



Western Michigan University
ScholarWorks at WMU

Dissertations

Graduate College

12-1991

Level of Ego Development and Degree of Distress Experienced During Marital Separation

Richard A. Strait
Western Michigan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dissertations>



Part of the Counseling Commons

Recommended Citation

Strait, Richard A., "Level of Ego Development and Degree of Distress Experienced During Marital Separation" (1991). *Dissertations*. 2042.

<https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dissertations/2042>

This Dissertation-Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate College at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.



LEVEL OF EGO DEVELOPMENT AND DEGREE OF DISTRESS
EXPERIENCED DURING MARITAL SEPARATION

by

Richard A. Strait

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Education
Department of Counselor Education
and Counseling Psychology

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
December 1991

LEVEL OF EGO DEVELOPMENT AND DEGREE OF DISTRESS
EXPERIENCED DURING MARITAL SEPARATION

Richard A. Strait, Ed.D.

Western Michigan University, 1991

The purpose of this study was to determine whether reactions to marital separation and divorce could be differentiated on the basis of level of ego development. A sample of 72 divorcing persons was drawn at random from court records, divided into groups on the basis of sex and level of ego development (using Loevinger's [1970, 1989] Sentence Completion Test [SCT]), and compared on three measures of emotional adjustment (attachment distress, general distress, and social adjustment).

The results indicated that level of ego development did not differentiate short-term reactions to separation (8.7 months) on the three dependent measures, although ego level did produce significant differences in length of marriage and willingness to utilize counseling or support groups for males. Instead, situational factors appeared more likely to influence the divorce adjustment process. Persons who had an alternate relationship, who were involved in social activities, or who initiated the divorce displayed significantly lower attachment distress, and males who had an alternate relationship

displayed significantly better social adjustment. Level of general distress remained unaffected by the situational factors utilized in the study.

One major sex difference was found in the study. Women reported significantly less attachment distress following separation than men, perhaps because women tended to be the persons initiating the divorce.

It was concluded that ego development appears more likely to affect the duration and outcome of the adjustment process, whereas circumstantial factors appear more likely to affect the initial intensity of divorce-related reactions. It was also concluded that males and females are likely to have quite different experiences of the adjustment process due to differing situational factors, although multiple measures of distress seem necessary to detect these differences. In general, these results support previous studies indicating that there are at least two types of reactions to divorce, one involving the loss of the marital relationship and the other related to coping with general life change.

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.



University Microfilms International
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Order Number 9211595

**Level of ego development and degree of distress experienced
during marital separation**

Strait, Richard A., Ed.D.

Western Michigan University, 1991

Copyright ©1991 by Strait, Richard A. All rights reserved.

U·M·I
300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

Copyright by
Richard A. Strait
1991

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to the exceptional teachers who have served on my doctoral committee: to my committee chairperson, Dr. Edward L. Trembley, for introducing me to the clinical value of developmental theory and for providing guidance and support throughout my course of study; to Dr. William A. Carlson for his direction and challenges, particularly early in my academic career; and to Dr. Robert F. Wait, for his conceptual and statistical clarity and ready advice.

In addition, I would like to offer a special word of thanks to my friend, John Roe, for his knowledge and able assistance in scoring the developmental protocols and to Julie Scott of the Computer Support Services of Western Michigan University for her statistical expertise and dedicated support that went well beyond all normative expectations.

Richard A. Strait

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	ii
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of the Study.....	6
Loevinger's Developmental Model.....	7
Presocial or Symbiotic Stage (I-1).....	10
Impulsive Stage (I-2).....	10
Self-Protective Stage (Delta).....	11
Conformist Stage (I-3).....	12
Self-Aware Level (I-3/4).....	13
Conscientious Stage (I-4).....	13
Individualistic Level (I-4/5).....	14
Autonomous Stage (I-5).....	15
Integrated Stage (I-6).....	15
A Developmental Approach to Divorce Adjustment.....	16
Impulsive (I-2) Expectations.....	17
Self-Protective (Delta) Expectations...	19
Conformist(I-3) Expectations.....	21
Self-Aware (I-3/4) Expectations.....	23
Conscientious (I-4) Expectations.....	24
Individualistic (I-4/5) Expectations...	26

Table of Contents--Continued

CHAPTER

Autonomous (I-5) Expectations.....	27
Statement of the Problem.....	28
Attachment Distress.....	29
General Distress.....	31
Social Adjustment.....	32
Divorce-Related Factors.....	34
Research Hypotheses.....	35
Attachment Distress.....	36
General Distress.....	37
Social Adjustment.....	39
Importance of the Study.....	41
Definitions.....	44
Ego Development.....	44
Attachment Distress.....	45
General Distress.....	46
Social Adjustment.....	47
II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	48
Introduction.....	48
Models of the Divorce Process.....	51
Descriptive Approaches to Divorce.....	52
Theoretical Approaches to Divorce.....	54
Divorce Adjustment Models.....	56
Theoretical Approaches to Divorce Adjustment.....	57

Table of Contents--Continued

CHAPTER

	Stress Models.....	57
	Crisis Models.....	59
	Grief Models.....	60
	Attachment/Loss Models.....	62
	Developmental Models.....	63
	Systemic Models.....	64
	Integrated Approaches.....	65
	Empirical Approaches to Divorce Adjustment.....	68
	Reactions to Separation and Divorce.	69
	Factors Moderating the Adjustment Process.....	75
	Sex Differences in Divorce Adjustment.....	93
III.	METHOD.....	101
	Description of the Research Approach.....	101
	Procedure.....	101
	Selection of Subjects.....	105
	Procedure for Data Collection.....	106
	Procedures for Insuring Anonymity.....	108
	Instrumentation.....	109
	Ego Development.....	109
	Attachment Distress.....	112
	General Distress.....	114
	Social Adjustment.....	118

Table of Contents--Continued

CHAPTER

	Demographic Data Form.....	122
	Data Collection and Recording.....	125
	Data Processing and Analysis.....	125
	Methodological Assumptions.....	129
	Limitations.....	130
IV.	DATA ANALYSIS.....	132
	Sample Description.....	132
	Demographic Characteristics.....	133
	Divorce-Related Factors.....	135
	Ego Level.....	135
	Linear Relationship Between the Dependent Variables.....	138
	Attachment Distress.....	139
	Main Effects.....	141
	Divorce-Related Factors.....	144
	Sex Differences.....	146
	Summary.....	147
	General Distress.....	148
	Main Effects.....	148
	Divorce-Related Factors.....	149
	Sex Differences.....	150
	Summary.....	150
	Social Adjustment.....	151
	Main Effects.....	151

Table of Contents--Continued

CHAPTER

Divorce-Related Factors.....	153
Sex Differences.....	154
Summary.....	154
Additional Tests of Significance.....	155
Survey Results.....	156
Subjective Experience of Distress.....	157
Preferred Support Systems.....	160
Summary.....	163
General Summary.....	164
V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.....	166
Discussion of Group Differences.....	166
Ego Level.....	166
Divorce-Related Factors.....	173
Sex Differences.....	177
Summary.....	178
Conclusions.....	178
Suggestions for Further Study.....	183
Implications for Clinical Practice.....	186
APPENDICES.....	192
A. Initial Contact Letter.....	193
B. Consent Form.....	195
C. Follow-Up Letter.....	197
D. Acknowledgment Letter.....	199

Table of Contents--Continued

APPENDICES

E. Cover Letter.....	201
F. General Instruction Sheet.....	203
G. Demographic Data Form.....	205
H. Reminder Letter.....	209
I. Distribution of Divorce-Related Factors by Sex.....	211
J. Length of Marriage, Males, One-Factor ANOVA and Least Squares Mean.....	213
K. Attachment Distress, Males and Females, Two-Factor ANOVAs for I-Level and an Alternate Relationship..	215
L. General Distress, Males and Females, Two-Factor ANOVAs for I-Level and Presence of Children.....	217
M. Social Adjustment, Males and Females, One-Factor ANOVAs.....	219
N. Approval Letter, Allegan County Community Mental Health Services.....	221
O. Approval Letters, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board.....	223
P. Computer Scoring Procedure for the Sentence Completion Test.....	226
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	229

LIST OF TABLES

1. Loevinger's Developmental Stages.....	9
2. Predicted Effects of Level of Ego Development and an Alternate Relationship on Attachment Distress.....	37
3. Predicted Effects of Ego Development and the Presence of Children on General Distress.....	39
4. Predicted Effect of Ego Development on Social Adjustment	40
5. Anticipated Frequency Distribution of Levels of Ego Development in the Sample Population.....	103
6. Level of Income by Sex.....	134
7. Sample Level of Ego Development by Sex.....	136
8. Length of Marriage by Sex and I-Level.....	137
9. Kitson Attachment Scale Reliability Analysis..	140
10. Kitson Attachment Scale, Attachment Distress by Sex and I-Level.....	142
11. Kitson Attachment Scale, Reluctance and Pressure by Sex and I-Level.....	142
12. Kitson Attachment Scale, Relief and Guilt by Sex and I-Level.....	143
13. SCL-90-R, GSI, General Distress by Sex and I-Level.....	148
14. SAS-SR, Adjustment Score, Social Adjustment by Sex and I-Level.....	152
15. Subjective Experience of Distress Over Time, Males and Females.....	157

List of Tables--Continued

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| 16. | Preferred Support Systems by Sex:
Support Groups, Counseling,
Friends and Relatives..... | 160 |
| 17. | Ranking of Preferred Social Supports
by Sex..... | 162 |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As the phenomenon of divorce became an increasing social concern during the 1970s, research on divorce adjustment tended to focus on the more disruptive effects of the divorce experience. Higher rates of psychopathology, automobile accidents, suicide, homicide, and disease processes were found to be related to marital status (Bloom, White, & Asher, 1979), and the divorced were generally found to be overrepresented in psychiatric samples (Burman & Turk, 1981). In fact, admission rates for both inpatient and outpatient settings were sometimes as much as six times higher for the divorced and separated as for married persons (Kraus, 1979). In general, those in the process of divorce tended to display high levels of depression, anxiety, and hostility during particular phases of the divorce process, as well as feelings of inadequacy, guilt, isolation, loneliness, boredom, and general life dissatisfaction (Gray, 1978; Hackney & Ribordy, 1980). Altogether, the general picture of the divorcing population emerging from this decade was one of crisis and emotional distress, creating

considerable personal disorganization for the parties involved.

Because of the intensity of reactions to divorce, considerable effort was expended to try to clarify the nature and course of the divorce adjustment process. Through this work, it became evident that although divorce could be highly stressful, it did not inevitably produce the extreme effects the early studies suggested (Buehler & Langenbrunner, 1987). To the contrary, many of the resulting life changes were found to be positive and growth promoting (Spanier & Thompson, 1983). Consequently, as the long-term consequences of divorce were identified, it became apparent that divorce involved a number of changes, both positive as well as negative, which could result in either satisfactory or unsatisfactory outcomes for the persons involved.

