CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-36990-9 - Stability and Change in Relationships
Edited by Anita L. Vangelisti, Harry T. Reis and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick
Frontmatter
More information

STABILITY AND CHANGE IN RELATIONSHIPS

Understanding interpersonal relationships requires understanding actors, behaviors, and contexts. This volume presents cutting-edge research from a variety of disciplines that examines personal relationships on all three levels. The first section focuses on the factors that influence individuals to enter, maintain, and dissolve relationships. The second section emphasizes ongoing processes that characterize relationships and focuses on issues such as arguing and sacrificing. The third and final section demonstrates that the processes of stability and change are embedded in social, cultural, and historical contexts. Chapters address cultural universals as well as cross-cultural differences in relationship behaviors and outcomes. The emergence of new relational forms, such as the interaction between people and computers, is also explored. *Stability and Change in Relationships* will be of interest to individuals in a broad range of fields including psychology, sociology, communication, gerontology, and counseling.

Anita L. Vangelisti is a well-known researcher in the field of communication whose work focuses on family interaction and the communication of emotion in personal relationships. She has coauthored and edited several books and has served as associate editor of *Personal Relationships*.

Harry T. Reis is an eminent social psychologist who is known for his research on intimacy as an interpersonal process as well as his work on the development of theories of social interaction. He previously served as editor of the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, published by the American Psychological Association.

Mary Anne Fitzpatrick, a leading figure in the field of communication, has done extensive research on communication in marriage and has established one of the best-known typologies of marital interaction. She has published more than 75 articles and chapters and has authored and edited several books.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-36990-9 - Stability and Change in Relationships
Edited by Anita L. Vangelisti, Harry T. Reis and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick
Frontmatter
More information

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-36990-9 - Stability and Change in Relationships
Edited by Anita L. Vangelisti, Harry T. Reis and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick
Frontmatter
More information

ADVANCES IN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Series Editiors
HARRY T. REIS
University of Rochester

MARY ANNE FITZPATRICK
University of Wisconsin, Madison

ANITA L. VANGELISTI
University of Texas, Austin

Advances in Personal Relationships represents the culmination of years of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary work on personal relationships. Sponsored by the International Society for the Study of Personal Relationships (ISSPR), the series offers readers cutting-edge research and theory in the field. Contributing authors are internationally known scholars from a variety of disciplines, including social psychology, clinical psychology, communication, history, sociology, gerontology, and family studies. Volumes include integrative reviews, conceptual pieces, summaries of research programs, and major theoretical works.

PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED

Valerie Manusov and John H. Harvey, eds., *Attribution, Communication Behavior, and Close Relationships*

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-36990-9 - Stability and Change in Relationships
Edited by Anita L. Vangelisti, Harry T. Reis and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick
Frontmatter
More information

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-36990-9 - Stability and Change in Relationships
Edited by Anita L. Vangelisti, Harry T. Reis and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick
Frontmatter
More information

Stability and Change in Relationships

Edited by

ANITA L. VANGELISTI
University of Texas, Austin

HARRY T. REIS
University of Rochester

MARY ANNE FITZPATRICK
University of Wisconsin, Madison

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-36990-9 - Stability and Change in Relationships
Edited by Anita L. Vangelisti, Harry T. Reis and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick
Frontmatter
More information

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521369909

© Cambridge University Press 2002

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2002
First paperback edition 2011

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Stability and change in relationships / edited by Anita L. Vangelisti, Harry T. Reis, Mary Anne Fitzpatrick.
p. cm. – (Advances in personal relationships)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-521-79076-x (hardcover)
1. Interpersonal relations. 2. Change (Psychology) I. Vangelisti, Anita L. II. Reis, Harry T. III. Fitzpatrick, Mary Anne, 1949– IV. Advances in personal relationships (Cambridge, England)

HM1106 .S75 2002
302 – dc21 2001035611

ISBN 978-0-521-79076-5 Hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-36990-9 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in
this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is,
or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-36990-9 - Stability and Change in Relationships
Edited by Anita L. Vangelisti, Harry T. Reis and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick
Frontmatter
More information

Contents

Contributors *page* ix

Preface xi

PART ONE: ACTORS: THE SCAFFOLDING OF STABILITY AND CHANGE

1 Change in Relationship Knowledge Representations 5
Paula R. Pietromonaco, Jean-Philippe Laurenceau, and Lisa Feldman Barrett

