The differential coping patterns of battered women
the decision to leave or stay.

Deborah Maria. Vanderloo

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THE DIFFERENTIAL COPING PATTERNS OF BATTERED WOMEN

THE DECISION TO LEAVE OR STAY

by

Deborah Maria Vanderloo

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the School of Social Work
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Social Work
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada
1983
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to investigate one aspect of the decision-making process. According to Pfouts' (1978) battered women exhibit differential coping patterns. Behavioral outcomes are contingent upon the level of satisfaction in an existing situation and the comparison level of satisfaction that can be achieved by opting for an alternative. According to the theory of interdependence, the battered woman will make a two-step decision about how she will cope with her situation. She will determine the costs and benefits of her relationship. Secondly, having assessed her overall satisfaction with the relationship she will compare this with the level of satisfaction she thinks she can gain by choosing a viable alternative. In this study it was hypothesized that a woman will leave her partner if alternatives offer greater satisfaction than does her relationship. Conversely, she will return to her partner if alternatives do not offer greater satisfaction.

The study was conducted at Interim House, a residential program for battered women and their children in Detroit, Michigan. The data collection period extended from April 14, 1982 to June 14, 1982. A self-explanatory questionnaire was administered to the residents of Interim House within two days of admission. The total number of questionnaires obtained was 71. Only 40 of these questionnaires met the research criteria. Basic demographic data was obtained from the client files by the researcher.

The findings revealed that returners and leavers did not differ significantly in their perceptions of the violent relationship and non-violent alternatives. The women's behavior did not follow patterns
of predictability. What emerged from the findings was a flight response. The women viewed their relationship negatively and the advantages of escaping the violent situation positively. Their perceptions lacked objectivity. The women appeared to be influenced more by emotion than logic.

A measure of ambivalence revealed that women uncertain of their desire to terminate an abusive relationship were more likely to return to their partner than were women who had no desire to continue the relationship. Seventy-five per cent of the women who wavered in their intent to leave the situation, returned to their partner and 75% of those women who did not waver, left their partner.

Other significant factors affecting the women's behaviour included emotional attachment to the assailant and preoccupation with the children's welfare. Despite the damaging effects of exposure to violence, the majority of women believed their children would be better off at home than in a new environment. In situations where the violence spilled over to the children, the women were more inclined to leave their partner. Women who displayed signs of emotional attachment were far more likely to be found living with their assailant at follow-up than were women who did not reveal signs of attachment.

One-half the sample population returned to an abusive situation. Professionals working in the field of domestic violence need to address this issue. A woman's decision to seek help may be no indication of a desire to leave an abusive partner. This study suggests that disengagement is an ongoing process and therefore flight behaviour is not uncommon. Interventive plans need to coincide with this process and
should incorporate a family perspective to enable victims to assess the needs of their children.
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My involvement with battered women has been challenging and very inspiring. I credit this to all those who were supportive of my professional endeavours.

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Professor Rosemary Cassano, for her enthusiasm and assistance with my thesis. I have silently admired her high work standards. Rosemary has convinced me that nothing but your best effort is enough.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>LIST OF TABLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Satisfaction with the Relationship and Non-violent Alternatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Satisfaction with the Relationship and Non-violent Alternatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Perception of Costs in the Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Perception of Benefits in the Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Perception of Gains in Leaving the Abusive Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Perception of Losses in Leaving the Abusive Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Perception of Safe Places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Best Safe Alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Degree of Desire to Leave or Return to Partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Influence of Emotional Attachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Influence of the Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Evaluation of Questionnaire Eligibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Length of Stay in Shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Age of Client Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Age of Abusive Partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Number of Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Age of the Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Duration of the Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Religious Involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Women's Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Partner's Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Women's Net Income at Time of Assault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Major Source of Women's Income</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Violence</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence within the Family</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Influences and Family Violence</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battered Women: Factors Affecting the Decision to Remain or Leave</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classification of the Research</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Hypotheses</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational Definitions</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sample</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. PRESENTATION OF DATA AND FINDINGS</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings Related to the Sample Population</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings Related to the Testing of the Research Hypotheses</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. SUMMARY</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. The Black Family</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Demographic Data</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Questionnaire</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA AUTORIS</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
24 Partner's Net Income at Time of Assault..................108
25 Major Source of Partner's Income.......................108
26 Estimated Length of Time Exposed to Abuse..............109
27 Forms of Abuse Experienced Within the Relationship.......110
28 Nature of Assault When Seeking Shelter..................111
29 Help Seeking Behaviour.....................................112
INTRODUCTION

The Emergence of Wife Battering

As a Social Problem

"Wife abuse is currently a prominent item on the agenda of America's pressing social problems" (Pfouts and Renz, 1981). The level of national interest in helping battered women is impressive considering the fact that wife abuse, until the 1970's, was a relatively ignored and silent concern (Pfouts and Renz, 1981; Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980). Prior to this time an interest can be found in issues of family conflict, but family violence was treated as an idiosyncratic individual characteristic or an unhealthy response to interactional impasses that placed its relevance outside the study of normal family processes (O'Brien, 1977). A decade ago there existed no literature on the subject with the exception of psychiatrically oriented discussions of sadomasochistic relationships. However, literature has now begun to proliferate, complemented by media coverage and legislative debates.

In the activist sphere, divergent community groups — feminist and non-feminist, volunteer and professional — are currently engaged in a wide spectrum of programs ranging from hotlines to shelters designed to help physically abused women and their children. (Pfouts and Renz, 1981, p. 451).

The initiation of efforts through feminist movements, combined with professional perspectives, has resulted in a unique service delivery system that has caused traditional agencies to rethink their policies and practices in relation to battered women (Pfouts and Renz, 1981). Although refinement of services is still needed in the diverging professional fields that have contact with battered women, changes have
begun to take place indicating community concern and interest. A closer examination of developments within the State of Michigan and, in particular, the Metropolitan Detroit area, including a review of statistical estimates of the occurrence of domestic violence, serves as one example of changes taking place in the broader sphere and indicates a need for continuing service developments.

Estimates of Problem

As reported by the United Community Services of Metropolitan Detroit (1980), statistical estimates of the prevalence and severity of spouse abuse in American homes are not readily available. There are many incidents which remain unreported or, if reported, remain concealed under codes not representative of the problem. Social agencies may include spouse abuse under the broad heading "marital problem". Law enforcement agencies gather statistics by type of crime rather than by the relationship of the victim to the offender and police departments use catch phrases such as "family trouble" or "domestic disturbance" when reporting non-criminal calls. In each instance the sex and relationship of the parties is concealed as is a description of the event requiring intervention.

Steinmetz (1980) interviewed in depth a random sample of 57 families. The findings revealed that about seven per cent of the wives, or over three and a third million women are likely to be severely physically assaulted by their partner in a year. Women experience abuse from their legal or live-in partner that extend from bruises to severe injuries, miscarriage, permanent disability, and even death (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1980). The Business and Professional Women's Foundation cites a Michigan study in which 20 women surveyed
reported having suffered from the following forms of abuse: 6 required hospitalization, 4 received concussions, 4 had miscarriages, one woman suffered from a broken and cracked set of ribs and one woman received a first degree burn. The beatings lasted anywhere from five minutes to over an hour.

The United Community Services of Metropolitan Detroit (1980) states that probably one of the most comprehensive research efforts made into the exploration of family violence is the program funded by the National Institute of Mental Health under the administration of Richard Gelles, Murray Straus and Susan Steinmetz. Data were gathered from a representative sample of 2,143 families in the United States. The Detroit Free Press, on February 26, 1977, reported the findings as estimating that 7.5 million American couples had at some time in their marriage experienced violence. Murray Straus was said to have found this estimate under-reported and estimated a more accurate figure to be approximately 50 to 60 percent of all American couples having experienced violence in their relationship. When considering unreported cases such estimates become more understandable.

Bassett (1980), in a case study of the battered rich discovered that many affluent women are abused regularly. Incidents remain concealed because women seek help from family members, temporarily reside in a motel or silently dissolve the relationship. The police chief in Grosse Pointe stated that his department had no spouse assault crimes to report. However, an attorney revealed that she had several divorce complaint cases from this same area which were filed on the grounds of physical cruelty.

The United Community Services of Metropolitan Detroit used police
statistics to arrive at spouse abuse estimates for the entire tri-county area. In Macomb County, the estimated spouse abuse rate was cited as 266 per every 100,000 persons; in Oakland County, the spouse abuse rate approached 234/100,000; in Wayne County (excluding Detroit) 346/100,000 and in the City of Detroit, the estimated spouse abuse rate was 451/100,000. The actual number of reported assaults in the City of Detroit for the year 1979 was 5,724 for a city population of 1,266,400. The higher rate of spouse abuse in the Detroit area may in part be related to the socioeconomic characteristics of the population. Steinmetz (1980) stated that low-income women are more likely to report spouse abuse than are those from higher income levels. A large proportion of the residents in the City of Detroit are low-income.

**Developments in Services to Spouse Abuse Victims**

The United Community Services of Metropolitan Detroit, offering an overview of developments in the awareness and services in the tri-county area and in general, the State of Michigan, has designated the women's movement as the primary group responsible for the development of spouse abuse programs. Through the efforts of this group, shelters for battered women were formed and changes in professional consciousness among existing institutions and agencies occurred. One of the earliest movements in the State of Michigan was the establishment of the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1975. Initially, it began as a small group of volunteers and progressed into a non-profit corporation which promoted community awareness of problems of domestic violence. The Project later became known as the National Technical Center on Family Violence and was funded for the purpose of enhancing service, research and education on family violence throughout the nation.
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Transition was able to reopen a shelter facility and the non-residential counselling program in Westland has been extended to a resident counselling program.

**Interim House**

The term "personal and community service" is used to describe a series of social services which have a number of common elements. In general, concern is given to the processes of socialization, mutual support and adaptation. The primary helping professionals are from social work or related para-professions, and the services offered are funded through legislative bodies and additional auspices (Armitage, 1975).

Interim House, a shelter program for domestic violence victims, meets the above criteria on all five levels. Counselling services are geared toward disrupting those socialization patterns which allow the problem of family violence to perpetuate. Because these patterns are deeply entrenched, it is difficult for family members to risk a changed environment. Support is offered in the form of individual, group and family counselling to enable the women to cope with their sense of ambivalence and fear. For the battered woman who decides to leave her abusive partner, attention is given to the needs of adaptation. Having suffered physical and emotional trauma, her level of self-esteem and confidence is low. Efforts are made to build a more positive self image and independent living skills. In addition, a non-resident counselling program is offered to discharged residents and women who have never been in the shelter to aid the assessment of the violent situation, to increase independent living skills and to promote emotional growth and development.
To accomplish the above goals, Interim House has been selective in choosing staff members. Counselling staff must have the appropriate training and education to fulfil the requirements of their position. Caseworkers in particular are required to have a master's degree in social work or psychology. All persons working with domestic violence victims or their children are trained and accountable to a staff person overseeing their activities. The general order of accountability is illustrated below.

Regular staff meetings are held to promote an awareness of the agency's problems, purposes and goals. In addition, workshops are held periodically to enhance the professional delivery of services.

Interim House is accountable to the Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board for the State of Michigan. The board is a legislative body formed to fund and audit domestic violence projects throughout the state. Additional sources of funding include:
1. United Foundation
2. Neighbourhood Opportunity Fund for the City of Detroit
3. Department of Social Services: provides emergency vouchers to
cover the cost of stay for eligible women and their children
4. Chicago Resource Foundation for non-residential group counselling
   and walk-in services
5. Private donations from large corporations, churches, community
groups and concerned individuals

The YWCA provides shelter and office accommodations and has a direct interest
in ensuring the agency's services meet professional standards.

Interim House, like other domestic violence programs is faced with the
struggle of becoming a recognized and solidly funded program. Because
domestic violence is a new issue for public concern, spouse abuse programs
are in a position to rally for attention and have the opportunity to develop
a level of expertise set apart from the mainstream of human services
(Armitage, 1975).
Research Rational

The researcher began her work with battered women in a small domestic violence shelter located in Cambridge, Ontario. Her involvement with spouse abuse victims extended from direct intervention to research in the area of domestic violence. Of particular interest was the finding which indicated that a sizeable number of the shelter's residents returned to their abusive partners. In a sample population of 18 sheltered women, 44% were found to be living with their partners at the time of follow-up. Similarly, in a subsequent study of 20 battered women, 55% returned to their partners.

The researcher chose to continue her involvement with spouse abuse victims by contracting with a much larger domestic violence program located in Detroit, Michigan. Interim House is situated in the heart of Detroit and serves a diverse population of battered victims. Closely tied to problems of violence are racial and socioeconomic problems. The exposure to an array of intervening variables led to a more comprehensive view of the problem. During her work in this setting, the researcher was again confronted with the fact that many clients returned to an abusive situation. Data collected at Women-in-Transition, a state funded shelter for battered women in Detroit, revealed that 50% of the women who sought shelter returned to an abusive partner (Synder and Frutchman, 1981).

Professionals involved with battered women are often given to feelings of cynicism and frustration in response to this unpredictable and seemingly self-defeating behaviour (Pfouts, 1978). This behaviour is a concern not only in terms of interventive outcomes, but because it generates a high level of stress for counselling staff. A caseworker
may spend several hours counselling a woman and later discovered the woman returned to her assailant. The prognosis for change in violent situations is low and the probability that the violence will recur with greater severity high.

It is this controversial behaviour that became the focal point of the research to follow. Using Pfouts' (1978) theoretical conception of the decision-making process the researcher attempted to explore factors affecting the decision to leave or return to a violent domicile. The research study is based upon the Kelley-Thibault (1978) framework of interdependence. According to this theory, behavioural outcomes are contingent upon the level of satisfaction experienced in an existing situation and the comparative level of satisfaction that can be gained by opting for an available alternative. Pfouts (1978) postulated that the battered woman will make a two step decision about how she will cope with her situation. She will consider the cost and benefits of her life with her partner. Secondly, having rated her overall satisfaction with the relationship she will compare this with the satisfaction she thinks she can achieve by choosing the best possible alternative. In testing this schema with 35 cases of violent families from a county welfare department, Pfouts (1978) discovered differential coping patterns among battered women. How the woman viewed her situation and alternatives was directly tied to her decision to terminate or continue a violent relationship.