During the past decade, research tended to focus on examining various factors which moderate the divorce adjustment process. Though the results were often confusing or contradictory, a number of specific factors were identified which seemed to modify the intensity and duration of the adjustment process. A few of the more significant variables include economic status, person suggesting the divorce, children, custody, social network, and heterosexual relationships (Spanier & Casto, 1979b).

In conjunction with this work, some broad adjustment trends were also identified. For the most part, it now appears that most divorce-related stressors can be grouped into two broad categories, general life change and separation distress (Kressel, Lopez-Morillas, Weinglass, & Deutsch, 1978). The first category involves the multitude of changes that accompany life reorganization during the divorce process, while the second involves issues related to loss of a major relationship. What remains unclear is the relative contributions of these two major processes to divorce-related stress.

Supporting evidence exists for both categories of reactions. In a pioneering study examining the effects of a wide number of moderating factors, Spanier and Casto (1979a) confirmed that divorce and separation involved "two separate but overlapping adjustments" (p. 243). As they saw it, one involved the breakup of the marriage (including emotional reactions to separation) and the other involved the creation of a new lifestyle. Of the two, they concluded that "establishing a new lifestyle is more problematic than adjusting to the dissolution of the marriage" (p. 251). However, when focusing more critically on reactions to loss of attachment in a similar study, Kitson (1982) found opposing results. Even though only 34.0% of her sample reported experiencing a high degree of attachment to their spouses and 52.3% low

attachment, she concluded that "attachment is the primary cause of the subjective distress experienced by the divorced" (p. 379). This finding supported Weiss' (1976) earlier conclusion that loss of attachment is the major cause of postseparation distress. Consequently, while significant gains have been made towards uncovering the major sources of divorce-related distress, there is still considerable confusion concerning the relative contributions of lifestyle change and attachment loss to the divorce adjustment process.

One possible way of clarifying this issue was suggested by research examining the relationship between level of ego development and marital quality. A study by Swensen, Eskew, and Kohlhepp (1981) utilizing Loevinger's (1976) model of ego development revealed that one of the most critical factors affecting overall marital quality is the the level of ego development of the partners. These investigators identified significant differences in relational quality between couples at lower developmental levels (who interact primarily through socially prescribed roles) and those at higher levels of ego functioning (who relate primarily in a more personal manner). According to their findings, the former tend to follow stereotypic role prescriptions in relationships, while the latter are able to transcend sex-role functioning through their capacity to appreciate individual

differences. This ability to transcend social roles was found to be associated with higher degrees of marital quality.

If there is a significant relationship between level of ego development and qualitative differences in marital functioning, then it seemed likely that differences in ego development could also be related to differential patterns of adjustment following a relational breakup. In general, given basic differences in ego functioning, it appeared that those persons at lower levels of ego development would have greater difficulty managing the stress related to overall life change due to their more limited coping capacity, whereas persons at higher levels of ego functioning would have greater difficulty handling the distress related to loss of the marital relationship due to their ability to form more intimate personal relationships. While no attempt had previously been made to empirically investigate the relationship between level of ego development and the extent and type of distress experienced during separation and divorce, research on the relationship between personality factors and divorce adjustment had shown that persons with particular personality traits (such as dominance, self-assurance, social-boldness, self-sufficiency, and greater ego strength) score higher on measures of adjustment to divorce (Thomas, 1982). These findings indicate that further

research on personality variables and reactions to divorce might help to clarify the patterns of divorce adjustment that have recently been emerging.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study, then, was to determine whether a relationship exists between level of ego development and the type and degree of distress experienced during marital separation. In contrast to existing approaches to divorce adjustment which generally do not account for basic differences in ego functioning, Loevinger's developmental theory suggested that there would be differential reactions to separation and divorce based upon qualitative differences in levels of ego development. In particular, since developmental differences affect the way persons establish and maintain significant relationships, it seemed that such differences would also be reflected in the various responses that accompany the separation process. If so, application of developmental theory to the experience of divorce would help to account for differences in the types and degree of distress involved in divorce adjustment and would assist practitioners in tailoring interventions to more specific clusters of divorce adjustment needs.

Loevinger's Developmental Model

The concept of ego development, as used by Loevinger (1976), is of relatively recent origin. As the name implies, the term ego development reflects the influence of two relatively distinct traditions of psychological thought, the neo-analytic school, with its emphasis on clarifying the structure of the ego, and the cognitive developmental school, with its emphasis on clarifying the process of intellectual development. The neo-analytic school, comprised of two streams of thought, ego psychology (Anna Freud, Hartman, and Erikson) and object relations theory (Fairbairn, Jacobsen, Winnicott, Mahler, and Guntrip), evolved primarily out of clinical practice and continues to have a highly clinical focus (Kegan, 1982). In contrast, the cognitive developmental school, pioneered by Piaget and represented by such theorists as Kohlberg, Sellman, and Blasi (Loevinger, 1983), has enjoyed particular prominence in scholastic circles and continues to maintain a research emphasis. In the last couple of decades, the main features of these two schools of thought have been combined in an alternative approach, termed "constructive developmental" (Kegan, 1982), that is characterized by a phenomenological construct of the ego and a stage-specific process of ego development.

With its emphasis on stages and a construct of ego that is functionally equivalent to recent conceptions of the self, Loevinger's theory of ego development falls most readily into the constructive developmental camp. However, in comparison to theories which place greater emphasis on the relational aspects of development, such as Kegan's (1982) model, Loevinger's theory more closely reflects the influence of the cognitive developmental tradition. In her approach, conceptualization takes prominence over other aspects of ego functioning, particularly as operationalized in her Sentence Completion Test, so that the relational aspects of her theory seem more implied than direct.

However, if the interpersonal dimensions of Loevinger's model are somewhat vague, her stages of development have a clarity and breadth that make the model useful for research purposes. At the same time, her approach seems to share enough similarity with other developmental models (such as Kohlberg and Kegan), that findings can probably be extended to other developmental schemas with relatively little difficulty. Moreover, her model incorporates a validated assessment instrument that has been used for research purposes for well over a decade. These benefits suggested that Loevinger's model would provide a useful tool for divorce research despite its somewhat limited focus on relational functioning.

A brief survey of Loevinger's (1976, Chapter 2) model of ego development reveals how developmental levels can be used to differentiate populations in psychologically significant ways. As indicated in Table 1, her approach delineates a series of qualitative changes in ego functioning by means of a hierarchy of operationally defined stages or character types (Hauser, 1976). Each

Table 1
Loevinger's Developmental Stages

I-level Designation	Level of Ego Development
I-1	Presocial Stage
I-2	Impulsive Stage
Delta	Self-protective Stage
I-3	Conformist Stage
I-3/4	Self-aware Level
I-4	Conscientious Stage
I-4/5	Individualistic Level
I-5	Autonomous Stage
I-6	Integrated Stage

successive stage or level of functioning brings qualitative changes in cognition, integrative capacity and frame of reference. As is evident in the following descriptions, each gain in psychological functioning also

involves corresponding changes in social and relational capabilities.

Presocial or Symbiotic Stage (I-1)

In the Presocial or Symbiotic stage (I-1), the task of development is to begin differentiating self from the world of objects. Because this stage is primarily pre-verbal, it cannot be examined through instruments requiring the use of language, nor is it likely to be found in the general adult population.

Impulsive Stage (I-2)

At the Impulsive stage (I-2), individuals have sufficiently separated from their social matrix that some self-awareness has emerged. However, their world view remains egocentric and concrete, while their general orientation remains primarily physiological. As a result, their major concerns involve controlling internal impulses and interacting with the social environment to obtain personal gratification. Their corresponding sense of morality consists of acting on the basis of rewards and punishments within the context of rules established by others. Persons functioning at this level could be described as "demanding, primitive, undifferentiated" (Holt, 1980, p. 912). Because of their relative lack of

differentiation, their relationships remain highly dependent, and their corresponding interpersonal style could be characterized as "receiving, dependent, exploitative" (Loevinger, 1976, p. 24).

Self-Protective Stage (Delta)

By the Self-protective stage (Delta), rules governing rewards and punishments have been internalized, but they continue to be followed out of self-interest in the pursuit of immediate advantage. Delta preoccupations focus on issues of control, domination and deception (Hauser, 1976). Due to a continuing inability to take the position of the other, their interpersonal relations are highly manipulative and exploitative; gains come at the expense of others (Swensen et al., 1981) with moral values centering on expediency. Such persons could be categorized as "wary, complaining, cynical, manipulative, exploitative, power oriented" (Holt, 1980, p. 912). Their corresponding interpersonal style can be stated in similar terms, i.e. "wary, manipulative, exploitative" (Loevinger, 1976, p. 24).

Though not recognized as a discrete stage in her formal model, Loevinger also utilizes a transitional stage (Delta/3) when measuring ego development. This level is somewhat more advanced than the Delta stage, in

that role related behavior has come to be recognized, yet it is still understood physically and not yet psychologically (Loevinger & Wessler, 1970). Descriptors for this intermediate level include "concretistic, earnest, concerned with cleanliness and respectability" (Holt, 1980, p. 912). However, the Delta/3 interpersonal style seems to remain closer to the Delta level, i.e. "manipulative, wary" (Loevinger, 1979, p. 283).

Conformist Stage (I-3)

At the Conformist stage (I-3), there is an increasing concern about the reactions of others, though the primary motivation is avoiding disapproval. At this level, relationships are seen as governed by rules defining appropriate role behavior, though they are construed primarily in terms of external actions and events. These rules are obeyed both for their own sake and to avoid shame and public humiliation. Though values are starting to become internalized, they remain stereotypic and moralistic. Major preoccupations concern status and appearance. "Conventional, moralistic, sentimental, stereotyped, rule bound" are key descriptors for persons functioning at this level (Holt, 1980, p. 912). Their corresponding interpersonal style concerns "belonging" and "superficial niceness" (Loevinger, 1976, p. 24).

Self-Aware Level (I-3/4)

At the transitional Self-aware or Conscientious-conformist level (I-3/4), group norms are no longer viewed as totally regulating individual behavior. With the development of some limited capacity for introspection, there is a growing awareness of the relativity of rules and prescriptions, though contextual differences are usually seen in global terms and tend to be rather "banal" (Hauser, 1976). Persons at this level may be characterized as "self-critical, aware of interpersonal differences and interactions and of multiple possibilities" (Holt, 1980, p. 912). Their interpersonal style involves being "aware of self in relation to group" with an emphasis on "helping" (Loevinger, 1976, p. 24). Most studies have found the I-3/4 level to be the most commonly occurring developmental level in the general population (Hauser, 1976).

