
Nifty Ways to Leave Your Lover: The Tactics People Use to Entice and Disguise the Process of Human Mate Poaching

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Although a number of studies have explored the ways that men and women romantically attract mates, almost no research exists on the special tactics people use when already in a relationship and trying to attract someone new—a process known as mate poaching enticement. In Study 1, the authors investigated the tactics people use to entice others into making mate poaching attempts. Enticement tactic effectiveness conformed to evolutionary-predicted patterns across sex and temporal context. In Study 2, the authors examined the tactics men and women use to disguise mate poaching enticement. The most effective camouflage for poaching also varied between sex in evolutionary-predicted ways, regardless of the target of deception (i.e., current partner vs. larger community). Discussion focuses on limitations of this research, future investigative directions, unexpected findings, and the utility of placing mate poaching attraction within the broader context of human sexual strategies.

Keywords: *mate poaching; infidelity; human sex differences*

Human mate poaching can be defined as a special form of romantic attraction that takes place when someone tries to attract another person who is already in a relationship (Schmitt & Buss, 2001). Sometimes mate poaching is intended to seduce a temporary sexual desertion by the already-mated partner (i.e., short-term poaching). A mate poacher also may target a more permanent relationship defection and the establishment of a new mating alliance (i.e., long-term poaching). In all its forms, mate poaching involves at least three people in a complex web of emotional tension, interpersonal conflict, and often secretive sexual behavior. As a result, several features of the mate poaching experience are relevant to core topics in social psychology, including

romantic attraction, infidelity, competition, impression management, persuasion, deception, jealousy, betrayal, and at times, aggression (Buss, 2000; Daly & Wilson, 1988; Shackelford, 1997). Because mate poaching is a nexus for so many aspects of social psychology, the study of mate poaching affords a unique window into the intricate interconnectedness of these topics. Traditionally, much of the research on these topics has failed to fully appreciate this interconnectedness.

Previous studies on infidelity, for example, have tended to focus solely on the psychology of the poached, on the desires and decisions of adulterers rather than on the psychology of the mate poacher (see Bringle & Buunk, 1991). Motivations for adultery typically range from needs for sexual variety and excitement to such situational factors as a partner's toleration for affairs and the desire for adulterous revenge (Bringle & Buunk, 1991; Wiggins & Lederer, 1984). Recently, Schmitt and Buss (2001) explored for the first time the special motivations of mate poachers, the reasons why people might choose to attract others who are already in relationships. They found that men are motivated to attract already-mated women by their physical beauty and to enjoy sexual variety, whereas women consider resource acquisition and dominance when mate poaching, much as they

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do in general mating relationships (Ellis, 1992; Schmitt & Buss, 1996). Unique to mate poaching, however, were findings that men often enjoy a lack of relationship responsibility when attracting an already-mated woman, whereas women sometimes suffer from guilt and self-degradation from mate poaching attraction. Overall, the psychological motivations of the mate poacher were in many ways different from the psychology of the adulterer (Schmitt & Buss, 2001).

Most studies on the process of romantic attraction, to take another core topic within social psychology, have focused primarily on the techniques used by people to entice others into mating relationships (Moore, 1995; Perper, 1985; Tooke & Camire, 1991). Schmitt and Buss (2001) identified the special tactics and strategies that most effectively attract people away from existing partnerships and into extra-dyadic relationships. They found that offering sexual access and physical beauty were viewed as especially effective tactics for female poachers, whereas displaying dominance and resources were seen as especially effective for male poachers. These findings suggest that mate poaching tactics are similar to general romantic attraction tactics.

On the other hand, several tactics were unique to mate poaching, such as those that target the mating rival. For example, manipulating the emotional commitment of a rival was seen as especially effective for men to attract a woman away from a romantic relationship (Schmitt & Buss, 2001). Of course, without a poaching rival, such a tactic would be impossible to employ. Indeed, numerous tactics suggest that the psychology of mate poaching is distinct from general romantic attraction. Poaching-related attraction, for example, is usually secretive and disguised, and the risk of having a poaching relationship become known is often considerable (Shackelford, Buss, & Peters, 2000). The potential damage from engaging in mate poaching can range from reputational loss in the community to physical retribution by the offended rival (Schmitt & Buss, 2001). Similar costs are rarely encountered in general romantic attraction.

Given the potential costs of mate poaching, it is not surprising that most people who are interested in attracting a romantic relationship partner do not actively seek out already-mated others. Schmitt and Buss (2001) found that very few people (around 3%) frequently pursue such a mating strategy, and only 20% of undergraduates currently in a romantic relationship were in one that resulted from mate poaching attraction. Recently, Schmitt and his colleagues (Schmitt et al., 2003) found this percentage was only around 5% among married couples. Moreover, even though relationships formed as a result of poaching were found to be universal across dozens of cultures, Schmitt and his colleagues (2003)

found that the prevalence was as low as 2% in some East Asian cultures.

From an evolutionary perspective, there may be adaptive reasons for poaching reluctance, in part because of the perceived costs of poaching detailed by Schmitt and Buss (2001). It would likely be an inefficient reproductive strategy to attempt to attract others when there is less chance of mating success due to the presence of an established mate. For mate poaching to be a profitable mating strategy, people may have to be attuned to cues that indicate when poaching attraction attempts will yield success. Schmitt and Buss (2001) found that one feature that can inform would-be poachers of likely success is the qualitative context of the targeted relationship, whether it is marital, dating, long distance, and so forth.

There may be other features of a relationship that indicate its susceptibility to a poaching attraction attempt. For example, previous research has suggested that specific behavioral cues can be effective at indicating sexual interest (Abbey, 1982; Greer & Buss, 1994). If someone is already in a relationship, are there signals that can be emitted that will effectively elicit a poaching attempt? Any such signals would be acts of romantic attraction in the sense that they are intended to provoke new relationship formation. We refer to this special form of romantic attraction—trying to elicit a poaching attempt on oneself—as the process of mate poaching enticement. In an initial study, we investigate the psychology of mate poaching enticement guided by four objectives: (a) to identify new attraction tactics that are unique to poaching enticement, (b) to evaluate whether an evolutionary psychological perspective can predict patterns of enticement tactic effectiveness, (c) to reveal the most effective ways that people entice others into making mate poaching attempts, and (d) to explore whether sex and temporal context play key roles in the effectiveness of enticement tactics. In addition, because sending signals of poaching availability can be costly if detected, causing a partner's jealousy and a community's wrath (see Buss, 2000, for a review), we investigate in a second study how people might attempt to hide or disguise mate poaching enticement signals from their regular partner and from the larger community.

STUDY 1: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MATE POACHING ENTICEMENT

The goals of Study 1 were to uncover the specific behaviors and general tactics people use to entice others into making a poaching attraction attempt, to evaluate an evolutionary psychological perspective on enticement effectiveness, to reveal the most effective ways that people entice others, and to explore whether sex and temporal context play key roles in enticement. We wanted first to identify a diverse list of distinctive acts of

mate poaching enticement. Toward this end, we used an act nomination procedure.

Preliminary Study Method

Participants. Participants were 58 undergraduates, 22 men and 36 women, enrolled in a psychology course at a medium-sized private university in Illinois. Participation was for extra credit.

Deception act nominations. Twenty-nine participants, 11 men and 18 women, received a sheet of paper asking for their sex and containing the following instructional set:

Instructions: Sometimes people try to romantically attract one another. On occasion, people try to attract one another even though one of them is *already in a romantic relationship*. For example, a *woman* may already be dating or married to a man, but she may try to attract and have a mating relationship with another man. She may try to have a short-term sexual affair with him, or she may seek to form a new long-term relationship with him.

In this study, we are interested in the specific things that people who are already in relationships do in order to let others know that they are willing to have another relationship. Please write down 10 behaviors or acts that a woman who is already in a romantic relationship might do in order to let others know she would like to have a short-term mating relationship. Then, please write down 10 behaviors or acts that a woman who is already in a romantic relationship might do to let others know she would like to form a new long-term relationship with someone other than her current partner. PLEASE WRITE DOWN SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS.

Following these instructions were two sections, followed by 10 lines on which to write down acts for each temporal context. Twenty-nine participants, 11 men and 18 women, received the same nomination form with a man as the one already in a relationship.

