

FORMULATION OF ZULF'S ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP THEORY

ZULFIKAR MOINUDDIN AHMED

I want to begin to formulate a new theory of close relationships between men and woman that I will call *Zulf's Romantic Relationship Theory*. It will be a new theory. It will be a challenge to Interdependence Theory which arose from game theoretic *Social Psychology of Groups* from 1959 [2]. It will be a challenge to Attachment Theory of Hazan and Shaver from 1987 [1].

I will briefly introduce the major issues that I find lacking in these two substantial established theories. First, in Interdependence Theory, game theoretic considerations do not give sufficient weight to social emotional instincts of human beings, and this we know include LUST, PLAY, CARE, SEEKING. So this theory only uses particular rational calculations which do have an effect but the theory is misspecifying the phenomena of romantic relationships by ignoring them from the elements of the theory.

Attachment theory improves on this but is totally focused on CARE.

I want to posit immediately that we need a theory that gives proper space for the basic affective components, LUST, PLAY, SEEKING, CARE, RAGE, FEAR, and SADNESS. I posit that Attachment theory is not giving proper place for LUST, PLAY, SEEKING at all and is biased for CARE.

1. THE AIM OF EFFORT TOWARD ZULF'S ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP THEORY

I had great success with my Four-Sphere Theory in fundamental physics. This gives me confidence that theoretical clarity produces better scientific theories. Psychology is far more difficult than physics because there is rarely any consensus on fundamental concepts unlike physics where there is no ambiguity or question on the existence of electrons and the measurement of their charges. The difficulties in psychology are many, but mainly because there is a vastly unknown genetic code in common, G_c , which is 99.9% of everyone's genome and its contents are mostly quite unknown and mysterious. So psychology is quite strongly concerned with attempting to determine natural laws for this universality in human beings. A valuable way of seeing psychology is to model the behaviour of individuals who all have G_c in common that determine their biological composition and adaptations and their interactions.

Now Interdependence theory developed roughly between 1959 and 1990, and does not take into account the sharpening of affective sources by Jaak Panksepp in 1998. And Attachment theory arose in 1987 and also did not use the affective sources.

2. WHEN SEX IS INVOLVED

I want to begin the assessment of Attachment theory with direct look at the LUST effects first because there we have some data on sexless marriages and happiness levels [4]. Attachment theory does not directly deal with sex directly.

Workspaces Applications Oct 28 8:55 PM

Sociodemographic Correlates of Sexlessness Among American Adults and Associations with Self-Reported Happiness Levels: Evidence from the U.S. General Social Survey

Self-reported past-year happiness levels versus past-year sexlessness status with multinomial odds ratios of happiness levels among healthy adults ^a

Happiness levels outcomes	Males			Females		
	Had sex	Sexless	OR _{adj} (95% CI) ^b	Had sex	Sexless	OR _{adj} (95% CI) ^b
<i>Married participants</i>	<i>n</i> = 2739	<i>n</i> = 190		<i>n</i> = 2959	<i>n</i> = 183	
Very happy	40.5%	42.6%	Referent outcome	43.0%	30.6%	Referent outcome
Pretty happy	54.1%	51.1%	1.02 (0.61, 1.71)	51.5%	59.0%	0.68 (0.40, 1.16)
Not too happy	5.4%	6.3%	1.13 (0.41, 3.14)	5.5%	10.4%	0.67 (0.23, 2.00)
<i>Never-married participants</i>	<i>n</i> = 1094	<i>n</i> = 317		<i>n</i> = 1007	<i>n</i> = 324	
Very happy	20.8%	18.9%	Referent outcome	23.2%	23.8%	Referent outcome
Pretty happy	65.5%	65.9%	1.08 (0.66, 1.78)	62.7%	63.3%	0.73 (0.44, 1.20)
Not too happy	13.6%	15.1%	0.93 (0.45, 1.89)	14.1%	13.0%	0.61 (0.28, 1.30)
<i>Divorced/separated participants</i>	<i>n</i> = 681	<i>n</i> = 145		<i>n</i> = 895	<i>n</i> = 435	
Very happy	17.0%	20.7%	Referent outcome	18.7%	20.9%	Referent outcome
Pretty happy	66.8%	61.4%	1.08 (0.53, 2.19)	64.4%	62.1%	1.56 (0.97, 2.50)
Not too happy	16.2%	17.9%	0.65 (0.26, 1.64)	17.0%	17.0%	1.36 (0.69, 2.68)
<i>Widowed participants</i>	<i>n</i> = 79	<i>n</i> = 117		<i>n</i> = 142	<i>n</i> = 771	
Very happy	30.4%	19.7%	Referent outcome	26.8%	25.3%	Referent outcome
Pretty happy	58.2%	56.4%	0.39 (0.09, 1.64)	48.6%	60.6%	0.66 (0.28, 1.53)
Not too happy	11.4%	23.9%	0.52 (0.06, 4.79)	24.6%	14.1%	1.54 (0.53, 4.45)

^aParticipants with baseline health reported as "poor" were excluded from analysis

^bAdjusted for age (18–34, 35–49, 50–64, 65+), household income, education, race, and social engagement levels (see Table 3 for categories)

We note that happiness levels decrease for married women who are sexless roughly by 5-15%. Now let's look at sexual activity by age.