In this study, an attempt is made to examine the interplay between levels of satisfaction within the relationship and non-violent alternatives. It was hypothesized that the weight accorded to each dimension would influence the battered woman's decision to leave or—
remain in an abusive situation.
Chapter 1

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Interpersonal Violence

Interpersonal violence in a broad sense pertains to violence which evolves out of the relationship between two or more persons. Within the context of the family, the expression of violent behaviour may be limited in form or may 'elicit many faces'. Harbin and Madden (1974) investigated in a clinical study, 28 cases of child to parent violence which under extreme circumstances resulted in patricide. Star (1980) and Freeman (1979) also addressing the issue of family violence delineated five types of familial violence: child abuse, sibling rivalry, child to parent violence, granny bashing and spousal abuse. For the purposes of this research design, focus will be limited to spouse abuse notwithstanding that other forms of violence may occur within the home simultaneously. Exclusive attention will be given to the battering of female partners although male partners are also undeniably victims of spouse abuse (Freeman, 1979; Star, 1980; Steinmetz, 1980). Finally, the focus will be limited to heterosexual unions as violence within homosexual relationships is presently a peripheral issue in terms of domestic violence research and not applicable to the sample population to be studied.

The specific contents of this chapter will deal with a comprehensive overview of variables affecting outcomes. Exploration will be given to family dynamics which predispose couples to violence as well as make it difficult for partners to opt out of the relationship. Discussion will include a view of those structural influences affecting levels of
violence and reducing the likelihood of family dissolution. Individual contributing factors will be explored in detail and attention will be given to the combined field of variables affecting a woman's choice to dissolve or continue a destructive relationship. Appendix A includes an overview of cultural and racial issues which affect the meaning of violence in the black family. Since a large proportion of the sample population is black, there is a need to understand those influences which make the battered black woman's situation extremely stressful. This is not to preclude that various racial or cultural groups are more prone to violence, but to give consideration to the unique experience of minority groups. Prior to a discussion of the above contents, an attempt will be made to deal with the shortcomings of various interpretations of the problem.

Interpretations of Domestic Violence

The term "spouse abuse" is often used interchangeably with the term "domestic violence". Consequently, people have presumed that violence occurs within legal boundaries. According to the United Community Services of Metropolitan Detroit, the term "domestic violence" literally includes the involvement of anyone living in or formally residing in a domestic situation. Present day assumptions about the free living arrangements of cohabiting couples, have given the false impression that violence among non-legal unions is less extensive because couples can readily dissolve the problematic relationship. Research reveals that contrary to popular beliefs, violence between cohabiting partners is actually higher than violence between married couples. Kerstiyllo and Straus (1981) reported that in "content and intimacy these relationships
differ little" (p. 341). In a study of courtship violence, Makepeace (1981) found in a sample of 202 sociology students, 61% had personally known of someone who had been involved in courtship violence and 21% indicated that they had at least one direct experience with courtship violence.

In view of the changing ideology governing relationships in Western society, the above findings take on more meaning. Subsistence Dependence Theory proposes that males and females initially formalized enduring relationships for the purpose of meeting instrumental needs. Love was a social creation held secondary to instrumental concerns. With the emergence of industrialization and the surplus of agricultural production, it became less necessary to have a husband and wife for survival. Since society depends upon the stability of the family, "it became imperative that a new social inducement to marry be developed" (Buehler and Wells, 1981, p. 453). The emerging ideology was that of romantic love, a recycled version of medieval romanticism, with emotional dependence as a new basis for marriage. In Western society, being in love is presently held as a prerequisite to marriage and conversely, its absence, a reason to terminate the relationship and select a new mate (Buehler and Wells, 1981). With this ideology in mind, similarities surface as to those factors binding both legal and non-legal unions.

Although the act of marriage transforms a private relationship into a public institution where social norms govern behavior, essentially there are few differences in such areas as division of labor, decision-making, communication, and satisfaction (Kerstiello and Straus, 1981). Having once entered a relationship, couples become tied at both an affective and instrumental level, and will, at best, find it difficult to
end the relationship (Foss, 1980). For both legal and non-legal unions violence is a possibility and in both instances, emotional and physical ties will resist dissolution.
Violence Within the Family

With the emergence of romantic love as the primary social inducement for marriage, emotional concerns have taken precedence to instrumental concerns (Buehler and Wells, 1981). One of the trade offs of marriage for convenience to marriage for love has been the requirement that couples meet the added demands of having to fulfill each others' hopes, dreams, needs and ideal expectations (Star, 1980). Concomitant to the changing ideology has come a change in the traditional forms of family life. Family systems have become self-maintaining both within and outside of legal bounds. As discussed earlier, "cohabitation research indicates that the attractions within marriage and cohabitation should be fairly similar" (Kerstjyllo and Straus, 1981, p. 340). Both relationships of cohabitation and marriage are vulnerable to the highly paradoxical situations that present themselves in family life. For this reason, it is necessary to look beyond such conventional statements as, "the marriage license serves as a hitting licence".

Foss (1980) states that among the factors working against families using conflict resolution strategies which reduce violence are the "high emotional investment between family members, their total personality involvement and the knowledge that members cannot simply pick up and leave when conflict develops" (p. 115). Family members are frequently in close interaction and issues are raised which may not necessarily be resolved to the satisfaction of all. While negotiations might be beneficial among social institutions, the family has no formal mechanisms for such negotiations aside from the legal avenues of separation and divorce (Marsden, 1978). Intimate groups are paradoxical in that the same structural elements which increase the likelihood of violence also
create a high probability that hostile feelings will be suppressed (Foss, 1980). Gelles (1979) and Straus (1980) in their earlier work identified unique characteristics that serve to make a family violence prone. Ironically, they found these same elements also served to make the family a warm supportive environment. Gelles (1979) lists eleven such paradoxical factors.

1. Time at risk: The ratio of time spent interacting with family members far exceeds the ratio of time spent with non-family members, depending upon the particular phase of the family's life cycle.

2. Range of activities and Interests: Not only do family members spend a great deal of time together, but the interaction ranges over a wider spectrum of activities. This invites the presence of differences in interests and chosen activities.

3. Intensity of Involvement: The degree of commitment in family interaction is extensive. A cutting remark made by one member is likely to have a greater impact than if made by an outsider.

4. Impinging Activities: Many interactions are conflict laden. Whether it is a case of deciding what television program to watch or what vehicle to buy, there will be a winner and a loser. Martin (1978) writes that family members always stand in relationships of power toward one another. The power may be that of adults over children, income earner over those who do not earn or stronger over weaker person. In any case, these imbalances are
unavoidable and if not counter-balanced by ties of affection and a common need for tolerable family conditions, violence may occur.

5. Right to Influence: Belonging to a family also carries the implicit right to influence the values, attitudes and behaviours of other family members.

6. Age and Sex Differences: The family is unique in its composition by age and sex. Thus, there is the potential for battles between the ages and sexes.

7. Ascribed Roles: The family is perhaps the only social institution that assigns roles and responsibilities on the basis of age and sex rather than interest or competence.

8. Privacy: The modern family is a private institution, insulated from ears, eyes and often the rules imposed by wider society. When the degree of privacy is high, the degree of social control will be low. Violence may occur within the family without outside intervention to prohibit its use.

9. Involuntary Membership: Families are exclusive organizations. Birth relationships are involuntary. While there may be ex-wives and ex-husbands, there are no ex-children or ex-parents. Thus, when conflict arises, it is not easy to leave by fleeing the scene or resigning from the group.

10. Stress: Families are more prone to stress than other
groups simply because they are constantly undergoing changes and transitions. Moreover, the stress felt by one family member is transmitted to other members.

11. Extensive Knowledge of Social Biographies: The intimacy and emotional involvement of members exposes a wide range of identities. Strengths, weaknesses, dislikes and likes, loves and fears lay exposed to other members. Such knowledge can be used to strengthen family solidarity, but may also be used as a tool to attack members with intimate and personal material.

Intimate groups are by definition said to be characterized by total, rather than by segmented personality involvement. For this reason there is a high degree of interaction. "Following the work of Simmuel and Fruel, Coser argues that habitual or intense interaction furnishes frequent occasions for conflict" (Foss, 1980, p. 177). Ironically, this same feature fosters a positive liking and an attraction to the relationship causing a low replaceability of family members.

A relationship characterized by total personality involvement is largely built on the unique contributions of each personality...when this occurs, the replacement of one group member will at the very least seriously alter the quality of the group relationships (Foss, 1980, p. 118).

Although there is the possibility of positive affective investment reducing violence, it is also possible that this could lead to fear of dissolution. Fears of relationship dissolution can actually curb the level of family violence (Foss, 1980).
To the extent that there is total personality involvement in a relationship, expressive antagonism is almost inevitable.

...intimates know how to support the identities of each other because each knows about the things that matter or are important to the other. While this extensive knowledge can be used to support and enhance identities, at the same time it can be used to damage identity (Foss, 1980, p.129).

Having greater knowledge of the other makes the use of personal attacks possible as a measure of self-defence. It is such responses to issues of intimacy that make this phase of marital development an intense matter (L'Abate and L'Abate, 1979).

The task of achieving intimacy is, in itself, a highly complex feat to master. To survive the demands of intimacy a couple must first achieve a semblance of closeness. Existing side by side with the wish for intimacy is the fear of intimacy. There is a fear of merger, fear of exposure, fear of abandonment, and fear of one's own destructive impulses.

As trite and corny as such a statement may be, hurt and caring are intrinsically interwoven. We often times give those we love a license to hurt. Functionally speaking, we are rarely if seldom hurt by strangers. The degree of hurt increases as the degree of closeness and caring increases. (L'Abate and L'Abate, 1979, p. 177)

To master intimacy, conflict is inevitable; however, it is the degree to which destructive impulses are unleashed that determines whether the task will create an unresolvable impasse.
In violent relationships, the struggle for intimacy often leads to a depletion of an already fragile self. The couple brings to the relationship complementary problems which become enmeshed producing a rigid battering system. Weitzman (1981) identified at least six control themes which characterize the violent couple's struggle for harmony. There is the battle between 1) distance and intimacy 2) jealousy and loyalty 3) independence and dependence 4) rejection and unconditional acceptance 5) adequacy and inadequacy and, 6) control, power and powerlessness. Although these themes exist in non-violent relationships, they are not as "rigid nor as likely enforced by violence when challenged" (Weitzman, 1982, p. 162). When violence occurs, it acts homoeostatically to seal off any challenge to areas of vulnerability and weakness; and strengthens those rules permitting a minimal degree of behaviour oscillation (Baker, 1975; Greenburg, 1977; Satir, 1967; Weitzman, 1982).

The presence of violence blocks the resolution of conflicts (Foss, 1980). Aggressive overtones will interfere with the couple's ability to consider the original claims of the conflicting interests. As Weitzman (1982) states, violence thwarts the change process and is a deterrent to dealing with the real issues at hand. Battles may occur over seemingly trivial concerns such as whether the "fork sits on the right or left hand side of the dinner plate". In many instances compliance to the aggressor's demands fails to appease him and there will be recurring conflicts over trivial issues.

Foss (1980) labels conflicts of this nature, non-realistic.
Conflicts which arise from frustration of specific demands within the relationship and from estimates of gains of the participants, and which are directed at the presumed frustrating object can be called realistic conflicts. Non-realistic conflicts...are not occasioned by rival ends of the antagonist, but by the need for tension release of at least one of them (p. 123).

The presence of non-realistic conflict does not stem from real objectively conflicting views, but out of the needs of group members (Foss, 1980). Control battles serve only to mask deeper struggles within the relationship (Weitzman, 1982). These patterns, coupled with the fact that violent behaviour decreases the likelihood of conflict resolution, are contributing factors to the cyclic pattern of violence. When transmitted to younger counterparts, it serves to perpetuate violence throughout generations to come (Carlson, 1977; Davison, 1978; Fleming, 1979; Moore, 1975; Pfouts and Schopler; Sopp-Gilson, 1980; Walker, 1979).

The inflexibility of the violent family makes the likelihood of change and dissolution problematic. Even when dissolution occurs it may not resolve the problem. The abusive partner may remarry and all too often repeats the same behaviour. Theories of assortive mating are against the woman finding a stable partner. Only a man who is desperately in need of a partner is likely to take on a 31 year old woman with 3 disturbed children and a shattered self-esteem. If her previous husband was an alcoholic there is a likelihood that the only social life she knows would centre around a heavy drinking circle. In her search for a new mate she might go to the only social life she knows, and so is
vulnerable to picking a man who at first appears kind, but later turns out to be like her former husband (Gayford, 1975). Often the family's linkage to society is fearful, placating and blaming (Satir, 1967). This makes the violent family resistant to intervention. Sealed off from outside attempts to restructure the family, members are less amenable to non-violent alternatives.
External Influences and Family Violence

Like all interpersonal behaviour, violent behaviour is constructed within a situation by the participants involved. For this reason, structural determinants of violence have been said to have insufficient explanatory power precisely because they do not account for the large degree of variation among actors and between situations. Although situations and actors are not constant there are more stable influences which increase the likelihood of violence occurring between individuals. By definition, societal norms, values and expectations are relatively enduring and transcend the individual and a particular moment. Within society norms exist which "legitimize the striking of family members, at least under certain conditions" (Hotaling and Straus, 1980, p.12). "Force or the threat of force in the family is seen as a permitted technique for preventing or controlling certain behaviours of family members" (Hotaling and Straus, p. 13). In most forms of social organization, whether it be society at large, a bureaucracy, or the family itself, a strong emphasis is placed on maintaining the status quo. "Norms legitimizing violence maintain order in the family group by imposing strong sanctions when an individual tries to play by other rules" (Hotaling and Straus, 1980, p. 13). Unfortunately, there is usually an unequal distribution of power which works to the disadvantage of the weaker family members.

In a study of "rape free" and "rape prone" societies, Benderly (1982) found that violence is directly linked to patterns of socialization. Rape is not inherent in man's nature, but results in his image of that nature. It is a product of a certain set of beliefs or expectations which are in turn derived from particular social
circumstances. Societies with a high incidence of rape tolerate violence and encourage men and boys to be tough, aggressive and competitive. The men have special politically important gathering spots off limits to women; whether it be the tribal hut or the corner tavern. The women are given little or no part in public decision making or religious rituals. A woman's work is considered of little importance and her practical judgment an object of scorn. The men remain aloof from childbearing and rearing. These groups usually trace their beginnings to a male supreme being. In some rape-prone cultures restitution is given to the rape victim's husband rather than the rape victim herself. Within the home, violent sexual conduct is often used to control. For example, in one culture, it was acceptable for a husband to have a disobedient wife gang raped by the village men. In another culture, women were taught to measure their husbands' vitality by how much pain he was able to exert on their wedding night. Societies of this kind are usually unstable and survival is a competitive and aggressive endeavour.

In contrast, rape-free societies are stable and neither need nor condone the use of violence. The women and men share power and authority because both contribute equally to society's welfare and fighters are not necessary. Within these cultures, female traits of nurturance and fertility are glorified. In fact, many of the people believe they were offspring of a male and female deity or that they descended from a universal womb.