Preliminary Study Results and Discussion

The goal of this preliminary study was to identify acts that men and women use for the specific purpose of enticing others into making a mate poaching attempt. The nominations were culled, removing vague phrases and redundancies, and added to the acts of general poaching attraction from Schmitt and Buss (2001) that were relevant to mate poaching enticement. For example, the acts from Schmitt and Buss (2001) that involve derogating the target's current partner were not necessarily relevant to mate poaching enticement. The result was a list of 51 distinct acts and 20 broad tactics of mate poaching enticement. The complete list of poaching acts and tactics is displayed in Table 1. Thirteen tactics came from Schmitt and Buss (2001). The 7 tactics culled

TABLE 1: Composition and Reliability of Tactics of Mate Poaching Enticement

<i>Tactics and Items (Cronbach's α)</i>	
Arrange easy sexual access (.79)	He appears naked in her room or car. He goes out with her under friendly premise and turns it into a romantic encounter. He is casual about a possible sexual encounter, suggesting that it's just for tonight.
Be generous (.86)	She shows that she is a caring person. She is extra polite to him. She helps him with work or chores.
Demonstrate resources (.83)	He spends money on her. He gives flowers to her. He tries to impress her with his achievements. He displays high levels of ambition.
Develop emotional connection (.81)	She confides in him to get him closer to her. She tries to become a very good friend of him. She talks about their mutual interests.
Develop social ties (.62)	He asks her to help out with something. He invites her to a party. He attempts to get his peer group to like her.
Enhance physical appearance (.81)	She improves her looks and appearance. She flaunts her body.
Enhance potential mate (.91)	He boosts her ego. He compliments her. He tells her that she deserves someone better. Get mate drunk (n/a) She gets the potential mate drunk and then takes advantage of him.
Provide easy sexual access (.87)	He offers her sex. He bluntly asks her for sex. He makes a pass at her and waits to see what happens.
Suggest easy sexual access (.87)	She acts sexy around him. She wears seductive clothes. She makes a lot of eye contact with him.
Temporal invasion (.93)	He changes his schedule so that he sees her more than present mate. He attempts to be around her more than present mate. He drops by to see her often.
Use humor (.94)	She is funny. She emphasizes her good nature through a sense of humor.
Wait around (n/a)	He waits around and is there when they break up.
Special enticement tactics	
Current partner derogates me (.93)	She says her current partner ridicules her. She shows him that her present mate treats her like "scum." She says her current partner is always pointing out her bad points.
Derogate current partner (.89)	He points out his present mate's bad points. He ridicules his current partner. He shows her that present mate is "scum."

(continued)

TABLE 1 (continued)

Tactics and Items (Cronbach's α)

Express boredom (.73)
She expresses boredom and frustration with current relationship.
She mentions that she wants her life to be more exciting.
Invite meddling (.88)
He asks her what she thinks about her current relationship partner.
He invites her to give him advice on his current relationship.
Mention looking for replacement (.63)
She says she is looking for someone "better" than her current partner.
She uses the expression "why can't I have a guy like you?"
She says she expects to be single and looking for someone again someday.
Prioritize new partner (.66)
He puts her before his current partner in priority.
He treats her like she has already replaced his current partner.
Temporary break-up (.76)
He mentions that he is "on a break" from his current relationship.
He breaks up with his current partner for a short time.

NOTE: Reliabilities are based on the responses of 26 men and 46 women. Acts were rated on scales ranging from *not at all effective* (1) to *very effective* (7). The pronouns alternate between male and female attraction actors. In the actual measures, the independent variable of sex (male, female) varied between subjects.

from the preliminary study on poaching enticement are displayed at the end of Table 1.

The remaining goals of this research were to evaluate whether an evolutionary psychological perspective can predict patterns of enticement tactic effectiveness, to reveal the most effective ways that people entice others into making mate poaching attempts, and to explore whether sex and temporal context play key roles in the effectiveness of enticement tactics. Toward this end, Study 1 was conducted.

Method

Participants. Participants were 72 undergraduates, 26 men and 46 women, drawn from a medium-sized private university in Illinois. Participation was for extra credit. None of the students participated in the preliminary study.

Design. The design of this study was a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ between-subjects factorial. The first independent variable was sex of rater (male, female), the second independent variable was sex of actor (male enticer, female enticer), and the third independent variable was temporal context (short-term, long-term). The dependent variable was the judged effectiveness of each act of mate poaching enticement as described below.

Procedure. Participants received a five-page instrument titled "Tactics for Indicating Romantic Interest While Already in Another Relationship" that asked for the

participant's sex and contained the following instructional set:

Instructions: Sometimes people try to romantically attract one another. On occasion, people try to attract one another even though one of them is *already in a romantic relationship*. A woman may be dating or married to a man, for example, but she may act in a certain way or give off special cues to a different man to let him know that she is interested in having a new romantic relationship. For instance, she might act in a way that suggests she is interested in having a *short-term* sexual affair with him. In this study, we are interested in the specific things that people who are already in relationships do in order to let others know that they are interested in being romantically attracted into a new romantic relationship.

Please rate the following acts on how effective each would be for a *woman* already in a relationship to indicate to a man that she is interested in being romantically attracted into a *short-term* mating relationship (e.g., a brief affair, one-night stand, etc.).

Although many of the following acts may seem similar, it is important that you rate the effectiveness of each act accurately and honestly. Please use the following 7-point scale: A 7 indicates that you think the act will be very effective at eliciting romantic attraction, a 4 indicates that the act will be moderately effective, a 1 indicates that the act is not at all effective.

A Likert-type scale with all 7 points was presented after the instructional set. Then participants were presented with rating blanks for the 51 acts of mate poaching enticement. Seven men and 11 women received the rating form as described above. Six men and 12 women received a similar form but the temporal context was long-term poaching enticement. Seven men and 11 women received the form with a male actor in the context of short-term enticement. Six men and 12 women received the form with a male actor in the long-term context.

Results and Discussion

Reliability of enticement tactic effectiveness judgments. Alpha reliability coefficients were computed for each composite tactic of mate poaching enticement. For each tactic, the average alpha reliability for each condition reached appreciable levels (see Table 1). The number of main effects and interactions due to sex of rater did not reach levels above what would be expected by chance alone, indicating sufficient agreement among male and female raters for reliable composite judgments to be obtained. All act-level analyses are available from the first author.

Hypothesis 1: Men's preference for physical attractiveness. According to sexual strategies theory (Buss & Schmitt, 1993), because physical attractiveness can be a reliable cue to the fertility and reproductive value of a woman,

TABLE 2: Judged Effectiveness of Mate Poaching Enticement Tactics Across Sex and Temporal Context

	<i>Sex of Poachee</i>				F
	<i>Male</i>		<i>Female</i>		
	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Long-Term</i>	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Long-Term</i>	
Hypothesis 1: Tactic should be judged more effective for women					
Enhance physical appearance	3.94 (1.83)	2.94 (1.50)	5.31 (1.65)	3.86 (1.01)	9.99**
Hypothesis 2: Tactics should be judged more effective for men					
Demonstrate resources	4.50 (1.43)	4.46 (1.39)	3.93 (1.22)	3.56 (1.24)	5.55*
Be generous	4.69 (1.58)	5.26 (1.28)	4.13 (1.37)	4.72 (1.17)	2.90
Hypothesis 3: Tactics should be judged most effective for women in the short-term context					
Provide easy sexual access	3.26 (1.14)	2.44 (1.22)	5.56 (1.43)	3.22 (0.98)	6.45**
Suggest easy sexual access	3.02 (1.54)	2.81 (1.48)	4.43 (1.29)	2.91 (0.76)	4.57*
Arrange easy sexual access	4.04 (1.52)	2.56 (1.00)	5.87 (0.88)	3.26 (1.27)	4.03*
Hypothesis 4: Tactic should be judged more effective for men					
Develop emotional closeness	4.22 (1.45)	5.15 (1.33)	4.04 (1.15)	4.89 (1.01)	0.57
Poaching enticement tactics judged more effective for women					
Mention looking for replacement	3.85 (1.22)	3.65 (1.08)	5.09 (1.18)	4.85 (1.14)	20.03***
Invite meddling	2.61 (1.45)	2.69 (1.32)	4.00 (1.91)	3.83 (1.52)	11.72***
Current partner derogates me	2.44 (1.38)	3.15 (1.67)	4.00 (1.86)	3.74 (1.87)	7.12**
Wait around	3.44 (2.06)	4.00 (2.00)	5.17 (1.38)	4.44 (1.76)	6.37**
Derogate current partner	2.67 (1.41)	2.37 (1.28)	3.83 (1.56)	2.85 (1.73)	5.40*
Develop social ties	3.96 (1.18)	3.98 (1.28)	4.69 (0.94)	4.37 (0.96)	4.78*
Prioritize new partner	3.97 (1.22)	4.14 (1.41)	4.61 (1.16)	4.67 (0.92)	4.32*
Poaching tactics judged more effective in the short-term context					
Get mate drunk	3.50 (2.57)	1.56 (1.29)	4.78 (2.21)	2.39 (1.58)	21.57***
Temporary break-up	4.11 (1.18)	2.97 (1.27)	5.39 (1.23)	4.53 (1.60)	10.16**
Poaching tactics judged to interact between sex and temporal context					
Enhance potential mate	4.74 (1.83)	5.30 (1.37)	5.72 (0.97)	4.72 (1.72)	4.78*
Temporal invasion	4.19 (1.41)	4.43 (1.52)	5.31 (1.07)	4.26 (1.45)	4.01*
Poaching tactics judged not to differ across sex or temporal context					
Use humor	4.69 (1.41)	5.19 (1.45)	4.56 (1.71)	4.56 (1.70)	<i>ns</i>
Express boredom	3.56 (1.60)	3.06 (1.40)	4.00 (1.82)	3.89 (1.54)	<i>ns</i>

