To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Shacunda Joytae Burton entitled "To Go or Not to Go, That is the Question: An Empirical Analysis of Battered Women's Decision Making Processes While Residing in a Domestic Violence Shelter." I have examined the final paper copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Psychology.

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TO GO OR NOT TO GO, THAT IS THE QUESTION: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF BATTERED WOMEN'S DECISION MAKING PROCESSES WHILE RESIDING IN A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Shacunda Joytae Burton

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Delphine Burton, whose strength provided me the courage and inspiration to follow this path of academic exploration and personal growth.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that are predictive of battered women's intent to return to their abusive relationships before exiting a domestic violence shelter. This study also sought to examine those factors that predict domestic violence victims' actual stay/leave behaviors. Specifically, this study sought to replicate and extend the model of research conducted by Choice and Lamke (1999), who examined stay/leave decisions in abusive dating relationships. In the present study, residents of various domestic violence shelters completed a set of questionnaires measuring the question "Will I be better off" and its four components, Relationship Distress, Quality of Alternatives, Irretrievable Investments, and Subjective Norm, and the question "Can I do it" and its two components, Personal Resources/Barriers, and Structural Resources/Barriers.

Multiple regression analyses revealed statistically significant relationship between battered women's intent to return and the constructs Quality of Alternatives and Personal Resources/Barriers. However, logistic regression analyses indicated that the constructs, Structural Investments in Marriage and Structural Resources/Barriers, were predictive of battered women's actual stay/leave behaviors once exiting domestic violence shelters. Findings from this study also indicate that battered women's intent to return to their relationships was a significant predictor in their post-shelter stay/leave behaviors.

Recommendations for assessment and intervention with battered women residing in domestic violence shelters are provided.

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I. Introduction and Literature Review

The phenomenon of domestic violence is a widespread social problem that impacts lives of many people throughout the world. It does not exist within the confines of cultural heritage, socioeconomic status, gender, age, or religious affiliation. Rather, its pervasive and ubiquitous nature dwells in each of these contexts, often having frightening and alarming consequences for all parties involved. However, those on the receiving end of this type of violence must deal not only with the physical scars that remain, but also the emotional injuries associated therewith. Due to the high prevalence of domestic violence, a significant proportion of scholarly research has focused its attention on the factors that allow for the perpetuation of this type of destructive behavior. The purpose of this study is to review theoretical considerations and empirical research on domestic violence; examine theories of learned helplessness, psychological entrapment, investment, and reasoned action/planned behavior; and discuss an empirical study that extends this body of research to women residing in domestic violence shelters.

The literature reveals that the term, "domestic violence," has evolved throughout the years. For instance, it has been referred to as "wife abuse, male violence against female partners, woman abuse, and partner abuse" (Goodman et al., 1993; Walker, 1999). For the purposes of this paper, the use of "domestic violence" will be used in accordance with the definition as outlined by the APA Task Force on Violence and the Family. In this case, domestic violence is defined as "A pattern of abusive behaviors including a wide range of physical, sexual, and psychological maltreatment used by one person in an

intimate relationship against another to gain power unfairly or maintain that person's misuse of power, control, and authority" (Goodman et al., 1994, p. 1054).

Although a paucity of scholarly literature existed in the realm of domestic violence prior to the 1970's, early schools of thought emphasized personality characteristics of women in such relationships. During this time, theoreticians argued that abused women's masochistic tendencies caused their victimization in violent intimate relationships. Waites (1977) suggests that early perspectives of masochism indicate that "suffering, for women, is inherently bound up with erotic pleasure and is desired for that reason" (p. 536). Most theories about this subject originated from the work of Sigmund Freud, who postulated that masochism, as a facet of human sexuality revolves around "the endurance of pain and suffering in the hope, conscious or unconscious, of some greater good" (McWilliams, 1994). Other notions of masochism include "fear of loss of the object and fear of loss of its love, castration fear, and superego anxiety" (Lowenstein, 1989). This statement suggests that masochism is the mechanism through which one inflicts pain on the self to relieve or control fear and guilt through sexualized pain. Although theoretical conceptualizations about masochism have evolved throughout the years, they still retain the same elements of suffering in the context of interpersonal relatedness (Glickauf-Hughes &Wells, 1994; McWilliams, 1994; Snell, Rosenwald, & Robey, 1964; Young & Gerson, 1991).

Specifically, Young & Gerson (1991) attempt to deconstruct the old meaning of masochism as a form of sexual perversion, and instead propose the use of the term "relational masochism." The authors suggest that, contrary to old psychoanalytic notions

of sexual masochism being related to drive theory and the unconscious desire to endure pain, relational masochism incorporates tenets of object relations theory and attachment theory. The definition of relational masochism is consistent with past arguments against masochism:

> We suggest that what could be described as masochistic behavior among chronically battered women does not reflect pleasure in pain, but rather the endurance of pain as the price paid to stay close to the person she loves (p. 31).

Despite more contemporary definitions of masochism, this theory has been disputed in the literature on domestic violence. Such criticisms of this theory indicate that the conceptualization of masochism construes battered women has having some personality defect or flaw, which blames the victim unnecessarily for the abuse she receives in her relationship (Gortner, Berns, Jacobsen, & Gottman, 1997; Star, 1978; Symonds, 1979; Waites, 1977).

Since the days of early psychoanalytic theories of masochism, however, a significant quantity of research has examined other facets of psychological sequelae that battered women experience. In particular, Walker (1983) put forth the notion of the battered woman syndrome, characterizing it as a constellation of specific features and effects of abuse. Three distinct properties of battered woman syndrome include traumatic consequences, learned helplessness, and maladaptive and often self-destructive coping methods (Dutton & Painter, 1993). Authors posit that, over time, abused women suffer with decreased feelings of self-worth, hypervigilant behaviors, and learned helplessness. Due to a combination of these factors, in addition to a plethora of others, women in these

situations generally feel powerless to find a way out of abusive situations. Consequently, significant numbers of women remain in abusive relationships and marriages, potentially risking their own lives.

However, there are certain women that make attempts to leave their abusive relationships, although these attempts may be unsuccessful at times. As such, this group of women has garnered the attention of scholars in recent years. Particularly, research has examined those factors that compel some women to return to their abusive relationships despite their efforts to exit them. Some findings have suggested that financial constraints, poor emotional and/or practical alternatives to their current relationships, fears of living alone, fears of custodial challenges, and fears of being stalked and/or killed by their batterers are a few of the reasons that some women remain in violent relationships and/or return to them (Drigotas & Rusbult, 1992; Ferraro & Johnson, Bauserman & Arias, 1992; Gayford, 1994; Johnson, 1992; Lesser, 1990; Rusbult & Martz, 1995; Stahly, 1999; Strube & Barbour, 1983; Walker, 1996). Rusbult and Martz (1995) report that over 40% of women who have left their relationships and sought refuge in domestic violence shelters eventually return to their abusive relationships. Although research in this particular domain provides more insight into the external factors that lead a woman to stay in or leave an abusive relationship, it is also necessary to examine women's internal decision-making processes as they face this dilemma.

Basing their work on Strube's (1988) examination of theoretical models and empirical research on abused women's decisions to remain in or leave their relationships,

Choice and Lamke (1997) proposed a multitheoretical approach to understanding abused women's stay/leave decisions. This approach incorporates four specific theories: learned helplessness, psychological entrapment, the investment model, and the reasoned action/planned behavior approach, all of which will be reviewed briefly.

The first theory, learned helplessness, is a social-learning theory originally developed by Seligman (1975), that suggests, in the context of abusive relationships, battered women lose the incentive to engage in behaviors that may elicit a different response from their abusers and/or end the abuse altogether. Specifically, the theory posits that this loss of incentive stems from the woman's beliefs that her actions will be ineffective. That is, a battered woman's perception of helplessness may originate and/or be exacerbated by an abusive relationship in which she is unable to control her environment or experiences a lack of contingency between her behavior and her batterer's response. Over time, these assumptions become solidified to such a degree that the woman ceases trying to change her circumstances, and focuses instead on more immediately relevant matters—minimizing injury and coping with pain and fear (Choice & Lamke, 1997, 1999; Dutton & Painter, 1983, 1993; Walker, 1978, 1983, 1996; Walker & Browne, 1985).

The second theory that Choice and Lamke (1997) discuss is psychological entrapment. Similar to learned helplessness, psychological entrapment indicates that the battered woman feels powerless to move out of the abusive relationship (Choice & Lamke, 1997, 1999; Horton & Johnson, 1993; Strube, 1988; Strube & Barbour, 1983).

The authors further describe the theory of psychological entrapment as having three essential features: investment, negative feedback, and internal conflict.

In psychological entrapment, Choice and Lamke (1997) suggest that the woman first exhibits an investment in her relationship by expending "time, energy, and emotional involvement" (p. 292). However, the experience of abuse provides negative feedback about the stability of her investment. In turn, the woman begins to experience internal conflict as she questions the utility of maintaining the relationship. Should the battered woman persist in efforts to invest in the relationship despite the negative feedback, she is considered to be psychologically entrapped. Strube (1988) associates the notion of psychological entrapment with cognitive dissonance theory, suggesting that:

> Individuals feel compelled to justify the time, effort, money or other important resources they have spent in pursuit of some goal...and continue to invest resources in pursuit of the goal to justify past expenses. This justification process arises from the individual's *commitment* to a course of action (p. 241).

As dissonance results when one has to choose between contradictory attitudes and behaviors, it appears that women become trapped between the amount of time and energy invested in a relationship and their dissatisfaction with the relationship.

The next models that Choice and Lamke (1997) use in their conceptualization of women's stay/leave decisions are the investment model proposed by Rusbult (1991) and the reasoned action/planned behavior approach outlined by Azjen (1985).

Similarly to psychological entrapment, figural in the investment model are the tenets of commitment, irretrievable investments (e.g., time), quality of alternatives to the

present relationship, and relationship satisfaction. Rusbult (1980, 1983) suggests that there is a marked difference between commitment and satisfaction. Satisfaction is associated with the rewards and costs of a relationship in addition to one's standard for how relationships should work (i.e., comparison level). Strube (1988) conceptualizes satisfaction in the following mathematical terms:

Satisfaction = (Rewards - Cost) - Comparison Level.

Commitment, or personal dedication to one's relationship, is a function of satisfaction, relationship investment, and quality of alternatives, and is represented by the following equation:

Commitment = Satisfaction + Investment – Quality of Alternatives.

Rusbult's model has gained empirical support and validation in a number of domains, one of which includes college dating relationships (Drigotas & Rusbult, 1992; Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus, 1991).

More recently, however, Rusbult and Martz (1995) conducted a study utilizing the investment model in the context of abusive relationships. The working hypothesis proposed by Rusbult and Martz (1995) emphasized that women's decisions to stay in or leave abusive relationships are mediated by feelings of commitment. Testing this model on 100 women residing in a domestic violence shelter, the authors found that one's quality of alternatives and size of investments in the relationship significantly predicted one's stay/leave decision. On the other hand, relationship satisfaction weakly predicted this decision. Additionally, results indicated that commitment was a complete mediator between satisfaction and stay/leave decisions, a large mediator between investment size

and stay/leave decisions, and a partial mediator of quality of alternatives and stay/leave decisions.

Thus, the study by Rusbult and Martz (1995) suggests that, while commitment plays a critical role in women's decision-making processes when in domestic violence shelters, relationship satisfaction serves a less prominent role. To explain the weak relationship between satisfaction and one's final decision, the authors assert:

> The current findings are consistent with our claim that behavior in relationships is governed by aspects of interdependence that go well beyond mere satisfaction; indeed, once those broader aspects of interdependence were taken into consideration, feelings of satisfaction were irrelevant to understanding whether abused women remained in or ended their relationship (p. 569).