2 Personality Effects on Personal Relationships over the Life Span 35
Jens B. Asendorpf

3 An Intergenerational Model of Romantic Relationship Development 57
Chalandra M. Bryant and Rand D. Conger

4 How Relationships Begin and End: A Genetic Perspective 83
David T. Lykken

PART TWO: BEHAVIORS: THE PROCESSES OF STABILITY AND CHANGE

5 Serial Arguing over the Relational Life Course: Antecedents and Consequences 107
Michael E. Roloff and Kristen Linnea Johnson

6 Communication, Relationship Concerns, and Satisfaction in Early Marriage 129
Patricia Noller and Judith A. Feeney

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-36990-9 - Stability and Change in Relationships
Edited by Anita L. Vangelisti, Harry T. Reis and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick
Frontmatter
More information

7 Sacrifice in Romantic Relationships: An Exploration of Relevant Research and Theory 156
Sarah Whitton, Scott Stanley, and Howard Markman

8 Stability and Change in Social Relations: Perspectives from Gerontology and Stress Research 182
David A. Chiriboga

9 What Microanalysis of Behavior in Social Situations Can Reveal about Relationships across the Life Span 207
Rebecca M. Warner

10 Developing a Multifaceted View of Change in Relationships 228
Ronald D. Rogge and Thomas N. Bradbury

PART THREE: CONTEXTS: SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS FOR STABILITY AND CHANGE

11 Social Networks and Change in Personal Relationships 257
Susan Sprecher, Diane Felmlee, Terri L. Orbuch, and Marion C. Willetts

12 Creating a Context for Change: Integrative Couple Therapy 285
Jennifer Wheeler and Andrew Christensen

13 Passionate Love and Sexual Desire: Cultural and Historical Perspectives 306
Elaine Hatfield and Richard L. Rapson

14 Rules for Responsive Robots: Using Human Interactions to Build Virtual Interactions 325
Joseph N. Cappella and Catherine Pelachaud

Author Index 355

Subject Index 370

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-36990-9 - Stability and Change in Relationships
Edited by Anita L. Vangelisti, Harry T. Reis and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick
Frontmatter
More information

Contributors

Jens B. Asendorpf, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Lisa Feldman Barrett, Boston College

Thomas N. Bradbury, University of California, Los Angeles

Chalandra M. Bryant, Iowa State University, Ames

Joseph N. Cappella, University of Pennsylvania

David A. Chiriboga, Florida Mental Health Institute, University of South Florida

Andrew Christensen, University of California, Los Angeles

Rand D. Conger, University of California, Davis

Judith A. Feeney, University of Queensland, Australia

Diane Felmlee, University of California, Davis

Elaine Hatfield, University of Hawaii, Honolulu

Kristen Linnea Johnson, Andersen Consulting

Jean-Philippe Laurenceau, University of Miami

David T. Lykken, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

Howard Markman, University of Denver

Patricia Noller, University of Queensland, Australia

Terri L. Orbuch, Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan

Catherine Pelachaud, Università di Roma

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-36990-9 - Stability and Change in Relationships
Edited by Anita L. Vangelisti, Harry T. Reis and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick
Frontmatter
More information

Paula R. Pietromonaco, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Richard L. Rapson, University of Hawaii, Honolulu

Ronald D. Rogge, University of California, Los Angeles

Michael E. Roloff, Northwestern University

Susan Sprecher, Illinois State University

Scott Stanley, University of Denver

Rebecca M. Warner, University of New Hampshire

Jennifer Wheeler, University of Washington

Sarah Whitton, University of Denver

Marion C. Willetts, Illinois State University

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-36990-9 - Stability and Change in Relationships
Edited by Anita L. Vangelisti, Harry T. Reis and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick
Frontmatter
More information

Preface

When people think about personal relationships, questions about stability and change jump into mind. An individual's behavior in current relationships is often explained by invoking similar relationships from the past. Feelings about one's present-day relationships reflect not so much current circumstances as the manner in which those circumstances are perceived to have improved or deteriorated. Hopes, fears, fantasies, and goals for future relationships tend not to be conceived in a vacuum, but rather are couched in terms of the present and the past. Among the most common questions that we, as relationship researchers, get from our acquaintances and students are questions about how to avoid repeating the mistakes and misfortunes of past relationships in subsequent relationships (which probably accounts for the widespread appeal of this same question in popular media).