NOTE: Enticement effectiveness judgments were based on the responses of 26 men (13 rating male actors, 13 female actors) and 46 women (23 rating male actors, 23 rating female actors). Means (standard deviations shown below and in parentheses) were rated on scales ranging from *not at all effective* (1) to *very effective* (7) for poaching enticement acts. *F* values are for hypothesis-related statistical tests. For tactics unrelated to hypotheses, *F* values are for tests as indicated by headings within the table.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

men may have evolved preferences that place a premium on physical attractiveness in potential mating partners (see also Symons, 1979). Based on sexual selection theory (Darwin, 1871), Schmitt and Buss (2001, Hypothesis 1) hypothesized—and confirmed—that manipulating cues to physical attractiveness is a more effective mate poaching attraction tactic for women than for men. In the context of enticing mate poaching attempts, Schmitt and Buss's (2001) Hypothesis 1 predicts that manipulating cues to physical attractiveness should be more effective for women than for men at eliciting mate poach attempts. As shown in Table 2, we tested and found support for this hypothesis using the enticement tactic Enhance Physical Appearance, which showed a main effect for sex of actor, $F(1, 68) = 9.99$, $p < .01$. Thus, women were judged to be more effective than men at eliciting a mate poaching attempt when they display enhanced physical attractiveness.¹

Hypothesis 2: Women's preference for the ability and willingness to invest resources. Schmitt and Buss (2001, Hypothesis 2) hypothesized and confirmed that manipulating cues to the ability and willingness to invest resources is a more effective mate poaching attraction tactic for men than for women arguably because women have evolved mate preferences for men who have the ability and willingness to invest resources in them and their children (Ellis, 1992). Because resource provisionment helps solve women's adaptive problem of finding a reproductively valuable mate, exhibiting cues to the ability and willingness to devote resources attracts women more than it does men. Schmitt and Buss's (2001) Hypothesis 2, as applied to mate poaching enticement, states that resource display should be more effective for men than for women at eliciting mate poach attempts. The basic logic is that if women prefer men with resources capabilities, a man should be especially effective at inducing a

woman to attract him when he demonstrates that he is able and willing to devote resources to her.

As shown in Table 2, the main effect of sex on Demonstrate Resources was significant. Men were judged to be more effective than women at eliciting a mate poaching attempt when they display resources, $F(1, 68) = 5.55, p < .05$. However, men were only marginally more effective when they act in ways that suggest they would be willing to devote resources to women and their children, $F(1, 68) = 2.90, p < .10$. This was somewhat of a predictive failure for Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3: Men's preference for easy sexual access. Schmitt and Buss (2001, Hypothesis 3) hypothesized and confirmed that manipulating cues to sexual availability is a more effective mate poaching attraction tactic for women than for men, especially in the short-term context, arguably because men have evolved preferences for short-term mates who display sexual availability (see Schmitt, Shackelford, Duntley, Tooke, & Buss, 2001). Because a woman's sexual availability helps solve men's adaptive problem of finding numerous short-term mates, displaying cues to sexual availability attracts men more than women when exhibited in a short-term mating context. Schmitt and Buss's (2001) Hypothesis 3 applied to mate poaching enticement states that displays of sexual availability should be more effective for women than for men at eliciting mate poach attempts, particularly for the short-term mating context. The basic logic is that if men prefer as short-term mates women who display sexual availability, a woman should be especially effective at inducing a man to attract her when she demonstrates that she is sexually available for a short-term poach.

Table 2 displays the results relevant to Hypothesis 3, which states that offering or suggesting low-cost sexual access would be most effective for women to induce a short-term poaching attempt. This hypothesis was strongly supported. The interaction of sex and temporal context was significant for all three critical poaching enticement tactics, including Provide Easy Sexual Access, $F(1, 68) = 6.45, p < .01$, Suggest Easy Sexual Access, $F(1, 68) = 4.57, p < .05$, and Arrange Easy Sexual Access, $F(1, 68) = 4.03, p < .05$. Thus, women who use easy sexual access tactics for eliciting short-term mate poach attempts were judged especially effective compared to women eliciting long-term mate poaches, men eliciting long-term mate poaches, and men eliciting short-term mate poaches.

Hypothesis 4: Women's preference for emotional commitment. Schmitt and Buss (2001, Hypothesis 4) hypothesized and confirmed that manipulating cues to emotional commitment is a more effective mate poaching attraction tactic for men than for women, arguably because women have

evolved preferences for mates who are able and willing to invest resources in them and their children (Buss, Larsen, Westen, & Semmelroth, 1992; Daly, Wilson, & Weghorst, 1982). A key cue to willingness to devote resources in a woman is a man's exclusive emotional commitment to her (Buss et al., 1992, 1999). Because a man's emotional commitment helps solve women's adaptive problem of finding a mate who is willing and able to invest resources exclusively in her and her children, displaying cues to emotional commitment attracts women more than it does men. Applied to the context of mate poaching enticement, Hypothesis 4 states that manipulating perceptions of emotional commitment would be more effective for men than for women. The results did not support this hypothesis. As displayed in Table 2, men were not judged more effective than women at eliciting a mate poaching attempt by using the tactic Develop Emotional Connection.

The most effective tactics of mate poaching enticement. For already-mated men seeking a short-term relationship, the three most effective enticement tactics were Enhance Potential Mate ($M = 4.74$), Use Humor ($M = 4.69$), and Be Generous ($M = 4.69$). Already-mated women seeking short-term mates were seen as most effective when using Arrange Easy Sexual Access ($M = 5.87$), Enhance Potential Mate ($M = 5.72$), and Provide Easy Sexual Access ($M = 5.56$). It is interesting that two of these top three tactics were related to Hypothesis 3. For men seeking a new long-term partner, successfully enticing a mate poach was viewed as most likely when they Enhance Potential Mate ($M = 5.30$), Be Generous ($M = 5.26$), and Use Humor ($M = 5.19$). These three enticement tactics were identical, although not in the same order, to those of short-term seeking men. For women seeking a new long-term partner, enticing a mate poach was viewed as most likely when they Develop Emotional Closeness ($M = 4.89$), Mention Looking for Replacement ($M = 4.85$), and Be Generous ($M = 4.72$). Overall, enhancing and being generous to one's enticement target were the most effective tactics of mate poaching enticement.

Tactics of poaching enticement for which no hypotheses were generated. As shown in Table 2, several poaching enticement tactics were judged more effective for women than for men. For example, four tactics that were nominated specifically as enticement tactics—Looking for Replacement, Invite Meddling, Current Partner Derogates Me, and Derogate Current Partner—were viewed as much more effective for women than for men. It is worth noting that each of these tactics is a more active form of mate poaching than other tactics (e.g., Wait Around). Each also belies a sense that the enticer is dissatisfied with the current partner or their relationship. Such tactics may

be judged more effective for women for two reasons. First, participants may assume that men are more susceptible to being lured into sexual relationships than women. Some experimental evidence suggests this is the case (Clark, 1990; Clark & Hatfield, 1989). Women's greater poaching effectiveness, in this case, may result simply from men's greater susceptibility to attraction tactics. Second, participants may have viewed men as more eager to mate poach than women (which is true, especially in the short-term context, across dozens of cultures) (Schmitt et al., 2003). If men are more eager to poach, then tactics that more directly instigate poaching may be more effective for women.

The tactics Wait Around, Develop Social Ties, and Prioritize New Partner also were seen as more effective for women than for men. These tactics are more passive and rely to a greater degree on long-term social investments in the potential mate poacher. These tactics may function to keep a potential mate poacher "on the side" and ready for an infidelity or new long-term relationship in the future. Having a mate ready for replacement has been shown to be a common tactic employed by women (Greiling & Buss, 2000). Overall, our findings suggest that mate poaching enticement is generally more effective for women than for men.

