AN EXAMINATION OF RELATIONAL SACRIFICES:
ASSOCIATIONS WITH DAILY COMMITMENT AND SATISFACTION AND TRIPARTITE
COMMITMENT EXPERIENCES

by

Shannon A. Corkery, M.S.

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As members of the Dissertation Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by Shannon A. Corkery, titled An Examination of Relational Sacrifices: Associations with Daily Commitment and Satisfaction and Tripartite Commitment Experiences and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

________________________________________ Date: July 9, 2015
Dr. Melissa A. Curran

________________________________________ Date: July 9, 2015
Dr. Christopher Segrin

________________________________________ Date: July 9, 2015
Dr. Brian Ogolsky

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate’s submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

________________________________________ Date: August 3, 2015
Dissertation Director: Dr. Melissa A. Curran
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SIGNED: Shannon A. Corkery
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to everyone who works hard and with heart in the pursuit of achieving one’s own sense of success and happiness. Embrace your joy. Find what you are good at and do it well.
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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I focus on associations between relational sacrifices and commitment (e.g., daily commitment and tripartite dimensions of commitment). This collection of empirically and conceptually related studies are guided by interdependence and commitment theories. First, in Paper 1, actor-partner interdependence models (APIMs) are used to examine individuals’ and partners’ self-reported perceptions of relational sacrifices in association with actors’ daily relational satisfaction and commitment. Here, actor and partner reports of frequency, ease and partner awareness of sacrifices were independent variables and daily satisfaction and commitment were dependent variables. For the sample of unmarried, expectant cohabitors (\(N = 140\) individuals; 70 couples), higher perceived ease of daily sacrifices by both actors and partners was associated with individuals’ higher daily satisfaction and higher daily commitment.

Relational sacrifices are again independent variables for papers 2 and 3, but tripartite dimensions of commitment (i.e., personal, moral and structural commitment) are specified as dependent variables. In paper 2, data from a subset of the sample of unmarried, expectant cohabitors from Paper 1 who completed qualitative interviews about their commitment (\(N = 82; 41\) couples) are used. Here, associations between sacrifices and commitment were primarily patterned around moral commitment. Specifically, individuals’ reports of more frequent and less easy sacrifices, and partners’ reports of higher perceived partner awareness of sacrifice, were associated with individuals’ higher moral commitment. In contrast, partners’ reports of more frequent sacrifices were associated with individuals’ lower moral commitment. Beyond moral commitment, individuals’ reports of higher perceived partner awareness of sacrifice were associated with their own higher structural commitment, but no significant associations were found with personal commitment.
In Paper 3, associations between frequency of and satisfaction with relational sacrifices and tripartite commitment dimensions are examined in a sample of 731 individuals currently involved in romantic relationships. Unlike the sample from Papers 1 and 2 (unmarried, expectant cohabiters), the sample here consisted of individuals across varied relationships statuses (e.g., casual dating, serious dating, married). With this broader range of relationships represented, more frequent sacrifices were associated with higher structural and moral commitment, whereas higher satisfaction with sacrifices was associated with higher personal commitment.

Despite a lack of patterned results across this collection of studies, the variation of findings across the samples suggests that the relationship between sacrifices and commitment may be different for different populations. For instance, results from papers 1 suggest that unmarried, expectant cohabiters may be wise to focus on making easier sacrifices given associations with more positive daily satisfaction and commitment. Moreover, results from paper 2 suggest that personal commitment may not be salient for these individuals as patterned findings were specific to the relationship between sacrifices and (mostly) moral commitment. Nevertheless, with a broader population represented (paper 3), associations were found across tripartite commitment dimensions. Thus although sacrifices may not have been relevant to personal commitment for unmarried, expectant cohabiters, it is for others. Taken together, these studies demonstrate the diverse ways in which individuals experience sacrifices relative to daily experiences, and various forms, of commitment. This knowledge can be used to inform individuals how they may choose to function in relationships, practitioners how they may design relational intervention and improvement strategies, and researchers how to apply theory and approach studying commitment across diverse populations.
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Over time, there has been considerable variability regarding whether studies about commitment focus on commitment itself or on what the desire for commitment is based (Adams & Jones, 1997). In fact, some theorists have argued that commitment is best understood as part of a cognitive decision-making process used to navigate relationships. From this view, commitment is considered to be a result of cultural, moral, social, and dyadic forces that compels individuals to commit to one another in different ways and for different reasons (Johnson, 1999; Levinger, 1965; Stanley & Markman, 1992; Surra, 1987). In other words, such forces impact the ways individuals perceive and evaluate attractive elements of relationships as well as the constraints that create barriers to ending relationships (Johnson, 1999; Levinger, 1965; Rusbult, 1980, 1983; Stanley & Markman, 1992). According to Rusbult’s investment model of commitment, such evaluation of relationship satisfaction, perceived availability of desirable alternatives, and dependence on a given relationship (Bui, Peplau, & Hill, 1996; Le & Agnew, 2003; Rusbult, 1980; Rusbult, 1983; Sabatelli & Shehan, 1993) shapes commitment. Moreover, investments individuals make into relationships should positively impact commitment.

In close relationships, when partners’ best interests do not align, conflicts of interest occur (Kelley, 1979). Although higher overall frequency of conflict is generally problematic for relationships (e.g., Braiker & Kelley, 1979), conflicts of interest can positively impact relationships by creating opportunities for partners to choose to coordinate best interests through relational sacrifices (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003; Van Lange, Agnew, Harnick, & Steemers, 1997; Van Lange, et al., 1997). Faced with conflicts of interest, individuals can choose sacrifices, a form of investing in their relationships, which according to theory should positively impact commitment (Kelly, 1979). While considerable extant research has focused on examining the relationship between relational sacrifices and commitment, there remains space to expand.

Close relationships are shaped by day to day interactions. Daily diary designs allow researchers to capture the particulars of important day to day experiences in a way that is not possible using traditional designs (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003). In fact, researchers have found associations between daily relational sacrifices and daily relationship quality, including measures of closeness, satisfaction, fun, conflict, commitment and satisfaction on a given day (Impett et al, 2005; Ruppel & Curran, 2012; Totenhagen, Curran, Serido, & Butler, 2013). Paper 1 addresses what about daily experiences of sacrifices is associated with daily satisfaction and commitment. For instance, is how often or easy it is to demonstrate care and concern through choosing relational sacrifices associated with commitment? Or, do individuals feel more committed and satisfied when they perceive their partners to be aware of the sacrifices they choose to make? To address these questions, in Paper 1 I examine perceived frequency of sacrifice, ease of sacrifice, and partner awareness of sacrifice in association with daily satisfaction and commitment for both partners in a sample of unmarried, expectant cohabiters. The aforementioned unique factors of sacrifice are examined at the same time to see how each accounts for unique variance in daily satisfaction and commitment.

Paper 2. Relational sacrifices and tripartite commitment for unmarried, pregnant cohabiters

Paper 3. Associations between relational sacrifices and tripartite commitment dimensions.

Johnson (1991, 1999) suggested the existence of three distinct dimensions of commitment: personal, moral, and structural. From this view, personal commitment is characterized by internal feelings of attraction to one’s partner or relationship, but moral and structural commitment are characterized by internal and external constraints, respectively, that
create actual or perceived barriers to relationship dissolution (Johnson, 1999). Despite evidence from exploratory studies that suggests the existence of multiple dimensions of commitment (e.g., Adams & Jones, 1997; Frank & Brandstatter, 2002; Johnson, Anderson, & Aducci, 2011; Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2009; Strachman & Gable, 2006; Stanley & Markman, 1992; Stanley, Rhoades, & Markman, 2006) most work has continued to focus on personal commitment. Moreover, although theory suggests that perceptions about relational sacrifices should be related to the form and strength of commitment, researchers have typically focused on personal commitment with samples of dating and married individuals (e.g., Impett & Gordon, 2008).

According to theory and logic, specific dimensions of commitment should be more or less salient to specific populations. Thus, in Papers 2 and 3, I again examine sacrifices as independent variables, but now specify tripartite dimensions of commitment as dependent variables. For instance, personal commitment may not be particularly salient for unmarried, expectant cohabiters – the sample addressed in Paper 2 - who may perceive multiple structural (live together) and moral (having baby together) barriers to relationship dissolution. Nevertheless, I expect to see more variation in what dimensions of commitment are salient to the relationship between sacrifices and commitment for individuals across various relational statuses and stages (Paper 3 sample). Across these papers, each set of hypotheses and analyses are informed by the tenants of social exchange, interdependence, and commitment theories and how the features of individuals’ relationships should theoretically impact the way in which individuals experience sacrifices and commitment.
CHAPTER II. PAPER 1. RELATIONAL SACRIFICES, SATISFACTION AND COMMITMENT: DAILY ASSOCIATIONS FOR UNMARRIED, PREGNANT COHABITORS

Introduction.

According to social exchange theory, individuals are egocentric and tend to seek outcomes beneficial to themselves. Nevertheless, theory suggests that romantic relationships challenge these egocentric propensities (Kelley, 1979) because individuals should care about the well-being and outcomes of their partners (Rusbult & Arriaga, 1997; Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). When partners’ best interests do not align, conflicts of interest occur (Kelley, 1979). Although higher overall frequency of conflict is generally problematic for relationships (e.g., Braiker & Kelley, 1979), theory and empirical work suggest that conflicts of interest can positively impact relationships by creating opportunities for partners to demonstrate care and concern for one another. For instance, individuals can choose to make relational sacrifices whereby they forgo some of their own best interest to benefit partners’ best interests, or at least align outcomes (Kelley, 1979; Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003; Van Lange, Agnew, Harnick, & Steemers, 1997; Van Lange, et al., 1997).

Although positive relational associations of choosing sacrifices have been empirically documented among individuals who are married or in dating relationships, such associations may be less straightforward for individuals in relationships characterized by unclear relational expectations, a lack of shared understanding about relationship status, or the presence of barriers to relationship dissolution. Across the last several decades, unmarried cohabitation has become a common step in many romantic relationships, as well as a routine setting for childbearing (Cherlin, 2010; Sassler, 2010). On average, cohabiters experience higher ambiguity about family
roles and relationships, higher relational instability, and more negative communication and lower levels of satisfaction compared to married couples (Hsueh, Morrison, & Doss, 2009; Jose, O’Leary, & Moyer, 2010; Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2009; Stanley, et al., 2006; Osborne, Manning, & Smock, 2007).

The current study addresses a sample of unmarried cohabiting couples expecting their first child together. During this time, partners are predisposed to conflicts of interest due to stressors common to the process of preparing for parenthood (Cowan & Cowan, 2000). A shared investment in childrearing unmarried, expectant cohabiters should feel inclined to engage in strategies to promote relational quality and stability. This may be especially relevant given often ambiguous, or a lack of shared, relational expectations for cohabiters. Thus, the ways in which individuals’ perceive of sacrifices may be particularly meaningful to individuals’ daily feelings of commitment and satisfaction in their relationships. In this paper, I examine the relationship between individuals’ and partners’ relational sacrifices and individuals’ satisfaction and commitment daily. This daily diary examination allows for the understanding of relational phenomena (here, sacrifices) as they occur, providing information about individuals and relationships on a microlevel basis (Laurenceau & Bolger, 2005), which is particularly important for relationships generally characterized by ambiguity and volatility.

**Relational Sacrifices.** Theory and some empirical work suggest positive relational benefits of choosing sacrifices, including having partners’ outcomes maximized and reassurances of partners’ care and concern (Impett & Gordon, 2008; Kelley, 1979; Rubsult & Van Lange, 1996). For individuals who choose relational sacrifices, possible benefits may include maintenance of positive self-images as good partners, feeling good about their ability to make their partners happy, increasing the likelihood that their partners will be willing to sacrifice for them in the
future, as well as relationship satisfaction and commitment (Impett & Gordon, 2008; Rusbult, Madoka, Coolen, & Kirchner, 2004). Researchers have studied several types of sacrifices, including willingness to sacrifice (Van Lange et al., 1997), frequency of sacrifice (Impett et al., 2005; Whitton et al., 2007; satisfaction with sacrifices (Stanley & Markman, 1992), and motives for sacrifice (Impett & Gordon, 2008). Across extant work, no particular measurement of sacrifices is most common. Guided by interdependence and commitment theories, three sacrifice variables (frequency, ease, and perceived partner awareness of sacrifices) are used.

**Frequency of Sacrifices.** Across extant work on frequency of sacrifices and relationship satisfaction and commitment no clear patterns have emerged. For instance, although some researchers have found higher frequency of sacrifices to be associated with higher satisfaction (e.g., Ruppel & Curran, 2012; Van Lange, Rusbult, et al., 1997 study 4) and commitment (Totenhagen et al., 2013; Van Lange, Agnew, et al., 1997; Van Lange, Rusbult, et al., 1997), others have found that frequent sacrifices to associated with lower satisfaction (e.g., Totenhagen & Curran, 2011, Whitton, Stanley, & Markman, 2007) and commitment (Whitton, et al., 2007). Additionally, others have found no associations between frequency of sacrifices and satisfaction or commitment (e.g., Impett, Gable, & Peplau, 2005). Partner effects for frequency of sacrifices are also unpatterned. For example, some researchers have found no associations between partners’ frequency of sacrifices and individuals’ relationship satisfaction or commitment (Ruppel & Curran, 2012; Totenhagen et al., 2013), but others have found significant associations between partners’ frequency of (intimate) sacrifices and individuals’ relationship satisfaction (Burke & Young, 2012).

In considering the relationships between frequency of sacrifice, satisfaction and commitment, theory suggests partners *should* sacrifice, but not always (Kelley, 1979). In fact,
frequent giving of oneself has been linked to poor relational outcomes (Helgeson & Fritz, 2000). Within relationships characterized by ambiguous status or those in which there is a lack of shared expectations, the frequency with which partners choose sacrifices may be particularly meaningful, as sacrifices communicate one’s interest in investing in the future of a relationship. This study focuses on individual and partner reports of perceived frequency of daily sacrifices, hereafter referred to as frequency. Despite a lack of patterned associations across extant work focusing on frequency of sacrifices, theory suggests that frequency of choosing sacrifices may be meaningful to relationships. Noting that such phenomena occur daily, the following research question is addressed: How are individuals’ and partners’ reports about frequency of sacrifice associated with individuals’ daily satisfaction and daily commitment (RQ1)?

