

INTRODUCTION

The assumption of sex differences in jealousy with men being more sexually jealous and women being more emotionally jealous belongs to the strongest classical predictions of the evolutionary behavioral sciences that received convincing empirical support (e. g., Daly, Wilson, & Weghorst, 1982; Pietrzak, Laird, Stevens, & Thompson, 2002). Altogether, sex differences result from differing evolutionary mating-relevant selection pressures (Maner & Shackelford, 2008).

- Men = prevention of cuckoldry
- Women = preventing mate of investing in other women (Maner & Shackelford, 2008)

RESEARCH QUESTION

We tested the temporal stability of this sex difference using different age cohorts. Do we find robust sex differences in sexual and emotional jealousy?

METHOD

Yearly: 1986–2008 (except 1998; 2005)

German university students (lecture „Introduction to Psychology“; **N = 4.737**; 3.134 ♀)

Questionnaire: forced-choice item with two scenarios from which one had to be chosen:

A (emotional fidelity):

“If anything, I would prefer my partner to sleep with someone else, but be with me with thoughts.”

VS

B (sexual fidelity):

“If anything, I would prefer my partner to sleep with me, but be with another person with thoughts.”

RESULTS

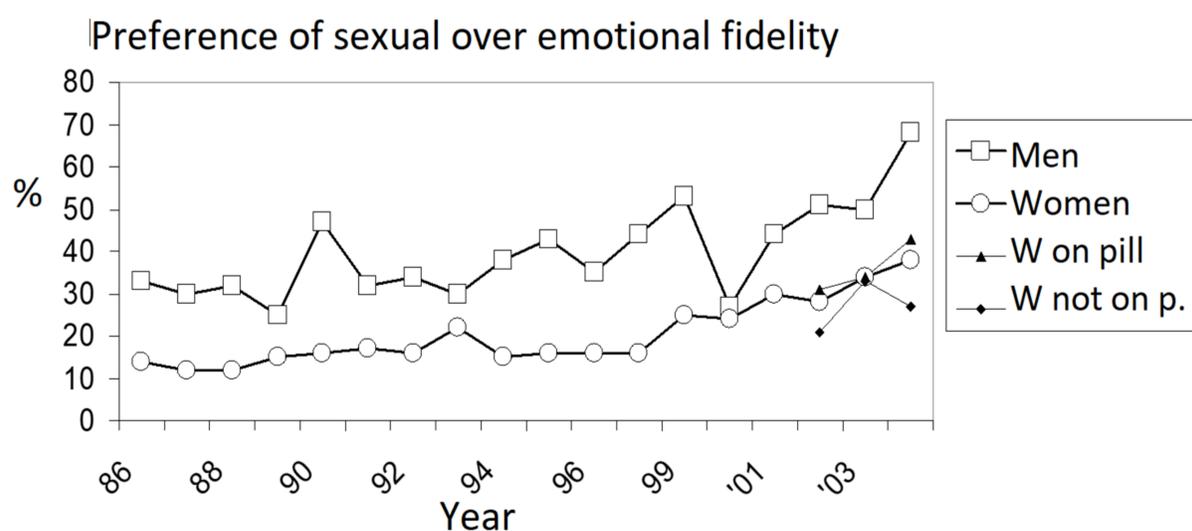
♂ > ♀ preference for sexual (over emotional) fidelity (in %)

Average across all measurement points: 17.4 % ♀, 34.1 % ♂ reported preference for sexual fidelity

Robustness of sex differences in jealousy across time

! However ! also overall increase of the preference for sexual fidelity over time for both sexes (see Figure 1)

Figure 1. Sex differences in sexual vs. emotional jealousy.



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DISCUSSION

Our results support the temporal stability of sex differences in jealousy with men being more sexually jealous and, thus, also the assertion that this sex difference can be explained evolutionarily. However, we also found evidence of an overall increase of the preference for sexual fidelity over time for both sexes, which could mean that also cultural factors play their part. Particularly for the latter, future research including cultural variables is needed.

REFERENCES

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