American society falls within the category of a rape-prone society. Although policy makers have attempted to recognize the plight of battered women, in principle, they have remained supportive of the overall system which contributes to their assault (Dobash and Dobash, 1977).
available evidence on marital violence indicates that a number of women are forced into having sexual relations with their spouse by physical violence or intimidation. The concept of "marital rape" is one that does not exist in a legal sense. Labelling sexual intercourse of this nature, "marital rape," implies a value judgment concerning appropriate interpersonal relations among family members (Gelles, 1977). Ironically, very little concern has been given to appropriate interpersonal functioning. The circumstances and conditions surrounding the act of sexual intercourse are secondary. Men and women cling to the traditional belief that it is the woman's duty to gratify her husband's sexual desires. Research on marital violence suggests that many victims believe that violence is expected and normative. The fact is that many women are injured by their husbands in trying to redress these acts (Gelles, 1977).

The cultural trends that have permeated expectations of male dominance predispose families to violence. In a society where male superiority norms are in a state of transition and the presumption of superiority must be validated by resources, such as valued personal traits, material goods and services, "ascribing superior authority to men is a potent force producing violent attacks on wives" (Hotaling and Straus, 1980, p. 19).

A husband who wants to be the dominant person in his family, but has little education, a job that is low in prestige and income, and a lack of interpersonal skills may resort to physical violence to maintain his position (Hotaling and Straus, 1980, p. 19).

Low income and social status have a marked effect upon the level of violence in the home. Although authors argue that such assumptions are unfounded and simply reflect the inability of the middle class
professionals to accept the universality of wife abuse, data can be found to substantiate that income level and social class do affect the number of incidents reported. Physical abuse is reported more often by low-income women than middle or upper-income women.

Peterson (1980) in his study of 602 randomly selected women, cohabitating or legally married, found that battering was highest among women whose husbands had the fewest years of education and the lowest status. Sixteen per cent of the women whose husbands earned less than $10,000 annually reported abuse. Employment stability also affected the level of abuse.

Women who were married to men whose employment was characterized as steady reported a much lower incidence of abuse (7.3%) than those whose husbands were not employed steadily (19.4%). Similarly, women whose husbands had been employed in their current position less than two years reported a higher incidence of wife abuse (10.4%) than those whose husbands had been in the same job more than two years (7.1%). Finally, women whose husbands were characterized as mostly unemployed reported an incidence of abuse (25%) three times higher than those whose husbands were employed (7.6%) (Peterson, 1980, p. 389).

Lower income groups are unable to purchase things that alleviate stress. Unless these stress producing conditions are compensated by adequate resources, family members will resort to violence (Steinmetz, 1980). Although relationships are moving towards egalitarianism, many men do not balance the responsibility of low resources. Instead a power theme still prevails in which the male can be seen struggling for equal standing or higher. Changing trends toward egalitarian relationships may increase
violence as couples become ambivalent concerning their role prescriptions (Hotaling and Straus, 1980). In addition, these trends may lead to both parties initiating violence.

From a normative perspective, physical force serves the purpose of inducing desired behaviour. It is goal directed and can be viewed as an acceptable means of maintaining control. It is also the easiest way of organizing family members. Gelles (1972) reported that 84 per cent to 97 per cent of all parents use some form of physical punishment on their children. Instrumental violence has the potential of appearing in all nuclear family relationships (Hotaling and Straus, 1980). An inherent weakness in this form of reasoning is the absence of restrictions on the use of violence. The line between goal-directed and non-goal-directed physical force is arbitrary. Sanctions guarding the privacy of the home leave members to exercise their own discretion as to how much physical force is acceptable. In many instances, the most powerful member sets his own limits. Unfortunately many battered victims have learned not to question these limits and remain in an abusive situation as though it were the norm.
Battered Women: Factors Affecting The Decision to Remain or Leave

Straus (1974) in his critique of Bach and Wyder's widely read book, The Intimate Enemy, noted that couples who fight together stay together, provided they know how to fight. Ironically, he also discovered that 80% of those couples seeking help were couples who did not fight at all, the penalty being emotional divorce (Straus, 1974). Although studies reveal that marital violence is a repeatedly cited cause for marital unhappiness, discord and divorce, evidence also reveals that many battered women remain in an abusive situation or, having left it, return to it (Lystad, 1975; Pfouts, 1978; Synderand Fruchtman, 1981; Star, et al., 1979). In a study of 57 battered women, findings revealed that over 80% of the women had threatened divorce and close to one half had considered suicide at some point after the onset of violence. The majority of the women followed neither course of action, preferring frequent periods of separation, usually lasting several days or weeks (Star, et al., 1979). Contrary to popular belief, Rounsaville (1978) in a study of battered victims needing medical aid, discovered that only one half of the women who left their partner cited physical abuse as the primary reason for leaving. Although evidence seems contradictory, the findings are not contrary, but simply reflect the interplay of multiple factors. One weakness of the human service profession is its failure to take into account the multi-dimensional nature of violence. For this reason, professionals have been operating with less than a full view of the problem (United Community Services of Metropolitan Detroit, 1980).

In lack of an answer, many professionals clung to the theories of masochism to explain wife abuse (Nichols, 1976; Pfouts, 1978;
The literature is replete with criticisms and recommendations for a more effective response from the human service profession. Often, caseworkers offer the all-too-simple solution of leaving, and are confounded when, after hours of counselling the women return to their assailant (Elbow, 1977). In an effort to resolve this confusion, professionals have been forced to look beyond given assumptions and ask, "Why do some wives remain with their abuser, while others move from one abusive relationship to another, and still others affect a permanent separation, either early in the marriage or, ... after many years of abuse" (Pfouts, 1978, p. 101). Research presently conveys two levels of analysis. Studies have been conducted which isolate individual contributing factors and some researchers have attempted to explore the interaction between outcomes and groups of variables. With this framework in mind, the above issue will be explored.

**Individual Contributing Factors**

**Economics**

One of the foremost factors discussed within the literature affecting the women's decision, is the fear of economic deprivation. As stated by the Michigan Women's Commission (1976) there is a very close correlation between total economic dependency and the women's decision to remain with an abusive partner. "Data regarding women's financial dependence is overwhelming in both volume and impact. Even if women are working, or can be trained to obtain jobs, they will continue to make lower salaries than men," especially if they have never worked (Moore, 1979, p. 21). For many women, termination of the relationship will mean dependence upon the promise of alimony or child support to help them
through the financial strain of trying to establish a separate residence. Statistics reveal that fewer than 50% of divorced women in the United States are awarded alimony, and a ten year study of child support ordered by the court revealed that only 38% of the husbands complied with the court order during the year following the divorce. Moreover, 42% did not make any payment at all during the first year. The older the order was, the smaller the percentage receiving child support. During the tenth year following divorce, only 13% of the men paid full child support, and 75% paid nothing at all (Moore, 1979). In the absence of financial support the women have no alternative but to seek public assistance as a primary source of income.

In many instances economic deprivation is used as a vehicle to control the women. It is not uncommon for the assailant to demand she relinquish all personal sources of income. This in effect reduces her chances of leaving. With no money for bus or cab fare and no finances to establish a separate residence she will be confined to the home. In fact she may lack the knowledge and skill necessary to acquire a new dwelling. In a study of 57 battered women, findings revealed that prior to entering the relationship most of the women were dependent on others for their living arrangements. "Only one-third lived in their own apartment and one-half were supported by their own earnings" (Star, et al., 1979, p. 483). The long-term unfamiliarity with the day to day living skills necessary for survival place the battered woman at a disadvantage when it comes to even the most minimal level of independent functioning (Michigan Women's Commission, 1976).

**Concern for Children**

"Children of battered women often experience as many problems as
their mothers" (Mesch, 1983, p. 87). They have been called the silent 
bystanders (Pfouts and Schopler, 1982). Unable to rescue their mother 
they are left alone to deal with their emotional upset. Consequently 
they often have great difficulty expressing themselves (Mesch, 1983). 
"Several writers have hypothesized a kind of ricochet family from husband 
to wife to child" (Allen, 1982, p. 161). Interestingly, the battered 
woman fears that her children will be seriously damaged by growing up 
without a father figure. A violent father is seen to be better than no 
father. This motive prevents her from recognizing that it is the current 
situation that is harmful and that her children would be better off in a 
non-violent situation despite the absence of a father and economic 
deprivation. Concern for the well-being of the children works to the 
advantage of the battered woman when and if violence spills over on to 
the children. Though reluctant to seek help for herself, she may take 
action once it becomes apparent that the children are also targets of 
abuse (Fleming, 1979).

**Self-Perceptions**

Women are socialized into a position of passiveness and dependency. 
They are taught that their primary route to satisfaction, happiness and 
fulfillment is a man and marriage. This produces in women a kind of 
desperation and a strong emphasis on relationship seeking (Patrick, 
1982). Studies reveal that many battered victims viewed themselves 
negatively prior to the beginning of an abusive relationship. They felt 
unattractive or unpopular and feared they would not find a partner. In 
some instances pregnancy occurred before marriage or marriage was used as 
a way of escaping a problematic home situation. In general, the women 
entered marriage with high and unrealistic expectations, believing it
would solve their problems (Star et al., 1979).

Because women are taught that the female is solely responsible for keeping the home together, the occurrence of violence is often internalized as a personal weakness. "Seldom do abused women understand that marriage should be a partnership of equals" (Mesch, 1983, p. 87). If she stands up for herself she may consider herself unfeminine or aggressive. Star et al. (1979) discovered that although many battered women agree with the principle of a fifty-fifty marriage, in practice they display a belief in male superiority and in the common ideology that the greatest satisfaction is derived from being a wife and mother.

Psychological Profile

The psychological profile of the battered woman depicts her as burdened with a sense of guilt, fear and a dim view of alternatives to the abusive situation (Heppner, 1978). Although this portrait is not erroneous, it does lead toward a stereotypical perception of the problem. A clinical study of abused women revealed that battered victims fell solidly within the average range on most clinical and personality factors. The women were of normal intelligence and comparable to the norm on traits of enthusiasm, social awareness, self-reproach and dominance. Differences appeared on only six personality traits and three clinical factors.

As a group, the women fell below mean scores on factors of reserve and caution in emotional self expression. They exhibited low ego strength and a feeling of being unable to cope. They also revealed lower scores with respect to shyness, difficulty with self expression and low levels of self-sentiment. Scores which exceeded standardized averages pertained to traits of self-sufficiency, introversion, tension and
frustration. Low modal scores occurred in two instances. The women reflected traits of introspection and insecurity.

On a clinical test index, departures from the norm signified tendencies toward withdrawal and an avoidance of interpersonal contact. On an index measuring paranoia, findings indicated the presence of felt mistreatment and persecution. Measures of schizophrenia revealed a tendency to retreat from reality and to give way to sudden impulses. None of the findings were indicative of a clinically deviant population.

In general, the women were portrayed as having:

... Low self-esteem, a lack of self-confidence, and a tendency to withdraw. The women displayed an aloof quality, a critical or uncompromising attitude, and a sense of discomfort when interacting with others. The combination of shyness and reserve generally reflects traits developed in childhood as a result of poor early life relationships.

The women were also anxious and have trouble binding their anxiety. Interviews with the women revealed that they faced a great deal of situational stress in their marriages around such issues as finances, household responsibilities, employment, and child rearing. These pressures combined with their consistent fear about their husbands' outbursts, contributed to high levels of tension (Star et al., 1979, p. 483).

Although the battered woman does not exhibit clinically deviant behaviour, the above factors may affect motivational levels. A woman who lacks self-confidence, feels anxious and has difficulty interacting with individuals who may be able to offer support will experience a great deal of discomfort and fear in considering a changed environment.
Isolation

When all factors are considered, it is easier to understand why the battered woman finds it almost impossible to break away. She is trapped by her conditioning, her low self-esteem and the fear that she cannot cope without her partner. "Each incidence of violence sends her deeper and deeper into the bog of humiliation and self-hate" (Patrick, 1982, p. 240). Once on a downward spiral of depression, she will become more in need of her partner and be willing to make more compromises to make the relationship work. Her partner also experiencing an intolerable feeling of worthlessness will experience a need to bind her more solidly to himself (Patrick, 1982).

Frequently, the abused woman is subject to demands which limit her social activities to the home. Her partner will decide when they will go out and who they will invite to the house. Often her partner will forbid her to interact with friends or relatives. Although his rationale is based on criticism of her social contacts it more clearly points to his own need to have her completely dependent upon himself. In a study of battered victims, the findings revealed that several of the women had virtually no social life because of their husbands' extreme and unfounded jealousy. One woman stated that she was not allowed to have female friends because her husband accused her of having lesbian affairs. Only twenty-three out of fifty-seven women reported having any type of involvement in activities outside of the family. Many stated they felt like prisoners in their own home (Star et al., 1979). "If she had friends at the beginning of the relationship, she has probably dropped them by now. She is too ashamed to let them see into her life" (Patrick, 1982, p. 242). Some women believe that by cleaving to their partner and
excluding the outside world the violence will stop.

Cut off from sources of support, the battered woman is in danger of not recognizing her plight. If she does come to realize what is happening to her — the door may be shut. Leaving requires tremendous strength, confidence and a place to which to escape. After years of abuse, "what little self-esteem she has has eroded, her depression has led to inertia and she is trapped in the ultimate of vicious circles" (Patrick, 1982, p. 242).

**Learned Helplessness**

To break the vicious cycle of violence, something must snap to bring the woman back to reality. She must recognize that she is fighting not for love or her family, but for her life (Patrick, 1982). Her choices are few. She can leave her partner, be forced into the position of homicide or resign herself to the belief that there is no way out. The latter may lead to her eventual physical disablement, mental illness or even death.

Walker (1979) stated that continued exposure to circumstances that seem uncontrollable increases a sense of helplessness. The theory of learned helplessness propounds that human beings have the ability to make voluntary responses which can either change or modify an outcome. If a voluntary response makes a difference in the event that transpires, or operates on the environment in a successful way, the person will experience a sense of control over his environment. If the expected outcome does not occur, an explanation is necessary to resolve the confusion. If no logical explanation can be found the end result will be a feeling that one has no control over his environment. Through the process of inferential thinking the person may come to believe that he is
an object of fate. The battered woman is particularly prone to this dilemma (Miller, 1980). Consider the following statement:

"I never knew what would provoke Carl," says Arlene, a 22-year-old legal secretary. "Once he said I talked to someone else too long at a party; another time I didn't show up on time for a movie; Or I'd worn a dress he didn't like. Sometimes he'd get mad at something that the time before hadn't fazed him at all. No matter how hard I tried to avoid provoking him; I couldn't. Because I never knew when or where his rages would come from" (Patrick, 1982, p. 189).

Repeated and unpredictable beatings leave the woman with a feeling that nothing can be done to alter her situation (Miller, 1980).