Perhaps relationship satisfaction plays a more critical role in other types of relationships, for example, those with low investment size and/or low quality of alternatives. Thus, if one considers the theory of psychological entrapment and its tenets of investment despite negative feedback, it seems logical that relationship satisfaction would serve only a marginal role when compared with commitment. On the other hand, relationship satisfaction may have been a poor predictor because of the manner in which it was operationalized, taking into account the extent of positive feelings, partner's history of violence and/or instability, benign attributions of abuse, and comparison of abuse to that which may have occurred in ones family of origin. It appears that the operational definition of this construct incorporated a number of factors, some of which may not be directly related to the true meaning of relationship satisfaction.

The theory of reasoned action/planned behavior, the fourth theory Choice and Lamke (1997) integrated into their study, is somewhat more complex than the investment model. The reasoned action component of this conceptualization focuses on decision-making processes one uses in situations that are under volitional control (Choice & Lamke, 1997; Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992). The theory of planned behavior incorporates the theory of reasoned action, but includes and additional component that emphasizes one's perception of volitional control over one's own behavior as a contributing factor that affects one's behavioral intention. Further, the theory of planned behavior posits that one's behavioral intent is influenced by one's beliefs about the outcome of one's actions (Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992). Central to these beliefs is the perception of one's "possession of requisite resources and opportunities for performing a given behavior" (Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992, p. 4). Thus, this component of the theory would suggest a direct positive relationship between one's intent to engage in a specific behavior and one's beliefs that he/she has the necessary resources to execute the targeted action.

Ajzen and Madden (1986) tested the model of reasoned action/planned behavior and found that perceptions of behavioral control significantly predicted behavioral intentions once the variables "attitude" and "subjective norm" were controlled. Attitude is characterized as the extent to which one has a positive or negative evaluation about a specific behavior. Subjective norm is defined as "what an individual's significant others (i.e., friends, family members) think the individual should do with regard to performing a

behavior multiplied by the individual's motivation to comply with the wishes of his or her significant others" (Choice & Lamke, 1997, p. 294).

Additional research in the domain of reasoned action and planned behavior has suggested an association between perceived behavioral control and a specified behavior (Ajzen & Madden, 1986; Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992). Thus, research in this area supports the notion that one's perception of behavioral control is highly salient in predicting one's behavioral intention as well as the likelihood of engaging in a targeted behavior. This theory may be important in assessing the extent to which battered women perceive behavioral control in their ability to separate from their abusive partners. For example, women with a higher perception of behavioral control may evidence an increased intent to exit their relationships, while women with lower levels of perceived behavioral control may be less likely to separate from their abusive partners. There is yet no empirical evidence to confirm the results' generalizability to abused women. Thus, research is needed in this domain to determine the extent to which they perceive their leaving or remaining in their relationship as fully under their control.

Therefore, based on the work by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) and Ajzen (1985), Choice and Lamke (1997) delineated three specific criteria that might be positively correlated with a woman's decision to leave her relationship. These criteria were as follows: 1) the perception that leaving the relationship will have a positive/favorable outcome, 2) the perception that leaving is within her own control, and 3) the motivation to exit the relationship is partially based on the suggestions/wishes of others.

Thus, using the four theories described here, reasoned action/planned behavior, investment, psychological entrapment, and learned helplessness, the authors constructed a two-part model defined by the questions "Will I be better off?" and "Can I do it?"

The question "Will I be better off" incorporates three of the four theories: reasoned action/planned behavior, investment, and psychological entrapment. This question encompasses the woman's feelings of satisfaction with the current relationship, understanding of investments that she may be unable to retrieve upon exiting the relationship, possibility of alternatives outside of her relationship, and the extent to which she relies on family members' and friends' beliefs about exiting the relationship. Should the battered woman answer "yes" to the question "Will I be better off," the authors suggest that she then moves to the second part of the model, addressing the question, "Can I do it?"

This stage of the decision-making process is hypothesized to incorporate the theories of learned helplessness, psychological entrapment, and reasoned action/planned behavior. Specifically, these approaches suggest that a woman's decision to leave her abusive relationship is contingent upon personal resources/barriers as well as social-structural resources and barriers (e.g., self-efficacy and availability of a domestic violence shelter). The proposed model by Choice and Lamke can be found in Appendix A.

In 1999, Choice and Lamke tested their model empirically with women in abusive dating relationships (see Appendix B). In this study, the authors measured a woman's likelihood of leaving an abusive relationship in terms of three observed indicators:

behavioral intention to remain in or leave the relationship, orientation toward future investment in the relationship, and various actions taken toward leaving or ending the abusive relationship.

Participants in the study included 126 individuals (70 women and 56 men) who reported a minimum of one act of violence in a current dating heterosexual relationship. The severity of violence varied within the sample as measured by the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979), ranging from incidents of violence occurring "once or rarely" to "often." The length of the relationships in question ranged from as few as two months to as long as seven years. Each participant completed a total of seventeen questionnaires measuring the factors "Will I be better off?" "Can I do it?," and "Likelihood of leaving the relationship." A detailed description of the measures used for each of these constructs can be found in Appendix C.

Using structural equation modeling, Choice and Lamke (1999) tested for any direct effects between the two questions "Will I be better off?" and "Can I do it?" Additionally, the authors conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to delineate the specific components of the exogenous and endogenous factors in the model. Conducting confirmatory factor analysis, the authors found a lack of construct validity for the question "Can I do it?" It appears that the low construct reliability of the variable "personal resources" (alpha = .48), which loads onto "Can I do it?" contributes to the lack of construct validity for this question.

The researchers then applied the structural model to the data using regression analyses which revealed that 87% of the variance in the "outcome construct representing

the intention to stay in or leave the relationship" was accounted for by "Will I be better off?" Additionally, results suggest "Will I be better off?" has a direct effect on "Can I do it?" However, "Can I do it?" was not directly related to the intent to leave a violent dating relationship.

Although this empirical study makes a valuable contribution to the existing literature on decision-making processes in relationships, there are several limitations present. First, the sample size used to evaluate the model was likely to be too small, which would reduce the power of the model to detect small but significant associations between the variables. Further, the study also lacked construct validity for the question "Can I do it?" This problem appears to stem from an insufficient operationalization of this construct. The questionnaires used to measure this concept assessed one's feelings of self-efficacy and control as well as structural issues such as outside support agencies providing social services. However, this question seems to encompass more than these elements.

For example, some authors suggest a positive relationship between one's attachment style and feelings of self-efficacy (Spivak, 1995; Burrows, 1997). As such, an individual with a secure attachment style may have a higher sense of self-efficacy, and may therefore be more likely to answer "yes" to the question "Can I do it" than someone with an anxious-ambivalent attachment style. Although Lesser (1990) found no support for the hypothesis that women with disruptions in their history of early attachments alone are more likely to return to their abusive relationships, results suggest that a combination of anxious attachment and self-sufficiency, attachment disruption, length of stay at a

domestic violence shelter, the presence of one's own material resources, and history of childhood violence accounted for 47% of the variance in length of time spent away from abusive relationships.

In addition, recent research with domestic violence populations indicates that emotional attachment to one's abuser is a primary factor related to a battered woman's difficulty in separating from her relationship (Dutton & Painter, 1993; Griffing, Ragin, Sage, Madry, & Primm, 2002; Watlington, Alvarez, O'Neill, Feeny, Zoellner, & Foa, 1999). Dutton and Painter (1981) developed a theory entitled "traumatic bonding" to describe the paradoxical attachment found in abusive relationships. According to the authors, traumatic bonding occurs as a function of two distinct elements. These factors include the nature of the power imbalance in the relationship and intermittent positive and negative treatment from the abuser. Regarding the dynamics of the power imbalance in these relationships, Dutton and Painter (1981) argue:

> As the power imbalance magnifies, persons in low power will feel more negative in their self-appraisal, more incapable of fending for themselves, and thus more in need of the high power person. This cycle of dependency and lowered self-esteem repeats itself over and over, and comes eventually to create a strong affective bond to the high power person (p. 147).

The second contributing factor to traumatic bonding, intermittent reinforcement, is also thought to produce powerful emotional bonds as well as "persistent patterns of behavior that are difficult to extinguish or terminate" (Dutton & Painter, 1993, p. 107). That is, through the alternation of abusive and contrite behavior evidenced by the

batterer, a symbiotic relationship between both partners is formed, making it arduous at best for some battered women to extricate themselves from their relationships (Graham, Rawlings, Ihms, Latimer, Foliano, Thompson, Suttman, Farrington, & Hacker, 1995). Given the importance of traumatic bonding in violent relationships, an instrument specifically designed to measure paradoxical attachment will be included in this study.

Additionally, one's feelings of self-efficacy and perceived control may be influenced by one's current state of psychological functioning (O'Neill, Brigdi, Watlington, Alvarez, Feeny, Zoellner, & Foa, 1999). According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV; APA, 1994), those who exhibit depressive symptomatology may experience "feelings of worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt" and/or "diminished ability to think or concentrate." Reaching the decision to leave a violent relationship may be encumbered by these symptoms.

Thus, as abused women's decision-making processes are multi-faceted, research and theory should take into account a broad spectrum of factors. Choice and Lamke's (1999) failure to include the full range of psychological mechanisms that are involved in battered women's choice to remain in or exit their abusive relationships is a major limitation of their study.

Another limitation of Choice and Lamke's (1999) study lies in the authors' measurement of one's intention to leave an abusive relationship rather than one's actual behavior. While one's cognitive processes are certainly relevant in this particular domain of study, one's subsequent actions following decision-making are equally pertinent.

Moreover, the majority of participants in this sample (52%) reported that abuse occurred "once or rarely" as measured by the Conflict Tactics Scale. Thus, the generalizability of the results from this study is questionable as it pertains to other relationships characterized by a higher frequency and/or severity of violence.

Given the aforementioned methodological limitations of Choice and Lamke's (1999) research, the present study aims to improve upon these limitations and extend it to a sample of women who have taken a fundamental step toward exiting their abusive relationships. In moving to a domestic violence shelter, these particular women have made an active declaration that abuse in intimate relationships is no longer bearable. However, these women are in a precarious position, as they contemplate whether or not they should return to their abusive relationships upon leaving the domestic violence shelter. The questions "Will I be better off?" and "Can I do it (make it on my own)?" are applicable at this juncture as well.

Thus, the present research project also attempts to address these two specific questions as outlined by Choice and Lamke (1997, 1999). As such, the study will employ a modified measurement model with a sample of women residing in domestic violence shelters. This modified model will adjust the measurement model tested by Choice and Lamke (1999) by using different questionnaires to address each of the three factors (see Appendix D). It is believed that the intended measures will help better operationalize the construct of Personal Resources and Barriers, therefore lending improved operationalization of the question "Can I do it?" Specifically, additional measures of attachment to the abuser, psychological damage, attachment style, depressive

symptomatology, and self-efficacy will be included in the observed indicator, Personal Resources and Barriers. Additionally, as several measures in this study are newly developed, each will be examined for its reliability before using them in the analyses. Appendix E provides a list of measures used in this study. In addition, the modified model for this research study will not employ structural equation modeling due to the small sample size. Rather, a series of regressions will be used to analyze data gathered from this study.

Therefore, the author hypothesizes that:

1. A significant proportion of the variance in one's intent to return to the abusive relationship will be accounted for by the question "Will I be better off?" and its four observed indicators, Relationship Satisfaction/Distress, Quality of Alternatives, Irretrievable Investments, and Subjective Norm.

2. A significant proportion of the variance in one's intent to return to the abusive relationship will be accounted for by the question "Can I do it" and its two observed indicators, Personal Resources/Barriers and Structural Resources/Barriers.

