

# Dating and Mating



# Dating and Modern Capitalism

- Ideology that marriage should be based on love  
→ transformation of dating
- Dating moves from family to “public world” --  
“from the front porch to the back seat”
- Shift of initiative in dating to men
- Shift in surveillance: from family to peers
- Emergence of adolescence (didn't exist before  
the 20th century ) → separate subculture
- Dating is gradually separated from marriage:
  - for fun and recreation
  - a way of gaining status among peers: “rating and dating complex”

# Dating and Mating Trends

- How did the dating and mating practices among the youth change in the last few decades? In your opinion, what causes these changes? How do you think they will change in the future?
- What kind of gender differences do we observe in dating and sex? How have they been changing?



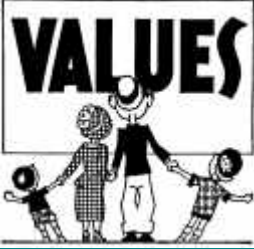
# Sexual Scripts



- Sexuality = both physical and social
- Sexual scripts are social expectations that guide our beliefs about sex. They regulate:
  - With whom?
  - When?
  - Where?
  - Why?
  - How?
  - How often?
- Gender is the primary organizing factor

# Sexual Revolution

- Usually associated with the late 1960s
- The changes in premarital sex started with the transition to industrial capitalism (family control over sexuality declined)
- Attitudes have been inconsistent with behavior
- Rate of change slowed down during the 1950s and accelerated in the 1960s
- The main reasons:
  - Technology=birth control
  - Demographics=baby boom
  - Cultural context=feminism
- Sexual revolution was gendered: Primarily changed the control over women's sexuality
- Both gains and disappointments
- Gender is still the principal organizing feature of sexuality, whatever your sexual orientation is



# Attitudes on Premarital Sex

- Premarital sex=implies future marriage
- General Social Survey data: If a man and a woman have sexual relations before marrying, do you think it is: always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, not wrong at all?
- Not wrong at all:

1970	32%
1982	50%
1992	44%
2004	46%
- Men 54%    Women 40%
- White 49%    Black 35%    Other 33%
- Not wrong at all for 14-16 y.o.: only 4.8% (70%=always wrong)
- Dramatization vs normalization of adolescent sexuality (hormones vs love)

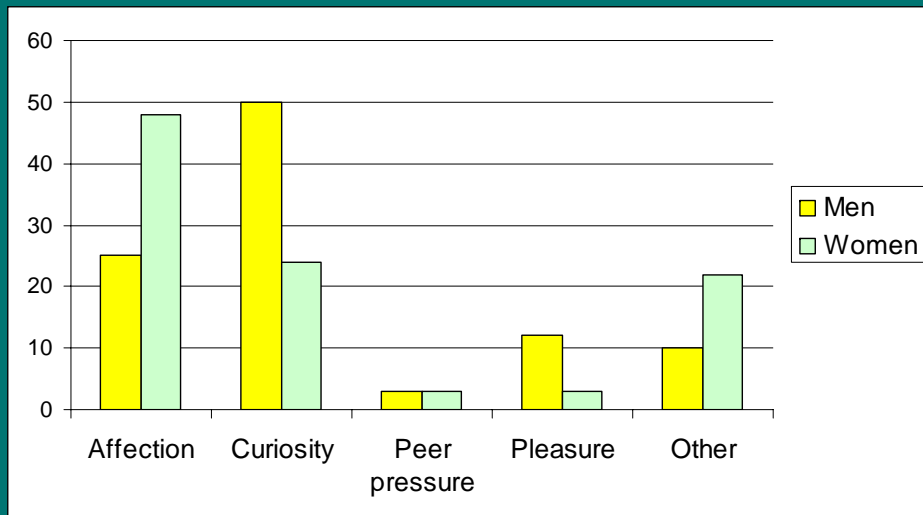
# Sex and the State

- Governments play a role in organizing sexual lives
- Goals: Reproduction, property transfers
- Sweden vs Saudi Arabia
- Governments can't be completely successful: More rigid rules = people marry early
- More liberal views of sexuality (e.g., Sweden) → fewer teenage pregnancies (sex education, strong welfare system)
- Control of sexuality is gendered – “double standard” – the extent varies a lot by country and over time
- The more patriarchal a country, the more tightly the government controls sexuality, and that is primarily control over women