A closer look at problem-solving strategies used by the victim to resolve the problem of violence, reveals how attempts to reduce conflicts could actually have the opposite effect. One very common strategy used is avoidance (Foss, 1980; Ramrattan et al., 1980). Foss (1980) states that the effectiveness of this strategy is contingent on a number of factors.

...whether avoidance of specific issues or avoidance in the form of general interpersonal withdrawal resolves or reduces conflicts of interest...depends on whether that avoidance occurs specifically in the area where conflicting interests arise...The avoidance must be "on target" if it is to have such a dampening effect.

...while avoidance may be the most probable initial strategy in intimate groups, it is usually ineffective in resolving conflicts of interests and eventually leads to greater hostility. In the long run, avoidance is the least probable outcome (Foss, 1980, pp. 128-129).

Often what sets the man off, the first time and every time thereafter, is a low sense of self-worth and insecurity. The incident that provokes
this feeling can be real or imagined (Patrick, 1982). In battering relationships avoidance is more likely to excite anger than ease a situation. When the man's self-image is very unfavourable, avoidance is usually seen as purposeful defiance or rejection (Scott, 1974).

Leveling in a similar fashion also disrupts the relationship. Direct attack of the issue at hand often leads to exposure of a fragile self. This type of verbal aggression is explosive and can very easily result in violence. In fact, conflicts usually arise over matters which mask the real problem (Weitzman, 1981). When couples attempt to dig below the surface, violence may become necessary to protect a sensitive ego. Ironically, both strategies give the impression that no matter what the woman does she is helpless in effecting positive outcomes. Hoping that violence does not occur again is one of the few alternatives she sees available (Michigan Women's Commission, 1977).

**Attachment to the Assailant**

As strange as it may sound to lay persons and professionals, the abused woman may experience feelings of affection and attachment toward her assailant. Those who fail to understand this phenomenon have often made accusations such as, "she likes being beaten" or "she has a psychological need to be battered". Studies on wife abuse offer no confirmation to masochism theories of this kind (Byles, 1980; Carlson, 1977; Davidson, 1978; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Gabor, 1976; Gelles, 1972; Gelles, 1979; Gilbert et al., 1981; Hendrix, 1978; Langley and Levy, 1977; Levens, 1976; Moore, 1979; Nichols, 1976; Pear, 1976; Pfouts, 1978; Ramrattan et al., 1980; Roy, 1977; Schlesinger, 1980; Schulyer, 1979; Shearing, 1976; Sopp-Gillson, 1980; Star, 1980; Star et al., 1979; Straus et al., 1980; Tidmarsh, 1976; Van Stolk, 1976; Victor, 1978; Walker,
Physical and psychological abuse do not necessarily cancel feelings of affection carried over from an earlier period in the relationship (Schulyer, 1979). Then too, there may be positive aspects to the relationship. The abusive partner is not violent all the time. What takes place between episodes may be relatively satisfying. Even in situations where violence has risen to critical proportions, the woman may stay because she consciously believes there is more good in her partner than bad (Patrick, 1982). She may become engaged in nurturing her partner back to health, not realizing that only he has power to reform his behaviour (Fleming, 1979; Martin, 1976; Moore, 1979; Ramrattan et al., 1980; Schulyer, 1979; Star, 1980).

For the woman who has experienced abuse as a child, there is often the acceptance of violence. Hitting may be seen as an expression of love. In addition, the woman may feel that a violent relationship is better than no relationship at all (Mesch, 1983; Patrick, 1982). "She may cling to this "love" relationship because it is the only love she has. Her abuser has probably convinced her that no one would ever put up with her except him or that she'll never get a good-paying job or another mate" (Mesch, 1983, p. 86).

A statement of professed love should not be taken at face value. It could mean a denial of ambivalence or even unmitigated hatred. Professed love may be tied to identity needs. The identity of the abused woman, particularly her identity as someone's wife or girlfriend, is defined by her ability to maintain a harmonious relationship. Psychologically she may not be ready to forfeit that identity or create a more independent identity. She may not know any women who live independently in a
successful way (Fleming, 1979; Mesch, 1983). From a clinical standpoint, some statements of attachment resemble addiction. The abuser and his wife may use each other as a form of security blanket, yet one in which he is able to ventilate feelings of rage when this sense of security is threatened (Fleming, 1979).

For the woman who experiences a bond of love, severance of the relationship will mean formidable loss. The woman may have focused all her energies on keeping her family intact; sacrificing ties with persons other than her spouse. Moreover, she must work against her own desires and hopes for change and reformation. The prospect of abandoning these hopes for an unknown future involves risk; risks she may not be willing to take if alternatives do not offer assurance of greater satisfaction (Fleming, 1979).

Fear

"To understand why a woman stays with a man who hurts her psychologically and physically... it is necessary to know the many fears and misconceptions that govern her life" (Mesch, 1983, p.86). She fears loneliness, financial devastation, failure and rejection. In fact, she may have left several times, but returned because she felt unable to cope as a single woman. Her inability to withstand the separation will in turn result in further self-blame, and her already low self-esteem may sink even lower (Fleming, 1979; Moore, 1979).

Rose (1980) in a study of battered women discovered that fear in abused women exceeds normative levels of fear measured by standardized instruments. Indeed some of these fears are well founded. Her assailant has probably threatened to seriously injure or kill her if she leaves. "Police records indicate that thousands of women are killed and millions
severely injured by their husbands or boyfriends every year" (Mesch, 1983 p. 86). Statistics also reveal that up to 50% of the abusers have sought out and continued to beat and terrorize their wives (Moore, 1979). Legal protection, rather than end the violence may excite further abuse. Many women have been threatened with serious reprisal for taking legal action (Chimbos, 1978; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Martin, 1976; Roy, 1977). The enormous power her spouse holds over her life immobilizes and instills a belief that there is no way out. Tormented by threats of violence, feelings of low self-esteem, dependency and isolation, she is helpless (Mesch, 1983).

Community Resources

The response the abused woman receives when seeking help will either confirm or dissolve notions of helplessness. Unfortunately for most women their encounter with the helping profession is disenchancing. Social service agencies, police departments, courts and attorneys are not well equipped to meet the pressing needs of battered women (Bard, 1971; Constantino, 1981; Field and Field, 1973; Freeman, 1978; MacLeod, 1979; Martin, 1976; Miller, 1980; Nicholls, 1976; Ostrowski, 1979; Pear, 1976; Ramrattan et al., 1980; Roy, 1977; Selig, 1976; Shearing, 1976). The battered woman seeking help must visit a series of agencies in order to deal with each aspect of her problem. Women complain that they must thread their way through an official maze, stymied at every turn by a sort of circular reasoning that invariably finds an excuse for denying aid (Pear, 1976). For those women who seek court protection there may be little relief. "State laws vary widely and women find themselves shunted between civil, criminal and family court" (Shearing, 1976, p. 148). Although criminal law makes no distinction between an assault on a family
member and that on a stranger, in reality there is strong tendency in
the legal system, arising from the way it is administered, to do
everything possible to prevent family assaults from coming before
criminal courts (MacLeod, 1979). The family court or civil court
division, known as the peacemaker, usually attends to cases of domestic
violence. The attitude is preventative rather than immediate
prosecution. It is one of mediation and reconciliation (Andrew, 1973;
"Although assault and battery is a criminal offence in all states, rarely
are charges brought successfully against abusive cohabiting boyfriends or
husbands" (Mesch, 1983, p. 87).

Constantino (1981) delineates eight major weaknesses inherent in the
present social service and legal system. In the realm of social services
there is an emphasis on preservation of the family, fear and lack of
training in dealing with violent situations, inappropriate use of
psychodynamic interpretations and a lack of case integration. In the
legal realm there is a reluctance on the part of legal representatives to
become involved in situations of domestic violence, limited civil
remedies, limited criminal remedies, and an inadequate response from the
police; an understandable reaction when considering that "22 percent of
the policemen killed in the line of duty were intervening in family
disputes" (Pear, 1976, p. 14).

Although the response of community services is dim, an abused woman
should still pursue all alternatives at her disposal (Mesch, 1983). Developments are beginning to take place which may compensate for some of
the above weaknesses. Police training units have been formed in some
major cities to enable officers to respond more effectively to calls of
domestic violence (Bard, 1971; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Martin, 1976). Organizations such as the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence advocate for the rights of abused women and shelters are opening across the country to provide temporary refuge for women who need to flee an abusive situation.

Having considered all the factors which keep the battered victim in her home, the question arises as to how "a woman living in fear — of irrational attacks that leave her so passive and nervous that she's hardly able to make even small decisions — makes a major decision to leave" (Mesch, 1983, p. 150). There must be forces propelling her toward avenues of escape.

For some women, the reality surfaces when the violence escalates to the point where they believe they may be killed. For others it may arrive when they come to recognize that they are capable, but held incapable by their assailants' needs (Patrick, 1982). Snell (1964) in a study of women who took their spouses to court, found that the woman's decision to call for help was more significant than the level of violence experienced. The decision to seek help invariably involved the children in some way. Typical reasons given by the women emphasized the male child's increasing age and strength: "He is growing old enough now for his father's behaviour to affect him" or "He is big enough to really hurt his father" (Snell, 1964, p. 109). In other instances the absence of children or the spilling of violence onto the children prompted the women to leave (Fleming, 1979; Gelles, 1979). Additional factors include social position, education and economic independence. An educated woman with employment is less likely to remain in an abusive situation than women lacking these resources (Gelles, 1979).
However, not every woman who leaves a violent partner will stay away. Figures from refuges for battered women show that more than one half of the women who escape, return to their assailant because of psychological dependency (Mesch, 1983; Snyder and Fruchtman, 1981). Women who leave for a second or third time are often in a better position to begin an independent existence (Mesch, 1983). Separation is an ongoing process and not all women will disengage in the same way or at the same time. It is important, however, that resources remain available to aid the women as they progress along this continuum.
Variable Relationships

"Domestic violence occurs differentially in stable and unstable relationships, with concomitant differences in individual histories and current responses of the victim to her assailant" (Snyder and Fruchtman, 1981, p. 878). As discussed earlier, one of the most common causes of inconsistent findings has been the tendency for most studies to approach spouse abuse as a unitary phenomenon, ignoring its complexity and multidimensional nature. A glance at the array of individual contributing factors, clearly indicates that there is no one factor responsible for the varied behaviour of battered victims. In fact, more recent studies suggest that there is more than one etiological profile of the battered woman.

A current study proposing to improve differential diagnosis identified five distinctive patterns of wife abuse. In each instance the women differed in their perception of the problem and in their decision to leave or remain in an abusive situation. Data were collected at Women-in-Transition, a state-funded facility for battered women in Detroit, Michigan. The study included 119 women admitted to the shelter over a six month period. Preliminary findings revealed that only a small proportion of the women (13%) indicated an intention to return to their partner. By discharge the rate reached 34% and at the follow-up 60% of the women were found living with their assailant.

Women in group one could be distinguished by the relative stability of their relationship. Physical abuse was found to be infrequent and rarely involved the concurrent abuse of children. Sexual abuse was virtually non-existent and sexual relations were rarely used to cement the relationship after a violent outburst. Interestingly, these women
were more likely than women in other groups to initiate violence toward their partner. These women sought shelter only after receiving unusually severe injuries. The duration of their stay in shelter was brief and they were far more likely than women in any other group to be living with their partner at follow-up (Synder and Frutchman, 1981).

Women in the second group were characterized by a highly unstable, explosive relationship with their assailant. Repeated separations were not uncommon. The frequency of the abuse was not as high as the other groups, but the severity rate and the likelihood of injuries exceeded that experienced by most of the women. Physical abuse often involved a sexual component, during both the assault and in response to it. These women were unlikely to seek a short-term separation and in general were not usually found living with their partner at the follow-up. For those women who did return, 46% continued to experience physical abuse at more than twice the rate than prior to admittance to shelter (Synder and Frutchman, 1981).

In the third group, the women were victims of the most severe and chronic forms of physical abuse. These women live in constant fear and under continuous threats of violence. In many instances the children were also targets of abuse. Unlike the first group, the women were unlikely to retaliate with violence of their own toward their partner. These women did not reflect a history of abuse or neglect by their parents, or partner prior to marriage. "Because of their non-violent past and lack of tolerance for abuse, women in this group are the least likely of women to be living with their assailant at follow-up" (Synder and Frutchman, 1981, p. 883).

Women in the fourth group had two main features. There was an
inordinately high rate of child abuse by the assailant and minimal violence toward the women themselves. The level of violence toward the women was the lowest of all groups in frequency and severity. Rarely did it involve a sexual component. In coming to the shelter, these women usually seek refuge for their children and remain for only a brief interval of time. Although they frequently report an intent to return home, they are among the least likely to be living with their assailant at follow-up (Snyder and Frutchman, 1981).

In the last group the women were characterized by an extensive history of violence in their family of procreation. All the women reported extensive parental neglect and physical abuse as a child on a monthly basis. "Physical violence pervades their interpersonal relationships: 27% reported frequent abuse by their assailant prior to marriage and nearly half reported additional abuse by others" (Snyder and Frutchman, 1981, p. 883). These women have grown to expect and accept violence in their relationships with others. Amongst all five groups, these women are the most likely to seek a short-term separation and were second to group one in their likelihood to be found residing with their assailant at follow-up.

Kerstiyillo and Straus (1981) noted that an individual's behaviour is governed by internal and external forces. In citing Levinger's theory of a two person group situation, marriage was viewed as a special case of all two-person relationships and marital cohesiveness a special case of group cohesiveness. Group cohesiveness is defined as the combined field of all forces which act on members to remain in the group. Inducements to remain include the attractiveness of the group and the strength of constraints against leaving it. Inducements to leave extend to
alternatives to the relationship. The strength of a relationship is a direct function of (a) the attractiveness within, (b) the barriers surrounding the marriage, and (c) an inverse function of alternatives to the relationship. In some situations the forces inducing a person to leave may be just as strong as those forces inducing him to stay (Shelley and Adelburg, 1972).

According to the theory of interdependence, behavioural outcomes are contingent upon the interaction between the level of satisfaction experienced by an individual in an existing situation and the comparative level of satisfaction that can be gained from available alternatives (Kelley and Thibault, 1978; Pfouts, 1978). Pfouts (1978) postulated that the battered woman would make a two step decision about how she will cope with her situation. She will consider the advantages and hardships of her relationship. Secondly, having rated her overall satisfaction with the relationship, she will compare this to the satisfaction she thinks she can achieve if she opts for the best possible alternative.

In testing this schema with 35 cases of violent families from a county welfare department, Pfouts (1978) discovered four major coping responses used by battered women to deal with an abusive situation. The four differential coping responses were delineated as follows:

I. The Self Punishing Response
   - The woman blames herself for being trapped in a violent marriage in which she can neither change her husband's behaviour nor find non-violent alternatives for herself and the children.