Conscientious Stage (I-4)

By the Conscientious stage (I-4), values have become differentiated and internalized as the basis of individual behavior. Because motivation is internal rather than external, conscious concerns center on ideals, obligations and achievements based upon inner standards. Along with this increasing capacity for introspection, there is

a growing ability to see others more individually, so that relationships come to be based upon mutuality rather than upon socially prescribed roles. Such persons can be characterized as "responsible, empathic, psychologically minded, self-respecting, conceptually complex" (Holt, 1980, p. 912). The conscientious interpersonal style is "intensive, responsible, mutual" and involves a "concern for communication" (Loevinger, 1976, p. 24).

Individualistic Level (I-4/5)

By the Individualistic level (I-4/5), there is an increasing appreciation of psychological causality and paradox. With this increased capacity for differentiation and awareness of conflicting viewpoints and values, moralism diminishes. In conjunction with this increased complexity, persons at this level display a growing concern for individuality along with an increasing recognition of emotional dependence and a valuing of interpersonal relationships. They can be described as "truly tolerant ... interested in process, aware of conflicting emotions" (Holt, 1980, p. 912). Their interpersonal style is similar to the Conscientious stage except that continuing "dependence" has generally become "an emotional problem" at this level (Loevinger, 1976, p. 24).

Autonomous Stage (I-5)

The Autonomous stage (I-5) brings an increased ability to recognize and accept inner conflict through an increased tolerance for ambiguity. At this level, individual differences are recognized, accepted, and valued. Along with a growing respect for another's autonomy, interpersonal relations come to be characterized by mutual interdependence. Such persons may be seen as "complex, objective, discriminating, self-realizing, respecting of others" (Holt, 1980, p. 912). With their capacity to recognize and appreciate paradox, their interpersonal style is characterized by an appreciation of both "autonomy" and "interdependence," in addition to the other I-4 and I-4/5 interpersonal characteristics (Loevinger, 1976, p. 25).

Integrated Stage (I-6)

The highest of the stages, the Integrated stage (I-6), involves transcending intrapsychic conflicts and developing an integrated personal identity. At this level, individual differences are prized rather than merely tolerated. Though rarely found in the general population, such persons have the following profile: "wise, broadly empathic, able to reconcile inner conflicts, cherishes individuality, reconciles roles to find identity" (Holt,

1980, p. 912). The I-6 interpersonal style adds the element of "cherishing of individuality" to the previous relational characteristics (Loevinger, 1976, p. 25).

A Developmental Approach to Divorce Adjustment

Perhaps the most obvious conclusion to be drawn from Loevinger's developmental model is that human development proceeds in an evolutionary fashion and results in qualitative improvements in overall levels of ego functioning. With their increased cognitive functioning, persons at higher levels of ego functioning would generally have a greater capacity for adapting to change and an increased ability to establish more meaningful personal relationships. As a result, persons at higher levels of ego functioning are likely to have a greater capacity to manage the stress and general life change involved in a divorce than those at lower levels of functioning. However, because of their increased capacity to form strong relational bonds, persons at higher level of development are also likely to be more vulnerable to emotional disruption with a significant relational loss.

In general, then, it appears that persons at higher developmental levels would have more difficulty managing the loss of the marital relationship, whereas persons at lower developmental levels would have more difficulty in managing overall life change. An exception would be at

the lowest developmental levels (I-2 and below) where very low coping capacity would create high dependency needs which would make the loss of a significant relationship an exceptionally traumatic event.

Applying Loevinger's developmental theory to the process of divorce adjustment, then, leads to a qualitative revisioning of the meaning of separation. In the context of developmental differences, divorce adjustment can be viewed as a complex reactive process that varies with level of ego development rather than as a uniform pattern of reactions to a specific disruptive event. In fact, for each developmental level, it is possible to specify an array of probable differences in reactions to separation based upon theoretical differences in individual and relational functioning. Not only are reactions to separation likely to be different at each major level, but also preferred support systems, the potentiality for counseling intervention, and the probable outcome of the divorce process. Using Loevinger's model as a guide, the following descriptions indicate the types of divorce adjustment differences most likely to be encountered in the general adult population.

Impulsive (I-2) Expectations

Beginning at the lower range of the developmental continuum, it would seem that persons functioning at

Loevinger's Impulsive stage (I-2) would likely form close bonds based on dependency needs due to their nascent ego development and relative lack of maturity. With their tendency to form symbiotic attachments and to utilize significant others to assist with basic ego functions, such persons would probably become highly distressed at the loss of an important relationship and quickly seek to find a replacement. Due to significant threats to personal security and the cohesion of the self created by the loss of the relationship, both distress related to loss of the partner and distress related to associated life changes can be expected to be high and would probably be reflected in increased somaticization, anxiety, and phobic anxiety.

Given their relative inability to function well autonomously, the capacity of these persons to manage the resulting distress (level of social adjustment) is anticipated to be low. As a result, they would likely seek out an external support base rather quickly, probably relying upon family members or relatives until they could develop an alternate relationship. Due to their inability to recognize their difficulties as involving individual psychological issues, they would probably seek professional help only for support during an immediate crisis, most likely to address loss of the ego supportive functions which the other performed. They might benefit

from the temporary support which therapy could provide, but their overall capacity to make major gains is expected to be low. Overall, the probable effect of the divorce experience would be regressive (e.g., to perpetuate their dependent state).

Self-Protective (Delta) Expectations

In Loevinger's Self-protective stage (Delta), persons have developed the basic coping ("survivor") skills to manage general life changes independently and no longer require others to assist with basic life functioning. Consequently, loss of a relationship would not be as critical an issue at this level due to lessened dependency. Nonetheless, the initial breakup might create some immediate reactive distress due to loss of the support for role functioning which the other provided. However, because such persons understand others primarily through identification (Loevinger, 1976, p. 115, Table 7) and relate primarily through stereotypic role prescriptions, they would probably show relatively little attachment distress over the loss of their spouse. In fact, given their propensity to externalize blame, they would probably hold their partner at fault for the breakup for failing to perform their marital obligations according to their set expectations. Nonetheless, they would probably

seek to find a replacement partner rather quickly in order to reestablish role-related functioning.

Persons at this level could be expected to utilize their coping skills to independently develop an adequate support system in their social environment. Dating, peer group, and some close relatives would probably form their social support network until a replacement partner could be found. Given their capacity for manipulation, they could also be expected to effectively exploit this system to help sustain their normal functioning and would therefore be likely to adapt to divorce-related changes rather quickly.

Because of their resourcefulness and their facade of self-reliance, persons at this level would probably display only moderate levels of general distress. Should they show any elevated symptomology, it would most likely be reflected in increased hostility or paranoid ideation. However, despite their capacity for utilizing others to meet their needs, they would probably display a low to moderate level of social adjustment due to their general lack of consideration for others. Given their externalization of blame and general lack of personal responsibility, they would be unlikely to seek professional help, except for crisis intervention involving issues of loss of pride or role supportive functions. Intervention can be expected to be short-lived and basically ineffective.

Overall, the effect of going through a divorce would probably be to intensify their basic life stance.

Conformist (I-3) Expectations

With the development of a capacity to perceive individual differences, interpersonal reciprocity becomes possible at the Conformist stage (I-3), though relationships are still characterized by rigid and stereotypic role expectations. In fact, this persistence of stereotypic role functioning, despite some appreciation of individual differences, provides an overlapping link with the previous levels that tends to limit personal growth.

Persons at this stage continue to be externally focused, displaying an excessive concern with appearance and social acceptance. Consequently, going through a divorce would probably be highly upsetting to them, since it would likely to raise issues of shame and guilt related to a perceived failure to adequately perform their socially sanctioned marital functions. Such feelings are apt to be compounded if such persons have accepted their partner's blame for the failure of the marriage. Consequently, these persons are liable to show a considerable amount of attachment distress after separation, resulting from both the loss of the other and the loss of the role supportive functions which the other performed. Given the sense of failure and inadequacy that may be present,

these persons are likely to have their general functioning diminished, reducing their capacity to manage divorce-related changes. Their distress is likely to be manifested in depression, anxiety, phobic anxiety, and perhaps some somaticization.

Given their high level of distress and limited psychological resources, these persons are likely to actively seek a wide range of external supports, particularly from friends and relatives. At first, they would probably be reluctant to date and might seek out professional help for advice on doing the "right" thing, particularly clergy if they happen to be religious. Without a ready support system to fall back on, they would be potential candidates for crisis counseling. Should they seek treatment, they would probably benefit from supportive interventions but would have limited capacity for personal growth if the rigidity of their role related functioning persisted.

In addition, given their identification with role performance, these persons might attempt to cope with the distress of divorce through role substitution. Females could attempt to compensate for the loss of the spousal role by assuming the role of a mother, while males might seek alternate satisfactions through focusing on their job or career. In any case, the likely effect of going through a divorce would be to intensify the need for

social supports to validate personal functioning. Because of this, divorce adjustment groups would seem to be the most appropriate treatment modality for persons at this developmental level.

Self-Aware (I-3/4) Expectations

With the increasing awareness of personal feelings, individual differences, and sense of self that emerges in the Self-aware level, it seems that loss of the partner would result in greater emotional distress, arising both from an increased sensitivity to inner feelings and also from the loss of a more meaningful interpersonal relationship. Moreover, these persons would probably have difficulty in coping with a relational loss, because they would have the capacity to more fully experience the loss and yet have relatively limited psychological resources to effectively process it. As a result, they can be expected to display considerable evidence of depression which would likely dominate their symptom expression.

Given their level of distress, persons at this level would probably be inclined to seek out the support of a close friend or perhaps a professional in order to help relieve their distress and to better understand their predicament and relational problems. They might also be inclined to utilize social activities or groups of friends for support, but dating and developing an

alternate relationship would probably not reduce their attachment distress to any great extent. Rather, because relationships are more mutual and "personal" at this developmental level, it seems likely that their sense of personal loss would persist.

Given the level of their distress, I-3/4 individuals would probably be good candidates for group experiences or individual counseling for managing their loss related issues, and they are likely to benefit from such treatment through increased personal growth. However, due to their increased capacity for coping and their awareness of multiple possibilities, they could be expected to manage the general life changes encountered with divorce fairly well, and their overall level of social adjustment would probably be moderately high. As a result, the effect of going through a divorce would likely be to promote individual and relational growth.

Conscientious (I-4) Expectations

Due in part to a growing psychological sophistication that brings freedom from role prescriptions and a more defined sense of self, persons at the Conscientious stage (I-4) are intensely interpersonal. Relationships reflect an increased appreciation for the others' individuality and are based upon mutuality and not simply reciprocity. As a result, these persons are likely to

acutely experience the loss of a meaningful relationship. Moreover, because of their heightened sense of "conscience," they are liable to be particularly vulnerable to continuing feelings of guilt over the divorce (even if it was perceived as beneficial), which they might have difficulty resolving. In fact, because they are capable of experiencing but not resolving the conflict between inner expectations and their life experience, they may be forced by their discomfort to seek professional help.