3. Furthermore, it is hypothesized that the question "Can I do it," operationalized as attachment style, attachment to the abuser, feelings of self-efficacy, depressive symptoms, drug/alcohol use, psychological damage, and structural resources/investments will significantly add to the amount of variance in predicting a woman's intent to return to her relationship over and above the variance accounted for by "Will I be better off."

4. The factors associated with the questions "Will I be better off" and "Can I do it" will be predictive of battered women's actual stay/leave decisions upon exiting domestic violence shelters.

5. Battered women's *intent* to return to their relationships will be predictive of their *actual* stay/leave decisions upon exiting domestic violence shelters.

II. Method

Participants

The participants utilized in this investigation were 121 females residing in nine domestic violence shelters throughout eastern Tennessee; three shelters were in cities, the remainder were in rural areas. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 70, with an average age of 34. Twenty-seven percent of the population was married and twenty seven percent of the sample was separated yet still seeing each other. Twenty four percent of the sample indicated being single, seventeen percent of the sample was divorced, and approximately three percent of the sample reported living with their abusers in a committed relationship. The remainder of the sample indicated being "other." The racial breakdown for this sample was eighty-two percent Caucasian, nine percent African-American, four percent Hispanic, two percent Native American, and three percent Other. Twenty-three percent of the sample reported post-secondary education, sixty-eight percent had some high school education, and nine percent had less than a high school education. The average income was between $5,000 and $10,000. Seventy-one percent of the sample was unemployed, twenty-two percent of the sample had full time jobs, and seven percent held part-time jobs. The average number of children was 2.4. None of these demographic variables were significantly associated with the outcome variable of intent to return.

Procedure

A letter of intent was mailed to the contact person of all shelters within 2 hours driving distance of the study's home base soliciting their participation in this research

project. Interested shelters returned a self-addressed stamped post-card indicating that they were willing to participate. Nine out of twenty-seven shelters agreed to participate. Those who refused cited security reasons or shelter policies regarding research projects. Fliers and sign-up sheets were posted in the participating shelters soliciting interested participants. During data collection, the investigators made weekly phone calls to the shelter contact person to set up a meeting at the shelters with interested participants to administer the questionnaires. After each participant completed the packet of questionnaires (found in Appendix F), she received a $20 gift certificate as compensation for her participation. Each woman then went through a debriefing session by the investigators to discuss any emotional reactions to the questionnaires.

Additionally, in order to protect these women's privacy further, this study used as minimally invasive follow-up procedures as possible in order to protect the women's privacy. Approximately three months later, the shelters were contacted to obtain follow-up information on the decisions the participants had made about their relationships when they left the shelter. Due to wide variation in shelter procedures, the follow-up information ranged from a shelter worker's memory of the woman's decision to actual records of final placement. Many of the women's whereabouts were unknown. If the participant was still living in the shelter, the shelter was contacted on a monthly basis until she left the system. The obtained follow-up information was placed into three categories: returned to live with partner, did not return to live with partner (e.g., living in halfway house, living with family/friends, living on own), and living situation unknown

(e.g., either shelter worker did not remember or the woman left without informing the shelter of her whereabouts).

Measures

Relationship Distress/Violence

1. Conflict Tactics Scale: (CTS; Straus, 1979). – This scale measures strategies couples may employ in resolving conflict. It is a widely used measure that assesses the degree to which couples use reasoning, verbal aggression, and physical aggression to resolve conflicts. Its coefficient alphas range from .70 to .88. There is considerable evidence of its concurrent and content validity as it is predictive of the incident rate of spousal violence (Straus, 1976). In this study, the coefficient alpha for this measure is .91.

Quality of Alternatives

1. Biographical Data Sheet: This form asks for basic demographic information necessary to provide a description of the sample (e.g., age, years of education, and marital information). Specifically, in this study, questions pertaining to the participant's social support and satisfaction will assess Quality of Alternatives. The reliability coefficient for this measure is .46.
2. Commitment Inventory: (C.I.; Stanley & Markman, 1992). The commitment inventory is a 55-item measure that assesses two basic aspects of relationship commitment: personal dedication and constraint. The constraint scale is made up of subscales such as structural investments in marriage, social pressures, unattractiveness of alternatives, morality of divorce, and availability of other partners. In contrast the personal dedication scale contains subscales measuring

primacy of relationship, relationship agenda, satisfaction with sacrifice, alternative monitoring, and meta-commitment. Initial research on this measure indicates coefficient alphas ranging from .79(meta-commitment) to .94 (relationship agenda and morality of divorce). The measure also had good concurrent validity with other measures of commitment and satisfaction and also offered greater specificity while having the advantage of more parsimoniously measuring a variety of constructs (Stanley & Markman, 1992). The "availability of other partners" subscale from the Commitment Inventory will be used to measure the participant's quality of alternatives outside of the abusive relationship. Lower scores on this measure suggest that one perceives the availability of other partners if the current relationship should end, while higher scores on this subscale indicate that one does not perceive the availability of other partners as an option external to the present relationship. In this study, the subscale has a coefficient alpha of .65.

Irretrievable Investments

1. Commitment Inventory: (Stanley & Markman, 1992). The "structural investments in marriage" subscale from the Commitment Inventory will be used to measure one's material possessions and/or financial resources invested in a particular relationship. The coefficient alpha is .58.

Subjective Norm

1. Commitment Inventory: (Stanley & Markman, 1992). The "social pressure" subscale from the Commitment Inventory is used to measure the level of pressure

one's friends and family put on an individual to remain in a relationship. The social pressure subscale has an alpha of .23.

Personal Resources and Barriers

1. Alcohol and Drug Screening Questionnaire: This 6-item measure, generated for the purposes of this study, examines the level of one's alcohol and/or drug use. The first three questions address the quantity, frequency, and beliefs about one's substance use. The last three questions are targeted toward the participant's perception of her partner's substance use. The reliability coefficient for this measure is .73.
2. Measure of Self-Efficacy: (MSE: Sherer, Maddux, et al., 1982). This is a 17-item measure of a person's general belief in one's ability to influence one's outcomes. It is a fairly well known and widely used measure in assessing a global sense of self-efficacy. It has a reported Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of .86 and is significantly correlated with related constructs such as internal-external locus of control and self-esteem (Sherer, Maddux, et al., 1982). In this study, the reliability coefficient is .81.
3. Center for Epidemiological Studies – Depression Scale: (C.E.S.-D.S., Radloff, 1977). This 20-item measure is a commonly used screening tool to assess depressive symptomatology in the general population. It has been shown to have high internal consistency, acceptable retest reliability, and good concurrent validity based on clinical and self-report criteria. Radloff (1977) reports alpha coefficients of .85 (general population) to .90 (patient population). Retest

correlations range from .51 (2 week period) to .67 (4 week period). The CES-D discriminates well between psychiatric in-patient and general populations samples and correlates well with other self-report measures of symptomatology, e.g., .83 with the SCL-90 (Radloff, 1977). This measure is suitable for people in a wide range of age and socioeconomic status (Radloff, 1977). The reliability coefficient for the CES-DS in this study is .81.

4. The Relationship Questionnaire: (RQ; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). This is a categorical measure of attachment in which participants are asked to indicate which one of four descriptions describes them best. Subsequently, a continuous measure of attachment is derived; participants are asked to rate each of the four options in terms of how well it describes them on a scale from 1 (corresponding to "not at all like me") to 7 (corresponding to "very much like me"). The RQ has demonstrated validity with regard to predicted personality variables, interpersonal problems, and sexual behavior (Bartholemew & Horowitz, 1991; Brennan & Shaver, 1995). Crowell, Fraley, and Shaver's (1999) review cites test-retest correlations averaging .50 over an eight month period. Brennan and Shaver (1995) generally interpret this level of reliability in attachment styles as consistent with the theoretical expectation that attachment styles appear relatively stable but may be open to modification.
5. Stockholm Syndrome Scale: (SSS; Graham, Dee, Rawlings, Edna, Ihms, Latimer, Foliano, Thompson, Suttman, Farrington, & Hacker, 1995). The SSQ is a 49-item measure designed to assess traumatic bonding, or the paradoxically intense

attachment victims develop to their abusers. In conditions of extreme threat, victims often deny their fear and pain and bond to the benevolent aspects of their abusers. The Scale consists of three factors: Core Stockholm Syndrome, which includes strategies and adaptations for coping with abuse ("I both love and fear my partner," and "The more I talk to people, the more confused I get about whether my relationship with my partner is healthy."); Psychological Damage, reflected in relational problems, depression, low self-esteem, and loss of identity ("I do not know who I am."); and Love-Dependence, characterized by a belief in the necessity of the abuser's love for basic survival ("Without my partner, I have nothing to live for."). All three factors and the scale as a whole have been shown to possess excellent internal consistency (a = .94, .90, and .89 for factors 1-3, respectively) and a good test re-test reliability (.85, .81, and .78 for the three factors and .84 for the scale overall). The scale's validity was demonstrated by assessing correlations with the three scales that comprise Straus' (1979) Conflict Tactics Scale (verbal aggression, violence, and reasoning) as well as Hatfield and Sprecher's (1986) Passionate Love Scale (Graham et al., 1995). Items from the Core Stockholm and Psychological Damage subscales used in this study yield a coefficient alpha of .92 and .84, respectively.

Structural Resources and Barriers

1. Biographical Data Sheet: Questions from this measure used to assess structural resources of a social nature are those regarding the participant's employment

status and mode of transportation. For the purposes of this study, the reliability for this construct is .39.

Behavioral intention and Orientation toward staying in or leaving the relationship

1. Intention to Return Questionnaire: This measure, generated by the co-investigators of the Domestic Violence and Forgiveness (DVAF) Study contains six questions that assess one's present feelings toward one's partner. Additionally, the questionnaire focuses on the degree to which an individual intends to return to the relationship one has exited recently. Responses are on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree, to 5 = Strongly Agree. Reliability for this measure is .84.

Stay/Leave Decisions

1. Follow-up data: In order to discover whether the participants have chosen to return to their relationships or not, the shelters were re-contacted within 3 months to gather information on the case disposition of each participant. At the outset of the study each volunteer was informed of this condition for participation as part of her decision to participate in the study or not. Upon contacting the shelters, women's decisions to return to or exit the relationship were placed into one of three categories: Not With Partners, With Partners, and Unknown Whereabouts.

III. Results

Initial examination of the data revealed normal distributions for all variables with the exception of the alcohol and drug screening questionnaire, the relationship styles questionnaire, and the intent to return measures. The alcohol and drug screening questionnaire displayed significant skewness, which could not be addressed by standard transformations, therefore, using a median split, this continuous variable was dummy coded into two categories of drug and alcohol use, 0 = low use and 1 = high use. As the relationship styles questionnaire is a categorical measure, the four categories of attachment styles were collapsed into two categories, secure and insecure, which also were dummy-coded, 0=secure, 1 = insecure. A logarithmic transformation adjusted the intent to return variable to an acceptable approximation of a normal distribution.

An examination of zero-order correlations revealed that the intent to return variable was significantly correlated with the Conflict Tactics Scale-Violence subscale, the Commitment Inventory-Availability of Other Partners subscale, the Stockholm Syndrome Scale-Core subscale, and the Measure of Self-Efficacy. Means and standard deviations of the variables are located in Table 1. Correlations between the independent and dependent variables are found in Table 2. All tables in this document are located in Appendix G.

