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The Tripartite Nature of Marital Commitment: Personal, Moral, and Structural Reasons to Stay Married

This study assesses the empirical viability of Johnson's (1991) commitment framework. The core principle is that commitment, rather than a unitary phenomenon, involves three distinct experiences: wanting to stay married, feeling morally obligated to stay married, and feeling constrained to stay married. Using data from a sample of married couples, we show that direct measures of the three experiences are not highly correlated with each other; that a measure of so-called global commitment is a function primarily, if not exclusively, of personal commitment, that the three direct measures of the experiences of commitment are associated for the most part with the components of each type as hypothesized in the commitment framework, and that the three types of commitment and their components are not associated in the same way with other variables.

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What does it mean to be committed to a relationship? Johnson (1973, 1982, 1991, in press) has argued that the experience of commitment is not unitary, that there are three distinct types of commitment, each with a different set of causes, a different phenomenology, and different cognitive, emotional, and behavioral consequences. Personal commitment refers to the sense of wanting to stay in the relationship, moral commitment to feeling morally obligated to stay, and structural commitment to feeling constrained to stay regardless of the level of personal or moral commitment. We report an investigation of the experiential nature of commitment in the context of first marriages that have survived from 1981 to 1994. Data are presented on the relationships among the three types of commitment and on the relationship of each of the three types to so-called global commitment. We also show that the three types of commitment are functions of different components of commitment and are related differently to a number of other antecedents and consequences.

TYPES OF COMMITMENT

Johnson's (1991) commitment framework is organized around a discussion of the components of

three major types of commitment and identifies the key sets of factors that contribute to the experiences of personal, moral, or structural commitment to a particular relationship. The first two types of commitment, personal and moral, are experienced as internal to the individual and are a function of the person's own attitudes and values. The third type of commitment, structural, is experienced as external to the individual and is a function of perceptions of constraints that make it costly for the individual to leave the relationship.

Personal Commitment

Personal commitment, the extent to which one wants to stay in a relationship, is affected by three components (Johnson, 1991). First, individuals may want to continue a relationship because they are attracted to their partner. Second, personal commitment is a function of attraction to the relationship. Although under many conditions these two components of personal commitment are correlated with each other, they clearly are not the same phenomenon. One can feel a strong attraction to an individual who, in the context of the relationship, behaves in ways that one finds quite unsatisfactory. Furthermore, the attractiveness of a relationship may be experienced as a joint function of the actions of both partners or may be attributed primarily to oneself. For example, one way a physically abusive husband controls his wife is by convincing her that the abuse is more her fault than his (Johnson, 1995; Kirkwood, 1993; Pence & Paymar, 1993). In such a case, a woman may have quite negative feelings about the violent relationship but still experience strong feelings of love for her partner, who has convinced her that he is not the problem.

The third component of personal commitment is couple identity. Social relationships are a central part of identity (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954; McCall & Simmons, 1978). Thus, one's participation in a particular relationship can become an important aspect of one's self-concept (Aron, Aron, & Smollen, 1992; Bolton, 1961).

Moral Commitment

Moral commitment, the sense that one is morally obligated to continue a relationship, is a function of three components. First, relationship-type obligation refers to values concerning the morality of the dissolution of particular types of relationships. One may feel, for example, that a marriage, any

marriage, ought to last "until death do us part." Second, one might feel a personal moral obligation to another person, as in "I promised Paul I would stay with him the rest of my life, and I will," or "Paul really needs me, and it wouldn't be fair to leave him now." Third, one might feel obligated to continue a particular relationship because of general consistency values. Kelley (1983) seems to have had this component of moral commitment in mind when he noted that people "tend to try to maintain a consistency, over time, in how they feel, think, and act on important matters" (p. 302). The general value of finishing what one starts is also captured in aphorisms such as: "Winners never quit, and quitters never win."

Structural Commitment

Johnson (1991) has argued that, although structural commitment (the sense of constraint or that there are barriers to leaving a relationship) is an important type of commitment, its impact may not be felt as long as personal or moral commitment is high. If, however, personal and moral commitments are relatively low, the following four components of structural commitment will become salient and will contribute to a sense of being trapped in the relationship, feeling constrained by the costs of dissolution to remain, whether one wants to or not.

Alternatives. Dependency on a relationship is partly a function of the alternative circumstances that a person believes would be available if the relationship ended (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Although much of the focus of the literature on alternatives has been confined to the attractiveness of alternative relationships, both Johnson (1973) and Udry (1981) have argued that perception of the quality of alternatives involves broader considerations. Decisions about relationship dissolution are made in an environment that also constrains options in matters such as economics, housing, employment, and contact with one's children.

Social pressure. A second type of constraint comes from the reactions that people anticipate from those in their network who may or may not approve of ending the relationship. Friends and relatives may, for either moral or pragmatic reasons, put pressure on an individual to stick with a relationship that seems to be headed for dissolution. When such pressures come from people whose opinions matter, individuals may feel constrained to continue a relationship even when they feel little personal or moral commitment.

Termination procedures. A third form of constraint involves the difficulty of the actions required to end a relationship. In the case of marriage, there is the set of legal procedures required to divorce, and there are other, less bureaucratic processes that may prove difficult. Possessions have to be divided. At least one of the partners ordinarily has to find new housing. If either of the partners has not been working, he or she has to find a job or look into other sources of support. To the extent that such actions are seen as onerous, they function as a barrier to dissolution.

Irretrievable investments. The final set of constraints concerns feelings about having invested time and resources into a relationship. Some individuals may perceive that these resources were well spent, that they produced positive experiences that were their own reward. Others may perceive that these resources were wasted if the relationship comes to an end. Thus, some people may be reluctant to leave even an unsatisfying relationship because they feel that their departure would represent an unacceptable waste of direct investments and foregone opportunities.

HYPOTHESES

The data were collected to assess the empirical viability of the core principle of the commitment framework. Commitment involves three distinct sets of experiences (personal commitment, moral commitment, and structural commitment), each shaped by its particular components. (See Table 1.) We hypothesize that measures of so-called global commitment actually assess only personal commitment, rather than the combined effects of all three types of commitment. Second, we hypothesize that the three types of commitment are, at most, moder-

ately correlated with each other. Third, we hypothesize that each of the three types of commitment is a function of its own set of components. Finally, we hypothesize that the three types of commitment relate differently to a variety of antecedents and consequences.

