

SEXUAL STRATEGIES THEORY MEETS “SEX AND THE CITY”: APPLYING AN
ADAPTATIONALIST LENS TO CONTENT ANALYZE SEXUAL CONTENT IN
TELEVISION PROGRAMMING

by

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(Under the Direction of Tom Reichert)

ABSTRACT

The present study is a content analysis of sexual content in relationally-oriented episodic dramas that air on broadcast and cable network television. Specifically, 10 episodes of six different programs were coded for content that ranges from sexual talk to sexual behavior. Not only does the analysis provide an assessment of the overall level of sexual content within this genre of programming, but it also reveals the nature of sexual interactions between female and male characters. Contrary to predictions, males were shown in sexually revealing instances as often as females. However, consistent with previous research 93% of sex occurred among unmarried couples and 94% of those instances contained no safe-sex discussion or behavior. The study has implications for researchers in that it provides an indication of the values and norms surrounding the depiction of sexual relationships on television and how those depictions are potentially interpreted by impressionable viewers.

INDEX WORDS: sexual content analysis, sex in television programming, sexual theory

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this to my parents and brother. Because you believed in me, this was possible.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	VII
LIST OF TABLES	IX
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER TWO	3
LITERATURE REVIEW	3
SEXUAL STRATEGIES THEORY	11
CHAPTER THREE	16
METHODOLOGY	16
<i>Sample</i>	16
<i>Variables</i>	16
<i>Sex-Related Variables</i>	17
<i>Sexual-Relationship Variables</i>	19
<i>Coding</i>	21
CHAPTER FOUR.....	22
RESULTS	22
SEXUAL STRATEGIES PREDICTIONS	24
CHAPTER FIVE	27
DISCUSSION	27
NATURE OF SEXUAL BEHAVIOR.....	27
SEXUAL STRATEGIES THEORY FINDINGS	30
FUTURE RESEARCH.....	35
LIMITATIONS.....	36
CONCLUSION.....	37
APPENDICES	40
(A) PROGRAMS AND DESCRIPTION OF SHOWS TO BE CODED	40
(B) VARIABLES AND CODE BOOK	42

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Components of Sexual Strategies Theory	11
Table 2: Female and Male Nudity (by percent)	22
Table 3: Sexual Behavior by Marital Status (by percent)	23
Table 4: Initiator by Motivation for Sex (by percent)	24

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The depiction of sexual content in mainstream television programming has been a contentious issue for many decades. Regardless of which side one is on—sex is, or is not, harmful to viewers—sexual content on network television has steadily increased. When couples first appeared in television dramas, for instance, even married couples were shown sleeping in separate beds. Today, not only are the couples not in separate beds, but they may be accompanied by several people in the same bed and engaged in activities that were unimaginable only a few years ago.

One reason for the increase in sexual content may be the influence of cable and premium pay channels. For example, it is thought that since people pay for cable and for pay channels, riskier sex can be shown without consequence. However, even though broadcast channels are considered public property, content on these channels has also been pushing the boundaries of acceptability, perhaps in an effort to compete with sexually-laden cable programming. With the emergence of HIV/AIDS and increasing teen-pregnancy rates, some critics are arguing that sexual content should be restricted, while others are arguing that sexual content has little effect on people's lives.

The present study does not directly address policy issues. It does, however, seek to contribute to what is known about the frequency and nature of sexual content in relationally oriented programming. The study begins with a comprehensive literature review of past content

research. Based on previous findings, several predictions regarding the nature of sexual content (e.g., female nudity, unmarried versus married sex, and safe sex) are set forth. Second, an evolutionary theory regarding the pattern of courtship interactions between females and males is discussed, which is followed by several predictions pertaining to the context-based sexual motivations and behavior patterns.

Consistent with content analysis research, the method section of this report outlines the sample and procedures to be followed to test the hypotheses. Coding procedures as well as coding categories derived from past research are described in detail. After the investigation is carried out, the remaining sections of the report—results and discussion sections—will be elaborated upon. At the very least, the present analysis seeks to contribute to current knowledge concerning sexual content in television programming through a comprehensive and systematic approach.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

For the past 30 years, sexual content in television programming has been a topic that has been studied and observed. Researchers have examined a range of programming from made-for-TV movies to prime-time programs to soap operas. In addition, the topic of analyses has ranged from sexual content such as mentions of rape and homosexuality to visual depictions of sexual behavior. Based on these analyses, sexual content in television programming has come a long way from the days of “The Donna Reed Show” to the days of “Sex and the City.” To capture the evolution of sexual content since the days of Donna Reed, the following research review details all the major published content analyses over the last 30 years.

In one of the earliest analyses, Bradley, Greenberg, Graef, Fernandez-Collado, Korzenny, and Atkin (1980) analyzed and compared sex in programs from fall 1977 and summer 1978. The programs were from a two-week sample of prime-time fictional television programs during each period. The programs were coded for categories that included rape, homosexual acts, intercourse among married and unmarried couples and prostitution. The authors found a drop in the rate of sexual references between the two time frames. For all the samples, what was seen most were references to intercourse among non-married partners. The rate of most sexual acts was much higher after 9 PM than they were from the hour between 8 and 9 PM. For example, during this time frame, the rate of sexual acts was three to four times greater, especially for sexual acts

among unmarried couples. Movies had the highest rate of sexual intercourse among unmarried couples with no instances of sexual intercourse among people who were married.

Greenberg et al. also analyzed content by network (ABC, NBC, and CBS). NBC was coded as having the fewest incidents of sexual acts. Women, it was found, were just as likely as men to be participating in the acts, with regard to both receiving and initiating the acts. Because there was such a low incidence of homosexuality, it was found that almost all of the acts were among men and women even though, overall, men outnumbered women three-to-one in the programs. Last, the authors reported that sex was primarily a “young” person’s activity. For example, about 75% of the acts coded occurred among people in the age range of 20 to 49.

Suls and Gastoff (1981) conducted a study to determine if there were many incidences of sexual discrimination, sexual humor, and hostility on prime-time television. Males in this study, which was conducted in 1977, were found to be the subject of sexual humor more than females, but that was because the males were the main characters in most programs. As such, it was easier for the men to be seen in humorous instances. At the time of this study there were instances of nonsexual humor during the viewing time. Also, there were more instances of what was considered sexual discrimination in 1977, but the authors reported they did not know how the results would turn out at the time the study was published, and that another study needed to be conducted.

Looking only at soap operas, Larson (1991) proposed that because soap operas have relationships as their major story lines, they are very appropriate for studying sexual interactions. According to the study, unmarried characters in soap operas had more sexual relationships than characters who were married. However, “kissing” was most common among married couples or those in committed relationships. Interestingly, some kisses coded as “forced,” yet most of these

kisses ended up successful, meaning that both partners ended the “kiss” as willing participants. In addition, there were hardly any rape instances in these programs, and the recognition of topics such as HIV/AIDS was practically nonexistent.