**Ease of Sacrifices.** One explanation for the inconsistent findings regarding frequency of sacrifice, satisfaction and commitment may be provided by focusing on perceptions of ease versus difficulty of sacrifices. For instance, when researchers asked participants to consider how harmful sacrifices were to themselves, they found greater perceived harmfulness of sacrifices to be associated with lower relationship satisfaction and commitment (Whitton et al., 2007). Other researchers found that higher perceived difficulty of sacrifice for both individuals and partners was negatively associated with relationship satisfaction (Ruppel & Curran, 2012). One explanation for these findings is that individuals may have been giving too much of themselves by choosing sacrifices that were too harmful to their own self-interests. As mentioned previously, theory suggest that sacrifices can be quite meaningful to communicating care for a partner or an interest in relationship maintenance. In relationships plagued by ambiguous statuses, easier sacrifices may allow individuals to show care and concern for their partners in ways that do not undermine themselves. For individuals who have a shared interest in
childrearing but for whom relational boundaries and expectations may be less clear, I expect that *as daily sacrifices are perceived as easier by individuals and partners, individuals will report higher daily satisfaction and higher daily commitment (H1).*

**Partner Awareness of Sacrifice.** Another explanation for inconsistent findings regarding frequency of sacrifices, satisfaction and commitment may have to do with how those sacrifices are perceived by partners. In line with theory and research on attributions, individuals may overestimate their own relational contributions, while underestimating or failing to notice at all their partners’ relational contributions (Kelley, 1979; Gable, Reis, & Downey, 2003; Fletcher & Kenny, 2012). For example, in diary studies of couples, individuals fail to notice approximately 25% of the positive behaviors their partners report doing (Gable et al., 2003). Although this study by Gable et al. (2003) was not specific to sacrifices, it exemplifies how individuals may not be fully aware of all of the positive behaviors their partners report doing. If one is unaware of positive behaviors or sacrifices that the partner is enacting, this could explain why he or she would not report increased satisfaction and commitment (see Totenhagen et al., 2013 for this discussion). As such, *I expect that higher perceived partner awareness of daily sacrifices by individuals and partners will be associated with individuals’ higher daily satisfaction and commitment (H2).*

**Method**

Cohabiting partners who were unmarried and expecting their first child together were recruited from local community agencies such as WIC (Women, Infants, and Children), Craig’s List, and hospitals frequented by pregnant women. To participate, partners had to be currently unmarried, cohabiting, and at least 18 years old. Participation included a one-time baseline survey and a series of seven daily diary surveys. Participants could complete the survey
segments of the study in one of two ways: online or mail-in hard copy. Survey instructions asked participants to complete all measures individually and to not discuss them with their partners.

**Participants.** The sample is a community sample from a medium sized city in the Southwestern United States made up of 140 unmarried, expectant cohabiters (70 couples). A majority of participants were Caucasian (49%) or of Hispanic or Latin American origin (31%) and ranged in age from 18 to 48 years old with a mean age of 24.52 years old ($SD = 5.19$). Participants reported being in romantic relationships with their current partners for a time period of 1.5 months to 7 years ($M = 2$ years; $SD = 1.5$ years). When asked about the status of their relationships, a majority of participants (75%) indicated a commitment to marriage to their current partner either publically or privately. For pregnancy intentions, available for 87% of sample, 62.5% reported the current pregnancy was unplanned whereas 37.5% that it was a planned pregnancy. Also, although participants could have a child or children from a previous relationship or relationships, this was true of only 20% of participants.

**Measures**

**Daily relational sacrifices.** Consistent with prior research on relational sacrifices (e.g., Impett, Gable, & Peplau, 2005; Whitton et al., 2007) relational sacrifices across various activities are considered. Sacrifice activities included those related to schedule, household tasks, leisure, amount of time spent with friends, amount of time spent with the family, communication with the partner, intimate behavior, physical appearance, diet and exercise, financial standing, childcare, and living arrangements. The phrase “changes for partner” was used to avoid implicit negative connotations of making sacrifices. For each sacrifice variable, participants were prompted to respond relative to “today.” For frequency of sacrifices, participants were asked “Did you make this sacrifice for your partner?” and responded on a scale of 0 (never) to 2.
often); responses were summed for a range of 1 to 24; α = .76. For ease of sacrifices, participants were asked “How difficult or easy was it for you to make this sacrifice for your partner?” and responded on a – 3 (very difficult) to +3 (very easy) scale, with a true 0 (neutral); responses were summed for a range of -36 to 36; α = .87. Finally, specific to partner awareness of sacrifices, participants were asked “How aware was your partner that you make this sacrifice for him or her?” and responded on a 1 (not at all aware) to 7 (very aware) scale; responses were summed for a range of 12 to 84; α = .82.

**Daily Satisfaction and Daily Commitment.** To reduce participant fatigue and following the example of others (e.g., Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003), I used one-item measures to assess daily satisfaction and daily commitment. Participants reported about their daily satisfaction by responding to the question “Today, how satisfied are you with your relationship with your partner?” on a scale of 1 (not very satisfied) to 7 (very satisfied). Participants reported about their daily commitment by responding to the question “Today, how committed do you feel to your partner?” on a scale of 1 (not very committed) to 7 (very committed).

**Control variables.** Initially, the following covariates were considered for inclusion in the models: relationship length, ethnicity, education level, age, gender, traditionality, and religiousness. These constructs were chosen as they are common covariates to include in studies about sacrifices within romantic relationships (Impett et al., 2005; Impett, Gere, Kogan, Gordan & Keltner, 2014; Ruppel & Curran, 2012; Totenhagen & Curran, 2011; Totenhagen et al. 2012, 2013; Van Lange, et al., 1997; Whitton, Stanley, & Markman, 2007). For instance, relationship length has been used to predict connections between romantic partners and whether partners should continue in their relationships (Braiker & Kelley, 1979). Age was also considered as a covariate, but ultimately dropped given high correlations and multicollinearity with relationship
length. Extant research has also shown that ethnicity and education level are predictors of whether relationships will transition to marriage – especially relevant to this cohabiting, expectant population. For example, 81% of non-Hispanic White women are predicted to marry by age 30 versus 52% of non-Hispanic African American women (Cherlin 2010). Moreover, college graduates are more likely to marry compared to individuals without a college degree (Cherlin 2010). Gender was considered given theorizing that suggests that women and men may be socialized to approach sacrifices differently (Impett & Gordon, 2008; Stanley et al., 2006). Finally, traditionality and religiosity were considered given the current sample who are unmarried, expectant parents living together. Here, it may be that one’s sense of tradition or religious beliefs about relationships and parenthood could influence the way they experience relationship phenomena (e.g., Kaufman, 2000; Mahoney, 2000) and shape their attitudes about sacrifices, satisfaction, and commitment.

For initial tests, model fit was tested using deviance statistics (Singer & Willett, 2003). Results revealed that a model including the control variables of baseline satisfaction (for the DV of satisfaction), baseline commitment (for the DV of commitment), gender, and relationship length was the best-fitting and most parsimonious model. For baseline relationship satisfaction and commitment, participants responded to one, face valid item for each. For baseline (not daily) relationship satisfaction, participants responded to “Overall, how satisfied are you with your relationship with your partner?” on a 1 (not very satisfied) to 7 (very satisfied) scale; participants reported medium-high baseline relational satisfaction ($M = 4.3; SD = .74$). For baseline relationship commitment, participants responded to “Overall, how committed do you feel to your partner?” on a 1 (not very committed) to 7 (very committed) scale; participants reported high baseline commitment ($M = 6.67; SD = .77$).
Plan of Analysis

I used multilevel modeling (MLM) because the data are dyadic and daily and thus include multiple levels of nonindependence. I used SAS PROC MIXED in which the random and repeated statements set up the error structure to deal with the levels of nesting. The random statement accounted for interdependence between partners and the repeated statement accounted for interdependence between partners’ daily reports as well as partners’ autocorrelation. I used Actor Partner Interdependence Models (APIM; Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006) which treat the dyad as the level of analysis and account for intrapersonal (actor effects) and interpersonal (partner effects) associations while controlling for dyadic interdependence. To test my RQ and hypotheses, I tested two models: one in which the DV was daily commitment and the second in which the DV was daily satisfaction. In each of the models, I included the aforementioned control variables as well as the actor and partner effects of frequency, ease, and perceived partner awareness as IVs.

Results

See Table 1 for a correlation matrix of study variables. As expected, daily and overall reports of relationship satisfaction and commitment were positively correlated with all other relationship quality variables. See Table 2 for study results.

Specific to the research question about frequency of sacrifices, daily satisfaction and daily commitment, (RQ1), results indicate no significant associations between actor or partner reports about frequency of daily sacrifices and individuals’ daily satisfaction or daily commitment.

Specific to ease of sacrifices (H1), as daily sacrifices were perceived as easier by individuals, individuals reported higher daily satisfaction (b = .06, SE = .01, p < .0001) and
higher daily commitment ($b = .03, SE = .01, p < .01$). Additionally, as daily sacrifices were perceived as easier by partners, actors reported higher daily satisfaction ($b = .03, SE = .01, p < .05$) and higher daily commitment ($b = .01, SE = .01, p < .05$). In other words, as sacrifices were perceived as easier for actors and partners, individuals’ reported higher daily satisfaction and higher daily commitment. Thus, results support H1.

Finally, specific to partner awareness of sacrifices (H2), no significant associations between actors’ or partners’ reports of perceived partner awareness sacrifices and individuals’ daily satisfaction and commitment were found. Thus, results do not support H2.

**Discussion**

In the current study, as individuals’ and partners’ perceived sacrifices as easier, individuals also reported higher daily satisfaction and commitment. No other associations between frequency of sacrifice and daily satisfaction and commitment, or partner awareness of sacrifice and daily satisfaction and commitment were found. That is, as sacrifices get easier, this may allow individuals and partners to sacrifice to benefit their partners and relationships without incurring too much personal cost. In other words, it may be that as sacrifices become easier, these are preferable to more sacrifices becoming more difficult as they are an avenue by which individuals and partners can give of themselves and demonstrate care and concern to the partner, but in ways that are not too detrimental to their own interest.

Extant research suggests that smaller acts of support by one’s partner are often more effective because they minimize the emotional cost of receiving support (Bolger et al., 2003). Similarly, it may be that as sacrifices get easier there are lower emotional costs to the partner receiving support. For pregnant cohabitors specifically, who may be experiencing conflicts of interest and heightened ambiguity about their relationships, these findings suggest it would be
wise to focus on making sacrifices easier daily given associations with higher relational satisfaction and commitment.

Although theory suggests that relational sacrifices provide opportunities for positive impacts for partners and relationships (Kelley, 1979), associations between frequency of sacrifices, satisfaction, and commitment were not found. According to theory, partners should sacrifice, but not always (Kelley, 1979). Given that some researchers have found high levels of instability for cohabitors with children (e.g., Osborne, et. al., 2007), pregnant unmarried cohabitors may not be inclined to make frequent daily sacrifices for their relational partner, or be aware of the sacrifices their partners are making for them. Additionally, no evidence of associations between partner awareness of sacrifices, satisfaction and commitment was found. This lack of association between partner awareness of sacrifices, satisfaction and commitment is consistent with extant research in which researchers have suggested that individuals often lack awareness of the positive behaviors their partners report doing. For instance, in a diary study of couples, researchers found individuals failed to notice approximately 25% of the positive behaviors enacted by their partners (Gable, Reis, & Downey, 2003). Although this diary study did not specify sacrifices, this does show how a general lack of awareness of the positive behaviors of partners may contribute to the lack of findings here.

Despite the consistent pattern of findings relative to ease of sacrifices, there are some limitations in the current study. First, all participants came from one geographical region which limits the generalizability of results. Nevertheless, stressors are common to couples expecting children together (Cowan & Cowan, 2000) which may enhance generalizability to the expectant population. Further, despite the use daily diary data, this study is still correlational as perceptions of sacrifices on a given say were examined in associations with reports of satisfaction and
commitment on that same day. Given this approach, the current study did not establish temporal precedence that perceptions of sacrifices occurred before reports of daily relationship satisfaction and commitment. It is possible that when individuals experienced fluctuations in daily satisfaction or commitment, they were inclined to feel differently about sacrifices for their partners.

With respect to measurement, the measures of satisfaction and commitment were single-item measures. In daily diary investigation, it is important to use shorter measures to prevent participant fatigues (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003), especially when participants fill out measures each day across a series of days. The choice to use single-item measures was made to balance the need for retention and decrease participant fatigue given the daily design of this study. Additionally, here it was observed that participants’ reports on these items were patterned near the upper limit of the measure. For example, for daily satisfaction, participants reported a mean of 6 on a 1 (not very satisfied) to 7 (very satisfied) scale (SD = 1.43). Further, for daily commitment, participants reported a mean of 6.53 on a 1 (not very committed) to 7 (very committed) scale (SD = 1.04). These high means could be associated with a ceiling effect whereby some variation across participants may not have been detected given the observation of means skewed to high end of the measurement. Here, given the high means, discriminating between participants reporting high scores on relationship quality may be challenging.

Given the results of the current study, future researchers may consider one or more of the following avenues of future research. First, noting findings relative to ease of sacrifice, researchers could continue to examine the impact of perceived valence of sacrifices, perhaps by developing more sophisticated ways to measures to assess perceived ease and difficulty of sacrificing. Here, we asked about general perceptions of ease versus difficulty across categories
of sacrifices on a 7 point scale daily. Future researchers should think about how to access reports about ease and difficulty specific to particular sacrifices. Additionally, future researchers may consider assessing ease and difficulty along separate scales to allow individuals the flexibility to acknowledge both the easy and difficult aspects of some sacrifices together. Next, despite the general conceptualization of commitment as a desire for relational continuation, there is considerable variation, both conceptually and pragmatically, with regard to the desires for relationship continuation. In future research it would be useful to consider other dimensions of commitment in addition to personal commitment as additional dimensions may each have unique associations with sacrifices and vary considerably given relationship types (e.g. unmarried cohabitation).

**Conclusions**

In sum, greater as daily sacrifices got easier for both individuals and partners, individuals reported higher daily satisfaction and higher daily commitment. In contrast, frequency of sacrifice and perceived partner awareness of sacrifice were not associated with daily satisfaction or commitment. Given these patterns, pregnant unmarried cohabiters may consider how to make sacrifices easier when aiming to demonstrate care and concern to their partner, because, as sacrifices get easier they may not be perceived as too detrimental to their own outcomes.
Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of Study Variables

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<td><strong>Relational Sacrifice Variables</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Frequency of Sacrifices</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>0 to 12</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>.76**</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>-.12**</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.06</td>
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<td>2. Ease of Sacrifices</td>
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<td>-15 to 33</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Partner Awareness of Sacrifices</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>0 to 11</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>.76**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.05</td>
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<td>4. Daily Satisfaction</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1 to 7</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>-.20**</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>.16**</td>
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<td>.61**</td>
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<td>5. Daily Commitment</td>
<td>6.53</td>
<td>1 to 7</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>-.12**</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.61**</td>
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<td>.53**</td>
<td>.64**</td>
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<td><strong>Relational Controls</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Satisfaction Overall</td>
<td>5.98</td>
<td>1 to 7</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>.53**</td>
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<td>.64**</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Commitment Overall</td>
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<td>-.06</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.64**</td>
<td>.64**</td>
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*Note. *p < .05. **p < .01.*
Table 2

Multilevel Models of Associations between Actor and Partner Daily Relational Sacrifices, Daily Commitment, and Daily Satisfaction

<table>
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<tr>
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Actor Effects of Sacrifices

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<th>DailyFrequency</th>
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<th>DailyEase</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>DailyEase</th>
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<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daily ease</td>
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<td><strong>0.03</strong></td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Daily partner awareness</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.04</td>
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Partner Effects of Sacrifices

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Daily频率</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>DailyFrequency</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>DailyEase</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>DailyEase</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily frequency</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td></td>
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<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daily ease</td>
<td><strong>0.03</strong></td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td><strong>0.01</strong></td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily partner awareness</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.04</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note. * p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001 All bs are unstandardized coefficients. Bolded bs indicate significant findings.
CHAPTER III. PAPER 2. RELATIONAL SACRIFICES AND TRIPARTITE COMMITMENT
FOR UNMARRIED, PREGNANT COHABITORS

Introduction

Conflicts of interest occur when partners’ best interests do not align. According to theory, conflicts of interest can generate opportunities for individuals to choose to forgo egocentric desires (or, make relational sacrifices) to accommodate their partners and coordinate outcomes (Van Lange, Agnew, Harnick, & Steemers, 1997). Theory also suggests that choosing relational sacrifices should be associated with higher commitment between partners (Kelley, 1979).

