

CO-CONSTRUCTING WORK-LIFE CONCERNS: AN EXAMINATION OF COUPLES' DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

Within the scholarship of work-life, there are many opportunities for new research, including expanding the voices of men and couples through examining how couples continue to co-construct their concerns. Using Ashcraft and Mumby's (2004) theoretical framework of feminist communicology, this research examined how couple's co-construct work-life concerns and how these issues are communicatively handled. The purpose of this study was to build an understanding of how couples' co-construct work life concerns as well as how issues of power and gender work in their relationships. To answer the research questions, 19 couples participated in dyadic interviews, and each partner also completed a stimulated recall interview. These interviews resulted in over 900 pages of text that was then analyzed. Through this framework, three central themes emerged that illustrated the ways that the couples' communication was constructed, the ways in which the couples communicatively constructed their relationships, and the ways that power and consequently gender were constructed in couples' conversations about work-life concerns. Individuals in relationships (re)create gender and power in ways that offer the couples both possibilities and limit opportunities. Additionally this study offers scholars an expanded understanding of couples' work-life co-constructions and opportunities for future research.

