task, subjects were told, was to examine whether having the advance information about the other person helps in the initial acquaintance process. Subjects were told that the information would be exchanged prior to the initial encounter, but that during the actual meeting, they were not to discuss the information they received. It was emphasized that this was an experimental manipulation, where some subjects did not receive information about each other, and that this was to be the only difference between groups. Therefore, if they were to discuss their essay information, they would have been introducing a confound into the experiment. In actuality, the essays that subjects wrote were not used; standard descriptions of the female as either high or low self-monitoring, consistent with the screening evaluation, were substituted and presented as the female's essay. In addition, a standard description of the male was substituted in place of the male's essay.

Subjects were lead to separate areas, where they completed their essays. The experimenter collected the essays and, if the subjects were in the informed condition, distributed the standardized descriptions to them. If they were in the uninformed condition, they were told that, although their essays would not be used, the writing of the essays was a necessary part of the internal control of the experiment.

Both subjects were then lead to the conversation room and prior acquaintance was assessed. Those who knew each other beyond simple recognition were not used. Subjects were instructed to discuss their experiences of the previous semester at USC for 7 min. They were told that they would be rating aspects of the conversation following the task. The experimenter then returned to an observation room, from where the interaction was videotaped.

Following the conversation period, subjects returned to separate areas to complete the rating scales and a demographic questionnaire. Following completion, subjects were brought back together for debriefing by the experimenter.

Measures

Interest Scale. The Interest Scale is an expanded version of Abbey's (1982) 32-item Sexual Behavior Rating Scale of heterosexual interactions. The modified scale includes three subscales: the Sexual Expressiveness In-

dex, the Flattery Index, and the Interest in Future Interaction Index. The Sexual Expressiveness Index subscale is composed of nine items, measuring the overt expression of sexual interest, e.g., flirtatious, seductive, promiscuous, as rated by the subject or his/her partner. The Flattery Index subscale contains three items that measure the less direct expressions of sexual interest, e.g. flattering, inviting. The third subscale, the Interest in Future Interaction Index, is composed of five items measuring the subjects' own or their partners' perceived interest in continuing the relationship beyond the initial acquaintance. This interest may range from getting to know the partner to interest in pursuing a sexual relationship. Craig (1990b) demonstrated sufficient reliability for each of these subscales.

Behavioral Coding. Five-minute segments of each interaction were coded for frequent eye contact (> 50% of the time), frequent smiling (> 50% of the time), leaning toward the partner (> 50% of the time), touching the partner, self-grooming (playing with hair, rubbing own arm or leg), using animated speech, fidgeting (i.e., playing with a pencil or other object), and nervous leg or foot movements. Two independent raters, one male and one female, coded the behaviors, with an initial mean interrater reliability of .89. All disagreements were resolved through discussion to attain complete agreement.

Multiphasic Sex Inventory, Social-Sexual Desirability Scale (SSDS; Nichols and Molinder, 1984). The SSDS consists of 35 items in a true/false format, and assesses a subject's willingness to admit sexual feelings. Kalichman (1989) reported sufficient reliability and validity for the SSDS.

RESULTS

Manipulation Check

Sixty subjects, independent from the experimental subjects, participated in a manipulation check for the self-monitoring style descriptions. Each subject was given one of the stylized descriptions and the instructions to complete the SMS *as if he or she were the 21-year-old female described in the paragraph*. The resulting SMS's were scored and classified as high or low self-monitoring. A frequency tabulation on these results indicated that 86.6% of the descriptions were correctly classified by subjects, reflecting that the descriptions provided did represent accurately the self-monitoring concept and that the two descriptions were significantly different from each other.

Differences on the SSDS

Differences between groups on the SSDS were analyzed using two $2 \times 2 \times 2$ (Sexual History of Male \times Self-Monitoring Status of Female \times Information Condition) analyses of variance (ANOVA), one for male and one for female subjects. For both groups of subjects, the results of the ANOVAs were nonsignificant, indicating that there was no consistent difference in willingness to admit sexual feelings by group; male: $F(7, 77) = 0.40, p > 0.90$; female: $F(7, 72) = 1.99, p > 0.06$. Therefore, the SSDS was not used as a covariate in further analyses.