The current study focuses on associations between sacrifices and three types of relational commitment (personal, moral, and structural commitment) for unmarried, expectant cohabiters. In most studies of sacrifices and relationship quality, researchers have focused on married and dating couples, and find patterns typically specific to sacrifices and one type of commitment, personal commitment (wanting to be in the relationship; see Johnson, 1999; Impett & Gordon, 2008; Rusbult et al., 2006, for reviews). Understanding the ways in which sacrifices are associated with different dimensions of commitment for unmarried, expectant cohabiters is of timely importance given the rising prevalence of this population coupled with high rates of potential relational instability (Osborne, Manning, & Smock, 2007; Stanley, Rhoades, & Markman, 2006; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Therefore, sacrifices made by pregnant cohabiters may be associated with personal commitment, but they may also be associated in the same or different ways with other types of commitment (moral, or ought to be committed and structural, or have to be committed; Johnson, 1999).

Like Paper 1, in the current study again focuses on sacrifices as independent variables; specifically, I focus on perceived frequency of sacrifices, ease of sacrifices, and partner
awareness of sacrifices. Here, dimensions of relational commitment (personal, moral, and structural; Johnson, 1999) are dependent variables.

**Relational Sacrifices: Frequency, Ease, and Partner Awareness.** Paper 1 addressed how according to interdependence theory sacrifices should be positively related with commitment (Kelley, 1979); however, extant work does not yield consistent patterns relative to this theorized relationship between sacrifices and commitment. For instance, some researchers find that higher frequency of sacrifices is associated with higher relational commitment (Totenhagen, Curran, Serido, & Butler, 2015; Van Lange, et al., 1997) while others find that higher frequency of sacrifices is associated with lower commitment (Impett, Gable, & Peplau, 2005; Whitton, Stanley, & Markman, 2007). Beyond frequency, individuals who report making sacrifices they perceived as harmful to self also report lower commitment (Whitton et al., 2007). This finding is supported by interdependence theory given that theory suggests that well-adapted individuals will always give some consideration to their own outcomes (Kelley, 1979). Thus, when faced with easy versus difficult sacrifices, easier sacrifices should have more positive associations with commitment.

Kelley (1979) also suggested that individuals frequently overestimate how much they do in a relationship while at the same time underestimating how much partners do. Moreover, a diary study of couples revealed that both men and women failed to notice approximately 25% of the small, positive behaviors their partners reported doing (Gable, Reis, & Downey, 2003). From the perspective of the individuals making the sacrifices, it may be important to perceive partners are aware those sacrifices. In other words, if positive relational associations of sacrifices (here, commitment) are based on the communication of care and concern, partners should be aware of sacrifices in order to experience those positive relational associations. As such, positive
relationship associations of sacrifices may fall away if the sacrificing individuals do not perceive partners to be aware of such efforts.

As noted previously (Paper 1), according to interdependence theory both partners should be considered with regard to their impact on relational outcomes (Kelley, 1979). Thus, despite a lack of significant patterns specific to the partner effects (e.g. Ruppel & Curran, 2012; Totenhagen et al., 2013; Whitton et al., 2007), this paper follows interdependence theory (Kelley, 1979) by including both individuals from the romantic relationship in the current study. For sacrifices, both actor effects, or how one’s behaviors impact one’s own outcomes, and partner effects, or how one’s partner’s behaviors impact one’s outcomes, are included.

**Commitment.** Building upon interdependence theory, the investment model of commitment (Rusbult, 1980; Rusbult, 1983) suggests that investments individuals make into relationships should be associated with commitment. According to the investment model of commitment, the more individuals invest in a relationship, the more highly committed they should be to that relationship (and/or partner) based on the potential for greater loss of investments. Connecting interdependence and commitment theories, relational sacrifices can be considered a form of investing in one’s relationship. Therefore, while interdependence theory suggests that sacrifices should be associated with higher commitment, it is necessary to consider how sacrifices, as relational investments, are associated with the nature of that commitment.

**Dimensions of Commitment.** Across extant work, commitment has most often been conceptualized as a desire for relationship continuation based on personal desire and attraction to one’s partner and/or relationship (Adams & Jones, 1997), referred to as personal commitment. Recognizing the need to move beyond personal commitment to capture variations in the nature and motives for commitment, Stanley and Markman (1992) developed a commitment inventory
(CI) which specifies two types of commitment: personal dedication and constraint commitment. Here, *personal dedication* refers to commitment characterized by a desire to maintain and improve the quality of one’s relationship while *constraint commitment* is characterized by feeling compelled to maintain a relationship based on the high cost of dissolution. Two-dimensional commitment models specific to personal dedication and constraint commitment (Stanley & Markman, 1992) have also been commonly used in the literature (over 400x), especially by researchers who study sacrifices, commitment, or both sacrifices and commitment (e.g. Givertz & Segrin, 2005; Givertz, Segrin, & Hanzal, 2009; Impett & Gordon, 2006; Johnson, Anderson, & Aducci, 2011; Stanley, Rhoades, & Markman, 2006). Nevertheless, an additional contribution from the CI by Stanley and Markman (1992) was the emergence of two unique factors *within* the constraint dimension: one characterized by external constraints (e.g., money) and the other internal constraints (e.g., morals). Other researchers have also found evidence of three dimensions of commitment, wherein constraint commitment is teased apart into a structural and a moral dimension (e.g. Adams & Jones, 1997). Formally addressing the three unique dimensions emerging from extant work, Johnson (1991, 1999) proposed a three dimensional or tripartite model of commitment comprising of personal commitment based on internal feelings of attraction to one’s partner or relationship, moral commitment based on moral constraints internal to individuals, and structural commitment that addresses constraints external to individuals (similar to constraint commitment).

As noted, several researchers have studied the associations between sacrifices and commitment (e.g., Impett & Gordon, 2008), with commitment typically specific to personal commitment, and with samples of dating and married individuals. The current study moved beyond extant literature on sacrifices and commitment by addressing associations between
sacrifices and three dimensions of commitment (personal, moral, and structural) using a community sample of unmarried, expectant cohabitors. Given that cohabitors in general, and especially those expecting or with young children, struggle relationally compared to other individuals (dating or married individuals; Osborne et al., 2007; Stanley et al., 2006), personal commitment may not be not salient for this sample of expectant cohabitors considered. Rather, desire for relationship continuation may be based on factors beyond personal attraction, such as obligations characterized by internal (e.g., morals) or external constraints (e.g., money). In other words, given their circumstances, unmarried, expectant cohabitors may be bound relationally by factors beyond those typically associated with personal commitment. Thus, I expect the relationships between sacrifices and commitment to be more robust when moral and/or structural commitment are specified, rather than personal commitment.

**Moral Commitment.** In expecting a child together, unmarried, expectant cohabitors may have considerable moral considerations about how they invest and sacrifice for their partner and/or relationship. These obligations may be complicated by a lack of formal commitment typically communicated by marriage. Specific to frequency of sacrifice, there may exist expectations of reciprocity of sacrifices wherein when individuals or partners sacrifice their own best interest in one situation, they do so with underlying expectations of reciprocity in the future (Impett & Gordon, 2008). Given this, when individuals or partners sacrifice frequently themselves, they may be committed based on the expectations for reciprocity from their significant others. Likewise, specific to ease, when individuals or partners report more difficult sacrifices individuals should theoretically experience higher moral commitment. For individuals or partners who are making difficult sacrifices, they may feel morally obligated to maintain their level of investing given an interest in dual child rearing and the perceived best interest of the
child or even simply to maintain their own positive image of self as a giving partner. When individuals or partners make difficult sacrifices, individuals should also feel especially morally obligated to be committed to that relationship given common expectations for reciprocity regarding sacrifices. Finally, specific to partner awareness, when individuals or partners are aware of each other’s sacrifices, they should also morally obligated to return the sacrifices (principle of reciprocity), while also committed to maintain the image of themselves as a good partner. In sum, specific to moral commitment, it is expected that greater frequency, less ease, and greater perceived partner awareness by both individuals and partners should be associated with individuals’ higher moral commitment.

**Structural Commitment.** Longer relationship durations are associated with structural commitment (Oswald, Goldberg, Kuvalanka, & Clausell, 2008) illustrating that structural constraints can be powerful motivators to remain in relationships. According to the investment model of commitment (Rusbult, 1980; Rusbult, 1983) relational investments may become constraints that make relationship dissolution more difficult. From this view, investments (here, sacrifices) should contribute to higher structural commitment as individuals and partners are investing through choosing sacrifices and thus, have more to lose. In expecting a child together, unmarried, expectant cohabitors and their partners may also have considerable structural considerations about how they invest and sacrifice for their partner and/or relationship. Specific to frequency of sacrifice, greater frequency of investments (here, sacrifices) for both individuals and partners should be associated with higher structural commitment. Specific to ease, easy sacrifices may be notably small investments compared to more difficult sacrifices. Thus, when individuals and partners choose more difficult (or less easy) sacrifices, individuals should be more structurally committed given the potential for greater loss of investments. Specific to
partner awareness of sacrifices, theory does not suggest that individuals’ or partners’ reports about sacrifice should be associated with structural commitment. In sum, specific to structural commitment, it is expected that only reports of greater frequency and less ease of sacrifices by individuals and partners should be associated with their own higher structural commitment. No actor or partner effects for perceived awareness of sacrifices and structural commitment are expected.

**Personal Commitment.** Given the variance that is hypothesized for both moral and structural commitment (described above), it is expected that individuals’ and partners’ sacrifices will have weak (i.e., fewer significant findings), if any, associations with individuals’ personal commitment.

**Method**

**Procedure.** To qualify to participate, individuals had to be at least 18 years old, expecting their first child with their unmarried, cohabiting romantic partner, and both partners had to be willing to participate. Study participation included completing (1) a baseline self-report, (2) a series of daily diary, self-report surveys, and (3) an in-home visit during which partners responded to a series of three individual interviews and were observed engaging in three short couple interaction tasks. See *Paper 1* for more specific information about the baseline self-report survey portion of participation (in which individuals reported about sacrifices). After completing the baseline survey, participants were scheduled for an in-home visit during which each partner participated in three interviews. One of these interviews was titled “About Commitment.” During this interview, participants were asked to explain their feelings of commitment in general as well as specific to their current partner and relationship. These
interviews were conducted with each individual separately, audio-recorded, and transcribed. The qualitative data from the “About commitment” interviews is used here.

**Participants.** The sample used here is a subsample of the broader data collection described above, as it includes only couples who completed both the baseline survey items about sacrifices and the in-home commitment interview. The sample includes 82 unmarried, expectant cohabitators (41 couples) who are primarily Caucasian (46.3%; \( n = 38 \)) or of Hispanic or Latin American origin (30.5%; \( n = 25 \)) with smaller numbers of participants reporting as American Indian or Alaska Native, African-American or Black, Asian or Pacific Islander, or Mixed race/ethnicity. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 48 years old (\( M = 24.5 \) years old; \( SD = 5.3 \)). The median level of education of participants was some college or an Associate’s degree (39.0%; \( n = 32 \)).

At the time of data collection, participants reported being in a romantic relationship with their current partner for a period of time ranging from 1.5 months to 8 years (\( M = 2 \) years; \( SD = 1.5 \) years). Although cohabitation has been frequently associated with high levels of relational instability (e.g., Stanley et al., 2006), this sample of unmarried cohabitators expecting their first child reported notably high overall relational commitment on a single item; \( M = 6.68 \) on a 1 (not very committed) to 7 (very committed) scale; \( SD = .74 \). Additionally, when asked about the status of their relationship, the majority of participants (76.8%; \( n = 63 \)) indicated a commitment to marriage to their current partner either publically or privately. When asked about pregnancy intentions, 62.5% reported the current pregnancy was unplanned while 37.5% that it was a planned pregnancy. Also, while participants could have a child or children from a previous relationship or relationships, this was true of only 19.5% (\( n = 16 \)) of individuals included in the sample used here.
Measures

Relational sacrifices. Consistent with prior research on relational sacrifices (e.g., Impett, Gable, & Peplau, 2005; Whitton et al., 2007) we asked about different types of sacrifice. Participants self-reported about the following 12 types of sacrifice: schedule, household tasks, leisure, amount of time spent with friends, amount of time spent with the family, communication with the partner, intimate behavior, physical appearance, diet and exercise, financial standing, childcare, and living arrangements. Here, “changes for partner” was used instead of “sacrifice for partner” to avoid implicit negative connotations of making sacrifices for the partner (e.g., sacrifice being negative or a chore). This wording was used because of research that indicates that individuals, women in particular, may do more “nice” or “helpful” things for the partner, but are less likely to define such behaviors as sacrifices (Impett & Gordon, 2008; Whitton et al., 2007). The wording in the scale about changes should help with such possible underreports and has been published with this sample (Corkery, Curran, & Parkman, 2011), and other samples (Burke & Young, 2012; Ruppel & Curran, 2012; Totenhagen & Curran, 2011; Totenhagen, Curran, Butler, & Serido, 2013).

For each sacrifice, participants reported about perceived frequency of sacrifices, perceived ease of sacrifices, and perceived partner awareness of sacrifices. Individuals reported about frequency by responding to the question “How often, in general, do you make this change for your partner?” Response options were 0 (never), 1 (sometimes), 2 (often), and 3 (possibility for future), summed for a range of 1 to 24 whereby a higher sum indicates more frequent sacrifices; $\alpha = .76$. Perceived ease (versus difficulty) of sacrifice was assessed with the question “How difficult or easy is it for you to make this sacrifice for your partner?” Participants responded about perceived ease of sacrifice on a – 3 (very difficult) to +3 (very easy) scale with a
true 0 (neutral). Responses on each of the 12 sacrifice items were summed for a range of -36 to 36 whereby higher scored indicate greater perceived ease of sacrifice; $\alpha = .87$. Finally, participants responded “yes” or “no” to the question “Was your partner aware that this change was made for him or her?” When a sacrifice was reported, most often individuals reported that “yes” partners were aware (See Appendix A for a copy of this measure).