Given their higher degree of personal autonomy, I-4 persons are less likely to seek out or to benefit from support given by dating, friends, or kindred, though they may still rely upon the support of a special confidant. However, despite their distress, they would probably continue to be involved in social activities and display a high degree of social adjustment because of their increased capacity to cope effectively with change. Nonetheless, they would probably still show moderate amounts of general distress related to their unresolved loss issues.

Should they seek professional counsel, depressive features related to unresolved attachment issues are likely to dominate their initial presentation. Given their high level of functioning, these persons are good candidates for insight oriented individual therapy, though they would also be able to benefit from

adjustment groups if sufficient numbers of similar functioning individuals were involved. As with the other higher levels of ego functioning, the most likely effect of going through a divorce would be to stimulate further development.

Individualistic (I-4/5) Expectations

Because the capacity for mutuality and personal responsibility persists through the higher developmental levels, coping with the loss of the relationship can be expected to continue to be a difficult problem at the Individualistic level. However, for these persons, the relational loss is likely to heighten tension between dependency and autonomy, making it a focused psychological problem. Consequently, at the Individualistic level, loss of the relationship may provide an opportunity for exercising increased autonomy and personal growth, since persons at this level of functioning are capable of perceiving paradox and are able to contain the tension of incongruities in experience. As a result, they may actually display less overt attachment distress than the previous two levels, even though they may experience a relational loss intensely.

Because of conflict arising from dependence-independence issues, I-4/5 persons might seek out professional help to work through the dilemma and would likely benefit

from individual treatment which has an intrapsychic focus. However, because their issues are primarily experienced intrapsychically, they would probably not be inclined to seek out other forms of support to help resolve their difficulties nor would they be likely candidates for group modalities. Instead, they would probably continue to remain highly involved in their extensive social network, displaying a high level of social adjustment. Likewise, given their capacity to cope well with change, they would probably show relatively low general distress, unless their attachment issues were particularly acute. Consequently, the overall impact of a major relational loss would probably be less visibly dramatic for this group than for persons functioning at lower levels of development. In fact, the effect of going through a divorce would probably be to promote developmental growth, increasing their capacity for both autonomy and interdependence.

Autonomous (I-5) Expectations

Though it is unlikely that many persons in the general population are likely to reach the I-5 stage, it can be anticipated that adjustment reactions at this level would be similar to those at the I-4/5 level, since autonomy and interdependence continue to remain salient issues. Because of the depth of their relational

involvements, they can be expected to experience high attachment distress but relatively little distress arising from general life changes. Overall, their level of general distress would probably be moderate to low, perhaps finding expression in some mild dysthymia. However, it is unlikely that 1-5 persons would seek any type of social support or professional help, apart from legal counsel, since they are likely to be functioning at a level where they can effectively resolve most divorce-related difficulties on their own.

Statement of the Problem

In light of these considerations, it appeared that Loevinger's developmental theory could provide a way of identifying meaningful differences in divorce adjustment patterns. The study was undertaken to investigate whether level of ego development could effectively differentiate patterns of adjustment related to three significant divorce-related issues, e.g., relational loss, general life change, and overall social functioning. In this study, attachment distress, general distress, and social adjustment are constructs used to represent distress related to loss of an attachment figure, distress related to general life change, and overall capacity to cope with divorce-related stress.

Attachment Distress

In this study, the term attachment distress was chosen to characterize the emotional distress experienced with the loss of an attachment figure (Weiss, 1975, 1976), i.e., relational loss. Noting that marital separation uniformly produces emotional distress regardless of the quality of the marriage or which partner initiated the separation, Weiss inferred that adults develop an attachment bond in intimate relationships similar to the one formed between children and their primary caretaker (Bowlby, 1969/82, 1973, 1980). In both cases, Weiss argued, prolonged separation from such a figure results in a characteristic alarm reaction, or separation distress, involving heightened vigilance and intense emotional reactions. Observing this type of reaction in adults attending divorce adjustment groups, Weiss (1976) concluded that loss of attachment is the major cause of the distress generally observed following separation.

While initial validation studies (Brown, Felton, Whiteman, & Manela, 1980; Kitson, 1982; Spanier & Casto, 1979b) tended to support the validity of the attachment construct, samples drawn at random from the general population of divorcing persons have shown that attachment distress is not nearly as widespread as Weiss had

suggested, with only a portion of the total divorcing population displaying any marked difficulty with separation issues (Spanier & Casto, 1979b). Nonetheless, it seemed that differentiating the divorcing population on the basis of ego development might help to account for some of the variation found in distress reactions following marital separation.

Since attachment distress is primarily a reaction to loss of relationship, it seemed that this kind of distress would generally increase with level of ego functioning due to the increases in emotional sensitivity and capacity for mutuality that attend qualitative gains in ego functioning. Consequently, it was anticipated that attachment distress would be lowest for those levels which function on the basis of stereotypic role functioning (I-3 and below) and highest for those levels that have developed some capacity for mutuality in relationships (I-3/4 and above). Possible exceptions would be the Impulsive stage (I-2), where dependency and attachment could easily be confounded, and the Individualistic (I-4/5) and Autonomous (I-5) levels, where an increasingly personal focus could diminish the intensity of attachment bonds.

General Distress

In this study, general distress was viewed as a factor which reflects the emotional impact of adjusting to all divorce-related changes. As such, it combines the influences of attachment loss and general life disruption. Consequently, general distress was considered a global measure of distress arising from all divorce-related change.

In general, level of ego development was seen as influencing general distress in two primary ways. Insofar as ego development is positively related to attachment distress, general distress was expected to increase with level of ego development. However, to the extent that ego development is also related to coping capacity, general distress was expected to decrease with ego development. As a result, these two influences seemed to offset one another, making specific quantitative predictions difficult.

However, at the lower developmental levels, it seemed likely that the impact of divorce-related stressors would generally be higher than the person's capacity to manage that distress, resulting in relatively high levels of experienced distress. At the higher developmental levels, it seemed that increased coping capacity would exert a stronger influence, resulting in relatively

lower levels of general distress. Consequently, it was predicted that general distress would be lowest for persons above level I-3/4 and highest for persons at or below level I-3/4.

In addition, ego development was also anticipated to exert an influence on the way in which general distress was expressed. In general, persons functioning at lower levels of ego development seemed more likely to display more primitive symptom patterns such as somatization and paranoia, whereas those at the higher levels seemed more likely to display symptoms common to grief and loss reactions, such as anxiety and depression. Ego development was also expected to influence the kinds of issues causing general distress. Persons at the lower developmental levels were anticipated to have more difficulty with role change issues, while those at higher developmental levels were expected to have more difficulty with individual psychological issues.

Social Adjustment

In this study, social adjustment was a term used to describe personal functioning in common social roles. It was also considered a measure of a person's capacity to cope with life stress, since it was assumed that the ability to function effectively in social roles despite

significant change is a measure of a person's capacity to cope with stress.

In general, it was anticipated that social adjustment would vary directly with ego development, with persons at lower developmental levels (I-3 and below) showing lower social adjustment due to their role bound social behaviors and lower coping capacity, and persons at higher developmental levels showing higher social adjustment due to their relatively role free interactions and higher coping capacity. In addition, those at the lower developmental levels (I-3 and below) were seen as likely to experience a high level of social disruption following separation and divorce due to their external focus, resulting in a high need for social support. This, in turn, would make them vulnerable to role conflicts and the negative influence of family and friends. In contrast, persons functioning at higher levels of ego development (I-3/4 and above) were not expected to experience as great a disruption in social functioning because of their increased autonomy, improved coping capacity, and more internal focus. These characteristics would make these persons less vulnerable to the negative influence of others and more likely to utilize positive social supports.

Divorce-Related Factors

Although the major focus of the study was on the influence of ego development on adjustment, it was recognized from the outset that numerous other factors impacting the divorce adjustment process could interfere with isolating and identifying any effects based on ego development. From the results of previous studies, the most salient moderating variables appeared to be sex, person suggesting the divorce, presence or absence of children, social activity level, and whether or not the person was involved in another significant relationship. However, the effects of these variables were expected to vary according to type of distress and area of life functioning affected (Burman & Turk, 1981).

For attachment distress, it was anticipated that the effects of ego development would be most directly influenced by the presence of an alternative relationship. Because persons at higher levels of ego functioning would likely form more intense and enduring bonds with their spouse, it seemed that their sense of loss would be deeper and more persistent than for persons at the lower developmental levels. Consequently, it appeared that the moderating effect of an alternative relationship would be much less for persons at higher developmental levels than at lower developmental levels.

For general distress, the presence or absence of children seemed likely to exert a significant influence across most developmental levels, since this factor involves a number of relational and life change issues. At the lower developmental levels (I-3 and below), children were seen as likely to generate increased generalized distress, because the additional demands they create could be expected to overtax more limited coping capacities. In contrast, children were seen as having limited or minimal effects on functioning at higher developmental levels (I-3/4 and above) due to their greater capacity to cope with added stress. However, these effects would be diminished to the extent that children served as surrogates for attachment needs.

No particular divorce-related variables were predicted to have a particularly pronounced effect on social adjustment. However, because of their potential for moderating the adjustment process, all of the major divorce-related variables were tested on each of the dependent measures (attachment distress, general distress, social adjustment) to check for differential impacts and to aid in interpreting main effects.

Research Hypotheses

These general expectations and relationships can be restated in the form of a number of research hypotheses

concerning the relationship between level of ego development and the three dependent variables. Expectations are given for the developmental eras most likely to be found in the general population.

Attachment Distress

Using the Washington University Sentence Completion Test (Loevinger, 1985; Loevinger & Wessler, 1970) as a measure of level of ego development and the Kitson Attachment Scale (Kitson, 1982) as a measure of attachment distress, it was predicted that mean levels of attachment distress following marital separation would not be evenly distributed across developmental levels. Rather, with the exception of the I-2 stage, it was predicted that mean levels of attachment distress would generally increase with developmental level. At the I-2 stage, it was anticipated that attachment distress would be fairly high due to the confounding of dependency and attachment.