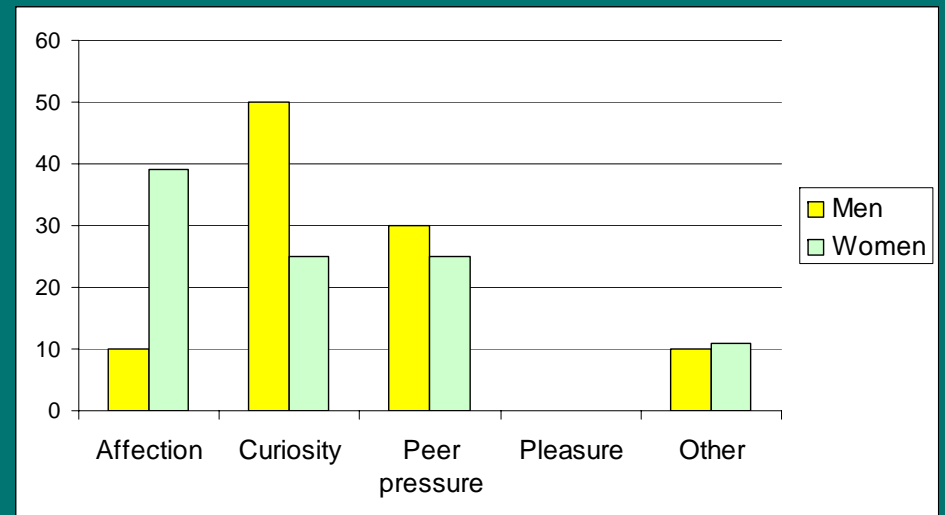
# First Sexual Experience Data (1994)

- Wanted it: 92% of men, 75% of women
- Does not mean that men's first sexual experiences are ideal – men are expected to always want sex
- Among those who wanted to have sex, there are more disappointed reports among women
- Reasons:

