

Natural Selection

- **Natural selection** is an evolutionary process through which adaptive traits are passed on to ongoing generations because these traits help animals survive and reproduce.
- According to natural selection, those organisms that are best adapted to their environment are most likely to survive and reproduce.
- Thus their genes are more likely to get passed along.

Evolutionary Psychology

- Study the origins of behavior and mental processes emphasizing the adaptive or survival value of such traits
- Behavioral Genetics attempts to explain differences in populations and attribute how much of that is due to genes
- Evolutionary Psychology attempts to explain common behavior **BY LOOKING AT WHAT WAS HELPFUL TO SURVIVAL OF THE SPECIES**

Evolutionary Psychology

- Evolutionary psychologists believe that behavior is strongly influenced by inherited factors, and that every human being acts (consciously, but mostly unconsciously) to enhance their **inclusive fitness** –
 - frequency and distribution of their genes in future generations. As Steven Pinker puts it, 'the ultimate goal that the mind was designed to attain is maximizing the number of copies of the genes that created it'.
- Selfish Gene Theory – Richard Dawkins

Human Traits

A number of human traits have been identified as a result of pressures afforded by natural selection.

Why do infants fear strangers when they become mobile?

Why are most parents so passionately devoted to their children?

Why do people fear spiders and snakes?

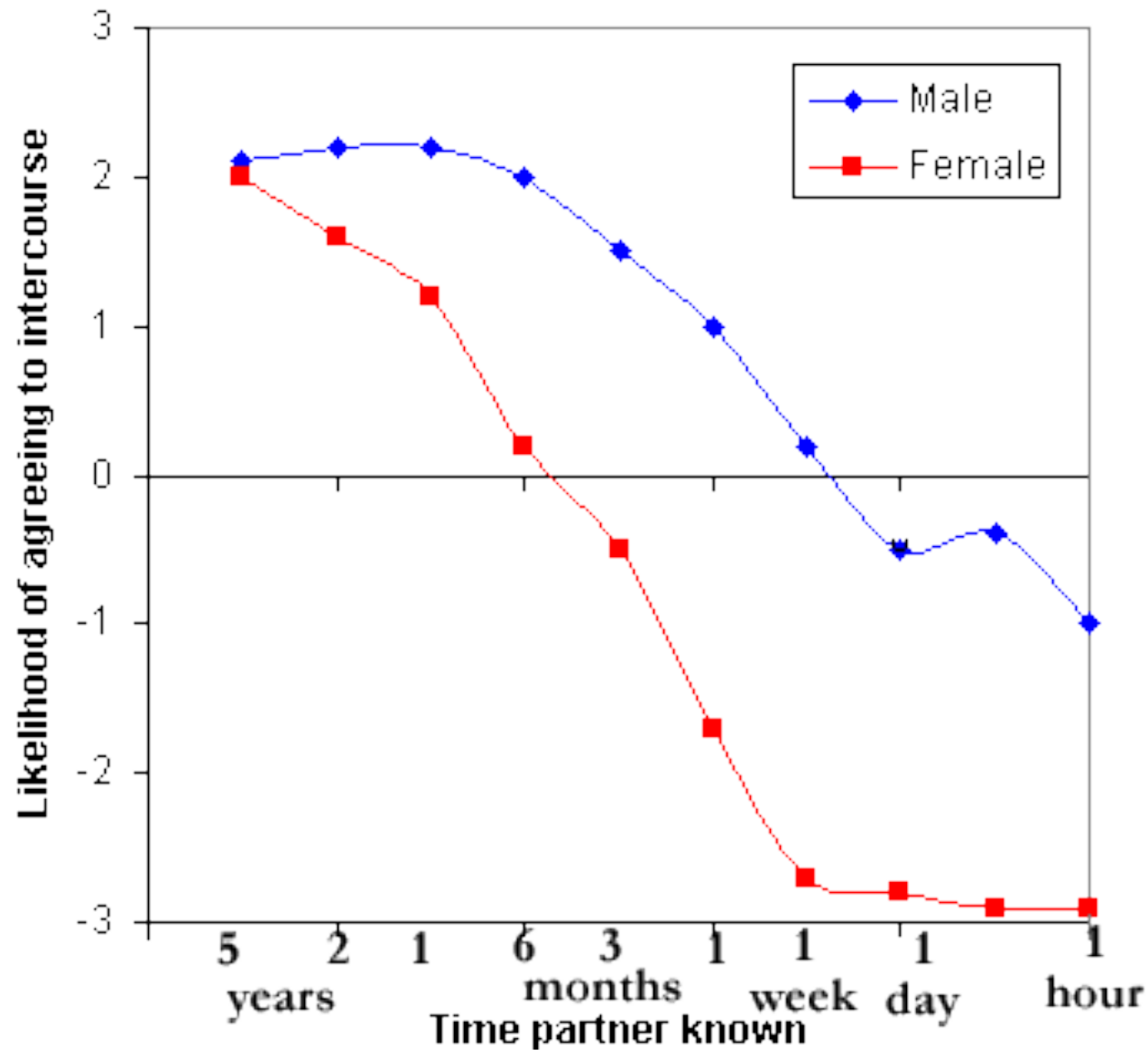
Language

- (Pinker 1994,1997,2002)
- All children acquire language without specific instruction
- This happens in all cultures at about the same age and in the same stages
- The nature of all human languages is the same (nouns, verbs, subjects, questions etc.)
- Conclusion: Our brains are hardwired for language. Even identified a gene found only in humans believed to be linked to this.