Also in 1991, Sapolsky (1991) content analyzed network programs in 1979, when, as he noted, AIDS and teen pregnancy rates were high. He compared his analysis with a similar analysis of 1989 programs. Sapolsky found that in a decade, the rates of sexual behavior had not decreased. He also found that nine in ten white males in prime-time programs typically initiated sex 75% of the time in 1989. In 1979, males and females initiated sex almost equally.

Sapolsky claimed that television is important because it presents sex in a reality-based manner. Television, he said, has become an important way to socialize people about sex. Then, the author seemingly contradicted himself by saying that the images people see regarding sex are not accurate and that this inaccuracy can lead to disappointment in real-life sexual situations. Here, too, as with the study by Larson (1991), most of the sexual activity coded in the 1970s was of unmarried couples. The type of content changed from 1979 to 1989 in that in the latter decade, more sexual language was present. In addition, there were more references about sexually transmitted disease during the later decade.

In a study conducted by Shilder and Lowry (1995), the 1992 sweeps period was analyzed for the networks ABC, NBC, and Fox. A primary factor in the study was an interest in the influence of the increase in sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS cases in the United States on television programming. Sex, according to the authors, has been used to attract viewers for some time. Some of the categories this study examined were verbal suggestiveness, physical suggestiveness, erotic touching, and heterosexual intercourse as the primary variables, with prostitution, homosexuality, pregnancy prevention, disease prevention, and transsexualism as

other categories. This study compared the fall 1991 non-sweeps period to the 1992 sweeps period, and found no significant difference in the sexual material for the two periods. As expected, most sexual activity occurred among unmarried people. Consistent with previous findings, even though sexual activity occurred among unmarried characters, they rarely contracted a sexually transmitted disease (STD) or AIDS. All of the incidences of people shown contracting a STD or AIDS appeared on NBC. Fox almost doubled its amount of sexual content from non-sweeps to the sweeps period, while there was no significant change for NBC.

It was also noted that just because a program portrayed sexual behavior did not mean the audience ratings were any higher. Regularly aired programs were found to have a higher level of sexual content than other programs that were not seen on a regular basis. The term “sex sells” was, as the authors saw it, of no merit because the programs did not have higher ratings due to the sexual content. In fact, the authors argued that sex on some programs had a negative effect on viewership because it drove away viewers. It was suggested that more attention should be paid to the influence of sexual content and network ratings.

Kunkel, Cope, Farinola, Biely, Rollin, and Donnerstein (1999) conducted a study that examined the amount, as well as the nature, of sexual messages on television. Because the authors believed it was not only what was shown, but also how sex is shown that mattered, they also examined the context in which sex was presented. Overall, they analyzed over 1,351 programs on ten different channels. They found that only 9% of all the programs with sexual content had any talk about the risk or responsibilities were related to sexual behavior. Overall, 88 scenes had sexual intercourse or sexual intercourse depicted, and of those none referred to the risks or responsibilities of sex. The most common act shown was passionate kissing at 50%. About 56% of all shows had some type of sexual content. Of the prime-time programs analyzed,

67% had talk about sex or some type of sexual behavior and 73% of shows that contained sexual intercourse (implied or actually depicted) were among people that ranged over the age of 25.

When considering genres, Signorielli (2000) found that sex was most often seen in dramas followed by situation comedies. Her study suggests that programs with sexual content do not have higher ratings, and that programs with no sexual content may have higher ratings. Signorielli found that the purpose of having sexual content in programs was because the sex sold well in an international market; Americans, she claimed, are not interested in seeing programs that contain sexual content. In fact, her findings suggest that programs with sexual content have the lowest ratings out of the programs that were in the study. The author characterized the 1960s as the “golden age of television” during which sex was implied but never seen or discussed during the program. During the 1990s, she suggested that sex in prime-time television may have been decreasing. The programs studied were, according to the author, encouraging to younger audiences because they promoting sexual behavior instead of encouraging them to abstain from sex.

Farrar, Kunkel, Beily, Eyal, Fandrich, and Donnerstein (2003) conducted an analysis of sexual content on ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox. A three-week sample was drawn to code programs that appeared between 8 PM and 11 PM over a six-month period from October to March. Altogether, 797 programs were analyzed for this study. Sex was defined as “any depiction of talk or behavior that involves sexuality, sexual suggestiveness, or sexual activities and relationships” (p. 12) The authors noted that actual sexual behavior does not actually have to take place to be included in this definition. Sexual behavior was measured at the “scene” level using six categories that included physical flirting, passionate kissing, intimate touching, sexual intercourse strongly implied, and sexual intercourse depicted. Sexual dialogue was categorized

as comments about one's own behavior or another's sexual behavior, talk about sex that already occurred, and talk about the possibility of having sex in the future. Another variable, safe sex, was coded at the program level. This included depictions of sexual patience, sexual precaution, and depictions of risks or sexual consequences.

The researchers focused their efforts on 258 prime-time programs aired from 2001 to 2002. Over 71% of these programs contained some form of sexual content. Farrar et al, concluded that sex was a major factor in prime-time television especially when 69% of programs contained sexual talk, which was most prevalent during prime-time programming than any other type of behavior. When there was sexual talk, the most common type was when someone talked about his/her own or someone else's sexual behavior. When sexual intercourse was depicted, the authors point out that very little nudity was involved. Overall, one of every three programs had some form of sexual behavior in it. Kissing and flirting made up 70% of the sexual behaviors seen on prime-time television. Sexual patience was not observed in any of the scenes, and any talk of risk was only present in 2% of the programs. In terms of genres, movies had the highest amount of sexual content with 94%, followed by comedies at 89%, and dramas at 73%.

In another study, Fisher, Hill, Grube, and Gruber (2004) suggested that the media, specifically television, was where many youth are getting their ideas about sex and how that is socialized into their lives. The authors reported that one in five teens said that television was where they got most of their information on sex. Many of these teens believed that what they were seeing was an actual portrayal of what sex was like in the real world. Fisher et al discussed Cultivation theory which says that as people watch more and more television, they begin to perceive what they are seeing as reality.

According to the authors, the amount of sexuality on television increased over the past 20 years. This study examined whether the programs coded had any kind of sexual responsibility in them, as well as sexual behavior in general. What they found was the majority of programs, roughly 80%, contained some form of sexual behavior. Almost half of the programs contained a form of physical flirting, and half also included kissing and some form of touching. Comedy, dramas, and movies each had a 100% incidence of sexual behaviors. Low levels of sexual behaviors were present in most of the genres compared to actual intercourse.