Hypothesis 1: "Will I be better off?" and Intent to Return

This study's first hypothesis suggested that the question "Will I be better off" and its four observed indicators would predict a battered woman's intent to return to her relationship. Therefore a test of linear regression was conducted in which intent to return

was regressed upon the level of relationship violence, quality of alternatives, availability of other partners, irretrievable investments, and social pressure. In this model, these variables accounted for approximately fifteen percent of the variance in the woman's intent to return to the relationship (R^2 = .15, F (5,115) = 4.05 p<. 002). See Table 3, Model 1, predicting intent to return, for beta weights and significance. The results from this model indicated that the level of relationship violence and the perceived availability of other partners contributed uniquely to the variance in predicting intent to return.

Hypothesis 2: "Can I do it?" and Intent to Return

Linear regression also was conducted to measure the extent to which the question "Can I do it" was predictive of a woman's intent to return to the abusive relationship. In this model, attachment style, attachment to the abuser, level of alcohol and/or drug use, level of depressive symptomatology, structural resources/investments, feelings of self-efficacy, and level of psychological damage were entered into the equation, predicting intent to return. Results reveal that these variables contributed to nineteen percent of the variance in a battered woman's intent to return to her relationship (R^2 = .19, F (7,110) = 3.79, p<.001). See Table 4, Model 1, for beta weights and significance. Of the measures entered into this model, attachment to the abuser, feelings of self-efficacy, and psychological damage uniquely predicted intent to return.

Hypothesis 3: "Can I do it" significantly adds to the predictive ability of "Will I Be Better Off" variables

In testing the degree to which the question "Can I do it" significantly adds to the amount of variance in predicting intent to return, a regression was conducted in which the

"Will I be better off" variables were entered into Model 1 to predict a battered woman's intent to return to her relationship. The "Will I be better off" variables accounted for fifteen percent of the variance in Model 1 ($R^2 = .15$, $F(5, 112) = 4.08$, $p<.002$). In the next step, both "Will I be better off" and "Can I do it" variables were entered into Model 2. Adding the "Can I do it" variables to the equation produced a significant improvement in the model's predictive ability ($R^2 = .31$, $F(7,105) = 3.85$, $p<.000$; R^2 change = .16, F_{inc} $(7, 105) = 3.3$, $p < .004$). In Model 1, the severity of violence and availability of other partners reached statistical significance, while the following variables reached statistical significance in Model 2: level of partner violence, availability of other partners, attachment to the abuser, and psychological damage. The only "Can I do it" variable that did not reach statistical significance in this model that was previously significant was the measure of self-efficacy. Table 5 shows the results of this analysis.

Choice and Lamke (1997, 1999) suggest that women must answer "yes" to both questions in order to leave their partners. This suggests that these two constructs have an additive effect on the intention to leave their relationships. The previous analyses suggest that this is so, as the addition of the CIDI variables doubles the predictive ability of the model, and there does not appear to be much overlap in prediction between the two constructs. However, to further explore the relationship between the construct of "Will I be better off" and the "Can I do it" variables, and to test the possibility that these constructs may interact instead of being additive, a post hoc exploratory regression analysis was conducted in which the "Will I be better off" variable with the highest statistical significance, relationship violence, and the "Can I do it" variable with the

highest statistical significance, attachment to the abuser, were entered into an equation predicting intent to return. The combination of these two variables accounted for twenty-three percent of the variance in intent to return (R^2 = .23, F (2,118) = 17.25, p<.000). To measure the extent to which the interaction of "Will I be better off" and "Can I do it" variables significantly add to the variance in predicting intent to return, the interaction between relationship violence and attachment to the abuser was entered into this regression model. The interaction of "Will I be better off" and "Can I do it" variables was not statistically significant. Table 6 shows the results of this analysis.

Hypothesis 4: "Will I be better off" and "Can I do it" as Predictors of Stay/Leave Decisions

To evaluate the association between predictor variables and actual stay/leave decisions of battered women exiting domestic violence shelters, a logistic regression was conducted, in which returning to or exiting the relationship was regressed on all twelve of the predictor variables (0 = leave relationship, 1 = stay in relationship). The model was significant (-2LL = 34.96, Nagelkerke R^2 = .53, X^2 (12) = 28.52, p < .005), correctly classifying approximately ninety-four percent of the women's stay/leave decisions. When each of these predictor variables were entered into the equation, stay/leave behaviors were uniquely predicted by structural investments in marriage as well as structural resources and barriers. Beta weights and significance from this analysis are presented in Table 7.

Hypothesis 5: Intent to Return and Stay/Leave Decisions

To evaluate the association between intent to return and actual stay/leave decisions of battered women exiting domestic violence shelters, a logistic regression was conducted, in which stay/leave decision (0 = leave relationship, 1 = stay in relationship) was regressed on the intent to return variable. The model was significant (-2LL = 58.26, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .12$, X^2 (1) = 5.68, $p < .01$), correctly classifying approximately ninety percent of the women's stay/leave decisions. The intent to return variable was statistically significant in this model. Beta weights and significance from this analysis are presented in Table 8.

IV. Discussion

Results of this study suggest that, while certain factors are related to battered women's intent to return to their abusive relationships, other determinants appear more central in their decisions as they prepare to exit domestic violence shelters. In this sample, the present model reveals that the factors related to the questions, "Will I be better off" and "Can I do it" are both independently predictive of one's intent to return. Whereas the "Will I be better off" predictors are relationship violence and availability of partners outside of the relationship, the individual "Can I do it" predictors are one's level of attachment to the abuser, psychological damage, and feelings of self-efficacy. However, in predicting the stay/leave decisions, it appears that structural investments (e.g., time and money) as well as structural resources (e.g., employment and transportation) determine whether or not women actually return to their relationships or establish their own lives immediately after leaving the shelters.

The findings from this study indicate that, the questions "Will I be better off" and "Can I do it" are each uniquely predictive of intent to return (accounting for 15% and 19% of the variance in intent to return, respectively). When examining the question "Can I do it" in conjunction with the question "Will I be better off," adding the "Can I do it" variables doubled the predictive ability of this model. Thus, these results support the hypothesis of this study that this model is additive in nature. Consequently, this model suggests that, in order to maximize the strength with which to understand the intricacies involved in battered women's stay/leave decision-making more fully, both questions should be examined in conjunction with one another. This finding of "Can I do it"

variables as additive highlights the salience of the role that psychological and emotional factors play in what appears to be a rational cost/benefit analytic process.

Specifically, the results of this study suggest that women who experience lower levels of relationship violence indicate a higher intent to return to their relationships. The findings in this study run counter to some research that suggest women who experience severe abuse are more likely to return to their relationships (Flynn, 1990; cited by Graham et al., 1995; Johnson, 1992). However, the findings from this study are consistent with research conducted by Gelles (1976), who found that women who experienced less severe and less frequent violence are more likely to remain with their partners. An explanation for the findings in this study may be that, if the level of relationship violence is not severe, these battered women may feel these costs do not outweigh the benefits of being with their partners, such as security from loneliness and financial stability. Consequently, they may feel that they can manage and/or withstand the violence within the relationship if they feel that their partners will meet these other basic needs. As such, these women may evidence a higher intent to return to their abusive relationships.

Although the findings of this study differ from those found by Johnson (1992), the explanations underlying battered women's stay/leave decision-making are similar. Johnson (1992) states:

> On the surface, one may think that any reasonable person would not stay in an abusive relationship when the abuse is severe. However, the assumption that battered women will immediately leave the abusive relationship when the

> frequency and severity of the abuse increase fails to consider the complexity of the situation. A battered woman with few or no marketable skills or access to employment may perceive her alternatives inside the marriage...as being more rewarding and less costly than alternatives outside the relationship, even though she is being subjected to severe abuse. No abuser is violent 24 hours a day, and the victim may evaluate her costs and benefits and decide that it would be less costly to stay with an abuser who is financially capable of supporting her and her dependents. In such cases, the woman's economic needs may take precedence over her physical and emotional need to be free from abuse (p. 175).

Thus, Johnson is suggesting that the relationship between severity of abuse and return to the relationship is not exactly linear. That is, other factors in addition to severity of abuse may be involved in the cost-benefits analysis that battered women make as they contemplate returning to or leaving their partners. Given the mixed findings from research in this area, more studies are needed to clarify the specific nature of the relationship between severity of the abuse and battered women's intent to remain in these relationships.

The findings of this study also suggest that women who do not perceive the availability of outside partners are more likely to return to their relationships. These results are consistent with the notion of psychological entrapment, as explained by Strube (1988). In his review of the literature on psychological entrapment, the author states:

> Decision-makers who are placed in a state of high insecurity are more likely to become entrapped than individuals who are more secure. Security in the context

> of abusive relationships may also be an important determinant of entrapment. In this case, the viability of alternatives to the abusive relationship may influence entrapment in that a woman without alternatives (i.e., high insecurity) has little choice but to take further risks with her current relationship (p. 242).

Stanley and Markman (1992) also report, "If a person wants a relationship, but perceives that there is no one else available besides the present partner, this person is more constrained to remain with that partner" (p. 596). Therefore, if the woman feels more constrained to her present relationship as a function of limited external options, she may return to the abusive relationship to avoid experiencing feelings of loneliness. This notion is also consistent with the "self-punishing response" also outlined by Strube (1988, 1989). He states:

> When costs are greater than rewards in both the current and alternative relationships, the typical coping behavior is the "self-punishing response." In this situation, the wife blames herself for being trapped in a violent marriage in which she can neither change her husband's behavior nor find nonviolent alternatives for herself or her children (1989, p. 102).

Results from this study also reveal that emotional factors, namely attachment to one's abuser and psychological damage, are related to a battered woman's decision to remain in or exit her relationship. Specifically, the findings from the study reveal that women who are emotionally attached to their partners despite the abuse are more likely to return to their relationships. This finding is consistent with the theory of traumatic bonding, as proposed by Graham et al. (1995). These authors suggest that:

> Traumatic bonding involve[s] hostages/victims experiencing a threat to their survival while, if kindness is perceived, developing hope that they will be permitted to live. Under these conditions, and if no other avenue of escape is perceived, the frightened victims deny both their terror and the captor's abuse and *bond* to the kind side of the captor, who represents their only available source of succor and avenue for escaping the abuse (p. 4).

This theory of traumatic bonding appears to be at work in this sample, as it corroborates the previously discussed findings, namely that battered women who report lower levels of relationship violence and perceive fewer outside options are more likely to intend to return to their relationships.

This finding related to emotional attachment is also consistent with research indicating that women's reported emotional attachment to their partners was more predictive of their failing to follow through with getting restraining orders than were traditional demographic constraint variables or severity of the abuse (Watlington, Alvarez, O'Neill, Feeny, Zoellner, & Foa, 1999). Furthermore, a study interviewing women in domestic violence shelters indicated that, when they reported their perceptions of their reasons for returning to their abusive relationships, factors related to emotional attachment were more highly endorsed than were economic factors (Griffing, Ragin, Sage, Madry, & Primm, 2002). Specifically, of the women in the study by Griffing et al. (2002) who indicated emotional attachment as a reason they might consider returning to their abusive relationships, 94% of them indicated emotional attachment as a reason for their return in the past.

Psychological damage also was an important factor in battered women's decision-making. In this study, women reporting a lower level of psychological damage, the components of which are depressive symptoms, low self-esteem, loss of a sense of self, and poor expectations for interpersonal relationships, are more likely to intend to return to their abusive partners. These findings are consistent with those found by Jacobsen, Gottman, Gortner, Berns, & Shortt (1996), in which battered wives were more likely to exit their relationships with partners who were more emotionally abusive. The authors also found that batterers who exhibited high levels of physical abuse were also more likely to display humiliating forms of emotional abuse. Given the previous finding from the present study that women with less severe relationship violence are more likely to intend to return, perhaps these women also experience less psychological damage in their relationships, which may influence their decision-making. In other words, women in this study who reported lower levels of physical violence may have also experienced lesser forms of psychological damage, and are therefore perhaps more likely to want their relationships to continue.