## Wanted to have sex



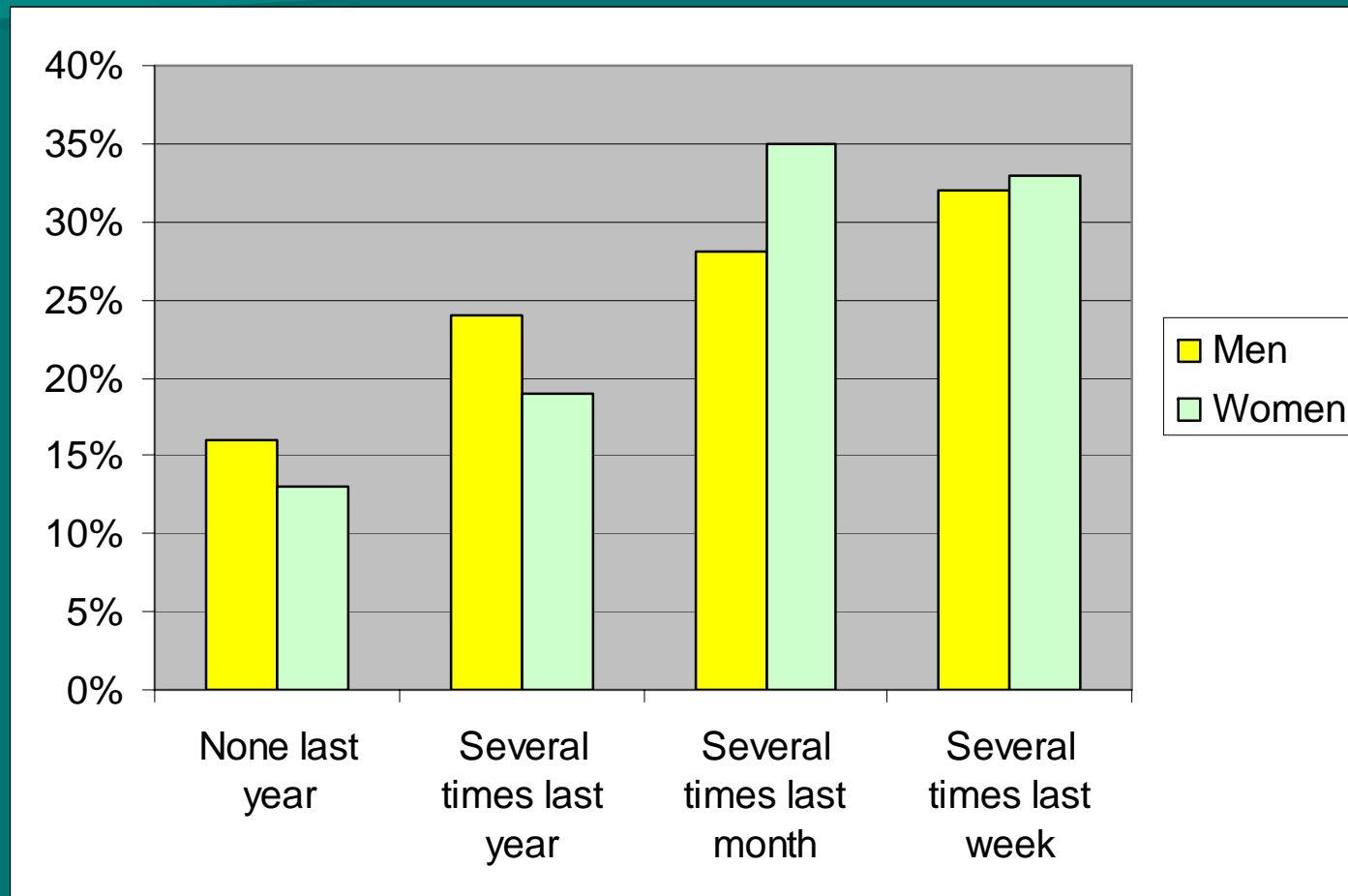
## Didn't want



Source: Schwartz & Rutter 1998



# Sexual Frequency among Single 20-Somethings (1994)



Source: Schwartz & Rutter 1998



# Mating Choices

- Free choice but clear limits -- external and internalized
  1. Opposite sex – limitations for marriage
  2. No relatives = incest taboos. Theories:
    - A. Biological: Ill effects of inbreeding
    - B. Psychological: Freud
    - C. Sociological: avoid family conflict, increase social integration
  3. Homogamy: “birds of a feather flock together”
    - a) Race
      - Interracial marriage: 6.7% U.S marriages, only 0.5% Black-White. Varies by group, by gender, by region.
      - Asians and Latinos -- 30%, Blacks -- 12.9%
      - Gender: Asian women and Black men are much more likely to outmarry than Asian men and Black women
    - b) Religion – becomes less important
    - c) Social class – maintains inequality
    - d) Age – age homogamy is increasing
- Heterogamy: “opposites attract” -- mostly not supported

# The Question of Personality

- Study of 291 newlyweds, by Eva C. Klohnen and Shanhong Luo (University of Iowa), February 2005, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*
- People tend to marry those who are similar in attitudes, religion and values (homogamy)
- Little (not above-chance) similarity in personality (attachment, extraversion, conscientiousness and positive or negative emotions)
- No evidence that opposites attract
- Similarity in personality appears to be more important than similarity in attitudes in having a happy marriage
- What is important in attracting people to one another may not be important in making couples happy

# Mate Preferences Over Time

TABLE 6. RANK ORDERING OF MATE PREFERENCES ACROSS 6 DECADES, BY PARTICIPANT GENDER

Characteristic	Men						Women					
	1939	1956	1967	1977	1984/ 1985	1996	1939	1956	1967	1977	1984/ 1985	1996
Dependable character	1	1	1	3	3	2	2	1	2	3	3	2
Emotional stability, maturity	2	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	2	3
Pleasing disposition	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4
Mutual attraction love	4-----	3-----	2-----	2-----	1-----	1	5-----	6-----	3-----	1-----	1-----	1
Good health	5	6	9	5	6	6	6	9	10	8	9	9
Desire for home, children	6	5	5	11	9	9	7	3	5	10	7	6
Refinement, neatness	7-----	8-----	7-----	10-----	10-----	11	8-----	7-----	8-----	12-----	12-----	12
Good cook, housekeeper	8-----	7-----	6-----	13-----	13-----	14	16	16	16	16	16	16
Ambition, industriousness	9	9	8	8	11	10	3-----	4-----	6-----	6-----	6-----	7
Chastity	10-----	13-----	15-----	17-----	17-----	16	10-----	15-----	15-----	18-----	18-----	17
Education, intelligence	11-----	11-----	10-----	7-----	5-----	5	9-----	14-----	7-----	5-----	5-----	5
Sociability	12-----	12-----	12-----	6-----	8-----	7	11-----	11-----	13-----	7-----	8-----	8
Similar religious background	13	14	13	14	12	12	14	10	11	13	15	14
Good looks	14-----	15-----	11-----	9-----	7-----	8	17-----	18-----	17-----	15-----	13-----	13
Similar education background	15-----	14-----	13-----	12-----	12-----	12	12	8	9	9	10	10
Favorable social status	16	16	16	15	14	17	15	13	14	14	14	15
Good financial prospect	17-----	17-----	18-----	16-----	16-----	13	13	12	12	11	11	11
Similar political background	18	18	17	18	18	18	18	17	18	17	17	18