**Tripartite Commitment.** During the commitment interview, researchers asked individuals to explain their thoughts on commitment in general as well as their commitment to their current partner/relationship. Specific to their current relationships, individuals were asked “How would you describe your commitment to (insert partner’s name) right now?” and a follow up “Why would you describe your commitment to (insert partner’s name) this way?” Each individual was given a separate code for each dimension on a scale of 1 (“not at all characteristic” of the specific dimension) to 5 (“highly characteristic” of the specific dimension). The guidelines for coding each dimension of commitment include (1) a brief summary description of the characteristics of that commitment dimension, (2) detailed information about themes common to that commitment dimension, and (3) a 1 (not at all characteristic) to 5 (highly characteristic) coding scheme that highlights examples of how a response that would fit into each category may sound or highlight. Coders were instructed read the entire transcript of the interview and provide a rating that was “most appropriate for the participant’s response based on both content and frequency of characteristic expression of the coding categories.” Coders were asked to judge based on the totality (or dominant theme) of discourse regarding commitment. When assigning codes, coders were encouraged to consider the strength and consistency with which each dimension came across in the participant’s responses.
As a way to strengthen the coding of qualitative interviews, Patton (2002) recommends “analyst triangulation.” To strengthen coding, we used a modified type of analyst triangulation. For each commitment dimension, two teams of two trained coders were involved. For each team, each trained coder independently read the transcribed responses multiple times, took notes on notable points of each interview response, and assigned a code. Next, the two coders met to compare findings. The paired coders discussed their coding assignments paying particular attention to any discrepancies. Together, coders reviewed their notes and decided on a final code for each dimension. Then, the final codes produced by two different pairs were compared. Alpha’s representing inter-rater reliabilities between the pairs of coders for the three dimensions are as follows: structural commitment $\alpha = .84$, moral commitment $\alpha = .79$, and personal commitment $\alpha = .85$.

**Plan of Analysis**

I used SAS PROC MIXED to account for nonindependence of data between partners wherein the random and repeated statements set up the error structure to deal the dyadic nature of the data (Cook & Kenny, 2005). For each model, a single commitment dimension is specified as the dependent variable while the other two dimensions are entered as controls (e.g., for the model of sacrifices and moral commitment, I included structural and personal commitment as control variables). Including each dimension of commitment in each the model allows for the elimination of variance explained by each type of commitment such that the unique variance explained by the sacrifice variables is apparent. In other words, by including the three dimensions, it is possible to assess how each dimension in uniquely impacted by the independent sacrifice variables.
Results

There were small but significant positive correlations between structural and moral commitment (.29; p < .05) (see Table 1). It is theoretically expected that structural and moral commitment should be positively correlated because both represent a form of constraint commitment (Stanley & Markman, 1992). Other correlations between commitment dimensions were also small, but not significant. Overall, these statistical tests suggest that each score represents a unique dimension of commitment. Correlations between the sacrifice variables included here were all positive and significant. Specifically, the correlation between frequency of sacrifices and ease of sacrifices and frequency of sacrifices and partner awareness of sacrifices was moderate (.55 and .54, respectively). Meanwhile, there was a strong correlation (.88) between frequency of sacrifices and partner awareness of sacrifices.

Moral Commitment. Here, results show three (out of six) findings in support of the hypothesis for moral commitment: (a) individuals’ reports of more frequent sacrifices, (b) individuals’ reports of less ease, and (c) partners’ reports of greater awareness were all associated with higher moral commitment. Results also show three (out of six) findings not in support of this hypothesis: (a) partners’ reports of sacrifices were negatively (rather than positively) associated with moral commitment, (b) partners’ reports of ease of sacrifices were not significantly related to moral commitment, and (c) individuals’ reports of partner awareness were not significantly related to moral commitment. Thus, this hypothesis is partially supported by results.

Structural Commitment. Here, zero (out of six) findings support the hypothesis for structural commitment. Five out of the six of the results were nonsignificant. For the remaining finding, what was expected to be nonsignificant was in fact significant: Higher perceived partner
awareness of sacrifices by partners was associated with higher structural commitment for individuals. Thus, this hypothesis was not supported.

**Personal Commitment.** Weak (i.e., fewer significant findings), if any, associations were expected between individuals’ and partners’ sacrifices and individuals’ personal commitment. As expected, no significant associations between actors’ or partners’ reports of frequency, ease, or partner awareness of sacrifices and actors’ personal commitment were found. Thus, this hypothesis was supported. See Table 2 for summary of results.

**Discussion**

For this sample of pregnant, unmarried cohabitors, robust patterns were expected between sacrifices and moral commitment and sacrifices and structural commitment, and fewer to no significant findings were expected for sacrifices and personal commitment. The patterns of results show some support for one of these hypotheses (i.e., sacrifices and moral commitment), with no support for one of the other hypotheses (i.e., sacrifices and structural commitment).

Specific to sacrifices and moral commitment, three findings support the hypothesis: (a) individuals’ reports of more frequent sacrifices, (b) individuals’ reports of less ease, and (c) partners’ reports of greater awareness were all associated with higher moral commitment. Thus, this provided preliminary support for the idea that as individuals invest into their relationships (here, through sacrificing) they feel more morally compelled to continue in those relationships. For instance, sacrificing partners may feel that they have developed expectations or images of themselves as partners through frequent sacrificing. As such, individuals may feel morally constrained to live up to those expectations to reinforce their own images and their partners’ images of them as reliable partners who show care and concern. For the pregnant, unmarried individuals in this sample, when individuals make choices to sacrifice and invest in their
relationship and the expectant child, the frequency of such sacrifices likely contributes to heightened commitment based on moral obligation.

Nevertheless, partner reports of frequent sacrifices were associated with lower moral commitment by individuals (or, the beneficiary of said sacrifices). This finding was not expected as theory suggests that individuals should be more likely to feel more morally constrained to be committed to partners who demonstrate consistent care and concern through sacrificing (Kelley, 1978). The unexpected result here for partners suggests that for unmarried, expectant cohabiters sacrifices by partners may be not necessarily constrain or compel individuals to be committed based on moral obligations. It may be that the generally precarious nature of these relationships coupled with other constraints (child bearing out of wedlock etc.) may water down the potential positive impact of frequent sacrifices.

With regard to associations between ease of sacrifice and moral commitment, individuals’ reports of greater ease of sacrifices were associated with their own lower moral commitment. Given the argument above whereby the more an individual invests the more morally obligated they feel, it follows that making easy sacrifices may not be associated with higher moral commitment given the lesser valence of investment.

Relative to the partner effect of awareness of sacrifice on higher moral commitment by individuals, this may also be due to expectations for reciprocity. In other words, when individuals are aware of the sacrifices partners make for them, they should feel compelled by moral obligation to engage in acts of reciprocity.

Why some patterns emerged as positive for individuals but negative for partners (frequency) or why other patterns remerged as positive for partners but lacked significance for individuals (partner awareness) specific to moral commitment is unknown. As noted in the
introduction, partner effects are not always consistent in the literature (Ruppel & Curran, 2012; Totenhagen et al., 2013; Whitton et al., 2007). Thus, more study of both individuals and partners in understanding sacrifices and moral commitment continues to be needed.

Specific to sacrifices and structural commitment, only one significant finding was found, which was contrary to my hypothesis. Further, no significant findings between sacrifices and personal commitment emerged. This latter lack of findings between sacrifices and personal commitment was expected, but still emphasizes the lack of overall significant relationships in the current study. Because the overall number of significant findings and expected patterns was limited, conclusions offered about sacrifices and moral commitment are tentative and require further examination and replication.

With this caveat in mind, I tentatively suggest that the relationship between sacrifices and commitment may be meaningful, but only when salient forms of commitment are considered. For this sample, the relationship between sacrifices and moral commitment may be particularly meaningful to pregnant, unmarried cohabitors given a lack of formal commitment (e.g., marriage) and the pending arrival children. The findings offer preliminary support that future researchers should extend beyond studies of sacrifice and personal commitment, especially for individuals for whom personal commitment may not be most salient.

Taken together, the results speak to the idea and consideration of expanded conceptualizations about commitment, and how sacrifices can be used to understand these different types of commitment. Theory and empirical evidence suggest that global measures fail to capture the nuances of modern commitment (e.g., Adams & Jones, 1997; Johnson, 1999; Stanley & Markman, 1992) such as those of expectant cohabitors (Corkery, Curran, & Parkman,
Nevertheless, a majority of extant work on sacrifices and commitment has focused exclusively on personal commitment.

One possible issue may be the best way to assess multiple types of commitment. That is, few published studies have examined tripartite dimensions using validated scales (for exceptions see Bello, Brandeau-Brown, & Ragsdale, 2008 and Ramirez, 2008). In fact, across studies that have tested tripartite dimensions (e.g. Kapinus & Johnson, 2002; Oswald et al., 2008; Tang, 2012), considerable variation is found. Even here, measures of dimensions are based on scoring of qualitative interview responses. To my knowledge, this is one of few studies in which tripartite commitment has been adapted to apply to interviews and then applied to a coding system versus its more typical uses (e.g., survey responses on a likert scale; Johnson, Caughlin, & Huston, 1999; Tang, 2012). While this is a novel approach that allows for individuals’ personal voices to guide their representation of commitment, there are limitations. Although thematic analyses of qualitative data offer distinct advantages, when research questions do not specially represent the methodology this can pose limitations for thematic analyses and interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Here, the tripartite coding scheme was built around an existing interview protocol not specifically designed to assess tripartite dimensions of commitment. As such, perhaps the research questions addresses were not explicitly matched to the original methodology. In future qualitative research on this subject, interview methodology should be specifically designed to reflect the research questions and specific variables of interest. Overall though, to move research forward, the research community should continue to be cognizant of commitment beyond personal commitment, and how these other types of commitment apply to specific samples of individuals such as pregnant, unmarried cohabiters.
Despite the aforementioned avenues for future research, several study limitations exist. First, all participants came from one geographical region which limits the generalizability of results. This sample is largely made up of notably low-income cohabiting couples. A larger, more diverse sample of cohabiting couples would be beneficial to explore how dimensions of commitment function across a range of cohabiting situations, including those free from financial pressures which may motivate structural commitment given the opportunity for pooling finances. Still, beyond financial considerations, stressors are common to couples expecting children together (Cowan & Cowan, 2000) which may enhance generalizability to the expectant population. Additionally, I am unable to assess if the pattern of findings would be consistent for couples in other relationship statuses (e.g., married or dating individuals), or couples in different relationship transitions (e.g., cohabitation without pregnancy, engagement, etc.).

**Conclusions**

The findings from this paper point to the need for future research to consider theory carefully when assessing what forms of commitment may or may not be salient to different populations. For instance, here most associations emerged between sacrifice variables and moral commitment. Although findings were not always in expected directions, overall, this suggests that moral commitment is indeed salient for unmarried, expectant cohabiters. This does not mean that personal and structural commitment are not relevant, but the findings here do point to the importance of morality. Given this, future research addressing unmarried partners living and expecting children together should consider the moral dimension of commitment in assessing relational phenomena such as sacrifices.
Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of Study Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Moral Commitment</th>
<th>Structural Commitment</th>
<th>Personal Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moral Commitment</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.29*</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural Commitment</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>.29*</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Commitment</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Sacrifices</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>0-12</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0.55**</td>
<td>0.80**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Sacrifices</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>7.85</td>
<td>-9-33</td>
<td>0.55**</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0.54**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Awareness of Sacrifices</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>0-11</td>
<td>0.80**</td>
<td>0.54**</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$*
### Table 2

**Multilevel Models of Sacrifices and Commitment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Moral Commitment</th>
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<th>Personal Commitment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>3.90*</td>
<td>1.62*</td>
<td>2.58</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moral commitment</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>0.47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structural commitment</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal commitment</td>
<td>-0.21**</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Actor Effects**

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Moral Commitment</th>
<th>Structural Commitment</th>
<th>Personal Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of sacrifices</td>
<td>0.33**</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of sacrifices</td>
<td>-0.10**</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived partner awareness</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
<td>0.23*</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Partner Effects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Moral Commitment</th>
<th>Structural Commitment</th>
<th>Personal Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of sacrifices</td>
<td>-0.28*</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of sacrifices</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived partner awareness</td>
<td>0.42**</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001. All bs are unstandardized coefficients. Bolded bs indicate significant finding.*
CHAPTER IV. PAPER 3. ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN RELATIONAL SACRIFICES AND TRIPARTITE COMMITMENT DIMENSIONS

Introduction

Most of the existing research on commitment is specific to personal commitment (e.g., Rusbult et al., 2006), which is described as a desire for relationship continuation based on internal attraction to one’s partner or relationship, or personal commitment (Adams & Jones, 1997; Impett & Gordon, 2008; Rusbult et al., 2006). Yet, considerable theorizing and empirical evidence suggests that commitment is a complex, multidimensional construct (e.g., Adams & Jones, 1997; Frank & Brandstatter, 2002; Johnson, Anderson, & Aducci, 2011; Strachman & Gable, 2006; Stanley & Markman, 1992). In particular, Johnson (1999) suggested the existence of three distinct dimensions of commitment: personal, moral, and structural commitment.

In the current study, I examine how relational sacrifices are associated with each of three types of commitment: personal, moral, and structural, using a large sample of individuals across various age ranges (18-80 years old), relationship statuses (e.g. casually dating, seriously dating, engaged, married), and relationship lengths (6 weeks to 47 years).

Dimensions of Commitment. Theorists and researchers have argued that commitment is best understood as part of a cognitive decision-making process used to navigate relationships (e.g., Sternberg, 1986, 1988). From this view, individuals’ commitment experiences are the result of cultural, moral, social, and dyadic forces that compel them to commit to one another in different ways and for different reasons (Johnson, 1999; Levinger, 1965; Stanley & Markman, 1992; Surra, 1987). For instance, forces internal and external to individuals should shape their commitment experiences.
Considering the various forces that impact commitment, Stanley and Markman (1992) put forth two dimensions of commitment – personal dedication and constraint commitment. From this view, attractive aspects of a relationship contribute to personal dedication commitment (characterized by internal motivations related to personal dedication, devotion, attachment, attraction, and love) whereas external forces that may prevent individuals from dissolving relationships contribute to constraint commitment (staying in a relationship due to external barriers; e.g. divorce is difficult, staying together for financial ease, etc.). Despite the specification of two dimensions of commitment, one based on internal motivations and the other on external constraints, the authors’ examination of the factor structure of commitment inventory designed to capture these two dimensions revealed three factors: 1) a factor characterized by the personal dedication subscales, 2) a factor characterized by the constraint subscales, and 3) a factor characterized by the morality of divorce and satisfaction with sacrifice subscales. The authors noted that the unexpected third factor represented a “moral dimension” (Stanley & Markman, 1992, p. 600).