The results from the present study also indicate that self-efficacy is a predictive factor in battered women's intent to return to their relationships. As self-efficacy was operationalized in this study as "an expectation of personal mastery and success" (Sherer et al., 1982), it appears that women evidencing a high intent to return category do not feel adept at engaging in behaviors that will result in successful outcomes. This lowered sense of self-efficacy appears to be consistent with the major tenet of learned helplessness theory, in that battered women see their behaviors as ineffective in eliciting

a different response from their abusers. This may translate further to the woman's belief that she will not be able to succeed on her own outside of the relationship. Therefore, those with a diminished sense of self-efficacy may evidence a heightened intent to return to their relationships. As such, the results of this study are consistent with the findings of Schutte, Bouleige, Fix, and Malouff (1986), whose study revealed that battered women who blamed themselves for battering incidents and had low self-esteem were more likely to return to their relationships.

However, the examination of the extent to which "Can I do it" variables adds to the prediction of women's intent to return, over and above the question "Will I be better off," reveals that, while attachment to one's abuser and psychological damage are predictive, feelings of self-efficacy are less important. Perhaps the significance of self-efficacy as a predictor becomes more diffuse when viewed in the context of relationship violence, availability of other partners, attachment to the abuser, and psychological damage.

In addition, the findings in this study suggest battered women's intent to return to their relationships was a significant predictor in their post-shelter stay/leave decisions. However, this study also reveals that in predicting battered women's actual stay/leave decisions immediately following their shelter stay, the factors that were associated with intent to return are no longer central. Two new variables become important in this realm, the investments the woman has made in her relationship and her structural resources/barriers. Specifically, the findings suggest that women who have invested a number of tangible resources (e.g., money) and intangible resources (e.g., time and

energy) in their relationships are more likely to return to their relationships. Additionally, women who have fewer structural resources, such as employment or their own transportation, may be more likely to remain in their abusive relationships. Consequently, these women may be more emotionally and/or financially dependent on their partners for survival, and therefore more likely to return to their relationships despite the abuse. This latter finding is consistent with other research that suggests women whose abusive partners are their sole source of income have an increased probability of returning to their relationships (Aguirre, 1985; Horton & Johnson, 1993; Johnson, 1992).

In sum, it appears that in contemplating the intent to return to their abusive partners, battered women in this study focused on interpersonal factors (i.e., relationship violence and the availability of other options) as well as intrapsychic dimensions (i.e., attachment toward the abuser, psychological damage, and self-efficacy). However, when faced with the decision of taking action to continue or terminate their relationships, a new set of determinants came to the fore, structural investments and structural resources. It seems that as a battered woman approaches the end of her shelter stay, she is faced with an issue of basic survival. That is, she may question whether or not she has the fundamental necessities to function as an autonomous, self-sufficient, independent being without the presence of her partner and the resources associated with the relationship. During this time, it is believed that these women may focus more on the absence of resources she possesses on her own as well as those tangible resources she may lose if she jettisons the relationship. In doing a cost/benefit analysis of leaving the partner, some

women may determine that the loss of structural resources is a higher cost than they are willing to pay, and subsequently may return to their partners. This hypothesis is supported by Gelles (1976), who found that the more resources a battered woman possesses, the more she is able to support herself as well as her children. Consequently, she is more likely to seek assistance from outside agencies, and not rely on her partner to fulfill these basic needs.

However, it must be noted that the stay/leave decisions that the battered women made upon shelter exit may not have been necessarily the behaviors in which they actually engaged after leaving the shelter. For instance, women exiting the shelter who said that they were not returning to their relationships actually may have returned to their partners sometime later down the road. As the loss of the emotional provisions provided by the relationship began to emerge, some battered women may have felt the sting of emotional deprivation and subsequently returned to their relationships. Therefore, the issues that were predictive of *immediate* intent to return while in the shelter (relationship violence, quality of alternatives, attachment to the abuser, psychological damage, and self-efficacy) may have resurfaced in predicting battered women's *eventual* return to their relationships. However we were not able to evaluate this possibility in our current study.

While there is no explicit determination of the number of relationships that eventually resumed or terminated in this study, it is still critical to examine one's intent to proceed with or discontinue the relationship. The significance of assessing one's intent to return to an abusive relationship may have significant implications for methods of intervention in these populations. Depending upon which stage of shelter residency

battered women are in, shelter coordinators may organize structured assessments of one's relationship factors, emotional concerns, and structural gains and losses. Furthermore, such staff members as well as clinicians working with these populations may work to provide assistance and support in these areas of weakness. It is also important to recognize that more battered women are likely to return to their relationships later after their shelter stay (Lesser, 1990; Snyder & Fruchtman, 1981). Therefore, these women may be more at risk later on after they leave the shelter and are faced with emotional loneliness and possible lack of economic stability. Thus, the aggregation of these factors indicates the necessity of continued research, policy-making, and individual treatment for women experiencing the terror of domestic violence as well as the agonizing pain associated with decision-making while in shelters.

Limitations and Future Directions

Despite the number of findings in this study, there are certain limitations of this research that should be noted. First, although the questions "Will I be better off" and "Can I do it" accounted for a total of 31% of the variance in predicting battered women's intent to return to their relationships, there is another 69% of the variance in this sample that is unaccounted for. Given other research findings related to abused women's increased likelihood of exiting their relationships when emotional abuse is high (Gortner et al., 1997; Jacobsen et al., 1996), an area of improvement in this study would have been to include a measure of emotional abuse women in this study experienced. Including this measure in the variable "Relationship Distress" may have increased the amount of variance predicted by this model.

In addition, this study did not include psychoanalytically-oriented measures of battered women's unconscious processes and personality organization that may have influenced their decision-making. For instance, the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) is a projective test of personality, which involves one's interpretations of social situations. The Rorschach Test is also a projective technique that measures of personality and character organization. Including tests such as the TAT and the Rorschach in the "Personal Resources and Barriers" construct may have revealed some of the more unconscious drives, internal conflict, emotions, and approach to decision-making that characterize one's personality structure, which may have also improved the predictive ability of this model.

Yet another salient limitation of this research study was the high percentage of women whose whereabouts upon exiting the shelter were unknown. While only 8% of the sample was known to have returned to their relationships, there was another 22% of the sample that either did not indicate their plans for relocation or were unaccounted for at the time follow-up data was collected from the shelters. As such, there may have been more women in this "Unknown" category that actually returned to their relationships. This dilemma in collecting specific follow-up data on the volunteers in this study speaks to the real problem in social service agencies attempting to provide aid to women in crisis. A number of the contact people from the shelters in this study spoke of being understaffed and not having the necessary resources to meet all of the clients' various needs, one of which included the ability to obtain relevant information about their relationship status after their exit from the shelter.

Similarly, another limitation of this study is the lack of certainty and stability regarding the volunteers' actual stay/leave behaviors once leaving the shelters. Specifically, there is no concrete measure of whether or not women who stated they were leaving their relationships or returning to their abusers actually followed through with their decisions. For instance, those who may have indicated that they planned to terminate their relationships may have eventually returned to their partners. As such, the results regarding battered women's actual stay/leave behaviors should be interpreted with caution.

Research indicates that women are more likely to return to their partners approximately one month after leaving domestic violence shelters as opposed to returning immediately after their departure from the shelters (Lesser, 1990; Snyder & Fruchtman, 1981). Therefore, a potential area of improvement in future research studies and assessment of women in shelters will be to assess the extent to which women's report of cognitive and emotional processes change as their length of stay in domestic violence shelters increases. More importantly, it is advised that future research studies have an extended period of time to gather follow-up data to better measure long-term stay/leave behaviors.

With respect to battered women's behavioral *intentions* toward their relationships (i.e., intent to return), other limitations of the study should be addressed. One of the shortcomings of this study involved the varying lengths of time that participants had been residing in the domestic violence shelters. As the volunteers' length of stay in the shelters at the time of their participation in the study ranged from three hours to ninety days, this

suggests that the women may have been at various stages of crisis. This variability may have had an influence not only on the level of symptomatology reported, but also on their decision-making behaviors. A potential area of improvement in future research will be to examine the variability in the volunteers' length of shelter stay as a mediator or moderator variable in battered women's stay/leave decisions.

The variability in battered women's decision-making processes both during their residence in domestic violence shelters as well as their actual behaviors upon their exit from these shelters may be reflective of the transtheoretical model of behavior change as proposed by Prochaska and DiClemente (1982). This model was most recently applied to women in the process of ending abusive relationships (Burke, Gielen, McDonnell, O'Campo, & Maman, 2001). In this model, five stages of change are involved, precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance.

Precontemplation refers to a stage in which the woman is not actively considering an escape from her relationship. Contemplation is the point at which the woman begins to think about leaving her abuser. Preparation is the stage involving the woman's active planning for escape. Action is the point at which the woman employs specific actions designed to end her abusive relationship. Maintenance is the stage in which the woman has actually ended her abusive relationship and tried to establish and maintain safety from her abuser. Given these various levels of change, as well as the cognitive and emotional factors involved in each of these, it is important to fully appreciate the range of commitment to remain in or exit these abusive relationships. It may be that the variability in intent to return that the battered women in this study expressed is a function

of the various stages of change represented by this particular population. For example, a woman in the "contemplation" stage may be more likely to return than a woman in the "action" or "maintenance" stages of change.

Another limitation of this study lies in its generalizability to other populations of battered women. As this study examines the decision-making patterns of women who have already taken initial steps toward leaving their relationship by seeking refuge in a domestic violence shelter, the results presented may not be generalizable for women who may not have ever exited their abusive relationships. Also, as this sample was comprised of volunteers who responded to flyers soliciting participating on this study, there may have also been selection bias in this sample. Therefore, the presence of a self-selected sample in this study may also interfere with the generalizability of these finding.

The sample of this study was also comprised of primarily Caucasian participants living in shelters in rural areas. Therefore, the volunteers in this study may not constitute a representative sample of domestically abused women. Consequently, this study did not take into account the number of racial and cultural differences that may exist within the heterogeneous population of battered women as a whole. Therefore, future research should make attempts to conduct studies with samples that will be more generalizable to battered women residing in shelters. Such factors in research may include, but are not limited to conducting research with a sample of women with varying ages, levels of socioeconomic status, areas of residence, race and ethnicity, religious practices, number of children, years invested in relationships, severity of violence, frequency of violence, and duration of violence.

Another limitation of this study lies in the use of self-report measures to assess battered women's intent to return to their relationships. While self-report measures are useful in gathering information about one's perception of one's individual and unique experience, self-report measures are also subject to a number of biases, social desirability for example. For instance, some women in this study may have answered questions in such a way that they underreported, over-reported, or neglected to report certain aspects of their abuse experiences, such that the essence of their genuine experiences may have been lost. Therefore, future research with these populations might employ clinician-administered structured interview techniques and more in-depth measures of personality in addition to the use of self-report measures.

With regard to the use of self-report measures, another limitation of this study lies in the administration of an older version of the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS, Straus, 1979), as opposed to the revised version of this measure (CTS2, Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) in the packet of questionnaires. The CTS2 has improved upon the pre-existing CTS by adding additional items to the Reasoning, Verbal Aggression, and Physical Aggression subscales. In addition, Straus et al. (1996) added two other subscales to the CTS2, Sexual Coercion and Physical Injury, to measure other specific concrete acts or events associated with intimate partner violence. Another disadvantage of the original CTS was its development as an interview schedule with two columns of response categories, as shown in Appendix E. When this format was presented to respondents for self-administration, it was difficult to complete—both as reported by Straus et al. (1996) as well as in this study. Therefore, the format of the

CTS2 was simplified for self-administration. As such, use of the CTS2 may have revealed more useful information in terms of the specific types of abuse these participants may have endured, and the improved format may have made it an easier measure for the volunteers to complete.