Source: Buss et al 2001, JMF

# Mate Preferences Over Time

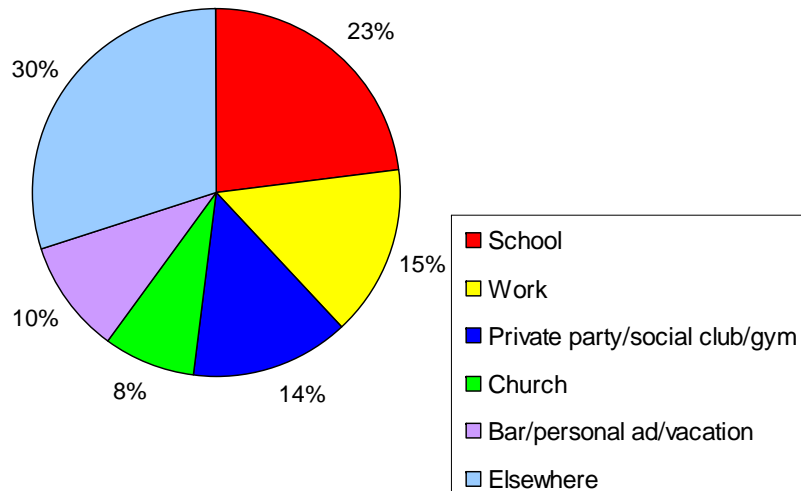
- Mutual attraction & love climbed to #1 for both sexes
- Physical attractiveness is more important for both sexes
- Education, intelligence and sociability is more important for both sexes
- Financial prospects of a mate became more important for men, and ambition of a mate became less important for women
- Domestic skills lost importance for men
- The sexes show maximum similarity in 1996

# Our Survey Results

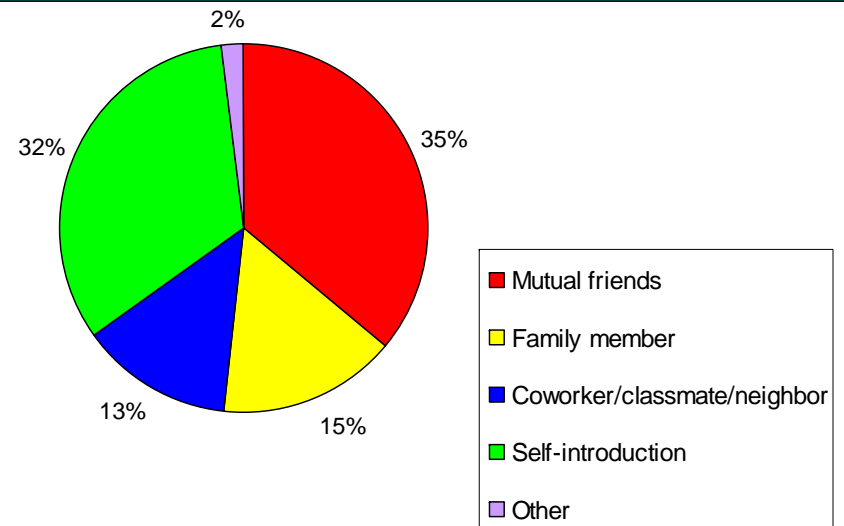
	<b>Our class</b>	<b>Women in class</b>	<b>Women 1996</b>	<b>Men 1996</b>	<b>Total 1996</b>
Mutual attraction, love	1	1	1	1	1
Dependable character	2	2	2	2	2
Emotional stability, maturity	3	3	3	3	3
Education, intelligence	4	4	5	5	5
Desire for home, children	5	5	6	9	6
Ambition, industriousness	6	6	7	10	8
Pleasing disposition	7	7	4	4	4
Sociability	8	8	8	7	7
Good health	9	9	9	6	9
Good looks	10	11	13	8	11
Good financial prospect	11	10	11	13	12
Refinement, neatness	12	13	12	11	13
Similar education background	13	12	10	12	10
Favorable social status	14	14	15	17	15
Good cook, housekeeper	15	15	16	14	16
Similar religious background	16	16	14	12	14
Similar political background	17	17	18	18	18
Chastity (no prior sexual experience)	18	18	17	16	17

# Finding a Partner

## Where did you meet?



## Who introduced you?



- Most people find partners through social networks
- These are for the married; the less formal the relationship, the less formal the initial contact

Source: Michael, Gagnon, Laumann, & Kolata, 1994