For the Fisher et al. study, ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox, UPN, WB, BET, MTV, Cinemax, HBO and Showtime were analyzed. They were not surprised to report that sexual behavior was more common on cable channels, especially premium cable channels, because there are fewer restrictions for these programs and networks. The amount of implied intercourse was almost four times higher for the premium pay channels than it was for the other cable channels. The amount was even greater when actual intercourse was depicted. The study found that premium pay channels showed intercourse about 20% of the time whereas broadcast channels showed intercourse about 1% of the time. Sexual talk was more prevalent at about 75% compared to sexual behavior at 67%. Again, pay cable channels had more talk about sex than broadcast channels, with sexual talk about one's own preferences combined with talk about past sex was present in almost two-thirds of the shows.

Another category in this study was sexual responsibility. In only 2.4% of the entire sample of 1,276 programs was there any mention of patience before sexual activity. However, if someone was about to engage in sexual activity, talk of being safe was more evident, but the amount was still low for the sample at 4.3%.

Pardun, Kelly L'Engle, and Jane Brown (2005) conducted the most recent analysis which was a two part study in which they first surveyed 3, 261 seventh and eighth graders regarding their media viewing habits. A sample of these students was interviewed about topics regarding health and sexuality. Based on the results, a content analysis of sexual imagery was completed using six different types of media that included 308 television shows, movies, music, internet sites, magazines, and newspapers that teens tended to use the most. They then coded references to development during puberty, romantic relationships, body exposure or nudity, sexual innuendo, touching and kissing, and sexual intercourse.

The results of this study are that music videos contained more sexual content than television, movies, magazines and the internet. What constituted most of the content (about two-thirds) was body exposure and romantic relationships. Content that talked about or showed sexual behaviors represented about 21% of the material coded. Music videos and magazines accounted for most of the content that contained references to sexual intercourse at about 15%, whereas there was a difference in that movies and television only showed sexual intercourse about 4% of the time. In 56% of the content that was analyzed, the focus was on body parts followed by an emphasis on relationships.

Pardun et al. report that what was most important was not necessarily the kind of sexual content that the media was portraying, but the extent to which teens were exposed to the sexual content. An interesting finding was that teens make media choices based on the issues they have going on in their lives. This, according to the authors, helped to explain why the media may have an effect on adolescents when it comes to making decisions based on sexual interests and behaviors. Last, in a study conducted by Kunkel (2003), it was reported that roughly 84% of the content analyzed for teenagers contained some kind of sexual activity. Kunkel, however, was

more specific when analyzing each scene in the program. Pardun et al. concluded that television did not have the most impact on adolescents' choices when it came to sex, that movies they watched and music was as, if not more, important.

Overall, these studies indicate that the amount and frequency of sexual content within television programming appears to be increasing over time. Genre comparisons indicate that comedies and dramas contain more instances of sexual content than other genres. In addition, the nature of the sexual content appears to be more explicit and graphic as well, with sexual behavior moving over time from images of passionate kissing to implied intercourse. The studies also show that sex is increasingly depicted more among non-married couples, and that discussions or outcomes related to safe sex are practically nonexistent. Based on previous studies and their findings, the following predictions regarding the frequency and nature of sexual content within relationally oriented programs are set forth.

H1: There is a higher incidence of female nudity in the programs compared to male nudity.

H2: Most sexual behavior will occur among unmarried couples compared to married couples.

H3: Most instances of unmarried sex will contain no mention or discussion of risk factors (e.g., sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy) or protective measures (e.g., condoms).

Sexual Strategies Theory

Despite common perceptions, how and who people choose to have sex with is not a random process. According to Sexual Strategies Theory (SST) proposed by evolutionary psychologists David Buss and David Schmitt (1993), human mating choices are predictable

because they have adapted over millions of years for the purpose of species survival. Compared to other adaptation-based theory of mate selection, SST postulates that mate selection strategies vary based on situational factors. For example, Buss and Schmitt state that “mating strategies are context dependent, and in particular, highly sensitive to the temporal context of short term versus long term mate-ships” (1993, p. 205). What this means is that there are certain situations that the sexes find themselves in that determine how they go about choosing a mate (see Table 1).

Time Frame	Sex	
	Male	Female
Short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater interest here • Desire for larger number of mates • Willing to have sex in less time • Less stringent standards • Sexual experience desired • Sexual inexperience undesired • Commitment-seeking women undesirable • Physical attractiveness important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate resources are desired • If mate in relationship it is undesirable • Promiscuity undesirable • Physical size and strength valued
Long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical attractiveness important • Physically unattractive undesirable • Jealousy over infidelity likely • Faithfulness and loyalty valued • Sexual experience not valued • Increases genetic quality of children • Cooperation of division of labor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having long term resources available for offspring is desirable

Note. Adapted from Buss and Schmitt (1993).

The concept of sexual selection was first proposed by Charles Darwin (1871). He noted that there were certain characteristics that gave animals, as well as humans, a reproductive advantage over time. Darwin noted concepts such as male hierarchy (e.g., alpha male), courtship patterns, and observable adaptations prompted mating such as colorful feathers on male birds. Characteristics with a reproductive advantage—that increase the chances of successful mating—

will further the chances of those traits being passed to future generations. Relatedly, Trivers (1972) proposed that sexual selection is influenced by parental investment—how much each sex must devote to his or her children. Trivers proposed that the parent who invests more in the offspring will be more selective about the mate they choose, and that those who invest fewer resources (i.e., time, nutrients, health) will attempt to mate with a person who invests more. They do this because by trying to mate with someone who invests more, the one who invests the least can continue to do so. Biologically, men are considered to invest the least in a relationship whereas women invest the greatest amount of resources.

Although Trivers' theory was an important contribution to the field of evolutionary-based mate selection, SST was proposed to explain observations not supported by the concept of parental investment. For example, there are some situations in which women will engage in short-term mating behavior (e.g., one-night stands) that are counter to the investment explanation. To better understand SST and its expression in sexual behavior, relevant main premises, hypotheses, and predictions governing sexual selection are described in the remainder of this section. It is important to note that Buss and Schmidt state that specific strategies and preferences have evolved over millions of years through a process of both psychological and biological adaptation.

The first set of propositions posed by SST pertain primarily to male short-term mating behavior. Similar to parental investment theory, SST predicts that because men have less parental investment in offspring they will be more likely to seek short-term mating opportunities. Because men devote more time to short-term mating, they will seek more sexual partners, and be willing to engage in sexual activity earlier in a relationship than women. Also according to the theory, if a man is seeking a short-term mate, he is more likely to want a mate who is sexually

experienced. Because the mating period is short-term, there is no commitment involved. If a woman begins to show signs of commitment, however, the man is more likely to consider her behavior unappealing.

