

KELLY CAMPBELL

RESEARCH STATEMENT

Topics

My research interests are broadly focused on interpersonal relationships and cultural diversity. Within interpersonal relationships, I am specifically interested in couple rituals, commitment, infidelity, and marriage. I enjoy studying how each of these topics varies by culture, not only within North America, but also across the world. My goal is to understand how evolutionary mechanisms interact with sociocultural practices to influence the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. As such, my research is generally guided by theories of evolutionary psychology, symbolic interaction, and social exchange. I consider myself a mixed methods researcher and have experience with qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods studies.

Past Research

My master's thesis at The University of British Columbia examined the relationship between couple rituals and commitment in premarital relationships (Campbell & Ponzetti, 2007). Prior to this study, little was known about the role of rituals in unmarried relationships because research on this topic had been focused on marital and family relationships (Berg-Cross, Daniels, & Carr, 1992; Bruess & Pearson, 1997; Doherty, 2001; Fiese, Tomcho, Douglas, Josephs, Poltrock, & Baker, 2002). Results of my study indicated that the association between rituals and commitment was mediated by the Investment Model variables (Rusbult, 1983) of relationship satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and investment size. Since no validated measures of couple rituals existed, part of my thesis involved creating the Couple Rituals Scale. Furthering the development and validation of this measure was a focus in my doctoral studies.

Recent Research

While pursuing my Ph.D. at the University of Georgia, I continued to develop my program of research on couple rituals and commitment. First, I conducted a qualitative study to identify the specific types of rituals enacted within unmarried couple relationships (Campbell, Silva, & Wright, under review). Next, I designed a mixed methods study to refine and validate the Couple Rituals Scale. During this time, I noticed that interpersonal researchers were conceptualizing *repeated and meaningful behaviors* as four distinct constructs: couple rituals (Berg-Cross et al., 1992; Bruess & Pearson, 1997), commitment behaviors (Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2002), couple behaviors (Shumway & Wampler, 2002), and relationship maintenance mechanisms (Canary & Stafford, 1994). In order to examine the similarities and differences among these constructs, I designed a third study, which is currently in the data analysis phase. The study involves a theoretical and empirical comparison of the four constructs to determine whether they should be conceptualized as distinct or as a single construct. The final project involved working with Dr. Kostas Kafetsios at the University of Crete in Greece to refine a measure he had developed for assessing partners' perceptions of emotions within couple relationships.

My dissertation is a mixed methods study that examines newlyweds' conceptions of marriage, including their perceptions of infidelity and divorce. This topic is important because over the past 40 years, people in Western cultures have experienced shifts in their marital practices (National Center for Health Statistics, 2005). Today, Americans marry primarily for love and happiness,

whereas in the past, they married more for economic, political, and social reasons (Coontz, 2005; Pines, 2002). With personal fulfillment as the basis for marriage, infidelity and divorce are more likely to be considered when spouses experience periods of low marital satisfaction. In addition to understanding newlyweds' general conceptions of marriage, my study also investigates their expectations of infidelity and divorce in their own marriage. I will examine how these perceptions vary based on intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual characteristics. The intrapersonal variables being examined include demographic characteristics, personality, and sociosexual orientation. The interpersonal variables include relationship satisfaction and commitment, and the contextual variables include quality of alternatives and whether the participants live in/grew up in urban versus rural environments. My dissertation is supported by a \$1,000 grant that was awarded by the Graduate School at the University of Georgia. I am currently in the data analysis phase.

Future Research

In the years ahead, I will continue building on my program of research. Specifically, I will use the Couple Rituals Scale to examine how rituals impact partners' relational identities, life transitions, and coping strategies. I am also interested in how intercultural couples form and maintain their rituals, given that partners must negotiate rituals from not only their families of origin, but also their different cultural backgrounds. I will expand on my dissertation topic as well by exploring cultural variations in marital conceptualizations and how infidelity and divorce are perceived in different cultures. For example, what does marriage mean to people in different parts of the world and how do the concepts of commitment, infidelity, and divorce fit (or not fit) into people's marital schemas? I will focus on cultural groups within North America, but will continue my collaborations with researchers at foreign universities to understand this topic worldwide.

I am eligible to apply for and will seek research funding from multiple sources. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) offers Standard Research Grants for up to \$100,000 to Canadian citizens who conduct studies on interpersonal relationships. Additionally, the National Institute of Health (NIH) has grants (R03, R01, and R21/R33) specifically designated for new investigators. The NIH also offers the Fogarty International Research Collaboration Award (FIRCA) for research in the social sciences that involves collaborating with scientists in foreign countries. The Fulbright Grant is another source of funding I will apply for to support the research I conduct abroad.

References

- Berg-Cross, L., Daniels, C., & Carr, P. (1992). Marital rituals among divorced and married couples. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 18*, 1-30.
- Bruess, J. S. C., & Pearson, C. J. (1997). Interpersonal rituals in marriage and adult friendship. *Communication Monographs, 64*, 25- 46.
- Campbell, K., & Ponzetti, J. J. (2007). The moderating effects of rituals on commitment in premarital involvements. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy, 22*, 1-14.
- Campbell, K., Silva, L., & Wright, D. W. (under review). Rituals in unmarried couple relationships: An exploratory study. *Communication Monographs*.
- Canary, D. J., & Stafford, L. (1994). Maintaining relationships through strategic and routine interaction. In D. J. Canary & L. Stafford (Eds.), *Communication and relational maintenance* (pp. 6-23). New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Coontz, S. (2005). *Marriage, a history: How love conquered marriage*. New York: Viking.
- Doherty, W. J. (2001). *Take back your marriage*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Fiese, B. H., Tomcho, J. T., Douglas, M., Josephs, K., Poltrock, S., & Baker, T. (2002). A review of 50 years of research on naturally occurring family routines and rituals: Cause for celebration? *Journal of Family Psychology, 16*, 381-390.
- National Center for Health Statistics (2005). Births, marriages, divorces, and deaths: Provisional data for 2004. *National Vital Statistics Report, 53*, 1-7.
- Pinsof, W. M. (2002). The death of "till death do us part": The transformation of pair-bonding in the 20th century. *Family Process, 41*, 135-157.
- Rusbult, C. E. (1983). A longitudinal test of the investment model: The development (and deterioration) of satisfaction and commitment in heterosexual involvements. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 45*, 101-117.
- Shumway, S. T., & Wampler, R. S. (2002). A behaviorally focused measure for relationships: The Couple Behavior Report (CBR). *The American Journal of Family Therapy, 30*, 311-321.
- Weigel, D. J., & Ballard-Reisch, D. S. (2002). Investigating the behavioral indicators of relational commitment. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 19*, 403-423.