



Interactional (DI), Social Network (SN), and Circumstantial/Situational (CS). Consistent with Kelley's theory of interdependence, respondents most frequently used IP and DI attributions. A detailed-coding scheme was developed to identify within-category properties of the attributions. In this analysis, individuals' responses to three separate questions were considered together to clarify which characteristics were perceived to have contributed to the break-up.

Multivariate analyses of variance revealed no relationship length or gender differences in the broad classes of causal attributions (IP, DI, SN, CS) used when explaining dissolution. Persons who perceived that they and their partners wanted to date again in the future, however, were more likely to report circumstantial reasons for their break-up.

Personal Characteristics (e.g., the distinctive qualities, traits, or dispositions of an individual) and Behavioral Response Interdependence (e.g., P's behavior has an effect on D) were the most frequently cited subcategories of reasons for dissolution. Chi-square tests revealed that persons in longer relationships and persons who experience Independence break-ups used DI behavioral attributions (e.g., activities participated in together) more than expected. Persons in shorter relationships and persons

who experienced Relationship Problem break-ups used DI Interpersonal attributions (e.g., a comparison of P's and D's role expectations) more than expected.

This investigation contributed to the understanding of the role of causal attributions in casual-dating dissolution. It is recommended that future studies examine relationship instability in terms of type of break-up.

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Vicki L. Loyer-Carlson

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APPROVED:

Redacted for Privacy

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Associate Professor of Human Development and Family  
Studies in charge of major

Redacted for Privacy

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Head of department of Human Development and Family  
Studies

Redacted for Privacy

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Dean of Graduate School

Date thesis is presented August 3, 1989

Typed by Vicki L. Loyer-Carlson for Vicki L.  
Loyer-Carlson

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# CAUSAL ATTRIBUTIONS AND THE DISSOLUTION OF CASUAL-DATING RELATIONSHIPS

## Chapter I: Introduction

How individuals decide to become involved in a permanent relationship, and what variables are most conducive to achieving a stable, voluntary, romantic relationship have intrigued researchers for the past 30 years. In spite of this interest there exists a paucity of research regarding cognitive processes and the dissolution of casual-dating relationships. Because sociodemographic variables such as race, education and socioeconomic status are not able to predict the stability of a relationship (Goode, 1956; Levinger and Rands, 1985), and persons are thought to focus their lives around their social relationships (Huston, Surra, Fitzgerald, & Cate, 1981; Kelley, 1979) an examination of the reasons persons give for dissolution is warranted. Kelley (1979) has proposed that causal attributions play a significant role in the decision to terminate or to continue a casual-dating relationship. It is thought that causal attributions are stimulated when persons perceive their partners are performing or failing to perform a desired behavior. How causal attributions are used in the evaluation of these particular situations is not known. Such cognitive processes are thought to be a key part of

relationship termination. The purpose of this study is to clarify the role of causal attributions in casual-dating dissolution.

Chapter two presents a historical review of the relationship development and dissolution literature. This literature provided the framework by which the present research questions were derived.

## Chapter II: Literature Review

Levinger and Snoek (1972) have proposed a three-stage model by which to understand interpersonal attraction. These authors contend that individuals first exist in the same social environment without awareness of each other. This is referred to as zero-contact. People may either remain at this pre-attraction state or progress to unilateral awareness (one person is aware of the other but no contact is made), to surface contact (interaction occurs, but behavior is fairly limited to social-role playing), and finally to mutuality (interaction is more frequent and diverse, and the amount of impact that members of the couple have on each other increases). Support for the existence of stages of interpersonal attraction was obtained in Braiker and Kelley's (1979) investigation of the developmental pattern of courtships. Responses from 16 married couples indicated that there are eight stages common to most courtships, with the first three stages being friends-acquaintances, casual-dating, and serious-dating. Casual-dating, therefore, is a very early stage in the relationship, occurring at some point between surface-contact and mutuality. Braiker and Kelley describe this stage as "an initial,

tentative, and largely superficial level of interaction . . . generally typified by feelings of attraction toward the partner (based on physical attributes and perceived personality traits), sexual exploration, and ambivalence about the continuance of the relationship" (1979, p. 148).

Levinger and Rands (1985) have conceptualized the process of interpersonal attraction in terms of macro- and micro- level variables. According to these authors, knowledge of one's background characteristics facilitate the prediction of that person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. This includes one's sociodemographic characteristics, history of interaction with others, and dispositions. Reportedly, these variables are important early in a relationship, at the time when there is little or no shared experience with the other person (that is, from approximately zero-contact to surface contact). As the relationship progresses, however, the macrolevel variables lose their predictive ability and microlevel variables become more important. Microlevel variables include how an individual interacts in a particular situation and the specific goal causing one to act in that manner among others (Levinger & Rands, 1985, p. 313).

The focus of this paper is on the dissolution of casual-dating relationships (relationships that do not develop to mutuality). The three stage model of interpersonal attraction developed by George Levinger and his colleagues, along with their framework distinguishing between the macro- and micro- variables, facilitates the exploration of relationship breakdown.

### Partner Similarity

In general, the investigation of relationship development has emphasized the mate-selection process. Sociological literature concerning this process has focused on issues of homogamy, marriage between spouses of similar sociodemographic characteristics, and heterogamy, marriage between spouses of different sociodemographic characteristics (Winch, 1958, p. 4). Research by Goode (1956), and other work reviewed by Udry (1966), demonstrated that the frequency of homogamous marriages is greater than would occur by chance alone. Furthermore, there is agreement among researchers that common homogamous variables are residential background, age, race, education, and socioeconomic status (Goode, 1956; Kerckhoff & Davis, 1962; Levinger & Rands, 1985; Udry, 1966; Winch,

1955). Udry (1966) suggested three factors which contribute to the production of homogamous marriages: (a) societal organization which enables persons to meet others like themselves, not those who are different from themselves; (b) social prescriptions which encourage homogamous relationships and discourage heterogamous relationships; and (c) similarities among homogamous persons in "attitudes, mannerisms, and vocabulary which tend to facilitate easy interaction" (p. 344).

The usefulness of sociodemographic variables in predicting relationship stability, however, seems to be limited. Goode (1956) indicated that while many married individuals are in homogamous relationships, homogamy is also found within the divorced population. In fact, Levinger and Rands (1985) have suggested that macrovariables "influence mate selection indirectly through the effects of mediating variables" (p. 314), and only a weak correlation exists between partners on macrolevel variables such as occupation, religion, education, and marital status (Goode, 1956). These authors contend that information concerning similarities in a couple's background does not provide a basis from which to predict that couple's stability. Kerckhoff's (1964) investigation of patterns of homogamy provided evidence that "although individuals begin the mate-selection process at different points on

a continuum of homogamy, and many do become more homogamous, a sizeable number also become less homogamous during the process" (p. 294). Specifically, Kerckhoff asked individuals to report on three significant opposite-sex relationships that they had had at chronologically different times. Results showed that over one-third as many participants changed from homogamous to heterogamous relationships as changed from heterogamous to homogamous relationships (Kerckhoff, 1964).

More recently, Hill and his associates (1976) conducted a two-year longitudinal study of dating relationships. Data were collected from 231 couples. By the end of the two years, 103 of these couples had broken-up. The investigators found that those couples who were well matched in age, educational plans, intelligence, and physical attractiveness were more likely to stay together than those couples who were not well matched in these areas. Continuing dating-partners also tended to match on some social attitudes and values, but they did not match on religious denomination, sex-role traditionalism, religiosity, or desired family size (p. 153).

The role of attitude similarity has been given attention by Berg (1984) in an investigation of same-sex friendships. Participants' ratings of 15 aspects of university life were summed in order to

determine attitudinal similarity or dissimilarity between previously unacquainted college roommates. Berg found that partners who wanted to discontinue their relationship at the end of the school year saw themselves as more dissimilar than did those individuals who either wanted to continue living together or were undecided. Attitudinal similarity was a predictor of final satisfaction for both women and men.

In summary, investigators of relationship development have examined the influence of macrolevel variables such as residential background, age, race, education, and socioeconomic background on marital stability. Goode (1956), Kerckhoff and Davis (1962), Kerckhoff (1964), Levinger and Rands (1985), and Udry (1966) concur that such macrolevel variables, while important, are unable to account for the developmental course of specific relationships. Investigations of sociodemographic variables in dating relationships reveal that dissimilarity between partners on some factors influence relationship status (continuing or non-continuing; Hill et al., 1976) and that attitudinal dissimilarity may be an important mediating variable in friendship relationships which dissolve.

### Filtering Models

Due to the lack of predictive ability associated with sociodemographic information, investigators of the mate selection process focused on explaining the ways in which individuals sift through potential spouses (Morton & Douglas, 1981, p. 13). Winch coined the phrase "field of eligibles" suggesting that, within a group of potential partners, individuals select someone with whom their needs are complementary. In this section three filtering models of mate selection are examined: Winch's (1955a; 1955b) Theory of Complementary Needs in Mate Selection, Kerckhoff and Davis's (1962) hypotheses of value consensus and need complementarity, and Murstein's (1970) Stimulus-Value-Role Theory.

#### Complementary Needs in Mate Selection

While the idea of sociodemographic similarity between partners was accepted by Winch, he contended that complementarity was also important. According to Winch's theory (1955a; 1955b) there are two types of complementarity. In Type I, a person high in one need (e.g., dominance), will select a mate who is correspondingly low in that need. In Type II, a person

high in one need (e.g., dominance) is likely to select someone who is high in a complementary characteristic (i.e., deference; Winch, 1955b, p. 552). In fact, Winch asserted that "it is feasible to conceive of the dyadic love relationship in terms of the need-patterns of the two lovers" (Winch, 1955a, p. 52).

Winch's sample consisted of 25 married couples who were white, middle-class, married for less than one year, and had no children. Winch acknowledged that his study did not provide unquestioning support for complementarity since not all of his couples could be classified as complementary. He did assert, however, that "complementariness is probably one of the determinants" of mate selection (Winch, 1958, p. 119). This study is limited, therefore, both in its generalizability and in its conclusiveness of the determinants of mate selection. In fact, others (Levinger, 1964; Murstein, 1970) agree that there is little evidence to support Winch's Theory of Complementary Needs in Mate Selection even though his notions had been originally accepted by some researchers.

#### Value Consensus and Need Complementarity

Kerckhoff and Davis (1962) studied 94 couples who were either "pinned," engaged, or otherwise "seriously

attached" and examined "progress in the mate selection process in the premarital period" (p. 296). The investigators examined the couple's consensus on family values, degree of need complementarity, and the length of time they had been going together. The results of their study led these authors tentatively to suggest what is now known as a "filter theory" (Huston, Surra, Fitzgerald, & Cate, 1981). Specifically, various stages operate in sequence in the mate-selection process. First, social-status variables such as race, religion, and social class are important. Members of a couple tend to be homogamous on these characteristics. Next, Kerckhoff and Davis proposed that consensus-on-values filtering operates in the relationship. Lastly, need complementarity emerges as a filtering variable. The investigators propose that this occurs last in the process because persons experience an idealization of their partner early on in the relationship (Kerckhoff & Davis, 1962).

Udry (1966) reported that other investigators have been unable to produce supportive findings for the need complementarity model reported by Winch (1955a; 1955b) and expanded by Kerckhoff and Davis (1962). In fact, in a replication of Kerckhoff and Davis's study, Levinger, Senn, and Jorgensen (1970) were unable to achieve the same results as the original investigators. Morton and Douglas (1981) assert that "with few

exceptions . . . research findings point to similar rather than complementary personality features among members of well established personal relationships" (p. 13).

### Stimulus-Value-Role Theory

Murstein's Stimulus-Value-Role theory (1970) adds social exchange variables to filter theory. Murstein (1970) asserted that individuals select partners in three stages. First, people are attracted to potential partners based on observable (stimulus) characteristics. Next, potential partners are concerned with compatibility in terms of values. Last, specific role behaviors and beliefs are important such that persons believe there is an adequate "role fit" between themselves and their partners (Huston et al., 1981; Morton & Douglas, 1981).

Murstein "provided some promising but indirect evidence to support the proposition that what draws people together varies as a function of relationship stage" (Morton & Douglas, 1981, p. 13). Huston and his associates (1981), however, suggested that no "evidence demonstrating the sequential ordering of the causal process" was supplied by Murstein (p. 57) and that the supporting data that Murstein presented were methodologically weak.

In summary, three heuristic filtering theories concerning the mate-selection process have been presented. While these theories are subjectively intriguing, little empirical support is available for them. These models have been unable to predict the sequence of actions engaged in by potential partners. Perhaps the specific actions of individuals (e.g., arriving late for a date), rather than sociodemographics of the relationship participants or the prescribed ordering of concerns are more influential in the instability of a relationship.

#### Theories of Interaction and Social Cognition

The rules of interaction and the attributions made by and about the partner are influential in the couple's move toward or away from a state of interdependence. Interdependence exists when the costs and rewards elicited from the relationship depend on both the individual's behavior and the combined actions of the individual and the partner (Kelley, 1979). Some factors lead couples toward greater closeness, while others lead to nonengagement or to disengagement. Of special importance are the rules of interaction as they apply to dyadic relationships (Kelley, 1979). Also important are the causal attributions that individuals

make concerning their partners, and how these attributions may affect future interactions.

Research on the dissolution of relationships tends to focus on marital disintegration (e.g., Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1978; Kitson, 1986; Levinger, 1976; Thompson & Spanier, 1983) or on the disintegration of established dating relationships (e.g., Hill et al., 1976). While there are sure to be common factors among these types of dissolution, the results of a study of one population may not be generalizable to another. For example, it is well documented that married persons are confronted with more barriers to dissolving an unstable relationship than are casual-dating persons (Cupach & Metts, 1986; Hill et al., 1976; Levinger, 1976).

Barriers are psychological restraining forces which affect the costs of terminating a relationship (Levinger, 1976). According to Levinger, barriers include material (financial), symbolic (obligation toward marital bond, religious constraints, pressure from primary group, pressure from the community), and affectional (feelings toward dependent children) costs. These costs operate in such a way as to lessen the effect of temporary fluctuation in interpersonal attraction thereby keeping long-term relationships intact. Hill and his associates (1976; p. 148) concur that break-ups before marriage take place in a very

different social context from that of divorce. Specifically, the ending of a dating relationship is relatively unaffected by factors that play a central role in divorces (e.g., change in residence, economic arrangements, child custody, legal battles, stigmatization by kin and community). For these reasons, the empirical research which focuses on marital dissolution may not be relevant to an investigation of the dissolution of casual-dating relationships.

Little information is available on the dissolution of casual-dating relationships. That which is available tends to describe patterns of relationship breakdown rather than to focus on the cognitive processes or causal attributions which may lead to relationship dissolution. Due to the paucity of research in this area, and the notion that voluntary relationships are thought to follow similar patterns of relationship development (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), the findings from investigations of young adults' friendships may contribute in important ways to the understanding of romantic relationships. In this section, social exchange theory, attribution theory, and Kelley's (1979) theory of interdependence will be reviewed.

## Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory focuses on those factors which encourage or discourage persons from engaging in future interaction with one another. The basic assumption of this theory is that people try to maximize their rewards and minimize their costs in interaction. In order to achieve rewards certain costs usually must be incurred. If a behavior is not rewarded it will not be repeated. If no rewarding alternatives are available the behavior which causes the least costs of any of the other alternatives will be enacted (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Applied to voluntary relationships, social exchange theory operates on the general assumption that "for a dyadic relationship to be viable it must provide rewards and/or economies in costs which compare favorably with those in other competing relationships or activities available to the two individuals" (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959, p. 49).

### Assessing Relationships

Three primary factors--rewards, costs, and outcomes--are utilized to compare a current

relationship to an individual's standards. In accordance with one of the assumptions of social exchange theory, individuals determine the outcomes of a relationship based on rewards received and costs incurred. The satisfactions which result from drives being reduced, and/or needs being met, constitute rewards (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959, p. 12). Factors which "operate to inhibit or deter the performance of a sequence of behavior" (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959, p. 12), those factors which are construed as punishing, together with the giving up of alternative good outcomes, constitute costs (Simpson, 1972, p. 10). The evaluation of outcomes is influenced by the norms (behavioral roles) accepted by the dyad (both interacting persons) and the content of their interactions (behaviors emitted in each other's presence which create "products" for each other). Goodness of outcomes are somewhat dependent on the acceptability of the behavioral sequence (the series of behaviors emitted in order to achieve some goal) and the degree to which individuals experience negative affect as a result of response interference (one person's behavior interferes with another person's desired response).

Concepts such as costs, rewards, outcomes, norms, interaction, goodness of outcomes, and response interference are included in the construct

"distributive justice." People are concerned about the distribution of rewards in a relationship. In fact, Huston and Burgess (1979) asserted that satisfaction with the relationship is likely to be the result of perceived equity or equality in the relationship. Perceptions of equity or equality in the relationship are tied to the history of rewards and costs in the current relationship as compared with those available outside of the relationship.

#### Evaluative Standards

Fundamental to social exchange theory as articulated by Thibaut and Kelley (1959) are the standards by which persons evaluate their involvement in a relationship. The first standard, the comparison level (CL), focuses on the attractiveness of the relationship and is determined by the outcomes people feel they deserve. This standard is set through a combination of past experiences and knowledge of other relationship outcomes. The CL, however, does not always accurately predict whether or not an individual will stay in a relationship. It is the Comparison Level for Alternatives (CL<sub>alt</sub>) that is utilized to determine the amount of dependency an individual has on the relationship and the standard by which an individual decides either to stay in or to leave a

relationship. "CLalt . . . (is) the lowest level of outcomes a member will accept in the light of available alternative opportunities" (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959, p. 21). The amount of satisfaction that an individual feels within a given relationship and the degree to which an individual feels dependent on a relationship are salient to the understanding of these standards (Kelley, 1979).

Satisfaction with a relationship. Persons who enjoy being in a particular relationship evaluate their involvement based on the satisfaction they feel with its outcomes. According to Rusbult (1980), there is a negative association between costs and satisfaction in a given relationship (as costs increase, satisfaction decreases). Satisfaction in relationships tends to rise at low levels of involvement, decline at intermediate levels, and increase as involvement intensifies (Eidelson, 1980). Eidelson (1980) proposed that persons incur increasing costs in their relationship after initial periods of interaction. It is at this point of increasing costs relative to rewards that decisions are made which affect the future of the relationship: "The present and anticipated rewards and costs point toward greater involvement or reduced association with the partner" (p. 461).

Berg (1984) reported that relationship rewards accounted for a large portion of what influences

satisfaction in a relationship. His study examined factors which would serve as predictors of college students' decisions to live with their current roommate during the next school year. Roommates who planned to live together reported more satisfaction with their living arrangement as early as two weeks after the current school year had begun. At the end of the six month study these participants continued to be more satisfied than those who chose to discontinue the relationship or those who had not yet decided on roommate preferences.

Berg and McQuinn (1986) found that the male members of couples who continued to date reported more satisfaction at the end of the study (that is, four months later) than did those who consequently dissolved their dating relationships. These two groups of men did not differ in reported satisfaction at the beginning of the study. There was no difference in the reported satisfaction of continuing or non-continuing women at the beginning or at the end of the study. The couples in this study who broke-up reported a decrease in relationship rewards over time and reported that their relationships compared unfavorably with their expectations. Simpson (1987) examined the dissolution of romantic relationships via a three-month longitudinal study of 234 individuals. Using a forward multiple regression analysis with 10 predictor

variables, Simpson reported that satisfaction was predictive of relationship-end-status, (accepting a probability level of  $p < .07$  as significant). A two-way analysis of variance (gender by relationship-end-status) with satisfaction as the dependent variable revealed a significant main effect for gender ( $p < .001$ ) which is, reportedly, due to men's "less restricted orientation to sexual relations" as compared to women's (p. 687). That is, men were more likely to leave a relationship with a sexual component if they were dissatisfied than were women.

In summary, there seem to be conflicting views in terms of the role that satisfaction plays in a relationship. Satisfaction is a useful barometer of stability in roommate relationships. Its ability to predict the stability of casual-dating relationships seems to be less clear.

Dependency on a relationship. Berg and McQuinn (1986) and Berg (1984) found evaluations of CLalt at the beginning of a relationship to be important predictors of relationship status at the end of their investigations (four months and six months later, respectively). Couples who discontinued their dating relationship reported less favorable comparisons of the dissolved relationship in regard to alternatives (CLalt) than did the continuing daters (Berg & McQuinn,

1986). According to Berg (1984), his findings indicate that CLalt influences satisfaction in a relationship.

Sabatelli (1987) examined the courtship progress of 157 individuals over 12 months in order to determine the predictive value of comparison level for alternatives, as well as other variables, on dating-relationship stability. The factors which best predicted relationship stability included being further along in the courtship process, being more committed to one's partner, and having fewer relationship alternatives (in that order).

In summary, CLalt does seem to mediate the decision to stay in or to leave a relationship. It is unclear when CLalt becomes an important consideration to individuals whose relationships eventually dissolve, however.

Leaving and being left. Persons who do not wish to continue their relationship tend to decrease the amount of interaction that they engage in with their partners (Hays, 1984). It is possible that there is an exploratory period early on in a relationship in which "personal or environmental factors . . . (signal) that a close friendship (is) not likely" (Hays, 1984, p. 92).

It is often the case that one member of the couple decides to discontinue the dating relationship to the dismay of the other member. Rusbult (1983) has



"personal or environmental factors . . . (signal) that a close friendship (is) not likely" (Hays, 1984, p. 92).

It is often the case that one member of the couple decides to discontinue the dating relationship to the dismay of the other member. Rusbult (1983) has differentiated the relationship outcomes of those persons who left a relationship (abandoners) and those whose partners ended the relationship (abandoned). The two groups had similar experiences in terms of rewards and costs increasing over time, and satisfaction either declining slightly (abandoner) or not increasing much (abandoned) during the relationship. The primary difference between the two groups was that the abandoners evaluated their alternatives more highly and indicated a decrease in their relationship investments. Those persons who were abandoned reported lower alternative value and indicated that there had been an increase in their investments.

In Rusbult's (1983) investigation, alternatives are not limited to relationships, they also include the importance of being involved in a relationship and the participants' happiness when they are not involved in a particular relationship. When people are in an unsatisfying relationship, it does appear that the presence of alternatives is an important factor in the decision to stay in or to leave that relationship. It

differentiated the relationship outcomes of those persons who left a relationship (abandoners) and those whose partners ended the relationship (abandoned). The two groups had similar experiences in terms of rewards and costs increasing over time, and satisfaction either declining slightly (abandoner) or not increasing much (abandoned) during the relationship. The primary difference between the two groups was that the abandoners evaluated their alternatives more highly and indicated a decrease in their relationship investments. Those persons who were abandoned reported lower alternative value and indicated that there had been an increase in their investments.

In Rusbult's (1983) investigation, alternatives are not limited to relationships, they also include the importance of being involved in a relationship and the participants' happiness when they are not involved in a particular relationship. When people are in an unsatisfying relationship, it does appear that the presence of alternatives is an important factor in the decision to stay in or to leave that relationship. It is not known which attributions would lead persons to evaluate any alternative as more favorable than the current relationship.

In summary, comparison level and comparison level for alternatives influence people's decisions to stay in or to leave a relationship. While social exchange

variables such as CL and CLalt facilitate the prediction of relationship dissolution, they do not provide information concerning the means by which persons determine the costs that are involved in a relationship, nor the basis upon which they decide whether or not a relationship is viable. An investigation of the decisions that are made in a casual-dating relationship must focus on "the participants' perceptions of each other's traits and attitudes" (Kelley, 1979, p. 165). These attributions may be used to make a projection about whether a relationship is rewarding or costly. Hence, an investigation that articulates the thinking leading to the dissolution of a casual-dating relationship, including the participants' assessments of their alternatives, is needed.

### Attribution Theory

Attributions are the cognitive processes by which individuals acquire knowledge of the stable characteristics of a person (P) (including themselves), of P's intentions, and of P's motives. These attributions focus on and about P, about stimuli (things or entities), or about circumstances (the specific situation, the particular time) associated with the action (Jones & Nisbett, 1984; Kelley, 1977).

During the early stages of a relationship (e.g., surface contact) persons adhere fairly closely to role behavior that seems appropriate for the specific meeting (Levinger & Snoek, 1972). A close relationship, however, enhances the need to understand the causes of one's partner's behavior and to explain the causes of one's own behavior (Drvis, Kelley, & Butler, 1976). Therefore, as a relationship moves toward mutuality, individuals begin to utilize non-role behavior. Non-role behavior constitutes a "quasi-disclosure of self to others" and affords individuals the opportunity to learn more about the other via attributions (Levinger & Snoek, 1972, p. 7). These attributions provide "explanations" about D's actions in terms of D's dispositional traits and attitudes toward P, and information upon which to decide whether or not a relationship will be rewarding.

It is generally accepted that persons are satisfied with a relationship when they perceive that they are liked by their partner, and that their partner is a likable person (e.g., Kelley, 1979). It is not known how P's perceptions of O's liking for P affects P's liking for O. These perceptions may influence the amount of satisfaction that the members of a couple feel in a relationship, and may be an important issue in the dissolution of a dating relationship. For example, persons who did not want to continue living together reported less liking for their roommates than did those who wanted to continue their roommate relationship (Berg, 1984). Their perceptions of their roommates' liking for them is not known.

In summary, in an attributional model, persons decide very early in the relationship's development whether or not it will be a rewarding one. This theory provides a framework by which the individuals' perceptions of their own and their partner's outcomes can be examined. Research which examines the way in which P uses information concerning O's feelings about P is an important next step in attribution research.

### Causal Attributions

The first task in the attribution process is to determine whether P's actions are the result of

internal or external causes (Thompson & Snyder, 1986). Information concerning internal states and dispositions is gathered by observing what P does, and by observing P's abilities as they apply to a particular situation (Weiner et al., 1972). External causes are those entities which influence P's actions and exist outside of the control of P. The observer assesses whether the actor was internally motivated to behave in such a way (e.g., an engineering student takes a philosophy course because of an intrinsic interest in philosophy) or if there were external factors, beyond the actor's control, that caused the actor to behave in that way (e.g., all engineering students must take beginning philosophy). Those causes which are attributed to personality or to enduring environmental characteristics (e.g., poverty) are considered stable; those which are attributed to changing mood states or environmental conditions (e.g., weather) are considered unstable.

Actor/Partner differences. Some investigators suggest that there is more of a tendency for people to make dispositional attributions than there is for them to make situational attributions (Heider, 1958; Ross, 1977). In addition, the attribution of actions to internal or external causes may be biased such that actors tend to attribute their own behavior to external factors while attributing the behavior of others to

internal factors (Jones & Nisbett, 1972). This bias is referred to as the "fundamental attribution error" (Ross, 1977). Other investigators have questioned whether such attribution errors are "fundamental," but do acknowledge the presence of such patterns in attributions (CF., Ajzen & Fishbein, 1983; Harvey, Town, & Yarkin, 1981). Jones and Nisbett (1972) and Kelley (1979) have suggested that this attributional pattern may be a result of people having more information concerning the occurrence of their own behavior, thereby acquiring evidence to support an external attribution. Typically, P does not have access to such information about O. Another explanation, offered by Jones and Nisbett (1972), is that attributions are influenced according to where the person's attention is focused during the interaction. While performing an action, one's attention is focused on the surroundings rather than on the self. While observing, however, individuals tend to focus on the actor rather than the actor's environment, leading to internal attributions.

The attributional conflict of 66 heterosexual couples who had either been dating for one year or were living together was investigated by Orvis (1977). This study revealed that partners utilize different attributional dimensions for the actor and the perceiver and communicate these different dimensions to

each other. As demonstrated by Passer, Kelley, and Michela (1978), actors of the behavior prefer self-explanations that reflect their positive attitudes toward their partner and that reflect their intention (intentional or unintentional). Partners, on the other hand, explain the actors' behavior in terms of a display of negative feelings toward them and in terms of the actors' traits. The focus on an actor's attitude toward a partner reflects a basic relational concern; after examining own and partner's behavior, implications emerge for potential relationship costs (Kelley, 1979). The actor incurs costs when a negative attribution made by the partner is communicated to the actor and is a credible attribution (it becomes a negative sanction; Kelley, 1979, p. 109). Partners are concerned with the implications of each cause of behavior. The causes (particularly if they are stable dispositions) guide partners in the prediction of the actor's future negative behavior (Passer et al., 1978). These attributions to self and other function to explain relationship behavior.

Perceptions of other. A study of perceptions of partner's attributions examined individuals' accuracy in assessing their partners' perceptions of conflict (Harvey, Wells, & Alvarez, 1978). Thirty-six couples who were staying with their partner four or more nights each week and who characterized their relationship as

having a high rate of conflict (at sometime they considered terminating their relationship) participated in this investigation.