Global Commitment

Johnson's model has never included a general or global concept of commitment, although it is common to encounter such a concept in the literature. Sometimes it comes in the form of a seemingly straightforward single item, such as: "How committed are you to this relationship?" More often, one encounters a multi-item measure, such as Dean and Spanier's (1974) Guttman scale that involves items that indicate variation in the lengths to which one will go to maintain a relationship in the face of adversity. Perhaps the best known operationalization of commitment is Rusbult's (1983; Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998) multi-item measure that involves questions about how long one wants the relationship to last, how committed one is to maintaining the relationship, how attached one is to one's partner, how likely it is that the relationship will end or that one will date someone else, whether one has fantasies about life outside the relationship, and how upset one would feel if the relationship were to end soon.

Our position is that these approaches to so-called global commitment address only matters of personal commitment and yield only information about the extent to which respondents want to continue the relationship. Thus, what is presented as global commitment or merely as "commitment" (without modifiers) actually deals with only one of the three forms of commitment. As Fehr (1988) demonstrated, when one asks respondents general

TABLE 1. THREE TYPES OF COMMITMENT AND THEIR COMPONENTS

Personal commitment: experienced as wanting to continue
Attraction to one's partner (love)
Attraction to the relationship (marital satisfaction)
Couple identity (couple identity)
Moral commitment: experienced as moral obligation to continue
Relationship-type obligations (divorce attitudes)
Personal moral obligation (partner contract)
Consistency values (consistency values)
Structural commitment: experienced as constraint to continue
Alternatives (alternatives)
Social pressure (social pressure)
Termination procedures (termination procedures)
Irretrievable investments (investments)

Note: The variable names under which each construct is operationalized in these data on marriage are indicated in parentheses.

questions about the meaning of commitment, one gets responses that are largely framed in terms of what the respondent wants, rather than in terms of moral or structural constraints. Rusbult's multi-item measure ensures this frame by first asking the respondent, "For how much longer do you want your relationship to last?" Then the measure goes on to the other commitment items (Rusbult et al., 1998). It is not surprising, then, to find that such measures are in large part a function of satisfaction with the relationship (Rusbult, 1983). This line of argument implies the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Global measures of commitment are strongly related to personal commitment and at best moderately related to moral and structural commitment.

Hypothesis 1a: Global measures of commitment are strongly related to the feeling that one wants to stay in the relationship and at best moderately related to feelings that one ought to or has to stay in the relationship.

Hypothesis 1b: Global measures of commitment are strongly related to the components of personal commitment (love, marital satisfaction, and couple identity) but at best only moderately related to the components of moral and structural commitment.

However, our concerns go beyond quarrels with current operationalizations of the concept of global commitment. It simply does not make experiential sense to aggregate the three types of commitment into one global concept. Ignoring moral commitment for the moment, imagine two people with the same "global commitment" score obtained from such an aggregation procedure. Person A has a strong personal commitment to the relationship but is not structurally committed. Person B feels no personal commitment but considerable structural commitment. For almost no purposes would it make sense to consider these two people to be similarly committed. In terms of the emotions involved, Person A is probably quite happy, and Person B is probably miserable. In terms of the expected longevity of the relationship, we can imagine Person A acting in ways that will maintain the relationship as long as her personal commitment does not change. Person B, however, is probably already trying to reduce her structural commitments so that she can get out of this situation as soon as possible. Furthermore, if we ask

how these people got where they are, the two stories are likely to be quite different. Thus, we see problems even with models that distinguish among the types of commitment but either aggregate them to form a global index or assume a simple additive effect of the three types on other variables such as motivation to maintain or dissolve the relationship. We need to develop more elaborate, realistic conceptions of how particular combinations of various levels of the three types of commitment might affect any of a number of actions relevant to the development, maintenance, or dissolution of the relationship (Johnson, 1991, pp. 127–128).

Covariation Among the Types of Commitment

Although the three types of commitment sometimes may covary with each other, they are distinguishable phenomena. We assume that these experiences of commitment can be assessed separately and each demonstrated to be a function of its own subset of the components of commitment. We also assume that the extent to which these types of commitment covary is a function of the type and stage of the relationship and of the characteristics of the social system in which the relationship is embedded (Johnson, 1991). Because our data were collected from couples who were married in Pennsylvania in 1981 and were still together in 1994, the development of hypotheses about the correlations among the three types of commitment must address that particular context. In general, our position is that for such a relationship (what we might call midlife marriage in the United States), the three types of commitment should not be highly correlated. The derivation of more specific hypotheses addresses two basic ways each type of commitment might affect the others. First, there might be intrapsychic effects in which one type of commitment experience seems to the individual either to imply another type of commitment or to be incompatible with it. Second, there are behaviorally mediated effects in which one type of commitment leads a person to engage in actions that affect the components of other types of commitment (Johnson, 1991).

We see no reason to expect personal commitment to affect moral commitment intrapsychically, no logic by which one's feeling that one wants to stay in a relationship would directly affect one's sense that one ought to stay in it. With respect to behaviorally mediated effects of moral commitment, two of the components of moral commitment (divorce attitudes and consistency values) are probably anchored in experiences that precede

and, therefore, have little to do with one's relationship with a particular spouse. Nonetheless, it is possible that people with strongly negative attitudes about divorce or with strong consistency values may have worked harder than others to maintain their personal commitment during their marriage. Thus we expect a weak relationship, at best, between personal commitment and these two components of moral commitment. However, there may be some behaviorally mediated connection between personal commitment and the partner-contract component of moral commitment. People who feel strongly about their partner may be somewhat more inclined to make promises to stick together, promises that make them feel they ought to stay in the relationship later, even if they no longer wish to. Taking all of these factors into account, we expect a slight correlation between personal and moral commitment.

Should moral and structural commitment be closely related for midlife marriages? We see no compelling reason to expect an intrapsychic relationship between moral and structural commitment. Moral commitment might, however, have some indirect effects on structural commitment. For example, a person might be more inclined to have children in a relationship to which he or she is morally committed, and the presence of children then would affect a number of the components of structural commitment, such as social pressure to stay together, the difficulty of termination procedures (because one must deal with custody and child support arrangements), or the attractiveness of alternatives (because the prospects of single parenthood or non-custodial parenthood in the U.S. are not particularly attractive). Thus, we expect a slight relationship between moral and structural commitment.