II. The Aggressive Response
   - The woman responds to violence with violence, sometimes against her partner, but more often against her children, or she takes her anger into another violent relationship.
III. The Early Disengagement

Because she has viable alternatives, the woman either moves quickly out of the marriage or forces her partner to give up his abusive behaviour.

The Reluctant Mid-Life Disengagement

Because she has devoted many years to "saving" the marriage, the woman moves reluctantly into a non-violent alternative when she finally becomes convinced that the abuse is too high a price for her and her children.

Throughout the researchers's involvement with battered women she has observed that a high percentage of her clientele returned to an abusive situation. Some women disengaged after relatively few violent outbursts, while others prolonged this decision. Pfouts' (1978) theoretical schema offers one means of exploring this decision making process. Using her interpretation of interdependent theory it was hypothesized that levels of satisfaction would be linked to outcomes. A woman who felt her relationship offered low-satisfaction would be inclined to leave, whereas a woman with the opposite view would be inclined to return to an abusive situation. The research also provided for the possibility of dichotomic thought processes which would influence the hypotheses.
CHAPTER II
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research project was to explore the existence of a relationship between the battered woman's perception of levels of satisfaction within an abusive relationship as well as comparison levels of satisfaction which might ensue by leaving the abusive situation. It was thought that the weight accorded to each dimension would influence the decision to leave or return to a violent domicile.

Classification of the Research

Tripodi, Fellin and Meyer (1979) developed a classification system for the purpose of identifying various types of research. Three broad categories were delineated: experimental, quantitative-descriptive and exploratory research. This research project falls within the second category, a quantitative-descriptive study. Research of this nature includes:

...empirical research investigations which have as their major purposes the delineation or assessment of characteristics of phenomena, program evaluation or isolation of key variables. These studies may use formal methods of approximation to experimental design with features of statistical reliability and control to provide evidence for the testing of hypotheses. All of these studies use quantitative devices for systematically collecting data from populations, programs, or samples of populations or programs. They employ personal interviews, mailed questionnaires, and/or other rigorous data gathering devices and survey sampling procedures (Tripodi et al., 1979, p. 38).
The research project can also be classified as quantitative-descriptive hypotheses testing study. Hypothesis testing studies are:

Those quantitative-descriptive studies which contain in their design of research explicit hypotheses to be tested. The hypotheses are typically derived from theory, and they may be either statements of cause-effect relationships or statements of association between two or more variables without reference to a causal relationship (Tripodi et al., p. 39).

Research Hypotheses

Research hypotheses were formulated to provide for the systematic collection and analysis of data.

Battered women who perceive non-violent alternatives (NVA) as offering low-satisfaction (LS) and their relationship (R) with a partner as offering high-satisfaction (HS) will return to their partner (RP).

\[ H_1 \text{ If NVA=LS and R=HS then the outcome will be RP} \]

\[ H_0 \text{ If NVA=LS and R=HS then the outcome will not be RP} \]

Battered women who perceive non-violent alternatives (NVA) offering high satisfaction (HS) and their relationship (R) with partner offering low satisfaction (LS) will leave their partner (LS).

\[ H_1 \text{ If NVA=HS and R=LS then the outcome will be LP} \]

\[ H_0 \text{ If NVA=HS and R=LS then the outcome will not be LP} \]

Operational Definitions

The explication of concepts within the hypotheses was used to provide consistent and exclusive meaning for the verbal symbols to be used throughout the study.
The data collection was restricted to a sample population of in-shelter battered women. The term battered woman includes any female victim who has been physically abused by a partner. Partner refers to the man with whom she resides, and by whom she has been physically assaulted (Ramrattan et al., 1980). The relationship may take the form of a cohabitant union or legal marriage. The act of violence occurs within the context of the heterosexual relationship and includes "any contact which was not desired by the recipient. It may or may not result in physical injury. It was intended to cause harm and/or to intimidate" (Ramrattan et al., 1980, p. 163).

Straus (1980) and Gelles (1979) developed the Conflict Resolution Technique (CRT) scale to enable the measurement of physical violence. The index includes eight forms of abuse.

1. Throwing things at spouse
2. Pushing, shoving, grabbing
3. Slapping
4. Kicking, biting, or hitting with fist
5. Hit or tried to hit with something
6. Beat up
7. Threatened with a knife or gun
8. Used a knife or gun

For the purpose of this study the CRT scale serves as a measurement of physical battering. All eligible participants were women who experienced at least one of the above forms of abuse.

The actual data in the study was based upon the perceptions of the participants.
An appropriate definition of perception is that presented by Lake (1970) in citing Osgood’s theory of social perception. The basic proponents of this theory describe perception as:

...the organization of information about persons (or situations) and the attribution of properties to them, on the basis of only sketchy clues. These properties are selectively attributed in the sense that they are influenced by the perceiver’s psychological state. The processes by which information is organized are flexible; the same body of information is subject to patterning in different ways (Lake, 1970, p. 2).

Osgood’s theory takes into account the uniqueness of individual perception. Perception is a fluid process, receptive to uncontrolled influences and varies according to an individual’s psychological state. The battered woman’s perceptions are unique in that she has been conditioned by the situation she is assessing. The isolation, repeated criticism, fear and unpredictability of violence in her home will leave her with a sense of helplessness and confusion. In coming to a shelter she has little understanding of what transpired in her home and how this affects her own mental state. She is in limbo as to what direction to take and fearful of the unknown. Her perceptions will be governed by an after-the-fact experience, present experience and future unknowns. In many instances her thought processes may reflect dichotomous thinking.

Measurement problems in studies based on perceptions are intense and widespread. The influences governing participants’ response have never been adequately controlled and in many instances data is subject to the manipulation of the researcher (Lake, 1970). Within this study allowance was made for incongruency in responses. To test the degree of
ambivalence in the woman's decision, two scales were inserted which measure the woman's intent to both return and leave her partner.

The research project itself is based upon the Kelley-Thibault framework of interdependence. According to this theory "the outcomes for any participant in an ongoing interaction can be stated in terms of the rewards received and the costs incurred by the participants, where these values depend upon the behaviours produced by two persons" (Kelley and Thibault, 1978, p. 8). Behavioural outcomes depend upon the interaction between the level of satisfaction experienced by an individual in an existing situation and the comparative level of satisfaction that can be gained by available alternatives (Pfouts, 1978; Kelley and Thibault, 1978). Pfouts (1978) postulated that the battered woman would make a two-step decision about how she will cope with her situation. She will consider the total benefits of the abusive relationship in relation to the total costs. Secondly, having rated her overall satisfaction with the relationship, the woman compares this with the satisfaction she thinks she can achieve if she opts for the best possible alternative.

Constraint-Reinforcement theory defines satisfaction as a "collection of pleasures and punishments, something being satisfying if it produces more pleasures than punishment" (Shelley and Adelburg, 1972, p. 20). The number of alternatives to a situation are limited by a physical, environmental, informational, social and personal constraints. Personal constraints in particular affect the battered woman's perceptions of outcomes. The violation of personal values, beliefs and expectations of oneself induces fear of negative outcomes. In battering situations these constraints may surface in the form of fear, depression
and guilt.

To provide a working definition of satisfaction congruent with the theories of interdependence and constraint-reinforcement, a cost/benefit strategy was devised to depict levels of satisfaction. A benefit was described as that which offers pleasure or some measure of satisfaction. Within the abusive relationship a benefit may include such items as security, material possessions, excitement, advantages for the children, social approval and good times with the abusive partner (Pfouts, 1978). Outside the relationship it pertains to that which might be gained by leaving the assailant. A cost, on the other hand, refers to the factors that inhibit or deter behaviour and result in some form of negative outcome. Within the relationship these factors may include physical or mental pain, embarrassment, anxiety, conflicting forces and adverse effects on children. Outside the relationship costs refer to those losses which might occur by leaving the violent partner. The concept of loss closely parallels that of constraints. Both factors increase cautiousness in considering alternatives to the relationship.

To assess the level of satisfaction within an existing relationship as well as outside alternatives a standard for gauging the acceptability of outcomes was devised by Kelley and Thibault (1978). The researchers developed what is called the comparison level (CL) and the comparison level for alternatives (CLalt).

The CL is the standard against which the participant evaluates the "attractiveness" of the relationship or how satisfactory it is. This is the standard that reflects the quality of outcomes that the participant feels he or she deserves. Outcomes falling above the CL are experienced as relatively satisfying and those below are unsatisfactory.
The C1alt can be defined informally as the lowest level of outcomes a member will accept in the light of available alternative opportunities in other relationships. So defined, it follows that if outcomes drop below C1alt the participant will leave the relationship. The location of C1alt depends mainly on the quality of the most attractive (alternatives) readily available to the participant (Kelley and Thibault, 1978).

This comparison strategy was simplified to determine the levels of satisfaction within, this study. A relationship or alternative offering high-satisfaction was described as one in which the benefits were perceived to be greater than the costs. Conversely, a situation offering low-satisfaction was one in which the costs outweighed the benefits. According to the research hypotheses a battered woman who perceives non-violent alternatives as offering low-satisfaction and her relationship as offering high-satisfaction will return to her partner and the converse. A non-violent alternative included any alternative where the couple would no longer reside together. The rationale governing this decision is based on the awareness that bonds of symbiotic dependency are likely to persist in returning to an abusive partner, thus, the battering system remains intact (Fleming, 1979; Weitzman, 1981). Even with the onset of counseling there is a period in which the couple have not yet developed interdependent coping skills. For this reason, a woman returning to her partner is at risk.

To leave the abusive partner means the women utilized a non-violent alternative and at the time of follow-up were living separate from their assailant. To return meant the women were found living with their partner at the time of follow-up or indicated that they were returning to their partner after discharging from the shelter.
The Sample

Selltiz, Wrightman and Cook (1976) state that the basic distinction in modern sampling theory is between probability and non-probability sampling. They clarify this distinction as follows:

The essential characteristics of probability sampling is that one can specify for each element of the population the probability that it will be included in the sample. In non-probability sampling, there is no way of estimating the probability that each element has of being included in the sample, and no assurance that every element has some chance of being included (Selltiz et al., 1976, p. 516).

The research project includes a sample drawn by a non-probability sampling method. The specific subtype is that of purposive sampling.

The basic assumption behind purposive sampling is that with good judgment and an appropriate strategy one can handpick the cases to be included in the sample and thus develop samples that are satisfactory in relation to one's needs (Selltiz et al., 1976, p. 521).

For this research, criteria were developed to enable the handpicking of cases to be included in the sample population. A woman was considered eligible if she had:

* Resided at Interim House during the data collection period of April 14, 1982 to June 14, 1982.
* Experienced at least one of the eight forms of physical abuse delineated on the CRT index.
* Lived with her partner at the time of admission to the shelter.
Indicated she was returning to her partner at discharge from the shelter or the researcher secured information as to her living arrangements at follow-up.

Data Collection

The Data Collection Instrument (Appendix B) used was that of a self-explanatory closed ended questionnaire. This method of data collection was chosen to increase systematic responses from a population of women described by Interim House counsellors to vary in their ability to provide answers to open-ended questions. To ensure questions approached a level of uniform understanding, the questionnaire was pre-tested with different clients, not included in the sample. After each interval of testing, the questionnaire was revised and administered to others for further evaluation.

Individual conferences were held with various counsellors to determine the best method of presenting data collection. Since the nature of the agency's services indicating fluctuating caseloads and a need to attend to the most immediate crisis at hand it was decided that counsellors could administer the questionnaire by simply reading the cover letter and the instructions which indicated to the participant that the counsellor would be available to help if any confusion arose. Counsellors were asked to record the degrees of assistance provided and the self-explanatory questionnaire served a compensatory function in the absence of instruction.

The questionnaire was administered by eight Interim House counsellors to clients on their second day in residence. This time frame was chosen to obtain the woman's initial assessment as opposed to an assessment arising through counselling. It was also felt that there
would be a greater likelihood that the women who remained in the shelter for only a brief period would appear in the sample population.
Data Analysis

The analysis of data was done through the Statistical Analysis System (SAS). The analysis includes a brief description of the sample population, followed by an investigation of the research hypotheses. This includes any significant findings which appear to have a bearing on outcomes. Chi square was used to test the existence of a relationship between variables. According to the hypotheses a battered woman's perception of her situation and alternatives will influence her final decision. The null hypotheses state that returners and leavers will not differ in their perception of these two factors. Type I error was set equal to .05. The criterion for rejection of the null hypotheses was a probability of 5% or less.
CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND FINDINGS

The collection of data involved a description of the sample population and information related to the testing of the research hypotheses. To enable a clearer presentation of the findings, only data directly related to the hypotheses will be investigated. This includes any significant findings which have a bearing on outcomes. Demographic data will be scanned briefly to give an indication of the sample size and the generalizability of the findings.

Sample Population

The sample population consisted of 40 in-shelter battered women who resided at Interim House during the two month data collection period. The average age of the women was 28.4. Most of the women (72.5%) were married. Only 25% were involved in a cohabitant relationship. The average number of children brought to the shelter was 1.9. Almost half the women had high school education or an equivalent diploma. For those with less than high school education, the average grade completed was 10. As a whole, the sample was low-income. Sixty-four per cent were recipients of public assistance or social security. The majority of the women (67.5%) were black. Only 30% were white and one woman, Hispanic/American Indian.

The level of violence experienced was considerably high. In most instances, the abuse escalated to beatings and in 45% of the cases, weapons were involved. Thirty-five per cent of the women had received medical attention for injuries incurred during the relationship. Well over one-half (62.5%) stated that the violence occurred so many times
they could not remember the number of incidents. Additional demographic information is available in Appendix B.

Testing of the Research Hypotheses

According to the theory of interdependence behavioural outcomes are contingent upon the interaction between the level of satisfaction experienced by an individual in an existing situation and the comparative level of satisfaction that can be gained by alternatives (Pfoutis, 1978; Kelley and Thibault, 1978). Pfoutis (1978) postulated that the battered woman makes a two step decision about how she will cope with her situation. Consciously or unconsciously she will consider the total costs and benefits of the abusive relationship. Secondly, having rated her overall satisfaction with the relationship she will compare this to satisfaction she thinks she can achieve by opting for the best alternative available. In this study it was hypothesized that a battered woman will return to an abusive situation if she perceives non-violent alternatives as offering lower satisfaction. Conversely, she will leave the abusive relationship if alternatives offer higher satisfaction.