Results indicated that the respondents tended to be egocentric in their predictions of their partners' attributions in 11 predetermined areas of possible conflict. That is, across the conflict categories, people predicted that their partners would make attributions which were similar to their own, but there was actually a significant difference between actual and perceived attributions. This may occur because both partners have investments in their roles as either the actor (the task is to defend or justify the behavior) or as the partner (the task is to evaluate the behavior). Harvey and his associates (1978, p. 247) suggested that a major determinant of conflict in these relationships may be "inaccurate and egocentric" perceptions of partners' attributions.

In summary, when persons make causal attributions they differentiate those actions that are internally motivated from those that are externally motivated, and determine whether stable or unstable personality characteristics are being represented. An actor/partner bias operates such that the type of attribution made (e.g., external, unintentional) is likely to be influenced by who is doing the attributing (e.g., the actor). Additionally, persons are likely to

predict that their partner makes attributions similar to those that they make, although in reality there is a discrepancy between the actual and predicted attributions.

### Locus of Attributions

Four loci of attributions have been identified: intrapersonal, dyadic, social network, and circumstantial (Surra & Huston, 1987). Attributions to intrapersonal factors have been examined in various ways. Drvis and his associates (1976) have focused on descriptions of the actor's dispositions (internal) or special circumstances (external), and whether the causes were stable or unstable (e.g., "My partner is a jealous person," versus "My partner becomes jealous when I flirt."; Kelley, 1979). Surra and Huston (1987) have operationalized an intrapersonal/ normative category that includes inferences about P, D, or the relationship, which are evaluated against a standard. Finally, Zvonkovic and Ponzetti (1988) have separated their individual/personal category into attributions about the actions, thoughts, or feelings of P or D.

Any statement about the interaction between partners is dyadic (Surra & Huston, 1987, p. 104). Zvonkovic and Ponzetti (1988) extend this definition to include both interpersonal conditions (e.g.,

compatibility) and behaviors (e.g., abuse) between two persons. Newman's (1981) dyadic attributional categories refer to the perceived feelings and intentions of the actor in regard to, or toward, the partner (p. 61). Specifically, she emphasizes centering in on interactive patterns, focusing on the self in terms of the partner, or the partner in terms of the self (e.g., my partner is jealous of me, or, I am jealous of my partner; Newman, 1981, p. 63). Dyadic attributions also include those which focus on the properties of the dyad, rather than on the individuals in the relationship (e.g., there is a lack of trust between us; Fincham, 1985, p. 225).

The social context of a relationship is also an important area of attributional loci and includes two distinct categories: the social network category and circumstantial. The social network includes attributions to any persons outside of the P and O dyad (e.g., family members, coworkers, roommates, employers). Circumstantial attributions are those which are thought to be outside of the control of P or O, including situations such as moving or losing a job.

Intrapersonal Attributions. Orvis and his associates (1976) asked young (18- to 26-year-old), "seriously- involved" couples (married, living together for 6 months, or dating for a year) to list instances in which either partner performed a behavior that

elicited different causal attributions from the two individuals. Participants were asked to indicate the specific behavior, who the actor was, their own explanation for the behavior, and their partners' explanation for that behavior. The results of this investigation provide support for the notion that attributions vary according to whether the respondents are reporting their own or their partners' behavior. When there are a variety of potential causal factors the "crucial" reason (e.g., the "real reason") is afforded the most importance (Orvis et al., 1976). Both internal and external attributions, and stable and unstable causes, were clearly represented in the 32 categories (13 classes) of explanations developed by Orvis and his associates, suggesting that "attributions will be evoked primarily in situations of conflict of interest" (Orvis et al., 1976, p. 380).

Dyadic attributions. According to Newman (1981) a category that is missing in many investigations of causal attributions is one that takes into account the interpersonal domain of conflict of interest. It is not only important to examine what an actor's behavior means to a partner (My partner yelled because she was angry), but also the partner's perceptions of the meaning of the actor's behavior in terms of the partner (My partner yelled because she was angry at me and no longer cares how I feel). Along these lines she

proposes distinguishing among dispositional, situational, and interpersonal attributions. Howe (1987) has operationalized interpersonal attributions as being similar to intrapersonal attributions except that they also have an interpersonal reference (e.g., P does X to/about O; p. 1120).

Dyadic attributions also address the joint contributions of each partner to the situation or event. Howe (1987) has operationalized this construct as one in which P and O do something to each other (e.g., Jane and Michael are possessive of each other), or P and O are something (e.g., Jane and Michael are selfish; p. 1120). In an investigation of behaviors which elicit different causal attributions from the actor and the observer, Orvis and his colleagues (1976) reported that their respondents gave no attributions which would suggest that the partners contributed jointly to the conflict (e.g., that conflict was the result of the relationship itself). Orvis et al. (1976) reasoned that this may be due to asking specifically for a behavior of their's or their partner's which caused conflict, rather than asking for a relationship event which caused conflict.

Over a two-month period of time Fletcher, Fincham, Cramer, and Heron (1987) examined the content of spontaneous attributions given by 131 respondents, who were involved in a dating relationship. Rather than

being asked for a specific behavior which caused conflict, these participants were asked to "Describe your relationship in your own words. Write down any thoughts or feelings you have about you and your dating partner. Write down whatever comes to mind" (Fletcher et al., 1987, p. 483). This study revealed that spontaneous attributions were interpersonal when the relationship was unstable (members of the couple spent time considering separation).

Thompson and Kelley (1981) asked 54 individuals from romantic relationships (dating to marriage) to judge their contributions to six events (such as planning joint leisure activities) in order to determine what information people use when recalling past relationship occurrences. These investigators looked for both the type of remark (focusing on a specific instance, a typical instance, or a disposition) and the referent of the remark (respondents referred to themselves, their partners, or themselves and their partners). Of the responses that could be coded in terms of the referent, 50 percent referred to both the self and the partner. In regard to the type of remark, over 90 percent were coded as typical instances or dispositions. This may imply that people make relationship attributions, those concerning the properties of the dyad itself, in reference to the entire relationship rather than in reference to a

specific instance. Furthermore, in line with research by Surra and her colleagues (1988), it is likely that these dyadic relationship attributions are used when judging relationship issues. (Surra found that dyadic reasons were associated with positive turning points in the relationship.) While these implications extend beyond Thompson and Kelley's question of responsibility in a relationship, they are important in terms of the decisions that are made concerning whether or not to continue the relationship.

Social Context. Each relationship is set in its own social context. This includes the social networks of P and/or O, and the circumstances of the relationships. Circumstances refer to the social calendar (e.g., beginning and ending of academic calendars), and/or events (e.g., changing jobs). What happens outside of the relationship has an impact on the relationship's trajectory. The retrospective reports of 43 married couples revealed that norms, relations with third parties, and external life events affected changes in commitment to the relationship more than did dyadic reasons (Surra, Arizzi, & Asmussen, 1988).

The results of Surra and her associates (1988) are in agreement with the pattern detected by Hill and his associates (1976). In the investigation of 103 relationships which dissolved, Hill et al. (1976) found

that persons who were least invested in the relationship broke it off at particular times--when there were breaks in the school calendar (May-June, September, and December-January; p. 156). For the participants in Hill et al.'s investigation, transitions in the academic calendar prompted changes in course schedules and changes in residence. These changes, in turn, made the existing relationships more challenging to maintain (conflicting schedules, physical separation for extended periods of time), and made more alternatives to the relationship available (e.g., meeting new people in class). When the more invested partner wanted to dissolve the relationship, however, the academic calendar did not seem to precipitate the break-up.

An investigation of same-sex friendship dissolution (Rose, 1984) revealed that physical separation affects men's friendships and dating or marriage affects women's friendships. Once a friendship has been weakened, however, physical separation, new friends, disliking the old friend, and dating or marriage are equally likely to contribute to the friendship termination.

## Kelley's Theory of Interdependence

The key properties of personal interactions are interdependence, mutual responsiveness to one another's outcomes, and attribution of behavior to stable dispositions (Kelley, 1979, p. 3). The types of attributions which are made by P and O in regard to perceptions of relationship interdependence and partner's responsiveness to outcomes affect the relationship's stability. Kelley's theory of interdependence provides a means by which to explore P's use of attributions in close relationships. This section will examine Kelley's (1979) theory in terms of casual-dating relationships which do not develop to mutuality.

Interdependence and mutual responsiveness. The status of interdependence is determined at the given and dispositional levels. The given level is the point at which the outcomes are incurred directly from individual or joint actions (Kelley, 1979). For example, if P enjoys horror movies, and P and O go to the theater to see one, then P's outcomes will be favorable at the given level. The dispositional level refers to a condition such that P's outcomes are affected by O's behavior (Kelley, 1979). Assuming P and O are in a close relationship, if O dislikes horror stories and goes to see the movie with P, then P will

enjoy the movie less because O was uncomfortable during it.

Mutuality, according to Levinger and Snoek (1972), is implicit in the development of interdependence: Members of the couple assume some responsibility for each others' outcomes and for establishing a mutually-agreed-upon pattern of interaction for the relationship base. Important here is that P and O, even when they do not have similar wants and needs, will adjust their behavior so as to please their partner. In addition, both P and O perceive the relationship to be unique.

Transformations. Kelley's (1979) separation of the levels of outcomes (given and dispositional) which are involved in mutuality provides a framework with which to show how members of a couple make transformations and become interdependent (Kelley, 1979; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Early in an acquaintance, P and O examine relationship outcomes as a result of their behavior only; they are concerned with the difference that they can make in their own outcomes by varying their behavior. As the individuals become more interested in their relationship they will be concerned with the degree to which their outcomes will be affected by their partner's behavior, and the degree to which their partners' outcomes will be affected by their behavior. Finally, as the level of

interdependence increases, both P and O's outcomes are important such that it becomes costly for P if O's outcomes are unpleasant; P redefines what is costly and what is rewarding.

The redefinition of costs and rewards in a relationship is affected both by O's costs and by P's perceptions of O's dispositions (e.g., whether O would make a transformation for P in a similar situation; Kelley, 1979). Whether P and O try to maximize their own outcomes regardless of the consequences for their partner, or take each others outcomes into consideration, is called pattern responsiveness. Individuals keep track of, and differentiate between, given and dispositional levels of outcomes and, generally, report that they are more responsive to their partner's outcomes than their partner is to their outcomes (Kelley, 1979). The observation of these transformations, and the conditions under which the transformations are performed, provide insight into individuals' tactics, intentions, attitudes, values, and/or traits (Kelley, 1979, p. 83). For example, interpersonal dispositions such as love, respect, and dominance can only be seen when a transformation is made. Interdependent people tend to be responsive to the effect that their decisions have on their partners. On the other hand, one member of the couple may make

transformations while the other does not, evidencing unilateral dependence on the relationship.

In summary, Kelley's theory of interdependence provides a framework by which both P's and O's outcomes can be assessed. Outcomes in interdependent relationships can be affected by P's actions alone or by the joint actions of P and O. The standard by which individuals decide to modify their outcomes for their partners (transformations that they are willing to make) is influenced by the attributions that they make concerning their partners' transformations.

#### Attributions and Conflict

Dispositional attributions provide a basis for individuals to predict their partners' future transformations. These attributions affect the relationship by influencing the transformations that one is willing to make (Kelley, 1979). Conflict, an interpersonal process that occurs whenever the actions of one person interfere with the actions of another (Peterson, 1983, p. 365), is stimulated when attributions are discrepant. Specifically, conflict is present when the attributions made by P about the causes of O's behavior are different from those made by O (Kelley, 1979). For example, if P does not buy a birthday gift for O on O's birthday, P may give the

explanation that there was no time to shop due to overtime requirements of P's occupation. The explanation given by O, however, may be that P did not buy a gift because P is basically a thoughtless person.

Conflict of interest. Conflict encompasses a broad range of "events and processes" including situations in which there is a conflict of interest: O's action prevents P from achieving a preferred goal (Peterson, 1983, p. 365). For the purpose of this investigation, conflict will refer to structural conflict of interest, defined as "any incompatibility between the goals of one person and another" (Peterson, 1983, p. 365). Hence, conflict of interest is present when P and O have different preferences about what should occur in their relationship. These conflicts of interest do not always result in open conflict (e.g., arguments); they may, however, influence persons' decisions concerning the future of their relationship. They do so by inspiring a search for causes and consequently an evaluation of the current relationship (Braiker & Kelley, 1979).

Braiker and Kelley (1979) have indicated that conflict of interest can be identified at the behavioral level (e.g., recreation, sexual behaviors), the normative level (e.g., household duties, economic support responsibilities) and the personal level (e.g., life values, affectional responses) (p. 139). There is

a tendency for people to escalate conflict of interest from specific behavioral descriptions to general dispositional traits or characteristics (Braiker & Kelley, 1979; Peterson, 1983). Escalating the conflict to the personal (or dispositional) level leads to the perception that O's behavior is due to stable and unchangeable characteristics, which further adds to the already existing conflict. Conflict that involves the long-term goals of P tends to be more problematic than conflict which is concerned with habits that O possesses (Peterson, 1983). Thus, conflict which is attributed interpersonally may be more problematic than conflict which is attributed intrapersonally.

The role of conflict of interest. The precise role that conflict of interest plays in relationship decisions is unknown. According to Peterson (1983), a great deal of the available research on conflict is based on laboratory studies. The laboratory environment may yield significantly different situations from those existing in casual-dating relationships. Braiker and Kelley (1979) have studied retrospective relationship progress reports of married couples and have found that, in the early stages of relationships (casual-dating), ". . . ambivalence is associated with the occurrence of conflict, suggesting that open conflict raises doubts in the person's mind about the central issue in the courtship process;

namely whether to continue along the road toward long-term commitment" (p. 157). No conclusive information concerning this potentially pivotal point in relationships can be drawn from Braiker and Kelley's (1979) study, however, because all of their participants were married, and, therefore, had at least temporarily resolved this ambivalence in favor of their partner. Braiker and Kelley assert that "in relationships that do not culminate in marriage, early conflict probably constitutes part of the information that leads to the decision to break off the courtship process" (p. 157).

Lloyd and Cate (1985a) studied relationship trajectories of individuals who were involved in a serious relationship which subsequently dissolved. Their data suggest that a certain amount of conflict is present at the beginning of a relationship and is a factor throughout increasing interdependence. Specifically, these investigators reported that conflict increases as interdependence increases, and increases sharply as interdependence decreases, before it levels off.

In summary, conflict of interest is likely to occur when P and O disagree about the causes of O's behavior. While there are three levels of conflict, there is a tendency for individuals to move from specific (behavioral) causes of behavior to general

(dispositional) causes. Research indicates that conflict during the casual-dating period causes ambivalence about continuing or not continuing the relationship; conflict also is present during decreasing interdependence. Little is known about the roles of conflict of interest and causal attributions in the decision to discontinue a dating relationship.

### Factors Affecting Attributions

The locus of the attribution (whether reasons are focused on the individual, the dyad, the social network, or circumstances surrounding the relationship) may be affected by constructs such as an individual's gender, the length of the relationship, and the individual's thinking about dating the former partner again in the future.

#### Gender

Women report more reasons for break-ups than do men (Baxter, 1986; Cupach & Metts, 1986; Hill et al., 1976). Baxter (1986) contends that women are more aware of factors which contribute to relationship dissolution because of gender differences in the assessment of their relationships: Women are more

likely to assess the relationship continuously. The impetus for women's greater sensitivity to relationship issues is their socialization to be the "emotional specialists" in our society (Hill et al., 1976). While men cite fewer reasons for break-up overall, they cite factors external to the relationship more frequently than do women (Cupach & Metts, 1986). Similarly, Rubin, Peplau, and Hill (1979) found that women were more likely to make attributions to individual or relationship factors (e.g., "differences in interest,") while men primarily made attributions to things external to the relationship (e.g., "living too far apart").

Females and males made similar attributions in many areas of conflict (e.g., politics, religion, education) but they made different attributions when the conflict involved sexual attitudes and financial matters (Harvey et al., 1978). Males placed more importance on incompatibility in sexual relations and on the importance of events (e.g., being disloyal) in the relationship than did females. Females placed more importance on financial problems and on stress associated with work and educational activities than did males. Actor/Partner attributions also seem to be influenced by gender. Investigators have reported that when the actor is a woman, both women and men tend to make attributions to environmental causes. When a man

enacts the behavior, women and men tend to make attributions to internal causes (Orvis et al., 1976).

Rubin (1983) suggests that gender differences in relationship concerns are caused by cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity: Masculine is synonymous with independent and feminine is synonymous with dependent. The economic independence of men is mistakenly thought to indicate emotional independence, and the economic dependence of women is mistakenly thought to indicate emotional dependence. According to Rubin, these stereotypes are not consistent with people's inner needs. Instead, social barriers, such as women remaining economically and socially disadvantaged, maintain the status quo. Rubin states that because independent, successful women are less likely to have the sustenance and comfort of family life, dependence (and thus focus) on the dyad is fostered. Similarly, she states that dependent men are perceived to be unsuccessful and are therefore less likely to have the sustenance and comfort of family life, hence, independence from relationships and focus on independence-maintaining elements is socially encouraged (Rubin, 1983, p. 141).

Fletcher et al. (1987) did not find gender differences in causal attributions when they examined relationship descriptions of 131 persons. The absence of gender differences was explained as resulting from

the unequal numbers of women and men (100 women, 31 men) in their study. For this investigation, it is expected that women and men will differ in the locus of their explanations of why the relationship dissolved. Men will be more likely than women to make circumstantial attributions, while women will be more likely to make attributions to the dyad.

### Length of the Relationship

Many of the previous investigations which examined length of relationships were interested in predicting relationship stability. Two such studies (Hill et al., 1976; Simpson, 1987) concurred that the length of the relationship is indicative of relationship stability. Within the group of persons who discontinue dating, little is known about the relation between causal attributions that are made concerning why a relationship dissolved and the length of time dating before the break-up.

There is some evidence that individuals attend to different information about their partner at different stages of the relationship. Levinger and Rands (1985) contend that external variables (age, race, socioeconomic status, relationship with social network, personality traits, general attitudes, or values) are important early in the relationship. As the

relationship progresses, specific goals and intentions become more important.

All of the participants in the present investigation were at a very early stage of their relationships (not firmly committed to the relationship), although they had been dating for varying lengths of time. Participants' causal attributions for why a relationship dissolved may be qualitatively different for relationships that break-up early as opposed to relationships that break-up later. The dearth of information concerning how length of relationship affects causal attributions prohibits the development of a specific hypothesis although the relationship will be examined in the present study.

#### Desire to Date Each Other in the Future

Rusbult's (1983) investigation of 34 individuals who were involved in romantic relationships revealed that persons who initiated the termination of their relationship decreased the level of commitment that they had in the relationship prior to dissolution. Those whose partners initiated the termination either increased or maintained their level of commitment. Hill et al. (1976) found that whether one left a relationship or was left influenced one's adjustment to the break-up. Women were more likely to initiate

termination than were men. Also, when women were left they had an easier time adjusting to the relationship loss than did men. These studies, along with the contention that P's perceptions of O's liking for P influences P's satisfaction in the relationship (e.g., Levinger & Snoek, 1972), indicate that there may be a difference in the causal attributions of persons who initiate termination versus those whose partners terminate the relationship. Those persons who perceive that they and their partners have different preferences for future dating (one wants to date again and one does not) may represent such differences in the initiation of termination, hence may be unique in their causal attributions.

It is expected that those individuals who would like to date O again in the future and who also perceive that O would like to date them again, will make circumstantial attributions. Not enough information is available concerning the possible attributions of the other groups (e.g., disagreement on future dating preference, future dating is dependent on certain conditions being met, or neither wanting to date again), however, so no hypothesis will be offered.

### Locus of the Attributions

Attributions, used to understand and predict future behavior, affect future interaction (Berley & Jacobson, 1984; Kelley, 1979). This necessitates persons locating the cause of the relationship dissatisfaction in either themselves or their partners, in the dyad, in the social network, or in the circumstances surrounding the relationship (Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988). The attribution of relationship outcomes to stable characteristics of one's partner leads to the belief that these relationship outcomes are not likely to change. In the present investigation respondents were asked to identify dispositional traits or characteristics perceived to have had an impact on the relationship. This impact may differ depending on whose characteristic is being reported (own or partner's), and the desirability of the characteristic (Kelley, 1979).

This investigation seeks to clarify the reasons casual-daters perceive as being most influential in the dissolution of their relationship. No known studies exist on which to base hypotheses regarding the direction that these attributions will take; therefore this investigation will be descriptive.

In summary, very little information is available concerning the role of causal attributions in the

dissolution of casual-dating relationships. Theories and investigations of successful relationships are not able to describe the cognitive processes which lead casual-daters to break-up. To learn more about this population a descriptive study is needed. This investigation seeks to describe what people say about why they broke-up by content analyzing their written responses to causal attribution questions with the goal of providing insight into the role of attributions in dissolution.

#### Summary

This chapter has focused on theories of mate-selection and theories of interaction. Additionally, it has utilized empirical research in the areas of friendship and romantic relationships to better understand the casual-dating dissolution process and to propose some specific research questions. A brief review follows.

Levinger and Snoek's (1972) levels of attraction (zero-contact, unilateral awareness, surface contact, and mutuality), and Braiker and Kelley's (1979) investigation of the developmental patterns of courtship were utilized to identify and describe the stage of casual-dating. It was shown that casual-dating is a very early stage in romantic

relationships, occurring at some point between surface-contact and mutuality.

Theories of Mate Selection. Levinger and Rands (1985) indicated that macrolevel variables (e.g., age, race, socioeconomic background) are important at the beginning of a relationship (zero-contact to surface contact), but they are unable to account for continuing or terminating dating relationships. Further support for the limited usefulness of sociodemographic variables was provided by Goode (1956), Kerckhoff (1964), and Udry (1966). Levinger and Rands (1985) suggested that microlevel variables (intentions and behaviors) may be more helpful in predicting the developmental course of a specific relationship than are macrolevel variables.

Attempts to explain relationship stability utilizing microlevel variables such as complementary needs, value consensus, and some social exchange variables were provided by Winch (1955a; 1955b), Kerckhoff and Davis (1962), and Murstein (1970). In each case, little empirical support for the theories was available, and it was concluded that filtering theories are unable to predict the sequential process of romantic relationships.

Theories of Interaction. Information regarding the unique actions of two individuals that determine a relationship's trajectory (either toward mutuality or

dissolution), was obtained via theories of interaction. Three theories were deemed particularly salient to this investigation: Social Exchange Theory, Attribution Theory, and Kelley's Theory of Interdependence (1979). The basic assumption of social exchange theory is that people try to maximize their rewards and minimize their costs in interactions. The evaluative standards which mediate the costs and rewards equation are the Comparison Level (CL; the outcomes people feel that they deserve) and the Comparison Level for Alternatives (CLalt; the lowest level of acceptable outcomes in light of available alternatives). Although CL determines the amount of satisfaction that an individual feels with a relationship, CLalt determines the amount of dependency that an individual has on the relationship. Hence, CLalt is the standard by which an individual decides to stay in or to leave a relationship.

Support for the role of CLalt is provided by Berg (1984), Berg and McQuinn (1986), and Sabatelli (1987) who reported empirical evidence that CLalt mediates the decision to stay in or to leave a relationship. The presence of an alternative is an important factor when people are in unsatisfying relationships (Rusbult, 1983). Therefore, both CL and CLalt provide important information regarding individuals' decisions to stay in or to leave a relationship. CL and CLalt are limited,

however, in that they do not explain the cognitive processes by which individuals actually compare their current relationship to their evaluative standards.

Attributions are the cognitive processes by which individuals acquire knowledge of the stable characteristics of a person (including themselves), of P's intentions, and of P's motives. Attributional foci are on or about P, about stimuli, or about circumstances, and typically are directed toward dispositions rather than situations. In the movement from surface-contact to mutuality, persons move from role behavior to non-role behavior. This movement provides an opportunity for the individuals to assess each other's dispositional traits and attitudes, thus providing a means by which the costs of being in the relationship may be assessed.

Dispositional attributions are the basis by which individuals predict their partner's future transformations; they affect the relationship by influencing the transformations that one is willing to make. Relationship stability, according to Kelley (1979), is affected by relationship interdependence and partner's responsiveness to outcomes. Generally, individuals feel that they are more responsive to their partner's outcomes than their partner is to their outcomes.

Conflict of interest is stimulated when attributions are discrepant. Defined as "any incompatibility between the goals of one person and another" (Peterson, 1983, p. 365), conflict of interest is frequently escalated from specific behavioral events to general dispositional traits or characteristics, which leads to the perception that O's behavior is a result of stable and unchangeable causes. Conflict of interest, therefore, may provide individuals with information which facilitates their decision to end, or to continue, a dating relationship (Braiker & Kelley, 1979).

It is plausible that conflict of interest sparks causal attributions. How persons process these attributions in terms of their evaluative standards, or how they are influenced by their perceptions of their partners' attributions is yet unknown. This investigation seeks to clarify the role of causal attributions in casual-dating relationship dissolution and to describe why particular attributions are salient to the dissolution of casual-dating relationships.

The roles of gender, relationship length, and willingness to date a former partner in the future, in mediating the types of attributions that are made are also of interest in this investigation. Gender is thought to influence the type of attributions that persons make in relationships because of the unique

role of gender socialization in relationships. Women are believed to be more sensitive to issues within the dyad because of their economic and social disadvantages associated with independence. Men are believed to attend more to issues outside of the relationship, consistent with social barriers against being perceived as dependent.

While little information is available concerning the length of a relationship and causal attributions it is hypothesized that there is a difference in attributions made by persons in longer versus shorter relationships. Because all of these participants were defined as being in casual-dating relationships it is unclear how these attributions may be different. No directional hypotheses are offered but the relationship between length of time dating and the causal attributions used to explain the break-up will be examined.

Finally, whether one would like to date one's partner again in the future may influence the locus of causal attributions that persons use. It is expected that if respondents perceive that both they and their partners would like to date again in the future, they will utilize circumstantial attributions to explain their break-up. Not enough information is available upon which to hypothesize how other preferences for future dating may operate in the use of causal

attributions. Hence, no other specific hypothesis is offered but the relationships will be examined.

## Chapter III: Methods

### Sample

Eighty-eight college students from the University of Oklahoma agreed to participate in a longitudinal investigation of dating relationships during the 1982-1983 school year. Of the 88 relationships which were initially represented, 74 were dissolved during the six-month data-collection period. Forty-eight persons (32 women and 16 men) completed termination questionnaires and are included in this study. Most (87%) of the respondents were 21 years old or younger, and reported an academic major in the professions (e.g., business, engineering, social sciences). The mean annual parental income was between \$30,000 and \$39,000, the average respondent's father had completed college, and most fathers worked in executive- or professional-status occupations.

### Procedures

Multiple recruitment methods (i.e., newspaper advertisements, radio announcements at football games, fliers, and visitors to a wide range of undergraduate courses) were utilized to attract persons whose dating relationships were either just beginning and/or not

serious. Persons who agreed to participate received two free movie passes, fast-food restaurant coupons, and an opportunity to win one of nine \$10.00 record store gift certificates.

### Design

This study is part of a larger investigation of casual-dating which utilized a longitudinal-sequential design (Walker, 1982). The investigation involved four primary data collection times (T1, T2, T3, T4). Following recruitment, the volunteers participated in a training session designed to acquaint students with the research instruments and to distribute data-collection materials for reporting over a two-week period (T1). During this session, respondents completed an agreement-to-participate form and an intake questionnaire. Respondents who were dating more than one person were instructed to complete materials for that dating relationship believed by them to be most important. For the next two weeks, encounter cards (similar to Wheeler and Nezlak's (1977) interaction records) were completed each time the participant interacted with the targeted partner for more than 10 minutes. If there was more than one encounter during any particular day, participants were instructed to

complete an encounter report card for that encounter deemed most important.

For those individuals who continued to date the same partner after the initial two weeks, the second wave (T2) involved completing a summary questionnaire. Participants who were no longer dating the T1 partner were asked to complete a termination questionnaire on the original partner and were given the option of remaining in the study by completing an intake questionnaire on a new partner. Six months after T1, participants again completed either a summary questionnaire or a termination questionnaire and a new intake questionnaire (T3), followed by two weeks of reporting encounters with their partner. Finally, at the end of that two weeks, data from a summary questionnaire or termination questionnaire were gathered (T4).

The 11 item, open-ended, Relationship Termination Questionnaire focused on the cognitive and attributional aspects of relationship dissolution and is of primary interest in this investigation. Larzelere and Klein (1987) concur that qualitative data provide an appropriate vehicle by which a new area of research can be explored.

Intake questionnaire. The Intake Questionnaire assessed sociodemographic information, information regarding general dating history, and the participants'

desire for a serious relationship. Moreover, participants were asked several questions about their most important, current, heterosexual dating relationship such as their level of involvement with, liking for, and desire to get to know their partner. Participants' satisfaction in, and alternatives to the relationship as well as their perceptions of their partners' satisfaction in, and alternatives to the relationship were also assessed. (See Appendix A for the Intake Questionnaire.)

