More unrestricted individuals, in contrast, typically become involved in temporary, short-term relationships characterized by lower levels of commitment and emotional intimacy. Unrestricted individuals also gravitate toward more physically attractive and higher status partners, and they place more weight on sexual attraction and the potential for sex when choosing opposite-sex friends (who at some point might become romantic partners). Highly unrestricted individuals are also more likely to cheat—or claim they would cheat—on their current romantic partners, especially if a highly desirable alternative partner became available. In addition, more unrestricted women tend to perceive sexual rewards, resource acquisition, and the refinement of their seductive skills as positive outcomes of pursuing a short-term mating strategy. When trying to attract mates, highly unrestricted men tend to use direct, competitive tactics such as showing off, bragging about past accomplishments, or belittling other men. They also are more likely to display nonverbal behaviors that convey contact-readiness, such as coy smiles, flirtatious glances, and head cants, which are likely to facilitate sexual intimacy without accompanying love, closeness, or commitment. Some recent evidence suggests that more unrestricted women may at times use short-term mating tactics to evaluate, attract, and possibly retain certain men as long-term mates, which is not true of more unrestricted men. In addition, more unrestricted men and women report being more likely to "poach" and be poached by individuals who had been involved in other established relationships.

In conclusion, the sociosexuality construct and measure have spawned a surprising amount of empirical research since the construct was introduced in 1990. From a theoretical standpoint, the most fruitful lines of inquiry have used the sociosexuality construct and measure to test evolutionary-based models of human mating, including important life-span models of social, emotional, and physical development. The sociosexuality construct and measure have also helped to move the study of human mating away from simple sex difference accounts of how and why men and women mate and toward more complex, complete, and accurate models that incorporate the social and environmental conditions under which *both* genders enact short- and/or long-term mating strategies.

Jeffry A. Simpson

See also Hooking Up, Hookups; Sexuality; Sexual Motives; Sexual Standards

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SPEED DATING

Speed dating is an activity designed for individuals who are interested in meeting potential romantic partners. At speed-dating events, participants have the opportunity to meet other attendees on a series of brief, one-on-one, 3- to 8-minute "dates." Heterosexual speed-dating events, for example, typically include 10 to 20 members of each sex, with members of one sex (usually the men) rotating to the next partner after each speed date until everybody has met all of the opposite-sex speed daters. After the event, participants report whether they would ("yes") or would not ("no") be interested in corresponding again with each of their speed-dating partners in the future. If two speed daters say "yes" to each other, they are a *match,* and the host of the speed-dating event gives them the opportunity to contact each other subsequently, perhaps to arrange a more traditional date.

Speed dating more closely resembles a party than a series of blind dates. Compared with parties, however, speed dating offers several advantages, including the assurance that the people who attendees meet are also interested in meeting romantic partners and the security of knowing that awkward or unpleasant dates require only minimal endurance.

History

Rabbi Yaacov Deyo invented speed dating in the late 1990s to help Jewish singles in Los Angeles meet each other. Since then, speed dating has become an international phenomenon serving diverse populations across dozens of countries. It has become a mainstay of popular culture, appearing in television programs, movies, and mainstream news outlets. It has also become big business, with millions of people paying tens of millions of dollars to attend events.

Although mechanisms for meeting romantic partners have existed for time immemorial, the rapid growth and widespread availability of the Internet in the mid-1990s spawned a variety of new avenues for individuals to find and meet partners. For example, today's singles frequently meet each other via online dating (e.g., eHarmony.com, match.com) and social networking Web sites (e.g., facebook.com, myspace.com). Speed dating also emerged with this burst of modern dating innovations, but it does not involve Internet use to the same extent as these other methods. Instead, speed dating is distinctive in featuring face-to-face interaction at the first step of the romantic initiation process. Speed-dating companies (e.g., Cupid.com, HurryDate.com) do allow users to register for events and contact their matches over the Internet, but this online communication does not substitute for the live interactions that lie at the heart of speed dating.