Finally, with respect to personal and structural commitment, the intrapsychic and behaviorally mediated sources of covariation are likely to have opposite effects. The intrapsychic effect should be quite negative. If one feels strongly that one wants to stay in a relationship, one is highly unlikely to feel that one has to stay in that relationship. Whatever the structural constraints may be and whatever one's awareness of them is, it is only when one feels little personal commitment that one experiences any sense of constraint. Balancing this negative effect, however, would be behaviorally mediated effects of personal commitment (through the components of structural commitment) that are likely to be positive. First, like morally committed couples, couples who are more personally committed to the maintenance of their relationship

may be more likely to have children, and the presence of children increases the constraints of social pressure and termination procedures and reduces the attractiveness of alternatives. A second set of possibilities has to do with the extent to which one objectifies or demonstrates one's personal commitments (or lack of them) by acting to affect the components of structural commitment. For example, high personal commitment might lead one to self-consciously create a joint social network that is couple oriented, that is, therefore, more likely to oppose a dissolution, and that restricts the availability of alternative partners. Similarly, a personally committed individual might be more willing to become economically dependent on his or her partner than would one who is less personally committed. However, because the major structural constraints involved in marriage probably have more to do with the economic and social history of the couple than with their feelings about each other, we do not expect these behaviorally mediated effects to be strong. In sum, although we expect a strong negative intrapsychic relationship between personal and structural commitment, this will be countered by a slightly positive behaviorally mediated effect that produces an overall moderately negative correlation.

Hypothesis 2: Personal, moral, and structural commitment are, at best, moderately associated.

Hypothesis 2a: Personal and moral commitment are slightly positively associated.

Hypothesis 2b: Moral and structural commitment are slightly positively associated.

Hypothesis 2c: Personal and structural commitment are moderately negatively associated.

Types and Their Components

One of the basic assumptions of the theoretical framework on which this article is based is that the major determinants of each of the three types of commitment are its particular components. Thus, we predict that personal commitment will be a function primarily of love, marital satisfaction, and couple identity. Similarly, we predict that moral commitment will be primarily a function of divorce attitudes, partner contract, and general consistency values. With respect to structural com-

mitment, however, a caveat is in order. All of the participants in this study are married couples who have been together for the same number of years. It is unlikely that termination procedures or irretrievable investments differ among our couples enough to have much of an effect on their sense of being trapped in their relationship. Therefore, we predict that for this sample only alternatives and social pressure will be clearly related to feelings of structural commitment.

Hypothesis 3: Personal, moral, and structural commitment are differentially related to the components of commitment.

Hypothesis 3a: Personal commitment is related primarily to love, marital satisfaction, and couple identity.

Hypothesis 3b: Moral commitment is related primarily to divorce attitudes, partner contract, and general consistency values.

Hypothesis 3c: Structural commitment is related primarily to alternatives and social pressure but for this sample not to termination procedures or irretrievable investments.

Other Variables

The final issue involves the relationships between the types of commitment and other variables. If it is important to distinguish among the three types of commitment, it should be possible to demonstrate that they have different causes and different effects. We will look at a few examples, chosen because we expected each of these particular variables to be associated with only one of the three types of commitment. We have chosen two variables that we believe will be associated exclusively with personal commitment. First, studies have demonstrated that the frequency with which partners express negative feelings is an excellent predictor of marital satisfaction (a component of personal commitment) but not a good predictor of marital stability, which we assume is affected strongly by moral and structural commitment. (See Karney & Bradbury, 1995, for a review.) Second, marital satisfaction (a component of personal commitment) often has been demonstrated to be associated with life satisfaction (e.g., Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976), but we are aware of no arguments associating life satisfaction with moral or structural commitment.

The third variable we have chosen for these analyses is religiosity, which we expect to be related to moral commitment but not to the other types of commitment. Our fourth hypothesis is more of an observation than a hypothesis because, working from an assumption that indicators of social class would be associated more closely with structural than with personal or moral commitment, we looked at a number of candidates such as income, social class, education, and stability of living arrangements.

Hypothesis 4: Personal, moral, and structural commitment have different antecedents and consequences.

Hypothesis 4a: Negative marital interaction is an antecedent of personal commitment but not of moral or structural commitment.

Hypothesis 4b: Life satisfaction is a consequence of personal commitment but not of moral or structural commitment.

Hypothesis 4c: Religiosity is an antecedent of moral commitment but not of personal or structural commitment.

Hypothesis 4d: Income, social class, education, and stability of living arrangements are antecedents of structural commitment but not of personal or moral commitment.

METHODS

Sample

Participants were 187 individuals (91 couples plus five women) in their 13th year of marriage. The sample was drawn from a larger longitudinal study of couples entering their first marriages in 1981 (Huston, McHale, & Crouter, 1986; Huston, Robins, Atkinson, & McHale, 1987). The original sample was identified through marriage licenses in four counties in central Pennsylvania. People were included only if they could speak English, were not part of the Amish community, were not institutionalized or incarcerated, and did not have plans to move from the area in the near future. Of the eligible couples, 42% (168 dyads) agreed to participate. According to information from marriage licenses, those who agreed to participate did not differ from those who refused in terms of age, father's occupation, or education level (Robins, 1985).

The subsample for this study was created by including only individuals who were still married in 1994 and who agreed to participate in follow-up interviews that year. To assess the impact of attrition, we compared the participants in the present follow-up study with the participants who dropped out of the study—whether for reasons of divorce or otherwise—using data collected from them when they were newlyweds. As newlyweds, the two subsamples were fairly similar in terms of variables related to commitment. In fact, those included here did not differ significantly from the excluded respondents in terms of “global” commitment, love, negativity, or life satisfaction. Not surprisingly, however, the current sample reported marginally higher marital satisfaction ($t = 1.93, p = .06$ for husbands, $t = 1.89, p = .06$ for wives) and higher religiosity ($t = 3.40, p < .01$ for husbands, $t = 3.43, p < .01$ for wives) than the people not included in the current sample (the majority of whom are divorced). Although these differences are potentially important, the effect sizes for these differences were not particularly large, equivalent to a Pearson correlation of .15 for the differences in both spouses’ marital satisfaction and equivalent to a Pearson correlation of .26 for the differences in both spouses’ religiosity.

Given that the theoretical model presented here posits that marital satisfaction and moral commitment are components of commitment, it is not surprising that people who participated in this study (all of whom were still married in 1994) were more satisfied and more religious than individuals who did not participate (most of whom were divorced by 1994). In that sense, the systematic nature of the attrition represents a confirmation of the model.

Data Collection

Most of the data were collected in a phone interview, during which trained interviewers read items from the various measures. The participants had been sent copies of the scales by mail and were asked to look at a series of scales corresponding to the items that the interviewer read and to respond to the items based on the scales. Spouses were interviewed separately and were asked to find a place where they would not be disturbed during the interview so that others would not influence their answers. Spouses also completed a series of six follow-up calls in which they reported on behaviors that they and their spouse had engaged in over the previous 24 hours. Finally, some of the data are from mailed questionnaires.