Termination questionnaire. If a relationship dissolved at any point in the investigation (from T1 to T4), individuals were requested to complete a Relationship Termination Questionnaire. Questions included the length of time (in months) that the couple had dated and respondents' perceptions of those things which led to the dissolution of the relationship. They were also asked about their desire to date their former partner again, and their perceptions of their former partner's desire to date them again. Finally, respondents were asked to compare this relationship to one which might have lasted. (See Appendix B for the Termination Questionnaire.)

## Measures

### Sociodemographic Variables

Gender and length of relationship. Gender of the respondent was reported on the Intake Questionnaire. Relationship length was assessed by asking respondents how long, in months, they had dated their current partner. A median split was used to create two relationship length variables (shorter and longer). Relationship length ranged from 1 week to 52 months (M = 7.19 months; Mdn = 3.25 months; mode = 4 months).

### Attributions

Three open-ended questions, focusing on attributional explanations, were asked in the Termination Questionnaire: (a) "What characteristic(s) of your partner do you think contributed to the break-up?," (b) "Which of your characteristics do you think contributed to the break-up?," and (c) "Why do you think this (these) characteristic(s) made a difference?" The first two questions asked the respondent to identify positive or negative dispositional traits or characteristics perceived to have had an impact on the relationship. The third question, why these characteristics made a difference,

is rooted in the hypothesis that, early in relationships, persons use attributional information about traits and dispositions to infer the partner's intentions towards them or towards the relationship. The relative importance of each locus of attribution to the respondents may be seen in terms of the frequency with which each locus is mentioned.

Zvonkovic and Ponzetti (1988) have developed a coding scheme of reasons persons give for discontinuing a marital relationship. This scheme was adapted for use in this investigation. Adaptation was necessary because this instrument was designed for use with the dissolution of marital relationships rather than dating relationships.

Locus of the attribution. The locus of the attribution refers to the contextual focus, or location, of the causal attribution. Although other subcategories of the attributional loci were identified later in this investigation, the categories of attributional loci identified a priori were: Individual/Personal, Dyadic/Interactional, Social Network, and Circumstantial/Situational (Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988). Each of these categories contained several subcategories. Table 3.1 visually depicts the choices within each locus.

Table 3.1

Loci Of Reasons For Dating Dissolution

Category	Subcategory
Individual (P or O)	Behavior/Action
	Cognition/Thought
	Emotion/Feeling
Dyadic/Interactional	Behaviors
	Interdependence
	Response Interdependence
	Sexual Relations
	Communication
	Interpersonal Condition
	Compatibility
	Adaptability
	Cohesion
	Social Network (P, O, P & O)
Friends	
Romantic Involvement	
Counselor/Professional	
Coworker/Classmate	
Other	

## Table 3.1 Continued

Circumstantial/Situational (P, O, P & O)

Children/Pregnancy

Physical Separation

Losing/Starting a Job

End of Semester

Conflicting Schedules

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The Individual/Personal locus distinguished among actions, thoughts, and feelings of the respondent (P) or the partner (O). The Dyadic/Interactional locus distinguished among behaviors (e.g., sexual relations, communication) and interpersonal conditions (e.g., compatibility, adaptability). Two categories from Surra et al. (1988) were also used in the behavior subcategory: behavioral interdependence ("the intertwining of partners' lives;" Surra, 1988) and behavioral response interdependence (P independently does X and causes O to react, Y). The Social Network locus distinguished among members of the social network (e.g., family, friends, another romantic involvement), and identified whether P, O, or both P and O were influenced by the network member(s). Lastly, the Circumstantial/Situational locus identified categories of issues such as children/pregnancy, physical separation, and financial concerns. While it was suspected that some of these subcategories might not be generalizable to this population, others (e.g., physical separation) were thought to be relevant. Additional categories (e.g., academic calendar, conflicting schedules, losing/starting a job) were added based on circumstantial/situational reasons cited by Hill et al. (1976). This category also identified whether P, or O, or both P and O were influenced by the circumstances and situations.

Number of attributions. The number of attributions refers to the number of discrete causal attributions that are expressed by an individual. A discrete causal attribution is one that is different from the attributional category, or subsection of the attributional category, that was previously coded. For example, the statements "She didn't act like she liked me very much. We had different ideas about what dating was all about," represent two discrete attributions. The first is an individual attribution whereas the second is a dyadic attribution. On the other hand, "He didn't act like he liked me very much. He acted like he was doing me a favor by going out," represent one discrete attribution: an individual/personal attribution.

#### Desire to Date Each Other in the Future

"Would you ever wish to start dating this person again?" and "Do you think your partner would ever wish to start dating you again?" were questions asked on the termination questionnaire. Persons who perceived that both they and their former partners would like to date again were assigned to the yes-yes agreement group YY (n = 7). Those persons who reported that neither they nor their former partners would like to date again were

assigned to the no-no agreement group NN ( $n = 9$ ). Those persons who perceived that that future dating was dependent on certain conditions being met by both they and their partners were assigned to the condition-condition agreement group CC ( $n = 10$ ). Finally, those persons who indicated that they and their former partners have different preferences for future dating were assigned to the disagreement group Disagree ( $n = 22$ ).

### Coding of Attributions

Content analysis. A typology of break-ups was developed by examining entire sets of responses for themes or patterns of break-up. Three mutually exclusive types of break-up were defined. Chapter three gives a complete account of how these types were identified and the content of each of these types.

Coding schemes. Two different types of coding schemes were used to code the individual statements provided by respondents. Each scheme and coding process is described in detail in chapter four. Briefly, the preliminary-coding utilized a four category scheme (Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988) to code the attributional loci of each question on the questionnaire. The detailed-coding employed the casual-dating dissolution coding scheme (see Appendix

D) to code the attributional loci of three questions considered simultaneously. This method of coding data offsets the difficulties that persons incur in responding directly to attribution questions. By using all of the responses simultaneously, it was possible to "cover some of the same ground" as the participants do in making their attributions (Kelley, 1979, p. 168).

### Proposed Analyses

The first goal of this research was to identify a typology of break-up. Huston, Surra, Fitzgerald, and Cate (1981) asserted that people focus their lives around their social relationships yet little is known about relationship development and dissolution. These investigators articulated a need for researchers to allow for individual differences in the process of relationship development. Although there are many typologies of relationship development and typologies of love (Cf., Hendrick & Hendrick, 1989), it is frequently assumed that all break-ups are alike (Duck, 1982). One recent investigation found that there are two patterns of divorce (Zvonkovic, 1987). It was unknown if, as with divorce, there are different types of dating break-up.

This research sought to clarify the role of causal attributions in the dissolution of casual-dating

relationships. It focused specifically on persons' cognitions regarding early relationship interactions and/or observations which caused them to think about the viability of the relationship. The locus of reasons, and the specific concerns within those loci, led to the development of typologies of casual-dating dissolution.

The next goal of this research was to analyze these data empirically in terms of the frequency with which particular causal attributions emerge and their distribution for women and men, for longer and shorter relationships, and across preferences for dating in the future. The following specific questions were addressed with a 2 (gender) x 2 (relationship length) multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with the number of individual/personal, dyadic/interactional, social network, and circumstantial/situational reasons as the dependent variables:

1) Do women and men differ in locus of attributions such that women are more likely to report dyadic and men more likely to report circumstantial attributions?

2) Do persons with longer casual-dating relationships provide different reasons for the break-up (e.g., more dyadic reasons) than persons with shorter casual-dating relationships?

A one-way (desire to date) MANOVA with the number of individual/personal, dyadic/interactional, social network, and circumstantial/situational reasons as the dependent variables was performed to answer the following question:

3) Do persons who report that both they and their partners would like to date in the future report more circumstantial reasons for the break-up than persons who perceive that neither they nor their partners want to date in the future, that future dating is dependent on certain conditions, or who perceive a disagreement in future dating preference?

In each analysis, if any category contained less than five cases (that is, a MANOVA cell was five or smaller) then that category was dropped from the analysis.

## Chapter IV: A Typology of Casual-Dating Break-up

### Developing the Typology

Data from 48 relationship terminations (one termination report from each participant) were examined for common themes or patterns of break-up. Kelley's (1979) theory of interdependence guided the examination, providing a basic framework of the information persons might use to evaluate a relationship. The following theoretical constructs from Kelley were of particular interest: unilateral dependence (one partner is more involved in the relationship than is the other partner); commonality of interest (whether P and O have similar wants and needs); pattern responsiveness (whether P and O try to maximize their own outcomes regardless of the consequences for the partner, or take each other's outcomes into consideration); interpersonal dispositions (dispositions which can only be seen when a transformation is made, for example, respect, love, and dominance); desire for uniqueness (the desire for this relationship to be different from any other relationship); and conflict about conflict behavior (includes influence attempts, nagging, etc.). None of the explanations for break-up included all of these constructs.

First, all of the responses to the questionnaires were read repeatedly until familiarity with each reason for break-up was achieved. Next, individual explanations were identified and recorded on a chart so that each could be compared and contrasted with other explanations, and Kelley's theory of interdependence (1979) was applied to the data. For example, if the respondent said, "My partner would never go to movies that I liked to see" the reason was recorded as an "inadequate transformation" in a new chart. After Kelley's model had been applied to all of the explanations, the questionnaires were stacked in Q-sort fashion, that is, separate piles according to the type and number of constructs represented in the explanation.

Three primary sets of reasons had been given, although some respondents gave reasons which fit into more than one group. Rules for inclusion into thematic categories were devised such that the set of characteristics shared by other persons with similar accounts were identified. Next, the explanations that fit into more than one category were examined for a dominant theme. Finally, three mutually exclusive types of break-up were defined: Independence, Disposition, and Relationship Problem.

The first two types of casual-dating break-ups reflect the notion that early in relationships persons

are primarily concerned with their own outcomes (Kelley, 1979). Independence reflects a rejection of committed-dating rather than the rejection of one's partner. Specifically, participation in a dating relationship that is considered more than casual-dating is perceived to be costly. Conversely, Dispositional break-ups reflect a focus on the partners' dispositions and their indicants rather than a rejection of committed dating. That is, dating a person with negative dispositions is perceived to be costly. Finally, Relationship Problem break-ups focus on the interactions within the relationship. Persons report a concern about their partners', as well as their own, relationship outcomes and are unsuccessful in finding mutually satisfying patterns of interaction (Kelley, 1979, p. 137). Summaries of these three types, and their key indicators appear in Table 4.1.

#### Type One: Independence Break-ups

There is a tendency to consider casual-dating a precursor to marriage (Braiker & Kelley, 1979). It is assumed that casual-dating is a testing stage in relationship development wherein individuals decide whether or not a more serious relationship should be pursued (Eidelson, 1980). Twenty-six (54.2%) of 48 break-ups, however, were identified as Independence

Table 4.1  
Three types of Casual-Dating Break-up

	Types of break-up		
	Independence	Disposition	Relationship Problem
% of Break-ups accounted for	54.2	22.9	22.9
Whose relationship outcomes matter?	Respondent's	Respondent's	Respondent's and Partner's
Major contributor to break-up	Rejects notion of committed dating	Dislikes partner's characteristics	Domains of behavior not mutually accommodating
Key indicators of Break-up type	Unequal involvement	O bothers P	Differences in interpersonal preferences
	Better alternatives	P predicts future costs	Dissimilarity in SES, religiosity
	Relationship is low priority		

Break-ups: P, O, or both P and O, did not want to become more than casually associated with a partner. "I did not want a permanent relationship--I wanted to date once in a while" was a frequent statement of these participants. Similarly, Hill et al. (1976) found that nearly 74% of the women and 61% of the men in their study cited a desire to be independent as a contributing factor to relationship dissolution. Hence, casual-dating is also a social activity which functions as an end in itself, rather than as a means to an end (e.g., a more serious relationship).

Participants in Independence Break-ups were interested in the immediate rewards (and costs) of the current relationship. Comments such as, "our relationship was good--we didn't fight that much and we did have a good time together," were fairly common. Berg's (1984) study of college roommates also indicated that, early in relationships, rewards are important and mediate the level of satisfaction felt within the relationship. Lloyd, Cate, and Henton (1982) found the presence of rewards, and an equitable distribution of interpersonal rewards which can be objectively measured (e.g., goods and services), were important in casual-dating relationships. For example, a woman in this investigation had a partner who "never had any money." She responded to the lack of adequate interpersonal rewards by becoming "bored fast."

All of the Independence Break-ups consisted of reports that P, O, or both P and O placed a low priority on the relationship or were not very involved in the relationship. In addition, 69% of these respondents reported that P and O readily identified rewarding alternatives to the dating relationship (including, as suggested by Rusbult, 1983, no relationship).

### Relationship Involvement

Unequal Involvement. Ninety-two percent of the respondents in Independence break-ups referred to unequal involvement in the relationship. The more involved partner was seen as wanting more out of the relationship than the less involved partner was willing to give. Typical illustrations of the more involved partner included being "demanding, or want(ing) to be with me for a period of time each day," and, "telling me who I could go out with and how late I could stay out." More involved partners were labeled "dominant," "jealous," "dependent," and "selfish."

Less involved partners tried to maintain a casual level of interaction in their relationships. For example, "He spoke of long term dating and I didn't encourage this," and, "I wasn't ready to get very serious" were typical responses referring to the less

involved person. These persons were labeled "private," "busy," "irresponsible," and "independent."

Unequal involvement was also evident in descriptions of conflict of interest. Specifically, one participant wanted a more intimate level of conversation and complained that, "When we went out she couldn't talk about anything except a 'superficial' conversation." Altman (1974) proposed a social penetration theory which states that early in a relationship persons utilize more breadth and less depth in their communication; in this respondent's words, "superficial conversation." Later, as the relationship becomes more intimate, the depth of the communication is increased. Hays (1984) found support for increasing depth of conversation in his investigation of friendships. In stable friendship relationships intimate communication was established after only six weeks. In unstable dyads, however, the level of intimacy in their conversation decreased. Further, Hill and his associates (1976) found "a significant association between reporting high intimacy on a variety of measures and reporting equal involvement" (p. 153). Hence, unequal levels of intimacy in communication indicate unequal involvement.

Researchers agree that when participants are unequally involved in a relationship, the relationship is less stable (e.g., Hill et al., 1976; Huston &

Burgess, 1979). The costliness of unequal relationships was illustrated here by reports such as, "(my partner) is very sweet and a lot of fun unless he gets jealous or demanding," and "(my partner) was too dependent, wanted too much of my time . . . I wanted to continue seeing others." For many of these respondents (58%) whether or not they would start dating their partners again was based on having equal involvement in the relationship. Some of the respondent said, "if it was just casual," and others required that their partners ". . . would be willing to make more of a commitment."

Alternatives. Romantic and non-romantic alternatives to the current relationship were readily identified by 69% of the respondents in Independence break-ups. Romantic relationship alternatives included specific-romantic others (e.g., "He started dating another girl," "I'm dating someone else"), potential-romantic others (e.g., "I wanted to date other people and not get serious"), and no romantic relationship. Non-romantic alternatives to the relationship included keeping busy with school (e.g., "I was too involved in school to please him"), paid work (e.g., "[I am] very busy especially at night. I'm a bar tender [sic]"), or family (e.g., "one of her aunts became seriously ill"), or focusing on one's long-term goals (e.g., "He was very serious about his

athletic career," "He wanted to remain 'unattached' since he will be graduating and commissioned in May").

It is not unexpected that early in a dating relationship persons continue to perceive that they have alternatives to the current relationship (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Presumably, they have not become independent from, and still have access to, social network members who were available to them before they began dating the current partner (Hill et al., 1976; Levinger, 1976). Independence Break-ups focused on the available alternatives to the relationship. As will be seen, alternatives to the relationship have a role in Relationship Problem Break-ups, but are not seen as causes of dissolution in either Dispositional Break-ups or Relationship Problems Break-ups.

Priority of Relationship. Low priority of the relationship was reported by 50% of the respondents in Independence break-ups. This category includes both an emphasis on other activities and persons, and an unwillingness to problem-solve conflicts of interest. Typical responses include "(She) didn't seem interested in seeing me and she told me things were just bad for her now," and, because of a "lack of time, conflicting schedules, little communication . . . (and) low interest the relationship suffered." One respondent illustrated her relationships' low priority this way: "When we discovered a problem in our relationship, we cancelled

the relationship rather than work out the problem." That the relationship was not top priority did not necessarily reflect poorly on the participants. One participant explained, "he isn't ready to date me or anyone else at this time in his life."

Summary. Independence Break-ups occur when P, O, or both P and O want to remain only casually associated and consider a committed relationship to be undesirable at this time. Often, unequal involvement such that one partner is perceived not to want more than a casual-dating relationship is seen as a cause of the break-up. Romantic and non-romantic alternatives to the dating relationship played an important role in Independence Break-ups, as did perceiving that the relationship is a low priority for P, O, or both P and O.

#### Type Two: Disposition Break-ups

As relationships continue and a variety of situations are encountered, persons interact with their partners using non-role behavior (Levinger & Snoek, 1972). Consequently, negative personal characteristics become more visible. In 11 (22.9%) of 48 break-ups, such characteristics were credited with causing the break-up. Disposition break-ups focused on personal characteristics (e.g., moody, conceited), interpersonal

dispositions (e.g., dominance, competitiveness), and the specific ways in which personal characteristics and interpersonal dispositions are displayed. "Of all the stable properties other persons possess . . . interpersonal dispositions are the most important for close personal relationships" and are most apparent when P has the opportunity to either enhance or inhibit O's positive outcomes (Kelley, 1979, p. 94).

#### Transformational Information

There are three ways in which transformational tendencies are detected in Disposition break-ups: (a) the partner caused a series of inconveniences in the relationship, (b) a specific event occurred which overshadowed other positive aspects of the partner or emphasized the negative aspects, or (c) the partners' behavior had obvious implications for P's or O's long-term goals.

Costs. Most commonly (72% of the persons in Disposition break-ups), respondents reiterated the difficulties of associating with persons they considered to be selfish or immature. For example, respondents stated that their partner showed a "lack of common courtesy," or had "a lot of immature ideas." These partner dispositions made the relationship too costly (e.g., "not worth the effort"). No single

behavior or event is of particular importance here, but rather the accumulated costs of certain behaviors or interaction patterns were perceived to be too high.

Specific Events. In some cases (45%), although persons suspected that their partner possessed negative, stable dispositions, critical events confirmed the suspicion. For example, one respondent said that her former partner was "a very self-centered type of person, but overall he was a nice well mannered guy." Although she had experienced his tendency to fall asleep at parties, the critical event was when he became intoxicated at a party and "passed out." She reported: "I had to get my own ride home and it made me very upset." This incident violated her expectations of appropriate behavior on the part of a dating partner.

Long-Term Goals. Conflicts involving the long-term goals of P and/or O are more problematic than conflicts involving short-terms goals (Peterson, 1983). Such conflicts include chemical or interpersonal dependencies (e.g., "He had a drinking problem;" "He was dependent on lots of things"), different preferences in lifestyle (e.g., "He had no goals or ambitions...I am a goal oriented person;" "I am involved in a lot of activities and she is not"), and competitive career goals (e.g., "I couldn't spend time with a competitor without feeling defensive of my own

goals"). Such conflicts were evident in 18% of the break-ups.

### Dispositions

The stability and generalizability of one's partner's behavior is assessed through personal experience with the partner and observations of the partner in interaction with others. This assessment facilitates prediction of the future costs of being involved in the relationship (Passer et al., 1978). For example, one participant emphasized that she "...can't stand inconsiderate people. Even if he wasn't too inconsiderate of me he was with many other people and I knew it wouldn't be long before he treated me the same."

Generality of Dispositions. Dispositional attributions are made to attitudes, values, and traits. Attitudinal dispositions are unique to the specific relationship and reveal information about one's self as well as one's partner. Attributions to attitudes may be rewarding, as when "(P's) attitude implies properties of (O) in which (O) takes pride" (Kelley, 1979, p. 119). According to Kelley, such attitudes facilitate liking because persons tend to like persons who like them (Kelley, 1979; Levinger, 1976). Conversely, if P's attitude implies unflattering

properties of O, those attitudes function as costs to O. For example, one woman said that the most important thing that caused the break-up was her partner's "hateful attitude towards me" which indicates that at least in O's opinion, P is a person who is unlikable.

More general attributions include values and traits. Values are beliefs about morally correct ways to treat any person with whom one is interdependent. For example, a man reported that he "enjoys a girlfriend and we'd designate intentional time to spend together." Traits are the most general type of disposition, they are not unique to any relationship (Kelley, 1979). A woman reported that she does not like her partner "because he is irresponsible and rude." That is, he has negative, general, stable, dispositions (traits) that are not unique to her relationship with him. Presumably, traits and values keep the focus of the action away from the respondent: When one's partner is perceived as having a selfish trait, the selfishness is believed to be present with any partner.

Respondents with Dispositional break-ups tend to make trait (81.8%) or value (27.2%) attributions rather than attitudinal attributions (9%). In other words, they tend to focus on attributions that reveal negative dispositions of their partners, but not of themselves.

Summary. Dispositional Break-ups occur when persons who are not opposed to committed-dating relationships per se, find specific dispositions of their partners undesirable. Information about the partners' disposition is revealed via a series of small inconveniences, a specific event, or conflicting long-term goals. Relationship participants utilize information concerning the stability and generalizability of the disposition to analyze the costliness of the relationship. Explanations of these analyses tended to focus on general dispositions (i.e., traits and values of the partner) rather than on attitudes (unique, interpersonal dispositions).

#### Type Three: Relationship Problems

Relationship dissolution does not necessarily imply a desire to be independent nor a dislike of one's partner's characteristics. In 11 (22.9%) of the 48 termination explanations, the quality or nature of the relationship is the focus. Persons in Relationship Problems Break-ups typically attribute positive personal characteristics to their partner while

indicating that their relationship lacks important qualities.

### Conflicts of Interest

Two areas of conflict of interest were most important to persons in Relationship Problem break-ups: (a) 64% of the respondents cited differences in interpersonal preferences which resulted in open conflict, and (b) 18% of the respondents cited differences in macrolevel variables such as socioeconomic status and religion. One respondent reported both differences in interpersonal preferences and macrolevel variables in her explanation for break-up.

Socioeconomic Status and Religion. Past research emphasized the importance of homogamous dating (Goode, 1956; Hill et. al, 1976; Udry, 1966; Winch, 1958). This research was supported by some of the break-up reports. As one individual explained:

We were from different SES backgrounds . . .  
(We) thought different on everything! . . .  
what he thought of as a nice place to go on a  
date, ideas about certain things . . . We

were too different to start dating, I realize how important it is to date someone on basically the same, or little better, level than you are. We would have had more in common, etc.

Similarly, a respondent reported that he did not share a prerequisite level of religiosity.

"Our spiritual beliefs were not at the same level..(and) I place spiritual values as a high priority in dating. We are still very good friends and were open enough with the break-up to start again . . . (but) I would have . . . to share more comfortably on a spiritual basis than we were doing."

In both situations the respondents concluded that there were important differences between them and their partners and, therefore, they did not have a solid enough basis for interaction.

Open Conflict. Relationships become costly when partners disagree on the direction their relationship should be taking (Peterson, 1983). For example, one respondent thought that, after 40 months of dating, theirs "was a great relationship but at this point in our lives either we get married or break-up." She knew

that they disagreed on the direction that their relationship should take based on a conversation they had. "We talked about what we are doing now and what we plan to do and he didn't know and I did . . . I wanted a serious relationship with a person of high ideals and good goals." While the relationships in this investigation varied in length from one week to 52 months, only 6% of the relationships were 40 months or longer.

Attempts to resolve open conflict and to establish mutually accommodating patterns of interaction focused on changing the partner or on "convincing" the partner. Sometimes changing a partner meant making the "real" and "ideal" partner the same person. For example, one respondent said that he ". . . was trying to make her become what I wanted in my mind for her to become . . . because we were growing apart and not together." Another respondent reported that she wasn't convinced she and her partner had similar values. She wrote:

"(If we) could meet on certain areas, I think the areas we already meet on are important . . . (but he) . . . tried to convince me of his certainty (about major issues in life, and) the more he persisted the more I had

cause to question why he was trying to convince me of something."

Finally, one woman reported that she and her partner had many differences of opinion which could not be resolved: "(We had) different point(s) of view on a lot of things concerning our relationship (which we) began to argue about . . . all the time. If it had lasted- - we would have fought all the time and never been very happy."

In summary, Relationship Problem break-ups involved overt conflict of interest in 73% of the cases. These conflicts included disagreements on the direction of the relationship and on the coordination of the partners' wants and needs. Differences in socioeconomic status and level of religiosity were also reported to be problematic.

### Physical Separation

Consistent with the findings of Hill and his associates (1976), respondents viewed physical proximity as an important relationship condition and physical separation as a high cost. Twenty-seven percent of the break-ups were perceived as resulting

directly from physical separation. Break-ups occurred both immediately upon separation and after attempts to maintain a long-distance relationship failed. The latter emphasized the costs of maintaining such a relationship, for example "(keeping in touch) was too hard and getting old." Consistently these respondents expressed a desire to resume dating, and perceived that the partner would also want to resume dating, if they were to move closer geographically (e.g., "We really did care for each other and I'm sure we'd be together now if at the same or at closer schools;" "If we had been able to see each other it probably would have lasted until I don't know when."). Despite this perception, the participants did not alter other plans to close the geographical distance.

#### Dissolving the Relationship

When to stop trying to make the casual-dating relationship work is a big question for participants in Relationship Problems Break-ups. For 27% of the respondents the decision was simplified by: (a) the perception that an alternative romantic partner is available to the respondent or perceived to be

available to the partner, or (b) the "ideal" relationship being shattered by information provided by a third person rather than the partner.

One woman's uncertainty about her partner's relationship with a girlfriend elsewhere caused her to question the nature of her relationship with him. As long as the romantic-other was a factor, she did not want to incur the costs of putting effort into the relationship. She stated that "Any long term relationship was impossible . . . (unless) perhaps he no longer had a girlfriend." Another individual concluded that "God has (provided) another girl to meet other needs that he has . . . (and) has someone else for me." Notice that in Independence Break-ups alternatives are viewed as the cause of break-up. In Relationship Problem Break-ups, alternatives to the relationship simplify the decision to end a relationship which is perceived to lack important qualities.

When a third party provides information that is incompatible with one's definition of one's partner and one's relationship, trust is compromised. For example, a woman reported learning from "another person" that her partner "had certain characteristics and actions I

didn't believe in." She stated that negotiation to resolve their differences would be unsuccessful "because I think you truly need to have a lot of trust in a relationship and I didn't have that trust."

### Summary

Relationship Problem break-ups focus on both P's and O's outcomes in the relationship and the attempt to find mutually accommodating domains of behavior (Kelley, 1979). Among the difficulties incurred in these relationships were: (a) conflicts of interest concerning the desirable characteristics/behaviors of one's partner, the direction of the relationship, and interaction patterns, (b) differences in socioeconomic status and religiosity, and (c) a lack of physical proximity. Decisions to end the relationship are facilitated by perceptions that one's partner is not trustworthy or that P and/or O have specific romantic alternatives to the relationship (thus affecting timing rather than causing the break-up as in Independence break-ups).

### Summary

Three types of break-ups emerged from the termination reports of 48 persons whose casual-dating relationships ended. Independence Break-ups occur when one partner or the other (or both) does not want to be more than casually involved in a relationship. The important elements of Independence Break-ups are unequal involvement, better alternatives, and the low priority of the relationship.

Disposition Break-ups focus on the dispositions of one's partner and the indicators of those dispositions. While a committed relationship per se is not being rejected (as in Independence Break-ups) the partner's dispositions are seen as undesirable; thus, a relationship with this person is unwanted. These explanations provide thorough accounts of general and specific behaviors of the partner (transformations that the partner did or did not make) to clarify the dispositions assigned to that person. The important elements of this break-up are: (a) a focus on information gathered via a series of inconveniences, specific events, or through the recognition of conflicting long-term goals; and (b) the stability and

generalizability of the dispositions attributed to the partner.

Last, in Relationship Problem Break-ups respondents perceive that they and their former partners were unable to find patterns of interaction that were acceptable to both of them. Importantly, it is not the relationship involvement nor the dispositions of the participants which cause difficulties. Rather, conflicts of interest (at the macro- and micro- levels), physical separation, and the decision to dissolve the relationship are emphasized.

## Chapter V: Results

A stated goal of this research was to describe the role of causal attributions in the dissolution of casual-dating relationships. Specifically, what do people think about their dating partner and their relationship, and how does that influence their thinking about the relationship's viability? To answer this question, all of the data from the Termination Questionnaires were coded utilizing the broad, level one, attribution categories Individual/ Personal (IP), Dyadic/Interactional (DI), Social Network (SN), and Circumstantial/Situational (CS). This process is referred to as "Preliminary Coding." Next, responses to three specific questions from the Termination Questionnaire were examined using a detailed coding scheme focusing on the specific causal attributions provided by the respondents. This process is referred to as "Detailed Coding."