Differences on the Interest Scale and Behavioral Cues

Multivariate analyses of variance were conducted to investigate differences between groups on the Interest Scale subscales. Four $2 \times 2 \times 2$ (Sexual History of Male \times Self-Monitoring Status of Female \times Information Condition) MANOVAs were used, analyzing separately for each gender and partner vs. self ratings. Pairwise comparisons were also conducted on the subscales of the Interest Scale to examine the differences between males and females across manipulation conditions. Additionally, videotapes of the conversations between subjects were analyzed and coded for specific behaviors for both males and females. Chi-square analyses were performed to assess the nature of between-group differences.

Evaluations of Females

Across manipulation conditions, male subjects rated their partners as significantly more sexually expressive than the females rated themselves, $t(80) = 4.55, p < 0.001$. No differences were found on the pairs' ratings of the females' Flattery or Interest in Future Interaction. Mean subscale scores on male and female ratings of female subjects are presented in Table I.

Behavioral cues were also examined between sexes, across treatment conditions. A significant difference was found on grooming, with a greater percentage of the females demonstrating grooming behavior than the males, $\chi^2(1) = 5.04, p < 0.03$. No other behavioral differences were found between sexes. Frequency tabulations of the coded behaviors for males and females are presented in Table II.

Within manipulation conditions, main effects for male coercive history and information status were found on males' ratings of their partners on the Interest Scale subscales. Coercive males rated their partners as more sexually expressive than the noncoercive males, $F(1, 75) = 4.51, p < 0.04$;

Table I. Subjects' Ratings of Females on the Interest Scale: Means (and Standard Deviations) of Main Effects ($n = 87$)

	Sexual expressiveness		Flattery		Future interaction	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Noncoercive male	20.3 ^a (8.8)	16.4 (6.7)	11.1 (4.3)	10.3 (3.6)	12.1 (5.2)	12.1 (4.3)
Coercive male	24.7 ^a (11.2)	14.8 (4.7)	10.7 (4.0)	9.6 (3.6)	12.8 (4.9)	11.7 (4.0)
Low self-monitoring female	23.0 (10.7)	15.4 (6.8)	10.9 (4.0)	9.4 ^b (3.6)	12.1 (4.6)	11.7 (4.2)
High self-monitoring female	21.2 (9.3)	16.1 (4.4)	11.0 (4.3)	10.8 ^b (3.4)	12.9 (5.7)	12.2 (4.2)
Noninformed condition	24.3 (10.4)	14.4 (6.7)	11.7 (4.1)	9.9 (3.5)	14.0 ^c (5.1)	12.2 (4.6)
Informed condition	20.5 (9.7)	15.9 (5.1)	10.2 (4.1)	10.0 (3.7)	11.1 ^c (4.7)	11.6 (3.8)
Total group	21.7 ^d (10.3)	15.6 ^d (6.0)	10.9 (4.2)	10.0 (3.6)	12.4 (5.0)	11.9 (4.2)

^a $p < 0.05$, noncoercive vs. coercive males' ratings of their partners' sexual expressiveness.

^b $p < 0.06$, (ns), low vs. high self-monitoring females' ratings of their own flattery.

^c $p < 0.05$, noninformed vs. informed males' ratings of their partners' interest in future interactions.

^d $p < 0.001$, males' vs. females' ratings of females' sexual expressiveness.

noninformed males expressing the belief that their partners had greater interest in future interactions with them than did the informed males, $F(1, 75) = 6.98$, $p < 0.02$.

No main effect was found for female self-monitoring tendency, and there were no significant interaction effects for males' ratings of their partners.