A final limitation of this study, with respect to the administration of self-report measures, is that certain questionnaires were newly developed for the purposes of this study. As reliability coefficients for these particular measures range from .39 (Biographical Data Survey—Structural Resources subscale) to .84 (Intent to Return Questionnaire), it is possible that some of these measures may not have adequately operationalized the constructs under examination. In addition, as these newly developed instruments have not yet been validated, future research using these measures, along with other measures of similar constructs may need to be conducted with more samples of battered women.

Conclusions

Despite the limitations of this research, there are significant findings from this study that may have important implications for treatment involving women who express an intent to return to their abusive relationships. Clinicians working with these populations should assess the battered woman's level of relationship violence, and her perceived availability of options external to her relationship. It is also important to address the emotional factors involved in battered women's decision-making, particularly one's emotional attachment to their abusers as well as psychological damage experienced in their relationships.

For those women exhibiting high levels of emotional attachment to their abusers concomitant with psychological symptoms associated with depression, low self-esteem, and identity diffusion, intense psychotherapy may be warranted. Specific goals for treatment may focus on helping battered women increase their sense of self-efficacy, heightening their feelings of mastery over previously hopeless situations. Perhaps exploration of this nature may allow battered women to examine their own feelings of attachment toward their abusers more accurately.

In sum, it appears that the question "To go, or not to go" is comprised of a number of complex factors. As such, an incorporative approach to understanding the intricacies and nuances of battered women's stay/leave decision-making is desperately needed to strengthen our current knowledge about domestic violence and pave new avenues for theory, research, and practice. Thus, it is hoped that the unified efforts of researchers, clinicians, and policy-makers will continue to make lasting contributions to understanding and rectifying the seemingly endless cycle of pain, desperation, futility, and despair for all the victims caught in the maelstrom of domestic violence.

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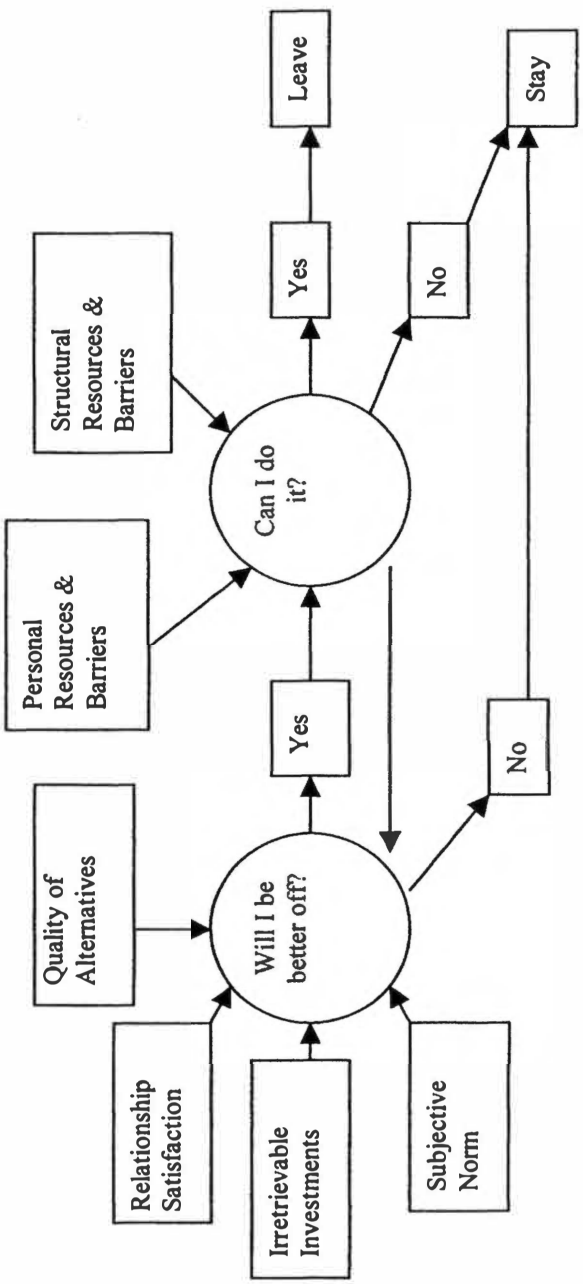
APPENDICES

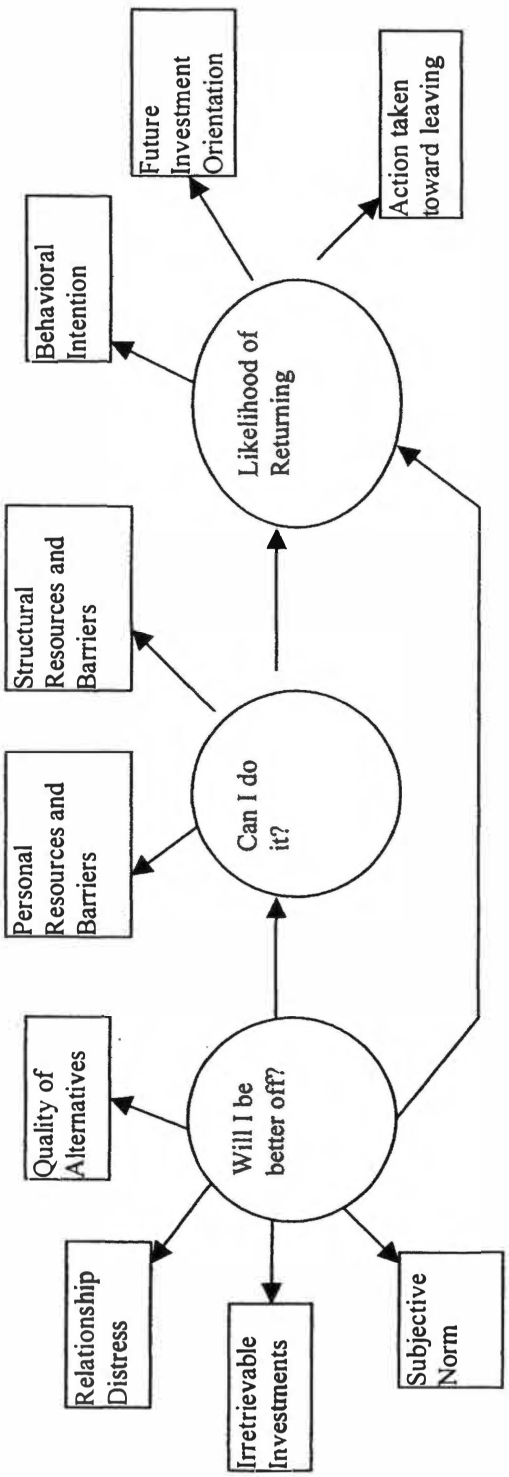
APPENDIX A

Model Used by Choice and Lamke (1997)



APPENDIX B

Model Used by Choice and Lamke (1999)



APPENDIX C
Measures Used In Choice and Lamke's (1999) Study

Will I Be Better Off?

Relationship satisfaction/distress **(Construct Reliability = .77)**

1. Needs Satisfaction in Current Relationship (Drigotas and Rusbult, 1992)
2. Global Satisfaction in Current Relationship (Drigotas and Rusbult, 1992)
3. Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988)
4. Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979)

Quality of alternatives **(Construct Reliability = .66)**

5. Need Satisfaction in Alternate Relationships (Drigotas and Rusbult, 1992)
6. Global Quality of Alternatives (Drigotas and Rusbult, 1992)
7. Ease of Finding an Alternate Partner Index (Simpson, 1987)

Irretrievable investments **(Construct Reliability = .70)**

8. Investment Scale (Lund, 1985)
9. Global Measure of Investment (Agnew et al., 1994)
10. Relationship Events Scale (King & Christensen, 1983)

Subjective norm

11. Authors' adaptation of a scale by Madden et al. (1992)

Can I Do It?

Personal resources/barriers **(Construct Reliability = .48)**

12. Self Mastery Scale (Pearlin et al., 1981)
13. Madden et al. (1992)

Structural resources/barriers

14. Investment Scale (Lund, 1985)

Indicators of the Intention to Stay In or Leave the Relationship

Behavioral intention

15. Adaptation of Madden et al.'s (1992) scale

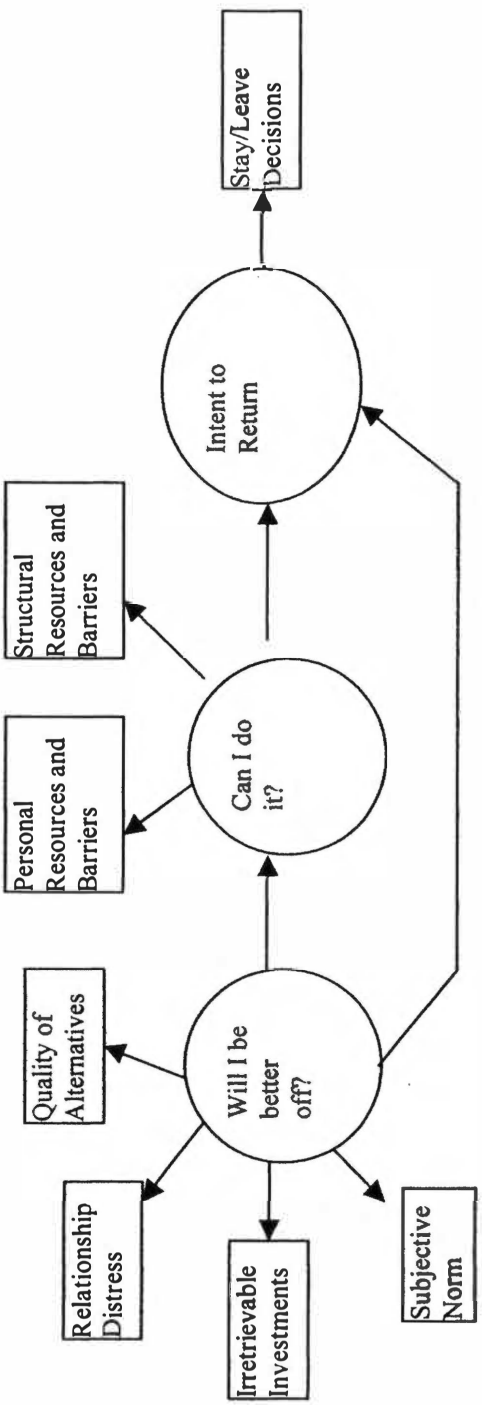
Orientation toward staying in or leaving the relationship

16. One item from the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976)

Actions taken toward leaving

17. Termination Strategies (Wilmot et al., 1985)

APPENDIX D
Model of Dissertation Research



APPENDIX E
Measures and Coefficient Alphas for Current Study

Will I Be Better Off?

Relationship satisfaction/distress

1. Conflict Tactics Scale (.91)

Quality of alternatives

2. Biographical Data Sheet (.46)
3. Commitment Inventory Subscale: "Availability of Other Partners" (.65)

Irretrievable investments

4. Commitment Inventory Subscale: "Structural Investments in Marriage" (.58)

Subjective norm

5. Commitment Inventory Subscale: "Social Pressure" (.23)

Can I Do It?

Personal resources/barriers

6. Alcohol and Drug Screening Questionnaire (.73)
7. Measure of Self-Efficacy (.81)
8. Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression Scale (.81)
9. Relationship Questionnaire N/A
10. Stockholm Syndrome Subscale: "Core Stockholm Syndrome" (.92)
11. Stockholm Syndrome Subscale: "Psychological Damage" (.84)

Structural resources/barriers

12. Biographical Data Sheet (.39)

Indicators of the Intention to Stay In or Leave the Relationship

Behavioral intention

14. Intention to Return Questionnaire (.84)

Actions taken toward leaving

15. Follow-up Data

APPENDIX F
Informed Consent

This is a research study conducted by the Psychology Department at the University of Tennessee. We are interested in learning more about the experiences of women who seek help from shelters due to their involvement in abusive relationships. We hope you will participate.