To test the hypotheses two tests of significance were conducted. Chi square (3.26, p>0.05) suggests that there is no support for the above hypotheses. The findings should be approached with some caution due to the fact that over 20% of the cells had expected counts of less than 5. Table 1 illustrates the cell distribution for the 2x3 table. Those who offered responses not outlined within the research hypotheses fell into two general categories. The participants either felt unable to provide a response or they gave the relationship and alternatives equal weights of satisfaction.
Table 1
Satisfaction with the Relationship and Non-violent Alternatives
(N=40)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Returners</th>
<th>Leavers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship = High Satisfaction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternatives = Low Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship = Low Satisfaction</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternatives = High Satisfaction</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fischer's Exact test was used to compensate for the weakness of Chi square. The findings were confirmed. Leavers and returners did not differ significantly in their perceptions (p>.05) (Bradley, 1968). Table 2 reveals the cell distribution for the 2x2 table.

Table 2
Satisfaction with the Relationship and Non-Violent Alternatives
(N=28)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Decision</th>
<th>Alternatives = High</th>
<th>Alternatives = Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship = Low</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship = High</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contrary to the hypotheses, perceived levels of satisfaction are not tied to outcomes. In fact, the findings seem to indicate the absence of
a logical decision-making sequence. What began to emerge from the findings was a flight pattern. Because the relationship was the object of pain it was rated in most instances (87%) as offering low-satisfaction. Leaving was the avenue of escape and therefore, 80% of the women rated non-violent alternatives as offering high-satisfaction. Two thirds of the women (67.55%) made both responses. The scoring in tables 3 and 4 reflects a preoccupation with the negative effects of a violent relationship. Similarly, tables 5 and 6 reflect a preoccupation with the advantages of escaping the situation. The women's responses lack objectivity. For example, 75% of the women had suffered isolation, but only 35% felt loneliness would be a hardship in trying to establish a separate residence.

Although the study reveals a positive attraction to the advantages of leaving a detrimental situation, the findings do not indicate to what extent the women actually believe they will be able to possess these gains. In reviewing tables 7 and 8, a disenchantment can be seen with respect to suggested non-violent alternatives. The majority of the women indicated that finding a separate residence would be one possible solution. Interestingly, only 42.5% felt this would be a viable alternative. Fewer women responded to legal alternatives. Legal alternatives offer little or no protection if the assailant is skillful enough to avoid contact with police officials. The police will not arrest if they are not present to witness an assault. Similarly, a mental health commitment is difficult to make if the assailant is only momentarily irrational. By the time a petition is filed the violence may have subsided. The incidence can very easily be attributed to marital problems rather than psychological impairment. One woman stated that
her safest alternative would be to leave the state of Michigan and five women felt residing at Interim House was the safest alternative. Three women stated that there were no safe alternatives. More than one-half the women shared a fear of continued violence and harassment.
Table 3
Perception of Costs in the Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs</th>
<th>N=40</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal abuse or criticism</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner keeps most of the money and I get to use very little or none</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Abuse</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>82.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarassment/Humiliation</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes I feel as though I might kill my partner</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor health</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have little or no energy to consider the needs of my children</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel sexually abused</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes feel like killing myself/have tried to kill myself</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hit my children</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children are upset when they see partner and me fighting</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>77.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel guilt</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner hits the children</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have no energy to consider my needs</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner criticizes or yells at children</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>82.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad feelings about self</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upset nerves/feelings of losing my mind</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3
Perception of Costs in the Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs</th>
<th>N=40</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I criticize or yell at children</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little or no confidence</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4

Perception of Benefits in the Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>N=40</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Support</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children receive love and affection from partner</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good times with partner</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status/recognition in being married or living with partner</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Security</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good times as a family</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children have father figure</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place to stay and possessions</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner is kind and shows affection after abuse</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Companionship</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5
Perceptions or Gains in Leaving the Abusive Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gains</th>
<th>N=40</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would have my own money</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could begin making new friends and visit old friends</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom from physical abuse</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children would be free from criticism or yelling by partner</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>57.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be more relaxed</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children would not be hit or in danger of being hit</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could begin developing self confidence in myself</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be less likely to criticize or yell at my children</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom from verbal abuse or criticism by partner</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would have energy to consider the needs of my children and myself</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be less likely to hit my children</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be my own boss and make my own decisions</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children will not have to see my partner and me fighting</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6
Perceptions of Losses in Leaving the Abusive Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Losses</th>
<th>N=40</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loss of love from partner</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money problems</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No father figure for the children</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children would experience upset in having to move to a new area, make new friends and perhaps attend a new school</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My partner's family or my own family might reject me</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children might be angry with me for leaving partner</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My life might be in danger if my partner tries to find me or he may continue harassing me</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I might not be able to make it on my own</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner may try to kidnap one or all of the children</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of sense of security</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would be difficult to raise the children as a single mother</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I may never be able to return to partner if I leave</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner may win custody of children</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loneliness</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6

Perceptions of Losses in Leaving the Abusive Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Losses</th>
<th>N=40</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would feel guilty for having left my partner</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel others would look down on me for leaving</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 7
Perception of Safe Places

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-violent Alternative</th>
<th>N=39</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living with friends</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding a place of my own</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>76.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with my parents</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with relatives</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having partner legally put out of home</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a mental health commitment</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 8
Best Safe Alternative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-violent Alternative</th>
<th>N=40</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living with friends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding a place of my own</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with parents</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having partner legally put out of home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a mental health commitment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional Findings

The intensity of the women's experience suggests an overspill of feelings at the time the questionnaire was completed. The women's behaviour is governed more by emotional than cognitive processes. To measure the degree of ambivalence in the women's stated intentions, two scales were inserted in the questionnaire which required the women to indicate the strength of their intent to leave or return to an abusive partner. Women with absolutely no desire to return and a very strong desire to leave were categorized as having taken an emphatic stance to their situation. Any woman who made a less decisive statement was labelled non-emphatic. Interestingly, 75% of those in the emphatic group left their partner and 75% of those in the non-emphatic group returned to their partner. Chi square (10.00, p<.05) revealed that returners and leavers differed significantly in their intention to leave a violent relationship. Table 9 outlines the cell distribution for the 2x2 table.

Table 9

Degree of Desire to Leave or Return
To Partner (N=40)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Response</th>
<th>Returners</th>
<th>Leavers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emphatic</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-emphatic</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The presence of ambivalence will increase the likelihood of a woman returning to an abusive situation. In order to find some homeostatic balance the scale must tip in one direction or the other. If a woman is uncertain of her readiness to terminate a problematic relationship she will have a tendency to avoid obstacles. Her own sense of insecurity results in the magnification of problems. While fear of violence may have driven her to shelter, the fear of a host of unknowns can impel her to return.

A second factor affecting the women's decision to dissolve or continue a violent relationship involved emotional attachment to the assailant. It is even possible that this factor lead to a non-emphatic response toward relationship dissolution. Chi square ($8.25, p < .05$) revealed that returners and leavers differed significantly in their emotional attachment to the assailant. Table 10 delineates the cell distribution for the 2x2 table.

Table 10

Influence of Emotional Attachment
(N=40)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response to Partner</th>
<th>Returners</th>
<th>Leavers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotionally Attached</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Attachment</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that those in the "no attachment" group may have concealed signs of attachment and therefore cannot be considered
emotionally divorced from the abusive relationship. The label simply differentiates those women who revealed attachment from those who did not exhibit emotional ties.

Cross tabulation revealed that the children had a major impact on the women's behaviour. Almost all women (92%) who indicated that their children received affection from their partner returned to their assailant. Similarly, 70% of those women who felt the absence of a father figure would be a loss to the children returned to the abusive situation. The child related concerns were combined to test the significance of the children's effect upon the women's decision. Women preoccupied with the children's welfare were labelled "concerned" and those who did not reflect this preoccupation were labelled "no concern". The labels are not indicative of a caring or uncaring parent.

The findings revealed that more than one-half the women preoccupied with their children's welfare returned to their partner. All women who did not reflect this preoccupation left their partner. The obtained value for Chi square was 12.8, (p<.05). Leavers and returners differed significantly in their preoccupation with the children. Table 11 illustrates the cell distribution for the 2x2 table.

Table 11
Influence of the Children
(N=35)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Response</th>
<th>Returners</th>
<th>Leavers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concerned</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Concern</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is interesting to note the number of women who prioritized the negative consequences of separating the children from their father as opposed to the damaging effects of witnessing violence. Thirty-one of the 35 women with children revealed that the presence of violence in the home upset the children. Of these 31 women, 58% returned to their partner. In their discomfort of breaking up the home many women do not credit themselves with the fact that what is in their own best interest could also be in the best interest of the children. In situations where the children are also targets of violence the women are more likely to leave. Of the ten women whose partner hit the children, 80% left the violent situation.

In contrast to Pfouts' (1978) study no evidence was found to support her earlier findings of differential coping patterns. Returners and leavers did not differ significantly in their perceptions of levels of satisfaction. Likewise they did not differ significantly on demographic characteristics. A slight difference in scores could be detected in reference to the length of stay in shelter and time exposed to abuse. Women who returned to their partner stayed in shelter for a shorter period of time and had been exposed to violence for a shorter period of time.
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The behaviour of the battered woman has often been viewed as self-defeating and unpredictable. Although matrimonial violence is cited as a cause for marital discord and divorce, studies reveal that many battered women remain in an abusive situation or, having left it return to it (Lystad, 1975; Mesch, 1983; Pfouts, 1978; Fructman, 1981; Star et al., 1980). From a prophylactic point of view, it is interesting to note the number of women who were warned of the onset of violence in their relationship (Faulk, 1974). In a study of battered victims only one-half the women cited physical abuse as their primary reason for leaving their partner (Ronsville, 1978). Some women respond to the threatening situation with counter threats of divorce or suicide. The majority of women follow neither course of action, preferring frequent periods of separation, usually lasting several days or weeks (Star et al., 1979). Not every woman who leaves a man will stay gone. The decision to leave a violent situation is not clear cut. Figures from refuges for battered women show that more than half the women who escape their assaultive partner return to him because of fear and psychological dependency (Mesch, 1983).

In this study it was hypothesized that a battered woman would leave her abusive mate if alternatives offered higher satisfaction than the relationship. Conversely, she would return to the abusive situation if alternatives did not offer higher satisfaction. Because the women's behaviour does not follow patterns of predictability there was no support for the research hypotheses. The women's behaviour appeared to be
influenced by emotional factors as opposed to logic. What emerged from the findings was a flight response. The majority of the women reported alternatives offered high satisfaction and their relationship low satisfaction. In 87% of the cases the relationship was seen as the object of pain and therefore, 80% responded favourably to the advantages of escaping the situation. Although 67.5% made both responses, 40% did not utilize a non-violent alternative and returned to their partner. The findings revealed that leavers and returners did not differ significantly in their perceptions.

A measure of ambivalence revealed that emotional factors had a significant impact on the women's behaviour. Seventy-five per cent of the women who wavered in their intent to leave the violent situation, returned to their partner. Interestingly, 75% of those women who did not waver in their intent to terminate a violent relationship, left their partner. The presence of ambivalence appeared to increase the likelihood of a woman returning to an abusive environment. Shelter statistics reveal that women who leave for the second or third time are often better equipped to begin an independent existence. This suggests that disengagement is an ongoing process rather than the outcome of one absolute and final decision.

Another factor which may have influenced the women's behaviour is the fact the participants were asked to compare an existing situation with an unknown. According to Kelley and Thibault (1978) the level of satisfaction in a relationship is contingent upon the quality of the most attractive readily available alternative. In this study the women had no immediate replacement satisfaction to aid them in assessing their situation. To leave the relationship requires stepping out into an
unknown. Alternative living arrangements must be found and even when an apartment or flat is secured the women often start out with less than the basic necessities. There may be one bed, no linens, a few replacement clothes given by the shelter and three or four hungry children to be fed. The cupboards will be unstocked and foodstamps will only minimally provide for family members. In some instances the attractiveness of alternatives may come to rest heavily upon the women's tolerance of a violent mate. The question of whether to leave or stay narrows down to a choice between the "worse of two evils".

There is a discrepancy between what is available to an individual and what is actually satisfying. "An individual may be reinforced to engage in behaviour events which are not satisfying" (Shelley and Adelburg, 1982, p. 20). In this study a high percentage of women were unable to relinquish a dissatisfying relationship. Unfortunately, the research design failed to uncover those constraining factors which may have affected outcomes.

Kerstiyollo and Straus (1981) in citing Levinger's interpretation of the two person group situation, capitalized upon the fact that inducements to remain in a relationship are the function of not only the attractiveness within, but constraints against leaving it. In this study it is difficult to isolate constraining variables because the women did not objectively assess their predicament. The flight response limited their focus to the here-and-now. They were unable to rationally weigh the consequences of establishing a separate existence. If the questionnaire had been administered at a later time there is a possibility that the scores would have differed.

The intensity of the women's experiences suggests a spill over
effect. Still traumatized by the mental and physical violence it is unlikely that the women were able to hold these feelings constant in order to form an objective response to the questionnaire. The women related feelings of fear (87.5%), depression (80%) and a feeling of upset and losing their mind (75%). All three factors can have a significant effect upon motivational levels. Rose (1980) discovered that fear in battered women exceeds normative levels of fear as measured by standardized instruments. Fear often immobilizes the victim, blocking her ability to take appropriate action (Fleming, 1979; Martin, 1976; Mesch, 1983). Similarly, depression effects an individual's perceptions of alternatives. A person temporarily depressed gives fewer responses that look forward to the amelioration or improvement of a frustrating situation. The depressed individual feels helpless and exhibits behaviours that are not goal directed (Shelley, 1982). This is particularly evident in situations where the victim believes she has no power over her destiny (Miller, 1980). Tormented by feelings of low self-esteem, dependency and isolation she may wholeheartedly accept the notion that she is helpless without her partner (Mesch, 1983). Although the study reveals a positive attraction to the advantages of leaving an abusive situation, there is no indication as to what extent the women actually believe they will be able to possess these gains. Forty per cent of the women reflected a disenchantment with alternatives. Fifteen per cent felt Interim House was the safest alternative. One woman stated she would have to leave the state of Michigan. Five per cent felt there were no safe alternatives and 20% did not provide a viable alternative to their situation.

The statistical analysis revealed two additional variables which
had a noticeable bearing on outcomes. Women who returned to their partner revealed signs of emotional attachment and were preoccupied with the children's welfare. Both these factors can affect the level of ambivalence encountered in trying to make a decision. As seen earlier, the presence of ambivalence had a significant effect upon the women's behaviour.

From a clinical standpoint statements of attachment sometimes have an addictive quality about them. The abuser and his wife may use each other as a form of security with the woman becoming the target of her partner's rage when this sense of security is threatened (Fleming, 1979).