The compelling interest in questions about stability and change evidenced by the lay public is matched by researchers interested in the scientific study of personal relationships. It is not surprising, therefore, that when the International Society for the Study of Personal Relationships decided to sponsor a series of edited volumes on timely, cutting-edge theory and research, continuity and change in personal relationships were identified as a preeminent issue. The chapters collected in this volume testify to the intellectual vigor with which scholars have sought to unravel the complex processes and associations that contribute to relationship stability and change. Thus we believe that readers will find their appreciation of, and knowledge about, relationships stimulated, enlightened, challenged, inspired, provoked, and ultimately, we hope, raised to a new level of understanding.

If nothing else, this volume makes plain the fact that questions about stability and change are far more complex than they first appear. The

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-36990-9 - Stability and Change in Relationships
Edited by Anita L. Vangelisti, Harry T. Reis and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick
Frontmatter
More information

chapters provide nuanced portrayals of how genetic, psychological, and social factors influence relationships, and how relational qualities, in turn, affect individuals and their social environments. The interaction among variables that occurs across these different levels of analysis represents one of the more fundamental themes throughout the volume. Most scholars agree that the causal influences between individuals and relationships are bidirectional – that is, that individual properties affect interactions and relationships and that relationship properties also affect individuals. Researchers also concur that properties and processes predictive at a given level of analysis may not be relevant at other levels of analysis. As is evident throughout this collection, then, questions about the perspective from which stability and change are examined, about the mechanisms associated with stability and change, and about the techniques used to measure stability and change are hotly debated.

In soliciting and organizing the contributions represented in this volume, we were guided by four propositions about relationships and how they function suggested by Sroufe and Fleeson (1986). The first proposition is that relationships are characterized by coherence and continuity. That is, even though relationships and relationship systems may be in a constant state of flux, relational processes often exhibit coherence across contexts and stability across transformations. There is, then, a seeming paradox: Relationships continually change, yet they do so in ways that are both patterned and often remarkably similar. Because relationships have structure, information about one component of the system may allow researchers to predict characteristics of other components. In other words, although relational processes and the behavioral manifestations of those processes may be dynamic and somewhat idiosyncratic, they are nonetheless intelligible. For instance, relationships that are headed toward dissolution may come apart at different times and at different rates, but existing research has identified some of the factors that contribute to dissolution processes and trajectories. Similarly, the interactions that occur between parents and children constantly change, yet scholars can forecast many of these changes before they occur.

Sroufe and Fleeson's second proposition is that individuals internalize (i.e., mentally represent) relationships. People know about relationships, particularly their own relationships. They believe that certain things are likely to happen in relationships and they evaluate their relationships in terms of those beliefs. Many popular theoretical

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-36990-9 - Stability and Change in Relationships
Edited by Anita L. Vangelisti, Harry T. Reis and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick
Frontmatter
More information

systems – for example, attachment theory, object relations theory, and social cognitive theories – posit that internalized models of relationships exert potent influence on attention, perception, expectations, memory, emotion, judgment, and behavior (Reis & Downey, 1999). These mental representations, while often quite stable, are also open to change to varying degrees. A major life transition may compel individuals to reinvent their model of what a relationship is and ought to be. Furthermore, ordinary social life causes us to encounter people who possess alternative views of relationships, requiring that we cope with discrepancies between what we "know" about relationships and what others "know." This may happen in numerous ways. For example, individuals may accommodate diverse views, integrating differences within a more complex mental model; they may attempt to persuade the other person to change his or her views; or they may simply dismiss the differences. The tendency to change relationship beliefs depends to some extent, of course, on the roots of those beliefs. Some beliefs are emotionally charged, whereas others are dispassionate. Some beliefs are founded in personality and may reflect individuals' genetic legacy, whereas other beliefs are shaped primarily by experiences. The factors that affect differences in people's mental models about relationships and the ways that these models both reflect and cause stability and change in relationships are the foci of several chapters in this volume.

The third proposition is that representations of prior relationships are carried forward to new relationships. Thus, established relationship knowledge has consequences for subsequent cognition, affect, and behavior in social interaction (Baldwin, 1992; Berscheid, 1994). Assessments of others are profoundly influenced by expectations of what relationships should and should not be. Likewise, emotions, both positive and negative, reflect the correspondence between expectations and circumstances. Relationship knowledge is used to communicate with partners, to select among the various behavioral options available in any given situation, and to help interpret and then respond to others' behavior and communication. The "carrying forward" of relationship knowledge is based on more than personal development: The application of relational knowledge is situated within, and is influenced by, social, cultural, familial, and historical contexts that cue individuals about the relevance of different relational beliefs. Thus, relationship knowledge may influence future generations as knowledge, beliefs, values, myths, and secrets are transmitted from one generation to the next.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-36990-9 - Stability and Change in Relationships
Edited by Anita L. Vangelisti, Harry T. Reis and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick
Frontmatter
More information