Measurement

Commitment types. Each of the three commitment types was assessed by a direct question. The personal commitment item was: “How much do you WANT to stay married to [partner’s name] at this stage?” The moral commitment item was: “How much do you feel that you SHOULD stay married to [partner’s name] at this stage?” The structural commitment item was: “How much do you feel that you HAVE to stay married to [partner’s name] at this stage?” The response format was a 9-point scale anchored by *not at all* and *very much*. The questions were asked consecutively, fairly early in the interview, and following the 25 items of Braiker and Kelley’s (1979) relationship questionnaire, a scale that assesses love, conflict, ambivalence, and maintenance.

General components of commitment. The items used to assess the components of the three types of commitment may be found in the Appendix. The love items were taken from Braiker and Kelley’s love scale (1979), the marital satisfaction measure was adapted from a scale of life satisfaction (Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976; Huston et al. 1986), some of the other items were adapted from Stanley and Markman’s work (1992), and the rest were developed for this investigation.

Components of personal and moral commitment. Because we assume that each of the six components of personal and moral commitment corresponds to a single attitude or value held by the respondent, the indicators fall into the typical effects indicators model for which internal-consistency approaches, such as factor analysis and Cronbach’s alpha, are appropriate (Bollen & Lennox, 1991). For these components, we assume that responses to the individual items are determined by a common cause (the component) and random and individual item effects. Thus, all of the items were placed into a principle axis factor analysis to assess their differentiability, and Cronbach’s alpha was computed for the final versions of the scales. We began our analysis with an oblique rotation that allowed moderate correlations between the factors because we felt it was reasonable to assume that some of the components might be correlated with others. In the first run, we rotated the five factors with eigenvalues above 1.00 (initial eigenvalues were 6.07, 2.50, 1.82, 1.45, and 1.02). The solution appeared to have a combined love-couple identity factor and four other factors corresponding nicely

TABLE 2. FACTOR LOADINGS FROM ANALYSIS OF COMPONENTS OF PERSONAL AND MORAL COMMITMENT

Item	1	2	3	4	5
How much do you need [partner's name] at this stage?	.92	.04	.04	.03	-.11
To what extent do you love [partner's name] at this stage?	.64	-.08	.01	-.03	.32
You really like being a [husband/wife].	.82	-.08	.02	.00	.08
Being married helps you feel good about yourself.	.59	.00	.00	-.02	.20
You would miss the sense of being a couple.	.46	.01	.06	-.19	.04
It's all right to get a divorce if things are not working out.	.10	.70	.10	.08	.05
If a couple works hard . . . and still cannot get along, divorce is the best thing that they can do.	.04	.69	-.16	.00	-.05
Getting a divorce violates your religious belief.	.00	.51	.02	-.20	.06
When you agree to get married, you are morally bound to stay married.	.03	.49	.06	-.26	.07
You would be disappointed in yourself because you had broken a sacred vow.	.14	.40	.25	-.28	-.09
It's important to stand by what you believe in.	.04	-.02	.69	-.04	.05
You feel that you should always finish what you start.	.03	.01	.67	.08	.17
Whenever you promise to do something, you should see it through.	-.09	-.09	.65	-.10	.03
Even when things get hard, you should do the things you have promised to do.	.11	.09	.55	.12	-.06
You could never leave . . . because you would feel guilty about letting [him/her] down.	.01	.03	-.05	-.83	.00
You could never leave [partner's name] because [he/she] needs you too much.	-.03	-.03	.04	-.66	.02
It would be difficult to tell [partner's name] that you wanted a divorce.	.13	.03	-.03	-.52	.01
You would feel bad about getting a divorce because you promised.33	.28	.16	-.36	-.10
Average of the eight semantic differential marital satisfaction items	.19	.00	.05	-.01	.79
Single marital satisfaction item	.01	.07	.02	.00	.79

Note: The factors correspond with the components as follows: Factor 1 with love and couple identity, Factor 2 with divorce attitudes, Factor 3 with consistency values, Factor 4 with partner contract, and Factor 5 with marital satisfaction. The highest factor loading for each item appears in bold. Oblique rotation was used, and correlations between factors range from .00 to .46. Factors selected with minimum eigenvalues = 1.

TABLE 3. CORRELATIONS AMONG COMPONENTS OF PERSONAL AND MORAL COMMITMENT

Component	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Love	—					
2. Marital satisfaction	.56**	.50**	.77**	.27*	.47**	.53**
3. Couple identity	.87**	.58**	.47**	.20*	.20*	.23*
4. Divorce attitudes	.22*	.06	.27**	.19	.51**	.48**
5. Partner contract	.42**	.21*	.45**	—	.31**	.19
6. Consistency values	.23*	.24*	.24*	.57**	.20	.31**

Note: Husbands' correlations appear above the diagonal; wives' correlations appear below the diagonal.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

to marital satisfaction, divorce attitudes, partner contract, and consistency values (Table 2).

We also tried a separate factor analysis (not shown) of the five love-identity items to see if love and identity would fall out as two separate factors. The initial eigenvalues of 3.32 and .64 led us to conclude that love and couple identity were not empirically separable in this sample. Nevertheless, because we believe that love and couple identity are conceptually distinct and probably empirically differentiable in other groups (e.g., arranged marriages, courting couples, or newlyweds), we decided to create separate (correlated) scales for the two components.

Because items within each of the six scales had similar response formats (7 points for the satisfaction items, 9 points for each of the others), we computed each scale as the mean of the items for that component. Cronbach's alphas are reported for each of the scales in the Appendix, and the scale intercorrelations are presented in Table 3.

Components of structural commitment. The components of structural commitment are not presumed to be a function of some underlying state of the individual but represent the summation of external constraints that may or may not be highly correlated with each other. Thus, these scale items fall into Bollen and Lennox's (1991) "causal indicators" model, and techniques such as factor analysis and statistics such as Cronbach's alpha are not appropriate.

We encountered a common problem with the measurement of alternatives and similar constructs (Rusbult, 1983; Stanley & Markman, 1992; Udry, 1981). All the items tapping alternatives are phrased in a framework that explicitly asks the respondent to compare the alternatives with the current situation (e.g., "you would miss being able to talk to and do fun things with a partner"). Thus, each item is implicitly a function of both the current situation and the alternatives that the respondent assumes would be available in the event of a breakup. If we were certain there were no causal

relationship between personal commitment and structural commitment, then we could solve this problem by simply using the residuals of these items from their regressions on the personal commitment components. However, that is not the case. We chose, therefore, the admittedly unsatisfactory option of eliminating the items that seemed most likely to be compromised by this confounding (i.e., the items that dealt most directly with feelings about one's partner and the relationship). In fact, those five items (available from the first author) were the items most highly correlated with the love scale. Their correlations ranged from .28 to .63.

