

SEX, ATTRACTIVENESS, AND COOPERATION IN SOCIAL EXCHANGE

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Abstract

The logic of female choice (Trivers, 1972) and strategic pluralism in mating (Gangestad & Simpson, 2000) leads us to predict that physically more attractive men of high genetic quality are more likely to cheat on women in social exchange relations than physically less attractive men, while physical attractiveness has no effect on women's tendency toward cooperation with men. We test this hypothesis with four different experimental games (Prisoner's Dilemma, Allocator Choice, Faith, and Trust), and found support of this prediction. Both male and female raters judge the faces of male defectors more attractive than those of male cooperators, but they do not give differential attractiveness ratings to female defectors and female cooperators.

Key Words: social exchange, facial attractiveness, prisoner's dilemma, trust game, cooperation