Another goal of this research was to analyze these data statistically using the level I categories (IP, DI, SN, CS) from the Detailed-Coding Scheme. The frequency with which particular causal attributions emerged and their distribution across gender, length of the relationship, and preference for future dating were examined. Each of these processes is reported in detail here.

## Preliminary Coding

### Procedure

The Termination Questionnaire consisted of 10 questions which focused on identifying the personal characteristics of P and O that contributed to the break-up, the reasons why the personal characteristics were important, and assessments of future dating preferences. (See Appendix B for the complete Termination Questionnaire.) Responses to each of these questions were coded into one of four categories: Individual/Personal, Dyadic/Interactional, Social Network, and Circumstantial/Situational. (See Table 5.1 for the Preliminary-Coding Scheme.) After brief definitions of the categories, the coding process and the results for the individual items will be reported.

Definitions. Statements coded as "Individual/Personal" (IP) refer to an individual's behaviors/actions, cognitions/thoughts, attitudes/feelings/emotions, or personal characteristics. A "Dyadic/Interactional" (DI) statement includes both members of the dyad in terms of either the respondent's (P) and the partner's (O) participation in a joint behavior,

Table 5.1

Preliminary-Coding Scheme

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Locus of Reason	Code
Individual/Personal (IP)	1
Dyadic/Interactional (DI)	2
Social Network (SN)	3
Circumstantial/Situational (CS)	4
Uncodable	5

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one person influencing the other, or the relationship's nature or quality. A "Social/Network" (SN) response involves reference to third party persons who are central to P and O's interactive or psychological environment; that is, persons who have a direct impact on one or both members of the dyad.

"Circumstantial/Situational" (CS) statements can refer to events that were either expected or unexpected, but the event originated outside of P and O and is, reportedly, perceived by P and O to be outside of their control. "No Response" was coded any time the respondent wrote in the word "none," and "Uncodable" was used in situations where either the handwriting of the respondent was illegible or the meaning of the statement was not clear.

Coding Process. Coding was completed by two independent coders who were familiar with the relevant literature. These individuals were trained to use the Preliminary Coding Scheme during several meetings in which the categories were defined, examples were practiced, and the following rules were established: (a) If there are two distinct comments, but they express the same idea (i.e., they would be coded in the same category), code the statement only once; (b) If there are two distinct comments, and they express different ideas (i.e., they would be coded in different categories), code the statement twice. To compare the

responses which were assigned more than one code, detailed records were kept.

Some relationships terminated before the end of this six-month investigation. After a termination questionnaire was completed, each of these persons was offered an opportunity to continue participating in the study by completing an intake questionnaire on a second partner. Of those persons who continued to participate, seven experienced a second dissolution and completed termination questionnaires again. All of the questionnaires were included in this coding for a total of 55 break-ups. This decision was based on the assumption that more termination data would lead to a greater understanding of the dissolution process and that response interdependence would not be a problem in this preliminary stage of the investigation.

Interrater Reliability. Interrater reliability was assessed using an adjusted Cohen's Kappa as suggested by Brennan and Prediger (1981). This adjusted Kappa is appropriate when "the marginal distributions are not specified a priori" (p. 692). Coders obtained an adjusted Cohen's Kappa score of 71%: complete agreement was achieved on 77% of the items scored and the other 23% of the items were agreed upon after discussion. See Appendix C for the detailed Preliminary-Coding results and refer to Table 5.2 for

the percent of responses appearing in each category for each question.

### Preliminary Coding Results

The preliminary coding made it possible to identify the parameters of the causal attributions individuals use when explaining their dating break-up. Responses to all of the questions together were distributed in the following way: 52% Individual/Personal, 36% Dyadic/Interactional, 5% Social Network, and 7% Circumstantial/Situational. How these causal attributions vary within a respondent's total explanation requires the examination of each question separately. Following is a break-down of the role of causal attributions within each question.

#### Personal Characteristics

Individual/Personal responses were most frequently used for reporting both P's (79%) and O's (57%) personal characteristics that contributed to the break-up. Traits such as selfishness, stubbornness, dominance, and immaturity were commonly cited as personal characteristics that contributed to the break-up. Dyadic/Interactional responses were also

Table 5.2

Response (%) categories across four attributional loci

Contribution to break-up	<u>n</u>	Attributional locus			
		IP	DI	SN	CS
<hr/>					
Partner's (O)					
Characteristic	47	57	30	4	9
Indicator of Character- istic	44	39	50	7	4
Own (P) Characteristic	44	79	14	0	7
Importance of Character- istic	40	55	40	0	5
Most important cause of break-up	45	33	42	16	9
Under what conditions would you date O again	21	57	29	10	5
Reason for P's future dating preference	39	59	28	5	8
Under what conditions would O date you again	14	71	21	0	7
Reason for O's future dating preference	40	55	30	8	8

Table 5.2 Continued

Compare terminated rela-  
 tionship with a stable  
 relationship

42	31	57	2	10
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Note. IP = Individual/Personal; DI =  
 Dyadic/Interactional; SN = Social Network; CS =  
 Circumstantial/Situational. n = the total number of  
 codable attributions reported for each question.

given to explain one's partner's personal characteristics (30%) and one's own characteristics (14%). These DI reasons focused on interactional factors such as lack of communication and differences in interests and goals rather than on attributions. The presence of an alternative dating partner (SN), physical separation (CS), and conflicting schedules (CS) were also offered as personal characteristics that contributed to the break-up. Social Network responses were given to explain one's partner's personal characteristics 4% of the time but were not used to explain one's own personal characteristics. Circumstantial/Situational responses were given to explain one's partner's personal characteristics 9% of the time and to explain one's own personal characteristics 7% of the time.

These findings are consistent with past research. First, persons receive information regarding O's personal characteristics through O's behavior and tend to report their finding at the dispositional level (Braiker & Kelley, 1979). For example, because P's partner showed up late in the evening drunk she made the attribution that he was unambitious (i.e., "He had no goals or ambitions.").

Some of the dyadic responses concerning the partner's personal characteristics support Kelley's (1979) contention that early in a relationship, P is

primarily concerned with P's own rewards and the implications of O's behavior for P's outcomes (e.g., "She wanted more out of the relationship than I was willing to put in;" "We had a different point of view on a lot of things concerning our relationship."). It may be that, even when asked to respond in terms of personal characteristics (an IP response), the specific characteristic of one's partner is not the most important issue to the respondent. What does seem to be important, and therefore is reported, is how the partner's characteristics fit with the wants and expectations of the respondent. For example the statement, "his apathy towards things I feel strongly about" demonstrates that the characteristic "apathetic" is not as important as is the fact that the partner is apathetic concerning things about which the respondent feels strongly.

#### Indicators of Personal Characteristics

Not surprisingly, when persons were asked, "How did you know your partner had this (these) characteristic(s)?," half (50%) of the responses were OI. For example, one person knew that his partner had the personal characteristic of not being open enough "from going out with her and talking to her and being the only one talking." Over one-third (39%) of the

responses, however, were IP. Interestingly, persons identified two ways of learning about their partners' personal characteristics: Through interaction with their partners (DI) or by watching them interact (or fail to interact) with others (IP), indications of underlying standards and values were observed. One woman, for example, reported knowing about important socioeconomic status differences between her and her partner (personal characteristics of each other) because they differed in their ideas of where to go and what to do on dates.

A smaller number (7%) of responses indicated finding out about the partner's characteristics from other persons. For example, one person reported that she knew about her partner from "other girls who had dated him in the past . . . ." Other responses (4%) revealed that circumstances rather than personal characteristics prohibited dating. As one respondent indicated: "There weren't any bad characteristics; we just found it too hard with seeing each other so little."

#### Importance of Attributions

Respondents were asked to identify the reason that P's or O's characteristics made a difference in the relationship. Most frequently (55%), an IP locus was

used to report why the personal characteristics of P and O made a difference. As Kelley (1979) predicted, some persons inferred future relationship costs based on the partner's current behavior. For instance, one woman's partner was inconsiderate towards other people which led her to conclude that he would treat her similarly in the future. Another respondent referred to potential costs that would be incurred from competition because they were studying to be in the same profession.

Forty percent of the responses were DI and focused primarily on the differences between one's self and one's partner. For example, thinking differently on important issues (e.g., "our goals were totally different") and "growing apart." Finally, 5% of the responses referred to an inability to continue the dating relationship due to academic commitments (a CS response).

#### Primary Cause of Break-up

The most frequent (42%) response to the question "What would you say is the single, most important thing that resulted in the break-up?" was DI. These responses indicated a lack of fit between the two persons (e.g., "Our needs were not mutual;" "I don't think we could ever find a medium for our

differences"), a redefinition of the relationship (e.g., "we decided to be friends."), and movement away from each other while in the relationship (e.g., "God used us to develop different characteristics in each of us.").

The second most frequently mentioned causal locus was IP (33%). These responses included attitudes (e.g., "his hateful attitude toward me"), behaviors (e.g., "double-crossing me"), motivation (e.g., "the interest was not strong enough on either part to try to work out everything"), and cognitions (e.g., "I learned again not to get too hung up on what I was 'feeling' and take it easy.").

Social Network responses (16%) focused on other dating partners (e.g., "Seeing another guy"), the influence of family members (e.g., "her aunt becoming very ill"), and other friendships (e.g., "I was out too much with other people"). Circumstantial/Situational responses (9%) to this question focused on the physical distance between the partners and on commitment to academic majors (e.g., "He's an architect major which requires lots of time.").

### Desire to Date Again

Respondents were asked whether they would like to date their partner again in the future and whether they

thought their partner would like to date them again in the future. The choices were "yes," "no," and "under certain conditions." Elaborations to the "under certain conditions" choice were coded into one of the four categories (IP, DI, SN, CS).

P's desire to date O again. Individual/Personal statements were the most frequently cited (57%) reasons for desiring to date one's partner again. In many cases, the IP condition was either the partner's change in behavior (e.g., "not as bossy," "not as dominating," "communicate more"), or change in attitudes (e.g., "more committed to various things;" "less emotionally dependent"). The DI condition (29%) frequently dealt with the amount of time the two persons spent together (e.g., "we would limit the amount of time we spent together") and with the nature of the relationship (e.g., "If it was just casual"). The SN condition (10%) specified that the partner discontinue another current dating relationship and the CS condition (5%) would only be satisfied by residential propinquity (e.g., "He came back or I went to Houston").

O's perceived desire to date P again. Seventy-one percent of the statements regarding O's desire to date P again were coded IP. These statements focused on behavior (e.g., "If I would let him run the relationship") and attitude (e.g., "If I were more interested in the relationship"), and potential costs

of P becoming emotionally invested in the relationship (e.g., "I wouldn't fall for him"). The DI statements (21%) indicated a desire for the partners to become more similar in characteristics (e.g., "for sure if we were the same religion") or for the two of them to interact more positively (e.g., "he gets his act together while I am not pressuring him to do so"). The one CS statement (8%) focused on residential propinquity.

Explanations for future dating preference. Nearly identical distributions of responses across the four categories were obtained for P's and O's reasons for wanting to date again. This finding is congruent with Harvey and associates' (1978) finding that participants predicted their partners would make attributions similar to the attributions that they themselves made. That is, the same framework that participants use to explain the relationship for themselves may be used when explaining the partner's experience with the termination.

Individual/Personal statements (P: 57%; O: 55%) were both positive (e.g., "Because I think she liked what she saw in me," "Because he's very sweet and a lot of fun"), and negative (e.g., "A possible gold digger," "Because I don't like him because he is irresponsible and rude"). Additionally, some statements revealed a concern with the timing of the relationship (e.g.,

"just because he isn't ready to date me or anyone else at this time in his life") and an evaluation that O is not meeting P's standards for a partner (e.g., "because I know he's not the 'one' for me").

The DI statements (P: 29%; O: 30%) focused on communication between the partners (e.g., "he has already asked," "we misunderstood each other"), differences in handling important issues (e.g., approaches to jobs), and differences in beliefs and values (e.g., "if we were the same religion"). Also, persons evaluated the quality of the time that they and their partner spent together while the two were dating (e.g., "we have fun together;" "I'm not interested in wasting my time on someone who won't treat me the way I expect to be treated").

Social Network statements (P: 10%; O: 8%) compared the current relationship to the available romantic alternatives (e.g., "she can't find any other dates . . . in this town," "because I need to feel like someone who I am dating cares about me as much as another relationship she has"). And finally, CS statements (P: 5%; O: 8%) considered both current (e.g., "we'd be together now if at the same or at closer schools,") and future (e.g., "He wants to remain 'unattached' since he will be graduating and commissioned in May") dating difficulties.

### Relationship Comparisons

The DI focus was used to compare more than half (57%) of the dissolved relationships to ones that would have lasted. Issues such as too little intimacy in the relationship, the relationship being too tenuous, and too little agreement on important beliefs and values were all cited as factors of the reported relationship that would not be present in a stable relationship. Interestingly, 31% of the relationship comparison responses were IP. Some of these participants had defined their relationships as short-term from the beginning (e.g., "I knew all along it was temporary and tried to get rid of him several times"), while others either indicated agreement on the impermanence of the relationship (e.g., "we both did not want to date each other steadily at the time") or indicated that the relationship did not feel "right."

One respondent (2%) perceived that social networks of persons in stable relationships have less of an active role in the relationship than did O's social network: "his friends needed to stay out of it - - and not give him ideas from the way they felt about me." Finally, CS accounted for 10% of the relationship comparison responses. One such response indicated that the relationship was together "because it was

convenient" and therefore could not be compared to one that would have lasted.

### Summary

The first step in describing the role of causal attributions in the dissolution of casual-dating relationships was to code all of the data from the Termination Questionnaire into four attribution categories: Individual/Personal, Dyadic/Interactional, Social Network, and Circumstantial/Situational. Results indicate that personal characteristics such as selfish, stubborn, dominant, and/or immature are most frequently seen as contributing to the break-up. Such characteristics of one's partner are detected through direct P and D interaction and by observing one's partner in interaction with others.

As Kelley (1979) suggested, attributions to personal characteristics of one's partner were important because they facilitated the prediction of future costs in the relationship. These costs were identified primarily within IP and DI loci. For example, P's outcomes were predicted to become minimized with further interaction (IP) or it was predicted that P and D would have continued to have difficulty finding mutually acceptable patterns of interaction (DI).

Attributions concerning the primary cause of break-up were varied and reflected concerns for the quality and the nature of the relationship as well as for P's and O's individual outcomes. The influence of other persons and residential propinquity were also perceived as primary causes of relationship dissolution.

Whether or not P would like to date O again in the future and P's perception of O's desire to date P again yielded very similar results. Future dating was dependent on individual change (e.g., behavior or attitude), and to a lesser extent on changing interactions (e.g., less time, seriousness) and on P and O's eventual matching on macrolevel (e.g., religion) and microlevel (e.g., maturity) variables. That P perceived O's explanations for future dating preference to be similar to P's explanations supports Harvey and associates' (1978) finding that persons predict that their partners will make attributions similar to those that they make themselves.

Finally, the terminated relationships were compared to relationships that would have lasted. Understandably, levels of intimacy and predictability and agreement on beliefs and values were seen as lower than would be the case for a stable relationship. Additionally, the early identification of these relationships as temporary or convenient, interference

by social network members, and the lack of residential propinquity were all reported as important differences between these and stable relationships.

Overall, two conclusions seem warranted from the preliminary coding. First, one would assume that responses to an attribution question would show an IP locus when the question asks one to make attributions about a person (e.g., "Which of your partner's characteristics contributed to the break-up?") and a DI locus when the question asks one to make attributions to the relationship (e.g., "How might you compare this relationship with one that might have lasted?"). In fact, the parameters of the question did not dictate completely the locus of the response. The majority of the responses to each question were in the expected locus but there were other loci identified for each question (see Table 5.2). This lends support to Kelley's (1979; p. 168) notion that people have "difficulties . . . in the accurate expression and attribution of traits and attitudes" (i.e., they have a difficult time making causal attributions). Consistent with Orvis et al.'s (1976) discussion, if there is more than one plausible reason for an outcome, persons will focus on crucial events and will report what they believe to be important, despite the parameters of the question. Thus, although responses might not be

provided for the category in question, the responses will focus on the perceived reasons for the break-up.

Next, SN was rarely mentioned as affecting the relationship's viability. Certainly, because most of the questions specifically asked about P and/or O, it was expected that there would be more responses within the IP and DI loci than there would be within the SN or CS loci. Some questions, however, were conducive to mentioning social network influence. For example, the question "What would you say is the single, most important thing that resulted in the break-up?" yielded the most (16%) SN responses of any question. Given the earlier observation that the locus of the response did not always match the locus of the question, obtaining so few SN responses is interesting. Does one's social network influence the viability of a relationship? The infrequency of SN responses parallel Leslie, Huston, and Johnson's (1986) findings that casual-daters are less likely than steady or engaged daters to tell their parents about their dating relationship, and that "parental support (was) relatively unrelated to change in relationship involvement" (p. 65). The role of social network members such as family, friends/acquaintances, or authority figures during casual-dating, however, merits further investigation.

Finally, it is interesting that very early in dating relationships persons rarely make CS

attributions. Again, because persons were asked primarily IP and DI questions it was expected that CS would be infrequently mentioned.

Circumstantial/Situational responses, however, accounted for only 7% of the total attributions. It does seem plausible that early in dating relationships persons focus on either the partner or the relationship, persons in the social network are not focal concerns. Additionally, relationship participants generally feel that they have control over the events pertaining to their casual-dating relationship.

### Detailed-Coding

#### Procedure

One termination questionnaire from each respondent was utilized in the detailed-coding process: When respondents reported more than one break-up only the first report was used. Consequently, seven questionnaires were removed from the preliminary-coding data set for a total of 48 break-ups. This process assured response independence which was needed for the proposed statistical analyses.

Coding Scheme. The Casual-Dating Termination coding scheme builds on the work of Surra (1980; 1984;

1988) and Zvonkovic and Ponzetti (1988). These earlier coding schemes were combined and modified for use with persons whose casual-dating relationships ended. The complete coding manual appears in Appendix D; a brief description of the coding process and the definitions of the subcategories are presented here.

Coding Process. Two independent coders, familiar with the relevant literature and trained to use the Detailed-Coding Scheme (see Table 5.3), coded these data. Training consisted of several steps. First, the Casual-Dating Dissolution Coding Manual (see Appendix D) and background literature concerning the development and dissolution of dating and friendship relationships was presented. Next, each of the categories and subcategories were discussed, practice termination questionnaires were coded, and interrater reliability for each of the practice sessions was calculated. Finally, disagreements were resolved by discussion and rules were clarified further.

Coders were asked to first read over the entire questionnaire and become acquainted with the respondent's entire set of attributions before categorizing them. Next, they were asked to extract a dominant theme of the break-up. If a particular questionnaire had more than one dominant theme of equal weight, the coder was to record the theme which ranked highest in the following sequence:

Table 5.3

Detailed-Coding Scheme

Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
Individual/			
Personal (IP).....1			
	Behavior/Action (BA).....1	Respondent (P).....1	Positive (+)....1
	Cognition/Thought (CT)....2	Partner (O).....2	Negative (-)....2
	Attitude/Feeling/ Emotion (AFE).....3		Neutral (NEU)...3
	Personal Characteristics (PC)....4		
Dyadic/			
Interactional (DI)..2			

Table 5.3 Continued

Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
	Behavioral (B).....1	Behavioral Independence/ Interdependence (BII)..1	Positive (+)....1
		Behavioral Response Interdependence (BRI)..2	Negative (-)....2
		Communication/Lack of Communication (CLC)....3	Neutral (NEU)...3
		Other (OR).....4	
	Interpersonal (I).....2	Incompatibility/ Compatibility (IC).....1	
		Cohesion/ Lack of Cohesion (COH).2	
		Nonromantic Relationship (NR).....3	
		Other (OR).....4	

Table 5.3 Continued

Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
Social Network (SN)...3	Family (F).....1	Respondent (P).....1	Positive (+)....1
	Friends/Acquaintance (FR).2	Partner (O).....2	Negative (-)....2
	Romantic Involvement (RI).3		Neutral (NEU)...3
	Authority (AU).....4		
	Clergy (CL).....5		
	Other (OR).....6		
	Circumstantial/ Situational (CS)....4	Physical Separation (PS)..1	Positive (+).....1
Health (H).....2		Negative (-).....2	
Academics/Employment (AE).3		Neutral (NEU).....3	
Social Network			
Circumstances (SNC).....4			

Table 5.3 Continued

Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
	Other (OR).....5		
Missing Data (MD).....5			
	No Response (N).....1		
	Uncodable (U).....2		

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1. Dyadic/Interactional
2. Circumstantial/Situational
3. Social Network
4. Individual/Personal

This sequence maximizes the role of dyadic/relational issues and minimizes the role of individual issues, consistent with Kelley's theory of interdependence (1979). As the last step in the coding process, the coders were asked to provide both category and subcategory code numbers for each separate response on the termination questionnaire.

Interrater Reliability. Interrater reliability testing proceeded in two steps: agreement on the general categories, then agreement on the subcategories. Using an adjusted Cohen's Kappa (Brennan & Predigar, 1981) to calculate the interrater reliability, an agreement score of 75% was obtained for the general categories. The remaining items were resolved by discussion. This discussion involved only whether a response was Individual/Personal (IP), Dyadic/Interactional (DI), Social Network (SN), or Circumstantial/Situational (CS). After the general category discrepancies were resolved, the subcategories were coded, and interrater reliability was recalculated to include the categories and subcategories. An 82% agreement score was obtained; disagreements were resolved by discussion.

## Definitions

Individual/Personal. Responses that refer to the respondent (P) or the other (O), independently, are coded Individual/Personal (IP). Within the IP category there are three subcategory levels. First, it must be determined whether the response refers to a Behavior/Action (behavior or lack of behavior independent of any effect), a Cognition/Thought (thought processes or inferences that persons make in regard to a stimulus event), an Attitude/Feeling/Emotion (actual or remembered physiological arousal or state of feeling or mind about a person or situation), or a Personal Characteristic (distinctive qualities, traits, or dispositions of an individual). Next, the referent of the response was coded (e.g., the respondent or the partner), and last, whether the attribution facilitated future dating (positive), impeded future dating (negative), or had neither effect (neutral).

Dyadic/Interactional. The Dyadic/Interactional (DI) category includes statements which refer to both members of the dyad either in terms of: (a) P's and O's participation or lack of participation in a joint behavior; (b) one person influencing or failing to

influence the other; or (c) the relationship's nature or quality. Within the DI category there are three subcategory levels. First, the statement is coded as behavioral (refers to the joint action of P and O; an action on the part of P or O that did, or did not, influence the other; or an exchange of information between P and O) or interpersonal (refers to the qualities and nature of a relationship or to a comparison of the interpersonal conditions of the relationship and a belief system regarding relationships).

Second, if the subcategory, behavioral, was chosen, it was determined whether the statement referred to Behavioral Independence/Interdependence (whether actions are performed together or separately), Behavioral Response Interdependence (a performed or unperformed behavior and a reaction in regard to the behavior), or Communication/Lack of Communication (reference to the exchange of information or the lack thereof). If the subcategory, Interpersonal, was chosen, it was determined whether the statement referred to Incompatibility/Compatibility (all statements which compare P and O's value systems, role expectations, socially defined positions and/or personal characteristics), Cohesion/Lack of Cohesion (an evaluation of the cohesion and/or emotional connectedness in the relationship), or a Nonromantic

Relationship (statements that specifically indicate that the nature of the relationship is nonromantic versus romantic). Last, it was determined whether the attribution facilitated future dating (positive), impeded future dating (negative), or had neither effect (neutral).

Social Network. Statements which referred to third party persons who are central to P and D's interactive or psychological environment were coded Social Network (SN). Within the SN category there are three subcategory levels. First, it was determined which Social Network member was influential. The options included: Family (any member of the nuclear or extended family such as mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, or cousins); Friends/Acquaintances (persons who are denoted as friends or acquaintances from school, work, or other social affiliations); Romantic Involvement (alternative dating partners); Authority (the influence of persons in positions of power such as teachers or employers); and Clergy (religious leaders and consultants such as priests, rabbis, and ministers). Next, the referent of the response was coded (e.g., the respondent or the partner), and, finally, whether the attribution facilitated future dating (positive), impeded future dating (negative), or had neither effect (neutral).

Circumstantial/Situational. Expected or unexpected events that originate outside of P and O and/or were perceived to be outside of the control of P and O were coded Circumstantial/Situational (CS). Within the CS category there are two subcategories. First, the locus of the uncontrollable event was determined. The options included: Physical Separation (refers to the spacial proximity of P and O); Health (P's or O's physical well-being); Academics/Employment (refers to difficulties incurred as a result of the school calendar or the requirements or schedule of coursework or paid work); and Social Network Circumstances (uncontrollable events for social network members). Second, whether the attribution facilitated future dating (positive), impeded future dating (negative), or had neither effect (neutral) was determined.

Across all categories, data were coded as missing when the meaning of the answer was unclear (e.g., "sometimes"), the handwriting of the respondent was illegible, or the response "none" was given.

### Causal Attributions

Causal attributions which focus on one's traits, attitudes, and values (e.g., stable characteristics) are thought to be at least part of the information

which tells a casually-dating person that a relationship is not viable (Kelley, 1979). O's behavior is thought to reveal such stable dispositions of O, and also to have meaning for P's perceptions of P's own characteristics (Kelley, 1979). For these reasons, the questions "What characteristic(s) of your partner do you think contributed to the break-up?," "Which of your characteristics do you think contributed to the break-up?," and "Why do you think this (these) characteristic(s) made a difference?" were examined using the detailed-coding scheme. Forty-eight respondents provided 147 codable causal attributions to these questions (see Appendix E for the detailed-coding of each statement). The most frequent causal attributions were IP (44%) and DI (47%), with SN (1%) and CS (8%) accounting for a very small percentage of the total attributions. Nearly all of the statements (99%) were coded as either negative or neutral. All four of the positive statements occurred in the DI category.

As shown in Table 5.4, IP Personal Characteristic accounted for 21% of all the causal attributions. These characteristics were dispositions such as stubborn, immature, and inconsistent. Cognition/Thought was the next most frequently cited IP attribution, accounting for 13% of the total causal attributions. These attributions tended to focus on P

Table 5.4

Frequency (%) of attributions

Locus of Response	Frequency (%)	
Individual/Personal		
Behavior/Action	9	(6)
Cognition/Thought	19	(13)
Attitude/Feeling/Emotion	6	(4)
Personal Characteristic	31	(21)
Dyadic/Interactional		
Behavioral		
Behavioral Independence/ Interdependence	11	(7)
Behavioral Response Interdependence	20	(14)
Communication/Lack of Communication	8	(6)
Interpersonal		
Incompatibility/Compatibility	25	(17)
Cohesion/Lack of Cohesion	5	(3)
Social Network		
Romantic Involvement	1	(1)

Table 5.4 Continued

## Circumstantial/Situational

Physical Separation	6	(4)
Academics/Employment	5	(3)
Social Network Circumstances	1	(1)

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or D's preference for a relationship (e.g., "I felt school was more important than the relationship;" "I didn't want to be tied down"), and D's erroneous assumptions (e.g., "He thought he owned me"). Less frequently mentioned IP causal attributions were Behavior/Action (6% of all causal attributions), and Attitude/Feeling/Emotion (4% of all causal attributions). The distribution of these data led to a suspicion that P used different subcategories to explain P's own personal characteristics than D's personal characteristics. A chi-square test of association between IP subcategories that were used to report attributions about one's self versus attributions about one's partner revealed no significant differences. That is, people are not significantly more likely to use one category to describe their own personal characteristics (e.g., Cognition/Thought) and another category to describe their partners' personal characteristics (e.g., Personal Characteristic) (see Table 5.5).

The most frequently mentioned causal attributions within DI were Incompatibility/Compatibility (17% of all causal attributions) and Behavioral Response Interdependence (14% of all causal attributions). Incompatibility statements reflected comparisons of different preferences concerning dating status (e.g., "He was looking for more of a 1 on 1 [sic]

Table 5.5

Frequency (%) of attributions to self (P) and to partner (O) within each Individual/Personal subcategory.

Subcategory	Attributional referent	
	P	O
Behavior/Action (BA)	5 (56)	4 (45)
Cognition/Thought (CT)	12 (63)	7 (36)
Attitude/Emotion/ Feeling (AFE)	3 (50)	3 (50)
Personal Characteristic (PC)	11 (35)	20 (65)

relationship, while I wanted to continue seeing others;" "She wanted me to be with her all the time, but I didn't want to be tied down"). Behavioral Response Interdependence statements focused on pushing a relationship too quickly, behaving in an inconsiderate manner, and the consequences of inappropriate behavior such as not being able to trust one's partner.

Romantic involvement of one's partner was the only SN causal attribution cited (accounting for 1% of the total causal attributions). Circumstantial/Situational attributions accounted for 8% of the total attributions. Within this category, Physical Separation accounted for 4% and conflicting schedules (Academics/Employment) accounted for 3% of the total attributional responses. One CS causal attribution (1%) was a Social Network Circumstance.