Because all of the structural commitment items had the same 9-point response formats, the four scores on the component scales are simple means of their constituent items. In general, the structural commitment components are modestly correlated with each other, as shown in Table 4.

Global commitment. We wanted to create a measure of global commitment that would be as similar as possible to Rusbult's measure (Rusbult et al., 1998). The Braiker and Kelley (1979) relationship questionnaire includes two items ("how committed do you feel toward [partner's name]?" and "how attached do you feel to [partner's name]?") that are similar to the following two items in Rusbult's measure: "I am committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner," and "I feel very attached to our relationship—very strongly linked to my partner." Our measure combining the two Braiker and Kelley items had a Cronbach's alpha of .78. To check the adequacy of our two-item measure as a surrogate for Rusbult's measure, we asked Hughes and Surra (personal communication, 1995) to create a similar two-item index from Rusbult's items, using data they had collected from over 200 dating couples. Their two-item index of global commitment, using the two Rusbult items that are similar to ours, correlates .79 with the six-item Rusbult measure in their data.

Other variables. The observations involved in our fourth set of basic questions utilized the following variables: negativity, religiosity, life satisfaction, and a variety of variables that we assumed would covary with structural commitment, including stability of living arrangements. Negative marital interaction was assessed in the six follow-up calls in which participants reported the frequency with which their spouse expressed affection, negativity, and sexual interest during the 24-hour period ending at 5 p.m. the evening of the call. The initial set

TABLE 4. CORRELATIONS AMONG COMPONENTS OF STRUCTURAL COMMITMENT

Component	1	2	3	4
Alternatives	—	.39**	.44**	.63**
Social pressure	.36**	—	.39**	.52**
Termination procedures	.57**	.50**	—	.48**
Investments	.13	.41**	.20*	—

Note: Husbands' correlations appear above the diagonal; wives' correlations appear below the diagonal.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

of 16 socioemotional behaviors was drawn from a list of pleasing and displeasing behaviors described by Wills, Weiss, and Patterson (1974), and negativity emerged as one factor (Huston & Vangelisti, 1991). The final negativity scale consisted of reports on six behaviors (aggregated over the 6 days), including reports that they had "criticized or complained," "showed anger or impatience," or "dominated conversation."

Religiosity was assessed in the main phone interview by a single question that asked how religious the participants were on a 4-point scale from *not at all religious* to *very religious*. Life satisfaction was assessed in the mailed questionnaire using Campbell et al.'s (1976) measure. Respondents were asked to think about their life over the last 2 months and to evaluate it on a series of bipolar adjective scales. (The same adjectives were used in the marital satisfaction scale. See the Appendix.) Information about income, education, and stability of living arrangements was gathered over the phone. Stability of living arrangements is simply the number of places where the respondents had lived from the time they were married to the time of the interview.

RESULTS

What Do Measures of Global Commitment Assess?

Hypothesis 1a predicts that measures of so-called global commitment actually tap personal commitment. For the two-item measure analogous to

Rusbult's commitment measures, the zero-order correlations with husbands' personal, moral, and structural commitment (the single-item questions about whether one wants to, should, or has to stay in the relationship) are .74, .09, and -.20, respectively. The same correlations for wives are .89, .10, and -.35. Hierarchical regressions (one for husbands and one for wives) that entered personal commitment first, followed by a block including both moral and structural commitment, show the latter two variables do not add significantly to the explained variance ($\Delta R^2 = 1\%$ for both husbands and wives). The betas from the husbands' final regression ($R^2 = .56$) are .72, .06, and -.11 for personal, moral, and structural commitment, respectively. In the same order, the betas for the wives are .86, .07, and -.07 ($R^2 = .80$).

Hypothesis 1b addresses the same issue with respect to the components of commitment. The zero-order correlations between global commitment and the components of the three types of commitment show the expected pattern. We predicted correlations of the three components of personal commitment (love, marital satisfaction, and couple identity) to be high. The zero-order pattern, with husbands' correlations listed first, is: love: .81, .83; marital satisfaction: .64, .67; couple identity: .70, .78, divorce attitudes: .14, .11; partner contract: .35, .25; consistency values: .43, .22, alternatives: .12, .25; social pressure: .05, .18; termination procedures: .03, .13; investments: .10, .00. As summarized in Table 5, hierarchical multiple regressions further confirm the hypothesis.

TABLE 5. REGRESSIONS OF GLOBAL COMMITMENT SCALE, PERSONAL COMMITMENT, MORAL COMMITMENT, AND STRUCTURAL COMMITMENT ON COMPONENTS OF COMMITMENT

	Global Commitment		Personal Commitment		Moral Commitment		Structural Commitment	
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
ΔR^2								
Step 1	.74**	.75**	.57**	.66**	.06	.19**	.09	.07
Step 2	.02	.03	.03	.09**	.02	.10	.12	.19**
Betas in final equation								
Love	.58**	.58**	.50**	.57**	-.12	.01	-.33	.15
Marital satisfaction	.30**	.28**	-.01	.13	-.02	-.02	-.07	-.21
Couple identity	.16	.15	.22	.27*	.20	-.06	-.04	-.44*
Divorce attitudes	-.11	-.07	.10	-.16*	.01	.33**	.14	.08
Partner contract	-.01	-.16*	-.02	-.25*	.03	.10	.17	.06
Consistency values	.01	.02	.15	-.03	.17	.19	-.03	-.04
Alternatives	-.07	.04	-.03	.15*	-.03	.35**	.03	-.05
Social pressure	-.02	.14	-.09	.17*	-.05	.06	.18	.25
Termination procedures	.07	-.01	.01	-.06	.12	-.17	-.12	.08
Investments	-.01	-.02	.00	.12	.01	-.15	.17	-.12

Note: For each regression, Step 1 included components of commitment expected to be associated with the dependent variable, and Step 2 included components of commitment not expected to be associated with the dependent variable.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

In both the husbands' regression and the wives' regression, a first block that includes the three components of personal commitment is a significant predictor of the global commitment measure ($p < .01$ for both husbands and wives). Adding a second block with the seven components of moral and structural commitment does not add significantly to the explained variance ($p = .67$ for husbands, $p = .20$ for wives). In short, the data strongly support the prediction that global commitment is primarily a function of personal commitment, not moral or structural commitment.