Subjects rated their own behavior along the same dimensions as their partners rated them so that a comparison between self-perception and perceptions by others could be made. In these ratings, the women with the coercive men did not rate themselves as more sexually expressive than those with the noncoercive men, nor did the women in the noninformed group rate their own level of interest in future interaction with their partners as higher than the women in the informed group. Thus, the pattern of self-

Table II. Frequencies of Coded Behaviors: Males and Females ($n = 159$)

	% Males	% Females
Eye contact > 50% of the time	59	67
Smiling > 50% of the time	40	47
Forward lean > 50% of the time	11	15
Touching	0	0
Grooming	24	41 ^a
Animated speech	49	51
Fidgeting	53	58
Frequent leg or foot movements	40	45

^a $p < 0.05$.

ratings by women did not match the ratings made of the women by the men. One area in which there was a between-groups difference on women's self-ratings was in a tendency to flatter one's partner. Although not statistically significant, there was a tendency for the high self-monitoring women to rate themselves as more flattering than the low self-monitoring women, $F(1, 77) = 3.70, p < 0.06$.

Examination of the behavioral data indicates that there were differences in behavior between high and low self-monitoring women, but that women's behavior did not vary as a function of male sexual history or information condition. Among the women, there was a significant effect for self-monitoring style on speech animation and object manipulation/fidgeting. The high self-monitoring women were more likely to demonstrate animated speech during the interaction than the low self-monitoring women, $\chi^2(1) = 5.27, p < 0.03$. The low self-monitoring women demonstrated more fidgeting behavior than the high self-monitoring women $\chi^2(1) = 7.66, p < 0.006$. Frequency tabulations of the coded behaviors for each group of women are presented in Table III.

Ratings of Males

Across manipulation conditions, female subjects rated their partners as significantly less sexually expressive, $t(82) = 3.02, p < 0.004$, flattering, $t(84) = 4.60, p < 0.001$, and interested in future contact, $t(83) = 6.25, p < 0.001$, than the males rated themselves. Mean subscale scores on ratings of the male subjects are presented in Table IV.

Table III. Frequencies of Coded Behaviors for Each Main Effects Group: Females ($n = 84$)

	Partner's sexual history (%)		Own style of self-monitoring (%)		Information provided (%)	
	Noncoercive	Coercive	Low	High	No	Yes
Eye contact > 50% of the time	65	69	73	59	68	66
Smiling > 50% of the time	39	53	42	53	53	42
Forward lean > 50% of the time	17	11	13	18	15	15
Touching	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grooming	44	36	41	41	44	39
Animated speech	44	58	39	68 ^a	56	46
Fidgeting	57	58	72	38 ^b	59	56
Frequent leg or foot movements	48	42	52	35	44	46

^a $p < 0.05$.^b $p < 0.01$.

Table IV. Subjects' Ratings of Males on the Interest Scale: Means (and Standard Deviations) of Main Effects ($n = 87$)

	Sexual expressiveness		Flattery		Future interaction	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Noncoercive male	18.1 ^a (9.2)	16.0 (5.9)	11.3 (4.1)	9.0 (3.5)	11.3 (5.2)	10.4 (3.8)
Coercive male	23.5 ^a (10.6)	15.8 (5.4)	12.1 (3.9)	8.7 (3.5)	14.2 (6.3)	10.2 (4.0)
Low self-monitoring female	20.4 (10.5)	15.1 ^b (5.8)	11.3 (3.7)	8.5 (3.6)	14.3 (5.7)	10.1 (3.5)
High self-monitoring female	20.8 (9.8)	17.1 ^b (5.3)	12.1 (4.4)	9.3 (3.3)	14.5 (5.8)	10.7 (4.3)
Noninformed condition	21.6 (9.4)	16.6 (6.4)	12.1 (4.1)	8.8 (3.9)	15.4 ^c (5.9)	10.7 (3.6)
Informed condition	19.6 (10.8)	15.3 (4.9)	11.2 (3.1)	8.9 (4.0)	13.5 ^c (4.1)	10.0 (5.4)
Total group	20.5 ^d (10.2)	16.6 ^d (6.1)	11.6 ^e (4.0)	8.9 ^e (3.5)	14.4 ^f (5.7)	10.2 ^f (3.9)

^a $p < 0.05$, noncoercive vs. coercive males' ratings of their own sexual expressiveness.
^b $p < 0.08$, (ns), Low vs. high self-monitoring females' ratings of their partners' sexual expressiveness.
^c $p < 0.05$, noninformed vs. informed males' ratings of their own interest in future interactions.
^d $p < 0.01$, males' vs. females' ratings of males' sexual expressiveness.
^e $p < 0.001$, males' vs. females' ratings of males' flattery.
^f $p < 0.001$, males' vs. females' ratings of males' interest in future interactions.

