Maybe I do: Interpersonal commitment and premarital or nonmarital cohabitation

ABSTRACT

Explanations for the risks associated with premarital and nonmarital cohabitation (e.g., higher rates of breakup and divorce, lower relationship satisfaction, and greater risk for violent interaction) have focused on levels of conventionality, including attitudes about commitment to the institution of marriage. However, relatively little attention has been paid to the role of interpersonal, not institutional, commitment. In a national random sample (United States), premarital and nonmarital cohabitation were associated with lower levels of interpersonal commitment to partners, suggesting links to further understanding of risk in these relationships. Premarital cohabitation was particularly associated with less committed and less religious males. Prior findings associating cohabitation with lower levels of happiness and religiosity, and higher levels of negative interaction (for men) were replicated.