In addition to temporal considerations, men place emphasis on mates who are physically attractive—regardless of whether they are seeking short-term or long-term mates. According to Buss and Schmidt, attractiveness is a sign of female fertility as symbolized by healthy bodies, clear skin, and an overall appearance of physical health. If men happen to be seeking a long-term relationship, these fertility signs also provide a relative indication of the woman's health and ability to produce offspring.

The second set of hypotheses pertain to male long-term mating strategies. As stated, when seeking long term mates, men search for the women with the greatest fertility opportunity. Men also seek to ensure that they are the fathers of their offspring. Because faithfulness and monogamy are desired in long-term relationships, women can provoke jealousy by either a real or perceived threat of adultery. If a woman is not faithful to her mate, he will not be sure that his children are his. A main aspect already mentioned is that men in long term commitment are in them because they can ensure paternity. Alternately, if a woman perceives that her relationship is threatened, she will become jealous. A male just wants be sure that he has found the best woman for procreation purposes.

The third set of predictions pertain to women's mating strategies. Essentially, women who seek short-term mates do so in order to procure immediate resources from the man. She wants the him to provide a place to stay, to buy her things, or for employment advancement, but she is not intending for that person to father her children. A second reason why women engage in short-term mating strategies is to involve quality candidates for the long-term. Therefore,

determining if a man can provide immediate resources will give the woman a better idea of what he may be able to provide long-term. In addition, women do not place value in men engaging in short-term strategies. Women seek men who are attractive and strong. He needs to be strong to protect her from other males. A female ultimately seeks males who can provide financially for her and her offspring. He needs to be financially stable and be a support system for her and the family.

Based on the previously reviewed research and predictions from Sexual Strategies Theory, the following predictions regarding the pattern of sexual interactions between male and female characters as represented in television drama are set forth. First, set of hypotheses pertain to temporal strategic differences between male and female sexual behaviors, especially with regard to initiation and motivation.

H4: Males are more likely than females to initiate sexual behavior.

H5: Sexual satisfaction is the primary motive for male engagement in sexual behavior.

H6: Females are more likely to initiate talk of long-term commitment compared to males.

The second set of hypotheses pertain to mate selection differences. As described in the SST section, both sexes place emphasis on physical attractiveness but men are more likely to use it as the sole criterion in short-term situations. Alternately, women will place more emphasis on resource factors such as political or social power as well as financial resources.

H7: Female physical attractiveness is the most important criterion for male short-term mate selection.

H8: Resource-related factors (e.g., financial and social power) are the most important criteria for female short- or long-term mate selection.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

To examine the nature of sexual content and to test the hypotheses, a content analysis will be conducted. Specifically, ten concurrent episodes of six relationship-based programs were analyzed and coded by the author. A more thorough description of the sampled programs and the variables to be coded are described in the following sections.

Sample

As mentioned, six different programs were chosen as the sample for the present analysis. Overall, there were 55 scenes involving sexual behavior in 60 sampled episodes ($M = .92$ per episode). The shows chosen for this study were as follows: *Grey's Anatomy*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Nip/Tuck*, *Sex and the City*, *Entourage*, and *Rescue Me*. (see Table 2). These programs were selected because they represent a sample of relationally-based dramatic narratives. As such, the programs provide a rich source of interactions between female and male characters. In addition, the programs also represent a range of programming from that which appears on broadcast networks, cable networks, and premium networks.

Variables

The following variables were analyzed within each scene. The first set of variables pertain to mainstream sexual content in television programming. The second set of variables are designed to provide insights into sexual interaction, and any pattern of inherent strategy, between

male and female characters. Both sets of variables have either been reported in previously published research, adapted from that research, or created for the specific purposes of the present study. See Table 3 for a synopsis of the primary variables that were coded (see Table 3).

Sex-Related Variables

Sexual behavior. An indicator of sexual behavior is adapted from a content analysis of sexual content in leading DVD rentals (Dempsey & Reichert, 2000). The variable consists of seven ordinal categories that range from “none”—or no sexual behavior—to depictions of “sexual intercourse.” Specifically, the categories are as follows: none, passionate kissing, intimate touch, oral sex implied, oral sex depicted, sexual intercourse implied, and sexual intercourse depicted. For the “none” category, there is no instance of any of the other six categories in the scene. “Passionate kissing” must be romantic in nature and suggest that there is potential for more sexual behavior (Cope-Farrar & Kunkel, 2002). “Intimate touches” involve physical touches intended to arouse a partner and can occur in private or public. “Oral sex implied” is when the audience is reasonably led to the inference that the act has occurred or is going to occur. “Oral sex depicted” is when the viewer sees the act occurring although the view of the actual act may be obstructed. Similarly, “sexual intercourse implied” means that the audience can make a logical inference that the act has happened or will happen. Last, “sexual intercourse depicted” means that the audience can see the act happening even if the view is obstructed.

Nudity. What and how much clothing actors are wearing in sexual scenes will be coded as “nudity.” For the present analysis, four categories will be assessed (Dempsey & Reichert, 2000). “Fully clothed” represents characters in everyday dress or full attire. “Partially clad” is

present when at least one of the characters is missing clothing (e.g., shirtless male), whether it is the top half or lower half, and if the characters are shown in lingerie or under garments. “Nude but obscured” is when breasts, buttocks, and genitals of those involved are covered, and “full nudity” is when those areas are visible.

Talk about sex. Comments made by characters about sex are defined by Cope-Farrar and Kunkel (2002) as conversations intended to promote or pursue sexual activities. The intention or goal of these remarks is to initiate sexual behavior. The talk must be a primary point of the scene to be coded. Categories include talk of past sexual partners, talk of current sexual partners, and talk about possible future sexual partners. The fourth category is seductive talk towards one another.

Type of partner. Created for the purpose of this study, “type of partner” refers to the nature of characters involved in the sexual act. There are eight types of partner types that will be coded. Heterosexuals are characters involved in which cross-sex interactions. “Lesbian” refers to two women involved in the behavior. “Gay males” are two men involved in the sexual behavior. A “threesome” are characters involved in sexual behavior that can include two women and one man or one woman and two men. “Swingers” are defined as married or unmarried couples who engage in sexual behavior with other couples who are married or not married. It will be noted what sexual orientation the couples are. There is a variable for “other” for any type of partner that was not foreseen by the time coding began.

Sexual health behavior. Talk about, and representations of, safe-sex practices has been an important variable in recent content analyses. The present analysis will utilize Cope-Farrar and Kunkel’s (2002) categorization. The variable ranges from “no mention” of sexual-health

risks, to mentions of the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, to talk of contraception for birth control, to depictions of safe-sex practices.