We computed Average Enticement Effectiveness indexes—by summing across all acts—to directly test this possibility. We found that the average effectiveness of poaching enticement was highest for women seeking a short-term desertion from their current mates ($M = 4.48$), followed by women seeking to engage in a long-term relationship defection ($M = 3.66$), men seeking a short-term relationship ($M = 3.66$), and men seeking to be attracted into a new long-term relationship ($M = 3.45$). Overall, women were much more effective than men, $F(1, 68) = 7.16, p < .01$, and short-term enticement was more effective than long-term enticement, $F(1, 68) = 7.13, p < .01$. Although these findings are significant, they should be interpreted with caution because simply summing across a large number of acts may not accurately reflect the overall effectiveness of short-term and long-term poaching enticement.

In line with these overall average enticement effectiveness findings, two tactics were seen as more effective in the short-term context, Get Mate Drunk and Temporary Break-Up. In addition, two tactics were seen as most effective for women in the context of short-term poaching enticement—Enhance Potential Mate and Temporal Invasion. Finally, Use Humor and Express Boredom were the only enticement tactics not to show a significant effect of either sex or temporal context. The fact that only two enticement tactics failed to show sex or context effects attests to the importance of sex and temporal context in moderating mate poaching enticement.

Summary of Study 1. In Study 1, we first sought to identify the special ways that people entice others into mate poach attempts. We also expected that these mate poaching enticement tactics would follow an evolutionary-predicted pattern of effectiveness across sex and temporal context. We found that offering sexual access and physical beauty were especially effective for women who desired to be attracted away from their partners, whereas displaying dominance and resources were particularly effective for men who seek to be poached. Unique to mate poaching enticement, several tactics were considered distinctively effective if they involved the current relationship partner. For example, to invite meddling in the current relationship and to mention that a current partner is constantly derogating were seen as effective for women to entice men into attracting them away from a romantic relationship. The most effective tactics, overall, appeared to involve being generous and enhancing the ego of one's enticement target. Finally, we confirmed that sex and temporal context consistently moderate perceptions of mate poaching, with women and short-term poaching seen as more effective than men and long-term poaching, respectively.

If certain acts of poaching enticement are particularly effective, we might expect that people would be especially vigilant about those cues that their partners give off to others of the opposite sex. Indeed, this seems to be the case when one's partner possesses high mate value (Buss & Shackelford, 1997). One potential consequence of high poaching enticement effectiveness combined with current partner vigilance is an intense selective pressure for the evolution of enticement deception strategies. We turn next to the important issue of disguising mate poaching enticement.

STUDY 2: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DISGUISED MATE POACHING ENTICEMENT

Many non-human animals attempt to conceal certain attributes, try to bluff one another, and otherwise use socially deceptive tactics to gain preferential access to desirable mates (Dawkins & Krebs, 1978; Trivers, 1985). Among primates, for example, de Waal (1986) has reported that subordinate male chimpanzees sometimes conceal their erections from the view of dominant men while allowing nearby women to observe the erect penis. Indeed, Whiten and Byrne (1988) have suggested that it is among apes that social deception reaches its height of complexity. Apes appear to be especially proficient at directing the attention of others away from desirable resources. For example, Goodall (1971) has noted that some chimpanzees will lead other chimpanzees away from feeding sites before the food source runs out and later double-back to finish the food alone.

Among humans, Tooke and Camire (1991) have documented that men tend to use a complex web of deception tactics to gain access to resources they view as desirable, including reproductively valuable women. For example, men tend to deceive women about their resource acquisition ability, sincerity of interest, and commitment while deceiving other men about their sexual intensity and popularity. These deception tactics seem designed to simultaneously increase the perception of men's mate value in the eyes of prospective mating partners and intrasexual mating competitors, both of which can be important deceptions for gaining sexual access to desirable members of the opposite sex (see Schmitt & Buss, 1996). Tooke and Camire (1991) also found that, among women, it was common to deceive potential mating partners using appearance alteration tactics and that, overall, women tend to use intrasexual deception less often and with less efficacy than men.

The use of deceptive mating tactics by humans may have important implications for the unique situation of mate poaching enticement. This is because one of the critical features of mate poaching is that people try to conceal the fact that they are engaging in an extra-dyadic relationship (Wiederman & Hurd, 1999). The partner who is engaging in the extra-dyadic relationship may have an adaptive interest in not letting their current partner or the larger community find out about their indiscretion. In our ancestral past, such revelations were sometimes met with outrage and violence (Betzig, 1989; Buss, 2000). In Study 2, we investigated the tactics that people use to disguise the fact that they are attracting someone while in a relationship. We call this form of social deception *poaching enticement disguise*.

There are at least two ways that a person could deceive others and effectively disguise the fact that they are engaging in poaching enticement. First, a person could make active and observable attempts at increasing their current partner's relationship satisfaction and generally make the current partner feel that the enticer is highly committed to the relationship. This may lessen the partner's and the general community's suspicions that the relationship is in trouble and is susceptible to mate poaching attempts. Schmitt and Buss (2001) found that highly committed relationships were regarded as the most difficult romantic relationships to poach. As an example of how this might work, consider women's preferences for men who are able and willing to invest resources (Ellis, 1992). For men to deceive women and the community about their poaching enticements, they could try to overtly satisfy their current partner's resource needs. By publicly placating a partner's desires, others may feel their relationship is highly committed and is less likely to be victimized by poaching attempts. This would be an effective form of poaching enticement

disguise when the resources are devoted in a way that diverts attention away from the man's attempts at poaching enticement attraction.

A second strategy for disguising poaching enticement would be for the enticer to lower other people's perceptions of the enticer's mate value. If people feel the enticer has low mate value relative to the current partner, they may be less suspicious that the partner will be deserted for short-term or long-term poaching relationships. For example, men tend to prefer women who are physically attractive for mating relationships (Symons, 1979), and men tend to be more jealous over women who are young and beautiful (Buss & Shackelford, 1997). If a woman disguised or discounted recent improvements she made to her physical appearance, her current partner and the larger community might experience less suspicion that she would be motivated to entice other more valuable men into making a poaching attempt.

These two forms of poaching enticement disguise may seem at odds with one another. The first involves providing a partner with valued attributes, and the second involves lessening the importance of those attributes. In both cases, however, the adaptive attributes are used to divert attention away from poaching enticement tactics and toward the presumed stability of the current relationship. This basic "enticement-disguise" logic—that people will satisfy their partners' desires while playing down their own mate value as a way to divert attention away from their poaching enticements—served as a guide to generate four evolutionary hypotheses (following Schmitt & Buss, 2001).

The preliminary goal of Study 2 was to identify the specific behaviors and general tactics used in the context of disguising mate poaching enticement. We wanted to develop a diverse list of distinctive acts of deception that men and women use for the goal of hiding the fact that they are trying to induce someone to attract them away from their romantic relationship. Toward this end, we used an act nomination procedure.

Preliminary Study Method

Participants. Participants were 47 undergraduates, 20 men and 37 women, enrolled in a psychology course at a medium-sized private university in Illinois. Participation was for extra credit. None of the students participated in the previous studies.

Disguise act nominations. Fourteen participants, 5 men and 9 women, received a sheet of paper asking for their sex and containing the following instructional set:

Instructions. Sometimes people try to romantically attract one another. On occasion, people try to attract one another even though one of them is *already in a romantic relationship*. For example, a *woman* may be dating or mar-

ried to a man, but she may attract and have a brief, *short-term* affair with another man.

In this study, we are interested in the specific things that people who are already in relationships do in order to *cover up* or *disguise* the fact that they are attracting another person. Please write down 10 behaviors or acts that a woman who is already in a romantic relationship might do in order to hide her additional relationship from her current partner. Then, please write down 10 behaviors or acts that a woman who is already in a romantic relationship might do in order to hide her additional relationship from the larger community (her friends, colleagues, and neighbors). PLEASE WRITE DOWN SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS.

Following these instructions were two sections, followed by 10 lines on which to write down acts for each deception target. Fourteen participants, 5 men and 9 women, received the same nomination form with a man as the one already in a relationship. Fifteen participants, 6 men and 9 women, received the same nomination form with a woman seeking a new long-term relationship. Fifteen participants, 5 men and 10 women, received the same nomination form with a man as the one seeking a long-term mating relationship.

Preliminary Results and Discussion

The goal of the preliminary study was to identify a large number of acts that men and women perform to disguise the fact that they are trying to attract a mate poaching relationship. The nominations were culled, removing vague phrases and redundancies. The result was a list of 91 distinct acts of mate poaching deception.

These acts of mate poaching deception were categorized into 20 clusters or tactics of enticement disguise based on conceptual similarity and for the purpose of economy of presentation. The complete list of disguise tactics is displayed in Table 3. For example, the enticement disguise tactic Decrease Time with Current Partner included the acts "She spends as much time away from her current partner as possible," "She goes out less with her current partner," and "She avoids being alone with her current partner." The sex of the enticement disguiser is alternated between tactics in Table 3. In the forms used in the following study, the sex of the actor was the same across all acts of enticement disguise.