Relationships Among Personal, Moral, and Structural Commitment

The next set of hypotheses suggests that personal, moral, and structural commitment are, at best, moderately correlated with each other. Tests of these hypotheses involve the examination of the correlations between the single-item measures asking whether one feels that one wants to, should, or has to stay in the relationship. Hypothesis 2a posits, at best, a slight relationship between personal and moral commitment. As expected, the correlations were small (husbands' $r = .09$, *ns*; wives' $r = .07$, *ns*). Hypothesis 2b suggests a slight correlation between moral and structural commitment. The associations are significant ($r = .34$, $p < .01$ for husbands; $r = .33$, $p < .01$ for wives). Although these moderate correlations are somewhat higher than we expected, they share only 12% and 11% of their variances for husbands and wives, respectively.

Hypothesis 2c predicts a moderate negative relationship between personal and structural commitment. The correlation for wives was, indeed, moderate: $-.34$ ($p < .01$), but for husbands the correlation was not significant: $-.15$ ($p = .14$). Overall then, there were some statistically significant correlations among personal, moral, and structural commitment, but the correlations were small enough to conclude that the three types of commitment are quite distinct.

Relationships of the Components to the Types of Commitment

Hypothesis 3a predicts that overall level of personal commitment, indicated by how much spouses say they want to stay in the relationship, will be correlated primarily with the three components of personal commitment. With husbands' associations listed first, the zero-order correlations

between personal commitment and the components are: love: .74, .80; marital satisfaction: .40, .54; couple identity: .65, .77, divorce attitudes: .28, .04; partner contract: .34, .19; consistency values: .51, .16, alternatives: .08, .33; social pressure: $-.01$, .20; termination procedures: .01, .13; investments: .08, .10. We predicted correlations of the three components of personal commitment (love, marital satisfaction, and couple identity) to be high. Overall, the correlations provide evidence for the hypothesis. Only one of the "other" correlations is as high as the lowest correlation among the personal commitment components.

A hierarchical multiple regression predicting the personal commitment item yields further support for Hypothesis 3a. (See Table 5.) For husbands, after we entered the three components of personal commitment as a block (accounting for 57% of the variance in personal commitment), the other seven components added only 3% to the explained variance, $\Delta F(7,80) = .99$, *ns*. Although in the final regression equation only one of the three personal commitment components (love) has a significant beta, this is not surprising, given the high correlations among the three components. (See Table 3.) None of the other betas is significant in the final regression for husbands. For wives the majority of the variance in personal commitment (66%) is accounted for by the three components of personal commitment. Although the block of seven moral and structural components adds significantly to the explained variance, $\Delta F(7,85) = 4.45$, $p < .01$, it adds only 9% to the explained variance, and an examination of the final regression coefficients reveals that the two strongest predictors of personal commitment are love (beta = .57, $p < .01$) and couple identity (beta = .27, $p < .01$). That is, even though there are some small (but statistically significant) unexpected associations, the primary predictors of personal commitment for wives are the components of personal commitment.

Hypothesis 3b predicts that moral commitment or the extent to which spouses feel they should stay in the marriage is related primarily to the components of moral commitment and only weakly to the components of the other types of commitment. This prediction is borne out, but not as clearly as we would like, by the zero-order correlations, which are generally highest for the components of moral commitment. Again, the husbands' correlations are listed first: love: .12, .17; marital satisfaction: .05, .09; couple identity: .19, .18, divorce attitudes: .05, .34; partner contract: .15, .30; consistency values: .23, .26, alternatives:

.09, .34; social pressure: .05, .29; termination procedures: .15, .18; investments: .10, .09. We predicted correlations of the three components of moral commitment (divorce attitudes, partner contract, and consistency values) to be high.

The hierarchical multiple regression (Table 5) yields results that are somewhat more clearly in line with the hypothesis. The block of moral commitment components explains 6% of the variance in moral commitment for husbands, $F = 1.74$, $p = .06$, and 19% of the variance for wives, $F = 7.09$, $p < .01$. The other seven components add only another 2% for husbands, $\Delta F(7,80) = .27$, *ns*, and 10% for wives, $\Delta F(7,85) = 1.70$, $p = .12$. The wives' final regression equation has a significant positive coefficient for one component of moral commitment (divorce attitudes), a near-significant one for another (consistency values), and a significant beta for one component of structural commitment (alternatives).

Hypothesis 3c predicts strong relationships between structural commitment and two of its components (alternatives and social pressure) and weak relationships with the components of the other types of commitment. The zero-order correlations are only partially consistent with that hypothesis. With husbands' values listed first, these correlations are: love: $-.24$, $-.28$; marital satisfaction: $-.20$, $-.36$; couple identity: $-.13$, $-.35$; divorce attitudes: $.11$, $.13$; partner contract: $.14$, $.01$; consistency values: $-.12$, $-.14$; alternatives: $.13$, $-.03$; social pressure: $.29$, $.21$; termination procedures: $.09$, $.11$; investments: $.21$, $-.01$. The hierarchical multiple regression results (Table 5) are not much clearer. The block of structural commitment components explains only 9%, $F = 1.98$, $p = .11$, and 7%, $F = 1.76$, $p = .14$, of the variance in husbands' and wives' structural commitment, respectively. The remaining six components add another 12%, $\Delta F(6,79) = 2.04$, $p = .07$, and 19%, $\Delta F(6,85) = 3.73$, $p < .01$, of the explained variance for husbands and wives, respectively.

Although these results do not confirm the hypothesis, our theoretical discussion suggests that personal commitment might directly affect the components of structural commitment, a pattern consistent with the correlations between the components of personal commitment and the general measure of structural commitment. In an attempt to address this complexity, we constructed a path model (not shown) with the general measure of personal commitment as an exogenous variable, the components of structural commitment as intervening variables, and overall structural commit-

ment as the dependent variable. Only two of the nine paths in the model were significant, indicating a strong, direct, negative relationship between personal and structural commitment (beta = $-.29$) and a strong positive relationship between social pressure and structural commitment (beta = $.30$). Thus, at this stage of marriage, variations in feelings of constraint (structural commitment) are accounted for primarily by personal commitment (negatively) and by one of the four components of structural commitment (social pressure).

Relationships to Other Variables

Our hypotheses about the differential relationships of the three types of commitment to other variables are, in large part, borne out by the data (Table 6). As predicted by Hypothesis 4a, negative marital interaction is correlated with personal commitment but generally not with moral or structural commitment. Specifically, negativity is inversely related to personal commitment and its three components for both husbands and wives. Also, only 1 of a possible 18 correlations involving negativity and the moral or structural commitment variables (a negative correlation between negativity and partner contract for husbands) is statistically significant, about what would be expected by chance. Overall, the correlations involving negativity and moral or structural commitment are quite small.