“I have been noticing you around campus and I find you to be very attractive. Would you go to bed with me tonight?”

- Russell Clark and Elaine Hatfield (1978)
- Average-looking student research assistants
- Women = 0%
- Men = 75%
- Some men replied “Why do we have to wait until tonight.”
- Repeated in 1982 and in the late 1980s with the same results. (50-75% of the men said yes.)

Sex Difference in Likelihood of Agreeing to Sexual Intercourse



Buss & Schmidt,
Psychological Review ,

100, 204-232, 1993

Partner Selection

Females and males have a particular interest in selecting partners that will enhance their reproductive success and inclusive fitness

Human Sexuality

Gender Differences in Sexuality

Males and females, to a large extent, behave and think similarly. Differences in sexes arise in regards to reproductive behaviors.

- Due to the reproductive reality, it would seem most adaptive for women to find a mate that gives the best genes, resources, and long-term parental care.
- Males can pass on as many genes as they can find willing partners.

What Women Want?

- (Singh 1995)
- Healthy looking men
- Affluent
- Mature
- Dominant
- Bold
- Offer long-term mating and investment (Gangestad and Simpson 2000)

Explanation of Partner Selection in Women

- **Females** have evolved mechanisms that enable them to detect men that will transfer resources to their offspring (i.e. **health** and **paternal investment**).
- These are sometimes referred to as '**good provider**' and '**good genes**' attributes in the male



A



B



C



D

What Guys Want?

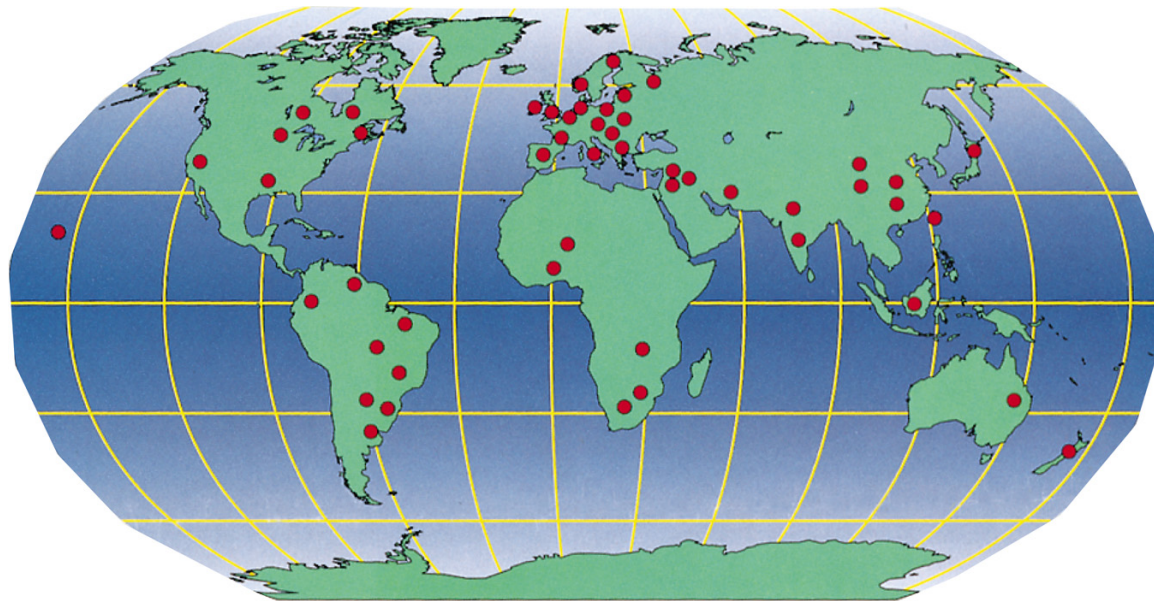
- A waist to hip ratio (WHR) of about 0.7 (the hour glass figure)
- Full lips and small noses
- Youthfulness
- These features are associated with a strong immune system, high estrogen level, and developmental stability

Explanation of Partner Selection in Men

- **Males** have evolved mechanisms that enable them to detect females that promise rapid production of offspring, and a disinclination to mate with other men (i.e. **health, fertility and faithfulness**)

Mating Preferences

Males look for youthful appearing females in order to pass their genes into the future. Females, on the other, hand look for maturity, dominance, affluence and boldness in males.



Data based on 37 cultures.

Critiquing the Evolutionary Perspective

Evolutionary psychologists take a behavior and work backward to explain it in terms of natural selection.

Evolutionary psychology proposes genetic determinism and undercuts morality in establishing society.

Where genders are unequal, gender preferences are very different, but when they are closely equal, preferences are more similar

Evolutionary Psychologists Reply

Evolutionary psychologists argue that we need to test behaviors that explain evolutionary principles.

Evolutionary psychologists remind us how we have adapted, but do not dictate how we ought to be.

Males and females are more alike than different, and if we study these differences we can establish their causes.