### Summary

The role of causal attributions in the dissolution of casual-dating relationships was further investigated through a detailed-coding scheme by which response to three questions from the Termination Questionnaire were categorized. The most frequently cited causes of break-up were two subcodes within Dyadic/Interactional: Incompatibility/Compatibility (i.e., the interpersonal

"fit" between P and O) and Behavioral Response Interdependence (i.e., a performed or unperformed behavior and a reaction in regard to the behavior). Individual/Personal subcategories Personal Characteristic (i.e., traits and dispositions) and Cognition/Thought (i.e., inference in regard to a stimulus) were cited slightly less often than the DI subcategories. The Circumstantial/Situational (i.e., events that are perceived to be outside of the control of P and O) subcategories Physical Separation and Academics/Employment were rarely cited.

Although the same broad attributional categories were used, the preliminary-coding and detailed-coding achieved different things. First, the preliminary-coding provided a framework for viewing and organizing these data. Consistent with Kelley's (1979) theory of interdependence persons most frequently gave IP and DI reasons for the break-up. Within each of the broad categories (IP, DI, SN, CS), however, there were different classes of reasons that persons gave for break-up. Whether respondents differed in the causal attributions they used within the broad categories was unknown. The multilevel coding scheme was used to record the nuances of the attributions and the responses were considered together to further the understanding of how attributions operated in the relationship. For example, the preliminary-coding

showed that DI responses accounted for 36% of all the coded responses. In the detailed-coding of three questions (i.e., which characteristics of P and O contributed to the break-up and how did P know that O had these characteristics), DI accounted for 47% of the total codable responses and Behavioral Response Interdependence (O's behavior, or lack of behavior, has an effect on P) was the most frequently mentioned DI behavioral subcategory. Behavioral Response Interdependence is perceived to have impeded future interaction 80% of the time while facilitating future interaction 5% of the time. Future investigations focused on all four levels of the coding scheme can provide more information regarding the specific role these attributional subcategories have in casual-dating dissolution.

#### Statistical Analysis of Causal Attributions

How do the different causal attributions relate to gender, length of the relationship, or preferences for future dating? The first level categories (IP, DI, SN, CS) of the detailed-coding were utilized here. Two multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs) were performed with IP, DI, SN, and CS as the dependent variables. Due to the inadequate cell size of SN ( $n =$

1), it was dropped from the subsequent univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs).

The first analysis, a 2 (gender) x 2 (length of relationship) MANOVA yielded insignificant multivariate  $F$ s (see Table 5.6 for the means and standard deviations). Specifically, there are no significant differences between women and men in the loci of attributions used to explain casual-dating break-up. This finding is contrary to the first hypothesis of this investigation which stated that men would be more likely than women to make circumstantial attributions while women would be more likely to make attributions to the dyad. There are also no differences between persons from shorter or longer dating relationships in terms of their use of particular loci of attributions to explain casual-dating break-up. It was hypothesized that persons in shorter relationships would give qualitatively different reasons for break-up than would persons in longer courtship. This hypothesis was not confirmed.

An interesting interaction may exist between gender and length of relationship for the IP category of attributions. A significant interaction occurred in a 2 (gender) by 2 (length of relationship) analysis of variance (ANOVA) with IP as the dependent variable ( $F(2,44) = 4.00, p < .05$ ). That is, women in shorter relationships seem to use more IP causal attributions

Table 5.6

Mean number of attributions by gender and relationship length

Locus	<u>Gender</u>		<u>Relationship length</u>	
	Female	Male	Shorter	Longer
Individual/				
Personal				
<u>M</u>	1.40	1.25	1.43	1.28
<u>SD</u>	1.21	1.06	1.23	1.10
Dyadic/				
Interactional				
<u>M</u>	1.13	1.68	1.56	1.32
<u>SD</u>	1.03	1.35	1.16	.14
Circumstantial/				
Situational				
<u>M</u>	.21	.31	.22	.28
<u>SD</u>	.66	1.01	.85	.73

Note. Social Network contained only one attribution, therefore it is not included here.

than do women in longer relationships, and men in shorter relationships may use fewer IP causal attributions than do men in longer relationships (see Figure 5.1). The multivariate  $F$  is insignificant ( $F(5,40) = 1.14, p > .05$ ), however, so this interaction must be tested in a future investigation to rule out the possibility of a spurious finding.

The second analysis, a 1-way (preference for future dating) multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) yielded a significant multivariate  $F$  ( $F(15, 110.82) = 2.78; p < .001$ ) (see Table 5.7 for the means and standard deviations). A 1-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed to inspect the relationship more closely.

As predicted, YY persons who perceived that both P and O would like to date again in the future ( $M = 1.57, SD = 1.51$ ) were significantly more likely to attribute their break-up to circumstances than were NN persons who perceived that neither P nor O wanted to date again ( $M = 0, SD = 0$ ), CC persons who perceived that both P and O would want to date again under specific conditions ( $M = 0, SD = 0$ ), or Disagree persons who perceived that P and O disagreed on wanting to date again in the future ( $M = .10, SD = .32, F(3, 44) = 14.44, p < .0001$ ).

Summary. The final goal of this research was to examine the relationship between gender, length of the

Figure 5.1

Interaction of gender and relationship length for  
Individual/Personal causal attributions.

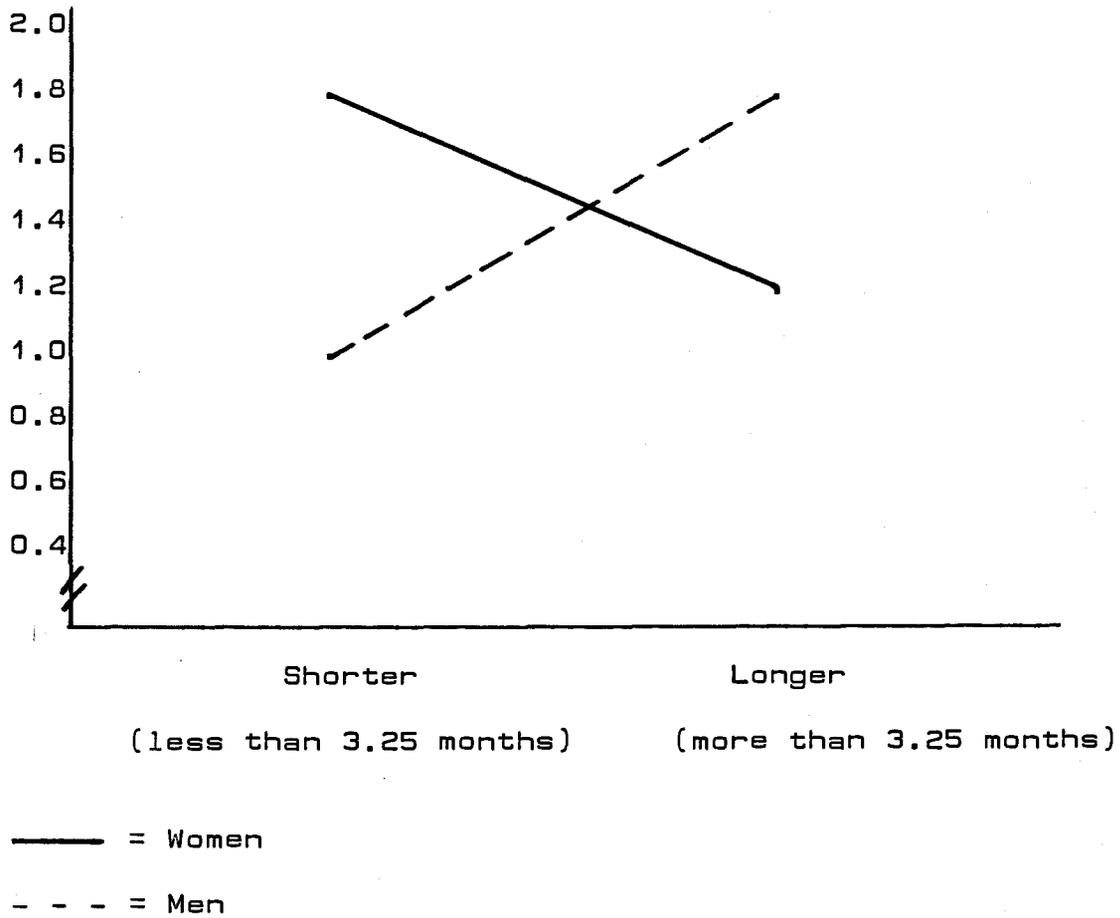


Table 5.7

Mean number of attributions by future dating preference

Locus	Future dating preference			
	YY	NN	CC	Disagree
Individual/Personal				
<u>M</u>	.57	1.25	1.80	1.43
<u>SD</u>	.78	1.16	1.39	1.08
Dyadic/Interactional				
<u>M</u>	1.00	1.37	1.40	1.60
<u>SD</u>	1.55	1.18	1.07	1.19
Circumstantial/Situational*				
<u>M</u>	1.57	0.00	0.00	.10
<u>SD</u>	1.51	0.00	0.00	.32

Note. Social Network contained only one attribution, therefore it is not included here. YY = respondents perceive that both they and their would like to date again in the future; NN = respondents perceive that neither they nor their partner would like to date again in the future; CC = respondents perceive that they and their partners agree that future dating is dependent on conditions; Disagree = respondents perceive that they and their partner disagree on their preferences for future dating.

\* $p < .0001$

relationship, and preference for future dating and the locus of causal attributions that were utilized. There were no significant differences between women and men, or between persons in longer or shorter relationships in the locus of attributions used. There was a significant difference between persons with different preferences for future dating and locus of attributions. Compared to persons who reported that both they and their partner would not like to date again in the future (NN), or who would do so under certain conditions (CC), persons who reported that both they and their partner would like to date again in the future (YY) made more Circumstantial/Situational attributions.

#### Further Examination

At the beginning of this investigation only the preliminary-coding scheme was developed, therefore, it was not possible to make hypotheses regarding the subcategories of the detailed-coding scheme. A detailed-coding system was developed and used to process three questions on the termination questionnaire. The results of this coding were analyzed using only level I (IP, DI, SN, CS) of the detailed-coding scheme. The nuances of the attributions have not been examined via the

subcategories, although such an examination is both necessary and possible. Also, three typologies of break-up were developed based on the termination questionnaires, apart from the coding scheme. It is possible that causal attributions operate differently in relationships with different types of break-ups.

The final element of this investigation is a preliminary examination of the subcategories and the typologies, as they might be related to the three independent variables that were hypothesized to be important: gender, length of the relationship, and preference for future dating. The nuances regarding the role of causal attributions in three types of casual-dating dissolution are the focus of this section. The a posteriori questions are: (a) Are gender, length of relationship, and preference for future dating differentially related to the loci of causal attributions? (b) Are gender, length of relationship and preference for future dating differentially related to the three types of break-up (Independence, Disposition, Relationship Problem)? (c) Do persons in particular types of break-up report some causal attributions more than others?

Causal attributions. The majority of the causal attributions occurred in the IP (44%) and DI (47%) categories. Because of the small number of attributions in SN (1%;  $n = 1$ ) and CS (8%;  $n = 12$ ) they

were excluded from the subcategory examination. To examine whether gender, length of the relationship, and preference for future dating are differentially related to elements of the Individual/Personal locus, a series of chi-square tests of association were conducted. There are no differences between women and men, between persons in longer and shorter relationships, or between groups with varying preferences for future dating (YY, NN, CC, Disagree), in their use of Behavior/Action (i.e., one's behavior independent of any effect on the other), Cognition/Thought (i.e., inferences in regard to stimuli), Attitude/Feeling/Emotion (i.e., state of feeling or mind), or Personal/Characteristic (i.e., traits and dispositions) attributions.

Next, to examine whether gender, length of the relationship and preference for future dating are differentially related to elements of the Dyadic/Interactional locus, a series of chi-square tests of association were conducted. First, level II (Behavioral, Interpersonal) was examined. There were no significant differences between women and men or between persons with varying preferences for future dating, in their use of the Behavioral (i.e., P's and O's joint behavior or one person influencing the other) or Interpersonal (i.e., the nature or quality of the relationship) subcategories. There were, however, significant differences between persons in longer and

shorter relationships in their use of Behavioral or Interpersonal subcategories ( $X^2(1, N = 69) = 7.62, p < .01$ ). Specifically, of the 30 persons in longer relationships, more cited DI Behavioral (77%) than would be expected by chance. Also, of the 39 persons in shorter relationships more cited DI Interpersonal (56%) than would be expected by chance (see Table 5.8). This means that persons in longer relationships were more likely to say they were bothered by their partners' habit of arriving late than to say that they and their partners had different social values: Persons in shorter relationships were more likely to say that they and their partners had different social values. Examination of the Level III subcategories (e.g., DI Behavioral subcategory Independence/Interdependence) did not yield significant differences for any of the independent variables.

In summary, only DI level II attributions differed when the IP and DI subcategory attributions were examined with gender, relationship length, and preferences for future dating as independent variables. Persons in longer relationships used significantly more DI Behavioral attributions (i.e., attributions to the joint action of P and O, an action of one that influenced the other, or communication) and persons in shorter relationships cited more DI Interpersonal attributions (i.e., attributions to the relationship's

Table 5.8

Frequency (%) of causal attributions within  
relationship length

Relationship length	Dyadic	
	Behavioral	Interpersonal
Longer	23 (77)	7 (33)
Shorter	17 (44)	22 (56)

Note.  $\chi^2 (1, N = 69) = 7.62, p < .01.$  Longer = more than 3.25 months; Shorter = less than 3.25 months.

quality or nature, or interpersonal conditions) than would be expected by chance.

Typology of break-up. To assess the relations among gender, length of relationship, and preference for future dating, and the type of break-up, chi-square tests of association were conducted. There were no differences between women and men or between persons in longer or shorter relationships in the types of break-up. There are significant differences, however, across the break-up types in the preference for future dating ( $X^2(6, N = 48) = 13.06, p < .05$ ). The greatest deviation between obtained and expected frequency was the number of YY preferences located in Relationship Problem break-ups (36%). Next, Disposition Break-ups have no reports of YY or CC preferences and more NN (36%) preferences than expected. Finally, there were more CC (30%) preferences in Independence break-ups than expected (see Table 5.9). That is, more than would be expected by chance, persons in Independence break-ups perceived that both they and their partner's would only want to date again if certain conditions were met, persons in Disposition break-ups perceived that neither they nor their partner wanted to date again, and persons in Relationship Problem break-ups perceived that both they and their partner wanted to date again in the future.

Table 5.9

Frequency (%) of future dating preference within type of break-up

Type of break-up	<u>Future dating preference</u>			
	YY	NN	CC	Disagree
Independence	3 (12)	3 (12)	8 (30)	12 (46)
Disposition	0 (0)	4 (36)	0 (0)	7 (64)
Relationship				
Problem	4 (36)	2 (18)	2 (18)	3 (27)

Note.  $X^2(6, N = 48) = 13.06, p < .05$ . YY = respondents perceive that both they and their would like to date again in the future; NN = respondents perceive that neither they nor their partner would like to date again in the future; CC = respondents perceive that they and their partners agree that future dating is dependent on conditions; Disagree = respondents perceive that they and their partner disagree on their preferences for future dating.

Causal attributions in the types of break-up. To assess whether persons in particular types of break-up utilized some subcategories of responses more than others, chi-square tests of association for the number of attributions in each category and break-up type also were examined. Results were not significant. The number of attributions for a particular category (IP, DI, SN, CS) were unrelated to break-up type (Independence, Disposition, Relationship Problem). There were also no significant differences across types when the subcategories of IP were examined. Significant differences between observed and expected frequencies did emerge when DI level II (Behavioral and Interpersonal) were examined with the three types of break-up ( $\chi^2(2, N = 70) = 14.79, p < .01$ ; see Table 5.10). More persons with Relationship Problem break-ups used DI Interpersonal attributions than expected (82%), and more persons with Independence break-ups used DI Behavioral attributions than expected (73%). For example, persons in Relationship Problem break-ups were more likely to say that they and their partners disagreed about who should pay for the dates (i.e., differing role expectation) and persons in Independence break-ups were more likely to say that it was embarrassing to have their partners always pay for the dates (i.e., O's behavior has an effect on P). There were no DI Level III subcategory differences

Table 5.10

Frequency (%) of causal attributions within type of break-up

Type of break-up	Dyadic	
	Behavioral	Interpersonal
Independence	27 (73)	10 (27)
Disposition	10 (63)	6 (37)
Relationship Problem	3 (18)	14 (82)

Note.  $\chi^2(2, N = 70) = 14.79, p < .01.$

(e.g., Behavioral subcategories, Interpersonal subcategories).

Summary. Preliminary analyses of the relation between subcategories of attributions and the break-up types were conducted. The goal was to provide an insight into the nuances regarding the role of specific causal attributions and the dissolution of casual dating relationships.

There were no differences between the obtained and expected frequencies of the IP subcategories for gender, length of relationship, preference for future dating, or the types of break-up. Significant findings did occur at level II of DI for length of relationship and type of break-up. Level II divides DI responses into Behavioral (refers to the joint action of P and O; an action on the part of P or O that did, or did not, influence the other; or an exchange of information between P and O) and interpersonal (refers to the qualities and nature of a relationship or to a comparison of the interpersonal conditions of the relationship and a belief system regarding relationships) subcategories. Persons who are in longer relationships and persons who experience Independence break-ups utilize DI Behavioral attributions more than would be expected by chance. That is, these persons' causal attributions are more likely to focus on P's and O's joint participation in

activities or to focus on one person's behavior and its effect on the other person. For example, they are more likely to report that they and their partners spent too much time together, than to say that the relationship did not meet their expectations for closeness. Persons who are in shorter relationships and persons who experience Relationship Problem break-ups utilize DI Interpersonal attributions more than would be expected by chance. That is, these persons are more likely to report concern about the relationship's nature or quality, or to compare P's and O's values. For example, they are more likely to report that their partners did not treat them the way a dating partner should be treated, than to say they did not spend enough time together. (A chi-square that included the length of relationship with the type of break-up was insignificant.)

Finally, some differences in expected and observed frequencies for the type of break-up with preference for future dating, were found. Understandably, persons in Disposition break-ups (i.e., break-ups in which the costliness of dating a person with negative dispositions is the focus) were more likely to perceive that neither they nor their partners would like to date again than that they both wanted to date again, that future dating was dependent on conditions, or that they disagreed on future dating preference. Persons in

Relationship Problem break-ups (i.e., break-ups in which participants focus on the interaction within the relationship) were more likely to perceive that both they and their partner would like to date again in the future than that neither wanted to date again, that future dating was based on conditions, or that they disagreed on future dating preference. That is, they seem to like each other but are unable to get past their interpersonal differences. Finally, persons in Independence break-ups (i.e., break-ups in which committed-dating is rejected rather than one's partner) were more likely to perceive that future dating was based on conditions than that both they and their partner wanted to date again, that neither they nor their partner wanted to date again, or that they disagreed on future dating preference. For example, they need first to agree on the level of seriousness or commitment required to be in the relationship.

### Summary

Three steps to describing the role of causal attributions in the dissolution of casual dating relationships have been presented. First, the data were coded using a preliminary-coding scheme that consisted of four categories of attributional loci (Individual/Personal, Dyadic/Interactional, Social

Network, Circumstantial/ Situational). It was found that personal characteristics such as selfish, stubborn, dominant, and/or immature contribute to casual-dating break-up. Such characteristics are detected through direct P and O interaction and by observing O's interactions with others. The desire to date again in the future is reportedly dependent on P's or O's behavior changing or on changing the interactions. Compared to stable relationships, these relationships that broke up were perceived to be less intimate and less predictable. Additionally, P and O were thought to agree less on beliefs and values and to incur more interference from the social network. Finally, respondents who experienced physical separation indicated that stable couples would be geographically closer.

Next, a detailed coding scheme, designed to accommodate casual-dating dissolution data, was developed building on the work of Surra (1980, 1984, 1988) and Zvonkovic and Ponzetti (1988). This coding scheme was utilized to examine more closely the responses to three questions which focused on P's and O's dispositions and the importance of these dispositions in the evaluation of the viability of the relationship. These data showed that Incompatibility/Compatibility (i.e., comparisons of value systems, role expectations, socially defined positions, and/or

personal characteristics) and Behavior Response Interdependence (i.e., a performed or unperformed behavior and a reaction in regard to that behavior) were the most frequently cited reasons for the dissolution of casual-dating relationships, followed by Personal Characteristics (i.e., traits and dispositions) and Cognition/Thought (inferences in regard to stimuli). Physical Separation and circumstances related to Academics/Employment were also contributors to break-up.

Statistical analyses were conducted to answer questions regarding the connection between the distribution of the attributional loci (IP, DI, SN, CS) and the independent variables of gender, relationship length, and future dating preference. A MANOVA revealed a significant difference between the number of attributions within the CS category and preference for future dating such that persons who indicated that both they and their partner would want to date again in the future (YY) reported more circumstantial attributions than did persons who perceived that neither they nor their partner wanted to date again (NN), that they and their partner would like to date again under specific conditions, or whose future dating preferences were not in agreement (Disagree).

A posteriori questions were investigated using both the subcategories of attributions from the

Detailed-Coding scheme and the typologies of break-up. It was found that persons who are in longer relationships and persons who experience Independence break-ups use DI Behavioral attributions more than expected such that they are more likely to focus on their participation or lack of participation in joint behaviors with their partners, or on the affect that their behavior (or their partners behavior) has on the other. Persons in shorter relationships and persons who experience Relationship Problem break-ups use DI Interpersonal attributions more than expected such that they are more likely to focus on the relationship's nature or quality or on the interpersonal conditions of the relationship. Also, preferences for future dating are associated with type of break-up such that persons in Independence break-ups reveal more CC preferences, persons in Disposition break-ups reveal more NN and significantly fewer YY or CC preferences, and persons in Relationship Problem break-ups reveal more YY preferences than expected.

## Chapter VI: Discussion

### Overview

This study sought to clarify the role of causal attributions in casual-dating dissolution and to develop a typology of break-ups. There were three major avenues of study: (a) the development of a typology of break-ups; (b) the detailed-coding of attributional responses; and (c) an integration of the types of break-up with the locus of the attributions. This chapter discusses the typology and coding scheme and the results of questions posed both a priori and a posteriori. Finally, an integration of the typology and causal attributions is presented, as are directions for future research and the limitations of this investigation.

### Methods of Understanding Cognitive Processes

An open-ended questionnaire focused on people's perceptions of why their casual-dating relationship broke-up. Each set of responses provided an explanation for the dissolution as well as information regarding future interaction and comparisons to other relationships. A strength of this investigation is that persons completed the termination questionnaire as

soon as they stopped dating the identified partner. This minimized the risk of cognitive restructuring of the events that led to the break-up.

Examined as a whole, the questions on a particular questionnaire provided a detailed explanation for the break-up which made possible the detection of themes or patterns. Responses taken separately revealed a variety of attributional loci which made possible the examination of perceived break-up causes and the ways in which independent variables (i.e., gender, relationship length, and preference for future dating) relate to attributions.

Typology of break-ups. The typology of break-ups involved examining the entire set of responses for themes or patterns. Guided by Harold Kelley's theory of interdependence (1979), three types were developed: Independence, Disposition, and Relationship Problem. Independence break-ups are those in which dating is perceived to be costly if it is more than casual. These persons cite alternatives to the relationship (including no relationship) as a cause of break-up. Disposition break-ups are those in which dating is costly because of negative dispositions of participants. These dispositions are revealed through transformations that were not performed and, typically, highlighted by a specific event or the accumulation of a series of costs. Relationship Problem break-ups

reflect a concern for both own and other's outcomes. Differences in macrolevel variables (e.g., SES or religiosity) and specific conflicts of interest are reported as problematic.

Prior to this writing, unstable dating relationships have not been distinguished (e.g., Berg & McQuinn, 1986). Here, it is shown that there are three distinct types of instability within the casual-dating stage. The inclusion of types of instability in future research may clarify important questions such as the role of alternatives and satisfaction in unstable relationships; whether certain types of break-up are more common at different stages of dating; and whether an individual's personality type is related to the type of break-up experienced. Finally, as suggested by Zvonkovic (1987), establishing ways of predicting the type of dissolution experienced would enhance the success of relationship intervention. Intervention strategies would vary according to the specific problems of each type of dissolution.

These three types of break-up serve as a test of Kelley's theory. First, they affirm his prediction of persons' outcome concerns at varying levels of relationship involvement. Independence and Disposition break-ups reflect Kelley's (1979) assertion that early in relationships persons are concerned with maximizing their own outcomes by varying their own behavior.

Relationship Problem break-ups reflect concern for both own and partner's outcomes. Kelley (1979) explains that concern for both partners' outcomes indicate interdependence. Thus, using Levinger and Snoek's (1972) model, Relationship Problem break-ups appear to have occurred in persons who were closer to the mutuality level of attraction and persons in Independence and Disposition break-ups seem to be closer to surface contact. Second, Kelley's emphasis on the importance of transformations was affirmed. In Disposition break-ups, persons learned of their partners' negative characteristics through the absence of adequate transformations. In Relationship Problem break-ups, persons indicated that they were unable to find a pattern of interaction such that each person received adequate outcomes. This indicates that transformational patterns were attempted but were of no avail.

While the typology is important for understanding the similarities and differences among break-ups, it is unable to account for the specific causal attributions that persons make. It is as important to know how persons respond to attributional questions as it is to know the overall theme of the break-up. What does the locus of the attribution tell us about the role of causal attributions and the dissolution of

casual-dating relationships? And, what, if anything, influences the locus of causal attributions?

Coding scheme. There have been several investigations using attributional data and a variety of suggestions have been made regarding the constructs needed to capture the complexity of these data (e.g., Fincham, 1985; Howe, 1987; Newman, 1981; Orvis et al., 1976; Surra, 1988; Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988). None of these investigations, however, provided a coding scheme which could be used without alterations to record the cognitive processes of persons whose casual-dating relationships terminated. Using a two-step process, a coding scheme was developed which builds on these earlier works.

First, using Zvonkovic and Ponzetti's (1988) adaptation of Surra's (1980) four categories of subjective inferences, each causal attribution was coded. The categories were: Individual/Personal, Dyadic/Interactional, Social Network, Circumstantial/Situational. This process provided information regarding the parameters of the constructs that are represented in the data, as well as the subtleties of each construct. For example, from this coding it was clear that not all of the causal attributions impeded future dating. Some of the attributions facilitated future dating while others had no effect. Zvonkovic and Ponzetti (1988) refined their

coding scheme to include a record of whether an event or attribution had a positive or a negative influence on divorce. The system which best captured casual-dating data, however, needed to record whether the response was positive, negative, or neutral.

Second, a detailed coding scheme was developed to consider further the attributional data. Surra's (1988) and Zvonkovic and Ponzetti's (1988) detailed-coding schemes were developed to code turning points in relationships which experienced marriage. Surra focused on relationship development and Zvonkovic and Ponzetti focused on dissolution. Those areas of each scheme which were applicable to casual-dating were adapted. For example, Surra's Behavioral Response Interdependence and Zvonkovic and Ponzetti's Incompatibility are important concepts to casual-dating persons. Neither of the schemes, however, included a Nonromantic Relationship option which is relevant to the casual-dating population. Utilizing applicable constructs from these earlier coding schemes encourages and facilitates comparability across investigations. Such comparability is needed to minimize duplication of efforts and thereby further the understanding of cognitive processes in both dissolution and development of relationships.

### Hypotheses

After coding, and thus quantifying, the data, the influence of gender, length of the relationship, and preference for dating in the future, were investigated. Because the detailed-coding scheme was not developed a priori, the dependent variables were identified as Individual/Personal (IP), Dyadic/Interactional (DI), Social Network (SN), and Circumstantial/Situational (CS).

#### Gender

The first research question, "Do women and men differ on the locus of attributions such that women are more likely to report dyadic and men more likely to report circumstantial attributions?" was answered negatively. There were no gender differences when these data were analyzed using only the level I categories of the coding scheme or when the subcategory levels were examined. These results may reflect the fact that persons were specifically asked to respond in terms of characteristics of themselves or their partners, thus limiting the possible response loci. If this were the case, however, persons who would like to date their partner again in the future, and who perceive that their partner would also like to date

them again in the future, would not have chosen significantly more CS reasons for their break-up than did other preference groups (this finding is discussed under Future Dating Preference). Another possible explanation is that the small number of men (16) in this study caused any possible gender differences to be hidden (Fletcher, 1987).

It is equally likely, however, that there are no gender differences in causal attributions in a casual-dating relationship. Women and men may be more alike than they are different (Cf., Bleier, 1984). It also may be that the relationship issues believed to be associated with gender, independence and dependence, do not become important until a later relationship stage when people are more involved with each other. In fact, none of the relationship investigations reporting gender difference included persons at such an early stage of dating (e.g., Hill et al., 1979; Harvey, 1978) as the participants in this investigation.