If she was an abused child there may be an acceptance of violence. Hitting may be seen as an expression of love. She may cling to the relationship because it is the only love she knows. In many instances the victim is told that no one would ever put up with her or that she will never get a good paying job or another mate (Mesch, 1983). The battering relationship is intense and thrives on isolation. It is, therefore, impossible for one party to leave without seriously threatening dependency needs (Shelley and Le Laurin, 1982; Weitzman, 1982). Absence from the abusive partner will activate a host of insecurities.

What appears to be love may be feelings of ambivalence or even unmitigated hatred. There are past periods of idealism and affection to contend with as well as the knowledge that the abusive partner may not be violent all the time. Hotaling (1974) states that the structural make up of relationships is such that violations are not often seen as aggressive, but as accidents, a response to situational demands or the
result of alcohol or drugs. This reduces the victim's ability to recognize and validate her sense of personal harm. In this study returners and leavers differed significantly in their attachment to their assailant. Seventy percent of the women who displayed signs of emotional attachment returned to an abusive situation and 76.5% of the women who did not display this attachment left their partner.

Leavers and returners also differed significantly in their preoccupation with the children's welfare. Sixty-nine percent of the women who were preoccupied with their children's welfare returned to an abusive situation whereas all women who did not reflect this preoccupation left their partner. The majority of the women felt that the children would be harmed by separation from their father. Somehow the fact that the father was violent was overlooked, especially if he offered affection to the children. Although 31 of the 35 women with children noted that the children were upset by the violence, 58% of these women returned to their partner.

Moore (1975) labelled children in violent homes, "Yo-Yo" children. Pfouts and Schopler (1982) called them the "silent bystanders". In both instances the children are portrayed as powerless and helpless.

The pattern of the Yo-Yo syndrome begins with a downward thrust as the Yo-Yo moves, with parents' inability to discuss in any rational way their problems and difficulties. The continuum is maintained by the parties accusing each other of extramarital relationships, real or imagined, and the wife's excessive dependence upon her own mother. The husband then threatens or beats his wife, who runs away, taking one or more of the children with her. Usually a child is left in the home as an entree for her to return, and return she inevitably will within a few hours or weeks. Therefore, just as it is felt that the Yo-Yo is at rest at the end of the string, the pattern of restlessness and violence begins all over again. (Moore, 1975, pp. 557-558)
The battered women's needs are often so intense that she is unable to recognize the consequences of her flight behaviour. Several studies have hypothesized a form of ricochet violence from husband to wife to child. Only 10% of the women acknowledged the emergence of this pattern. In most instances the children reveal aspects of the marital dysfunction. They may act out violence with siblings, parents, peers or authority figures. Some children internalize the conflict and develop psychosomatic symptoms. Feelings of self-hatred are not uncommon. In other instances the children develop school problems. They may be shaken from an evening's episode of screaming and fighting or plagued with fears about their mother's safety while absent from home. In most situations, the violence is carried over by the children to the next generation.

By believing that the children need a father figure, many women fail to recognize that it is the current situation that is harmful and the children would be better off in a non-violent setting despite the absence of a father figure and economic deprivations (Fleming, 1979). In fact the children may prefer a separation as opposed to a violent home setting. One child commented, "I went to my room and prayed, but they still fight" and another child remarked, "I go down to the basement and put my hands over my ears so I won't hear them fighting."

In situations where the violence spills over to the children, the women may be more inclined to leave their partner. Although reluctant to seek help for herself, the battered woman may take action once it becomes apparent that her children are also victims of physical abuse. In this study 8 out of 10 women whose partner abused the children left the abusive situation.
Contrary to Pfouts' (1978) study the women differed very little in their perceptions of levels of satisfaction with the relationship and non-violent alternatives. Similarly, they did not differ markedly in their demographic characteristics. The women did not exhibit the coping responses hypothesized in this study. Disengagement appears to be an ongoing process and does not follow patterns of predictability. The dynamics of the battering situation is such that a flight response is not uncommon.
Women who seek the services of a domestic violence shelter are in a state of crisis. The dynamics of the battering situation are such that a flight response is not uncommon. The women's emotions are at a high pitch and their perception of the situation does not often coincide with that of the helping profession. A woman will return to her partner if she is not convinced that dissolution of the relationship is in her best interest. Research reveals that most women attempt to dissolve a violent relationship only after a history of repeated conflict and reconciliation (Bass and Rice, 1972; Mesch, 1983; Pfouts, 1978; Star, et al., 1979). Roundsville's (1978) study revealed that only one half of the women who left their partner cited physical abuse as their primary reason for leaving.

Professionals serving battered women need to address the fact that many of their clients will return to an abusive situation. The decision to seek help is not indicative of the women's desire to terminate a problematic relationship. Disengagement is an ongoing process. Because the women are in a potentially dangerous and even lethal situation, many caseworkers bypass this ongoing process. They concentrate their efforts on what they perceive as the best solution to the problem. The women are encouraged to leave the abusive situation and goals are set for a transition to independent living. Much of the frustration and cynicism experienced by caseworkers results from their decision to over step the client's reality in an effort to convince her of their own understanding of the problem. Often, what the client feels and believes is more real
than the caseworker's diagnosis of the situation.

Interventive plans need to include a preventive focus and cannot carry the assumption that women seeking help will leave their partner. Referrals should be given for couple or assailant counselling. The value of personal counselling needs to be stressed should the assailant refuse professional help. A woman who is given the tools to understand her dilemma is in a better position for assessing the prognosis of her relationship. The women also need to develop a strategy for fleeing the home environment should the violence recur. They will encounter less frustration in coming to the shelter if they have taken the necessary precautions of hiding important papers, money, clothing and so forth. The Task Force on Family Violence identified the women's most immediate needs as "relevant information, practical help and financial assistance, opportunity to acquire skills and jobs, and adequate housing" (McLeod, 1979). Assistance of this nature will broaden the women's perception of available alternatives and will reduce their sense of entrapment.

Professionals need to be aware of signs indicating a woman may return to an abusive situation. In this study, women who returned to their partner were markedly ambivalent about a separation. Returners also revealed signs of emotional attachment and were preoccupied with their children's welfare. Counselling needs to include a family perspective to enable the woman to deal with the effects of her decision on the children. In most instances, the woman are not aware of their children's plight. The women need to be informed of the effects of violence. In all instances the helping profession needs to consider each individual's situation aside from population and group characteristics.
Support and counselling should be gauged according to the needs of the women and children. For this reason, workers need to get in touch with their fears about the women's safety. This will enable professionals to move with the client instead of pushing her toward the goal that will appease their fears.
APPENDIX A

THE BLACK FAMILY
The Black Family

Information on the degree of family violence between racial groups is sparse (Lystad, 1975). Statistical reports reveal that spouse abuse is not confined to racial, social, economic or geographical boundaries (MacLeod, 1979). However, "we live in a society in which people are oppressed because of their race, class and/or culture" (Sullivan, 1981, p. 53). According to Steinmetz (1980) "people who experience a greater amount of conflict, stress, and frustration and have fewer resources for alleviating these problems are likely to experience more family violence" (p.35). Minority groups fall within this category. In addition, cultural consistency theory asserts that cultural norms which do not have a manifest reference to violence can affect the level of violence in the home (Caroll, 1974).

The American black family has four distinct traits which distinguish it from other cultural groups: 1) the black people came from a continent with values and norms dissimilar to the American way of life; 2) they were descendants of varied tribal formulations, each with its own language, culture, and tradition; 3) in the beginning the men came without women; and 4) the black people came in bondage (Staples, 1979). The black family, from the time it reached the shores of America through to present, has undergone radical change. Under the slave era family traditions were dissolved to meet the economic interests of slaveholders. As a consequence, emancipation left the black family in a state of "limbo". They became free men with little knowledge as to how to reorganize themselves according to white standards. To date the black family is still held at distance in its attempts to aspire to white ideals. "White people, because the society is controlled by other white
people, automatically get certain benefits from being white" (Sullivan, 1981, p. 53). These benefits are denied to people of colour just as automatically (Sullivan, 1981). It is this situation that has placed the black family in a position of continual strain, particularly those members of the low-income group. These conditions need to be recognized in order to understand the significance of violence in the black family. In the discussion to follow, attention will be given to cultural and external factors which have the potential of increasing violence in the black home. In particular, focus will be given to the plight of low-income black people. This is not to suggest the black family is more violent than other cultural groups, but to recognize that throughout American history it has been subject to conflict, stress, and frustration, factors which can increase the likelihood of violence.

The impact of slavery and segregation has had a debilitating effect upon the black family. Family control was shattered causing the black family to be replaced as the primary norm-setter (Lystad, 1975). The black family is by descent patriarchal; however, under the slavery system it lost its right to preserve this trend. The character of marriage changed significantly under the slave era. Marriage became subject to conditions imposed by slave holders (Staples, 1973). For most, marriage was a fragile bond that depended on the way the partners felt toward each other (Bernard, 1966). The slaves had no legal rights; therefore, their marriage received no recognition in the state marriage statutes (Staples, 1973).

Family relations were disrupted by the economic interests of the slave holders. Wives were economically independent of their partners,
and the husbands' function became biological rather than sociological or economic (Staples, 1971). Under the slave system the husband could no longer maintain a leadership position in his household. He was restricted to working in the fields and caring children rather than providing economic support or physical protection to family members. It was this inability to protect his wife and children from the physical and sexual abuse of the slave masters that most pained him (Staples, 1976). Bound by a sense of helplessness, the black male became indoctrinated through observable events which linked supremacy and control to physical violence.

After the civil war a reversal trend set in. As the old order crumbled with the onset of emancipation, millions of black people left the rural communities of the south, cutting themselves loose from family and friend in an effort to find work and adventure (Frasier, 1966). In order to curb this situation and ensure a steady supply of labour for the upkeep of plantations, the south enacted severe laws to regulate the vagrancy of homeless black people. At the same time concern arose as to the laissez faire relationships of black couples, and efforts were made to stabilize cohabitant unions (Bernard, 1966). Relationships were built on romantic qualities and when the romance ended so too the relationship dissolved (Frasier, 1966). One legislative approach involved a simple declaration requiring all existing relationships under slavery to be binding. However, this law left many free men open to penalties of desertion, bigamy and adultery for, as slaves, many had more than one mate. Thus, in many states the law was altered to legalize marriages dating from the passage of the Reconstruction Acts. Efforts were made to encourage the registration of marriage before any state, county, or
municipal officer; and failure to comply left persons open to penalties of adulthood. Concessions were usually made for common-law marriages. Thus, the outside world came increasingly to impinge upon the black way of life; and with the advent of child welfare programs and public health activities, all kinds of documentary proof of relationships became necessary (Bernard, 1966).

There were, however, differing levels of conformity. For some blacks conformity to institutional norms of monogamous marriage was merely superficial. Lacking the traditional preparation for such unions, the duty-responsibility commitment which constituted monogamous marriage remained foreign. Love, jealousy, resentment and all spontaneous reactions were still the basis of relationships, and the fact that marriage had been solemnized did not always mean the significance was understood. At most it was a life-long commitment (Bernard, 1966).

To a certain extent, institutional restraints made superficial adaptation inevitable. The proponents of the institutional norms said, in effect: you may not have sexual relations until you are married, and you must not marry until you are able to support a family; but we won’t do a thing to help you support yourself and your children, and the possibility is high that you may never be able to on a permanent basis; therefore, you may not have sexual relations ever (Bernard, 1966). The institutional norms implied that conformity was impossible; thus, institutional ways for evading norms had to be devised and a less desirable but possible pattern adopted. In the case of the family and marriage, the pattern is one in which love supersedes duty and responsibility. Sexual relationships are based on mutual attraction with partners providing emotional warmth and support to one another. The
relationship lasts only as long as the attraction, and new unions may be formed thereafter (Bernard, 1966).

Although institutional norms of monogamous marriage could be evaded, the black male could not evade white standards which linked social advancement and patriarchy. After the civil war, the black family was expected to once again assume a patriarchal status. However, the black male was not given the income nor accredited the social status needed to head a household. In fact, economic restraints often required the black woman to use her own personal resources to keep the family fed, clothed, and cared for (Bernard, 1966; Staples, 1971). Traditionally black women have worked outside the home and have a higher labor force participation than white wives. The precarious employment situation of the black male has led to both partners working in an attempt to balance any changes in the unemployment status of the other (Staples, 1971). Since the beginning of slavery, the black woman has remained relatively economically independent of her partner. The semblance of the black female dominance today can be traced to the persistent rate of high unemployment among black males which prevents them from becoming the major economic support of their family (Staples, 1971). Historically female black children were given preference when educational opportunities arose, suggesting that many black males are held at a disadvantage in a society in which educational attainment and high income are prerequisites to upward mobility. It is difficult to imagine black males celebrating the fact that over 60% of the college degrees awarded to blacks are awarded to black women (Staples, 1971).

Since American society is traditionally patriarchal, the position of women as head of households becomes a point from which to deprecate the
male not fulfilling the requirements of a patriarchal society. In some instances, this source of conflict may lead to the onset of violence in the home. According to Hotaling and Straus (1980), a husband, whether white or black, who wants to be the dominant figure in the home, but has little or no education, a job that is of low prestige and income, and poor interpersonal skills, may resort to violence to maintain his desired position. In the lower income groups this struggle appears in more aggravated form.

One of the main effects of emancipation and redistribution of the black population has been the differentiation of sex and family relations according to socio-economic status, particularly in the towns and cities (Stapelos, 1971). For example, the low-income black family is repeatedly described in the literature as matriarchal. Studies which appear to be more inclusive of higher income families portray the black family as bearing an egalitarian status (Beckett and Smith, 1981). This apparent divergence from the traditional norms of male dominance can be explained, in part, by the black male experiencing at arm's length the larger cultural definition of man-woman relationships which are generally defined as being socially and economically controlled by the male" (Axelon, 1970, p. 457). The present social system is organized in such a way that it frustrates in large measure the black males' ability to fulfill the larger cultural definition of manhood; thus, "forcing him to accept as normal, the variation in the cultural theme that is the black males' role in the United States, especially in the urban ghetto" (Axelon, 1970, p. 457).

In the low income group, manhood is based upon rigid adherence to narrow role expectations of man-woman relationships. If the family is
unstable or burdened by stressful conditions this could lead to violence (Star, 1980; Weitzman, 1980). In addition, husbands that do not work may maintain contact with their peer group and gradually move back into the street system, where they are likely to become involved in activities that threaten family relationships. Alcohol is a great enemy of the lower-class housewife, both black and white. Lower-class wives fear the use of alcohol by husbands as it may mean greater financial strain, violence, or sexual involvement with other women. In many instances the precipitating causes of marital disruption fall into economic or sexual categories (Rainwater, 1971).