Sexual-Relationship Variables

Relational status. It will be important to assess the relational status of characters involved in sexual interactions. Based on past research, seven relational categories include strangers, friends, non-monogamous dating, committed relationships not-married, married, and divorced. “Strangers” are people who have just met and know little about one another. “Friends” are characters who do not typically display romantic gestures and have known each other for a long period of time. “Non-monogamous dating” involves characters who date one another but also date other people. “Committed relationship, not-married” involves characters in a committed relationship but are not married (e.g., living together, engaged). “Married” and “divorced” represent the two remaining categories. Any additional relationship categories will be coded as “other” and assessed during the coding process.

Initiation. To assess the gender and age of those who initiate sexual interest in a relationship, “initiation” is included as a variable in the present study. The person who actually initiates the interaction will be identified. Gender was included in a study by Cope-Farrar and Kunkel (2002). Initiator age will be categorized into five groups (Dempsey & Reichert, 2000): (1) high school and younger aged, (2) college-aged of 18 to 22, (3) young adults from 23 to 30, (4) mature adults from 31 to 60, and (5) older adults who are 61 and older.

Success of attempt. Whether the initiation attempt was successful or not will be noted as either “successful” or “unsuccessful.” It will be noted if successive attempts are made between the same set of characters over the course of an episode.

Motives. Another important variable for the purpose of determining sexual strategies involves assessing motivations. This is defined as the reasons one intends to engage in sexual behavior or to initiate a relationship. The first category is “sex only” in which the primary motive is to engage in intercourse with a person. A second category involves sex for the first time due to marriage. It will be noted if at least one character involved is a virgin. The third category is “make-up sex” that occurs after an argument. Here, the characters engage in sex as an outcome of an argument. The next category is “maintenance sex” in which sex is simply routine for the characters involved. A fifth motive is to gain status such as popularity among one’s peers or co-workers. A sixth motive is to receive a reward such as a higher job position or a gift. Any additional motives that emerge during coding will be carefully noted and categorized as “other.”

Consequence of behavior. If sexual behavior occurs, the consequences of that behavior will be noted. At this point, eight possible outcomes are expected. These consequences include: guilt that the act occurred, a relationship is gained, prestige or popularity is diminished or gained, worry of a sexually transmitted disease, an STD is actually contracted, pregnancy worry, actual pregnancy, and, finally, marriage.

Physical attractiveness. Physical attractiveness is important to assess because it provides an indication of characters that are likely relational targets. Also, an attractiveness differential may exist depending on context and resource considerations. The overall physical attractiveness of the characters involved in sex-related scenes will be coded on a 10-point scale (1 = extremely unappealing, 10 = extremely appealing). For analysis purposes, the scale may be categorized as follows (1-3 = “unappealing”, 4-6 = “moderately appealing”, 7-10 = “very appealing”).

Coding

Each scene was coded for sexual content. A scene in this instance is defined as a sequence in which the place and time generally hold constant (Cope-Farrar and Kunkel, 2002), which is consistent with previous content analyses of sexual content in television programming. In addition, a scene ends when there is a shift in time or characters. Also, characters may enter or leave a scene, but they do not interfere with the definition of a scene. Both the female and male character were coded when sexual behavior was present in a scene. Physical attractiveness was coded from the standpoint of (1) how attractive the characters found one another and (2) what the coders perceived as attractive.

The author was the primary coder for the present study. To establish reliability, a secondary coder, a female graduate-student, coded one episode of each program comprising approximately 13% of all instances of sexual behavior. The second coder was thoroughly trained with regard to coding procedures, variables, and categorizations.

Cohen's Kappa was calculated for the following coding categories and deemed acceptable: sexual behavior ($K = 1.0$), talk about sex ($K = 1.0$), relational status ($K = 1.0$), and initiation ($K = .88$). Other variables with perfect agreement included type of partner, sexual health behavior, success of attempt, and motives. With regard to the coding of individuals within the scene, coding also was reliable: female nudity ($K = 1.0$), male nudity ($K = .88$), female age ($K = 1.0$), male age ($K = .60$), female physical attractiveness ($K = .52$), and male physical attractiveness ($K = .48$). Fleiss (1981) has described a Kappa rating of .4 to .6 as fair, a .6 to .75 as good, and a Kappa rating above .75 as excellent. The primary coder's data is used for analysis purposes.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Hypothesis 1 predicted that there would be a higher incidence of female nudity in the sampled programs compared to male nudity. Because “nudity” is an ordinal variable (i.e., fully dressed to fully nude), a *t* test was employed to analyze the relationship between male and female nudity. A paired-sample *t* test failed to support this prediction, $t(55) = .85, p > .05$. In the scenes analyzed in this investigation, females were no less exposed ($M = 2.31$) than were males ($M = 2.24$). See Table 2 for percentages.

Table 2. Female and Male Nudity (in Percent)		
	Female	Male
Fully dressed	26%	33%
Partially clad	26%	16%
Nude but obscured	42%	46%
Fully nude	7%	6%
Note. $N = 55$. Percentages may not equal 100% because of rounding.		

The second hypothesis (H2) predicted that most instances of sexual behavior would occur among unmarried couples compared to married couples. This prediction was supported. A chi-square goodness-of-fit test revealed that there was a relationship between marital status and sexual behavior, chi-square (1, $N = 55$) = 40.16, $p < .001$. Overall, 93% of sexual behavior occurred among non-married people compared to only 7% for married couples (see Table 3).

Table 3. Sexual Behavior by Marital Status (by Percent)		
	Married ($n=4$)	Unmarried ($n=51$)
None	2%	6%
Passionate Kissing	2%	24%
Intimate Touching	-	13%
Oral Sex Implied	-	9%
Oral Sex Depicted	-	2%
Intercourse Implied	-	11%
Intercourse Depicted	4%	29%
Note. $N = 55$. Percentages may not equal 100% because of rounding.		

Hypothesis 3 predicted that instances of sex among unmarried couples would contain no mention or discussion of risk factors (e.g., sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy) or

protective measures (e.g., condoms). This prediction also was supported, chi-square (1, $N = 51$) = 39.71, $p < .001$. Overall, 94% of sex between unmarried couples contained no safe-sex discussion or behavior. It appears that safe sex continues to be absent when sex is portrayed in television dramas.

Sexual Strategies Predictions

The following predictions pertain to Sexual Strategies Theory and sexual content in TV programming. Specifically, Hypothesis 4 predicted that males would be more likely than females to initiate sexual behavior. This prediction failed to receive support (see Table 4). Overall, there was no statistical difference between male (41%, $n = 12$) and female (59%, $n = 17$) initiators although women appeared to initiate sexual behavior more than men. Actually, “mutual” initiation was the most common category ($n = 18$). It appears, however, that men are no more likely to initiate sexual behavior than are women.