#### Relationship Length

The second research question, "Do persons with longer casual-dating relationships provide different reasons for the break-up (e.g., more dyadic reasons) than persons with shorter casual-dating relationships?" was answered negatively. There were no differences in

level I attributions (IP, DI, SN, CS) made by persons in longer relationships versus those in shorter relationships.

It is possible that by eliminating persons in various stages of relationship development (e.g., committed and engaged individuals) the variable "relationship length" diminished in predictive ability. Simpson (1987) hypothesized that relationship length would predict relationship stability because of the correlation between length of time dating and relationship stage. He asserted that persons in longer relationships have "survived the formative and often unstable stages of relationship development" (Simpson, 1987, p. 684). Hill and his associates (1976) viewed relationship length as a measure of intimacy. They found that relationship length was predictive of stability and was correlated with other measures of intimacy such as love, exclusive dating, and feelings of closeness. While one might expect that persons who are in shorter relationships (e.g., one month) would consider themselves to be casually-dating and persons in longer relationships (e.g., four years) would consider themselves to be seriously-dating, all of the persons in this study were in dating relationships in which they were not dating seriously or were not firmly committed to the relationship. Although relationships varied in length from 1 week to 52 months, the median

was 3.25 months so most of the relationships were fairly short.

It was expected, however, that the causal attributions of persons in longer versus shorter courtships would be different because persons attend to different relationship variables over time (Levinger & Rands, 1985). Early in relationships, persons attend to macrolevel variables which facilitate interaction but give little information by which to predict a partner's actual behavior. Later, persons become more concerned with those variables which have a greater correlation with one's actual behavior (Levinger & Rands, 1985). Where one's attention is focused affects the attributions that one makes (Jones & Nisbett, 1972).

A post hoc analysis focusing on the second level of the coding scheme supported Levinger and Rands' (1985) assertion. Persons in shorter relationships focus on Dyadic Interpersonal issues (i.e., the relationship's nature or quality which includes the interpersonal "fit" of the partners), and persons in longer relationships focus on DI Behavioral issues (i.e., P and O's participation or lack of participation in a joint behavior, or one person influencing or failing to influence the other). These data suggest that at the beginning of the relationship, when the costs of dating O are relatively low, P focuses on P

and O's compatibility. If costs increase after initial interaction, as Eidelson (1980) suggests, and if persons attempt to maximize their rewards and minimize their costs in a relationship, as Thibaut and Kelley (1959) suggest, then these costs interfere with desired goals. Such interference produces conflict (Peterson, 1983). Conflict escalates from the behavioral (specific activities), to the normative (role expectations), and then to the dispositional (personal characteristics) level (Braiker & Kelley, 1979). So, at the earliest stages of conflict, when casual-dating persons prefer an equitable exchange of interpersonal rewards which can be objectively measured (Lloyd et al., 1982), the focus of causal attributions is on behavioral evidence of the costs incurred in the relationship.

#### Future Dating Preference

The last research question was "Do persons who would like to date their former partners in the future report more circumstantial reasons for the break-up than persons who perceive that neither they nor their partners want to date in the future, or who perceive a disagreement in future dating preference?" This question was answered affirmatively. Persons who perceive that both they and their partner would like to

date again in the future do make more CS causal attributions than do persons who do not want to date again in the future, who perceive agreement that future dating is conditional, or who perceive disagreement in future dating preference. This finding is understandable: If future dating were perceived to be within one's control, and both P and O were believed to want to continue dating, P and O would continue to date.

The types of events that casually-dating persons evaluated as outside of their control were, as would be expected, different from those that persons in more serious relationships would report. It has been acknowledged that casual-dating persons have fewer barriers to dissolution than do persons in committed relationships (Hill et al., 1976; Levinger, 1976). Barriers to dissolution lessen the effect of temporary fluctuations in a serious relationship (Levinger, 1976). One such barrier is commitment, influenced by the amount of investment one has in a relationship (Rusbult, 1980). Casual-dating relationships are typified by a low level of relationship investment. Hence, a potential barrier to relationship dissolution caused by schedule conflicts, is not present.

## Summary

There were no gender differences in the locus of causal attributions used to explain the dissolution of casual dating relationships. It was suggested that women and men may be more alike than different in their causal attributions, and that relationship issues which are believed to be associated with gender become more important later in relationship development. There are, however, differences in the causal attributions of persons in longer versus shorter relationships. Persons in shorter relationships focus on the quality or nature of the relationship or to comparisons of the interpersonal conditions of the relationship and a belief system regarding relationships (DI Interpersonal). Persons in longer relationships focus on the joint action of P and O; an action on the part of P or O that did, or did not influence the other; or an exchange of information between P and O (DI Behavioral). A DI Behavioral focus provides information concerning the specific rewards and costs of the relationship and is a basis for deciding whether to leave the relationship or to absorb the increasing costs of participation. Finally, persons who perceive that both they and their partner would like to date again in the future use more Circumstantial/Situational causal attributions than do other persons. It was

noted that, consistent with their level of involvement, seemingly temporary obstacles (e.g., a change in one's schedule) caused dissolution.

### Integrating a Typology of Break-up and Causal Attributions

Validity of the typology. Independence, Disposition, and Relationship Problem break-ups were shown to have face validity by the statistical significance of a chi-square which associated preference for future dating with relationship type. Future preference varied such that persons in Dispositional break-ups, those persons who disliked their partners' dispositions, were more likely to perceive that neither they nor their partner would want to date again in the future. Persons in Relationship Problem break-ups, those persons who liked their partners and did not mind more than casual-dating, were more likely to perceive that both they and their partner would like to date again in the future. Finally, persons in Independence break-ups, those persons who did not like the idea of committed dating, were more likely to perceive that both they and their partner felt that future dating was dependent on particular conditions. In many cases the condition

upon which future dating was based was that the relationship not be so serious.

### Causal Attributions

The types of break-up may be further refined by considering the specific role of a variety of causal attributions in each type. Following is a preliminary effort toward the integration of the typology with the attributional loci.

Attributions to alternatives. Many investigators have posed the question, "What is the role of alternatives to a relationship (CLalt) in the dissolution process?" (e.g., Berg, 1984; Berg & McQuinn, 1986; Rusbult, 1983). That is, when do alternatives become important and when is any alternative more favorable than the current relationship? These investigators have typically attempted to answer this question by tracking the importance of CLalt across time in a relationship. Despite the attention that this question has received, it is yet unclear when CLalt becomes an important consideration to individuals whose relationships eventually dissolve or which attributions lead persons to evaluate any alternative as more favorable than the current relationship.

Alternatives to the relationship play an important role in the dissolution of Independence break-ups. When persons are uninterested in becoming more than casually involved with a partner, alternatives (including no relationship), are cited as a cause of the break-up. Disposition and Relationship Problem break-ups do not share this emphasis on alternatives as causes of break-up. Social Network Romantic Other alternatives do, however, facilitate the decision to break-up in Relationship Problems. Hence, the question of the role of CLalt in the dissolution of relationships may be answered better in terms of type of break-up than in terms of time spent in the relationship.

Dyadic/Interactional attributions. The degree to which one feels comfortable participating in a committed relationship affects the locus of the attributions within the Dyadic/Interactional category. Persons in Independence break-ups, who rejected the notion of committed dating, focus on the joint activities of P and O, on an action on the part of P or O that did, or did not influence the other, and/or on the exchange of information between P and O, to evaluate the costs incurred by participating in the relationship. The explanation for this finding is similar to that of persons in longer relationships: If the costs of being in the relationship increase after

initial interactions (Eidelson, 1980), and the participants are concerned with maintaining an equitable exchange of interpersonal rewards which can be objectively measured (Lloyd et al., 1982), then such measurement is most efficiently accomplished by focusing on specific behavioral interactions.

Persons in Relationship Problem break-ups, who are comfortable with their partner's dispositions and with the notion of committed-dating, focus on the qualities and nature of a relationship or to a comparison of the interpersonal conditions of the relationship and a belief system regarding relationships. Information concerning one's long-term goals is available by attending to one's value system, role expectations, and socially defined positions (Cf. Levinger & Rands, 1985). Conflict which involves long-term goals is more problematic than conflict which concerns an individual's habits (Peterson, 1983). Hence, it makes sense that in relationships wherein a person is otherwise content with a dating partner, Interpersonal conflict causes a break-up.

Future research should use the Individual/Personal categories Personal Characteristic (i.e., traits and dispositions) and Cognition/Thought (i.e., inferences in regard to stimuli) to test the hypothesis that persons in Disposition break-ups make more causal attributes to the negative dispositions of their

partner than do persons in either Independence or Relationship Problem break-ups.

### Summary

Support for the face validity of the typology of break-up was obtained via a chi-square test of association which showed that persons in Independence, Disposition, and Relationship Problem break-ups were likely to cite preferences for future dating consistent with the descriptions of each type. Preliminary efforts to integrate the typology with various causal attributions have demonstrated that types of break-up differentially reflect attributional codes. Therefore caution in constructing the dependent variable is advised. For example, alternatives to the relationship are seen as a cause of Independence break-ups, while Social Network Romantic Other causal attributions facilitated the decision to break-up in Relationship Problems. It was also found that aspects of the relationship are differentially important by break-up type. For example, in some break-ups (Independence) the behavior of P and/or O is the focus of causal attributions while in others (Relationship Problem) the quality of the relationship and the interpersonal "fit" between P and O is the focus. It is suggested that

personal characteristic and negative cognitions are related to Disposition Break-ups.

### Future Research

While this research has successfully examined the role of causal attributions and the dissolution of casual-dating relationships, it has generated far more questions that it has answered.

Non-marital and marital dissolution. Early in this investigation a decision was made, based on past research, to focus the literature review on dating and friendship development and dissolution only. It was believed that divorce and dating break-ups were fundamentally different processes because the barriers to dissolving a marriage are not present in casual-dating dissolution (Cf., Hill et al., 1979; Levinger, 1976). This argument is valid when the investigation is concerned with macro- and micro- level variables which contribute to dissolution. When the cognitive processes by which persons decide a relationship is not viable are examined, however, there are striking similarities between the types of casual-dating break-ups and marital dissolution.

Zvonkovic (1987) examined eight relationships which dissolved during the first two years of marriage and found that there were two types of break-up:

Intrapersonal and Interactional. The three types of casual-dating break-up found here would be characterized as intrapersonal divorces in Zvonkovic's schema. That is, Intrapersonal divorces included the Independence properties of low commitment to improving or maintaining the relationship, labeling partners as "possessive" and "irresponsible," and alternatives seen as a major cause of the divorce; the Disposition property of unpleasant traits of the partner; and the Relationship Problem trait of lack of problem solving and missing relationship qualities. Zvonkovic's Interactional break-ups involved specific couple interactions (notably distress and violence), for which this investigation does not have data. A thorough articulation of the similarities of casual-dating break-up and marital break-up is needed. Next, the differences between these two investigations should be detailed. Zvonkovic studied persons whose marriages had terminated. The concept of independence may be very different for these individuals than for casual-dating persons. Zvonkovic also conducted in-depth interviews in which many causes of break-up were identified, whereas respondents in this study answered a small number of specific questions. In light of these differences in relationship type and method of investigation, it is not surprising that the findings are different. Indeed, it is the similarities

between the two sets of findings that are noteworthy. These similarities should be explored further. Finally, it would be of interest to articulate the behavioral components of Independence, Disposition, and Relationship Problem break-ups.

Causal attributions and typologies. Although the work of articulating the role of causal attributions within the types of break-ups has begun, additional research is needed. Questions which could be investigated are: Would an objective question asking persons about their CLalt at the beginning of data collection concur with the findings of the role of alternatives within each type of break-up? Are the attributions within each type stable despite the length of the relationship? Looking at dissolution across different stages of relationships, when do gender differences emerge in the causal attributions of dissolution, or do they emerge?

#### Limitations

The participants in this investigation were a fairly homogeneous group of individuals. This investigation would benefit from a replication study which could obtain a culturally and geographically diverse sample. Additionally, this investigation included fewer men than women. A replication study

would benefit by including a more equal proportion of female and male participants. Although persons were afforded the opportunity to speak with their own voice, there were limits imposed by the use of a structured questionnaire (Cf., Walker, Martin, & Thompson, 1988). A future investigation which used open-ended interviews in conjunction with written responses would allow the researcher to (a) clarify uncodable responses which in this investigation became missing data, and (b) provide information on why people have a difficult time responding to attributional questions. Also, the detailed-coding scheme was developed after these data were collected. This coding scheme should be applied to new data to insure that the categories are mutually exclusive and exhaustive.

Finally, asking persons about their relationship may have unintentionally affected the relationships' trajectory and is therefore a limitation of this investigation. Rubin and Mitchell (1976) found that both self-disclosure and one's definition of the relationship were affected by participating in a longitudinal investigation of relationship development, although they concluded that relationship trajectories were hastened, rather than changed, by such participation.

### Summary

This investigation has furthered the study of casual-dating dissolution in several ways. First, it was shown that there are no gender differences in the types of causal attributions that persons make early in dating relationships. Women and men report equal numbers of individual, dyadic, social network, and circumstantial reasons for casual-dating break-up. Next, length of relationship influences the dyadic causal attributions used to explain relationship dissolution. Persons in longer relationships focus on the joint action of P and O, on an action on the part of one person that influenced the other, or on an exchange of information between P and O. These behavioral observations are used to evaluate the exchange of interpersonal resources (e.g., Is the exchange equitable?) so the costs of the relationship can be assessed. Persons in shorter relationships focus on the relationship's nature or quality.

Preference for future dating is predictive of which causal attributions will be used. That is, persons who indicate that both they and their partner want to date again in the future report more circumstantial reasons for the dissolution than do persons who perceive that future dating is based on certain conditions being met, that neither they nor

their partner would like to date again in the future, or that they and their partner have different preferences for future dating.

Additionally, there is not only one casual-dating break-up, but rather there are three types of break-up. Independence break-ups occur when one partner or the other (or both) does not want to be more than casually involved in a relationship. Disposition break-ups focus on the dispositions of one's partner and the indicators of those dispositions. A committed relationship per se is not being rejected, but a relationship with this person is unwanted. Relationship Problem break-ups include those persons who perceive that they and their former partners were unable to find patterns of interaction that were acceptable to both of them. Preference for future dating lends face validity to the typology of casual-dating break-up. Persons in Relationship Problem break-ups are more likely to perceive that both they and their partner would like to date again in the future, persons in Independence break-ups are more likely to perceive that future dating is based on certain conditions being met, and persons in Disposition break-ups are more likely to perceive that neither they nor their partner want to date again in the future. Finally, the three types of break-up seem

to be embedded in Zvonkovic's (1987) Intrapersonal  
divorce and warrant further examination.

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**APPENDICES**

## Appendix A

## INTAKE

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions for your relationship with the person of the opposite sex with whom you are currently the most involved.

1. How would you describe your level of involvement with your partner?

1. We're just dating off and on, nothing serious
2. We're dating regularly, but we're not firmly committed to the relationship
3. We're dating seriously, but not yet committed to the relationship
4. We're committed to marry each other

2. How much do you like your partner?

Not at all	Very, little	Very little	Not too much	A little	I like my partner	Pretty well	A lot	Very much	Very much	As much as possible
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

3. How much would you like to get to know your partner better?

Not at all	Very, little	Very little	Not too much	A little	I like my partner	Pretty well	A lot	Very much	Very much	As much as possible
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

4. How much do you think your partner likes you?

Not at all	Very, little	Very little	Not too much	A little	I like my partner	Pretty well	A lot	Very much	Very much	As much as possible
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

5. How much do you think your partner would like to get to know you better?

Not at all	Very, little	Very little	Not too much	A little	I like my partner	Pretty well	A lot	Very much	Very much	As much as possible
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

6. Given what you have invested so far in the relationship, how satisfied are you with the benefits you get out of it?
1. Very satisfied
  2. Somewhat satisfied
  3. Somewhat dissatisfied
  4. Very dissatisfied
7. All things considered, what chance do you think you would have of getting into a relationship that would have greater benefits for you; that is, that would give you more satisfaction?
1. Very good
  2. Good
  3. About fifty-fifty
  4. Poor
  5. Very Poor
8. Given what your partner has invested in the relationship so far, how satisfied do you think s/he is with the benefits s/he gets out of it?
1. Very satisfied
  2. Somewhat satisfied
  3. Somewhat dissatisfied
  4. Very dissatisfied
9. All things considered, what chance do you think your partner has of getting into a relationship that would have greater benefits for him/her; that is, that would give him/her more satisfaction?
1. Very good
  2. Good
  3. About fifty-fifty
  4. Poor
  5. Very Poor

10. What is your estimate that the relationship you have with your partner will end in marriage; that is, what would you say is the percent likelihood that marriage will occur? (Give a percent from 0 to 100.)

\_\_\_\_\_ %

11. How important would you say this relationship is to you?

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not really important
4. Somewhat unimportant
5. Very unimportant

12. How close would you say you are to your partner?

1. Very close
2. Somewhat close
3. Not really close
4. Somewhat distant
5. Very distant

13. How attractive would you say your partner is?

1. Very attractive
2. Moderately attractive
3. Average in attractiveness
4. Moderately unattractive
5. Very unattractive

14. How attractive would you say you are?

1. Very attractive
2. Moderately attractive
3. Average in attractiveness
4. Moderately unattractive
5. Very unattractive

15. How long, in weeks, have you been dating your partner?

\_\_\_\_\_ weeks

16. How did you and your partner meet?

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17. Estimate, in hours, the amount of time you spent with your partner per day in the previous week.

\_\_\_\_\_ hours

18. Estimate, in hours, the amount of time per day you spent with your partner in the previous month.

\_\_\_\_\_ hours

19. At this time in your life, how much do you want to be married?

Not at all								Very much	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

20. Since you began to date, how would you characterize your dating overall?

1. Never dated
2. Infrequently dated, but usually only involved with one person at a time
3. Frequently dated, but usually only involved with one person at a time
4. Infrequently dated, usually dating more than one person at a time
5. Frequently dated, usually dating more than one person at a time

21. What is your age?

1. 18 or younger
2. 19
3. 20
4. 21
5. 22
6. 23-25
7. 26-29
8. 30 or older

22. What is your sex?

1. Female
2. Male

23. What is your classification?

1. Freshman
2. Sophomore
3. Junior
4. Senior
5. Graduate
6. Other (Specify): \_\_\_\_\_

24. What is your major?

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25. Estimate your parents' average annual income:

1. less than \$10,000
2. \$10,000 - \$14,999
3. \$15,000 - \$19,999
4. \$20,000 - \$24,999
5. \$25,000 - \$29,999
6. \$30,000 - \$39,999
7. \$40,000 - \$49,999
8. \$50,000 or more

26. What is your father's highest education?

1. Less than high school
2. High school diploma
3. Some college
4. College degree
5. Some graduate work
6. Graduate degree

27. What is your father's occupation?

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of  
occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Appendix B

## Relationship Termination Questionnaire

(To be completed if you discontinue dating the person with whom you were most involved at the beginning of the study.)

1. How long, in months, had you been dating your partner?

\_\_\_\_\_ months

2. What characteristics of your partner do you think contributed to the break-up?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. How did you know your partner had this (these) characteristic(s)?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Which of your characteristics do you think contributed to the break-up?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Why do you think this (these) characteristic(s) made a difference?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. What would you say is the single, most important thing that resulted in the break-up?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Would you ever wish to start dating this person again?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Under certain conditions. (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Do you think your partner would ever wish to start dating you again?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Under certain conditions. (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. How would you compare this relationship with one that might have lasted?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Date of break-up \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

Preliminary-Coding Results

Question 2: What characteristic(s) of your partner do you think contributed to the break-up?

Individual/Personal

Inconsiderate for my feelings.

Stubbornness and jealousy.

I really don't know. I was taken by surprise. He stopped the relationship because it was taking too much time.

He had a drinking problem and he had no goals or ambitions.

Domineering.

He was a very self-centered type of person and I didn't like that.

He never had any money and he waited till the last minute to ask me out.

Inconsiderate, unappreciative, mentally demanding from her persistent stupidity!

She was too self-centered.

His extreme objectiveness.

He had certain characteristics and actions I didn't believe in.

He talked about little else but himself.

Lack of participation in relationship. Thought that it was time consuming.

He was moody and hateful for no reason.

He was wishy-washy.

His forwardness in wanting us to pressure the relationship more.

Wanted a more permanent relationship.

Selfish, jealous, He thought he owned me.

His willingness not to settle for something less than what he truly desired.

She doesn't have her head together & she has had a bad exper. w/ her childhood which made her decide to hurt her mother over the yrs. She has forgotten the reason so she turned it into hurting her self instead.

She didn't have any bad qualities. We got along great - - too great. Her stubbornness. She also was confused about what she really wanted. She also is strict in believing that because we are different religions--we can't remain serious with each other.

She wanted to tell everyone she "had a boyfriend" instead of having a relationship.

General immaturity.

Partner had severe emotional problems.

Immaturity.

Selfishness.

In consideration.

Wanted to date other people and not get serious--his  
ego.

Overempowering.

He seemed to be very uncertain about major issues in  
his life like school, career. Plus he had a steady  
girlfriend at home which he felt would affect our  
relationship.

She wasn't interested in getting together anymore,  
wanted to concentrate more on schoolwork.

Not open enough.

#### Dyadic/Interactional

His apathy towards things I feel strongly about.

We had been dating 2 yrs out of the three while he was  
away at school and things just fell apart due to lack  
of communication and loss of interest.

Lack of communication.

Other interests and our spiritual beliefs were not at  
the same level.

We misunderstood one another, she didn't understand me,  
I misunderstood her.

Differences in life-time goals. He has less goals at  
this time.

Lack of communication of how he felt about me & the  
relationship.

Different point of view on alot of things concerning  
our relationship.

He wanted a deeper level of committment to the  
relationship than I did.

She wanted more out of the relationship than I was  
willing to put in.

Lack of time, conflicting schedules, little  
communication.

His possessiveness, his expectations of me, and him  
being domineering.

Too dependent, wanted too much of my time.

Make plans with people not only with me and be late,  
totally forget, blow it off or something. We also  
talked about how this and that was a sin but I felt  
the way he treated other people was as bad as he  
thought drinking, etc. was.

He never called or made arrangements for us to see each  
other--I always had to.

We were from different SES backgrounds.

### Social Network

Another girl, 1st is diversion of feelings.

Didn't want to be so serious, started liking another  
guy.

Circumstantial/Situational

The fact that he had to move to Houston, Texas.

Schedule conflicts and one of her aunts became seriously ill.

None, he is in Europe for a semester but we still write.

He was very busy with his extra-curricular activities.

He was very serious about his athletic career.

No Response

None

Question 3: How did you know your partner had this (these) characteristic(s)?

Individual/Personal

Didn't like me to go out with my girlfriends cause I might meet a guy.

He had told me early in the relationship he didn't want to get deeply involved.

He would show up late in the evening drunk. He didn't care if he graduated or not.

He wanted to dominate me & my actions.

Because he was mad everytime I talked to another guy.

He expected me to be where he thought I should be.

He was always telling me what to do.

He would fall asleep at social parties if he was

tired--not being considerate of me in this certain

area, but overall he was a nice, well-mannered guy.

It became overwhelmingly, extremely, evident--common

sense can't handle this girl.

Just by watching him make plans with people and never

fulfill them. He didn't ever stand me up but he did

it to other people all the time. He was usually late

with me.

He looks at situations with out thinking or feeling.

I didn't until he started snapping at me.

Never could make up his mind

What he thought of nice place to go on a date, ideas

about certain things

Wanted to see each other a lot - - spent a lot of time

planning "big" dates, etc.

She would always give the wrong signals which was very

frustrating!

She couldn't talk serous, only about things people talk

about when they first meet.

Very indecisive, easily swayed by something she could

get now instead of waiting [for something] better

late[r], short attention.

She is not honest with herself & has alot of immature ideas (such as, she doesn't need anyone).

Lack of common curtesy.

Demanded too much time.

Didn't seem interested in seeing me and she told me things were just bad for her now.

They exposed themselves well on the phone.

### Dyadic/Interactional

Because we were misunderstanding some of the things we said to each other.

Even though he tried to convince me of his certainty, the more he persisted the more I had cause to question why he was trying to convince me of something. I had a feeling he had a girlfriend.

We talked about it.

From going out with her and talking to her and being the only one talking.

We talked about what we are doing now & what we plan to do & he didn't know & I did.

He spoke of long term dating and I didn't encourage this.

We began to argue about them all the time.

The way he talked--said I was all he ever wanted in a woman, but there was just something missing.

We've talked a lot about our feelings and thoughts and beliefs.

From her actions and the things she talked to me about. Because of the way she treated me versus the way she treated another person.

We never saw each other

By talking to him about it. By the way he placed his priorities (athletics first)

He was always at my apt. or wanted me to come to his apt.

When I realized I was always the one calling him and stuff.

He was telling me who I could go out with and how late I could stay out.

He keeps informing me of them

One of my friends ask him. And he didn't talk to me about them.

Being in classes together & outside class activities.

He told me and it was obvious.

He told me before he moved.

Told me so.

She told me.

I could tell from spending time with her.

### Social Network

Another person.

Started dating other girls.

From other girls who had dated him in the past & his attitude.

#### Circumstantial

She acted emotionally most of the time. She also transferred to another school so she could live at home.

There weren't any bad characteristics we just found it too hard with seeing each other so little.

#### Uncodable

Sort of.

I didn't until the day we broke up.

I didn't at the time.

Question 4: Which of your characteristic(s) do you think contributed to the break-up?

#### Individual/Personal

Too straight-laced, I guess.

Stubbornness and wanted to be trusted.

My independence.

I didn't want to get deeply involved either.

I am a goal oriented person & I don't believe in getting something for nothing.

Stubbornness

My possible fear of getting too involved and my desire for change.

Not enough patience.

My macho suave, debonier personality told me to -  
"move on."

None of mine, besides the fact that I couldn't handle her.

I was trying to make her become what I wanted in my mind for her to become.

Inconsistency.

I wanted him to be more thoughtful and also wanted to date different people.

I wanted a serious relationship with a person of high ideals & good goals.

Extreme subjectiveness and "irresponsibility."

He said I was manipulative--however, I don't see any reason he thought this.

Not having enough confidence and truly believing all he said - - confidence & trust

Wanted more from relationship than to listen.

Demanding or wanted to be w/ him for a period of time each day.

My sensitivity.

I wanted a stable relationship and commitment.

I did not want a permanent relationship--I wanted to date once in a while.

Willingness to accept his point of view at times.

My independence, I wanted to date around.

My independence plus a need to always have everything defined.

I just wasn't attracted to him "in that way."

I might have put some kind of pressure on her when she just wanted to just date around. I think our personalities matched ideally and this made us closer which she didn't think was possible

Too detached, unaggressive.

Could not handle someone like that.

Inadiquacy to be more dominant.

I didn't give her enough attention.

Perhaps tried to rush things too much.

Lack of common courtesy.

None-except maybe that I'm not willing to take being treated like dirt.

I wasn't sure I wanted to just date him.

Independency

I like lots of attention, which he gave to me at first, but as the relationship grew I don't think he could handle it.

I felt school was more important to than the relationship; I didn't want to be tied down.

Very busy, especially at night, (I'm a bar tender)  
general lack of motivation.

I don't know, I terminated the relationship. She  
still wants to date me.

Diversion of feelings.

### Dyadic/Interactional

Lack of communication as well as jealousy and  
dependency on my part.

I feel I perceived alot of his needs as well as my own  
& when they weren't being met I initiated a  
discussion about the subject and was right.

That I wasn't willing to spend as much time w/ him as  
he wanted.

Other interests and our spiritual beliefs were not at  
the same level.

I didn't want to get as serious as he wanted to be.

I wanted more of his time than he was willing to give.

I wasn't ready to get very serious, but she was.

### Circumstantial

I ended up staying in Norman.

My schedule.

There weren't any bad characteristics we just found it too hard w/ seeing eachother so little.

No Response

None

Question 5: Why do you think this (these) characteristic(s) made a difference?

Individual/Personal

I started to realize that he had a "free loader" mentality. His drinking disgusted me (I even worked in a bar at the time).

Because at this point in his life, he felt the relationship wasn't worth working for in comparison to the problems we were having.

We were both basically pretty spoiled and neither one of us wanted to give an inch.

If I were to put up with or settle with a give & no take on my part relationship I would present myself as vulnerable. Our needs could not be met.

Because he was looking for more of a 1 on 1 relationship, while I wanted to continue seeing others.

Because I'm not ready for a steady relationship and I get bored fast.

Because I place spiritual values as a high priority in dating.

Because I didn't give her time to open up.

Because I like girls who care more about other people.

I can't stand inconsiderate people. Even if he wasn't too inconsiderate of me he was with many other people and I knew it wouldn't be long before he treated me the same.

I couldn't understand his moods so I took all his attacks personally.

He didn't want any responsibilities.

I could never figure out what she wanted or was trying to tell me.