The fourth proposition described by Sroufe and Fleeson is that relationships are best considered as "wholes" (i.e., more than additive combinations of partner characteristics) and therefore should be examined in terms of the interrelation of their parts (i.e., their organization or structure; Reis, Collins, & Berscheid, 2000). In other words, relationships operate as interdependent systems of influence and constraint (Kelley, 1983). Thus, when one partner acts, the behavior of the other is necessarily affected. This may be evident, for example, in the tendency of a child to be hostile and reactive to one parent, yet warm and responsive to the other. Similarly, stability or change in one relational domain (i.e., financial contributions to the family) may facilitate or constrain the likelihood of change in another domain (i.e., parental roles). Chapters in this book clearly demonstrate that even a very focused change in one aspect of a relationship may have broad consequences for that relationship (and for the other relationships with which it is associated, as discussed in the next paragraph). The interconnected nature of relational systems presents a challenge for researchers and theorists who aim to understand and explain relational processes.

Relationship systems are characterized not only by the connections and relations between their components but also by the interactions between the dyad and its larger social environment. From birth, individuals and dyads contribute to systems or networks of relationships. As implied by the term "network," all relationships within a network influence one another to a greater or lesser degree. These influences in turn reflect back on the dyad and the development of the individual partners. The various levels of analysis inherent in this many-tiered system – individuals, dyads, families, groups, societies – are not discrete but rather coexist in a state of ongoing influence and interdependence (Reis et al., 2000). As is reflected in several chapters in this volume, relationship researchers often investigate these systems by examining some of their lower-level elements. For example, in examining family processes, the theorist may consider the mother–infant exchange as the focal point for analysis. Linking levels are feedback loops that amplify or dampen the effects of various interactions in the system.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS VOLUME

The field of personal relationships is multidisciplinary in large part because a proper understanding of personal relationships demands

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-36990-9 - Stability and Change in Relationships
Edited by Anita L. Vangelisti, Harry T. Reis and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick
Frontmatter
More information

simultaneous focus on actors, behaviors, and contexts. Hence we have organized this volume according to these three important categories. The first section focuses on individuals as they enter, maintain, and dissolve relationships. These chapters turn the lens toward cognitive, emotional, and personality factors that undergird relational stability and change processes. In the second section, we move beyond the individual to examine what transpires between partners. These chapters describe dynamic processes of change that are revealed in interactions and interpersonal behaviors, as well the inferences that partners make about these behaviors. The third and final section considers how the processes of stability and change are embedded in social, cultural, and transhistorical contexts. This contextual perspective includes consideration of therapeutic interventions as well as new relationship variations that are emerging from contemporary technological innovations.

The chapters in this volume represent not so much a definitive declaration on the when, why, and how of stability and change but rather a portal between prior conceptualizations, which naively assumed that a correlation coefficient between two measures spanning a suitable interval would be all that was needed, and the future, in which, we believe, these and yet richer theoretical models will have been supported by empirical evidence. In other words, we hope this volume will do more than describe what is known about stability and change in relationships; we hope it will stimulate new research and new ideas into this perennially compelling topic.

REFERENCES

Baldwin, M. W. (1992). Relational schemas and the processing of social information. *Psychological Bulletin*, *112*, 461–484.

Berscheid, E. (1994). Interpersonal relationships. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *45*, 79–129.

Kelley, H. H. (1983). Analyzing close relationships. In H. H. Kelley, E. Berscheid, A. Christensen, J. H. Harvey, T. L. Huston, G. Levinger, E. McClintock, L. A. Peplau, & D. R. Peterson (Eds.), *Close relationships* (pp. 20–67). New York: Freeman.

Reis, H. T., & Downey, G. (1999). Social cognition in relationships: Building essential bridges between two literatures. *Social Cognition*, *17*, 97–117.

Reis, H. T., Collins, W. A., & Berscheid, E. (2000). The relationship context of human behavior and development. *Psychological Bulletin*, *126*, 844–872.

Sroufe, L. A., & Fleeson, J. (1986). Attachment and the construction of relationships. In W. W. Hartup & Z. Rubin (Eds.), *Relationships and development* (pp. 51–71). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org