Using the same measures of ego development and attachment distress and a dichotomous measure to identify the presence of an alternative relationship, it was also predicted that the effect of an alternative relationship on mean levels of attachment distress would not be evenly distributed across developmental levels. Rather, it was predicted that mean levels of attachment distress would be decreased for developmental levels where relationships

are based primarily on stereotypic role functioning (I-3 and below) and would remain unaffected for the higher developmental levels (I-3/4 and above). These expectations and relationships are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Predicted Effects of Ego Development and an Alternate Relationship on Attachment Distress

	Level of Ego Development (Loevinger)	Level of Attachment Distress	Effect of Alternate Relationship
I-2	Impulsive	high *	significant decrease
Delta	Self-protective	low	significant decrease
I-3	Conformist	moderate	significant decrease
I-3/4	Self-aware	high	minimal change
I-4	Conscientious	high	minimal change
I-4/5	Individualistic	high	minimal change
I-5	Autonomous	high	minimal change

* attachment and dependency are confounded at this level

General Distress

Using the Washington University Sentence Completion Test (Loevinger, 1985; Loevinger & Wessler, 1970) as a measure of level of ego development and the SCL-90-R (Derogatis, Lipman, & Covi, 1975) as a measure of general distress, it was predicted that mean level of general

distress following marital separation would not be equally distributed across developmental levels. Instead, it was anticipated that mean levels of general distress would be highest at those developmental levels where the capacity to manage stress is moderate, i.e., at the Impulsive (I-2), Conformist (I-3) and Self-aware (I-3/4) levels. For the remaining developmental levels, i.e., Self-protective (Delta), Conscientious (I-4), Individualistic (I-4/5), and Autonomous (I-5), general distress was expected to be lower due to increases in relative independence and coping capacity.

Using the same measures of ego development and general distress, it was also predicted that the effect of the presence or absence of children on general distress would not be uniform across all developmental levels. Rather, it was anticipated that mean levels of general distress would be higher for those developmental levels which have more limited coping capacity and stereotypic role functioning (levels I-3 and below). It was further predicted that the presence of children would have a moderate influence on the level of general distress for those at the Self-aware (I-3/4) level and a minimal influence on those at the higher developmental levels (I-4, I-4/5, and I-5). These relationships are also summarized in Table 3.

Table 3
Predicted Effects of Ego Development and the
Presence of Children on General Distress

Level of Ego Development (Loevinger)		Level of General Distress	Effect of Children on General Distress
I-2	Impulsive	high *	significant increase
Delta	Self-protective	moderate	significant increase
I-3	Conformist	high	significant increase
I-3/4	Self-aware	high	moderate increase
I-4	Conscientious	moderate	minimal change
I-4/5	Individualistic	moderate	minimal change
I-5	Autonomous	moderate	minimal change

* attachment and dependency are confounded at this level

Social Adjustment

Using the Washington University Sentence Completion Test (Loevinger, 1985; Loevinger & Wessler, 1970) as a measure of level of ego development and the Social Adjustment Scale-Self Report (SAS-SR) (Weissman & Bothwell, 1976) as a measure of adjustment to divorce, it was predicted that the mean level of social adjustment would not be equal across developmental levels. Instead, it was anticipated that the overall level of social adjustment would generally increase with developmental level.

However, because low scores on the SAS-SR indicate high levels of social adjustment, the relationship appears to be reversed, with higher ego levels having the lower adjustment scores. Consequently, it was predicted that the mean SAS-SR adjustment scores would be highest at the Impulsive stage (I-2), mid-range at the Self-protective (Delta), Conformist (I-3), and Self-aware (I-3/4) stages, and lowest at the Conscientious (I-4), Individualistic (I-4/5) and Autonomous (I-5) stages. These relationships are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Predicted Effect of Ego Development on Social Adjustment

Level of Ego Development (Loevinger)		Level of Social Adjustment	Mean SAS-SR Score
I-2	Impulsive	low	high
Delta	Self-protective	moderate	mid-range
I-3	Conformist	moderate	mid-range
I-3/4	Self-aware	moderate	mid-range
I-4	Conscientious	high	low
I-4/5	Individualistic	high	low
I-5	Autonomous	high	low

Importance of the Study

Up to the present time, most models of divorce adjustment (and hence most treatment interventions) have been based upon research that has approached divorce as primarily an adjustment issue involving either stress or grief reactions. As a result, most treatment strategies have been developed on the basis of providing interventions that correspond to the various phases of the adjustment process. Initially, these approaches were little more than variations to the Kübler-Ross model of adjusting to death and dying, which focused on assisting persons with coping with a progression of loss related emotions (namely, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance) (Herman, 1974).

With the growing recognition of the complexity of the divorce process, however, more elaborate models were developed that allowed treatment to focus on the most salient issues at each phase of the divorce process. Wiseman (1975), for example, developed a treatment approach that addressed a sequence of reactions, moving from an initial experience of shock and crisis, to a sense of grief and loss, to mobilizing and developing new resources. Building on a number of earlier models, Salts (1979) presented a more comprehensive treatment strategy which included all phases in the divorce process. In her

approach, treatment began with the disillusionment phase of the divorce process and focused on attempting to improve the couple's interaction skills. If detachment consolidated, the emphasis shifted to assisting the couple with evaluating alternatives. Following physical separation, the focus changed to individual crisis counseling to address separation and readjustment issues, which was followed by more traditional counseling in the latter stages of the divorce process to promote personal growth. This approach is shared by Storm and Sprenkle (1982), who agree that conjoint or family treatment is the preferred mode of treatment in the decision making phase of divorce, while individual treatment is better suited to the adjustment phase of the process. In all of these models, however, the emphasis is on adjusting treatment to a particular phase of the divorce process.

Group approaches to divorce therapy also seem to follow this same pattern. In a review of transition groups, Morris and Prescott (1975) showed that the same basic progression (moving from crisis counseling with its supportive emphasis to developmental counseling with its readjustment emphasis) can be accomplished in a group format. In fact, they emphasized the way in which the group focus typically shifts as the members move from mourning the past, to addressing present life change issues, to formulating plans for the future. In their

view, group treatment accomplishes the same goals as individual treatment, with the additional benefit of providing social support and validation functions through the interaction of the group members. While these models have apparently proven effective with particular groups of persons, they are still based upon the strategy of adapting treatment to fit a particular adjustment pattern.

In contrast, a developmental approach to divorce adjustment argues that the adjustment process differs for persons at varying developmental levels. In fact, from a developmental perspective, not only do the the issues vary for persons at differing developmental levels, but also the intensity of their distress and the way that distress is expressed. In fact, a developmental perspective reveals an array of individual differences calling for differing intervention strategies and modalities of treatment. These include characteristic strengths and limitations, style of coping and interpersonal involvement, preferred resources and social supports, likelihood of seeking treatment, reasons for seeking treatment, and the probability benefitting from it. In short, developmental theory reveals that there may be a variety of patterns to divorce adjustment reflecting basic differences in ego functioning that require essentially different treatment strategies to maximize positive outcomes.

In contrast to the unitary approach of present divorce adjustment models, then, a developmental approach provides a way of making significant practical distinctions that have both clinical and theoretical utility. Developmental theory provides a context for better understanding individual reactions to divorce and separation and for interpreting many of the conflicting findings on divorce in the divorce literature. In effect, it allows the varied results in the present literature to be understood in part as reflecting basic differences in psychological functioning. As such, it is an approach which has the potential for providing a basis for integrating much of the existing literature on divorce adjustment.

Definitions

Ego Development

Ego development is a term used to describe what Hauser (1976) called "the framework of meaning which one subjectively imposes on experience" (p. 930). Though the term ego is an abstraction somewhat analogous to an individual's sense of self, ego development suggests that there are sequential changes in an individual's structure of meaning and corresponding character structure. As used here, ego development refers to the levels of ego functioning operationally defined by Loevinger's (1985;

Loevinger & Wessler, 1970) Sentence Completion Test (SCT). While Loevinger generally eschews clear definitions of terms, she describes the parameters of ego development in this way:

The conception of ego development as a sequence of stages that also constitutes a set of personality types is necessarily an abstraction. The fundamental characteristics of the ego are that it is a process, a structure, social in origin, functioning as a whole, and guided by purpose and meaning. Development implies structural change.... ..the ego is not the same as the whole personality. It is close to what the person thinks of as his self (Loevinger, 1976, p. 67).

Attachment Distress

Attachment distress is used to describe a complex of behaviors which a number of authors have described as loss of attachment. Behaviorally equivalent to the "separation distress" syndrome described by Parkes (1972), loss of attachment has been described by Weiss (1976) as including

the organization of attention around the image of the lost figure, an urge to make contact with the lost figure, anger toward the lost figure, guilt for having produced the loss, and the presence of an "alarm reaction" (Parke's term), including hyper-alertness to indications of the lost figure's return, great restlessness, and feelings of fear or panic. Difficulties in sleeping and, to a lesser extent, loss of appetite are also expressions of heightened vigilance (pp. 139-140).

This reaction pattern presupposes the existence of an attachment bond, a construct initially proposed by Bowlby (1969/1982)

to refer to the affectional bond that one person (or animal) forms to another specific individual (also see Ainsworth, 1972). This bond is manifested by behaviors fostering proximity to and contact with the love object and by behavioral disruptions if separation occurs... (Hirschfeld et al., 1977, p. 610-611).

While some authors use "attachment" as a term to describe the behaviors reflecting loss of attachment (Brown et al., 1980; Kitson, 1982), this usage appears to confound the construct of an affectional bond and the emotional reactions related to the loss of that bond. "Attachment distress" is a term used to refer specifically to behaviors attending the loss of the affectional bond called "attachment." It was measured by a series of items developed by Kitson (1982).

General Distress

The term general distress is used to describe the overall level of emotional distress experienced by a person going through the process of separation and divorce. Because it reflects both reactions to the loss of an attachment figure as well as reactions to the numerous life changes involved in going through a divorce, it can be taken as an overall measure of the current distress a person is experiencing while going through the process of divorce. General distress is being measured by the SCL-90-R, "a self-report rating scale oriented toward the

symptomatic behavior of psychiatric outpatients"
(Derogatis et al., 1975).

Social Adjustment

The term social adjustment is used to describe a person's overall level of functioning in a number of common social roles. As such, it is seen as a behavioral measure of a person's overall capacity to manage the numerous life changes associated with the process of going through a divorce. It is being measured by the Social Adjustment Scale-Self Report (SAS-SR) originally developed by Weissman and Bothwell (1976) as a research tool for assessing the social functioning of individuals by self-report following psychiatric interventions.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Despite its far-reaching social and psychological impact, divorce and its consequences received relatively little attention in comparison to other family phenomena until the early to mid-1970s (Kitson & Raschke, 1981). Prior to that time, little research was done on the process and effects of marital breakup, with the exception of Goode's (1956) investigation of the effects of divorce on women. Instead, much of the early work on divorce was historical and sociological in focus and often secondary to other research being done on mental health, economic studies, or general population trends (Kitson & Raschke, 1981). Moreover, many of the early studies aimed at reducing the effects of the social stigma then associated with divorce rather than explicating the process and effects of divorce in detail (Chiancola, 1978). Consequently, although a significant amount of information accumulated on divorce statistics and trends, it revealed relatively little about the causes and consequences of divorce or the divorce process (Price-Bonham & Balswick, 1980).