She saw that we could and were becoming quite involved w/ each other. Since she wasn't ready for such a close relationship (especially w/ me a non-Baptist) she had to break it off completely before we became more attached. We can't even be friend.

Was not aggressive enough.

She needs someone to guide her.

May have pushed her into a behavior before she was ready e.g., having a relationship.

We didn't seem to care enough to keep in touch by writing & calling anymore because it was too hard and getting old.

When we discovered a problem in our relationship we cancelled the relationship rather than work out the problem.

He was a person that liked to be to himself - - and I had him figured out to well - - he felt uncomfortable so he thought he was being manipulated.

Because I think you truly need to have alot of trust in a relationship and I didn't have that trust.

We are in the same profession, therefore somewhat competitive. I couldn't spend time w/ a competitor w/ out feeling somewhat defensive of my own goals.

I don't think he believed that I ever really trusted him - - I "worried" about the relationship too much. Afraid of being hurt....

Because of low interest & little time, the relationship suffered.

#### Dyadic/Interactional

Because neither of us could understand the other or wanted to.

Because we were growing apart and not together.

We were getting close to the marriage part of a relationship & we were too different to commit ourselves to one another.

They were extreme for both of us - - what was important to me didn't seem so for him.

We have different intentions in what we wanted from our relationship.

Thought different on everything! Where we wanted to be 5 years from now - - our goals were totally different.

Well, we were both approaching the relationship from two different perspectives.

I am really involved in a lot of activities and she is not. I enjoy a girlfriend & we'd designate intentional time to spend together but I guess it wasn't enough.

Little sharing makes a poor relationship.

Because they were in total conflict with each other.

He was dependent on lots of things so he hated that I wasn't.

I wouldn't give in and he wouldn't change.

It made me think he wasn't caring enough and that I was wasting my time.

She wanted me to be with her all the time, but I didn't want to be tied down.

He wanted to make a stronger commitment and I was too involved in school to please him. I liked dating around and he didn't.

He made all of the plans. I accepted but did not offer any future plans.

Circumstantial

We had to be separated for his business purposes. I had to stay in school.

Dealing w/ school and interfering with academics.

Due to these conflicts and that she is an athlete which keeps her pretty well run down, and I have to devote my spare time to studies.

Uncodable

Yes

Yes, very much.

They clash.

If I didn't feel for him - - as much - - it would waste both of our times. We shouldn't have continued.

It meant spending less time with this person.

Question 6: What would you say is the single, most important thing that resulted in the break-up?

Individual/Personal

The party he wanted to go to and mentioned before.

No trust on his part.

His hateful attitude towards me.

His drinking & his partying attitude. (He always wanted to go out to bars.)

My disappearance of interest (as a boyfriend) in my partner.

I couldn't handle her stupidity.

She was self centered

My gain in self-confidence. I realized I don't have to lean on him.

Well, I learned again not to get too hung up on what I was "feeling" & take it easy. Not to push.

It was good for me- taught me not to settle for less than what I desired in a dating partner- I was really forced to stand on my own two feet.

Double-crossing me.

When we went out she couldn't talk about anything except a superficial conversation.

My wanting to be free. Not tied down.

Her loss of interest in the relationship.

Selfishness.

Wanted to date other people.

Maybe not enough effort to advance or at least foster a relationship.

The interest was not strong enough on either part to try to work out everything.

Dyadic/Interactional

Lack of communication and being together.

The amount of time we had spent together just prior to the breakup.

That we decided to be friends.

Our needs were not mutual. We "met" on several aspects yet any long term relationship was impossible. And to avoid hurt on both sides.

Lack of communication.

We were different.

He borrowed a very expensive camera from me and lost it. I didn't care that he lost it but he waited 2 wks to tell me and thought I was just going to keep going out with him.

Lack of communication.

I don't think we could ever find a medium for our differences.

Professional differences.

Arguments.

The timing and religions are both equally important.

(Maybe religion a little more of a priority.)

Difference in age.

Him getting really drunk at a party and passing out. I had to get my own ride home and it made me very upset.

The fact that I had to be the one to make arrangements  
to see each other.

Going out too much with others and not enough with me.

A discussion we had on his reforming a relationship  
with an old girlfriend.

God used us together to develop different  
characteristics in each of us. Now God has put  
another girl to meet other needs that He has.

I had to study and he took it that I was trying to  
break-off the relationship.

We are still friends.

A friendship was better established.

#### Social Network

I was out too much w/ other people.

He started dating another girl.

He was seeing someone else.

Someone new.

Her aunt becoming very ill.

Seeing another guy.

An encounter between my partner, another man and I.

#### Circumstantial/Situational

Distance (an ocean)

The moving factor.

He's an architect major which requires lots of time.

She left school.

Uncodable

Spiritual values.

We have intentions in what we wanted from our  
relationship.

SES

Question 7: Would you ever wish to start dating  
this person again? (Under what conditions?)

Individual/Personal

He changed.

If he wouldn't dominate me.

That he doesn't act so bossy or possessive.

I would have to feel a lot less emotionally dependent  
on him.

That she would understand why I broke up and that she  
wouldn't have any bad feelings.

If she were more committed to certain things in her  
life.

If he started being more open with me about how he saw the relationship and didn't feel I was manipulative. Giving him enough time for studies and being there when he needed me.

He would be willing to make more of a commitment to me and the relationship. Demanding, huh?

When she grows up.

He would be more considerate of other people.

If she asked me or showed some interest .

Once-in-awhile.

#### Dyadic/Interactional

We would limit the amount of time we spent together  
Our differences of opinions coming together along with his setting of lifetime goals.

We have alot of different ideas and viewpoints.

If it was just casual.

If perhaps he no longer had a girlfriend & we both had the same needs.

We occasionally see each other as friends which I enjoy.

#### Social Network

He gets rid of the other girl.

Because of someone else.

Circumstantial/Situational

He come back or I went to Houston

Question 8. Why or why not (do you want to date your partner again)?

Individual/Personal

Disappointed in him and that can never change.

We could never have a lasting relationship if he doesn't trust me.

His drinking problem could be helped, but his

"something for nothing" attitude couldn't.

Because he could be really sweet when he wanted to be.

He is very sweet and a lot of fun unless he gets jealous or demanding.

Because he's very sweet and a lot of fun.

Because I know he's not the "one" for me.

Because I know I am still interested in her and think about her and I a lot.

Because I don't like him because he is irresponsible and rude.

Why, because I still care for him.

Because I doubt he'll ever change and I never really  
did think he was right for me anyway.

I still find him intriguing.

He couldn't date without getting very serious.

We get along well, but I would never have deep feelings  
for him.

No, because he'll never change his attitude about them.

I really think God has someone else for me.

Because he's a wonderful man & I'll always care about  
him.

He's just not what I'm looking for, physically as well  
as character wise.

She did me dirty too many times.

Because she won't change until she's married.

She is a lot of fun and nice-looking.

Because she has a lot of nice points and when she  
exposes only those, she's enjoyable to be around.

She's a nice person usually.

I'm not interested in watching her grow up.

I still like him.

She is still an interesting person, some interest is  
still present.

Because I am still interested in him as a friend and am  
interested in his activities. He is a very enjoyable  
person to be with.

Not worth the effort.

Dyadic/Interactional

If we could meet on certain areas. I think the areas we already meet on are impt. to perhaps try again.

Because even though we misunderstood one another we could relate to each other easily.

He can make me happy. He knows me better than anyone.

We have fun together. We understand one another.

Because he is a very interesting person and we have alot of the same interests.

Because we had too many different beliefs and viewpoints.

We have different approaches to our job--that probably won't change.

We don't have much in common.

We have too many different ideas about things. Not same goals.

I love her. Maybe we could work out religious differences if we tried and wanted to. But I'm afraid it doesn't look like either one of us will change.

I like her a lot and think we have much in common.

I'm not interested in wasting my time on someone who won't treat me the way I expect to be treated.

We are still very good friends and were open enough with the break-up to start again.

Social Network

Because I'm dating someone seriously.

Because I need to feel like someone who I am dating  
cares about me as much as other relationship she has.

Circumstantial/Situational

Because any architect major needs moral support  
concerning his work load.

Too far apart (distance wise).

Because we really did care for eachother and I'm sure  
we'd be together now if at the same or at closer  
schools.

Uncodable

It would most likely end up the same way.

There is no way- just no way!

I understand that when a crisis hits a family it  
usually pulls together.

Question 9: Do you think your partner would ever  
wish to start dating you again? (Under what  
conditions?)

Individual/Personal

He hates for anyone to think badly of him.

That I make a committment to him.

If I would pay more attn. to him when we're together.

(hopefully) Only if I explain myself.

If I would let him run the relationship.

I wouldn't "fall" for him.

Having to have everything by his decision, or a  
majority of his way.

If I were more interested in the relationship.

If his heart were to really change.

If I were to suddenly become attracted to him.

Maybe if she grows up.

If she decided she wanted a steady sort of  
relationship.

Dyadic/Interactional

If she was ready (prepared), and for sure if we were  
the same religion (so we could get married!!).

He gets his act together while I am not pressuring him  
to do so.

He has indicated so.

Circumstantial/Situational

If we lived in the same area (or w/ relative distance).

Uncodable

I have no idea.

Maybe.

Under certain conditions.

Not sure.

No!! She can't find any other dates.

Question 10: Why or Why not? (do you think your partner would wish to start dating you again)

Individual/Personal

Disappointed in me and that can never change.

He knows that someday I'll be successful & he likes women who have money.

I don't think he really cares enough about me to start dating me again.

Because when we broke up she said that she still wanted to go out.

Because I'm sooo good looking, so cool, so nice;  
besides, I'm an official member to: "Super Stud  
Club."

Because I'm cool.

Because I think she liked what she saw in me.

If I was willing and willing enough to change.

Because partly for his ego.

I did not put effort into the relationship.

He still calls me and asks me out.

He expressed a real desire to get to know me and date  
me - - as I see him now - - I still sense that  
attraction.

She's always talking to me and wanting me to do stuff  
with her.

Sees me as a friend now.

She can see I should be used less and have more concern  
for me as a person.

Sometimes she is happy with me.

She'll settle down

I think she was/is interested in me and is just unsure  
as to what she wants.

A possible gold digger.

She doesn't really know that she did it and would be  
open to me again.

He says so in his letters.

When we bump into each she still is interested.

Just because he isn't ready to date me or anyone else at this time in his life.

I think he still would be interested after we spend some time apart.

We are very close, I give him more attention than anyone - - his family or whoever. I can make him happy.

I'm sure he's seeing someone who will take that crap off him.

Because he has been informing other people that he would like to see me.

I was a good show off for his friends & family, etc....

#### Dyadic/Interactional

We have different approaches to our job - - that probably won't change.

We said some things to each other that we can't take back.

We had a good time together, and we have common ideals about life school friends, ect.

If we were a little older and the same religion, nothing would come close in stopping us from living the rest of our lives together.

We don't see each other or talk much any more.

Because he was really wanting a very close, deep relationship, which I couldn't give at the time.

He had fun with me.

Because I broke up and he didn't feel the way I did.

Because we have not discussed it or the break-up - - we  
have just started saying hi to each other.

Well, he told me that he'd always just really respected  
& appreciated me as a person.

Because he keeps letting other people know but still  
won't tell me or call.

Because he says so.

Because he has already asked.

#### Social Network

He's engaged

He's pinned to another girl- He is leaning in another  
direction than myself. She would help him in ways I  
couldn't.

When she can't find any other dates because she has  
been getting a bad rep. in this town.

#### Circumstantial

Too far apart (distance wise).

He wants to remain "unattached" since he will be  
graduating and commitioned in May.

Because we really did care for each other and I'm sure we'd be together now if at the same or at closer schools.

Uncodable

Because it was left open-ended.

I doubt he or I ever will.

Question 11: How would you compare this relationship with one that might have lasted?

Individual/Personal

It wouldn't be comparable! I knew all along it was temporary & tried to get rid of him several times.

I didn't put much time into it.

I really can't pinpoint the exact reasons I broke up, it was just a feeling I had (or lost), so it's hard to say what I would want.

I would have been able to share more comfortably on a spiritual basis than we were doing.

The one's that have lasted with me always happened fast but we never really knew each other very well but with this one I just wasn't very patient and it would have lasted if I had.

The break-up was a definite surprise to me and I didn't realize how he felt about the relationship. I wish I would have known.

If he wouldn't have been so forward and not rush me into the relationship so fast.

He would have to be a different type of person - - I don't think it's the fact that he got so rushed, because I do desire to be meaningfully dating someone - - but he just wasn't the one.

She doesn't know what she wants - - she is always hooking up with losers - - ones that treat her badly. She was kind of fun but it was basically a waste of time.

It might have lasted if she would have let me have my freedom.

We both did not want to date eachother steadily at the time.

I don't think either of us were ready to commit ourselves to a relationship because we had just gotten out of long relationships prior to this one. It might have lasted longer if we had allowed more time between relationships.

This relationship started w/ both of up being very infactuated w/ each other and we both thought the other was perfect. Well, Reality set in after 2 1/2 months and we had specific problems that we really didn't care enough about working out.

The guys I have dated a long time have been very liberal, open-minded and nice, considerate of all people.

### Dyadic/Interactional

This relationship started out really well, our sense of humor and interests were the same but not our deep beliefs or morals which is the most important thing. Not as intimate.

Our relationship was good - - I mean we didn't fight that much and we did have a good time together. But we were on opposite sides of a continuum. In a lasting relationship I think we'd have to see eye to eye more.

The relationship was too "shakie." I constantly felt like everyday would be the last one of our relationship. A relationship that would have lasted would have to be more secure.

This relationship was too shallow. It was on a surface level.

One that might have lasted would have been a mutual relationship where we both put something into it.

In a relationship that would be lasting more similarity in background & values would be needed.

I think it could've lasted if I were willing to give enough time and effort but I disagree with him so

badly on some things I don't think it could ever work.

There were no committments. We saw each other only once in a while.

We were too different to start dating. I relize how important it is to date someone on basicly the same or little better level than you are. We would have had more in commmon, etc...

A lasting relationship should be more mutual conserning who makes plans and feelings.

If it had lasted - - we would have fought all the time & never been very happy.

We were not open enough

Probably I learned much more about leaving my relationship to God & letting him develop and change our hearts. Our hearts just weren't forming as one.

It was perfect as far as loving each other's personalities, etc., and wanting to give to each other; and had one of us been looser in our religious convictions we would be together still (and most likely forever.)

It was not a secure relationship. It rocked like a ship in stormy weather.

No comparison. We are too different or have too many conflicts to ever get a relationship off the ground.

It's a good relationship because we're both free to date others with no problems.

It was sort of luke warm, not based on anything of a long period.

If this had been one that would have lasted, there would have been more communication between the two people. It would have been more balanced also.

In a way that we would be more giving.

It was disappointing difficult to deal with, hard to accept but realistic, smart, and will save myself alot of grief. Yet I had fun when we were really getting along. We're still friends even though I think he's a "fool"!!

I enjoy being friends with her, but I believe I'd like it more if it was more intimate. If she had grown up e little faster, it might have lasted.

I really enjoyed it. She apparently was telling me things that sounded good to her. I thought we had good communication, but epperently not. More commitment was needed to make it last.

Our relationship was close to one that would have lasted had we been closer in age and able to attend the same schools

Well, we were always good friends--that's important to me to make relationships work.

Social Network

Communication needed to be better and his friends  
needed to stay out of it - - and not give him idea -  
- from the way they felt about me.

Circumstantial/Situational

If we had been able to still see eachother it probably  
would have lasted until, I don't know when.  
I wouldn't. We spent much time together because it was  
convenient. That didn't last long.  
This one has lasted for a long time. I think it was  
great relationship but at this point in our lives we  
either get married or break-up.  
It had a good start but not enough time to grow and be  
really tested

Uncodable

Unspeakable.  
I can't compare it at all.  
There's no comparison.  
I have no conception of one that would have.  
Very little resemblance to one that might have lasted.  
Shorter, less certain; less security

## Appendix D

Casual-Dating Dissolution  
Coding Manual

Vicki L. Loyer-Carlson  
Alexis J. Walker  
Oregon State University  
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This manual borrows heavily from the following coding manuals:

- Surra, C. A. (1988). Turning Point Coding Manual III Coding Rules and Definitions. Unpublished manuscript, University of Arizona, Tucson.
- Zvonkovic, A. & Ponzetti, J. (1988). Coding Instructions: Divorce Study. Unpublished manuscript, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon.

Special thanks are extended to Anisa Zvonkovic for helpful comments on this coding system.

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Table

1. Coding Categories

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## PREFACE

This Casual-Dating Termination coding system builds on Catherine Surra's (1980; 1984; 1988) Turning Point Code system. Surra was interested in relationship development and focused on "why the chance of marriage changed during dating or courtship" (Surra, 1988, p. 2). Zvonkovic and Ponzetti (1988) recently adapted Surra's Turning Point Code system to analyze those turning points which increased the chance of divorce. In the present investigation Surra's (1988) version of the Turning Point Code system and Zvonkovic and Ponzetti's (1988) Turning Points toward divorce coding system were blended for use with persons whose casual-dating relationship ended. All of the primary categories (Individual/Personal, Dyadic/Interactional, Social Network, and Circumstantial/Situational) have been adopted from Catherine Surra (1980; 1984; 1988), and many of the modifications by Anisa Zvonkovic and James Ponzetti (1988) have been adopted as well.

## CASUAL DATING TERMINATION

## coding instructions

You have been given a copy of the original termination questionnaires. Respondents offer dominant themes of their termination expressed in terms of Individual/Personal, Dyadic/Interactional, Social Network, or Circumstantial/Situational reasons. You are asked to code both the dominant theme as well as the responses to each question. To assist you, use the following guidelines.

1. Read the entire questionnaire

Before beginning the coding process, read the entire set of responses for a participant. This will allow you to become acquainted with the respondent's entire set of attributions before you begin categorizing reasons. Respondents may emphasize one primary reason that their relationships ended or they may give two or more reasons equal weight in the termination of their relationship.

## 2. Extract the dominant theme

After reading the entire set of responses, extract the dominant theme or primary reason (e.g., P wanted independence, or P and O had different standards and expectations for the relationship). If you decide that a particular questionnaire has two or more themes weighted equally (e.g., an individual and a dyadic reason), then code the theme that ranks highest according to the following:

<u>category</u>	<u>code number</u>
Dyadic	2
Circumstantial	4
Social Network	3
Individual	1

For Example, if the respondent has given two equally weighted themes, individual and dyadic, you will code the dyadic theme ("2"). If the themes are circumstantial, individual, and social network, you will code circumstantial ("4").

## 3. Code each individual reason in sequence

Notice that there are 10 questions (numbers 2 thru 11) that allow respondents to write reasons for the dissolution. Some respondents will give one word or one reason answers while other respondents will give full sentences explaining a reason. It is also

possible that a respondent will give many reasons within the same sentence. In such cases, all reasons should be coded.

- \*\* Use slashes to separate reasons (e.g., "I really like being independent / and Chris and I disagreed about how much say one person should have in what the other person does").
- \*\* Write the category and subcategory numbers above the reason.

Example:

2. Characteristics of your partner?

I/P 1.4.2.1                      I/P 1.4.2.2

/ He was nice, / but a little too pushy. /

3. How did you know?

D/I 2.1.1.2

/ He was polite when we went out, but we always did  
what he wanted to do. /

4. Your Characteristics?

I/P 1.4.1.2

/ I'm too independent, I wanted to be free to do as  
I wanted. /

5. Why did they make a difference?

D/I 2.2.1.2

/ He wanted a serious relationship and I wanted to  
be free to date others. /

6. Single most important thing that resulted in the  
breakup?

I/P 1.4.1.2

D/I 2.2.3.1

/ I regained my independence, / kept a very good

SN 3.3.1.2

friendship with him, / and was able to go out with  
another guy. /

Dominant Theme: Independence of the Respondent

## Category and Subcategory Descriptions

You will use four major categories while coding the reasons that persons give for the termination of their casual-dating relationship. In this section, each of the categories, along with their subcategories, will be explained in detail. Refer to the page titled "Coding Categories" for the complete diagram of this coding scheme. Notice that the codes and the enumeration of the respective coding rules have the same numbers. If you decide that a statement refers to a negative event, and belongs in the Social Network category with the friends of the other person as the subcategory, both the number of the coding rule and the code number that you assign the statement will be 3.2.2.2. By looking up SN (social network) 3.2.2.2, you can ensure that your code meets the specifications of this category.

### Individual/Personal

Level I. Items in this category are those that refer to the respondent (P) or the other (O), independently (Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988). It is possible that items in this category will mention both persons ("We did....," "We didn't....," "Neither of us..."), however Individual/ Personal (I/P) statements

can easily be translated into "P did...", and "D did...." Statements in this category do not refer to beliefs or behaviors that are shared or about which there is disagreement, but are individual properties such as motivation or independence.

Compare, "We didn't maintain our relationship" (I/P Lack of Behavior/Action) to "I thought it was her job suggest dates and she thought it was mine (D/I Compatibility/Incompatibility). The statement "We were too busy," can be translated into two statements: "P was too busy," and "D was too busy." Notice that if the statement indicates that being "too busy" is perceived to be outside of the control of P and D ("School kept us so busy that we were never able to get together") the statement should be coded Circumstantial/Situational (CS: Academics/Employment, negative; CS 4.3.2). The difference is whether or not the respondent perceived P and D to have had control over the situation. Simply being "too busy" could be perceived to have been within their control and therefore an Individual/Personal response (e.g., "I had other options so I busied myself in other areas," I/P 1.1.1.2). Individual/Personal statements may refer to a behavior/action, cognition/thought, attitude/feeling/emotion, or a personal characteristic. The category rule for I/P statements is:

I/P 1:

An Individual/Personal statement refers to an individual's behaviors/actions, cognitions/thoughts, attitudes/feelings/emotions, or personality characteristics. The statement may refer to P and O together, but the concepts or characteristics that are mentioned are individual properties.

Level II. The first I/P subcategory, Behavior/Action refers to an individual doing or not doing something (Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988). A statement may be coded Behavior/Action when something is not done ("P never called," I/P 1.1.2.2) as well as when something is done ("P called every night," I/P 1.1.2.3). A statement is only I/P Behavior/Action if there is no reference to the impact that the behavior had on the partner. That is, "P never called which really made me angry" is not I/P: Behavior/Action but rather an action that had an impact on O (D/I 2.1.2.2).

I/P 1.1:

A Behavior/Action statement refers to the behavior of P (O), or lack of behavior on the part of P (O), independent of any effect on O (P).

Cognition/Thought, the second subcategory, consists of statements that refer to reports of the thought processes or inferences that persons make in regard to an event that affects P (0) or of which P (0) is aware (stimulus event) (Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988). P may explain how a particular decision was reached or the reason a particular action was better than another. For example, "I decided that it was time to focus on something else" is a Cognition/Thought of P. The rule for this subcategory is as follows:

I/P 1.2:

Cognition/Thought statements report the thought processes or inferences that persons make in regard to a stimulus event.

Third, Attitude/Feeling/Emotion (AFE) statements refer to internal, psychological experiences (cf. Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988). This subcategory includes either states of feeling or mind about a person or situation ("I had a feeling she was serious and unbending") or remembered and possibly physiologically arousing thoughts ("I was angry at everyone," or "I still get upset"). The following rule should guide you in determining whether a statement belongs in this subcategory:

I/P 1.3:

Attitude/Feeling/Emotion statements refer to an actual or remembered physiological arousal or a state of feeling or mind about a person or situation. Statements referring to the absence of Attitude/Feeling/Emotion also belong in this subcategory.

Last, Personal Characteristics are distinctive qualities, traits, or dispositions, of an individual (cf. Surra, 1988). Many times a Personal Characteristic is denoted by saying that someone is something or tends toward doing something. For example, "P is a jerk," "O can't handle stress," or "P and O are both spoiled." Notice that this last example can be translated into "P is spoiled," and "O is spoiled." The rule for Personal Characteristic is:

I/P 1.4:

A Personal Characteristic statement refers to the distinctive qualities, traits, or dispositions, of an individual.

Level III. Here you are asked to decide to whom the statement refers (Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988). For each of the subcategories indicate whether the respondents referred to themselves (Respondent = 1) or

to their partners (Partner = 2). "I'm really too goal directed and it gets me in trouble sometimes" (I/P 1.4.1.3) or "I spent a lot of time deciding whether I wanted to be in a relationship, and I finally decided 'no'" (I/P 1.2.1.2) are examples of statements that refer to the respondent. Statements such as, "He was always laughing about everything" (I/P 1.1.2.3) and "She was convinced that it was more fun to date younger guys" (I/P 1.2.2.2) refer to the partner. The rule for the Respondent/Partner subcategory is as follows:

I/P 1.X.1:

A statement referring to the respondent

I/P 1.X.2:

A statement referring to the partner.

Level IV. Next, you must decide whether the statement is positive, negative (Surra, 1988; Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988), or neutral. A positive statement (1) refers to a positive behavior, thought, feeling, or personality characteristic that fosters future interaction between P and O. A negative statement (2) refers to a negative behavior, thought, feeling, or personality characteristic that impedes future interaction. Last, a neutral statement (3) does not show evidence of fostering or impeding relationship

progress. For example, "My partner was always doing really nice things for me," is a positive behavior/action statement that refers to the partner (I/P 1.1.2.1) because it encourages future interaction. "I decided that I deserved better than that," is a negative cognition/thought statement that refers to the respondent (I/P 1.2.1.2) because deciding that P wasn't getting what P deserved reduces the likelihood of future interaction. Finally, "I didn't really care how physically attractive my partner was" (I/P 1.3.2.3) is neutral because it neither encourages nor discourages future interaction. The rules for the positive, negative, and neutral subcategory of the Individual/Personal statements are as follows:

I/P 1.X.X.1:

A Positive statement refers to a behavior, thought, feeling, or personality characteristic that fosters future interaction.

I/P 1.X.X.2:

A Negative statement refers to a behavior, thought, feeling, or personality characteristic that impedes future interaction.

I/P 1.X.X.3:

A Neutral statment refers to a behavior, thought, feeling, or personality characteristic that neither fosters nor impedes future interaction.

Dyadic/Interactional

Level I. As the terms imply, Dyadic/Interactional (D/I) statements involve P and O, yet membership into this category does not require that both persons perform a shared behavior (Surra, 1988; Zvonkovic and Ponzetti, 1988). If the respondent reports that the behavior of one member of the dyad influenced the other, the statement is coded "dyadic" (Surra, 1988). D/I also includes statements that make reference to the qualities and/or nature of the relationship (Surra, 1988); these reasons involve less tangible descriptions than do specific behaviors. For example, a relationship condition (e.g., "We don't really talk to each other") may be compared to an individual preference for a relationship (e.g., "...and I think communication is essential in any dating relationship.") constituting an interpersonal dyadic statement (Zvonkovic and Ponzetti, 1988).

There are many possible dyadic elements to a relationship, consequently, the D/I category contains the most decisions for you to make. As a starting point, the first D/I rule is as follows:

D/I 2:

A Dyadic/Interactional statement refers to both members of the dyad either in terms of: (a) P's and O's participation or lack of participation in a joint behavior; (b) one person influencing or failing to influence the other; or (c) the relationship's nature or quality.

Level II. Once you have determined that the respondent gave a D/I response, you must decide whether the statement refers to behaviors involving P and O ("We don't talk about the important things enough"), or to the interpersonal issues which confront the persons in the relationship ("She and I think differently about dating relationships") (Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988). To facilitate your decision making process, follow coding rules D/I 2.1 and D/I 2.2.

D/I 2.1:

A Behavioral response includes reference to the joint action of P and O, an action on the part of P or O that did, or did not, influence the other, or an exchange of information between P and O about the relationship or behaviors therein. A Behavioral response may also refer to the absence of a joint or influential action or a lack of exchanged information.

D/I 2.2:

An Interpersonal response makes reference to the qualities and nature that define a relationship (Surra, 1988) or to a comparison of the interpersonal conditions of the relationship and a belief system regarding relationships (Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988).

There are several types of Behavioral and Interpersonal D/I responses. First the four Behavioral subcategories and then the four Interpersonal subcategories, will be discussed.

Level III: Dyadic/Interactional, Behavioral. The first subcategory, Behavioral Independence/Interdependence, is identified by reference to such

things as planning activities, changes in activities, or spending time together (Surra, 1988). The important aspect of this category is an emphasis on the participation, or lack of participation, of both P and O in the same activity. P performed a behavior independent of O if O did not participate (e.g., "I went to a lot of parties, but Joe usually stayed home" D/I 2.1.1.3). Conversely, if P and O participated in an action together, their behavior was interdependent ("Joe and I were always going out to parties together" D/I 2.1.1.3). Respondents may refer to excessive behavioral independence between themselves and their partner ("We kept going out with our own friends rather than with each other" D/I 2.1.1.3), or to excessive behavioral interdependence ("We were always together, and that got boring after a while" D/I 2.1.1.2). The rule for coding a statement as Behavioral Independence/Interdependence is:

D/I 2.1.1:

Behavioral

Independence/Interdependence statements are those that involve the joint actions of P and O. These statements specify whether actions are performed together (interdependently) or separately (independently).