We will ask you to complete 17 questionnaires if you choose to participate. We expect that it will take about 90 minutes to do this. Then, we would like to talk with you about what you thought of the questionnaires and answer any questions you have about them or the project as a whole. The entire process should take less than 1½ hours. You will receive a $20 gift certificate from Wal-Mart for your time. You can stop participating in this study at any time without penalty. However, you will only receive the gift certificate if you complete the questionnaires. Three months from now, the researchers will contact this shelter again for follow up on the decisions you made when you left the shelter. However, we will not record any specifics of where you went such as your address or phone number.

Your response to the questions and statements in the packet will be kept confidential. Only primary investigators will be able to see the information you give us. The completed packets will be stored in locked files in locked rooms at the University of Tennessee. To further protect you, your name will be replaced by a code number. Only three researchers will have access to this letter which will contain both your name and the code. Your answers will used for research purposes only and will be destroyed after the study is completed. There are only three situations where the investigators are required to break confidentiality and inform appropriate authorities: when you report situations involving potential child abuse, or when you report that you are planning to commit serious harm to yourself or other people.

We are very interested in your experience of abuse and the factors related to your decisions about your relationship now that you are in a protective shelter. Many of the forms in the packet ask about abusive experiences that you may have had. The only risk to your health that we think may happen is that filling out these forms may cause you to think about some difficult parts of your life, which may cause you some distress. If remembering or thinking about these experiences upsets you, please speak with any of the researchers who can discuss your feelings with you and help you find other support. If you have questions about the instructions or meanings of any questions in the packet, please ask one of the researchers or a staff at your shelter.

Your answers will help us to better understand the experiences of abuse in close relationships as well as the factors that make it difficult for many women to leave them and find safety. Your thoughts on this and the other areas covered in the packet of forms will be important for a more complete understanding of abusive relationships. From your responses and those of other women in shelters in east Tennessee, we hope to create programs to better provide women the support they need.

If you have any questions about this study, please call Dr. Kristina Gordon at 974-3347 or Shacunda Burton at 974-2161. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact the UT Compliance Section at 974-3466.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty. I have read and understand what I have to do and I agree to participate.

Signed_____ Date_____

Witnessed_____ Date_____

APPENDIX F-1

Conflict Tactics Scale

No matter how well a couple gets along, there are times when they disagree on major decisions, get annoyed about something the other person does, or just have spats or fights because they're in a bad mood or tired or for some other reason. They also use many different ways of trying to settle their differences.

Please read this list of some things that your partner may have done when you had a dispute and, for each one, select a number that indicates:

(a) how often your partner has done this in the past year,
(b) if the event has ever happened in your relationship.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	**Once**	**Twice**	**3-5 times**	**6-10 times**	**11-20 times**	**>20**

	Partner in Past Year	**Ever Happened**		
a. Discussed the issue calmly	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	1 Yes	2 No	X Don't Know
b. Gotten information to back up his side of things	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	1 Yes	2 No	X Don't Know
c. Brought in, or tried to bring in, someone to help settle things	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	1 Yes	2 No	X Don't Know
d. Argued heatedly, but short of yelling	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	1 Yes	2 No	X Don't Know
e. Yelled and/or insulted you	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	1 Yes	2 No	X Don't Know
f. Sulked and/or refused to talk about it	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	1 Yes	2 No	X Don't Know
g. Stomped out of the room	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	1 Yes	2 No	X Don't Know
h. Threw something, but not at you, or smashed something	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	1 Yes	2 No	X Don't Know
i. Cried	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	1 Yes	2 No	X Don't Know
j. Did or said something to spite	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	1	2	X

you		Yes	No	Don't Know
k. Threatened to hit or throw something at you	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	1 Yes	2 No	X Don't Know
l. Pushed, grabbed, or shoved you	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	1 Yes	2 No	X Don't Know
m. Slapped you	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	1 Yes	2 No	X Don't Know
n. Kicked, bit, or hit you with a fist	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	1 Yes	2 No	X Don't Know
o. Hit or tried to hit you with something	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	1 Yes	2 No	X Don't Know
p. Beat you up	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	1 Yes	2 No	X Don't Know
q. Threatened you with a knife or gun	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	1 Yes	2 No	X Don't Know
r. Used a knife or gun	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	1 Yes	2 No	X Don't Know
s. Other:_____	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	1 Yes	2 No	X Don't Know

APPENDIX F-2

Biographical Data Survey

Before you begin the questionnaires, please tell us a little about yourself. This information, like all information that you give us, will be kept strictly confidential.

Please circle the appropriate answer or fill in the blank.

1. What is your age? _____
2. How many years of education have you had? _____
3. What is your racial group?
   1. Asian 2. African-American (Black) 3. Hispanic 4. Native American
   5. Caucasian (White) 6. Other_____
4. What is your marital status?
   1. Single 2. Married 3. Divorced 4. Separated 5. Widowed
   6. Living in a Committed Relationship7. Other_____
5. If married, how many years have you been married to your spouse? _____
6. Did you and your spouse live together before you were married?
   1. Yes - How long? _____(months, years) 2. No
7. How many times have you been married? _____
8. If not married, how long have you been in your current relationship?
   _____(months, years)
9. How many children do you have? _____
10. Are you employed outside the home?
    1. No 2. Yes - Circle one: Full Time Part Time 3. Other_____
    If yes, what is your occupation?_____
11. What is your household's yearly income? 1. Less than $5,000
    2. $5,000 - $10,000 3. $10,000 - $24,999 4. $25,000 - $49,999
    5. $50,000 - $74,999 6. $75,000 - $99,999 7. More than $100,000
12. What is your primary mode of transportation? 1. Own car 2. Bus 3. Walk
    4. Rely on family and/or friends 5. Other _____
13. What is your religious denomination?
    1. Baptist 2. Catholic 3. Episcopalian 4. Fundamentalist 5. Jewish
    6. Lutheran 7. Methodist 8. Presbyterian 9. Other Protestant _____
    10. Other religion_____ 11. None
14. How often do you participate in religious services?
    1. Frequently 2. Occasionally 3. Seldom 4. Never
15. How much do you consider yourself to be a religious or spiritual person?
    1. Not at all 2. A little 3. Moderately so 4. Very much so
16. How satisfied are you with the support you receive from your family?
    1. Not at all 2. A little 3. Moderately so 4. Very much so
17. How satisfied are you with the support you receive from your friends?
    1. Not at all 2. A little 3. Moderately so 4. Very much so

APPENDIX F-3

Commitment Inventory

Here are some beliefs that some couples have about their relationships. Please circle the number next to the belief that shows how much you agree with that belief.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree			Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree

1. Except when a spouse dies, marriage should be a once in a lifetime commitment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I would have trouble finding a suitable partner if this relationship ended.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. It would be difficult for my friends to accept it if I ended the relationship with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I would lose valuable possessions if I left my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I may not want to be with my partner a few years from now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Following through on commitments is an essential part of who I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I want to keep the plans for my life somewhat separate from my partner's plans for life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. My career (or job, studies, homemaking, child-rearing, etc.) is more important to me than my relationship with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I get satisfaction out of doing things for my partner, even if it means I miss out on something I want for myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Though I would not want to end the relationship with my partner, I would like to have a romantic/sexual relationship with someone other than my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. It is all right for a couple to get a divorce if their marriage is not working out.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I am not very attractive to the opposite sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

13. My friends would not mind it if my partner and I broke up (or divorced).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. I have not spent much money on my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. I want to grow old with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. I try hard to follow through on all my commitments.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. I am more comfortable thinking in terms of "my" things than "our" things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. When push comes to shove, my relationship with my partner comes first.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. It can be personally fulfilling to give up something for my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. I am not seriously attracted to people of the opposite sex other than my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. Divorce is wrong.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. I believe there are many people who would be happy with me as their spouse or partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. My friends want to see my relationship with my partner continue.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. I have put a number of tangible, valuable resources into this relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. I do not have life-long plans for this relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. I don't make commitments unless I believe I will keep them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. I am willing to have or develop a strong sense of an identity as a couple with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. My relationship with my partner comes before my relationships with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. I do not get much fulfillment out of sacrificing for my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. I know people of the opposite sex whom I desire more than my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

31. People should feel free to end a marriage as long as the children are not going to be hurt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. It would be very difficult to find a new partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. My family would not care either way if this relationship ended.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. This relationship has cost me very little in terms of physical, tangible resources.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. I may decide that I want to end this relationship at some point in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. I do not feel compelled to keep all of the commitments that I make.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. I tend to think about how things affect "us" as a couple more than how things affect "me" as an individual.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. When push comes to shove, my relationship with my partner often must take a backseat to other interests of mine.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39. I am not the kind of person that finds satisfaction in putting aside my interests for the sake of my relationship with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40. I am not seriously attracted to anyone other than my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41. If a couple works hard to make their marriage work but finds themselves incompatible, divorce is the best thing they can do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42. If, for any reason, my relationship ended, I could find another partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
43. My family really wants this relationship to work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
44. I would lose money, or feel like money had been wasted, if my partner and I broke up (divorced).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
45. I want this relationship to stay strong no matter what rough times we may encounter.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

46. I have trouble making commitments because I do not want to close off alternatives.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
47. I like to think of my partner and me more in terms of "us" and "we" than "me" and "him."	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
48. When the pressure is really on and I must choose, my partner's happiness is not as important to me as are other things in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
49. It makes me feel good to sacrifice for my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
50. I do not often find myself thinking about what it would be like to be in a relationship with someone else.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
51. A marriage is a sacred bond between two people which should not be broken.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
52. Though it might take awhile, I could find another desirable partner if I wanted or needed to.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
53. My family would not care if I ended this relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
54. I have put very little money into this relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
55. My relationship with my partner is clearly part of my future life plans.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
56. Fairly often I make commitments to people or things that I do not follow through on.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
57. I do not want to have a strong identity as a couple with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
58. My relationship with my partner is more important to me than almost anything else in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
59. Giving something up for my partner is frequently not worth the trouble.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
60. I think a lot about what it would be like to be married to (or dating) someone other than my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX F-4

Stockholm Syndrome Scale

Using the letters,

A. I always or almost always feel this way
B. I often feel this way
C. I feel this way as often as not
D. I seldom feel this way
E. I never or almost never feel this way; this does not apply to me,

indicate the extent to which each of the statements below describes how you feel or have felt *since being with your partner.*

_____1. My partner's love and protection are more important than any hurt he might cause me.
_____2. I need my partner's nurturance and protection to survive.
_____3. The problem is not that my partner is "just an angry person;" it is that I provoke him.
_____4. I have to have my partner's love to survive.
_____5. I am extremely attached to my partner.
_____6. In my eyes, my partner is like a god.
_____7. My partner would not get so angry at me if others had not been mean to him.
_____8. There is something about me that makes my partner unable to control his anger.
_____9. When I start getting close to people, something bad happens.
_____10. Other people see only my partner's negative side; they don't see all the small kindnesses he does for me that make me love him.
_____11. I do not want others to know how angry my partner gets at me.
_____12. I both love and fear my partner.
_____13. I dislike others telling me my partner is not good to me.
_____14. I know my partner is not a violent person; he just loses control.
_____15. Without my partner, I have nothing to live for.
_____16. I feel like I am going crazy.
_____17. My partner is like me, a victim of others' anger.
_____18. I do not know who I am.
_____19. I cannot imagine trying to live without my partner.
_____20. If I give my partner enough love, he will stop getting so angry at me.
_____21. My partner is as much a victim as I am.
_____22. I have conflicting feelings about my partner.
_____23. It is really hard for me to question whether my relationship with my partner is good for me.
_____24. If my relationship were to break up, I would feel so much pain that I would want to kill myself.
_____25. I cannot stand it if I even suspect somebody is rejecting me in any way.
_____26. I hate those parts of me that cause my partner to criticize or get angry at me.