Hypothesis 4b deals with life satisfaction as a consequence of personal commitment. Our measure of life satisfaction is significantly correlated with personal commitment and all of its components for wives. Life satisfaction is also significantly related to two of the three personal commitment components for husbands. Unexpectedly, there were also two positive correlations between husbands' life satisfaction and components of moral commitment, a negative correlation between wives' life satisfaction and structural commitment, and a positive correlation between wives' life satisfaction and their available alternatives. Given that these four unexpected correlations are generally weaker than the correlations involving personal commitment and that there is no clear pattern to the unexpected findings, the overall results are fairly consistent with the hypothesis.

With regard to Hypothesis 4c, religiosity is correlated, as expected, with moral commitment and all of its components. Only one of these eight correlations is not statistically significant—the correlation between wives' religiosity and partner contract. Religiosity is also correlated with husbands'

TABLE 6. PREDICTORS OF DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES OF COMMITMENT

	Husbands												
	Personal Commitment				Moral Commitment				Structural Commitment				
	Want (1 Item)	Love	Satisfaction	Couple Identity	Should (1 Item)	Divorce Attitudes	Partner Contract	Consistency Values	Have (1 Item)	Alternatives	Social Pressure	Termination Procedures	Investments
Negativity	-.37**	-.24*	-.21*	-.27*	-.11	-.06	-.23*	-.10	.00	-.03	.08	.04	.02
Life satisfaction	.04	.15	.45**	.24*	.12	.26*	.13	.22*	.00	-.01	.17	-.03	-.01
Religiosity	.14	.13	.13	.15	.17*	.47**	.19*	.29**	.25*	.03	.31**	.16	.13
Number of homes since marriage	.03	.11	.10	.02	-.09	.02	-.11	.08	-.29**	-.31**	-.18*	-.06	-.23*

	Wives												
	Personal Commitment				Moral Commitment				Structural Commitment				
	Want (1 Item)	Love	Satisfaction	Couple Identity	Should (1 Item)	Divorce Attitudes	Partner Contract	Consistency Values	Have (1 Item)	Alternatives	Social Pressure	Termination Procedures	Investments
Negativity	-.24*	-.19*	-.29*	-.26*	.09	.03	-.04	-.12	.17	-.06	.04	.18	.11
Life satisfaction	-.39**	.40**	.52**	.43**	.11	.03	.01	.20	-.21*	.27*	.06	.18	-.14
Religiosity	-.01	.02	.05	-.02	.22*	.40**	.16	.24**	.19	.08	.32**	.19	.12
Number of homes since marriage	.08	.17	.00	.03	.08	-.10	-.04	.07	-.04	-.10	-.11	-.10	-.14

Note: One-tailed tests of significance were used for the expected correlations. Two-tailed tests of significance were used for unexpected correlations. **p* < .05. ***p* < .01.

structural commitment and with social pressure for both spouses. It is easy to imagine why religiosity might also covary with social pressure to stay married. Highly religious people are likely to be embedded in a social network of similarly religious individuals. Finally, stability of living arrangements is an "economic" variable that is related primarily to structural commitment (Hypothesis 4d). For husbands, the number of places lived since the couple was married is significantly correlated with the general measure of structural commitment and three of its four components. Neither income, education, nor the number of homes since marriage was related to personal commitment, moral commitment, or the components of either.

DISCUSSION

The data support the main tenet of Johnson's (1991) commitment framework. Personal, moral and structural commitment are distinguishable experiences that are not captured in measures of so-called global commitment. First, the general measures of personal, moral, and structural commitment (measured by whether the respondent wants to, should, or has to stay in the marriage) are only moderately correlated with each other. The strongest of the correlations for husbands (personal and moral), as well as for wives (personal and structural), represent only 12% shared variance.

Second, because the three types of commitment are distinguishable, it follows that any meaningful concept of global commitment ought to be a function of all three types of commitment. Our data show that, on the contrary, even multi-item measures of commitment tap only personal commitment.

The third step in validating the commitment framework demonstrated that each of the types of commitment is, in fact, correlated with its components. The findings here were particularly strong for personal commitment, less strong for moral commitment, and weak for structural commitment. Our clearest findings were for personal commitment to the marriage, which was, as predicted, a function of love, marital satisfaction, and couple identity. The results pertaining to moral commitment also fit with the hypotheses. Husbands' moral commitment was most highly correlated with consistency values, one of the components of moral commitment. Wives' moral commitment was moderately related to each of the three components of moral commitment, but two of the structural com-

ponents (alternatives and social pressure) also were related to the moral commitment item. The data regarding structural commitment did not support our hypotheses. The set of structural components did not significantly predict the general, single-item measure of structural commitment.

There are at least two possible reasons why the components of structural commitment were not as strongly related to structural commitment as expected. First, any specific constraint may be enough to create a sense of structural commitment. Parenthood, for example, was shared by more than 95% of the couples in this study. Once individuals feel they have to stay in a relationship because of any constraint, adding or subtracting other constraints may not make them feel any more trapped in the relationship. Second, the individuals in this sample may be comparatively homogeneous in the extent to which important structural constraints operate. Couples in the original study who began marriage with limited economic resources were more likely to divorce. As a result, there is reduced variability of economic well-being in the follow-up sample. Also, given that the participants were involved in relatively durable marriages, few of them were likely to be thinking about divorce at the time of the follow-up (Huston, Caughlin, Houts, Shebilske, & Smith, 1998). Thus, considerations of structural commitment may not have been as salient to the participants as they would have been if data were gathered earlier when more of them may have been contemplating divorce. It would be useful for future investigations to use participants who are comparatively low in personal commitment.

The final step in our argument for the need to distinguish among personal, moral, and structural commitment was the demonstration that other variables (both antecedents and consequences) are associated with one type of commitment but not with the other two. Our data showed that negative marital interaction was associated only with personal commitment, that life satisfaction was related primarily to personal commitment, that religiosity was associated primarily with moral commitment, and that stability of living arrangements was associated only with husbands' structural commitment.

A number of findings differed for husbands and wives. These differences were largely differences in magnitude, rather than fundamental distinctions between husbands' and wives' results. For example, although the negative correlations between structural commitment and stability of living arrangements were significant only for hus-

bands, all the correlations between wives' stability of living arrangements and aspects of structural commitment were negative as well. There probably are differences in the way that men and women experience marital commitment (Kapinus & Johnson, 1996), but our study did not find marked differences between husbands and wives. The main conclusion of this study, that there are empirically distinct experiences of commitment, held for both husbands and wives.