With the advent of divorce as a growing social phenomenon in the 1970s, divorce came to be recognized as a significant field of investigation. As research in the field began to accelerate, it focused initially on the divorce process, with particular attention being given to the process of marital dissolution (Rose & Price-Bonham, 1973). Much of this work concentrated on causative factors and correlates of the decision to divorce with relatively limited attention being given to the problem of adjustment (Bloom & Caldwell, 1981). However, as the psychological effects of going through a divorce became more apparent, divorce adjustment received a growing amount of attention. Greater emphasis was placed on identifying subjective reactions to the experience of divorce, with special emphasis being placed on isolating specific factors affecting both the divorce process and divorce adjustment. As a result, there is now a significant body of literature which documents the process of divorce, its effects on the individuals involved, and the kinds of interventions which can assist with the divorce adjustment process (Kressel et al., 1980).

Despite these advances, however, divorce research has not been guided by any unifying theoretical framework nor has it led to the development of a coherent, generally accepted model of the divorce process (McPhee, 1984).

Rather, it appears that the bulk of the research has been approached from a variety of theoretical perspectives scattered among a number of academic disciplines. Though numerous models of the divorce process and divorce adjustment have emerged, most are adaptations of models from existing theoretical frameworks, such as crisis, grief or other adjustment models. Few attempts have been made to develop comprehensive models of divorce based on a synthesis of the existing research or to apply more general theories from other theoretical frameworks, such as developmental or object relations perspectives, even though these theories have added considerably to knowledge about the impact of relationships on individual functioning. As a result, the growing body of literature on divorce continues to lack a strong theoretical base, and the available data generally remains unintegrated and sometimes contradictory.

In presenting a review of the divorce-related literature now available, attention is first given to models of the divorce process, both descriptive and theoretical, along with any supporting empirical studies. In the next section, the various models of divorce adjustment are described along with summaries of the available supporting research. Empirical investigations of divorce adjustment are considered next, focusing first on reactions to separation and then on factors moderating the adjustment

process. As a way of summarizing current views of divorce adjustment, sex differences in divorce adjustment are reviewed, concluding with composite descriptions of male and female reactions to divorce.

Models of the Divorce Process

Divorce is a process of marital dissolution which impacts a broad domain of human functioning: social, economic, legal, and psychological. As such, it is more than the legal event which dissolves a marital bond. Rather, it is process which begins with the initial marital disruption, proceeds through the process of marital dissolution, and extends beyond the actual divorce decree to the reconstruction of an alternative lifestyle.

Since the mid-1960s, numerous attempts have been made to develop models of this process using both descriptive and theoretical approaches. In general, the descriptive approaches have developed models of divorce based on data from empirical investigations of the divorce process, whereas the theoretical models have typically used social exchange theory as a theoretical base. Both approaches tend to utilize the marital dyad as the basic unit of analysis and conceptualize marital dissolution as a series of stages leading from initial dissatisfaction through postdissolution resolution.

In contrast to approaches which use the dyad as the primary unit of analysis, a few models of divorce have been developed which explore the process of divorce at the individual level of analysis (Kressel et al., 1978; Smart, 1977). One of these (Smart, 1977) is particularly noteworthy for attempting to organize the process of divorce around Erikson's developmental stages. However, on the whole, these attempts can be faulted for ignoring the interactional dimension of the divorce process, which is particularly important in the phases prior to separation.

Descriptive Approaches to Divorce

The descriptive approaches to divorce primarily synthesize the emerging data on the divorce process in chronological order. Most utilize a stage format to present the most salient issues emerging at significant points during the dissolution process. On the whole, some form of three-fold classification system seems to have been adopted by most researchers as a framework for organizing the emerging data, such as decision-making, litigation-restructuring, and postdissolution (Lyon, Silverman, Howe, Bishop, & Armstrong, 1985; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989). Ponzetti and Cate (1987) add an additional phase to this progression, suggesting that the divorce process moves in a sequential progression from

recognition, to discussion, to action, and finally to postdissolution.

Because these models are basically chronological in nature, research tends to focus on examining specific issues arising at various points during the divorce process. While studies have been completed on almost all phases of the divorce process, the majority of investigations have tended to concentrate on factors leading up to the decision to divorce (Booth & White, 1980; Bugaighis, Schumm, Jurich, & Bollman, 1985; Federico, 1979). In most cases, these studies have been attempts to identify the reasons for divorce (Hayes, Stinnett, & Defrain, 1980; Pino, 1980; Thurnher, Fenn, Melichar, & Chiriboga, 1983) and critical factors influencing the divorce process. Specific studies have focused on personality factors (Newcomb, 1984), locus of control (Constantine & Bahr, 1980; Doherty, 1980), ambivalence (Jones, 1987), alcohol consumption (Magura & Shapiro, 1988), work life (Cherlin, 1979), and unemployment (Jones, 1988). In addition, causes of marital dissatisfaction (Levinger, 1966) and marital disruption and instability (Mott & Moore, 1979; Newcomb, 1984; Schumm & Bugaighis, 1985) have also received considerable attention.

Theoretical Approaches to Divorce

In contrast to the descriptive models of the divorce process, the theoretical models have a strong theoretical basis that more narrowly defines their field of investigation. In general, their primary focus has been on exploring the relationship between marital quality and marital stability (Kitson & Raschke, 1981). Most of the resulting models have been developed by social psychologists using exchange theory as their theoretical framework.

One of earliest and probably the most representative is the model of marital dissolution proposed by Levinger (1976). Utilizing concepts taken from Lewinian field theory, Levinger approached the decision to divorce as the aggregate sum of attractions and barriers to marital cohesion for each of the partners relative to the available alternatives. Building on an earlier study of marital cohesiveness and dissolution (Levinger, 1965), this model "translates the effects of external events, pressures, or shocks into psychological forces experienced inside the pair" (1976, p. 43). As such, it provides a way of accounting for the impact of the existing social context on both individual and interpersonal levels of functioning.

In general, direct attempts to validate Levinger's theory have been uniformly supportive. In a correlational study comparing divorcing and dismissing couples who had filed applications for divorce, Levinger (1979) isolated predictors of separation and divorce which provided some support for his theory of attractions and barriers. Combining social exchange and cognitive consistency theories, Wright (1988) developed a more extensive application of exchange theory, which suggests that there are actually three critical decisions in the divorce process (i.e., whether or not to separate, whether or not to petition for divorce, and whether or not to complete the legal process). Although they were not directly testing Levinger's model, Green and Sporkowski (1983) also found that external pressures and alternative attractions highly influenced both marital quality and marital stability.

In addition, various empirical studies applying social exchange theory to the decision to divorce have also validated this approach. For example, Edwards and Saunders (1981) used exchange theory to develop a model explaining the marital dissolution decision. Integrating the concepts of marital congruity and comparison of alternatives, their approach stresses the importance of congruency of experience and the behavior of the other in fulfilling personal expectations. In a study of factors

leading to the decision to divorce, Albrecht and Kunz (1980) concluded that for their sample the costs of maintaining a difficult relationship had become so high that there was little utility left for salvaging the marriage. While Thompson and Spanier (1983) found some gender differences in factors influencing acceptance of the marital termination, all of the major findings in their study were consistent with social exchange predictions. Similarly, a study of factors leading to the breakup of non-married couples (Hill, Rubin, & Peplau, 1976) also supported predictions based on exchange theory, as did a study of mid and later life reactions to divorce (Lloyd & Zick, 1986).

Divorce Adjustment Models

In contrast to models of divorce which focus on the process of marital dissolution, models of divorce adjustment focus primarily on the personal experience of going through divorce. As such, they utilize the individual as the principle unit of analysis and tend to identify either reactions to separation or critical factors influencing the adjustment process. As with the divorce process, divorce adjustment can be approached from a theoretical or an empirical basis.

Theoretical Approaches to Divorce Adjustment

The majority of the theoretical models of divorce adjustment have been derived from existing approaches to various "adjustment reactions" (crisis, stress, grief, and loss). Though each approach has a particular emphasis that distinguishes it from the others, they share a number of common features. In particular, most utilize a stage format and focus on those periods in the divorce process immediately preceeding and following the time of marital separation.

Stress Models

While there is as yet no commonly accepted approach to divorce adjustment, there is nearly universal agreement that going through a divorce is a highly stressful event, resulting in significant life change and personal disorganization. In fact, there is some evidence that divorce could be the most stressful experience of any major life event (Deckert & Langelier, 1978). In reviewing the degree and type of emotional disruption experienced by divorcing persons attending adult education programs on divorce, Dasteel (1982) found that over nine-tenths of the respondents reported experiencing a high degree of stress and that nearly two-thirds indicated that they were feeling unhappy and worrying about the

future. In fact, half of this sample scored as high as a hospitalized population on the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory D30 (depression) scale. As a result, stress theory has sometimes been utilized to help identify the types of divorce-related disruption producing emotional difficulty and the intensity of these emotional reactions.

Despite its popularity and intuitive appeal, however, the amount of theoretical work on divorce-related stress has actually been quite limited. In one attempt to identify potential stressors during the divorce process, Buehler and Langenbrunner (1987) tested a number of dimensions of divorce-related stress: occurrence, disruptiveness, area of life change, social desirability, and subjective desirability. Their results indicated that scores showing the degree of disruption displayed stronger correlations with global measures of stress than scores showing only that a disruption had occurred. They also demonstrated that various areas of life change correlated differentially with the global stress measure. Recognizing the complexity of the issues involved in stress research, particularly the persistent tendency to confound the occurrence of an event with the appraisal of an event, Buehler, Hogan, Robinson, and Levy (1985) developed a model controlling for individual resources, perception of the event, divorce history, and personal

background factors, which allowed the relative impact of a number of individual divorce-related stressors to be compared. Using multivariate regression analysis, the authors concluded that divorce adjustment involved major role shifts for both sexes.

Crisis Models

Crisis models of divorce adjustment utilize extensions of crisis theory to describe reactions to divorce or separation. Though similar to stress models, they differ by postulating a higher degree of potential emotional disruption and by proposing stages for the process of adjustment. Primarily developed by practitioners, little empirical work has been attempted to validate these models.

Incorporating a variety of crisis models, Kraus (1979) developed a five stage "coping" model (involving denial, anger/guilt/regret, depression, reorientation of life style, and acceptance) to describe the process of emotional change occurring during a divorce-related crisis state. In her approach, divorce or separation is viewed as a stressor which initially creates a state of disequilibrium that can escalate into a crisis state depending on the degree of perceived threat and the influence of situational and individual variables. In her view, a crisis develops out of any upset in the individual's

everyday equilibrium which cannot be managed with normal coping mechanisms. Once the crisis state has been resolved, it is followed by a process of long-term adjustment that can lead to a variety of alternative outcomes depending on the influence of a number of significant variables. In her view, the primary outcomes include strengthened functioning, varying levels of reorganization, or psychopathology.

In an earlier application of crisis resolution theory, Wiseman (1975) developed a more clinical approach to the divorce adjustment process. In her view, adjustment involves moving through a sequential series of stages from denial, loss and depression, anger and ambivalence, through reorientation of life-style and identity, and finally to acceptance and a new level of functioning. Because Wiseman views adjustment as involving elements of loss and depression as well as challenge, the sequence of stages in her model is quite close to that found in grief models.

