

# The Association Between Environmental Threat Cues

## and Women's Mating Strategies

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### Background

- Women in harsh environments may form relationships with men to reduce the risk of encountering environmental harm (Wilson & Mesnick, 1997)
- Men may provide women with investment in exchange for sexual access (Baumeister & Vohs, 2004)

### Method

- 155 women (68 in control and 87 in resource scarcity) who identified as attracted to opposite sex between the ages of 18-25 ( $M = 19.19$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ ) reported minimum mate standards at four levels

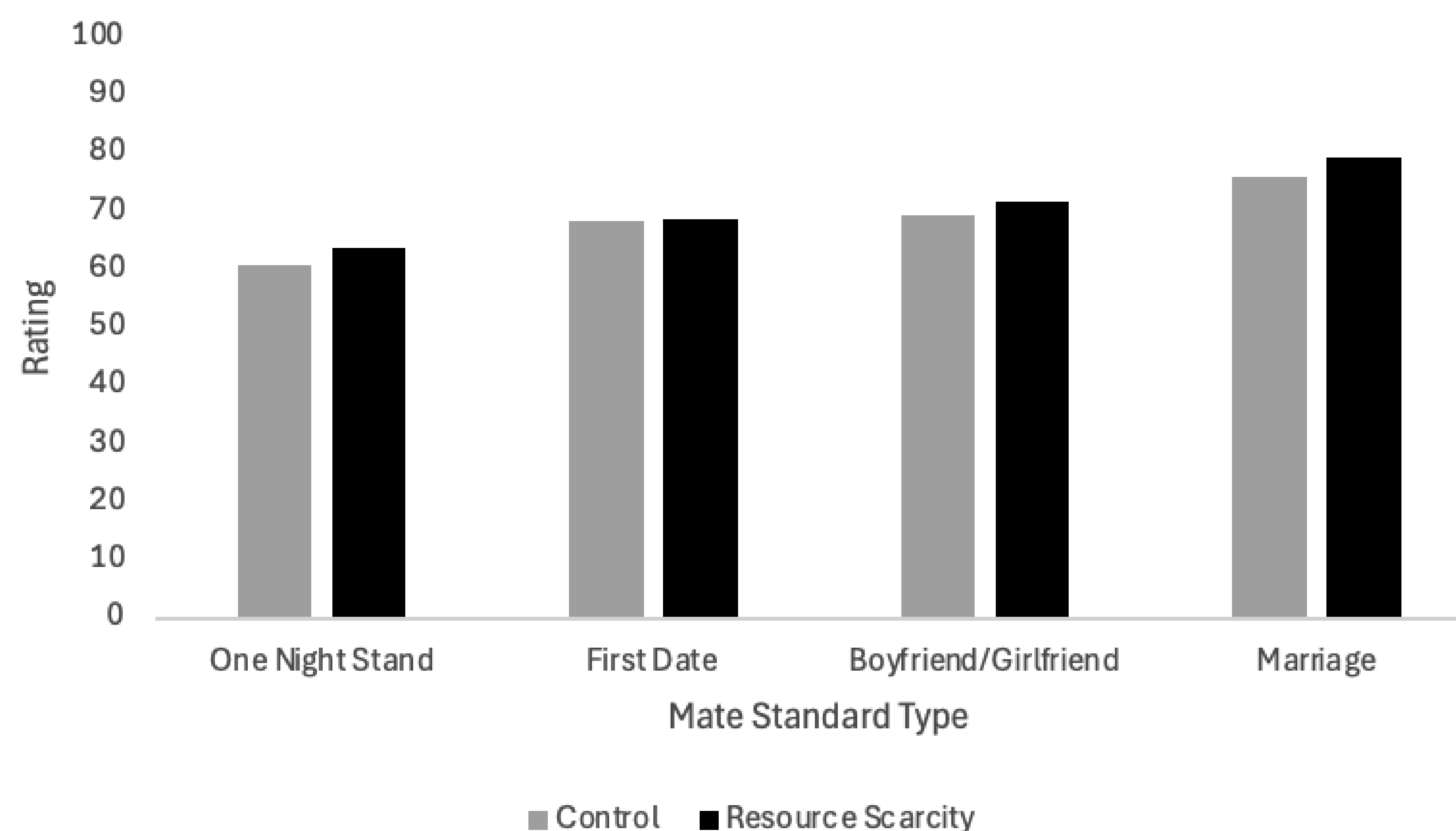
### Hypotheses

- Women who are primed with dangerous environment cues, compared to those primed with a control, will report higher levels of sexual openness (i.e., lower mate standards)

### Results

- There was not a significant effect of resource scarcity on women's average minimum standards for a one-night stand, ( $p = .37$ )
- There was not a significant effect of resource scarcity on women's average minimum standards for a first date, ( $p = .87$ )
- There was not a significant effect of resource scarcity on women's average minimum standards for a boyfriend, ( $p = .33$ )
- There was not a significant effect of resource scarcity on women's average minimum standards for marriage, ( $p = .19$ )

Reported Minimum Mate Standards at Four Commitment Levels Based on Experimental Prime



### Conclusion

- Resource scarcity may not influence women's levels of sexual openness
- Across all commitment levels, resource scarcity seems to have little to no effect on minimum standards

### Limitations

- Salience of the priming conditions may not have been strong enough to induce observable changes
- Did not account for baseline pre-test attitudes among participants

### References

- Baumeister, R. F., & Vohs, K. D. (2004). Sexual economics: Sex as female resource for social exchange in heterosexual interactions. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 8(4), 339-363. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0804\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0804_2)
- Wilson, M., & Mesnick, S. (1997). An empirical test of the bodyguard hypothesis. In P. Gowaty (Ed.), *Feminism and evolutionary biology: Boundaries, intersections, and frontiers* (pp. 505-511). Springer.