The primary goal of Study 2 was to obtain judgments from men and women about the perceived effectiveness of enticement disguise tactics to test four evolutionary psychological hypotheses. In addition, we sought to reveal the most effective ways that men and women deceive others when they are already in relationships and to explicitly compare the effectiveness of mate poaching disguise when targeted at current mates versus the larger community.

TABLE 3: Composition and Reliability of Tactics of Mate Poaching Enticement Disguise

<i>Tactics and Items (Cronbach's α)</i>	
Decrease time with current partner (.94)	He spends as much time away from his current partner as possible. He goes out less with his current partner. He avoids being alone with his current partner.
Discount appearance improvement (.84)	She minimizes the importance of recent improvements in the way she looks. She is humble and doesn't say she needs a better life after improving her looks. She pretends that her recent increase in exercise and fitness is about her health, not her looks.
Distance friendships (.69)	He stops hanging around mutual friends. He does not tell his friends about his new partner. He never tells friends or anyone about new partner. He thinks before he speaks in public.
Establish independent self (.92)	She opens a bank account in her own name. She gets a separate credit card for her use only. She gets a personal e-mail account.
Increase emotional connection (.93)	He has deep, emotional talks with current partner. He talks with his current partner about their future together as a family. He pretends he is happy with his present mate. He spends more "quality time" with current partner. He keeps constant eye contact on his current partner in public situations. He spends less time away from his current partner. He gets his current partner pregnant. He keeps himself interested in his current partner.
Increase relationship affection (.89)	She is affectionate toward her current partner. She holds hands with her current mate more often. She compliments her current partner. She tells her current partner that she loves him. She does more around the house for her current partner. She pays closer attention to her current partner. She tells her current partner she is satisfied with their relationship.
Increase resource commitment (.85)	He takes his current partner out to dinner. He buys nice things for his current partner. He spends a lot of money on his current partner.
Increase sex (.86)	She has sex more often with her current partner. She becomes more romantic with her current partner. She keeps her current partner sexually satisfied. She rekindles the romance of the current relationship.
Keep out of town (.55)	He only sees new mate in another town. He goes to bars in other towns. He goes on a trip with his new partner.
Keep things normal (.89)	She doesn't act like anything is "different." She doesn't change her physical look. She maintains her daily routine. She always returns home at same time each day.

(continued)

TABLE 3 (continued)

<i>Tactics and Items (Cronbach's α)</i>	<i>Tactics and Items (Cronbach's α)</i>
Lie about enticement target (.83) He says that he is "just friends" with the new mate. He keeps his meetings with new partner to the evenings. He tells his current partner that the new partner is a "lesbian" friend. He denies that he knows the new partner. He never mentions meeting people of the opposite sex.	He wears his "relationship ring" all the time. He changes his clothes often. He showers often to eliminate smells. He hides new clothing from his current partner.
Lie about new relationship (.76) She makes future plans with her new partner. She talks about having children with her new partner. She gets well-acquainted with new partner's family. She avoids discussing precise terms of relationship with new partner. She doesn't tell new partner she cares about him. She never introduces the new partner to her family.	Manipulate social situations (.77) She always surrounds herself with lots of people. She avoids the new partner in social situations. She goes to church and becomes more involved. She plans outings with other couples. She only goes to secluded places with new partner.
Lie about self (.81) He lies about his past. He makes it seem as though his current relationship has already ended. He keeps pictures of his family hidden. He doesn't describe details about himself to new mate. He doesn't stray from normal conversation topics with new partner. He keeps his conversation routine and never talks about what is really going on in his life.	Phone tactics (.85) He gives his new partner a fake phone number. He only gives out his work number to new partner. He makes sure not to receive calls from new partner. He buys a cell phone. He gets a separate phone line.
Lie about whereabouts (.90) She often lies about where she is going. She lies about where her time is being spent. She says she's going out with friends, but she doesn't.	Social isolation (.76) She attends fewer parties so as to be seen less. She does not discuss the new partner with anyone. She says she is too tired to go out tonight. She doesn't spend too much time away from work and home.
Manipulate clothing/smell (.64) He dresses conservatively. He doesn't wear his "relationship ring" outside.	Use friends (.69) He introduces the new partner to a faithful friend. He gets friends to help "cover up" his infidelity. He goes out with same-sex friends more often. He continues his relationships with his friends. He confides in a friend to talk about the situation.
	Use work excuse (.89) She works more hours than normal. She says she has to work late. She takes on extra projects at work. She sneaks away from work to see new partner.

NOTE: Effectiveness judgments are based on the responses of 36 men (19 rating actors in the disguise from current partner condition, 17 rating actors in the disguise from community condition) and 44 women (22 rating actors in the disguise from current partner condition, 22 rating actors in the disguise from community condition). Acts were rated on scales ranging from *not at all effective* (1) to *very effective* (7) for poaching enticement disguise tactics. The pronouns alternate between male and female disguise actors. In the actual measures, the independent variable of sex (male, female) varied between subjects.

Hypothesis 1: Men's preference for physical attractiveness. Men more than women prefer youth and beauty in their mating partners (Buss & Schmitt, 1993). We found in Study 1 that women were perceived as more effective than men at enticing a poaching attempt when they satisfy the desire for physical attractiveness. However, men are more suspicious of poaching enticement and infidelities when their wives are young and beautiful (Buss & Shackelford, 1997). Using our enticement-disguise logic, we hypothesized that women would be more effective at enticement disguise than men when using the tactic Discount Appearance Improvement. This is because concerns about female infidelity after a woman's mate value increases tend to become elevated (Buss & Shackelford, 1997). If a woman discounts the increase in mate value, however, she may effectively disguise her poaching enticement activities.

Hypothesis 2: Women's preference for the ability and willingness to invest resources. Women may have evolved desires for men who are able and willing to invest resources (Ellis, 1992). In Study 1, we found that men were more effective at mate enticement than women when they demonstrate resource ability. Using our enticement-disguise logic, we hypothesized that men would be more effective at enticement disguise than women when using the tactic Increase Resource Commitment. This is because satisfying a current partner's desire for resources should increase perceptions of the relationship's overall stability and partner satisfaction (Shackelford & Buss, 1997, 2000) and thereby divert attention away from men's poaching enticement activities.

Hypothesis 3: Men's preference for easy sexual access. Men seem to have psychological adaptations for desiring easy

sexual access in short-term mates (Schmitt, Shackelford, & Buss, 2001; Schmitt, Shackelford, et al., 2001) and, once obtained, men tend to prefer exclusive but frequent sexual access in their long-term mates as well (Buss, 1994). Using our enticement-disguise logic, we hypothesized that women would be more effective at enticement disguise than men when using the tactic Increase Sex. This is because satisfying a current partner's desire for frequent sex should increase perceptions of the relationship's overall stability and partner satisfaction (Shackelford & Buss, 1997, 2000) and thereby divert attention away from women's poaching enticement activities.

Hypothesis 4: Women's preference for emotional commitment. Men and women both prefer relationship devotion on the part of their long-term mates, but there is an important sex difference suggested by an evolutionary psychological analysis. Men have evolved a preference for sexual fidelity by their partners because this helps to solve the adaptive problem of paternity uncertainty. Women, in contrast, place a greater premium on emotional fidelity as a signal of long-term commitment and investment (Buss et al., 1992, 1999; Daly et al., 1982). Using our enticement-disguise logic, we hypothesized that men would be more effective at enticement disguise than women when using the tactics Increase Emotional Connection and Increase Relationship Affection. This is because satisfying a current partner's desire for emotional interconnectedness should increase perceptions of the relationship's overall stability and partner satisfaction (Shackelford & Buss, 1997, 2000) and thereby divert attention away from men's poaching enticement activities.

Method

Participants. Participants were 80 undergraduates, 36 men and 44 women, drawn from a medium-sized private university in Illinois. Participation was for extra credit. None of the students participated in the previous studies.

Design. The design of this study was a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ between-subjects factorial. The first independent variable was sex of rater (male, female), the second independent variable was sex of actor (male deceiver, female deceiver), and the third independent variable was target of deception (current partner, larger community). The dependent variable was the judged effectiveness of each act of mate poaching deception as described below.

Procedure. The participants received a five-page instrument titled "Tactics for Hiding Romantic Attraction While Already in Another Relationship" that asked for the participant's sex and contained the following instructional set:

Instructions: Sometimes people try to romantically attract one another. On occasion, people try to attract one another even though one of them is *already in a romantic relationship*. For example, a *woman* may be dating or married to a man, but she may attract and have a brief *short-term* affair with another man, or she may attract and form a new *long-term* relationship with him.