In spite of the overall strength of support for the general model of commitment types, our study also suggests a need for further advances in operationalizing commitment. First, we ran up against limitations in the direct, single-item measures of the three commitment experiences. Although there has been some previous work devoted to the measurement of the components of the three types of commitment (Adams & Jones, 1997; Bagarozzi & Attilano, 1982; Lund, 1985; Stanley & Markman, 1992), this is the first attempt to try to get directly at the experiences of wanting to stay in a relationship, feeling that one is morally obligated to stay in it, or feeling that one is trapped by external circumstances. Single-item questions about whether one wants to, should, or has to stay in a relationship are perhaps too ambiguous to distinguish effectively among the three types of commitment experience. For example, our data suggest that a question about whether one feels that one should stay in a relationship may capture some mix of moral and structural commitment. We need multi-item measures of the three types of commitment that capture the three experiences clearly enough to allow some assurance that correlations among the measures are due to causal relationships, rather than operational ambiguity.

The second measurement problem involves one of the components of structural commitment—availability of attractive alternatives. The questions we used have the same problem of confounding the attractiveness of alternatives with the attractiveness of the respondent's current situation (personal commitment) that we see in other attempts to measure this aspect of commitment to relationships (Rusbult, 1983; Stanley & Markman, 1992; Udry, 1981). The problem is that the questions are framed comparatively and ask respondents to describe the changes they would experience if they left the relationship. Thus, two respondents who have the same alternatives will answer the questions differently if their relationships differ. For example, if I am asked whether I would miss having conversations with a partner should I leave

my current relationship, I consider the question not only in terms of whether I think I would have such conversations in my new situation, but also whether I do, in fact, have them in my current relationship. We need to put some energy into developing questions about alternatives that avoid this double-barreled format.

In spite of these measurement issues, the data support the position that the proper analysis of commitment requires attention to distinctions among personal, moral, and structural commitment. First, direct measures of the three experiences are not highly correlated with each other; 87% or more of their variance is unshared in this sample. Second, a measure of global commitment designed to capture the essence of the most commonly used operationalization in the field is clearly demonstrated to be a function primarily, if not exclusively, of personal commitment. It is not global in the sense of capturing the full experience of commitment. Third, the data demonstrate that the three direct measures of the experiences of commitment are associated, for the most part, with the components of each type hypothesized in the commitment framework. Finally, the data demonstrate that the three types of commitment and their components are not associated in the same way with other variables. They are not only distinguishable concepts, but their causes and consequences are different. Of course, this finding speaks to the essence of the commitment framework. The tripartite nature of commitment dictates that researchers who want to understand why couples stay together move beyond anchoring their analysis in personal commitment and focus, instead, on understanding the origins of all three types of commitment, how combinations of the types are experienced, and how they affect the ways couples function as a unit and whether their relationship endures over time. If personal, moral, and structural commitment have different causes and consequences, we will never fully understand the nature of commitment unless we stop assuming that commitment is a unitary phenomenon.

NOTE

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APPENDIX

MEASUREMENT OF COMPONENTS OF COMMITMENT

Personal commitment

Love (two items, alpha = .75)

To what extent do you love [partner's name] at this stage? (1 = *very little*; 9 = *very much*)

How much do you need [partner's name] at this stage? (1 = *not at all*; 9 = *very much*)

Marital satisfaction (two items, alpha = .84)

Respondents were asked to "describe your marriage over the past 2 months." One item in the marital satisfaction scale consisted of the mean of responses on the following 7-point scales: miserable-enjoyable, hopeful-discouraging, empty-full, interesting-boring, rewarding-disappointing, doesn't give me much chance-brings out the best in me, lonely-friendly, and worthwhile-useless. (alpha = .93.)

The second item in the marital satisfaction scale was: "Using this scale, please tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied have you been with your marriage over the past two months, all things considered?" (1 = *completely satisfied*; 7 = *completely dissatisfied*).

Couple identity (three items, alpha = .73)

You would miss the sense of being a couple.

Being married helps you feel good about yourself.

You really like being a [husband/wife].

Moral commitment

Divorce attitudes (five items, alpha = .74)

You would be disappointed in yourself because you had broken a sacred vow.

Getting a divorce violates your religious beliefs.

It's all right to get a divorce if things are not working out. (reversed scored)

If a couple works hard at making their marriage succeed and still cannot get along, divorce is the best thing that they can do. (reversed scored)

When you agree to get married, you are morally bound to stay married.

Partner contract (four items, alpha = .76)

You would feel bad about getting a divorce because you promised [partner's name] you would stay with [him/her] forever.

You could never leave [partner's name] because [he/she] needs you too much.

It would be difficult to tell [partner's name] that you wanted a divorce.

You could never leave [partner's name] because you would feel guilty about letting [him/her] down.

Consistency values (four items, alpha = .71)

Whenever you promise to do something, you should see it through.

It's important to stand by what you believe in.

You feel that you should always finish what you start.

Even when things get hard, you should do the things you have promised to do.

Structural commitment

Alternatives (six items, causal indicators model)

If you and [partner's name] were to break up, you would miss important income, insurance, or other property.

You would miss just having somebody around.

You would miss living in your house.

You would miss the help you get around the house from having a partner.

You would miss being able to see your [child/children] regularly.

You would not have to work around the house so much. (reversed scored)

Social pressure (six items, causal indicators model)

You would be upset because you would lose your place or standing in the community.

You would be upset because your family would be uncomfortable with your breaking up.

You would be upset because your in-laws would be uncomfortable with your breaking up.

You would be upset because you would lose some respect from friends.

It would be difficult to face your friends and family after you broke up.

You would lose some of your [child's/children's] love.

Appendix continues on next page.

APPENDIX

MEASUREMENT OF COMPONENTS OF COMMITMENT—CONTINUED

Termination procedures (six items, causal indicators model)

- It would be hard to work out who would get what property.
- It would be hard for you to find a new place to live.
- Having to move your things would be a burden.
- Dealing with the legal system would be difficult.
- It would be hard to work out who would get the kid(s).
- It would be awfully difficult to do the things necessary to get a divorce.

Investment (four items, causal indicators model)

- You would lose all the time you had put into the marriage.
 - You would feel like all the effort you had put into keeping the two of you together had been wasted.
 - You would lose money you'd put into the marriage.
 - You would feel like you'd wasted the best years of your life.
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Note: Except where noted, all items were measured on a scale that included: 1 = strongly disagree; 4 = not sure; 9 = strongly agree. Alphas are not given for the structural components because, in a causal-indicators model, alphas are not appropriate.