Moving beyond a two-dimensional model of commitment, Johnson (1999) suggested the existence of three distinct dimensions of commitment: personal, moral, and structural commitment. Like Stanley and Markman (1992), Johnson (1991, 1999) put forth personal commitment based on internal feelings of attraction to one’s partner or relationship. With regard to constraint commitment, however, Johnson specified two distinct dimensions: one involving structural constraints external to the individual and one involving moral constraints internal to the individual. These two constraint dimensions mirror the two factors found by Stanley and Markman (1992). More specifically, structural commitment is when one feels they “have to” stay in their relationship because of perceived barriers or constraints that would make relational
dissolution difficult. Johnson (1982, 1999) explained structural commitment is often expressed as feelings of having “no other choice” or being “trapped.” Perceived structural barriers to staying in a relationship are based on factors external to the individual (e.g., economic constraints, social constraints, etc.) such as lack of desirable alternatives, social pressures, difficulty with termination procedures, and when there are significant irretrievable investments. Finally, a third dimension, moral commitment refers to feelings of obligation to stay in a relationship which are internally motivated. Here, individuals feel they “ought to” or “should” be in their relationship based on their own sense of moral obligation, responsibility, or as a function of their attitudes, values, and beliefs about what is “right” versus “wrong.” Johnson (1991, 1999) termed his framework “tripartite commitment.”

Because commitment experiences are the result of internal and external forces that compel individuals to commit to one another in different ways (Johnson, 1999; Levinger, 1965; Stanley & Markman, 1992), I argue that to move research forward, examinations of the underlying motivations for relational commitment are imperative.

**Relational Sacrifices.** According to Rusbult’s investment model of commitment (1983), higher levels of (personal) commitment should be associated with relational longevity; a suggestion that has been supported across extant research (see meta-analysis by Le, Dove, Agnew, Korn, & Musto, 2010). One explanation for such patterned associations between commitment and relational persistence is that individuals who report higher commitment also report a variety of prorelationship behaviors (Finkel & Rusbult, 2008; Rusbult et al., 2004). Choosing relational sacrifices is considered a prorelationship behavior as individuals are choosing to sacrifice their own best interests to benefit their partners and/or relationships (Finkel
& Rusbult, 2008). Here, I focus on individuals’ perceptions of both the frequency of sacrifices and satisfaction with sacrifices.

Whereas frequency of sacrifices suggests the amount of times sacrifices take place, satisfaction with sacrifices captures the valence of those sacrifices (i.e., very satisfied to less satisfied). While positively associated with one another, frequency of sacrifices, and satisfaction with sacrifices offer unique information in terms of understanding tripartite dimensions of commitment for individuals in various stages and types of romantic relationships. Specifically, I predict that:

(H1) After controlling for satisfaction with sacrifices, individuals’ higher frequency of sacrifices will be associated with higher moral commitment and higher structural commitment (but not personal commitment).

This hypothesis is based on the idea that choosing sacrifices is a form of investing in one’s relationship. According to Rusbult’s (1983) investment model of commitment higher investments should be associated with higher commitment. Moreover, according to Johnson’s tripartite commitment (1991) theorizing, investments should create barriers (or, constraints) to ending a relationship – features of structural and moral commitment. Thus, more frequent sacrifices (or, higher levels of investing) should be associated with higher commitment that is characterized by barriers – here, structural and moral commitment.

(H2) After controlling for frequency of sacrifices, individuals’ higher level of satisfaction with sacrifices will be associated with higher personal commitment and lower moral and structural commitment.

Again, this hypothesis is grounded by Rusbult’s (1983) investment model of commitment, interdependence theory, and Johnson’s tripartite commitment (1991). Specifically, based on
Rusbult’s (1983) investment model of commitment, sacrifices (as a form of investing) should be positively associated with commitment. Moreover, satisfaction with said sacrifices should be specifically associated with personal commitment which is based on attraction to one’s partner or relationship. As such, given this logic, I also expect higher satisfaction with sacrifices to be associated with lower commitment when that commitment is based on constraints.

In both models addressed here, controlling for the other sacrifice variable is necessary because of the small correlation (.12) between the two variables (satisfaction with sacrifices and frequency of sacrifices). Given this, by controlling for one, while testing for the other, the amount of variance from the control variable is partitioned from the model being tested.

**Method**

Participation involved the one-time completion of an online survey. Potential study participants were identified through either verbal or email advertisement of the study in university courses, a personal referral from a student enrolled in a course in which the survey was advertised, or both. At this initial screening web link, potential participants were asked to respond to two questions to determine if they were qualified for the study: (1) Individuals needed to be 18 years of age or older and (2) have been in a relationship with their current romantic partner for at least six weeks. Individuals qualified to participate were automatically directed to the survey and instructed not to discuss their responses with their romantic partners.

**Participants.** The current sample ($N = 731$) consisted of 559 female and 172 male participants who ranged in age from 18 to 80 years old with a mean age of 25.82 years ($SD = 11.67$). A majority of participants reported their ethnicity as Caucasian (65.5%) and their level of education as some college or associate’s degree (70%). Participants reported being in romantic relationships with their current partners for a time period of 1.5 months to 47 years ($M = 5.59$)
years; \(SD = 9.03\) years). When asked “How involved are you with your partner?” a majority of participants reported that they were seriously dating (62.5%) or married to their current partners (22.6%), while others reported they were casually dating (9%) or engaged to (5.5%) their current partners. A majority of participants also reported that they were currently living with their partners (65.1%). Among participants who reported living with their current partners, the time they had been living together ranged from 6 weeks to 47 years (\(M = 5.59; SD = 9.03\)).

**Measures**

See descriptive statistics, including scale reliabilities, for study scales and variables in Table 1. Correlations among all study variables are shown on Table 2. Correlations between tripartite commitment variables were all positive and the strength of those correlations was as expected (Johnson, Caughlin, & Huston, 1999). For instance, the weakest correlation was between structural and personal commitment while the strongest correlation between two dimensions of commitment was between structural and moral commitment – both representing forms of constraint.

**Frequency of Relational Sacrifices.** The phrase “changes for partner” was used instead of “sacrifices for partner” to avoid implicit negative connotations of making sacrifices for the partner (e.g., sacrifice being negative or a chore), and in line with previous research using this phrase (e.g., Burke & Young, 2012; Corkery, Curran, & Parkman, 2011; Totenhagen et al., 2013). Also consistent with prior research on relational sacrifices (e.g., Impett, Gable, & Peplau, 2005; Whitton et al., 2007), relational sacrifice activities were examined. Participants reported perceived frequency of 12 sacrifice activities: (1) schedule, (2) household tasks, (3) leisure, (4) amount of time spent with friends, (5) amount of time spent with the family, (6) communication with the partner, (7) intimate behavior, (8) physical appearance, (9) diet and exercise, (10)
financial standing, (11) childcare, and (12) living arrangements. For each sacrifice variable, participants responded to “How often, in general, do you make this sacrifice for your partner?” on a 1 (never) to 7 (always) scale. Means were calculated across activities for each participant such that participants’ higher overall score indicates more frequent sacrifices. Participants reported a wide range with regard to frequency of sacrifices: 1 to 6.72 on a 1 to 7 scale ($M = 3.41; SD = .99$).

**Satisfaction with Sacrifices.** Participants self-reported their satisfaction with sacrifices, on the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of six statements on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Example statements include “It can be personally fulfilling to give up something for my partner,” “I get satisfaction out of doing things for my partner, even if it means I miss out on something I want for myself,” and “Giving something up for my partner is frequently not worth the trouble.” Higher scores indicate higher satisfaction with sacrifices (Stanley & Markman, 1992). Overall, participants reported a relatively high level of satisfaction ($M = 5.44; SD = 1.07$).

**Tripartite Commitment.** Participants responded to 41 items that addressed aspects of their commitment to their current partner and relationships. The measure used here was adapted from work by Adam and Jones (1997), in which these authors tested 135 items measuring domains of commitment that garner the most theoretical and empirical attention, called the commitment inventory. Next, Adam and Jones (1997) conducted a factor analysis that revealed 45 items to load onto three factors of commitment that are consistent with ideas about personal, moral, and structural commitment. For the current study, 41 items were drawn from the original measurement and adapted the language to be inclusive across relationship types. To do this, language referring to “marriage” was changed to be more inclusive of individuals across
relationship statuses by using language like “in a relationship with” (note, 4 items that could not be adapted to be universal were excluded; in other words, these items were very specific to the institution of marriage and could not be generalized to address a variety of relational statuses).

Participants responded to each item on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) scale. Here, 13 items were used to measure personal commitment. Sample items for personal commitment are, “I like knowing that my partner and I form a unit” and “No matter what, my partner knows that I'll always be there for him or her.” 14 items were used to measure moral commitment. Sample items for moral commitment are, “My relationship should be protected at all costs” and “Any committed relationship should be protected at all costs.” Finally, 14 items were used to measure structural commitment. Sample items for structural commitment are, “I have to stay in my relationship or else my family will think badly of me” and “Even if I wanted to, it would be very difficult for me to end my relationship with my partner.” Mean scores were computed for each commitment scale such that a higher score on each dimension indicated a higher level of that type of commitment. Overall, participant reported high levels of personal commitment ($M = 5.77; SD = 1.16$), moderate levels of moral commitment ($M = 4.01; SD = 1.22$), and low levels of structural commitment ($M = 2.92; SD = 1.06$).

**Control Variables.** Across extant studies of sacrifices and commitment (e.g. Impett, Gable, & Peplau, 2005; Impett et al., 2014; Totenhagen, Curran, Serido, & Butler, 2013; Van Lange, et al., 1997; Whitton, Stanley, & Markman, 2007), common controls are gender, level of education, relationship length or type, and parental status. As such, I included gender (1 = men), education level, (1 = some high school), relationship length (described above), and whether or not participants had children (1 = yes to having children) as controls here. Gender is relevant given theorizing that suggests that women and men may be socialized to approach sacrifices
differently (Impett & Gordon, 2008; Stanley et al., 2006). Extant research has also shown education level to be a predictor of whether relationships will transition to marriage with college graduates are more likely to marry compared to individuals without a college degree (Cherlin 2010). Likewise, relationship length has been used to predict connections between romantic partners and whether partners should continue in their relationships (Braiker & Kelley, 1979). Finally, parent status was included here as the presence of children has been shown to sometimes adversely impact romantic relationships between parents (Doss et al. 2009; Twenge et al., 2003). Age was also considered as a control here given a wide range of relationship lengths, but given a high correlation with the other control of relationship length (.90), age was excluded to prevent issues of multicollinearity. All continuous control variables were centered around their mean prior to being entered into analyses.

Results

Linear regression analyses were used to examine each hypothesis. Three models were tested, specifying a new dependent variable in each model – one for personal commitment, one for moral commitment, and one for structural commitment. In all of the models, the aforementioned controls were included, as well as frequency of sacrifices and satisfaction with sacrifices to control for the amount of variance explained by the competing sacrifice variable (the one not being tested by the specific model).

Depending on the model (e.g., personal commitment), the other two commitment dimensions (e.g., moral and structural commitment) were included. Results for H1 and H2 are summarized in Table 3.
(H1) After controlling for satisfaction with sacrifices, individuals’ higher frequency of sacrifices will be associated with higher moral commitment and higher structural commitment (but not personal commitment).

Results supported H1. More frequent sacrifices were associated with higher structural (b = .15; SE = .04; p < .001; B = .15) and moral commitment (b = .11; SE = .04; p < .01; B = .09). Frequency of sacrifices had no significant association with personal commitment.

(H2) After controlling for frequency of sacrifices, individuals’ higher level of satisfaction with sacrifices will be associated with higher personal commitment and lower moral and structural commitment.

Results partially supported H2. Higher satisfaction with relational sacrifices was associated with higher personal commitment (b = .38, SE = .04; p < .001; B = .36), but was not associated with moral or structural commitment.

Additional findings (specific to the controls) reveal that individuals who reported longer relationships reported higher levels of personal commitment (b = .01; SE = .01; p < .05; B = .11), while females reported higher moral commitment than males (b = .38; SE = .09; p < .001; B = .13). Additionally, more highly educated individuals reported higher levels of personal commitment (b = .13; SE = .05; p < .001; B = .10).

Post Hoc Analyses

After the above analyses were complete, I also thought the interplay between frequency of sacrifices and satisfaction with sacrifices in associations with each type of commitment may be informative. For example, for individuals who report high frequency of sacrifice, but report less satisfaction with sacrifices, what are the associations to each type of commitment, compared to individuals who report high frequency of sacrifice and more satisfaction with sacrifices in
associations with each type of commitment? To address this question, post hoc analyses were conducted. Here, all the previous steps specific to H1 and H2 were followed, but frequency of, and satisfaction with, sacrifices were both centered around their means before creating the interaction term. Once interaction terms were included, few differences emerged from prior tests, and results for length of time in relationship fell away with the inclusion of the interaction term for models with structural and personal commitment as the dependent variable.

Discussion

In this study, I examined associations between individuals’ reports about frequency of sacrifices and satisfaction with sacrifices and three dimensions of commitment given that researchers have argued that choosing sacrifices is akin to “investing” in a relationship (Whitton, Stanley, & Markman, 2007). Based on findings here, the dimensions of commitment individuals experience may function with one’s perceptions of sacrifices, specifically frequency of and satisfaction with sacrifices.

Sacrifices May Make Partners/Relationships Attractive. In line with expectations, higher satisfaction with relational sacrifices was associated with higher personal commitment. (In contrast, frequency of sacrifices had no significant association with personal commitment). As discussed previously, personal commitment is the internal feeling of “wanting” and /or desire that one has to be in a specific relationship with a specific partner, or, an attraction to a specific partner and relationship based on the qualities of that partner or relationship. When individuals are satisfied with the relational sacrifices that are experienced, it follows that this sense of satisfaction should translate as an attractive element of one’s relationship. In other words, the satisfaction one experiences relative to sacrifices may be an attractive aspect of a relationship. Further, it has been argued that choosing sacrifices is a form of “investing” in the long term
health and maintenance of a relationship (Whitton, Stanley, & Markman, 2007), or a relationship maintenance strategy. One defining characteristic of personal commitment is referred to as “future orientation” whereby individuals naturally think towards the future of their relationship with their current partner or express a desire for continuation. Therefore, it follows that feeling satisfied with the long term investments (sacrifices) being made into a relationship should be associated, as found here, with higher levels of personal commitment.

**Sacrifices May Create Barriers to Possible Relationship Dissolution.** As expected, individuals who reported more frequent sacrifices reported higher structural commitment. As explained above, structural commitment is the feeling of “having to” stay in a relationship, frequently due to an awareness of irretrievable investments that have been made (Johnson, 1991). When individuals sacrifice, they are investing. While some investments can be recovered in the event of a separation, sacrifices by nature are about forgoing one’s own best interest to benefit one’s partner. As such, some sacrifices are investments that take the form of actions that cannot be undone. When faced with an abundance of irretrievable investments, it may make sense for individuals to choose to remain in a relationship due to their perceived value of those irretrievable investments (here, sacrifices). In other words, individuals may feel structurally committed to the maintenance of a relationship based on the potential loss of investments.