In this study, we are interested in the specific things that people who are already in relationships do in order to *cover up* or *disguise* the fact that they are attracting another person. Please rate the following acts on how effective each would be at hiding from her *current partner* the fact that a *woman* who is already in a romantic relationship is trying to attract a new relationship partner.

Although many of the following acts may seem similar, it is important that you rate the effectiveness of each act accurately and honestly. Please use the following 7-point scale: A 7 indicates that you think the act will be very effective at deceiving the current partner, a 4 indicates that the act will be moderately effective, a 1 indicates that the act is not at all effective.

A Likert-type scale with all 7 points was presented after the instructional set. Then the participants were presented with rating blanks for the 91 acts of mate poaching deception. Nine men and 10 women received the rating form as described above. Eight men and 11 women received a similar form but the target of deception was described as the larger community. Ten men and 12 women received the form with a male actor and the current partner as the target of deception. Nine men and 11 women received the form with a male actor and the larger community as the target of deception.

Results and Discussion

Reliability of tactic effectiveness judgments. Alpha reliability coefficients were computed for each composite tactic of mate poaching disguise. For each tactic, the average alpha reliability for each condition reached appreciable levels (see Table 3). In subsequent analyses, the number of main effects and interactions due to sex of rater did not reach levels above what would be expected by chance alone, indicating sufficient agreement among male and female raters for reliable composite judgments to be obtained. All act-level analyses are available from the first author.

The effects of sex of actor and target of deception were tested in a between-subjects factorial analysis of variance design. The dependent variables were the judged effectiveness of specific mate enticement disguise tactics. Each disguise tactic consisted of the mean average across all acts subsumed by it, as shown in Table 3. For all hypotheses in Study 2, we predicted main effects of sex. In addition, few enticement disguise tactics displayed main effects of deception target. As a

TABLE 4: Judged Effectiveness of Enticement Disguise Tactics Across Sex and Deception Target

	Sex of Disguiser				F
	Male		Female		
	Partner	Community	Partner	Community	
Hypothesis 1: Tactic should be judged more effective for women Disguise appearance improvement	3.23 (1.86)	3.30 (1.59)	4.21 (1.50)	4.81 (1.29)	12.34***
Hypothesis 2: Tactic should be judged more effective for men Increase resource commitment	4.82 (1.29)	4.48 (1.52)	3.70 (1.55)	4.00 (1.74)	5.68*
Hypothesis 3: Tactic should be judged more effective for women Increase sex	4.88 (1.64)	4.21 (1.44)	5.62 (0.86)	5.01 (1.10)	6.63**
Hypothesis 4: Tactics should be judged more effective for men Increase emotional connection	5.53 (1.15)	4.95 (1.21)	4.91 (1.12)	4.12 (1.48)	7.12**
Increase relationship affection	5.12 (1.22)	4.60 (1.39)	4.62 (1.34)	4.73 (1.20)	0.47
Tactics judged more effective for women					
Keep things normal	4.53 (2.03)	4.19 (1.76)	6.20 (0.99)	6.08 (1.01)	26.22***
Use friends	3.12 (1.35)	2.92 (1.09)	4.12 (1.05)	3.57 (1.03)	10.15**
Lie about new relationship	2.80 (1.15)	3.05 (1.64)	3.88 (1.44)	3.82 (1.22)	9.34**
Lie about self	2.89 (1.57)	3.09 (1.63)	3.61 (1.04)	4.02 (1.25)	6.85**
Establish independent self	2.79 (1.93)	3.53 (2.17)	3.81 (1.95)	4.33 (1.79)	4.46*
Social isolation	4.32 (1.73)	4.14 (1.48)	5.07 (1.00)	4.79 (1.29)	4.81*
Tactics judged more effective for men					
Decrease time with current partner	2.55 (2.17)	3.15 (2.35)	1.88 (0.92)	1.91 (0.94)	5.70*
Use work excuse	3.51 (1.14)	3.58 (1.00)	2.83 (1.33)	2.74 (1.43)	4.01*
Tactic judged more effective for deceiving community					
Distance friendships	3.36 (1.29)	4.10 (1.35)	4.24 (0.93)	4.76 (1.35)	5.25*
Tactic judged more effective for deceiving current partner					
Phone tactics	3.95 (1.39)	3.47 (1.59)	4.51 (1.63)	3.52 (1.79)	4.04*
Tactics judged most effective for women deceiving current partner					
Manipulate clothing/smell	2.83 (1.02)	3.09 (0.87)	3.93 (1.41)	2.99 (1.07)	5.86*
Lie about whereabouts	2.94 (1.72)	3.05 (1.31)	4.37 (1.53)	3.04 (1.14)	4.92*
Keep out of town	3.33 (1.40)	4.22 (1.59)	4.23 (1.34)	3.74 (1.31)	4.69*
Tactics showing no sex or deception target differences					
Lie about enticement target	3.46 (1.73)	3.49 (1.94)	4.07 (1.40)	3.85 (1.43)	<i>ns</i>
Manipulate social situations	4.37 (1.49)	4.40 (1.50)	4.71 (1.20)	4.34 (1.24)	<i>ns</i>

NOTE: Effectiveness judgments are based on the responses of 36 men (10 rating male actors in deceive current partner condition, 9 rating male actors in deceive community condition, 9 rating female actors in deceive current partner condition, 8 rating female actors in deceive community condition) and 44 women (12 rating male actors in deceive current partner condition, 11 rating male actors in deceive community condition, 10 rating female actors in deceive current partner condition, 11 rating female actors in deceive community condition). Means (standard deviations shown below and in parentheses) were rated on scales ranging from *not at all effective* (1) to *very effective* (7) for poaching deception tactics.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

result, F values presented in Table 4 are for main effects of sex unless otherwise specified in the text.

Hypothesis 1: Men's preference for physical attractiveness. Hypothesis 1 stated that discounting a recent improvement in one's appearance would be more effective for women than for men as a poaching enticement disguise tactic. This hypothesis was supported. As shown in Table 4, the main effect of sex for Discount Appearance Improvement was significant, $F(1, 76) = 12.34$, $p < .001$. There was no effect of deception target on this tactic.

Hypothesis 2: Women's preference for the ability and willingness to invest resources. Hypothesis 2 stated that devoting resources to a partner would be more effective for men to employ than women as a poaching enticement disguise tactic. As shown in Table 4, the main effect of sex was significant for the tactic Increase Resource

Commitment, $F(1, 76) = 5.68$, $p < .05$. There was no effect of deception target on this tactic.

Hypothesis 3: Men's preference for easy sexual access. Hypothesis 3 stated that increasing sexual involvement and accessibility with one's current partner would be more effective for women than for men to disguise poaching enticement. As shown in Table 4, this hypothesis was supported. The main effect of sex on Increase Sex was significant, $F(1, 76) = 6.63$, $p < .01$. In addition, both men and women were seen as more effective at deceiving their current partner than the larger community when using this tactic, $F(1, 76) = 4.69$, $p < .05$.

Hypothesis 4: Women's preference for emotional commitment. Hypothesis 4 stated that the tactics Increase Emotional Connection and Increase Relationship Affection would be more effective for men than for women to disguise

their enticement activities. We found partial support for this hypothesis. As shown in Table 4, Increase Emotional Connection was more effective for men than for women, $F(1, 76) = 7.12, p < .01$, but Increase Relationship Affection did not differ in effectiveness for men and women. This was a predictive failure for Hypothesis 4. It is possible that the latter tactic contained aspects of sexual access (e.g., “He is affectionate toward his current partner”) that caused women’s enticement disguise effectiveness to be higher than predicted. Overall, Hypothesis 4 was partially supported.

Tactics of poaching enticement disguise for which no hypotheses were generated. We found six tactics of enticement disguise that were unexpectedly viewed as more effective for women than for men. Women were seen as more effective when using the tactics Keep Things Normal, Use Friends, Lie about Relationships, Lie about Self, Establish Independent Self, and Social Isolation. Men, in contrast, we seen as more effective when using the tactics Decrease Time with Current Partner and Use Work Excuse. This last tactic may be related to Hypothesis 2. It is possible that the acquisition of resources by a partner would satisfy women more than men in long-term mating relationships and therefore women may be more likely than men to have partners that put long hours in at work.

A few tactics showed significant differences between targets of disguise. For example, the tactic Distance Friendships was seen as more effective for deceiving the community, whereas Phone Tactics was judged more effective for disguising poaching enticement from a current partner. The tactics Manipulate Clothing/Smell, Lie about Whereabouts, and Keep Out of Town displayed interactions between sex of actor and deception target such that men were more effective at deceiving the community, whereas women were more effective at disguising their enticement activities from the current partner. Finally, the tactics Lie about Enticement Target and Manipulate Social Situations showed no differences between sex or deception target.