In a study of post-marital satisfaction, findings revealed that for many low-income black women marriage was a misfortune. Once having experienced marriage, few saw much to recommend in the future. Leibow's study of lower-class black males also revealed a pervasive disenchantment with marriage (Staples, 1971). Marriage was viewed as a series of public and private fights between spouses over how to feed, clothe, and house a wife and child. One study of low-income black women revealed that 63% of the women would not marry if they had the opportunity to do it over again. In general they were dissatisfied with their husbands as lovers and providers. They viewed men as exploitive and irresponsible, and overall communication was poor. The black male was found to confuse sexual and social roles, viewing female figures as masculine and authoritative. Their attitude was one of mistrust, hostility and resentful dependency (Staples, 1971).

The outcome of irremediable conflict is termination of the relationship and the search for a new mate. The painful reality remains
that there is an extremely low ratio of men to women in the black community. For many black women, in forfeiting a marriage they must compete for a relatively small commodity of available men. Her attitude toward marriage indicates that she does expect to find a reliable satisfying partner. Thus, shortcomings, even violence, may be tolerated for the sake of companionship (Rhodes, 1971).

"If a battered woman is black, there may be reasons peculiar to her cultural experience that make her reluctant to leave an abusive relationship" (Mesch, 1983, p. 87). Traditionally, the black woman has been portrayed and used as a worker to be exploited or as a sex toy or as property to be owned. "Her victimization has been justified or excused by the flimsy notion that the black woman is exceptionally resilient and tough — 'she can take it'" (Mesch, 1983, p. 87). Because the historical pattern in America has been to break up the black family, many black women place a strong emphasis on keeping their family together at all costs. It was reported in one shelter that some black women believe that to leave their marriages, even violent ones, is to somehow turn their backs on the black man, to give into the "oppressor" or to betray their culture. There is a need to understand that violence cuts across all racial, ethnic and socio-economic lines. This is not to say that violence does not have a racial as well as sexual cause. Both our race and our sex lead to violence against women as a whole (Mesch, 1983).
APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA
TABLE 12
Evaluation of Questionnaire Eligibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Questionnaires</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed eligible questionnaires</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants not living with partner</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants not physically assaulted</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete questionnaires</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No means of follow-up</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Stay</td>
<td>Days</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


TABLE 14
Age of Client Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>N=40</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43-47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38-42</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-37</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-27</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 15

Age of Abusive Partner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>N=40</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>52-56</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47-51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42-46</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37-41</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32-36</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-31</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>N=40</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 child</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 children</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 children</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 children</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 17

Age of Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>N=40</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than a year</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 and over</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 18
Duration of the Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years</th>
<th>N=40</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than a year</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9 years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 19

**Church Involvement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Church or Service Attendance</th>
<th>N=40</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once a week or more</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or three times per month</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several times a year</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a year or less</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 20

**Women's Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of Education</th>
<th>N=40</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma/G.E.D.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Degree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 21

**Partner's Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of Education</th>
<th>N=40</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma/G.E.D.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Degree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 22
Women's Net Income at Time of Assault

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of Income</th>
<th>N=40</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $200/mo.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$201-$400/mo.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$401-$600/mo.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$601-$800/mo.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$801 or more per mo.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No income</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 23
Major Source of Women's Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>N=25</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security/Public Assistance</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 24
Partner's Net Income at Time of Assault

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of Income</th>
<th>N=40</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $200/mo.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$201-$400/mo.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$401-$600/mo.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$601-$800/mo.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$801-$1,000/mo.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,001-$1,500/mo.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1.501 or more per mo.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No income</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 25
Major Source of Partner's Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>N=30</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>56.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security/Public Assistance</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 26

Estimated Length of Time Exposed to Abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Time</th>
<th>N=37</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than a year</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms of Abuse</td>
<td>N=40</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throwing things at you</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushing, shoving, grabbing</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kicking, biting, hitting with the fist</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hit or tried to hit with something</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beat up</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>77.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened with knife or gun</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used a knife or gun</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 28

Nature of Assault When Seeking Shelter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Assault</th>
<th>N=40</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handgun</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longgun</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting instrument</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blunt weapon/object</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hands/fist/feet</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological/verbal</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 29
Help Seeking Behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Help</th>
<th>N=40</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Called Police</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Help</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE
1. Client No. __________

2. Length of stay at Interim House __________

3. No. of times stayed at Interim House ______

4. Age:
   ______ Client
   ______ Spouse

5. No. of children ______

6. Ages of children:
   ______ 1st  ______ 2nd
   ______ 2nd  ______ 5th
   ______ 3rd  ______ 6th

7. Marital Status:
   ______ Legally married
   ______ Not married, but involved in a cohabitant relationship

8. Duration of relationship: __________

9. Client's Education:
   ______ Less than high school
   ______ High School Diploma/GED
   ______ Some college
   ______ College Degree
   ______ Unknown

10. Spouse's Education:
    ______ Less than high school
    ______ High School Diploma/GED
    ______ Some college
    ______ College Degree
    ______ Unknown

11. Religious Affiliation:
    ______ Protestant
    ______ Catholic
    ______ Jewish
    ______ Muslim
    ______ Other (specify) ______

12. Religious involvement (frequency of service attendance):
    ______ Once a week or more
    ______ Two or three times per month
    ______ Once per month
    ______ Several times per year
    ______ Once a year or less
    ______ Not at all

13. Race:
    ______ White
    ______ Black
    ______ Oriental
    ______ Hispanic
    ______ Arabic
    ______ American Indian
    ______ Other (specify) ______
14. Client's net income at time of assault
   ___ Less than $200/month
   ___ $201-$400/month
   ___ $401-$600/month
   ___ $601-$800/month
   ___ $800 or more per month
   ___ No income
   ___ Unknown

15. Spouse's net income at time of assault
   ___ Less than $200/month
   ___ $201-$400/month
   ___ $401-$600/month
   ___ $601-$800/month
   ___ $801-$1,000/month
   ___ $1,000-$1,500/month
   ___ $1,501 or more per month
   ___ No income
   ___ Unknown

16. Major source of client's income:
   ___ Client's employment
   ___ Social Security/public assistance
   ___ Other (specify)
   ___ Unknown

17. Major source of spouse's income:
   ___ Spouse's employment
   ___ Social Security/public assistance
   ___ Other (specify)
   ___ Unknown

Abuse History

18. Was client physically abused as a child?
   ___ Yes
   ___ No
   ___ Unknown

19. (a) Was there physical abuse between the client's parents?
   ___ Yes
   ___ No
   ___ Unknown

(b) If yes, did the parents separate/divorce as a result of the abuse?
   ___ Yes
   ___ No
   ___ Unknown

20. Estimated length of time client has been exposed to abuse:
   ___ Less than a year
   ___ More than a year, (specify) __________
   ___ Unknown

21. Has client sought help for this problem in the past?
   ___ Medical
   ___ Financial
   ___ Called police, # ______ of time
   ___ Counselling
   ___ Shelter
   ___ Legal help
   ___ Other (specify) __________
22. What was the nature of assault when seeking shelter at Interim House?

___ Handgun
___ Long gun
___ Cutting instrument
___ Blunt weapon/object
___ Hands/fist/feet
___ Psychological/verbal abuse
___ Other (specify) __________
___ Unknown
1. At time of discharge from Interim House did the client:
   - ___ Return to partner?
   - ___ Return to home without partner?
   - ___ Leave partner and home?
   - ___ Unknown

2. At the time of follow-up, was the client living:
   - ___ With partner?
   - ___ Separate from partner?
   - ___ Unknown

3. Was the information concerning the client's relationship with partner secured from:
   - ___ Client?
   - ___ Relative?
   - ___ Friend?
   - ___ Other?
A questionnaire has been developed with the purpose of gathering information that will lead to a greater understanding of women who like yourself have experienced abuse in the home. Since you and those women faced with similar situations are the only persons qualified to provide this information, I would like to ask you to share in this research project.

Your time and sharing will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely Yours,

Deborah Vanderloo
Project Worker and Counsellor
Interim House
Instructions:

Before you begin answering the questions, please make sure your counsellor has filled in your client number and the date is signed. Your number is needed to keep your answers confidential. After this is done, begin answering the questions in the order they appear and please answer every question. If you have any difficulty ask your counsellor for help. It is very important that every question is answered as incomplete answers will make it impossible to use your replies.

1. What forms of abuse have you experienced during the time that you lived with your partner? (Check as many as apply to your situation)

   ___ Throwing things at you
   ___ Pushing, shoving or grabbing
   ___ Kicking, biting or hitting with the fist
   ___ Hit or tried to hit with something
   ___ Beat up
   ___ Threatened with a knife or gun
   ___ Used a knife or gun

2. About how many times has the abuse occurred?

   ___ 1 time
   ___ 2 times
   ___ 3 times
   ___ 4 times
   ___ 5 times
   ___ 6 times
   ___ 7 times
   ___ 8 times
   ___ So many times I forget
3. What are some of the difficulties in living with your partner? (Check as many as apply to your situation)

(a) ___ Verbal abuse or criticism by partner
(b) ___ Isolation (cut off by people)
(c) ___ Partner keeps all or most of the money and I get to use very little or none of it
(d) ___ Physical abuse by partner
(e) ___ Embarrassment or feelings of humiliation
(f) ___ Sometimes I feel as though I might kill my partner

(g) ___ Poor health
(h) ___ I have little energy to consider the needs of my children
(i) ___ I feel sexually abused by my partner
(j) ___ I sometimes feel like killing myself or have tried to kill myself
(k) ___ I hit my children
(l) ___ Children are upset when they see my partner and myself fighting

(m) ___ I feel guilt
(n) ___ Partner hits the children
(o) ___ I have no energy to consider my own needs
(p) ___ Partner criticizes or yells at the children
(q) ___ Fear
(r) ___ I have bad feelings about myself
(s) ___ Upset nerves or feelings of losing my mind
(t) ___ I criticize or yell at the children
(u) ___ Depression
(v) ___ I have little or no confidence in myself
(w) ___ Other (specify)

(x) ___ None of the above
4. Do you see any good things about living with your partner? (Check as many as apply to your situation)

(a) ___ Love
(b) ___ Financial Support
(c) ___ Children receive love and affection from partner
(d) ___ Good times with partner
(e) ___ Status or recognition in being married or living with partner (social approval)
(f) ___ Sense of security

(g) ___ Good times as a family
(h) ___ Children have father figure
(i) ___ Place to stay and possessions
(j) ___ Partner is kind and shows affection after he abuses me
(k) ___ Companionship
(l) ___ Other (specify) ________________________________________
(m) ___ None of the above

5. In thinking about the difficulties and the good things in living with your partner: (Please check only one answer)

Do the difficulties outweigh the good things ___

Do the good things outweigh the difficulties ___
6. In leaving your partner what safe place(s) could you go to? (Check as many as apply to your situation)

(a) ___ Living with friends
(b) ___ Finding a place of my own
(c) ___ Living with my parents
(d) ___ Living with relatives
(e) ___ Having partner legally put out of home and return to the place
(f) ___ Having partner committed to a hospital for the mentally ill and return to same place
(g) ___ Other (specify) ________________________________

7. Choosing from the above, which safe place seems the best?

8. Wherever you go, would you take the children with you?

___ Yes
___ No
___ I have no children
9. What would you gain if you left your partner and went to one of these safe places? (Check as many as apply to your situation)

(a) ___ I would have my own money
(b) ___ I could begin making new friends and visit old ones
(c) ___ Freedom from physical abuse by partner
(d) ___ Children would be free from criticism or yelling by partner
(e) ___ I would be more relaxed
(f) ___ Children would not be hit or be in danger of being hit by partner
(g) ___ I could begin developing confidence in myself
(h) ___ I would be less likely to criticize or yell at my children
(i) ___ Freedom from verbal abuse or criticism by partner
(j) ___ I would have more energy to consider the needs of my children and myself
(k) ___ I would be less likely to hit my children
(l) ___ I would be my own boss and make my own decisions
(m) ___ Children will not have to see my partner and myself fighting
(n) ___ Other (specify) ____________________________
(o) ___ None of the above
10. What would you lose if you left your partner and went to one of these safe places? (Check as many as apply to your situation)

(a) ___ Loss of love from partner

(b) ___ Money problems

(c) ___ No father figure for children

(d) ___ Children would experience upset in having to move to a new area, make new friends and perhaps attending a new school

(e) ___ My partner's family or my own family might reject me

(f) ___ Children might be angry with me for leaving partner

(g) ___ My life might be in danger if my partner tries to find me or he may continue harassing me.

(h) ___ I might not be able to make it on my own

(i) ___ Partner may try to kidnap one or all of my children

(j) ___ Loss of sense of security

(k) ___ It would be difficult to raise the children as a single mother

(l) ___ I may never be able to return to my partner if I leave him

(m) ___ Partner might win custody of the children

(n) ___ Loneliness

(o) ___ I would feel guilty for having left partner

(p) ___ I feel others would look down on me for leaving partner

(q) ___ Other (specify) __________________________

(r) ___ None of the above
11. In thinking about the gains and losses in leaving your partner:
   (Please check only one answer)
   Do the gains outweigh the losses
   Do the losses outweigh the gains

12. Right now how do you feel about: (Please circle one answer on each line)
   (a) Returning to partner:
       
       |   1 | 2  | 3 | 4 | 5 |
       |-----|----|---|---|---|
       | Very strong | Strong desire | Some desire | Little desire | No desire |
       | desire to return | to return | to return | to return | to return |

   (b) Leaving partner:
       
       |   1 | 2  | 3 | 4 | 5 |
       |-----|----|---|---|---|
       | Very strong | Strong desire | Some desire | Little desire | No desire |
       | desire to leave | to leave | to leave | to leave | to leave |

THANK YOU FOR GIVING OF YOURSELF

Deborah Vanderloo
Project Worker and Counsellor
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-126-


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VITA AUCTORIS

Deborah Maria Vanderloo was born in Cambridge, Ontario on May 11, 1958. She attended a series of rural elementary schools in Puslinch Township. In 1977, she graduated from Guelph Collegiate Vocational Institute with her Secondary School Graduation Honours Diploma. She then completed one year of undergraduate work at the University of Western Ontario. With one year of social science, she enrolled in the Social Work Program at the University of Windsor. It was during her summer interim that she first began her work with abused women. She spent the summers of 1980 and 1981 working for the Cambridge Family Crisis Shelter. In 1981, she received her Bachelor of Social Work degree.

During 1981, Miss Vanderloo was accepted into the School of Social Work Graduate Program. She did her internship at Interim House, a domestic violence shelter in Detroit and was later hired as a full-time caseworker. The agency negotiated a work permit with the U.S. Immigration Department, enabling her to offer services for one year. In the fall of 1983, she plans to graduate with her Master of Social Work degree.