Within manipulation conditions, no significant relationships were found on the Interest Scale subscales for women's ratings of their partners.

In contrast, the males' self-ratings produced a number of differences between groups. While no main effect was found for female self-monitoring tendency, main effects were found on the Interest Scale subscales for male coercive history and information status. Coercive males rated themselves as more sexually expressive than the noncoercive males, $F(1, 75) = 5.12$, $p < 0.03$, and noninformed males reported slightly more interest in future interactions with their partners than the informed males, $F(1, 75) = 3.46$, $p < 0.06$.

Although men differed in their self-descriptions according to their sexual history and information condition, behavioral data did not support

these self-perceived differences. However, males' behavior did differ as a function of their partners' self-monitoring style. Men with high self-monitoring partners smiled more frequently than the low self-monitoring partner group, $\chi^2(1) = 5.12, p < 0.03$. Frequency tabulations of the coded behaviors for each group of men are presented in Table V.

DISCUSSION

As a group, men interpreted the women's behavior as more sexually expressive than the women judged themselves to be. This result replicates the findings of Abbey and colleagues (Abbey, 1982, 1987; Abbey and Melby, 1986), and supports their contention that men have a more sexualized view of events than do women. Abbey and Melby (1986) concluded that this "misinterpretation" of female cues may be a contributing factor in the occurrence of sexual coercion. This latter conclusion is also supported by the current study, as sexually coercive men were more prone than noncoercive men to label the women's behavior as sexually motivated.

In an effort to objectively evaluate the validity of the men's attributions, videotapes of the interactions were coded for specific behaviors that have been described as relating information about sexual interest. Examination of the women's behavior reveals that women were significantly more likely to groom themselves during the brief interactions than were the men. Additionally, although not statistically significant, women were also more likely to maintain eye contact, smile, lean toward their partners, and have animated speech—all behaviors that suggest sexual interest. They were also more likely to fidget and move their feet and legs—behaviors that suggest nonattraction. Given that the men interpreted women's cues in a sexual manner, it may be that they were interpreting the total behavior constellation as an indication of interest, although the women were apparently unaware of the messages they were communicating.

High self-monitoring women were especially likely to demonstrate "interested" behaviors; however, neither they nor the men with whom they interacted labeled their actions as more sexually motivated than the low self-monitors'. The fact that these behavioral differences did not result in differential attributions by men further supports the hypothesis of selective evaluation. In this case, the men were responding to the women primarily based on the cues that favored their position, while ignoring those cues that may have refuted their attributions.

We also studied whether the men were aware of the messages they were sending to their partners, and whether those messages were received as intended. All subjects rated the men's behavior and attitudes in terms

Table V. Frequencies of Coded Behaviors for Each Main Effects Group: Males (*n* = 87)

	Own sexual history (%)		Partner's self-monitoring style (%)		Information provided (%)	
	Noncoercive	Coercive	Low	High	No	Yes
Eye contact > 50% of the time	65	51	57	62	62	56
Smiling > 50% of the time	40	41	28	56 ^a	33	46
Forward lean > 50% of the time	16	5	11	12	10	12
Touching	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grooming	27	19	19	29	25	22
Animated speech	52	46	51	47	53	46
Fidgeting	50	57	51	56	48	59
Frequent leg or foot movements	39	41	31	47	40	39

^a*p* < 0.05.

of their sexual expressiveness, flattery, and interest in future interactions with their female partners. In each of these areas, men rated themselves higher. As with their interpretations of the women's behavior, the coercive men were especially prone to label their own behavior as sexually expressive. Women's judgments did not differ as a function of men's sexual history. This pattern of results mirrors the ratings of women's behavior and attitudes and supports the hypothesis of selective evaluation by men, of not only others' cues but also their own. Again this appears to be more descriptive of coercive men than noncoercive men, although all male subjects, regardless of the women's actual response to their behavior, continued to believe that their behavior was sexually appealing.