Table 4. Initiator by Motivation for Sex (in Percent)

Motivation	Initiator				$N = 55$
	Female ($n=17$)	Male ($n=12$)	Mutual ($n=18$)	Uncertain ($n=8$)	
Sex only	22%	16%	26%	7%	39
Relationship gain	2%	-	-	-	3
Make-up sex	-	-	2%	2%	2
Maintenance	4%	4%	6%	6%	9
Other	5%	2%	-	-	3
Total	32%	22%	43%	15%	100%

Note. $N = 55$. Percentages may not equal 100% because of rounding.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that sexual satisfaction would be the primary motive for male engagement in sexual behavior. Overall, this prediction was supported, chi-square (1, $N = 55$) = 9.62, $p < .003$. Looking only at motivations for sexual behavior, 71% of all instances included sexual pleasure as the primary motivation (see Table 5). Looking only at male-initiated sexual encounters ($n = 12$), 75% included sex as the primary motivation, chi-square (1, $N = 12$) = 3.0, $p < .10$. Similarly, however, 71% of female initiated sex also was judged to be primarily for sexual pleasure. Overall, it appears that sex for sex's sake is the primary motivation for both men's and women's engagement within sex in TV dramas.

Hypothesis 6 predicted that females would be more likely to initiate talk of long-term commitment compared to males. Overall, the coders made no distinction between motivations articulated by males or females. However, the results reveal that very little talk was involved at all, much less talk about long-term commitments when sexual behavior was present. For instance, 87% of all sexual behavior instances contained no talk, chi-square (3, $N = 55$) = 113.80, $p < .001$. Therefore, this prediction failed to receive direct support as neither men or women engaged in talk before having sex.

Hypothesis 7 predicted that female physical attractiveness would be the most important criterion for male short-term mate selection. Similar to the previous prediction, however, there was no clear verbal indication of sexual behavior motives for males. But physical attraction clearly played a significant role given that the women in the sample were extremely attractive ($M = 9.07$, $SD = 1.09$). In addition, as previously noted, sexual pleasure was the primary motivation for having sex. As a result, there is indirect evidence that physical attractiveness played a very important role in the sexual motivations of men, thereby partially supporting Hypothesis 7.

Last, resource-related factors (e.g., financial and social power) were predicted (H8) to be the most important criteria for female short- or long-term mate selection. Overall, this prediction was not directly supported. As previously discussed, sexual pleasure was the primary motivation (71%) for sexual behavior and there were no instances of resource-related factors as sexual behavior decision points. Simply, it appears that sexual desire and physical attractiveness constitute the primary motivations for sex in relationship-based televised dramas.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

The purpose of the present analysis is to analyze sexual content in relationally based television programming, and to compare the findings with those from previous research. A second goal is to examine the initiation and nature of sexual behavior between characters based on evolutionary-based guidance of Sexual Strategies Theory (SST). Overall, the hypotheses related to sexual content in television programming based on past research are partially supported. In addition, the hypotheses pertaining to Sexual Strategies Theory (SST) are either not supported or not directly tested. The findings and their implications are discussed in detail in the following section.

Nature of Sexual Behavior

The first set of hypotheses are concerned with describing the nature of sexual behavior in relationally based programming. Hypothesis one (H1) predicted that there would be a greater incidence of female nudity compared to male nudity. Interestingly, this prediction is not supported as, overall, there is no difference in the degree of nudity in which women and men are depicted. This finding is counter to most previous research that has found women to be provocatively portrayed both more often and more explicitly than men.

In fact, in the programs coded in this study, there are many instances of male nudity that would not have been present when previous research was conducted. For example:

In *Nip/Tuck*, the audience spends most of the time, as far as sexual scenes, looking at Dr. Troy's rear end. The viewer sees him in what seems to be his favorite position, having sex with his women from behind. Similarly, in the opening scene of an episode of *Grey's Anatomy*, there is a shot of the leading male character's rear end, but that is about as fleshy as the content becomes.

As this example demonstrates, there are many instances of male nudity that are present in today's relationally-based narratives.

Hypothesis two (H2) predicted that there will be more sexual behavior among non-married couples compared to married couples. The findings support this prediction as non-married persons are shown engaging in sexual activity overwhelmingly more than married couples. This finding is congruent with past research. For example, in their analysis Bradley, Greenberg, Graef, Fernandez-Collado, Korzenny, and Atkin (1980) found a higher incidence of sexual activity among non-married couples. Similarly, Shilder and Lowry (1995) found the same to be true in their study. They found more instances of sex among non-married couples in a sample from the 1992 non-sweeps and sweeps period during the Fall.

Also, Dempsey and Reichert (2000) found in their analysis of top video rentals that married couples rarely had sex, and when they did, it was limited to passionate kissing. A similar pattern of findings is evident in this study. For example, only four instances of sexual behavior among married couples is evident compared to 51 instances among non-married couples (see Table 3). Similarly, 4% of "depicted intercourse" instances are of married couples compared to 29% for non-married couples. The following examples highlight the sexual situations evident for non-married couples:

Desperate Housewives offered more sexual detail than its other network show *Grey's Anatomy*. One of the main characters, Gabriel, was having an affair with her high-school-aged gardener. In one scene she jumps on him as he lays her half dressed body on the dining table. In another episode they were taking a bubble bath together. Most of the sex scenes in this show were that of Gabriel and her gardener John.

Similarly, consider examples of non-married sex depicted in the program *Rescue Me*:

In *Rescue Me*, the series begins with a slow start. However, the show offers more sexual twists than have been seen on the other shows. The main character begins having sex with a young lady. She answers the door wearing just a robe and within a minute his pants are down and the viewer gets a vivid visual of him having sex with her from behind. There are eventually two such scenes such as this. In another scene, a character on the show cheats on his girlfriend with her daughter by allowing her to give him oral sex. In order for her to keep quiet she demands the same. That same character finds himself in a twisted threesome with another couple that he did not plan on. The viewer finds that the man in the scene forces sex with the young man as he is tied up. In another scene, one of the firemen is warned that a co-worker's ex girlfriend is a little crazy, but he has sex with her regardless. She ties him up, and burns his chest with her cigarette. She claws at his neck as well. In this scene, there is a view of the girl's rear end, which is not seen on the other shows.

In Nip/Tuck, there is an instance of married sex, but its depiction pales in comparison to non-married sex:

The other doctor on the show, Dr. Macnamara, is shown in a vivid scene having sex with his wife. While it is obvious they are having sex, there is no nudity. In addition, with him on top of her, she has a bored facial expression and he looks distracted.

Overall, it appears that sex out-of-wedlock is a staple in television programming. Why this is the case is a cause for speculation. Sex among married people may not be as a dramatic narrative device compared to the taboos associated with sex among non-married partners. Answering that question would be a worthy goal for further research.

