

EXPLICITNESS IN MONOGAMOUS AND NONMONOGAMOUS RELATIONSHIPS - A METHODOLOGICAL PROPOSAL FOR DATA COLLECTION

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Objective: To give an account of the current theoretical, ethical, and methodological shortcomings of how non/monogamy is addressed in data collection. To develop and test a theoretically-grounded research instrument that allows researchers to capture a specific dimension of intimate relationship configurations - namely, the level of explicitness present in the (perceived) relationship agreements and behaviors in regard to non/monogamy.

Design and Method: Through a literature review that encompasses the rise of the term “consensual nonmonogamies”, and its deployment in varied survey instruments, I seek to identify the existing lacunae in translating theory into research tools, and the limitations in data interpretability they give rise to. I then establish an ancillary classificatory construct - explicitness - and its relation to existing constructs. I then showcase different forms of operationalizing it, and the advantages and disadvantages associated with them, advocating a multi-construct approach, rather than a replacement of existing constructs. Lastly, I invite critique and the identification of potential flaws, in order to improve the instrument.

Results: N/A

Conclusions: Current survey methods often conflate identification with practices, relationship identities with individual identities, relationship identities with individual practices, and more. This proposal prioritizes a deeper understanding of the intersubjective experiences of (non-)shared understanding about what terms like “monogamy” or “nonmonogamy” mean, as a way to more clearly identify different types of research-relevant behaviors and identities.