Grief Models

Similar in format to crisis models, grief models of divorce adjustment focus primarily on the way in which a person detaches from a lost object (Saul & Scherman, 1984). Based on the assumption that divorce and bereavement are somewhat analogous processes, these models are

clear adaptations of the Kübler-Ross (1970) model of adjustment to death and dying. In fact, Herman's (1974) grief model directly borrows her five stages of denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance in developing a divorce intervention model for nurses. Froiland and Hozman (1977) also utilize the same five stages in their model of counseling intervention, arguing that the dissolution of a marriage is equivalent to "the death of a relationship" (p. 525).

While application of the grief process to divorce adjustment has been fairly common, particularly among clinicians and other health care practitioners, empirical work on the grief model of divorce has been extremely limited and generally unsupportive. The only direct studies of the model (Crosby, Gage, & Raymond, 1983; Crosby, Lybarger, & Mason, 1987) failed to find any conclusive validating evidence. In fact, these investigators concluded only that stress and crisis were common to both death and divorce. Likewise, Saul and Scherman's (1984) study of factors thought to affect the grief resolution process (remarriage, sex, time) found that only time approached significance. This finding contradicted earlier assumptions that remarriage is a positive index of divorce adjustment.

Attachment/Loss Models

In general, loss models appear quite similar to grief models, since they also focus on reactions to the loss of a love object. However, loss models tend to draw upon attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982) to explain adult reactions to separation. Probably the major work in this category is Weiss' (1975, 1976) application of attachment theory to the process of marital separation. Observing that "most among the separated continue to feel drawn to the spouse even when a new relationship is established" (p. 137), Weiss (1976) postulated the existence of an attachment bond between partners similar to that described by Bowlby in children. In fact, noting that marital separation almost uniformly produces emotional distress regardless of the quality of the marriage or which partner initiated the separation, Weiss argued that the loss of attachment is the major cause of a cluster of symptoms often observed following separation, i.e., separation distress, depression and/or euphoria, and loneliness.

However, empirical research on adult attachment loss is limited. Two studies (Brown et al., 1980; Kitson, 1982) attempting to separate distress related to loss of an attachment figure from distress resulting from general life change produced mixed results. Though both studies

validated the construct of attachment and differentiated attachment distress (as operationally defined) from generalized distress, they found that attachment was not nearly as universal as Weiss had predicted. Nonetheless, based upon the differential findings, Kitson concluded that loss of an attachment figure is the primary cause of the distress experienced following separation.

In a less direct application of attachment theory, Stephen (1984) tested a reformulation of the concept which he termed "symbolic interdependence," or "the extent to which a couple has constructed a shared view of the world" (p. 1). Stephen argued that the result of such a construction is a shared meaning system which functions to validate an individual's identity, values, and belief system. In his view, loss of relationship results in loss of this source of validation which causes personal distress. Stephen's study of the relationship between symbolic interdependence and post-separation distress revealed that both symbolic interdependence and relationship commitment are significantly related to post-breakup distress.

Developmental Models

While developmental and object relations theories have generally led to an increasing appreciation for the role of relationships in human development, very little

divorce-related research has utilized this perspective. Within the last decade, only two attempts were made to develop models of divorce adjustment based on developmental theory and these were limited to applications of Mahler's theory of separation-individuation (Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, 1975). In one, Cantor (1982) approached the marital couple as an analogue to the mother-child dyad. In her model, stresses leading to divorce are seen as arising from disruptive influence of the separation-individuation process on the marital bond as one partner seeks to individuate while the other suffers the loss of a symbiotic attachment. Taking a somewhat different tact, Gilfillan (1985) argued that the formation of an intimate adult relationship constitutes a recapitulation of the separation-individuation process which leads to intrapsychic restructuring at progressively higher levels. While there has as yet been no attempt to validate either of these models, they suggest the possibility of differential reactions to divorce based on developmental issues, a perspective which has been missing in most other models of divorce adjustment.

Systemic Models

In contrast to models which focus on individual reactions to divorce, a few models have been developed which approach divorce adjustment from a systems per-

spective. Those falling into this category include Pais and White's (1979) conceptualization of divorce adjustment as a process of family redefinition, Ahrons' (1980) description of divorce as a family transitional crisis, and McPhee's (1984) application of role theory within a family systems framework. Though these models consider the family as the basic unit of analysis, each appears to utilize systems theory to identify relational factors influencing the adjustment of individual family members (McPhee, 1984). As such, they are able to describe the way in which interactional issues impact individual functioning, an element which is missing in most other models of divorce adjustment given their individual focus.

Integrated Approaches

As is evident from the variety of perspectives on divorce adjustment now available, there is as yet no generally accepted model that describes the entire adjustment process. Rather, each approach seems to capture a particular aspect of a multifaceted phenomenon which has a valid but rather limited utility. For example, stress and crisis models seem best suited for highlighting the emotional impact of the multitude of life changes associated with divorce, while grief and loss models seem best able to emphasize issues related to the

loss of a major relationship. However, since all of these processes seem to be involved in the adjustment process, any particular approach alone seems insufficient for explaining the entire scope of the adjustment process.

Recognizing the limitations of singular approaches to divorce adjustment, at least two attempts have been made to incorporate many of the existing models into a more integrated framework (Price-Bonham & Balswick, 1980; Salts, 1979). For example, Wiseman (1975) viewed the adjustment process as beginning with an initial experience of shock and crisis, followed by a sense of grief and loss, which eventually leads to a need to mobilize and develop new resources. Consequently, she suggested that the most appropriate model depends on the particular phase of the adjustment process that the person is experiencing. Joining the divorce adjustment process and clinical concerns, Salts (1979) also argued that different models are needed at different phases in the adjustment process, because the relevant clinical issues change over the course of the divorce process. In her view, intervention should focus on improving the couple's interaction during the initial disillusionment phase. It shifts to evaluation of alternatives once detachment has been consolidated and then to crisis counseling when physical separation occurs. As life reconsolidation

occurs, therapy gradually moves from crisis counseling and problem solving towards promoting self understanding and personal growth. In Salts' approach, then, the relevant model depends on the most salient clinical issue needing to be addressed.

While applying the various adjustment models in serial fashion seems intuitively appealing, the literature suggests that there are marked limitations to using this approach. In the first place, little work has been done on correlating adjustment issues with stage in the divorce process (Kolevzon & Gottlieb, 1983), leaving few theoretical or empirical guidelines for making such applications. Secondly, even though an integrated approach allows a variety of models to be utilized, it assumes that individuals move through the process of divorce in a relatively predictable fashion, though perhaps at differing rates. This assumption has been recently challenged by Ponzetti and Cate (1988), who identified three different "trajectories" through the dissolution process, each of which involves differing subjective experiences. If so, then it is questionable whether a thorough understanding of divorce adjustment is possible by simply combining the existing models.

As a result, it appears that none of the existing models of divorce adjustment, either individually or in combination, has the capacity to adequately explain the

wide variety of reactions associated with divorce. Instead, what remains to be developed is a comprehensive model of divorce adjustment which both accounts for differential reactions to separation and divorce and which enables those reactions to be correlated with stages in the divorce process.

Empirical Approaches to Divorce Adjustment

Though numerous empirical studies of divorce adjustment have been conducted over the past two decades, the majority of these studies have examined either reactions to separation and divorce or else variables that moderate the adjustment process. The first category focuses mainly on the types, intensity, and duration of reactions to separation and divorce. The second focuses on identifying and investigating the numerous variables influencing the adjustment process. In addition to these primary areas of investigation, sex differences in the adjustment process have more recently emerged as a topic of considerable interest. Though the results on gender and divorce remain tentative and sometimes contradictory, they are being included as a way of summarizing the empirical findings on divorce adjustment.

Reactions to Separation and Divorce

In examining the quality and duration of emotional reactions to separation, most investigations have concentrated on identifying specific areas of life disruption, the intensity of emotional reactions at the time of separation, or the process of emotional adjustment over time. For the most part, the majority of the initial studies focused on clarifying the extent of emotional disruption at the time of separation, which has generally been considered the period of greatest distress ever since Goode's (1956) early study of women's reactions to divorce (Chiriboga, Roberts, & Stein, 1978; Gray, 1978; Price-Bohman & Balswick, 1980). In comparison, relatively few attempts have been made to chart the nature and course of the entire adjustment process over time (Gray, 1978; Hackney & Ribordy, 1980). As a result, the early studies on reactions to separation created an impression that divorce is a disruptive and crisis provoking life event, characterized by changes in self-identity (Kohen, 1981), depressive reactions (Menaghan & Lieberman, 1986), loneliness (Woodward, Zabel, & Decosta, 1980), and suicide (Herman, 1977). However, as investigators began to explore the adjustment process over time, a more complicated picture of the adjustment process began to emerge, involving ambivalence and the intermixing of patterns of

relief and distress (Spanier & Thompson, 1983). As a result, it now appears that for many individuals, divorce leads to a positive outcome over time, even though particular periods of the adjustment process can be highly stressful (Zeiss, Zeiss & Johnson, 1980).

Areas of Distress. While it is generally agreed that separation and divorce can have a broad impact on general life functioning, relatively little has been written about the specific areas of life functioning that are most likely to be affected. In one attempt to isolate specific stressors, factor analysis identified at least six discreet areas producing stress: former spouse contacts, parent-child interactions, interpersonal relations, loneliness, practical problems, and financial concerns (Burman & Turk, 1981). In a later review of the literature, Buehler and Langenbrunner (1987) identified similar areas of greatest stress: "the relationship with the former spouse, loneliness, a sense of personal failure, finances, and child rearing" (p. 31). However, Burman and Turk (1981) emphasized that there could be differential reactions within groupings. For example, they found that family difficulties incorporate two separate classes of problems, those involving interaction with the children and those involving interaction with the ex-spouse. They also discovered that family problems

as a whole contribute very little to general dissatisfaction, whereas problems in the area of social relations often lead to greater mood disturbance and life dissatisfaction. However, it is not altogether clear that these reaction patterns hold true for all persons. A study correlating family stress and well-being found differential stressors for custodial mothers and noncustodial fathers (Buehler et al., 1985). In an attempt to resolve such uncertainties, Spanier and Casto (1979a) tried to identify which aspects of the divorce process produced the greatest stress. In analyzing their data, they concluded that divorce involves two separate but interrelated processes, i.e., adjusting to the dissolution of the marriage and setting up a new lifestyle. Of these processes, they concluded that establishing a new lifestyle produced the greatest degree of divorce-related stress.

Intensity of Distress. As previously indicated, much of the early work on divorce adjustment concentrated on exploring the intensity of reactions to divorce, primarily at the time of separation. In general, the main efforts in this area have focused on quantifying distress related to overall life change or distress related to separation from the marital partner (Spanier & Casto, 1979a). However, comparisons have been difficult due to

the wide variety of instruments that have been used to measure related constructs.