Acts of enticement disguise judged most effective for each sex toward each target of deception. Table 5 shows the 10 deception acts judged most effective for each sex toward current partner and community targets of deception. These acts give a somewhat richer flavor of the primary effectiveness results and expose some findings not revealed at the tactic level. The single most effective act for men trying to disguise poaching enticement from their current partner was “He talks with his current partner about their future together as a family.” This also was seen as highly effective for men deceiving the larger community about mating enticements and validates our enticement-disguise logic that effective disguise comes from making

TABLE 5: Top Ten Acts of Enticement Disguise Judged Most Effective Across Targets of Deception

<i>Acts of Mate Poaching Enticement Disguise</i>	M	SD
Ten acts judged most effective for men to deceive a current partner		
He talks with his current partner about their future together as a family.	5.86	1.21
He pays closer attention to his current partner.	5.82	1.18
He keeps constant eye contact on his current partner in public situations.	5.73	1.03
He has deep, emotional talks with his current partner.	5.64	1.43
He gets his current partner pregnant.	5.64	1.65
He spends more “quality time” with current partner.	5.55	1.60
He pretends he is happy with his present mate.	5.55	1.44
He spends less time away from his mate.	5.45	1.47
He tells his current partner he is satisfied with their relationship.	5.45	1.57
He does not discuss the new partner with anyone.	5.32	1.78
Average act effectiveness for men deceiving partner	3.81	0.70
Ten acts judged most effective for men to deceive the community		
He does not discuss the new partner with anyone.	5.35	1.79
He keeps constant eye contact on his current partner in public situations.	5.25	1.41
He thinks before he speaks in public.	5.15	1.76
He has deep, emotional talks with his current partner.	5.15	1.53
He spends less time away from his current partner.	5.15	1.52
He is affectionate toward his current partner.	5.10	1.80
He talks with his current partner about their future together as a family.	5.05	1.70
He pretends he is happy with his present mate.	5.00	1.62
He gets his current partner pregnant.	4.95	1.73
He never tells friends or anyone about new partner.	4.90	2.20
Average act effectiveness for men deceiving community	3.79	0.81
Ten acts judged most effective for women to deceive a current partner		
She maintains her daily routine.	6.53	0.90
She doesn’t change her physical look.	6.42	1.22
She always returns home at same time each day.	6.32	0.89
She wears her “relationship ring” all the time.	5.95	1.18
She does not discuss the new partner with anyone.	5.89	0.94
She becomes more romantic with her current partner.	5.84	1.38
She attends fewer parties so as to be seen less.	5.68	1.29
She has sex more often with her current partner.	5.63	1.01
She rekindles the romance of the current relationship.	5.58	1.07
She doesn’t act like anything is “different.”	5.53	1.90
Average act effectiveness for women deceiving partner	4.28	0.72
Ten acts judged most effective for women to deceive the community		
She maintains her daily routine.	6.26	1.05
She always returns home at same time each day.	6.21	0.85
She doesn’t change her physical look.	6.21	1.18
She doesn’t act like anything is “different.”	5.63	1.54
She keeps her conversation routine and never talks about what is really going on in her life.	5.47	1.54

(continued)

TABLE 5 (continued)

<i>Acts of Mate Poaching Enticement Disguise</i>	M	SD
She never tells friends or anyone about new partner.	5.47	1.22
She keeps her current partner sexually satisfied.	5.32	1.20
She wears her "relationship ring" all the time.	5.26	1.82
She is affectionate toward her current partner.	5.21	1.36
She rekindles the romance of the current relationship.	5.16	1.17
Average act effectiveness for women deceiving community	4.03	0.69

NOTE: Effectiveness judgments are based on the responses of 36 men (19 rating actors in the deceive current partner condition, 17 rating actors in the deceive community condition) and 44 women (22 rating actors in the deceive current partner condition, 22 rating actors in the deceive community condition). Means rated on scales ranging from *not at all effective* (1) to *very effective* (7) for poaching deception acts.

others feel that the current relationship will continue unabated. Several acts stood out as particularly effective for men trying to camouflage enticements from their current partner. The acts "He pays closer attention to his current partner," "He has deep, emotional talks with his current partner," and "He tells his current partner he is satisfied with their relationship" all involved providing women with a close emotional connection. This seems to support the evolutionary psychological proposal that women have desires for emotional commitment (Buss, 1994; Buss et al., 1992) and that their attention can be diverted away from the fact that they are being poached by satisfying these evolved desires.

The single most effective act for men trying to deceive the larger community was "He does not discuss the new partner with anyone." This was not surprising because this act would obviously aid in keeping any poaching enticements hidden from the community. Two additional acts stood out as particularly effective for men trying to camouflage the mate poach from the larger community. The acts "He thinks before he speaks in public" and "He never tells his friends or anyone about new partner" both involved isolating the mate poaching relationship from others, primarily through limiting social communication. Similar to the previous study on poaching enticement, we computed an overall Average Act Effectiveness score by averaging across all 91 acts of deception within each sex by deception target quadrant. Men's overall judged effectiveness when deceiving their current partner ($M = 3.81$) was nearly identical to the perceived effectiveness of deceiving the larger community ($M = 3.79$).

The single most effective act for women trying to deceive their current partner was "She maintains her daily routine." In fact, the top three acts for women deceiving their current partner and the community were the same, each involving the maintenance of everyday

activities. None of these tactics showed up on the top 10 lists of men. Apparently, women's mate poaching enticements can be camouflaged best by not letting their daily life become noticeably altered. Two acts stood out as particularly effective for women trying to hide the mate poach from their current partner. The acts "She becomes more romantic with her current partner" and "She has sex more often with her partner" both indicate that women can be especially effective at disguising a mate poach from their partner by satisfying his need for frequent sexual access (Baker & Bellis, 1995; Shackelford et al., 2002). Overall, women's perceived enticement disguise effectiveness was greater than men's, $F(1, 76) = 4.63, p = .05$. When the target was the current partner, women's judged effectiveness ($M = 4.28$) was significantly higher than men's ($M = 3.81$), $t(39) = 2.09, p < .05$.

Mate poaching deception compared to general romantic deception. It is difficult to compare the current results of poaching enticement disguise to previous literature on romantic deception for two reasons. First, no previous study has examined the specific goal of deceiving a current relationship partner and the larger community about one's romantic enticement attempts. Although there are numerous popular press texts (Green, 2000) and Web sites (e.g., www.infidelity.com) on "discovering the cues that say he is cheating," no scientific studies on disguising poaching enticement, per se, have been conducted.

Second, the most closely related study on disguise tactics (Tooke & Camire, 1991) looked at deception directed toward potential partners or same-sex competitors, whereas the current Study 2 examined deception when targeted at a current mate or the larger community. In addition, the Tooke and Camire (1991) study used a 5-point scale of deception effectiveness, rendering clear comparisons across targets of deception difficult to accomplish. What can be gleaned from comparing Study 2 to previous research on deception is that the evolutionary-predicted sex differences in physical attractiveness and resource devotion tactics of deception were robust across all studies. Women deceived most effectively about physical attractiveness, whereas men deceived most effectively about resources.

Summary of Study 2. In Study 2, we sought to identify the special ways that people hide the fact that they are enticing others into making mate poach attempts. We expected that these enticement disguise tactics would follow an evolutionary-predicted pattern of effectiveness across sex and temporal context. We found that increasing sexual frequency and discounting physical appearance tactics were especially effective for women who desire to hide their poaching desires, whereas resource-

related and emotional connection tactics were effective for men who sought to hide mate poaching enticement. Unique to mate poaching enticement disguise, several tactics were considered especially effective if they involved social isolation and were conducted out of town, away from the regular partner and from the prying eyes of the residential community. Overall, we confirmed that sex and temporal context consistently moderated the broad phenomenon of disguising poaching enticements.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Study 1 had four major objectives: (a) to identify new attraction tactics uniquely related to poaching enticement, (b) to evaluate whether an evolutionary psychological perspective can predict patterns of enticement tactic effectiveness, (c) to reveal the most effective ways that people entice others into making mate poaching attempts, and (d) to explore whether sex and temporal context play key roles in the effectiveness of enticement tactics. We identified several new attraction tactics—such as Current Partner Derogates Me, Invite Meddling, and Mention Looking for Replacement—that have never before been evaluated empirically. We found that an evolutionary psychological perspective predicted several aspects of mate poaching, particularly certain sex differences in enticement effectiveness. The most effective enticement tactics appeared to involve being generous and enhancing the ego of one's enticement target. Finally, we found that sex and temporal context played robust and important roles in poaching enticement effectiveness judgments.