Results also showed that individuals who reported more frequent sacrifices also reported higher moral commitment. Like structural commitment, moral commitment is also based on feelings of constraint, but distinguished by such constraints feeling *internal* to individuals that make them feel like they “ought to” stay in a relationship due to their sense of moral obligation or responsibility (Johnson, 1991). In other words, individuals may feel morally obligated to remain in, or not dissolve, relationships because of their *own* general consistency values.
Specifically, individuals will often behave in a manner such that they are consistent with and reinforce their perception of their own morality and the morality others have come to expect from them. Thus, individuals who frequently sacrifice may feel compelled to maintain this pattern of behavior in order to maintain their own image of themselves as good partners. From this view, frequent sacrifices would indicate a commitment to one’s relationship; however, it may be that this is based more on the need to maintain one’s pattern and expectations of self than general attractiveness to one’s partner and relationship. Therefore, individuals who make frequent sacrifices may be inclined, as found here, to be morally committed to their partners and relationships based on a desire to maintain a consistent sense of self.

**Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions.** For the current study, there are several notable strengths and limitations. First, like paper 2, this paper moved beyond personal commitment to also consider the ways in which sacrifices are associated with structural and moral commitment. That said, the tripartite commitment measure used here was an adapted version of a measure used by Adams and Jones (1997) that was specific to married populations. Given the diverse sample here, some items from the original Adams and Jones (1997) measure were dropped or re-worked to be relevant to individuals across relationship types. Nevertheless, by making this adjustment, certain items that may have been quite specific and meaningful to the married individuals that were included in the sample used here were eliminated.

Additionally, although the sample here represents diverse relationship lengths and statuses, it is specific to individuals in the U.S. and findings may not be generalizable across other cultures in which sacrifices may be understood and experienced differently. Further, interdependence theory emphasizes the important role each partner plays in a relationship. As such, future work in this area should look to integrate partner data as the presence of actor and
partner effects may reveal important information about how sacrifices are associated with forms of commitment.

The current study also did not consider gender relevant to commitment dimensions (note, this was partially due to a disproportionate number of female participants). Nevertheless, some authors have theorized, or found, that men and women experience commitment differently (e.g., Johnson et al., 1999; Kapinus & Johnson, 2002; Tang, 2011). Other evidence suggests that men and women may understand and interpret commitment differently (e.g., Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2006; Stanley et al., 2004). Moreover, it has been suggested that men and women are socialized to engage in and experience sacrifices in different ways (Impett & Gordon, 2008). Thus, although gender was only used as a control variable in this study, future researchers in this area should consider gender relevant to the relationship between sacrifices and commitment.

Finally, in post hoc analyses interactions between the two sacrifice variables were included, but found few differences from the result prior to the inclusion of this interaction term. Based on this, it seems future research is still needed to understand how each individual sacrifice variable functions relative to commitment before researchers can meaningfully delve into examining interactions of different sacrifice experiences. Further, I expect that the ways in which these variables interact with one another differ across populations. In other words, individuals in long term relationships may differ from individuals in shorter term relationships, individuals with and without children may differ, and cohabiters may differ from married couples. Thus, future researchers should consider theory, prior work, and the characteristics of the populations being addresses to inform, assess, and explore how elements of sacrifices and commitment interact with one another.

**Conclusions**
Taken together, results suggest that there are important ways in which individuals’ experiences of sacrifices, satisfaction with and frequency that may be associated with the different ways in which they experience commitment to their partners. Although relationship persistence is important, the reasons why individuals are committed to that persistence is also important. Given the results here, individuals should look to make sacrifices that foster a sense of attraction to their partners and relationships (personal commitment) rather than simply make frequent sacrifices. While most sacrifices should promote relational longevity, results suggest that satisfying sacrifices may allow for such longevity out of choice whereas frequent sacrifices may create longevity through the imposition of barriers to dissolution.
Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Scale Reliability Information for Study Variables of Interest & Continuous Controls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Scale Reliability (α)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Relational Sacrifice Variables</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Relational Sacrifices</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>1 to 7</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.83</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Sacrifices</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>1 to 7</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>.82</td>
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<td>1 to 7</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Commitment</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>1 to 7</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural Commitment</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>1 to 7</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>.84</td>
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<td><strong>Continuous Controls</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship Length</td>
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<td>5.59 yrs.</td>
<td>9.03 yrs.</td>
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Table 2

Correlations for Study Variables

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<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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<th>9</th>
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<td>1. Personal Commitment</td>
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<td>2. Moral Commitment</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Structural Commitment</td>
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<td>4. Frequency of Relational Sacrifices</td>
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<td>5. Satisfaction with Sacrifices</td>
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<td>6. Level of Education</td>
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<td>7. Relationship Length</td>
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<td>8. Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Children</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note. * p < .05; **p < .01.
Table 3

*Associations between Relational Sacrifices Variables and Tripartite Dimensions of Commitment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Personal Commitment</th>
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<th>Moral Commitment</th>
<th></th>
<th>Structural Commitment</th>
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<td>SE</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>SE</td>
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<td>SE</td>
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<td>Gender</td>
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<td>.09</td>
<td></td>
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<td>.38***</td>
<td>.09</td>
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<td>Level of Education</td>
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<td>.05</td>
<td></td>
<td>.07</td>
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<td>-.04</td>
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<td>.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.01</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.21</td>
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<td>Tripartite Commitment Dimensions</td>
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<td>.26***</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Commitment</td>
<td>.22***</td>
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<td>.33***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural Commitment</td>
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<td>.04</td>
<td></td>
<td>.40***</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>--</td>
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<td>Relational Sacrifices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frequency of sacrifices</td>
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<td>.04</td>
<td></td>
<td>.11**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.15***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with sacrifices</td>
<td>.38***</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td></td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.; All bs are unstandardized coefficients. Bolded bs indicate significant finding.
CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS

Overview of the Three Papers

As previously noted, commitment has been routinely shown to be associated with relational persistence, even in the case of less satisfying relationships (e.g., abusive relationships, Strube & Barbour, 1983). As such, although conflict is generally problematic in relationships (e.g. Braiker & Kelley, 1979), conflicts of interest can create opportunities for individuals to positively impact relationships by choosing relational sacrifices (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003; Van Lange, Agnew, Harnick, & Steemers, 1997; Van Lange, et al., 1997). Given this theory and empirical research, across this dissertation I have hypothesized that choosing relational sacrifices should be associated with positive relationship outcomes (here, commitment, satisfaction, or both). Specifically, I examined the relationship between relational sacrifices with daily satisfaction and aspects of relational commitment (e.g., daily commitment and tripartite dimensions of commitment).

Understanding the relationship between relational sacrifices and the outcome variables specified here is important as theory and extant research suggest relational sacrifices may shape the way individuals experience and evaluate close partnerships. Theory suggests that choosing sacrifices should positively impact relationships by allowing individuals to demonstrate care and concern for their partners. The studies presented here suggest that the relationship between sacrifices and relational outcomes is more complex – having to do so with frequency, perceived ease, and partner awareness of those sacrifices. Additionally, specific to the relationship between sacrifices and relational commitment, based on the studies presented here I suggest the importance of considering the characteristics of that commitment, whereby sacrifices are related in different ways with different forms of commitment.
Discussion and Implications Across the Three Papers

Across the three studies included here, I examined several variants of relational sacrifices: frequency of sacrifice, ease of sacrifice, partner awareness of sacrifice, and satisfaction with sacrifices in association with relational variables (e.g. satisfaction and commitment). Below, I discuss implications for findings.

Frequency of Sacrifices. In all three of the papers, I included frequency of sacrifices as a sacrifice variant in association with relational variables (e.g., commitment, satisfaction). Like prior work, I found mixed results relative to frequency of sacrifices across the papers included in this dissertation. For instance, in paper 1, frequency of (daily) sacrifices did not significantly explain either daily satisfaction or daily commitment. Nevertheless, in both papers 2 and 3, when individuals reported higher frequency of sacrifice, this was associated with higher moral commitment (and also higher structural commitment in paper 3). In contrast, in paper 2, when partners reported higher frequency of sacrifice, this was associated with lower moral commitment. Although no associations were found between frequency of sacrifices and daily satisfaction and commitment, results from papers two and three reveal associations between frequency of sacrifices and higher commitment along dimensions associated with relational constraints (e.g., structural and moral commitment); this was true for unmarried, expectant cohabiters as well as individuals across relationships lengths and statuses.

Although it may seem that more frequent sacrifices should be associated with more positive relationship quality, according to interdependence theory partners should sacrifice, but not always (Kelley, 1979). This theoretical notion suggests that sacrifices can be relationally beneficial, but perhaps not always. Still, effect sizes are important to consider, especially when addressing notably small samples (such as those used in Papers 1 and 2) and notably large
samples (such as the one used in Paper 3), as statistical significance is made more meaningful by examining the magnitude of the effect (or statistical difference). Despite the findings from the three papers presented here, effect sizes for significant results relevant to frequency of sacrifices across the papers included here were all small ($B < .2$). In other words, although statistically significant results were found, the practical significance is minimal.

Nevertheless, as mentioned above, extant work on romantic relationships has identified commitment as an important component of successful relationships (Ferguson, 1993). However, most studies have focused on personal commitment. In both papers 2 and 3, results showed frequency of sacrifices to be associated with commitment, but not personal commitment. Rather, both actors’ and partners’ reports about frequency of sacrifices were associated with forms of commitment characterized by constraint. Thus, although theory suggests a positive relationship between sacrifices and relational commitment generally, the relationship between frequency of sacrifices and commitment may be based more on the constraints and barriers imposed by said sacrifices rather than the personal and relational attractiveness fostered by the sacrifices. In other words, it may be because sacrifices are a form of investing in one’s relationship that more frequent investments by individuals are associated with a greater sense of constraint to one’s relationship (here, captured by structural and moral commitment).

Further, although more frequent sacrifices by individuals are associated with higher levels of constraint based commitment for individuals, results reported in paper 2 (specific to unmarried, expectant cohabiters) revealed partner reports of higher frequency of sacrifices to be associated with lower moral commitment for individuals. While frequent investments (sacrifices) by individuals impose constraints relative to their own commitment, partners making more frequent sacrifices bear no impact on one’s own level of investment and associated constraints.
Rather, I found that more frequent sacrifices by partners were associated with lower moral commitment; in other words, a lower sense of moral obligation or constraint to one’s partner and relationship. This was an unexpected finding for which theory does not offer an explanation. If anything, theory would suggest that more frequent sacrifices by partners should be associated with higher personal commitment by individuals as they should be more personally attracted to partner who demonstrate a frequent willingness to accommodate their best interest. Taken together, theory and findings suggest the need for additional studies addressing frequency of sacrifices in association with forms of commitment and how the relationship between frequency of sacrifices and commitment may differ based on who is reporting the frequent sacrifices. Moreover, researchers should look to observe and measure sacrifices over a longer period of time as this may generate more variation to study.

**Other Sacrifice Variants.** Across extant work, researchers have examined many aspects of relational sacrifices. Across these studies, in addition the frequency, I too examined several relational sacrifice variables – including perceived ease of sacrifices, awareness of sacrifices, and satisfaction with sacrifices.

Results from paper 1 show higher perceived ease of daily sacrifices by both actors and partners to be associated with higher daily satisfaction for individuals, while higher perceived ease of daily sacrifices was associated with higher daily commitment for actors only. Nevertheless, in paper 2 when the examination was expanded to address dimensions of commitment, individuals’ reports of less easy (or more difficult) sacrifices were associated only with higher moral commitment for individuals.

According to interdependence theory, choosing easier sacrifices should allow individuals to benefit their partners and relationships in ways that do not undermine themselves and should
be associated with more positive relationship quality (higher satisfaction), as I found here. In other words, the findings are consistent with theory that suggests easy sacrifices may allow individuals and partners to sacrifice to experience positive relational associations, but without incurring too much personal cost. In contrast, for pregnant cohabitators who may be experiencing conflicts of interest and heightened ambiguity about their relationships, choosing more difficult sacrifices may represent greater investments that are positively associated with a sense of moral constraint to stay committed to one’s relationship.

Relative to awareness of sacrifices, in paper 2 I found that partners’ reports of higher perceived partner awareness of sacrifice was associated with higher moral commitment for individuals; however, individuals’ reports of higher perceived partner awareness of sacrifice were associated with their own higher structural commitment. Here again, results indicate a relationship between sacrifices and forms of constraint commitment, but do not point to associations with personal commitment. Interestingly, partner and individual reports of awareness each had associations with higher commitment, but specific to different dimensions of commitment.

Finally, just as it made theoretical sense that frequent investing should be associated with commitment characterized by constraints (e.g. structural and moral commitment), it follows that satisfaction with sacrifices should be associated with higher commitment characterized by personal attraction to the features of one’s partner or relationship (here, personal commitment), a notion validated by paper 3 results. This is expected due and consistent with theory. All findings considered, the results reported in this dissertation speak to the need to continue to dissect sacrifices experiences relative to their associations with relational variables like satisfaction and commitment.
Commitment Dimensions. In two of the papers (2 and 3), I examined three types of commitment – moral, structural, and personal – as dependent variables (DVs) (Johnson, 1999). Across these papers, I found only one significant association between relational sacrifices and personal commitment (paper 3; satisfaction with sacrifices was associated with higher). Instead, across samples, I found many significant associations between sacrifice variables and dimensions of commitment characterized by constraints and barriers.

Across extant research, commitment as most frequently been conceptualized as a desire for relationship continuation (Adams & Jones, 1997). Some researchers have suggested that commitment may be the result of cultural, moral, social, and dyadic forces that couple with individual subjectivity to compel people to commit to one another in different ways and for different reasons (Johnson, 1999; Levinger, 1965; Stanley & Markman, 1992; Surra, 1987). The suggestion of different underlying motivations or reasons for commitment is undoubtedly embedded in commitment work by Levinger (1965, 1976, 1991) and Rusbult (1980) theorizing; however, most work has focused only on personal commitment. Nevertheless, scholars have been working toward conceptually distinguishing motives/reasons for commitment, frequently referring to the different experiences as commitment “dimensions” (e.g., Johnson, 1991; Johnson, Caughlin, & Huston, 1999). Across the current studies, I found evidence that sacrifices are indeed related to commitment motivations (or dimensions) in different ways. Specifically, I found that frequent sacrifices tend to be related to dimensions of commitment characterized by constraint. This was especially true for unmarried, expectant cohabiters for whom personal commitment may be less salient given other considerations such as living together outside of wedlock and expecting a child together.
Moreover, I point to the distinction between associations with commitment based on structural constraints versus moral constraints as shown through results across this dissertation. For instance, if I had only examined the pregnant, unmarried cohabiters, I would have concluded that sacrifices were most impactful specific to moral commitment, rather than structural or personal, commitment. In contrast, in the larger sample that included individuals across relationship types and durations, I found significant associations between sacrifices and constraint commitment based on structural barriers and based on moral obligations (in addition to personal commitment).