Speed Dating and Romantic Attraction Research

Soon after speed dating became a pop culture phenomenon, scholars recognized it as an efficient means of studying romantic attraction. A stream of articles began appearing in the scientific literature in 2005, with some reporting findings from commercial speed-dating events and others reporting findings from events hosted by romantic attraction scholars for graduate or undergraduate students.

Scholars are enthusiastic about the scientific potential of speed dating because its procedures possess many features that make it an ideal method for studying romantic attraction. For example, speed-dating procedures allow scholars to: (a) study real relationships with a potential future, (b) study both partners from each speed date simultaneously, (c) maintain tight control over the circumstances in which individuals meet potential partners, and (d) examine how individuals select among a series of available romantic partners. Speed-dating procedures also allow scholars to assess background characteristics about individuals before they attend the event and to follow matched pairs into the future to study early relationship development.

A skeptic might question whether these benefits of speed-dating procedures might be offset by the disadvantage of each speed date's brevity. After all, perhaps individuals are not able to learn anything substantive about each other in only a few minutes. Although this concern is reasonable, it is contradicted by decades of research demonstrating that individuals can make impressive and nuanced social evaluations quickly—sometimes in a matter of seconds. Because the social psyche is so sophisticated, people can make speedy social judgments that go well beyond physical attractiveness evaluations. Indeed, one study revealed that speed daters tend to be especially attracted to others who selectively like them: When a speed dater encounters partners who experience romantic desire for everybody they meet, she tends not to reciprocate this desire, but when she encounters partners who experience romantic desire uniquely for her, she tends to reciprocate this selective desire.

Other speed-dating research has explored the roles that race and sex play in predicting romantic attraction. For example, evidence now suggests that (a) men are less selective in their "yessing" decisions than women are (especially as the number of attendees at the event gets larger) and (b) women show stronger preferences for partners of their own race than men do. Additional research has demonstrated that both men and women show strikingly poor ability to predict in advance which

characteristics of their speed-dating partners will inspire their romantic desire at the events. In other words, people may not know what they initially desire in a romantic partner.

Conclusion

Although speed dating is only a decade old, it has already substantially influenced the relationship initiation process for millions of singles and the scientific methodology employed by scholars of romantic attraction. It will be interesting to see whether speed dating's popularity continues to expand over the next decade and whether speed dating proves more or less effective than other methods at spawning meaningful, long-term romantic relationships.

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See also Commercial Channels for Mate Seeking; First Impressions; Initiation of Relationships; Internet Dating; Interpersonal Attraction; Reciprocity of Liking; Social Relations Model

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Stage Theories of Relationship Development

Theories of relationship development try to explain how partnerships change over time. Such theories highlight the dynamic process of evolution across the life span of relationships. *Stage models* are one class of theories of relationship development. Stage models propose that relationship development occurs as a succession of discrete phases. This entry identifies core assumptions of stage theories, describes examples, and evaluates their strengths and weaknesses.

Assumptions of Stage Theories

One assumption of stage theories is that relationship progression is marked by a series of delineated phases that partners must negotiate over time. A *stage* is an idiosyncratic period in the life span of a relationship that is noticeably different from adjacent periods. According to stage theories, partners experience a unique constellation of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in each phase. Stage theories seek to (a) identify the phases that occur across the trajectory of relationship development and (b) describe the defining attributes of each phase.

A related assumption is that relationship development is punctuated at irregular intervals by events that transform the nature of the partnership. Stage theories portray relationship progression as sporadic, abrupt, and revolutionary. They argue that relationship-transforming changes occur at irregular intervals. Although stage theories recognize that later phases are linked to previous ones, they do not require adjacent stages to resemble one another.

Major Stage Theories

Many stage theories exist in the literature. Although they are united by common assumptions, the theories differ in the number and nature of stages they identify. The following subsections summarize prominent stage theories in approximate chronological order of their origin.

Wheel Model of Love

The wheel model of love, advanced by Ira Reiss, describes four stages in romantic relationship formation. During the *rapport stage,* individuals establish understanding and common ground. Next, in the *self-revelation stage,* partners engage