Workspaces Applications Oct 28 9:41 PM

Sociodemographic Correlates of Sexlessness Among American Adults and Associations with Self-Reported Happiness Levels: Evidence from the U.S. General Social Survey

	% past-year sexless	% 5-year sexless	Unadjusted model for past-year sexlessness odds ratio (95% CI)	Demographic and health factors model for past-year sexlessness OR (95% CI)	All factors model for past-year sexless OR (95% CI)
Total female study sample	26.3	17.4			
<i>Age at time of survey</i>					
< 25	11.8	8.6	1.00	1.00	1.00
25–34 year	6.8	3.3	0.54 (0.42–0.71)[‡]	0.97 (0.69–1.36)	0.78 (0.47–1.32)
35–44 year	11.2	4.9	0.95 (0.75–1.20)	2.99 (2.11–4.23)[‡]	1.74 (0.99–3.07) [‡]
45–54 year	20.4	9.2	1.92 (1.52–2.42)[‡]	7.25 (5.04–10.4)[‡]	5.34 (2.99–9.54)[‡]
55–64 year	38.9	25.2	4.77 (3.78–6.01)[‡]	22.4 (15.1–33.1)[‡]	15.9 (8.48–29.6)[‡]
65 +	73.7	61.3	21.0 (16.8–26.3)[‡]	76.4 (51.1–114.2)[‡]	44.7 (23.1–86.4)[‡]
<i>Years of education</i>					
17 + years (post-college)	21.9	14.8	1.00	Non-significant ^a	Non-significant ^c
13–16 years (college)	20.6	12.4	0.93 (0.78–1.10)		
HS diploma (12 years)	26.2	17.8	1.27 (1.07–1.50)[‡]		
11 years or less	41.0	31.1	2.48 (2.07–2.96)[‡]		
<i>Race</i>					
White	27.1	18.2	1.00	1.00	1.00
Black	25.1	15.4	0.90 (0.79–1.02)	1.50 (0.86–2.62)	2.13 (0.89–5.08)
Other race	18.3	12.4	0.60 (0.48–0.76)[‡]	1.32 (0.55–3.22)	1.57 (0.43–5.66)
<i>Marital status</i>					
Married	6.5	3.7	1.00	1.00	1.00
Never married	25.2	16.5	4.88 (4.18–5.70)[‡]	22.8 (16.1–32.3)[‡]	39.4 (21.5–72.3)[‡]
Divorced/separated	33.7	19.1	7.36 (6.34–8.53)[‡]	15.7 (12.0–20.51)[‡]	23.1 (14.6–36.5)[‡]

Here we want to point out that for 55-65 years 1-year sexless is 39% so sexual activity is 61%. This gives us a sense of the importance of LUST system in romantic relationships. Attachment theory does not explicitly take this into account and that this makes vulnerable to challenge.

3. INFANT ATTACHMENT STYLES UNLIKELY TO DETERMINE ADULT ROMANTIC STYLES

That there would be some small correlations between infant-parent attachment style and romantic relationship attachment style is reasonable but I have strong doubts about any determination for these. This is because LUST and SEEKING systems activate and there is a separate Attraction system for mating that is totally independent of the Attachment system. I have significant doubts that there can be a fundamental scientific theory that can withstand the test of time from Attachment theory for the effects of LUST, SEEKING, PLAY are fundamentally not dominant in infant-child relationship at all. And their expectation to have a significant effect in adult romantic relationships is quite natural.

In different words, Attachment Theory does not have enough input variables to produce a comprehensive theory because it attempts to parent-childify relationships that are fundamentally driven by sexual and romantic urges to produce progeny. Neither party is helpless dependent on the other at all in adult romantic relationships and preferred mates do not have any automaticity in attachment.

4. ATTACHMENT VIEWPOINT AVOIDS ADULT ISSUES LIKE AUTONOMY

Rainer Maria Rilke had an awful attachment to his mother, and yet in his poetry shows some profound insights about Romantic Relationships. Not long ago I discovered that Rilke's "Love Song" had some empirical verification [5]. The issue is support for Autonomy within the relationship. This is very important and is a significant variation from Romantic Love as an attachment process, which is Cynthia Hazan and Phillip Shaver's articulation of the 1987 Attachment Theory.