Overall, I suggest that the results specific to tripartite dimensions of commitment support Johnson’s (1999) suggestion that researchers must look beyond global, or personal commitment, when considering how commitment functions relative to other relational variables (here, relational sacrifices). With these findings, I suggest that there is still a place for researchers to include personal commitment as a study construct, but that to do so in the absence of other forms of commitment based on structural and moral constraints would be overlooking important nuances of how different populations may experience and define their commitment. I also suggest that, especially if researchers are studying individuals in community samples (i.e., pregnant, unmarried cohabiters), associations between sacrifices and personal commitment may not emerge. Instead, these findings suggest the importance of thinking about how to assess commitment among populations for whom personal commitment may not be salient. Taken together, findings from this dissertation, coupled with extant work and theorizing, suggest the need for future research on commitment to acknowledge and critically assess the variations and nuances of commitment experiences as they pertain to modern unions and relational phenomena like sacrifices. Overall, despite a lack of patterned results across this collection of studies, the
variation of findings across the samples suggests that the relationship between sacrifices and commitment may be different for different populations.

**Strengths and Limitations Across the Three Papers**

Across the studies included here, there are several notable strengths and limitations. First, as explained above, two of the papers included here move beyond unidimensional commitment (personal) to address multiple dimensions of commitment. Even more, this work moved beyond work addressing personal and constraint commitment to address two distinct forms of constraint commitment (structural and moral). Overall, I note this as a strength of the current work as results indeed suggest that individuals experience associations between sacrifices and these forms of commitment in different ways.

Also, most studies addressing dimensional commitment have done so on the basis of factor analysis or correlations. In papers 2 and 3 I examined models that considered the unique dimensions at the same time (as controls) to see how these dimensions interacted and account for unique variance. These inclusive models allowed me to assess the unique variance that each dimension of commitment explained relative to primary relationship of interest.

Still, how dimensions of commitment were measured could be considered a strength or limitation. For paper 2, scores on dimensions of commitment were based on qualitative coding, so naturally subject to human error in interpretation. That said, the coding scheme was based strongly on theory and each response was coded by multiple coders with coder reliability checked. The tripartite commitment measure used in paper 3 was an adapted version of a measure put forth and validated by Adams and Jones (1997). Nevertheless, some items from the original measure did not directly translate as it was designed for married couples specifically. The need to re-word and re-work some of these items represents a departure from the original
measure, which although necessary for the samples included, is a limitation as it introduces a higher likelihood of error based on the subjective interpretation of the author.

Despite the aforementioned, I point out that research on commitment has typically focused on *marital* commitment. Given that measurement should be phenomena-specific, measures assessing commitment should be specific to the specific types of relationships (e.g., dating, cohabiting, etc), as was done here. This represents a strength of the current work as the measures were tailored to the specific circumstances of the samples. Finally, also specific to measurement, for paper 1 addressing daily commitment and satisfaction, one item measures were used to minimize participant fatigue. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that single-item measures do have limitations, including the inability to report reliability and reduced variability.

Another strength is that the studies included here are rooted in theory. Specifically, I looked to interdependence theory which emphasizes that close relationships naturally challenge egocentric propensities. As such, although models of commitment put forth by Johnson and Rusbult primarily address *individuals’* commitment, I include consideration of partner reports here in papers 1 and 2 as according to interdependence theory (Kelley, 1979), both partners must be considered in understanding relational constructs such as commitment. Nevertheless, while I do use actor-partner interdependence models in study 1 and SAS proc mixed to control for nonindependence of partner data in paper 2, lack of partner data is indeed a limitation of paper 3. Thus, I acknowledge the inclusion of partner data in two of the three paper presented here as a strength and the absence of partner data in paper 3 as a limitation. Overall, the presence of actor and partner effects in future research may reveal important information about the theoretical foundations of how we conceptualize commitment.
Additional limitations also exist across the collection of papers included here. First, most participants were heterosexual, unmarried, expectant cohabiters living in the Southwestern U.S. (samples for papers 1 and 2). As such, findings from these papers are not generalizable to broader populations as important differences may exist outside of this area or based on the status of these relationships. Still, the sample for paper 3 did capture a broader demographic of individuals in relationships defined by different lengths of time and statuses and from across the U.S. As such, findings of paper 3 may be more generalizable.

Despite the aforementioned limitations relevant to the samples used here (especially with regard to papers 1 and 2), this is not without qualification. Recent trends show marriage declining (Cherlin, 2010) while other relational forms (e.g., cohabitation, singlehood) are on the rise (Cherlin, 2010). Additionally, nonmarital childbearing, especially in the context of cohabiting relationships, is on the rise (Cherlin, 2010; Kreider & Elliot, 2009). Given the aforementioned changes in relationships and attitudes, there is a need for researchers to address and rethink traditional commitment paradigms (Fox & Murry, 2000). For instance, although “marriage,” or marital commitment, has historically been the benchmark of commitment, this view may be outdated given the heterogenous nature of modern relationships. As such, although the sample used in papers 1 and 2 is specific, I suggest that it represents an important and growing population of individuals whose relationships and commitment are important to understand.

Finally, there are important takeaways relevant to control variables future researchers may consider when examining sacrifices and commitment. First, some authors have theorized, or found, that men and women experience commitment differently (e.g., Johnson et al., 1999; Kapinus & Johnson, 2002; Tang, 2011). Other evidence suggests that men and women may
understand and interpret commitment differently (e.g., Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2006; Stanley et al., 2004). Although I considered gender as a control variable in all three of the studies, gender was only a significant control variable in Paper 3 wherein female participants reported higher moral commitment than males. It has been suggested that women are more socialized to sacrifices than men, as such, it may be that for women, sacrificing behaviors are more tied to a sense of moral obligations. Nevertheless, this finding relative to gender was not found for the unmarried, pregnant sample, suggesting that perhaps gender differences fall away in light of specific life circumstances (e.g. expecting a baby together within a tenuous union). Given these findings, additional exploration of gender and sex relevant to the relationship between sacrifices and relational variables like satisfaction and commitment is advisable in future studies. Additionally, I found (specific to controls) for the sample in Paper 3, the broadest of the samples included in this dissertation, that individuals who reported longer relationships reported higher levels of personal commitment - a finding that makes theoretical sense. Nevertheless, this finding was not apparent for unmarried, expectant cohabitors. Again, it may be that for certain populations there are more pressing considerations beyond the typical that impact commitment. Finally, also in paper 3, I found more highly educated individuals reported higher levels of personal commitment. Overall, from the findings across studies, I suggest that researchers should continue to consider a range of variables, but select variables that may be most meaningful given the specific populations being addressed. For instance, for a population like unmarried, expectant cohabitors, gender, relationship length, and level of education may not be as meaningful as variables specific to the pending birth of their child.

Summary
Romantic partnerships are complex and diverse. Despite a lack of patterned results across this collection of studies, the variation of findings across the samples suggests that the relationship between sacrifices and commitment may be different for different populations. For instance, results suggest that unmarried, expectant cohabiters may be wise to focus on making easier sacrifices as personal commitment may not be salient for these individuals. Nevertheless, personal, or other forms of commitment, may be salient for others. Taken together, these studies demonstrate the diverse ways in which individuals may experience sacrifices relative to daily experiences, and various forms, of commitment. This knowledge can be used to inform individuals how they may choose to function in relationships, practitioners how they may design relational intervention and improvement strategies, and researchers how to apply theory and approach studying commitment across diverse populations.
Table 1

*Summary Table of Significant Results Across the Three Papers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Daily Satisfaction</th>
<th>Daily Commitment</th>
<th>Personal Commitment</th>
<th>Moral Commitment</th>
<th>Structural Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paper 1 b</td>
<td>Paper 1 b</td>
<td>Paper 2 b</td>
<td>Paper 3 b</td>
<td>Paper 2 b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency of Sacrifices</strong> (<em>Daily for Paper 1</em>)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actor Effects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>.11**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Effects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-0.28*</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ease of Sacrifices</strong> (<em>Daily for Paper 1</em>)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actor Effects</td>
<td>.06***</td>
<td>.03**</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-0.10**</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Effects</td>
<td>.03*</td>
<td>.01*</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partner Awareness of Sacrifices</strong> (<em>Daily for Paper 1</em>)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actor Effects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td>.23*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Effects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Satisfaction With Sacrifices</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actor Effects</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>.38***</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Effects</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001; “n/a” indicates was not tested in given study; “--” indicates no significant result
Table 2

*Summary Table of Controls Across the Three Papers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Paper 1</th>
<th>Paper 2</th>
<th>Paper 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daily Satisfaction</td>
<td>Daily Commitment</td>
<td>Personal Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Satisfaction</td>
<td>$b = 0.46^{***}$</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(not daily)</td>
<td>$(SE = 0.08)$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Commitment</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>$b = 0.74^{***}$</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(not daily)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$(SE = 0.09)$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Length</td>
<td>$b = -0.001$</td>
<td>$b = 0.004$</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$(SE = 0.006)$</td>
<td>$(SE = 0.006)$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>$b = -0.25$</td>
<td>$b = 0.06$</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$(SE = 0.22)$</td>
<td>$(SE = 0.15)$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Education</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. * $p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$; “n/a” indicates was not tested in given study*
APPENDIX A. MEASURE OF RELATIONAL SACRIFICES: FREQUENCY, EASE, AND PERCEIVED PARTNER AWARENESS (PAPER 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Frequency): How often do you make this change for your partner?</th>
<th>(Ease): How difficult or easy is this change for you to make for your partner?</th>
<th>(Perceived Partner Awareness):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have changed _______ for my partner.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>-3 Very difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items:</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My daily schedule (work, sleep, errands)</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household tasks</td>
<td></td>
<td>0 Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My leisure interests/activities</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of time I spend with friends</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 Very easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of time I spend with family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with partner (conversations about relationships and goals)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimate behaviors (sex, affection, cuddling, holding hands)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My physical appearance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My diet and exercise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My financial standing (savings, spending habits)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living arrangements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B. CONCEPTUALIZING COMMITMENT

Commitment:
One's desire for continuation of their specific relationship with their specific partner

Based on...

- personal desire for relational continuation
- perceived constraints to relationship termination

Tripartite Dimensions of Commitment
(Johnson, 1999)

Personal Commitment:
the internal feeling of "wanting" one has to be in a specific relationship because he/she is attracted to a particular partner or relationship.

- Common on them ex:
  - Attraction to Partner/Individual (physical or emotional)
  - Attraction to Relationship (perhaps based on comfort, familiarity, etc.).
  - Couple Identity: self-identity tied to relational identity

Moral Commitment:
the internal feeling that one has telling them they "ought to" or "should" be in a specific relationship due to their own sense of moral obligation or responsibility.

- Common on them ex:
  - Personal Obligation (to a partner)
  - Relational Obligation (e.g., marriage vows, kids, etc.)
  - General Values (what is "right" vs. "wrong")

Structural Commitment:
the feeling of "having to" stay in a relationship because he/she perceives there are barriers or constraints that or would make it particularly difficult to split from their partner.

- Common on them ex:
  - Lack of viable/attractive alternatives
  - Irretrievable investments
  - Social pressure
  - Difficulty of termination procedures
PERSONAL COMMITMENT (“Want to”): Explanation of Scale

Personal commitment is the internal feeling of “wanting” and/or desire that one has to be in a relationship. A person may feel personally motivated to form, remain in, or not dissolve a relationship because he/she is attracted to a particular partner or relationship. Personal motivation is intrinsic to the individual and is a function of their own intrinsic desires and wants. An individual’s personal desire (“want”) is what causes them to commit to a partner or a relationship.

Frequent/Common themes associated with personal commitment --- i.e. why people form or wish to remain in a relationship - are:

(1) Attraction to Partner/Individual:
A person can be attracted to a specific partner and qualities specific to that person. Attraction to an individual could be based (a) physical attraction—or (b) emotional attraction, as well as many other qualities that are characteristic to an individual that someone finds appealing. A person may stay in a relationship because they find them self consistently and unyieldingly attracted to their current partner for one or more reasons.

(2) Attraction to Relationship:
A person can be attracted to a specific relationship due to the specific qualities of that relationship. Attraction to a relationship can be based on (a) comfort/familiarity, (b) feeling of security, (c) pleasant/fun/satisfying, (d) lack of difficulty, and many other possibly attractive qualities about a relationship. A person may stay in a relationship because they find them self consistently and unyieldingly attracted to their current relationship (independent or in addition to partner attraction) for one or more reasons.

(3) Couple Identity:
A person can be personally committed to a relationship/partner because they feel that their self- and social- identity is largely defined by their couple identity to their liking. This phenomena can often be expressed as satisfaction (e.g. “I would be nothing without him”).

(*) Future Orientation:
A person may spontaneously generate ideas regarding the future of their relationship with their current partner or express a desire for continuation. An individual spontaneously discussing their thoughts or plans about the future are often indicative of personal commitment. (*Note: this is only relevant to this coding procedure when spontaneously generated before question #5 is asked).
Appendix C continued.

**Instructions.** Choose the code that is most appropriate for the participant’s response based on both content and frequency of characteristic expression of the coding categories. *Note: Not all of the descriptions/factors involved in structural commitment need to be present to be categorized. Please judge based on the totality (or dominant theme) of discourse regarding to commitment to partner/relationship. For instance, please consider if the theme of personal commitment is mentioned in passing versus meaningfully dominant to the discussion. It may help to: (a) think about quantifying the duration/portion of the response which focuses on the personal theme, (b) look for consistency of the personal theme across the discussion, and (c) look at the proportional extent to which the participant discusses personal themes to determine how it is a representation of attitudes.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 – Highly Characteristic</td>
<td>Participant’s discussion includes clear, strong, direct statements of personal “wanting” and/or desire regarding their relationship including, but not limited to, feeling personally (a) attracted to their partner, (b) attracted to their relationship, (c) committed, and (d) a strong sense of couple identity which is central to his/her own personal and social identity. Often, personal commitment is expressed through satisfaction and the consequential “wanting” for the relationship. An individual may also indicates feeling strongly defined by their relationship stating things like “I would be nothing without him/her.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – Moderately Characteristic</td>
<td>Participant’s discussion involves statements reflecting personal desire and “wanting” regarding their current commitment to partner and/or relationship. While highlighting personal motivating themes, their discussion indicates that personal wanting is not their only reason for relational commitment despite being meaningful and important for them. Personal desires and “wanting” are discussed as contributing, supporting factors. A participant may acknowledge personal reasons for the relationship as supplementary to, or supplemented by, other reasons that are not strictly personal in nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – Somewhat Characteristic</td>
<td>Participant’s discussion involves some statements reflecting personal desire and “wanting” regarding their partner and/or relationship. While mentioning personal motivating themes, their discussion indicates that personal wanting is not a primary reason for relational commitment despite being something of which they are somewhat aware. Personal desires and “wanting” are discussed as minor contributing/supportive factors to their relationship. A participant may acknowledge personal reasons for the relationship as supplementary, while the majority of their reasons are not strictly personally-based.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Minimally Characteristic</td>
<td>Participant’s discussion does not directly indicate personal reasons or “want” in regard to their commitment to partner or relationship, but may indirectly allude to the presence of personal motivating factors. The participant’s reason for their relational commitment is NOT defined in any meaningful or significant capacity by personal desire or “wanting.” The participant acknowledges possible presence of personal desire, but does not emphasize individual and personal “wanting” when determining the future of the relationship or commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – Not at all Characteristic</td>
<td>Participant does not mention anything directly or indirectly indicating that he/she feels personally committed (“want” to be committed) to partner or relationship. Participant does not indicate any personal motivation for relational commitment such as being attracted to or satisfied with their partner, their relationship, or that their couple identity is of valued importance to them. He/she does not sight personal wanting in regard to the formation or continuation of his/her relationship. Participant does not discuss themes based on one’s personal desire or wanting to be relationally involved as they currently are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>999 – Not able to be Determined</td>
<td>Only choose this “0” option when you are completely unable to categorize.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C continued.