Hypothesis three (H3) predicted that most non-married sex acts would occur without mention of risk or prevention. This prediction is supported in that sexual partners rarely mentioned risks associated with unprotected sex. Similarly, very few couples took any type of preventative action. Again, these findings are consistent with previous research. As mentioned, Fisher et al. (2004) reported very few instances of talk regarding abstinence and only a slight mention of sexual responsibility in terms of promoting one's health. Similarly, Shilder and Lowry (1995) found that few of the partners having sex in television ever contracted a sexually transmitted disease.

Sexual Strategies Theory Findings

The second set of hypotheses sought to portray the nature and pattern of sexual relationships between women and men in televised relational programming. A tenet of the theory

is that men initiate courtship, or, in the case of contemporary relations, sexual behavior. Thus, Hypothesis four (H4) predicted that men would initiate sexual behavior more than women. Overall, this prediction is not supported. Mutual initiation is most common, followed by female-initiation, with male-initiation third most common (see Table 4). Although these differences are not statistically significant, the finding does strongly suggest that men do not take the lead in initiating sexual behavior in the sampled programs. Consider the following examples of women initiating sexual behavior:

In an episode of *Desperate Housewives*, Bree and her husband become separated and in order to bring some excitement back to their sex life, Bree shows up at her husband's hotel room wearing just an overcoat and heels. When she takes the coat off, she is wearing some racy lingerie. While there was a lot of sex occurring in the show, there was again very little visuals from the encounters.

In *Sex and the City*, much of the sex that occurs is mutual, or it is uncertain who initiated the act. One of the main characters, Samantha, has few inhibitions and has no problem baring her body.

It is clear from these examples that women are just as apt to initiate sexual behavior as are men in relationally based programming. This finding does not lend support to Schmidt and Buss' SST regarding short-term mating behavior. As previously noted, past research is somewhat mixed. For example, Sapolsky (1991) examined a ten-year period of sex in television programming and found that women and men in 1979 initiated sex at the same level. In 1989,

however, overwhelmingly men initiated sexual acts. Whether SST is a dated theory or if sexual depictions on television deviate from sexual norms is another area of future research.

A second hypothesis regarding SST (H5) is that that sexual satisfaction would be the primary motive for male engagement in sexual behavior. Overall, this prediction is supported. As described in the previous section, 75% of male-initiated sexual encounters was judged to be for sexual pleasure. This finding lends support to SST in so far as males are more likely to seek out and to initiate mates simply for sexual satisfaction (i.e., “one-night stands). However, in stark contrast to SST, 71% of female initiated sex also was judged to be for sexual pleasure. According to SST, women are more likely to initiate sexual mating behavior motivations for resource procurement, to gain status, or for advancement, among other motivations. As clearly demonstrated in Table 4, hardly any motivations are present other than momentary sexual pleasure. Perhaps the herein lies the difference between televised mating behavior and real-world mating behavior. Following are examples from *Entourage* and *Sex and the City* that demonstrate the quest for sexual pleasure as a primary motivation in sampled programs.

The most explicit scene in *Entourage* occurred in the eighth episode where the main character Vince decides to have sex before he goes on a trip. What the viewer sees is a girl straddling Vince facing backwards, meaning they are facing the same way. She is having a conversation with him as she rocks back and forth on him.

In *Sex and the City*, the main character, Carrie, appears in a scene in which she is moaning her partner’s name implying that he is performing oral sex. Other than that scene, she is usually depicted after the act has occurred. Samantha appears in a scene in

which she is vividly telling Carrie about her night with a young chef. As she describes her behavior, the viewer gets visuals of what she is describing: she is on top, he is on top, she is on her side, and he is on his side.

Hypothesis 6 anticipates that females would be more likely to initiate talk of long-term commitment compared to males. Overall, the coders made no distinction between motivations articulated by males or females. However, the results reveal that very little talk was involved at all, much less talk about long-term commitments when sexual behavior was present. For instance, 87% of all sexual behavior instances contained no talk. Therefore, this prediction failed to receive direct support as neither men or women engaged in talk before having sex. This finding is somewhat surprising given that Fisher, Hill, Grube, and Gruber (2004) found sexual talk to be more prevalent than actual sexual behavior, whereas the present study shows just the opposite to be true. More sexual acts are evident in the sampled programs than any type of sexual talk. However, there are some exceptions. For instance, in the HBO program *Entourage*, there is very little explicit sex in the first ten episodes. What is explicit are the conversations the characters have about sex, but overall, there are few scenes depicting sexual behavior.

Another prediction, Hypothesis seven (H7), is that female physical attractiveness would be the most important criterion for male short-term mate selection. Similar to the previous prediction, however, there is no clear verbal indication of sexual behavior motives for males but physical attraction clearly plays a significant role given that the women in the sample are extremely attractive. As a result, there is indirect evidence that physical attractiveness plays an important role in the sexual motivations of men, thereby partially supporting Hypothesis 7 and the role of physical beauty in mating situations.

Last, resource-related factors (e.g., financial and social power) are predicted (H8) to be the most important criteria for female short- or long-term mate selection. Overall, this prediction is not directly supported. As previously discussed, sexual pleasure is the primary motivation for 71% of female initiated sexual behavior. No instances of resource-related factors were perceived by the coders. Simply, it appears that sexual desire and physical attractiveness constitute the primary motivations for sex in relationship-based televised dramas.

Overall, it appears that there is mixed support for Schmidt and Buss' Sexual Strategies Theory. It is clear that physical attractiveness and sexual pleasure are primary motivations for male short-term mating behavior. On the other hand, women are clearly equal partners in televised mating ritual. Women are as apt to initiate sexual behavior as are men, they do not engage in talk regarding long-term relationships, and they appear to be as motivated by sexual pleasure and physical attractiveness as men when it comes to mate selection. Whether these inconsistencies with SST are a reflection of the distortion inherent in television narratives or if they reflect changing gender norms in which the double standard that sanctions women's sexual freedom is not clear. In all likelihood, the answer is that both forces are influencing the present findings.

From another perspective, the role of women in the selected programs may have influenced the findings. For example, women occupied more leading roles in the programs coded (Desperate Housewives, Sex and the City), and they were depicted in more modern-day roles as well (e.g., divorced women, single moms). With more women portrayed in these roles and shown being in control of the mating situation, it leads to the conclusion that SST may not pertain to the television world in all instances. In reality, there are more women who are single

and independently taking charge of their lives which means that SST may not accurately reflect real-world reality as well.

Future Research

There are several areas of research that can build upon the present findings. One area is the media effects. For example, it would be interesting to investigate the possible effects on people when they view the type of sexual content shown on these programs. Does it provide a model for behavior or does it provide a cathartic effect? It would be important to determine, especially, as sexual content on television becomes more explicit. In addition, understanding the effects of sexual program content would help producers become aware of the effects of their content of viewers.