_____27. Because I cause my partner to get angry at me, I am not a good partner.

_____28. The more I talk to people, the more confused I get about whether my relationship with my partner is healthy.

A. I always or almost always feel this way
B. I often feel this way
C. I feel this way as often as not
D. I seldom feel this way
E. I never or almost never feel this way; this does not apply to me

_____29. Without my partner, I would not know who I am.

_____30. Any kindness by my partner creates hope in me that things will get better.

_____31. I feel good about who I am.

_____32. I feel calm and sure of myself.

_____33. Aspects of my partner's and my relationship that I see as normal, others see as unhealthy.

_____34. There are things that my partner has done to me that I don't like to think about.

_____35. I feel down and blue.

_____36. I feel like I could not live without my partner.

Using the letters,

A. Always or almost always
B. Often
C. As often as not
D. Seldom
E. Almost never or never,

indicate the extent to which you do or have done the following *since being with your partner*:

_____37. If others try to intervene on my behalf when my partner criticizes me or gets angry with me, I take my partner's side against them.

_____38. I find myself defending and making excuses for my partner when I talk about him with others.

_____39. When others ask me how I feel about something, I do not know.

_____40. If others try to intervene on my behalf when my partner criticizes me, I get angry at them.

_____41. I find it difficult to concentrate on tasks.

_____42. I switch back and forth between seeing my partner as either all good or all bad.

_____43. When my partner is less critical of me, I become hopeful.

_____44. It is hard for me to make decisions.

_____45. I have different personalities depending on who I am with.

_____46. I cannot make decisions.

_____47. I make jokes to others about the times my partner has been really angry at me.

_____48. I work hard to get people to like me.

_____49. I get angry at people who point out ways in which my partner is not good to me.

APPENDIX F-5

Alcohol and Drug Screening Questionnaire

Please respond to the following questions.

1. How often do you use alcohol and/or drugs each week?
____0 times _____1-2 times _____3-4 times _____5 or more times

2. How much do you drink/use at each sitting?
_____1 _____2-3 _____4 or more

3. Do you feel that you have a problem with alcohol and/or drugs? _____yes _____no

4. How often does your partner use alcohol and/or drugs each week?
____0 times _____1-2 times _____3-4 times _____5 or more times

5. How much does your partner drink/use at each sitting?
_____1 _____2-3 _____4 or more

6. Do you feel that your partner has a problem with alcohol and/or drugs? _____yes _____no

APPENDIX F-6

Measure of Self-Efficacy

Respond to the following statements by placing in the blank the number that best indicates how much you agree with each one.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

_____ 1. When I make plans, I am certain I can make them work.

_____ 2. One of my problems is that I cannot get down to work when I should.

_____ 3. If I can't do a job the first time, I keep trying until I can.

_____ 4. When I set important goals for myself, I rarely achieve them.

_____ 5. I give up on things before completing them.

_____ 6. I avoid facing difficulties.

_____ 7. If something looks too complicated, I will not even bother to try it.

_____ 8. When I have something unpleasant to do, I stick to it until I finish it.

_____ 9. When I decide to do something, I go right to work on it.

_____ 10. When trying to learn something new, I soon give up if I am not initially successful.

_____ 11. When unexpected problems occur, I don't handle them well.

_____ 12. I avoid trying to learn new things when they look too difficult for me.

_____ 13. Failure just makes me try harder.

_____ 14. I feel insecure about my ability to do things.

_____ 15. I am a self-reliant person.

_____ 16. I give up easily.

_____ 17. I do not seem capable of dealing with most problems that come up in life.

APPENDIX F-7

Center for Epidemiolgical Studies-Depression Scale

INSTRUCTIONS: Below is a list of the ways you might have felt or behaved lately. Please tell us how often you have felt this way during the past week.

0 = Rarely or None of the Time (Less than 1 Day)
1 = Some or a Little of the Time (1-2 Days)
2 = Occasionally or a Moderate Amount of Time (3-4 Days)
3 = Most or All of the Time (5-7 Days)

1. I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me.	0	1	2	3
2. I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor.	0	1	2	3
3. I felt that I could not shake off the blues even with help from my family or friends.	0	1	2	3
4. I felt that I was just as good as other people.	0	1	2	3
5. I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing.	0	1	2	3
6. I felt depressed.	0	1	2	3
7. I felt that everything I did was an effort.	0	1	2	3
8. I felt hopeful about the future.	0	1	2	3
9. I thought my life had been a failure.	0	1	2	3
10. I felt fearful.	0	1	2	3
11. My sleep was restless.	0	1	2	3
12. I was happy.	0	1	2	3
13. I talked less than usual.	0	1	2	3
14. I felt lonely.	0	1	2	3
15. People were unfriendly.	0	1	2	3
16. I enjoyed life.	0	1	2	3
17. I had crying spells.	0	1	2	3
18. I felt sad.	0	1	2	3
19. I felt that people dislike me.	0	1	2	3
20. I could not get "going."	0	1	2	3

APPENDIX F-8

Relationship Questionnaire

Following are four general relationship styles that people often report. Place a checkmark next to the letter corresponding to the style that best describes you or is closest to the way you are.

___ A. It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or having others not accept me.

___ B. I am uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.

___ C. I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.

___ D. I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me.

Now please rate each of the relationship styles above to indicate how well or poorly each description corresponds to your general relationship style (circle the number).

Style A

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all like me			Neutral/ Mixed			Very much like me

Style B

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all like me			Neutral/ Mixed			Very much like me

Style C

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all like me			Neutral/ Mixed			Very much like me

Style D

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all like me			Neutral/ Mixed			Very much like me

APPENDIX F-9

Intention to Return

Please respond to these statements, using the following scale, based on your **current feelings** about your relationship and partner.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

_____ 1. I miss my partner a lot.

_____ 2. I plan to see him again.

_____ 3. I don't want to go home to my partner.

_____ 4. I am going to give my relationship with my partner another chance.

_____ 5. I wish my partner and I could make our relationship work.

_____ 6. When I leave this shelter, I will go back to my partner.

APPENDIX G
TABLES

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Independent and Dependent Variables (N=121)

	Mean	S.D
1. Intent to Return	2.56	1.56
2. Relationship Violence	24.26	25.0
3. Social Support	4.78	1.92
4. Availability of Other Partners	20.79	7.70
5. Irretrievable Investments	25.10	7.52
6. Social Pressure	20.91	5.89
7. Alcohol and Drug Use	1.36	1.81
8. Self-Efficacy	54.80	10.77
9. Depressive Symptoms	34.29	10.33
10. Attachment Style	2.30	1.03
11. Attachment to Abuser	34.76	19.70
12. Psychological Damage	24.80	10.66
13. Structural Resources	3.42	1.78

Table 2

Correlations between Independent and Dependent Variables (N=121)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Intent to Return	1.00	-.27**	-.06	.24**	.06	.11	-.19*	.02	.36**	.06	.11	-.10
2. Relationship Violence		1.00	-.13	.11	-.02	-.19*	.01	.21*	.06	-.03	.19*	-.01
3. Quality of Alternatives			1.00	-.06	-.13	-.05	.11	-.15	-.02	-.16	-.16	.09
4. Availability of Other Partners				1.00	.13	.11	-.30**	.19*	.32**	-.01	.44**	-.00
5. Irretrievable Investments					1.00	.01	.01	-.06	.01	-.08	.09	.11
6. Social Pressure						1.00	-.07	-.06	.24**	.11	.21*	-.04
7. Self-Efficacy							1.00	-.21*	-.31**	-.06	-.50**	.21*
8. Depression								1.00	.06	.31**	.29**	-.07
9. Attachment to Abuser									1.00	-.02	.59**	-.27**
10. Attachment Style										1.00	.01	-.03
11. Psychological Damage											1.00	-.26**
12. Structural Resources												1.00

† $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .005$; **** $p < .00$

Table 3

Regression Model Predicting Intent to Return from "Will I be better off" Variables (N=121)

Model	Variable	Beta	*SE B*	R^2
1	Relationship Violence	-.31***	.00	.15***
	Quality of Alternatives	-.06	.01	
	Availability of Other Partners	.27***	.00	
	Structural Investments	-.00	.00	
	Social Pressure	-.02	.00	

† $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .005$; **** $p < .001$

Table 4

Regression Model Predicting Intent to Return from "Can I do it" Variables (N=121)

Model	Variable	Beta	*SE B*	R^2
1	Attachment to Abuser	.46****	.00	.19****
	Attachment Style	.08	.06	
	Alcohol/Drug Use	.09	.05	
	Depression	-.00	.00	
	Psychological Damage	-.27*	.00	
	Self-Efficacy	-.18†	.00	
	Structural Resources	-.01	.01	

† $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .005$; **** $p < .001$

Table 5

Regression Model Predicting Intent to Return from "Will I be better off" and "Can I do it" Variables (N=121)

Model	Variable	Beta	*SE B*	R^2
1	Will I be better off			
	Relationship Violence	-.32****	.00	.15***
	Quality of Alternatives	-.06	.01	
	Availability of Other Partners	.27***	.00	
	Structural Investments	-.01	.00	
	Social Pressure	-.01	.00	
2	Will I be better off			
	Relationship Violence	-.30****	.00	.31****
	Quality of Alternatives	-.06	.01	
	Availability of Other Partners	.19*	.00	
	Structural Investments	.06	.00	
	Social Pressure	-.05	.00	
	Can I do it			
	Attachment to Abuser	.45****	.00	
	Attachment Style	.05	.06	
	Alcohol/Drug Use	.07	.05	
	Depression	-.04	.00	
	Psychological Damage	-.28*	.00	
	Self-Efficacy	-.13	.00	
	Structural Resources	-.02	.01	

† $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .005$; **** $p < .001$

Table 6

Regression Model Predicting Intent to Return from Significant "Will I be better off" and "Can I do it" Variables and the Interaction of "Will I be better off" and "Can I do it" (N=121)

Model	Variable	Beta	*SE B*	R^2
1	Relationship to Violence (RV)	-.30****	.00	.23****
	Attachment to Abuser (AA)	.39****	.00	
2	Relationship Violence	-.30****	.00	.23****
	Attachment to Abuser	-.40****	.00	
	(RV) x (AA)	.03	.00	

† $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .005$; **** $p < .001$

Table 7

Regression Model Predicting Stay/Leave Decisions from "Will I be better off" and "Can I do it" Variables
(N=96)

Variable	Beta	SE	Exp B
Relationship Violence	-.02	.04	.98
Quality of Alternatives	.39	.36	1.48
Availability of Other Partners	-.10	.07	.90
Structural Investments	.31***	.10	1.36
Social Pressure	-.00	.08	1.00
Alcohol/Drug Use	-.76	1.12	.47
Attachment Style	.88	1.24	2.42
Attachment to Abuser	-.01	.03	.99
Depression	.04	.05	1.04
Psychological Damage	-.06	.08	.95
Self-Efficacy	-.06	.06	.94
Structural Resources	-1.11**	.43	.33

† $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .005$; **** $p < .001$

Table 8

Regression Model Predicting Stay/Leave Decisions from Intent to Return (N=96)

Variable	Beta	SE	ExpB
Intent to Return	3.20*	1.44	24.51

† $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .005$; **** $p < .001$

Vita

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