5. SEXUAL EXCITEMENT AND PASSIONATE LOVE

A large cocktail of emotions were measured for close relationships by Susan Sprecher and Constantine Sedikides [6]. In expressions of emotions, men reported higher expressions of *Sexual Excitement* and *Passionate Love*.

Gender differences in perceptions of emotionality: The case of close heterosexual relationships

Gender differences in perceptions of emotion.pdf

Table II. Gender Differences in Reports of Own Emotions Expressed

	Men	Women	<i>t</i>
Emotion indices			
Positive emotions	6.99	7.14	-1.37
Negative emotions	2.53	2.82	-3.23 ^c
Total emotions	4.62	4.83	-2.75 ^b
Hedonic tone	4.45	4.32	.98
Specific emotions			
Positive emotions			
Passionate love	6.96	6.83	.78
Sexual excitement	7.39	7.06	2.47 ^b
Companionate love	7.59	7.99	-3.14 ^b
Trust	6.69	6.78	-.43
Liking	7.52	7.90	-2.51 ^b
Respect	6.69	6.49	.99
Commitment	6.68	6.96	-1.59
Confidence	6.64	6.65	-.05
Satisfaction	6.97	7.22	-1.67
Contentment	6.76	7.15	-2.34 ^a
Joy	7.26	7.59	-2.60 ^b
Negative emotions			
Anger	3.16	3.64	-3.16 ^b
Hate	1.43	1.35	.88
Resentment	1.98	2.29	-2.10 ^a
Depression	2.81	3.56	-4.42 ^c
Sadness	3.06	3.52	-2.52 ^b
Hurt	2.42	3.06	-4.08 ^c
Frustration	3.45	3.88	-2.38 ^a
Jealousy	2.39	2.39	.00
Insecurity	2.22	2.52	-1.81
Ambivalence	2.92	2.54	2.06 ^a
Anxiety	3.07	3.47	-2.02 ^a
Fear	2.09	2.34	-1.59
Guilt	2.07	2.13	-.45
Loneliness	2.55	2.81	-1.61

^a*p* ≤ .05.
^b*p* ≤ .01.
^c*p* ≤ .001.

We're going to just make elementary inferences from this. First for both parties *Sexual Excitement* and *Passionate Love* are nontrivial. That is absolutely central in our view, for this is *within* close relationships and not *before* relationship formation.

6. CORE THESIS OF ZULF'S ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP THEORY

The Core Thesis of *Zulf's Romantic Relationship Theory* is that of the three systems hypothesized by Helen Fisher in 1998, Lust, Attraction, and Attachment, both Lust and Attraction are the driving variables for the entire duration of the relationship and Attachment is the *secondary* variable. In the entire cocktail of the positive and negative relationships, all will drop significantly lower and the relationship itself might dissolve if the key variables of *Sexual Excitement* and *Passionate Love* are turned off. Now I am not sure that *Passionate Love* of Sprecher-Sedikides is not just the effects of Helen Fisher's Attraction system; I assume it is.

The nontrivial difference in my *Zulf's Romantic Relationship Theory* and Hazan-Shaver 1987 will be some new propositions.

(a) Romantic relations have low probability of coming to existence without *Attraction* system turning on.

(b) Romantic relations have low probability of coming to existence without *Lust* system turning on.

(c) Romantic relations can become close relationships with *Attraction* and *Lust* systems being relatively high for both parties.

(d) The Attachment theory is a reasonable account for some secondary effects given *Lust* and *Attraction* being in a steady state.

(e) The rest of the positive emotional cocktail is rests on some combination of the primary *Attraction* and *Lust* and secondary *Attachment* systems.

(f) There is a high probability of dissolution if primary variables of *Attraction* and *Lust* systems turning off. Then the close relationships begin dissolution; couples could remain together by tertiary constraints such as cohabitation, financial interdependence, rearing children, etc.

The key point is that it is not Bowlby's attachment process that is a good scientific model of adult romantic relationships.

REFERENCES

- [1] Cindy Hazan and Phillip Shaver, 1987
- [2] G. Levinger and JD Snoek, *Attraction in Relationship: A New Look at Interpersonal Attraction*, Morristown, NJ: Gen. Learn. Press, 1972
- [3] Jaak Panksepp, *Affective Neuroscience*, 1998
- [4] Jean H. Kim, Wilson S. Tam, and Peter Muennig, Sociodemographic Correlates of Sexlessness Among American Adults and Associations with Self-Reported Happiness Levels: Evidence from the U.S. General Social Survey, *Arch Sex Behav.* 2017 November ; 46(8): 2403–2415
- [5] Zulfikar M. Ahmed, Ruminations on Rilke's *Love Song*, Sept 19 2021
- [6] Susan Sprecher and Constantine Sedikides, *Sex Roles*, Vol. 28, Nos. 9/10, 1993