In addition, there appear to be some differences between broadcast and cable networks with regard to the explicitness of sexual content. Cable television appears to be showing more sexual content than it has in the past. On the cable programs, for instance, sexual acts are explicitly depicted leaving little to the imagination. Going back to effects, determining how explicit content affects younger viewers could be of importance. Adolescents are impressionable and, perhaps, are learning much of what they know about sex from watching these types of shows despite the false reality of the programs. By studying the impact of effects in the future, there could be a better understanding of how to represent sex on television programming in a more socially responsible manner so that young audiences get a better understanding of what sex really is.

Future researchers also could compare more genre types. In so doing, it would be possible to determine if SST is more apparent in one genre than another or it is represented in all

genres to the same degree. In this study, SST was moderately operational in the relationally based programs. However, only one genre was analyzed. Perhaps if soap operas were included in the content analysis, audiences may find more women seeking potential mates for child-rearing, or men trying to have more children to keep their genes ongoing. If this was to be true, and if there is a large audience following this programming, what does that say to the audience and how many, if any, believe that the programs represent what life is or should be like? In essence, an effects or content analysis of other genres would build upon this study's findings.

Limitations

A limitation of the present analysis is the program sample selection. The study only sampled relationally-based dramas or comedy-dramas. There were no examples of soap operas or comedies, and certain types of shows such as crime dramas were omitted from the study. Therefore, the findings of the present analysis can only be generalized to type of programs selected for the study.

Another limitation is the number of programs to be analyzed. Initially, ten programs were included to represent a larger sample size. But constraints reduced the number of sampled programs to six. In addition, the number of episodes of each program increased from three to ten. While there became more instances to code, the type of programs coded became smaller leaving the type of programs coded to be very similar instead of representative of different types of programming. When the original sample began to be studied, there was a problem in locating all the programs needed. Two shows were new this season and not yet out on DVD or available to stream online. Since there was a deadline for the study, those two programs had to be excluded from the sample.

There were only two researchers coding for this study and both were female. This could have had an impact on results such as females may find some items such as attractiveness different than if a male researcher served as a coder.

Conclusion

The present analysis set forth to analyze the frequency and nature of sexual content in relationally-based television programming. Congruent with past analyses, there is sex in these programs but, more important, the nature of sexual interactions is different from previous research. Sexual Strategies Theory was proposed to assist in analyzing differences in male and female mating behavior. Generally, initiated sex with physically attractive women for the sole purpose of sexual pleasure. This finding is consistent with SST expectation. However, the findings also reveal that women are more likely to be initiators and to pursue sex simply for pleasurable purposes to the same degree as male characters. These findings suggest that the nature of gender relations is changing, at least on television. Whether those depictions influence or reflect reality remain to be determined. In sum, it is clear that programming content today has become more brazen than it was in the past. It will be interesting to see in another ten years where sex in television stands. Today, audiences are getting more explicit fare on cable than with broadcast networks. Questioning if this bold content says anything about our society will be something to ask in the future, and if so, how will society respond to the growing amount of sexual content, if they will respond at all.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A			
(A) Programs and description of shows to be coded			
Programs	Network (Time slot)	Genre	Description
Grey's Anatomy	ABC Thursday 9pm	Comedy/Drama	The show is about the various relationships among the cast of 5 interns at a hospital and the attending surgeons they work for. The relationships can overlap, be humorous, serious, and complex.
Desperate Housewives	ABC Sunday 10pm	Dark Comedy	Described as a “prime-time soap”, the program is narrated by a character who committed suicide and now goes through telling the story of her friends secrets. Relationships, cheating, and dating around are common themes among this show.
Nip Tuck	FX Tuesday 10pm	Comedy/Drama	This shows follows the lives of 2 plastic surgeons. Sex is a main theme of this show, along with many twisted story lines of murder, family, and relationships.

Appendix A, cont'd Programs	Network (Time slot)	Genre	Description
Sex and the City	HBO Sunday 9pm	Comedy/Drama	This is based on the lived of four women living in NYC. Most of the shows substance is based on relationships and sex.
Entourage	HBO Sunday 10pm	Comedy	Show is about a rising actor in Hollywood and his entourage (manager, friend, and half brother). It follows the actor and his entourage and what life is like in Hollywood and how difficult it is to find love in the business.
Rescue Me	FX Wednesday 10pm	Comedy/Drama	About the firefighters at a station in NY. Follows lives and romances of them.

APPENDIX B

(B) Variables and Code Book

Variables (Source)	Levels
Sexual Behavior (Dempsey and Reichert 2000)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. None 2. Passionate kissing 3. Intimate touching 4. Oral sex implied 5. Oral sex depicted 6. Sexual intercourse implied 7. Sexual intercourse depicted
Nudity (Dempsey and Reichert 2000)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fully dressed 2. Partially clad 3. Nude but obscured- breasts, buttocks, and genitals of those involved covered 4. Full Nudity- breasts, buttocks, or genital area of at least one person visible
Talk about sex (Cope-Farrar and Kunkel 2002)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Talk of past sexual partners 2. Talk of current sexual partners 3. Talk of future sexual partners 4. Seductive talk to one another
Type of partner	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Heterosexual 2. Lesbian 3. Gay male 4. Threesome: two women one man 5. Threesome: two men one woman 6. Three or more partners involved 7. Other

Appendix B, cont'd Variables (Source)	Levels
Health promotion (Cope-Farrar and Kunkel 2002)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No mention of risk behavior 2. Talk of consequences: STD's 3. Talk of contraception 4. Use of contraception
Relational Status (Cope-Farrar and Kunkel 2002)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strangers (just met) 2. Friends 3. Non-monogamous dating 4. Committed relationship-not married 5. Co-workers 6. Married 7. One married one not 8. Divorced 9. Other
Initiation (Dempsey and Reichert 2000)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Female initiated 2. Male initiated
Age	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High school or younger 2. College age (18-22) 3. Young adult (23-30) 4. Mature adult (31-60) 5. Older adult (61 and up)
Success of Attempt	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Failure at attempt 2. Success at attempt
Motives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sex only 2. First time due to marriage/ waiting 3. Make-up sex after argument 4. Maintenance sex in a relationship 5. Gain status-such as popularity 6. Receive reward (gift or job) 7. Other

Appendix B, cont'd Variables (Source)	Levels
Consequences of behavior	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guilt 2. Relationship gained 3. Diminished prestige/popularity 4. Worry of STD 5. STD 6. Worry of Pregnancy 7. Pregnancy 8. Marriage 9. Other
Physical Attractiveness	1-10, 1 least attractive 10 most attractive