In Study 2, we identified empirically, for the first time, the special ways that people hide the fact that they are enticing others into making mate poach attempts. We found that these poaching enticement disguise tactics followed evolutionary-predicted patterns, such as women's greater effectiveness at increasing sexual frequency and discounting physical appearance. Men, in contrast, were seen as more effective at resource-related and emotional connection tactics. The most effective act for men to hide their enticements from their current partners was "He talks with his current partner about their future together as a family." For women, the most effective disguise act, for both her partner and her community, was "She maintains her daily routine." Finally, as with mate poaching enticement, we confirmed that sex and temporal context consistently moderated the broad phenomenon of disguising mate poach enticements.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

There are several limitations to the current set of studies. First, the samples we used were primarily undergraduate students. A number of studies suggest that many

undergraduates do form long-term mating relationships, with roughly 50% being in enduring relationships at a given point in time (Buss et al., 1992; Schmitt & Buss, 2001). Indeed, a case can be made that issues of mate poaching are more prevalent among undergraduates than among other samples. Even so, future research could profitably explore mate poaching enticement and disguise among older and more diverse samples. A number of studies suggest that men are most jealous and vigilant about potential poachers when married to young and attractive women (Buss & Shackelford, 1997), suggesting that young married couples would be an ideal sample in which to study issues of mate poaching. On the other hand, actual rates of infidelity appear to rise among women in the mid-30s (Baker & Bellis, 1995), suggesting that sexual desertions (which may reflect successful short-term mate poaching attraction) are more common in later stages of adulthood. Studies of different age samples could explore these important developmental dimensions of mate poaching enticement and disguise.

A second limitation of the current studies is that we assessed the perceived and not actual effectiveness of various poaching enticement and disguise tactics. This is based on the assumption that the reported perceptions of mate poaching enticement and disguise effectiveness for men and women in the short-term and long-term contexts are reasonably veridical assessments of actual tactic effectiveness. Establishing veridicality would be an extremely difficult task given that mate poaching is often conducted clandestinely, rendering observational studies almost impossible to employ. Nonetheless, reports by successful mate poachers, as well as those who have been lured by mate poaching, may be one step toward providing convergent evidence of the current judgments of perceived effectiveness. Assessing actual affective reactions to tactical enticement and disguise attempts in laboratory experiments (e.g., Schmitt, Couden, & Baker, 2001) or capitalizing on social psychological principles such as contrast effects (e.g., Kenrick, Neuberg, Zierk, & Krones, 1994) would help to establish the veridicality of sex and temporal context effects in mate poaching enticement and disguise.

A third limitation is that the current studies probably underestimate the real-life subtlety and complexity of mate poaching enticement and disguise. It is likely that some strategies of mate poaching involve extremely subtle manipulations of the targeted mate's value of their current mate, planting small but accumulating seeds of dissatisfaction in the targeted mate, skillfully befriending the regular mate so as to gain greater access to his or her partner, influencing those in the social network and kin group of the targeted mate and other tactics difficult to capture with existing behavioral science methods.

Because the current assessment of tactics involved single acts of mate poaching, we may have underestimated the special effectiveness of the temporally extended deployment of poaching strategies. Furthermore, we did not address the relationship status of the mate poacher. Poaching enticement may vary across different relationship contexts and poaching enticement and disguise may be targeted at individuals not studied in the current investigation, including parents, children, and the mate poachers themselves. Although we examined poaching enticement and disguise from an evolutionary psychological perspective, the interpersonal complexity of mate poaching leaves much work to be done.

Evaluating the Evolutionary Psychology Perspective

Consistent with an evolutionary psychological perspective on mate poaching (Schmitt & Buss, 2001), we found in Study 1 that offering sexual access and physical beauty were especially effective for women who desire to be attracted away from their partners, whereas demonstrating resources and being generous were effective for men who seek to be poached. Unique to mate poaching enticement, several tactics were considered especially effective if they involved the current relationship partner. For example, inviting meddling in the current relationship and mentioning that a current partner derogates oneself were seen as particularly effective for women to entice men into attracting them away from a romantic relationship.

Further corroborating the heuristic value of an evolutionary psychological perspective on mate poaching (Schmitt & Buss, 2001), we found in Study 2 that increasing sexual frequency and discounting physical appearance tactics were especially effective for women who desire to hide their poaching desires, whereas increasing resources and emotional commitment toward a partner were especially effective for men who sought to hide mate poaching enticement. Unique to mate poaching enticement disguise, several tactics were considered especially effective if they involved social isolation and keeping one's poaching activities out of town and, therefore, out of sight of one's regular mate and the local community. Overall, we confirmed that sex and temporal context consistently moderated the broad phenomena of mate poaching enticement and disguise.

Unexpected Findings

Although the current evolutionary psychological hypotheses were largely supported, most sex and temporal context differences were not predicted a priori by the evolutionary psychology perspective. For example, among enticement tactics, only 7 of 18 significant effects (39%) were predicted by the current evolutionary perspective. This limited utility in past evolutionary theoriz-

ing may be due, in part, to the unique and heretofore unexplored nature of mate poaching. Several of the attraction tactics evaluated in this research were novel to the literature. Many enticement tactics could be used only within the special context of mate poaching, and many poaching-specific tactics were judged among the most effective for romantic enticement. The tactic Mention Looking for Replacement, for example, was judged among the more effective avenues for eliciting a mate poach and would be irrelevant to theorizing based on general romantic attraction. Future research and theory is needed to more explicitly contrast the tactical shifts that occur when moving from general romantic attraction to the context of mate poaching.

Another consistent, and largely unpredicted, finding was that tactics that downplay or avoid changing one's manner or appearance were judged more effective for women (e.g., Disguise Appearance Improvement, Keep Things Normal, and Manipulate Clothing/Smell). One reason for this pattern may be that the raters of enticement disguise effectiveness are taking into account the mate guarding psychologies of men. If men are more concerned with sexual infidelity, for example, changes in a partner's habit and manner that are linked to sexual unfaithfulness may especially arouse suspicion in men. In contrast, tactics that are concerned more with emotional fidelity (e.g., Increase Emotional Connection, Increase Relationship Affection) may especially lower suspicions in women. Moreover, because previous studies have shown that male mate guarding is tied closely to female physical attractiveness (Buss & Shackelford, 1997), disguise tactics that capitalize on male mate guarding psychology by downplaying the need to mate guard (e.g., Disguise Appearance Improvement) also may be especially effective.

Alternative Explanations of Sex Differences

In addition to an evolutionary psychological perspective, alternative approaches to explaining the current findings should be considered. For example, according to the social structural theory of Eagly and Wood (1999), the minds of men and women are not likely to contain psychological adaptations that reliably produce sex differences, such as those we found in poaching enticement and disguise (see also Wood & Eagly, 2002). Instead, Eagly and Wood (1999) assume that the "differences in the minds of men and women arise primarily from experience and socialization" (p. 414). Thus, if men and women appear to differ, it is because they have received dissimilar socialization experiences—particularly those associated with bifurcated gender roles. Of importance, the degree to which men and women inhabit dissimilar roles, and eventually develop psycho-

logical differences, is something that presumably varies across cultures.

From this social structure perspective, therefore, sex differences in the effectiveness of romantic attraction tactics—including poaching tactics of enticement and disguise—may result from social role differences, not from sex-differentiated evolved psychological dispositions (Eagly & Wood, 1999). If true, cultures around the world may show great variation in the degree of sex differences in mate poaching effectiveness. Of course, the samples in the current set of studies came from the United States, which possesses among the highest levels of gender equity in the world. According to the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) calculated by the United Nations (United Nations Development Programme, 2001), the United States ranks 4th out of 146 nations (97th percentile) in terms of gender equity. Thus, it would be expected from social structural theory that in the 142 cultures that rank below the United States, the suite of sex differences uncovered in the present study would actually be somewhat larger. In the three cultures with greater GDIs than the United States (i.e., Norway, Australia, and Canada), on the other hand, sex differences may be somewhat attenuated. In any case, finding significant sex differences in a culture as gender-egalitarian as the United States suggests, from a social structural perspective, that the sex differences we found in poaching enticement and disguise are likely to be robust across most cultures.

Conclusions

Within the limitations noted above, this research makes several novel contributions to the study of human mating and romantic attraction. First, it highlights contexts of romantic attraction that have thus far received virtually no attention in psychological research—the contexts of mate poaching enticement and enticement disguise. Second, we documented that mate poaching enticement and disguise tend to follow evolutionary-predicted patterns of romantic attraction. Third, we discovered the most effective means by which men and women entice, and disguise, activities of mate poaching. The current studies, therefore, represent an important theoretical and empirical advance in our understanding of human mating and the complex nexus of romantic attraction and infidelity known as human mate poaching.

NOTE

1. For each multi-item tactic of poaching enticement, key statistical analyses also were conducted on individual items. In almost every case, the sex and context differences found for individual items mirrored those of the high-level tactics. Detailed results on item-level analyses are available from the first author.

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