MORAL COMMITMENT (“Ought to”): Explanation of Scale

Moral commitment is the feeling, internal to an individual, that one has telling them they “ought to” or “should” be in a relationship due to their own sense of moral obligation or responsibility. A person may feel morally obligated to form, remain in, or not dissolve a relationship because his/her own attitudes and values obligate them to do so. An individual’s moral system (what is “right” versus “wrong”) comes into play, compelling them behave in a way which is compliant with their moral and attitudinal structure. Moral obligation can be reinforced through social pressures that govern personal beliefs and social values of what is moral. Still, a moral commitment must reflect self-motivated and intrinsic beliefs of morality (although perhaps also reinforced by social pressures). Common mentions of morality regarding relationships include a person believing vows are forever, religion forbids certain actions, they should be loyal and obliged to partner/children, they made promises, and what is “right” vs. “wrong.”

Frequent/Common themes associated with moral commitment can be categorized include:

(1) **Personal Obligation:**
A person may feel morally obligated to an individual/specific person for reasons including, but not limited to, (a) “I owe it to them,” (b) “they deserve my loyalty,” (c) “they have done so much for me,” (d) “I promised him/her;” and many others. A person may choose to remain in a relationship based on a sense of moral obligation to his/her partner or relationship.

(2) **Relational Obligation:**
A person may feel morally obligated to a specific relationship for reasons including, but not limited to, (a) “I took a vow to be loyal to this relationship,” (b) “breaking up this relationship is not morally right (because involves commitment, marriage, kids, etc),” (c) “our relationship has lasted this long” and many others. A person may choose to remain in a relationship based on a sense of moral obligation to the relationship or attitudes, values, and beliefs that guide him/her.

(3) **General Consistency Values:**
A person has general, internalized belief systems, values, and attitudes about what is “right” and what is “wrong.” A person will often behave in a manner such that they uphold these morals and values in order to be consistent and reinforce their perception of their own morality and the morality others have come to expect from them. Individuals will also behave according to what is consistent with social standards.
**Appendix C continued.**

**Instructions.** Choose the code that is most appropriate for the participant’s response based on both *content and frequency of characteristic expression* of the coding categories. *Note: Not all of the descriptions/factors involved in structural commitment need to be present to be categorized. Please judge based on the totality (or dominant theme) of discourse regarding to commitment to partner/relationship. For instance, please consider if the theme of moral commitment is mentioned in passing versus meaningfully dominant to the discussion. It may help to: (a) think about quantifying the duration/portion of the response which focuses on the moral theme, (b) look for consistency of the moral theme across the discussion, and (c) look at the proportional extent to which the participant discusses moral themes to determine how it is a representation of attitudes.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 – Highly Characteristic</td>
<td>Participant’s discussion includes <em>clear, strong, direct statements of morality</em> regarding their relationship perhaps including, but are not limited to, feeling morally obligated because of (a) marriage/vows, (b) what is “right” versus “wrong,” (c) owing something to their partner, (d) owing something to their relationship, (d) having made a promise, (e) wanting to remain “true” to and consistent with their own values, morals, and attitudes—or values instilled in them by social surroundings. An individual indicates feel morally obligated to their relationships as a function of one of more of the following possibilities: their self, partner, relationship, children, family, social surroundings etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – Moderately Characteristic</td>
<td>Participant’s discussion involves morality statements regarding their current commitment to their partner and relationship. While highlighting moral themes, their discussion indicates that these <em>moral obligations are not their only reasons for relational commitment despite being meaningful and important reasons for them.</em> Moral responsibilities are discussed as contributing, supporting factors. A participant may acknowledge moral reasons for the relationship as supplement to, or supplemented by, other reasons that are not strictly based on moral obligation or responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – Somewhat Characteristic</td>
<td>Participant’s discussion involves some statements of morality regarding their current commitment to their partner/relationship. While mentioning moral themes, their discussion indicates that these <em>moral obligations are not important or primary reasons for relational commitment despite being some things of which they are peripherally aware.</em> Moral responsibilities are discussed as <em>minor</em> contributing, supporting factors. A participant may acknowledge moral reasons for the relationship as supplementary factors, but the majority of their reasons are not morally-based.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Minimally Characteristic</td>
<td>Participant’s discussion <em>does not directly indicate</em> moral reasons or internal obligations in regard to their commitment to partner or relationship, but <em>may indirectly allude</em> to the presence of some of these factors. Still, the participant’s reason for their relational commitment is <em>NOT</em> defined in any meaningful capacity by moral compulsions or obligations. Rather, the participant acknowledges the possible presence of moral beliefs and values systems, but <em>does not emphasize morality</em> when determining the future of the relationship or commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – Not at all Characteristic</td>
<td>Participant makes no mention of anything directly or indirectly indicating that he/she feels morally, or they “should be,” committed to partner or relationship. Participant does not indicate any moral motivations, attitudes, beliefs, or values that compel him/her relationally. He/she does not sight or consider moral obligations in regard to the formation or continuation of his/her relationship. Involvement in their relationship is not at all based on one’s need to uphold their own, or societlal, consistency values of what is “right” or “wrong.” Participant does not discuss themes of relational morality or obligation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>999 – Not able to be Determined</td>
<td>Only choose this “0” option when you are completely unable to categorize.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C continued.

**STRUCTURAL COMMITMENT (“Have to”): Explanation of Scale**

Structural commitment is the feeling of “having to” stay in a relationship. A person may remain in a relationship because he/she perceives there are barriers or constraints that or would make it particularly difficult to split from their partner. Often, this can be experienced as having a feeling of “no other choice” but to stay in the current relationship (a “trapped feeling”). These perceived barriers to staying a relationship because of the difficulty associated with leaving are often based on factors external to the individual (e.g. economic constraints, social constraints, etc.)

Frequent/Common reasons for structural commitment can be categorized into four groups:

1. **Perceived alternatives and the quality of those alternatives:**
   A person may choose to remain in a relationship based on his/her perception of alternatives, or any better alternatives, than the present. If an individual does not see/sense that there are alternatives to their current relationship available to them, they may remain in a relationship because often people think it better to be in a relationship (regardless of quality, authenticity of affection, reason, etc) than be in no relationship at all. Further, when one does perceive alternatives, he/she will weigh the quality of those alternatives against the quality of the current relationship – asking oneself questions such as (a) do the potential rewards/benefits of the alternative outweigh the costs/drawbacks of the present? – and (b) do the rewards/benefits of the present outweigh the potential costs/drawbacks to the available alternative?

2. **Irretrievable investments:**
   A person invests in a relationship. Investments come in categorical forms such as (a) monetary, (b) time, and (c) emotional. Some investments can be recovered in the event of a separation and some cannot. Irretrievable investments are those made that cannot be regained in the event of separation. A person may choose to remain in a relationship due to their perceived value of irretrievable investments. Time, as an investment, is typically perceived as irretrievable. Sometimes, emotional investments (e.g. “giving one’s heart away”) are irretrievable. A person may stay in a relationship because they perceive the value of their investments too great to abandon, or because they perceive the discrepant value of irretrievable investments by comparison to the value of those able to be regained as not worth the loss.

3. **Social Pressure:**
   People can feel compelled to behave according to social expectations, or do what they perceive people expect or want them to do. People also according their perceptions of the negative judgments others would place on them for not behaving as expected. Anticipating reactions from friends, family, and social surroundings, if one perceives the possibility of disapproval, this can possibly lead to the choosing of actions in order to comply and avoid disapproval, such as remaining in a relationship. Social pressure can be experienced as the effects one’s actions would have on a social network; for instance, someone may choose not to break a network if the benefits of being part of it outweigh the alternatives. Social pressures can also be experienced as the moral value systems imposed on a person by their social surroundings that are not necessarily internalized as their own.

4. **Difficulty of the Termination Procedure:**
   Some people will remain in a relationship because of the difficulty they perceive being associated with the termination procedure. The termination procedure can vary in longevity and procedure often according to the stage of a relationship and investments made. The ending of a relationship can involve things ranging like (as) legal matters, (b) the dividing of possessions, (c) changing/finding a new job, (d) changing/finding a new place to live, and (e) emotional disarray (although, note this is not an exhaustive list).
**Appendix C continued.**

**Instructions.** Choose the code that is most appropriate for the participant’s response based on both **content and frequency of characteristic expression** of the coding categories. *Note: Not all of the descriptions/factors involved in structural commitment need to be present to be categorized. Please judge based on the totality (or dominant theme) of discourse regarding to commitment to partner/relationship. For instance, please consider if the theme of structural commitment is mentioned in passing versus meaningfully dominant to the discussion. It may help to: (a) think about quantifying the duration/portion of the response which focuses on the structural theme, (b) look for consistency of the structural theme across the discussion, and (c) look at the proportional extent to which the participant discusses structural themes to determine how it is a representation of attitudes.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>5 – Highly Characteristic</strong></td>
<td>Participant’s discussion includes <em>clear, strong, direct structural statements</em> regarding their current relationship and relational stability including, but not limited to, (a) being financially bound to the relationship in terms of income, living situation, job availability, etc. (b) feeling that there are no better alternatives compared to the present state (i.e. the benefits of the current outweigh the alternative), (c) feeling that that which he/she has invested into the relationship is irretrievable and not worth the loss of leaving, (d) feeling compelled by social pressures involving social networks or judgments of others, -or- He/she mentions staying in the current relationship due to miscellaneous constraints to leaving including the complexity of the dissolution/separation process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4 – Moderately Characteristic</strong></td>
<td>Participant’s discussion involves structural statements regarding their current commitment to their partner and relationship. While primarily structural in nature, discussion of constraints (i.e. barriers, alternatives, irretrievable investments, etc) indicates that the <em>constraints are meaningful, but not regarded as the only reasons</em> for relational commitment despite being taken into consideration. Constraints are discussed as fairly major contributing, supporting factors. Here, a participant may acknowledge barrier constraints as reasons for the relationship, but supplements this information with non-structurally based contributing factors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 – Somewhat Characteristic</strong></td>
<td>Participant’s discussion involves some structural statements regarding their current commitment to their partner and relationship. While there is some discussion based on structural factors, discussion of constraints (i.e. barriers, alternatives, irretrievable investments, etc) indicates that the <em>constraints are not regarded as important</em> in regard to their relational commitment despite being taken acknowledged. Constraints are discussed as <em>minor contributing, supporting factors</em>. Here, a participant may acknowledge barrier constraints, but more of their reasons are not structurally-based.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 – Minimally Characteristic</strong></td>
<td>Participant’s discussion <em>does not directly indicate</em> structural reasons or constraints (i.e. barriers to leaving, alternatives, irretrievable investments, etc) for their commitment to partner or relationship, but <em>may indirectly allude</em> to the presence of some of these factors. Still, the participant’s reasoning for their relational commitment is <em>NOT</em> defined in any meaningful capacity by such factors. Rather, the participant acknowledges the possible presence of such factors, but <em>does not take them into further consideration</em> when determining the future of the relationship or commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 – Not at all Characteristic</strong></td>
<td>No mention of anything directly or indirectly indicating that he/she is committed to partner or relationship for structural reasons. Participant does not indicate any barriers, social pressures, or potential complications of separation as reasons for his/her commitment or maintenance to his/her partner or relationship. Participant does not mention seeking, considering, or comparison of alternatives to their current relationship. Participant does not discuss structural themes in regard to their partner/relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>999 – Not able to be Determined</strong></td>
<td>Only choose this “0” option when you are completely unable to categorize.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D. TRIPARTITE COMMITMENT MEASURE (PAPER 3)

Tripartite Commitment Measure

**YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP**

Tripartite Commitment – adapted from Adams & Jones, 1999

Please report the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statements below on the following scale:

1 (strongly disagree)
2 (Moderately disagree)
3 (slightly disagree)
4 (Neutral)
5 (slightly agree)
6 (moderately agree)
7 (strongly agree)

1. When I image what my life will be like in the future, I see my partner standing next to me.
2. I'm dedicated to making my relationship with my partner as fulfilling as it can be.
3. I like knowing that my partner and I form a unit.
4. I am completely devoted to my partner.
5. I'm not very devoted to my partner.
6. I often think that my partner and I have too many irreconcilable differences.
7. When things go wrong in my relationship, I consider ending my relationship with my partner.
8. I am not confident that my relationship will last forever.
9. My future plans do not include my partner.
10. I often think about what it would be like to be romantically involved with someone other than my partner.
11. No matter what, my partner knows that I'll always be there for him or her.
12. I would be shattered if my partner and I ended our relationship.
13. There is nothing that I wouldn't sacrifice for my partner.
14. I don't think it's morally wrong to end my relationship with my partner.
Appendix D. Tripartite Commitment Measure continued…

15. It is morally wrong to divorce your spouse.
16. I could never leave my partner because it would go against everything I believe in.
17. If there are too many problems in my relationship, it's okay to end it.
18. If there are too many problems in a marriage, it is okay to end it.
19. I believe that marriage is for life regardless of what happens.
20. My relationship should be protected at all costs.
21. Any committed relationship should be protected at all costs.
22. A marriage should be protected at all costs.
23. Under no circumstances should a marriage be broken.
24. I can imagine several situations in which the marriage bond should be broken.
25. I feel free to end my relationship with my partner if I so desire.
26. I was raised to believe that once one is in a committed relationship, one doesn't end the relationship when struggles occur.
27. I was raised to believe that when one is married, one doesn't end a marriage when struggles occur.
28. It would be difficult to handle the shame of my relationship ending.
29. I'm afraid that if I were to leave my partner, God would punish me.
30. My relationship ending would ruin my reputation.
31. I have to stay in my relationship or else my family will think badly of me.
32. I have to stay in my relationship or else I would lose certain friends or social networks.
33. It would be shameful if my partner and I ended our relationship.
34. My family would strongly disapprove if I ended my relationship.
35. My friends would disapprove if I ended my relationship.
36. It would be humiliating if my partner and I ended our relationship.
37. It would be difficult for me to leave my partner; I have too much invested in him or her.
38. It would be particularly hard on my family and friends if my partner and I ended our relationship.
39. I've spent so much money on my relationship with my partner that it would be very difficult to end our relationship.
40. Even if I wanted to, it would be very difficult for me to end my relationship with my partner.
41. I would not be embarrassed to end my relationship.

Key:
- Items #1-13 make up the personal commitment subscale.
- Items #14-27 make up the moral commitment subscale.
- Items #28-41 make up the structural commitment subscale.
- Reverse Scored Items Include: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 17, 18, 24, 25, 41
REFERENCES


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