In summary, the data support the primary hypothesis of selective evaluation as an operative process in heterosexual encounters, especially when the male has a history of sexual coercion. One unexpected finding was the main effect for information status; having no information about a woman's self-monitoring style was more likely to elicit men's interest in future interactions and to lead men to believe that the women were sexually interested in them. This may be a reflection of the role of fantasy and assumptions in attraction. Both descriptions of the women were direct and assertive statements about her ideas and behavior patterns. It may be that the directness of the self-descriptions was unappealing to men, in that they had less opportunity to project their own ideas about the women. Socialization of men may also play a part in this preference. The descriptions were caricatures of high and low self-monitors. It may be that either extreme is seen as an undesirable trait in women, who are "supposed to be" less assertive and self-confident than the characterizations suggested. Thus, while it was expected that the description of a high self-monitoring woman would be more appealing to men than the description of a low self-monitoring woman, both appeared equally unappealing.

The expectation of a main effect for self-monitoring style received only partial support. While the high self-monitors were more likely to label their own behavior as flattering, this difference was not statistically significant nor was it an admission of overt sexual interest. Further, men expressed no preference for high or low self-monitoring women. It is interesting that the increase in interested behaviors of both high self-monitoring women and the men interacting with them was not predictive of an increase in self-reported sexual interest. Rather, the behavioral differences between groups seems only to provide construct validity for the concept of high self-monitoring, wherein they express and elicit more flattering behavior without regard to their inner feelings.

Future research is needed to examine more closely the process of selective evaluation in sexually coercive encounters and relationships, as

well as to examine the other aspects of coercion presented in the situational model. The current study provides support for the major hypotheses; however, limitations of the study should be addressed.

The artificiality of the encounters between subjects works as both a strength and a limitation. As the interactions studied in this experiment were brief, initial, and artificial, it is surprising that the effects of selective evaluation were seen at all. This emphasizes the magnitude of the miscommunications that are apparently occurring between men and women. It is likely that this level of misunderstanding is magnified in more natural, social situations. Further research examining the sexual attributions formed by men and women would benefit by using more naturalistic settings.

A second limitation was the descriptions of women provided to the men. Both were descriptive of a woman at the extreme end of the self-monitoring continuum. Although women were matched categorically to the descriptions by their self-report, it is unlikely that many of the women were as extreme in their self-monitoring styles as the descriptions suggested. Thus, it appears that men were responding more to the quantitative aspects of the information than to the qualitative aspects. In future research, it is suggested that information be more subtle and more reflective of the actual characteristics of the individual being described.

A third limitation was the between-subjects design utilized. Although it is not possible to examine male sexual history within subjects, finer distinctions could be made as to the effects of information and female self-monitoring style in a repeated-measures design.

Future research should also address the apparent miscommunications that exist between men and women, and between different types of men and women. That main effects were found not only for sexual history but also for gender suggests that the process of selective evaluation is active in all men, not only coercive men. This suggests the role that early socialization plays in shaping the nature of interactions between men and women. It must also be pointed out that women may be using selective evaluation as well, but in the opposite direction, that is to refute evidence of sexual attraction in themselves and the men with whom they interact. It is not possible to say which group, men or women, was "correctly" interpreting the cues in this study; but it is apparent that there is a misunderstanding between the sexes. Therefore, it is important that prevention work in sexual coercion be twofold. First, increasing awareness of one's own nonverbal cues and increasing the accuracy of interpreting other's cues would serve to decrease the opportunity for misunderstanding. Second, increasing verbal communication between partners rather than relying on nonverbal cues would provide reliable information about one's intentions and expectations,

thereby reducing the risk of sexual coercion and aggression within dating relationships.

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