The second subcategory in D/I: Behavioral is Behavioral Response Interdependence (Surra, 1988).

This category includes actions that are performed (or not performed) by a partner eliciting a reaction from the other (Surra, 1988). For example, "He was flirting all night, which really made me mad" is a behavior by O which elicited a reaction from P (D/I 2.1.2.2). "When she didn't remember my birthday I was really hurt," is an unperformed behavior by O which elicited a reaction from P (D/I 2.1.2.2). The coding rule is as follows:

D/I 2.1.2:

Behavioral Response Interdependence

involves two components: (a) a performed or unperformed behavior by P (O), and (b) a reaction from O (P) in regard to the behavior (lack of behavior). Both components must be included in the statement for it to be correctly coded into this subcategory.

The third subcategory is Communication/Lack of Communication (Surra, 1988; Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988). These statements focus on issues that were either mutually discussed (e.g., "We talked about school") or communicated one-way (e.g., "She told me about her class"). The message can be verbally transmitted or written ("He left me a note" D/I

2.1.3.3) (Surra, 1988). This subcategory also includes statements which indicate that a particular topic was not discussed ("We never really talked about the relationship"). While "communicating" is a behavioral action (and therefore could be appropriate for Behavioral Independence/ Interdependence), all statements about the exchange of information (or lack thereof) are coded in this subcategory (Surra, 1988) because communication is implicitly dyadic and a central factor in the relationship (they either exchange, or do not exchange, information). Thus, the D/I rule of communication is:

D/I 2.1.3:

Communication/Lack of Communication

is coded anytime the respondent refers to the exchange of information or the lack thereof. The information can be given (or not given) by one person, or it can be discussed between the two persons.

Last, the Other category is used when you have decided that the statement is referring to a D/I: Behavior, but does not meet the specifications for the Behavioral Independence/Interdependence, Behavioral Response Interdependence, or Communication/Lack of

Communication categories. Use of the "Other" category should be rare. The rule for Other is:

D/I 2.1.4:

Other is used for

Dyadic/Interactional Behavioral statements which do not meet the specifications for the Behavioral Independence/Interdependence, Behavioral Response Interdependence, or Communication/Lack of Communication categories.

Dyadic/Interactional, Interpersonal. As mentioned earlier, an Interpersonal response makes reference to the qualities and nature that define a relationship (Surra, 1988) and/or to a comparison of the interpersonal conditions of the relationship and their belief system regarding relationships (Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988). Within this category there are four subcategories. The first, Incompatibility/Compatibility, refers to the way P and O "fit" with each other in terms of their value system and their expectations of each other's responsibilities within the relationship (Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988). These values and expectations may be verbalized in terms of similarities and differences between the partners ("We disagree on the importance of being

friends as well as lovers" D/I 2.2.1.2) or in terms of expectations, theirs or their partner's, that do not fit with the other's wants and needs ("We had different ideas about who should plan the dates, who should pay for the dates, that type of thing" D/I 2.2.1.2).

Evaluations of the fit between P's and D's socially defined positions (e.g., student government president, group leader) and between their personal characteristics (e.g., age, religion, ethnic heritage) are also included here. For example, "I was the president of the student body and he was a rabble-rouser. It just wasn't right." (D/I 2.2.1.2) compares the socially defined positions, while "she was too old for me" (D/I 2.2.1.2) focuses on the difference between their personality characteristics. The rule for Incompatibility/Compatibility is as follows:

D/I 2.2.1:

Incompatibility/Compatibility

includes all statements which compare P and D's value systems, role expectations, socially defined positions and/or personality characteristics.

The second Interpersonal subcategory, Cohesion/Lack of Cohesion, refers to the cohesion or emotional connectedness present in the relationship (Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988). That is, the presence or

absence of an emotion or feeling as a relationship quality as opposed to an individual property. These statements may be in the form of normative comparisons (social expectations for a relationship) such as "We should have been closer," (D/I 2.2.2.2) or as an evaluation of the cohesion in the relationship ("We didn't connect with each other," D/I 2.2.2.2). Alternatively, "I didn't love my partner" is an I/P: Attitude/Feeling/Emotion statement (I/P 1.3.1.2). The coding rule for this subcategory is:

D/I 2.2.2:

A Cohesion/Lack of Cohesion

statement displays an evaluation of the cohesion of and/or emotional connectedness in the relationship.

Nonromantic Relationship is assigned to statements in which the respondents describe the nature of the relationship with their partners as nonromantic rather than as romantic. The statement may mention a change in the type of relationship between P and D ("We like being friends better than lovers," D/I 2.2.3.3, "We used to be friends, but now we can't be anymore" D/I 2.2.3.2), or it may define the P and D relationship as it has always been ("We've always had a very close friendship," D/I 2.2.3.1). This subcategory includes nonromantic relationships such as acquaintances and

soulmates. "We're no longer friends" (D/I 2.2.3.2) is an appropriate statement for this category whereas "I don't want to be friends with her" is not (it is a negative I/P: Attitude/Feeling/Emotion of the respondent, I/P 1.3.1.2, because it is a state of feeling or mind about wanting to be friends with the partner). The D/I rule for this subcategory is:

D/I 2.2.3:

Nonromantic Relationship applies to statements that specifically indicate that the nature of their relationship is nonromantic (friendship, acquaintance, soulmate) versus romantic.

Last, the Other category is used when you have decided that the statement is D/I: Interpersonal but does not meet the specifications for the Incompatibility/Compatibility, Cohesion/Lack of Cohesion, and Nonromantic Relationship categories. Use of the "Other" category should be rare. The rule for Other is:

D/I 2.2.4:

Other is used for Dyadic/Interactional Interpersonal statements which do not meet the specifications for the Incompatibility/Compatibility, Cohesion/Lack of Cohesion, or Nonromantic Relationship categories.

Level IV. Finally, for each of the subcategories indicate whether the statement refers to positive (1), negative (2) (Surra, 1988; Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988), or neutral (3) behaviors or interactions. Again, both Surra (1988) and Zvonkovic and Ponzetti (1988) have positive and negative evaluations in their systems, and the present system has added on the neutral subcategory. A positive statement reveals behavioral or interpersonal interactions which foster future interactions. "We enjoyed going to parties together" is a positive Behavioral Independence/Interdependence statement (D/I 2.1.1.1). A negative statement refers to behavioral or interpersonal interaction which impedes future interaction. "We disagreed on almost everything that mattered," is a negative Interpersonal Incompatibility/Compatibility statement (D/I 2.2.1.2). A neutral statement neither facilitates nor impedes future interaction (e.g., "We talked about a lot of

things," D/I 2.1.3.3). The rules for adding the positive/negative/neutral subcategory to the Dyadic/Interactional statements are as follows:

D/I 2.X.X.1:

A Positive Dyadic/Interactional statement reveals behavioral or interpersonal interactions which foster future interactions.

D/I 2.X.X.2:

A Negative Dyadic/Interactional statement reveals behavioral or interpersonal interaction which impedes future interaction.

D/I 2.X.X.3:

A Neutral Dyadic/Interactional statement neither facilitates nor impedes future interaction.

## Social Network

Level I. When a respondent cites a specific person in P or O's social network as having affected the relationship, the statement is coded Social Network (SN) (Surra, 1988; Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988). The important factor in this category is that the third party is in P's or O's psychological environment (it's important to P or O what the third person thinks or says) or is central to P and O's interactive environment (for example, the environment in which P and O work, socialize, or live) (Surra, 1988; Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988).

Persons who are in the social network and are mentioned, but are not central to the P and O interaction, are not coded social network. For example, compare "Her mother didn't like me and was always telling Chris not to let me 'get away' with this and that" to "She was always visiting with her mother and never had time to go out with me." In the latter statement, her mother is not the focal point. It would not have mattered with whom the partner was visiting; the critical part of this statement is that there is insufficient behavioral interdependence. It should be coded as negative D/I: Behavioral, Behavioral Independence/Interdependence (D/I 2.1.1.2). On the other hand, in the former statement the respondent

perceives that Chris's mother has a direct impact on Chris's psychological environment, and presumably is influenced by her. It should be coded as negative SN: Family (SN 3.1.2.2). The coding rule for the Social Network category is:

SN 3:

Social Network statements refer to third party persons who are central to P and O's interactive or psychological environment.

Level II. There are six subcategories of social network members (cf. Surra, 1988; Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988). Family members are any member of the nuclear or extended family that the respondent denotes as "family." For example, statements that refer to parents, "My father would have never approved of me dating outside of my 'kind,'" (SN 3.1.1.2) are to be coded here. Reference to sorority and fraternity "sisters" and "brothers" are coded as Friends/Aquaintances (SN 3.2), not as Family.

SN 3.1:

Family members are any member of the nuclear or extended family such as mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Friends/Acquaintances include persons who are denoted as friends from school, work, or other social affiliations. "I went out with some friends" (SN 3.2.1.3) or "My best friend never visited when he was over" (SN 3.2.1.2) are examples of friendship statements. It should be the respondent's judgment that the person is a friend/acquaintance and not your judgment. "My friend, who is also our Family Dynamics teacher, helped us a lot" is to be coded SN: Friends/Acquaintances because the instructor was referred to as a friend (SN 3.2.1.1; SN 3.2.2.1). Compare that to "Our Family Dynamics teacher helped us a lot" which is a SN: Authority statement (SN 3.4.1.1; SN 3.4.2.1).

SN 3.2:

Friends/Acquaintances include persons who are denoted as friends or acquaintances from school, work, or other social affiliations.

Romantic Involvement is coded any time the statement refers to specific alternative dating partners of P and/or O. For example, "I was dating someone else" (SN 3.3.1.2) is coded Romantic Involvement. "I wanted to start dating other people," is not Romantic Involvement because there is not a specific person or set of persons having a direct

influence on the relationship. It is a negative I/P: Cognition/Thought referring to the respondent (I/P 1.2.1.3).

SN 3.3:

Romantic Involvement is coded any time the statement refers to alternative dating partners of P and/or of O.

Authority includes all persons who are authority figures, such as teachers or employers. Religious leaders, however, are coded as Clergy and not as Authority. An example of the influence of authority is "My boss told me that my work was getting sloppy and so I had to concentrate more on work and less on dating" (SN 3.4.1.2).

SN 3.4:

Authority statements refer to the influence of persons in positions of power such as teachers or employers.

Clergy includes religious leaders and consultants such as priests, rabbis, and ministers. While these persons may be considered authority figures they are to be coded separately from authority because of the unique role of religiosity in human relations. "Our minister really disapproved of dating non-parishioners so it made it tough to go out" (SN 3.5.1.2) is an example of a Clergy statement. If a statement refers

to the belief of God ("I don't think God would approve") then code the statement as an Individual/Personal statement because it is an individual experience and belief. The code would be a negative I/P: Cognition/Thought statement (I/P 1.2.1.2). If, however, the respondents refer to God as a person with whom they have had a conversation ("I told God that I was putting it in His hands and He led me to the answer") then it is a Clergy response because God is being referred to as a religious consultant with whom there was communication (SN 3.5.1.3; Surra, 1988).

SN 3.5:

Clergy includes religious leaders and consultants such as priests, rabbis, and ministers.

If a Social Network reason cannot be placed into one of these five subcategories, then Other is selected.

SN 3.6:

Other is reserved for reasons that cannot be placed into a Family, Friends/Aquaintances, Romantic Involvement, Authority, or Clergy subcategory.

Level III. It is important to identify which partner was affected by the social network (Zvonkovic &

Ponzetti, 1988). The social network subcategories, therefore, are further defined by specifying who was affected; the respondents (Respondent = 1) or their partner (Partner = 2). The rules for adding this subcategory to the social network statements are as follows:

SN 3.X.1:

A statement referring to the respondent.

SN 3.X.2:

A statement referring to the partner.

Level IV. The statements here are to be coded as positive, negative (Surra, 1988; Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988), or neutral. A positive (1) statement reveals a social network influence which fosters the continuance of the dating relationship. A negative (2) statement refers to a social network influence which impedes the continuance of the dating relationship. And last, a neutral (3) statement refers to a social network influence which neither fosters nor impedes the progress of the dating relationship. For example, "Her best friend really helped me to understand her moods" is a positive SN: Friends/Aquantance (SN 3.2.1.1) statement, while "His Dad was always instigating fights between us" is a negative SN: Family statement (SN

3.1.2.2). A neutral statement is "My roommate would always give me his opinion about my partner's behavior when I'd ask," (SN 3.3.1.3). The rules for the positive/negative/neutral subcategory to the Social Network statements are as follows:

SN 3.X.X.1:

A Positive Social Network influence fosters the continuance of the dating relationship.

SN 3.X.X.2:

A Negative Social Network influence impedes the continuance of the dating relationship.

SN 3.X.X.3:

A Neutral Social Network influence neither fosters nor impedes the continuance of the dating relationship.

Circumstantial/Situational

Level I. An expected or unexpected event that originates outside of P and O, over which the respondents perceived they had little control, is Circumstantial/ Situational (Surra, 1988; Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988). Persons in casual-dating relationships may perceive physical separation, academic calendars, or employment requirements as Circumstantial/Situational events (Surra, 1988). Reasons that involve accidents or twists of fate for P, O, or social network members are also coded as circumstantial (Surra, 1988). For example, "His parents lost all their money and needed him to help support the family," (CS 4.4.2). The rule for this category is:

CS 4:

Circumstantial/Situational

statements refer to events that (a) were expected or unexpected, (b) originated outside of P and O, and/or (c) were perceived to be outside of the control of P and O.

Level II. There are five subcategories for Circumstantial/Situational. First, Physical Separation is selected any time the respondent mentions that the physical distance between the partners (spacial

proximity) is so great as to prohibit dating (Surra, 1988; Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988). This may refer to long distances ("She decided to live and work in Iceland," CS 4.1.2) or to seemingly small distances ("He moved into a different apartment complex," CS 4.1.2). The important factor is that the respondent refers to the distance between them as causing a difficulty. The rule for Physical Separation is:

CS 4.1:

Physical Separation statements

specify the spacial proximity of P and

O.

Health. Next, it is possible that respondents will indicate that difficulties associated with either their own physical well-being or the physical well-being of the partner became a problem (Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988). For instance, "When she tore the ligaments in her knee she had to go home for a semester for surgery" (CS 4.2.2). This subcategory, Health is defined as:

CS 4.2:

Health statements refer to one or the other partner's physical well-being.

The Academics/Employment subcategory is reserved for statements which refer to difficulties incurred by the academic or employment calendar (e.g., beginning or end of semesters, the end of the fiscal year) (Surra,

1988; Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988). For example, "The semester ended and I had to go back home" (CS 4.3.2), or "Inventory took longer than we planned so I missed the party" (CS 4.3.2). Also included in this category are references to the requirements of coursework (e.g., "A large project was due," CS 4.3.2) or paid work ("I was 'on-call' a lot of the time so I could never plan dates," CS 4.3.2) and references to academic and paid work scheduling ("We had conflicting schedules," CS 4.3.2).

To be appropriate for this category the statement must also reflect the perception that the difficulties are out of P and O's control. If the statement indicates perceived control over the situation, then it does not belong in this subcategory. Compare "I preferred to work on my homework after dinner every night," versus, "I tried to hurry with my homework so we could go out more often but there was just too much to do." The former statement should be coded as a negative I/P: Behavior/Action of the respondent (I/P 1.1.1.2) while the latter statement should be coded Academics/Employment of the respondent (CS 4.1.2).

CS 4.3:

An Academics/Employment statement indicates that either (a) the school calendar, (b) the requirements of coursework or paid work, or (c) academic or paid work schedules, caused difficulties for the dating partners.

Social Network Circumstances. "Accidents or twists of fate for network members" are circumstantial rather than social network reasons (Surra, 1988, p. 22). Therefore, any statement referring to something beyond the control of the social network members, for example "After her parents' house was flooded she was too busy helping them with repairs to go out with me" (CS 4.4.2), should be coded here. The rule for this subcategory is:

CS 4.4:Social Network Circumstances

includes "accidents or twists of fate for network members" (Surra, 1988, p. 22).

Last, Other statements are rarely used. Statements in this subcategory are Circumstantial/Situational but do not fit in the other subcategories (Physical Separation, Health,

Academics/Employment, Social Network Circumstances).

The rule for other is:

CS 4.5:

Other is reserved for reasons that cannot be placed into a Physical Separation, Health, Academics/Employment, or Social Network Circumstances subcategory.

Level III. For each of the subcategories indicate whether the statement is positive (1), negative (2) (Zvonkovic & Ponzetti, 1988), or neutral (3). A positive statement refers to a circumstance which fosters future interaction with the dating partner. A negative statement refers to a circumstance which impedes future interaction with the dating partner. A neutral circumstance neither facilitates nor impedes future interaction with the dating partner. For example, "His parents moved to my hometown, so we still went out in the summer" is a positive Circumstantial/Situational (CS 4.1.1) statement, while "We couldn't go out because she took a semester off to travel" is a negative Circumstantial/Situational statement (CS 4.1.2). A neutral statement is "I was always catching colds, so we spent a lot of dates indoors" (CS 4.2.3). The rules for adding the

positive/negative/neutral subcategory to  
Circumstantial/Situational statements are as follows:

CS 4.X.1:

A positive statement refers to a  
circumstance which fosters future  
interaction with the dating partner.

CS 4.X.2:

A negative statement refers to a  
circumstance which impedes future  
interaction with the dating partner.

CS 4.X.3:

A neutral circumstance neither  
facilitates nor impedes future  
interaction with the dating partner.

Missing Data

Last, Missing Data is used when data are either missing or not codable. The following rules should be observed in coding this category:

MD 5.1:

No Response is coded any time the respondent either does not write in the space provided or writes in the word "none."

MD 5.2:

Uncodable is coded any time the handwriting of the respondent is illegible or the meaning of the answer is not clear (e.g., "Maybe, Maybe not").

## REFERENCES

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- Surra, C. A. (1988). Turning Point Coding Manual III Coding Rules and Definitions. Unpublished manuscript, University of Arizona, Tucson.
- Zvonkovic, A. & Ponzetti, J. (1988). Coding Instructions: Divorce Study. Unpublished manuscript, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon.

COOING CATEGORIES

Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
Individual/ Personal (IP).....1	Behavior/Action (BA).....1 Cognition/Thought (CT)....2 Attitude/Feeling/ Emotion (AFE).....3 Personal Characteristics (PC)....4	Respondent (P).....1 Partner (O).....2	Positive (+)....1 Negative (-)....2 Neutral (NEU)...3
Dyadic/ Interactional (DI)..2	Behavioral (B).....1  Interpersonal (I).....2	Behavioral Independence/ Interdependence (BII)..1 Behavioral Response Interdependence (BRI)..2 Communication/Lack of Communication (CLC)....3 Other (OR).....4 Incompatibility/ Compatibility (IC).....1 Cohesion/ Lack of Cohesion (COH).2 Nonromantic Relationship (NR).....3 Other (OR).....4	Positive (+)....1 Negative (-)....2 Neutral (NEU)...3
Social Network (SN)...3	Family (F).....1 Friends/Acquaintance (FR).2 Romantic Involvement (RI).3 Authority (AU).....4	Respondent (P).....1 Partner (O).....2	Positive (+)....1 Negative (-)....2 Neutral (NEU)...3

Level I

Level II

Level III

Level IV

	Clergy (CL).....5		
	Other (OR).....6		
Circumstantial/ Situational (CS)....4	Physical Separation (PS)..1	Positive (+).....1	
	Health (H).....2	Negative (-).....2	
	Academics/Employment (AE).3	Neutral (NEU).....3	
	Social Network		
	Circumstances (SNC).....4		
	Other (OR).....5		
Missing Data (MD).....5	No Response (N).....1		
	Uncodable (U).....2		

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## Appendix E

## Detailed-Coding Results

Individual/Personal: Behavior/ActionNegative Behavior/Action of the Respondent

Jealousy and dependency on my part

Too detached, unaggressive.

Was not aggressive enough.

Very busy. Especially at night (I'm a Bar Tender)

general lack of motivation.

Neutral Behavior/Action of the Respondent

Demanding or wanted to be w/him for a period of  
time each day.

Negative Behavior/Action of the Partner

He never had any money and he waited till the last  
minute to ask me out.

She doesn't have her head together & she has had a  
bad exper. w/ her childhood which made her  
decide to

hurt her mother over the yrs. She has forgotten the reason so she turned it into hurting her self instead

She wasn't interested in getting together any more. Wanted to concentrate more on schoolwork.

Neutral Behavior/Action of the Respondent

He was very busy with his extra-curricular activities. He was very serious about his athletic career.

Individual/Personal: Cognition/Thought

Negative Cognition/Thought of the Respondent

I did not want a permanent relationship - - I wanted to date once in a while.

My independence. I wanted to date around.

I felt school was more important than the relationship; I didn't want to be tied down.

Because I'm not ready for a steady relationship and I get bored fast.

None - - except may be that I'm not willing to take being treated like dirt.

Neutral Cognition/Thought of the Respondent

I didn't want to get deeply involved either.

I started to realize that he had a "freeloader" mentality.

I wanted a serious relationship with a person of high ideals & good goals.

I wasn't sure I wanted to just date him.

I wanted a stable relationship and committment.

Because I place spiritual values as a high priority in dating.

Negative Cognition/Thought of the Partner

Wanted to date other people and not get serious

He didn't want any responsibilities.

Because at this point in his life, he felt the

relationship wasn't worth working for in

comparison to the problems we were having

She also was confused about what she really

wanted. She also is strict in believing that

because we are different religions we can't

remain serious with each other.

Neutral Cognition/Thought of the Partner

He thought he owned me.

His expectations of me.

He seemed to be very uncertain about major issues in his life like school, career. Plus he had a steady girlfriend at home which he felt would affect our relationship.

Individual/Personal: Attitude/Feeling/EmotionNegative Attitude/Feeling/Emotion of the Respondent

Diversion of feelings.

Afraid of being hurt.

My possible fear of getting too involved and my desire for change.

Negative Attitude/Feeling/Emotion of the Partner

1st is diversion of feelings.

Didn't want to be so serious, started liking another guy.

Neutral Attitude/Feeling/Emotion of the Partner

Wanted a more permanent relationship

Individual/Personal: Personal CharacteristicNegative Personal Characteristic of the Respondent

Independency.

Stubbornness & wanting to be trusted.

My independence.

Not enough patience.

My macho suave, debonier personality told me to -

- "move on."

Inadequacy to be more dominant.

Neutral Personal Characteristic of the Respondent

Extreme subjectiveness and "irresponsibility."

I am a goal oriented person & I don't believe in  
getting something for nothing.

My independence plus a need to always have  
everything defined.

Stubbornness.

Inconsistency.

Negative Personal Characteristic of the Partner

His extreme objectiveness.

He had a drinking problem and he had no goals or ambitions.

Overempowering.

Stubbornness and jealousy.

He was wishy-washy.

Selfish, jealous.

Not open enough.

Inconsiderate, unappreciative, mentally demanding from her persistent stupidity!

Her Stubbornness.

Partner had severe emotional problems.

Immaturity.

Selfishness.

In consideration.

Neutral Personal Characteristic of the Partner

His ego.

His willingness not to settle for something less than what he truly desired.

Domineering.

His possessiveness.

Him being domineering.

She needs someone to guide her.

Dyadic/Interactional: BehavioralBehavioral Independence/Interdependence, Positive

He made all of the plans. I accepted but did not offer any future plans.

Behavioral Independence/Interdependence, Negative

I wanted more of his time than he was willing to give.

I really don't know. I was taken by surprise. He stopped the relationship because I was taking too much time.

When we discovered a problem in our relationship we cancelled the relationship rather than work out the problem.

Lack of participation in relationship. Thought that it was time consuming.

It meant spending less time w/ this person.

Too dependant, wanted too much of my time.

That I wasn't willing to spend as much time w/ him as he wanted.

She saw that we could and were becoming quite involved w/ each other. Since she wasn't ready for such a close relationship (especially w/ me a non-Baptist) she had to break it off

completely before we became even more attached.

We can't even be friends.

I am really involved in a lot of activities and she is not. I enjoy a girlfriend & we'd designate intentional time to spend together but I guess it wasn't enough.

Lack of time.

Because of low interest & little time the relationship suffered.

#### Behavioral Response Interdependence, Positive

Willingness to accept his point of view at times

#### Behavioral Response Interdependence, Negative

Not having enough confidence and truly believing all he said- -confidence & trust.

He was a person that liked to be to himself and I had him figured out too well - - he felt uncomfortable so he thought he was being manipulated.

His drinking disgusted me (I even worked in a bar at the time).

His apathy towards things I feel strongly about.

He was dependent on lots of things so he hated that I wasn't.

I don't think he believed that I ever really trusted him - - I "worried" about the relationship too much.

He was a very self-centered type of person and I didn't like that.

I can't stand inconsiderate people. Even if he wasn't too inconsiderate of me he was with many other people and I knew it wouldn't be long before he treated me the same.

Because I didn't give her time to open up.

I was trying to make her become what I wanted in my mind for her to become.

She wanted more out of the relationship than I was willing to put in.

I didn't give her enough attention.

Perhaps tried to rush things too much.

May have pushed her into a behavior before she was ready e.g., having a relationship.

#### Behavioral Response Interdependence, Neutral

I might have put some kind of pressure on her when she wanted to just date around.

I don't know, I terminated the relationship. She still wants to date me.

Communication/Lack of Communication, Positive

I feel I perceived alot of his needs as well as my own & when they weren't being met I initiated a discussion about the subject and was right.

Communication/Lack of Communication, Negative

Lack of communication of how he felt about me & the relationship.

He said I was manipulative - - however, I don't see any reason he thought this.

Lack of communication

I could never figgure out what she wanted or was trying to tell me.

Little communication.

Communication/Lack of Communication, Neutral

He talked about little else but himself.

InterpersonalIncompatibility/Compatibility, Positive

She didn't have any bad qualities. We got along great - - too great.

Incompatibility/Compatibility, Negative

Because I think you truly need to have a lot of trust in a relationship and I didn't have that trust.

Wanted more from relationship than to listen.

We are in the same profession, therefore somewhat competitive. I couldn't spend time w/a competitor w/o feeling somewhat defensive of my own goals.

They were extreme for both of us - - what was important to me didn't seem so for him.

Differences in life-time goals. He has less goals at this time.

We were getting close to the marriage part of a relationship & we were too different to commit ourselves to one another.

We were from different SES backgrounds.

SES Background.

Thought different on everything! Where we wanted to be 5 years from now - - our goals were totally different

Different point of view on alot of things  
concerning our relationship.

They clash.

I wouldn't give in and he wouldn't change.

He wanted to make a stronger committment and I was  
to involved in school to please him. I liked  
dating around and he didn't.

I like lots of attention, which he gave to me at  
first, but as the relationship grew I don't  
think he could handle it.

We were both basically pretty spoiled and neither  
one of us wanted to give an inch.

Make plans with people not only with me and be  
late, totally forget, blow it off or something.  
We also talked about how this and that was a sin  
but I felt the way he treated other people was  
as bad as he thought drinking, etc. was.

If I were to put up with or settle with a give &  
no take on my part relationship I would present  
myself as vulnerable. Our needs could not be  
met.

Because he was looking for more of a 1 on 1  
relationship, while I wanted to continue seeing  
others.

Other interests and our spiritual beliefs were not  
at the same level.

She wanted to tell everyone she "had a boyfriend"  
instead of having a relationship.

I wasn't ready to get very serious, but she was.  
She wanted me to be with her all the time, but I  
didn't want to be tied down.

Little shareing makes a poor relationship.

Because they were in total conflict with each  
other.

#### Cohesion/Lack of Cohesion, Negative

If I didn't feel for him as much it would waste  
both of our times. We shouldn't have continued.  
We didn't seem to care enough to keep in touch by  
writing & calling anymore because it was too  
hard and getting old.

We misunderstood one another, she didn't  
understand me, I misunderstood her.

Because we were growing apart and not together.

Cohesion/Lack of Cohesion, Neutral

I think our personalities matched ideally and this made us closer which she didn't think was possible.

## Social Network

Partner's Romantic Involvement, Negative

Another girl

## Circumstantial/Situational

Physical Separation, Negative

None, he is in Europe for a semester but we still write.

We had been dating 2 yrs out of the three while he was away at school and things just fell apart due to lack of communication and loss of interest.

The fact that he had to move to Houston, Texas

I ended up staying in Norman.

We had to be separated for his business purposes.

I had to stay in school.

Academic/Employment, Negative

Dealing w/ school and interfering w/ academics

Schedule conflicts.

My schedule.

Due to these conflicts and that she is an athlete

which keeps her pretty well run down and I have

to devote my spare time to studies.

Conflicting schedules.

Social Network Circumstances, Neutral

One of her aunts became seriously ill.

Missing Data

No Response

None.

?

Uncodable

Yes very much.

Explained before.

Yes.