Of the types of distress most frequently examined, measures of attachment distress are probably the most discrete, since only two instruments have been developed to measure the construct. In one study, Brown et al. (1980) found that attachment could be distinguished from generalized distress, although it contributed to "most of the variance" in generalized distress. Using a measure developed from grief responses, Kitson (1982) also found a positive correlation between attachment distress and general distress with some indication that attachment difficulties increase distress. In her sample, 15.8% reported no attachment, 41.8% low attachment, 17.5% moderate attachment, and 24.9% high attachment.

In contrast to the relatively specific results on attachment distress, measuring and comparing the intensity of general distress has proven to be more difficult because of the wide variety of measures that have been used. A brief sampling of instruments used as measures of distress in various divorce adjustment studies includes the Beck Depression Inventory (Hackney & Ribordy, 1980), the Blair Divorce Adjustment Inventory (Thomas, 1982), the Bradburn Affect Balance Scale (Nelson, 1981; Spanier & Lachman, 1980), the Cantril Self-Anchoring Ladder (Spanier & Lachman, 1980), the Fisher Divorce

Adjustment Scale (Davis & Aron, 1988), the General Well-Being Schedule (Daniels-Mohring & Berger, 1984), the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (Hackney & Ribordy, 1980; Spivey & Scherman, 1980), the Multiple Affect Adjective Checklist (Hackney & Ribordy, 1980), the Social Adjustment Scale (Nelson, 1981), and the Social Avoidance and Distress Scale (Davis & Aron, 1988; Granvold, Pedler, & Schellie, 1979). In addition, many authors develop their own adjustment scales, create scales using relevant items from preexisting scales, or utilize an interview format, which makes comparisons between studies nearly impossible. Consequently, given the diversity of distress measures currently in use, probably the safest conclusion that can be drawn regarding the intensity of reactions to divorce is that persons going through divorce generally show higher levels of distress than persons in the general population.

Duration of Distress. Studies of divorce reactions over time have generally produced a rather confusing picture of the course of the adjustment process. Hackney and Ribordy (1980) concluded that there were three phases to the emotional adjustment process: an initial traumatic phase when marital difficulties escalate, a prolonged stress phase as the couple moves towards divorce, and a

readjustment phase following the divorce decree. However, just which of these periods is most problematic remains unclear. For example, in contrast to expectations that the period immediately following separation is the most difficult, Albrecht (1980) discovered that the period before the decision to divorce was the most difficult for his sample. However, Bloom and Caldwell (1981) found that high pre-separation distress held true only for the females in their sample, whereas the males generally had poorer adjustment following separation. A later study of depressive reactions after separation (Propst, Pardington, Ostrom, & Watkins, 1986) produced similar findings for the women in the sample. In contrast, Spivey and Scherman (1980) found that not only were the first six months after filing the most stressful for their female sample but also that indicators of maladjustment did not fully emerge until six months to a year later. As a result, they concluded that the period between 12 to 18 months post-separation was the most difficult.

As a result, it is difficult to make any generalization about the relationship between level of distress and phase of the adjustment process. On the whole, most studies suggest that divorce-related distress decreases over time. For example, Clarke-Stewart and Bailey (1989) report that in their sample most of the negative feelings

associated with the divorce had diminished by 6 to 12 months following the divorce. Likewise, in examining the relationship between former spouses, Goldsmith (1980) found that most of the sample did not have extreme feelings about their former partner by one year following separation. In addition, she found that "former spouses generally experience positive, caring feelings toward one another concurrent with the negative ones" (p. 16). Consequently, it appears that while the separation process may be initially quite stressful, these effects appear to diminish over time resulting in a generally positive conclusion (Riessman, 1990). However, given the contradictions in current findings, the relationship between time and level of distress is perhaps best summed up by Spanier and Lachman's (1980) caution that the critical period in the divorce process "may vary widely across individuals" (p. 380).

Factors Moderating the Adjustment Process

Of the studies conducted on the process of divorce adjustment, probably the most attention has been devoted to identifying factors moderating the adjustment process (Spanier & Casto, 1979a; Spanier & Lachman, 1980). In the course of this work, numerous variables have been examined in an attempt to isolate the influence of specific factors on the adjustment process. However,

considering the number of factors thought to moderate adjustment, it is striking how few have been identified as exerting a consistent influence. In one of the earliest studies focusing exclusively on the effects of marital separation, Weiss (1975) identified only a small number of significant mitigating factors affecting the degree and extent of the emotional reaction (forewarning, length of marriage, "leaver" or "left," an alternate attachment figure, and quality of the postmarital relationship). Looking at a broader population, Spanier and Lachman (1980) found the differentiating variables to be limited to health, economic stability and dating, though they obtained slightly differing results depending on the dependent measure. These investigators also reported that greater mood disturbance was associated with fewer children, less desire for the divorce, lower income, and longer marriage. Neither sex nor age proved to be significant factors. In a later study of depressive reactions following divorce, Menaghan and Lieberman (1986) found that changes in depression could be explained by only three factors: increased economic difficulties, a declining standard of living, and decreased social supports. Similarly, in examining differential sex reactions to divorce, Clarke-Stewart and Bailey (1989) found that adjustment to divorce could be predicted by very few variables. For the total sample, time since divorce,

psychological stress, and length of time in the present job proved to be the only discernable predictor variables, although independence (relocation) also proved to be significant for women.

Given the wide variability in results, it is clear that relatively few conclusions can be drawn about factors which affect the intensity and duration of emotional reactions to divorce. On the whole, the trends suggest that some of the variables most likely to affect overall adjustment include gender, filing status, economic issues, children, response of family and friends, social participation, and relationship with the former spouse (Price-Bonham & Balswick, 1980). However, judging from the variety of variables found to moderate divorce, it appears that it would be premature to isolate any particular variables as having clear effects on the process and course of divorce adjustment. Although it now appears that some variables may exert more influence than others, the lack of consistency in findings suggests that greater standardization in measures and procedures is needed before firm conclusions can be drawn.

In to order present an overview of the empirical findings, the numerous factors moderating either the extent of divorce-related distress or the overall adjustment process have been grouped under the broad categories

of individual differences, divorce-related variables, and social supports.

Individual differences. Over the past decade, a number of variables have been found to influence reactions to separation and divorce which can be broadly classified in the category of individual differences. These include age, education, income, personality factors, sex role orientation and coping capacity.

1. Age. Though often considered a significant demographic variable, age seems to have received relatively little attention as a factor affecting divorce adjustment. Though some work has isolated reactions to divorce for specific age groups, such as midlife (Arnold & McKenry, 1986; Cleveland, 1979; Davis & Aron, 1988; Deckert & Langelier, 1978) and late life (Weingarten, 1988), little attention has been given to examining the effects of age on adjustment for the general population of divorcing persons. Moreover, results that are available have proven to be contradictory. For example, Chiriboga et al. (1978) found that older persons tended to be more unhappy following divorce than younger persons, whereas Granvold et al. (1979) found that older women and women who had been married longer showed better overall adjustment than their younger counterparts. However, they noted that this finding was unanticipated

and contrary to earlier results which showed that older subjects tended to have more difficulty in adjusting to divorce. They interpreted this result as reflecting changing societal attitudes towards women's roles and divorce and a positive correlation between age and self-acceptance. In a later study, Clarke-Stewart and Bailey (1989) found adjustment to be unrelated to age.

2. Education. In the few studies that have considered education as a moderating factor, level of education tends to be positively correlated with various measures of divorce adjustment, though there are exceptions. In a study of female responses to divorce, higher education was found to be significantly related to lower anxiety and the perception of better coping (Propst et al., 1986), while a study including both sexes (Spanier & Thompson, 1983) found a low level of educational achievement to be related to higher distress. However, a study comparing male and female reactions to divorce, found that lower educational level and occupation to was correlated with higher adjustment in females (Clarke-Stewart & Bailey, 1989).

3. Income. In contrast to the uneven findings for most predictor variables, the effect of income level on divorce adjustment has proven to be fairly consistent. In virtually all studies, economic difficulties have been found to be directly related to divorce-related distress

for both sexes (Price-Bonhman & Balswick, 1980). In general, it appears that persons having higher incomes experience less distress, while those with lower incomes experience higher distress (Spanier & Lachman, 1980). In a study of depressive reactions following divorce, Menaghan and Lieberman (1986) found that changes in depression could be explained primarily by economic factors, i.e., by increased economic difficulties and by a declining standard of living (and to a lesser extent by loss of social supports). However, even though income levels influence the adjustment of both sexes, it appears that women appear are more highly affected by income level than men, because men tend to have much more favorable economic circumstances following divorce than women (Albrecht, 1980; Spanier & Casto, 1979a). However, it should also be noted that it is generally difficult to separate the relative effects of employment and income on overall adjustment, though both appear to be equally predictive (Clarke-Stewart & Bailey, 1989).

4. Personality factors. Despite the frequent correlation between personality style and particular patterns of behavior, personality factors have received relatively little attention in the divorce adjustment literature. Although specific aspects of personality have been examined, only one study (Thomas, 1982) specifically attempted to isolate personality factors associated with

improved adjustment. Using scores on various scales of the 16PF, Thomas found that persons scoring highest on measures of adjustment to divorce were highest on "dominance, self-assurance, intelligence, creativity, social boldness, liberalism, self-sufficiency, greater ego strength, and lower anxiety level" (p. 33). In examining the effect of a more specific personality variable, locus of control, Morgan (1988) found that locus of control scores remained unaffected by the termination of a marriage. She concluded that locus of control remains a fairly stable trait under stress. In looking at the relationship between independence and reactions to divorce, Dasteel (1982) discovered that persons who were less independent within the marriage had more difficulty with the postdivorce transition. She postulated that such persons may have utilized their marital partner to help support their basic ego functioning, particularly decision making, and concluded that their emotional disturbance was related to having to learn to function independently.

5. Coping capacity. Of the numerous individual factors affecting adjustment, only Burman and Turk (1981) have explored the effects of coping strategies on divorce adjustment. In the course of this work, they isolated six factors that appeared to exert a significant influence on divorce adjustment (i.e., social activities,

learning, personal understanding, expressing feelings, autonomy, and home and family activities). However, they also discovered that such coping strategies were problem specific, with particular strategies affecting particular problem areas. For example, they found that social activity and greater autonomy tended to be significantly related to reduced loneliness and fewer problems with interpersonal relations. These factors were also related to lower mood disturbance and improved life satisfaction but only in the interpersonal and emotional realms. Consequently, Burman and Turk concluded that "neither problems alone nor coping alone are sufficient to understand the phenomenon of divorce; ... both aspects should be examined concurrently" (p. 186).

6. Sex role. A number of studies have examined the relationship between sex role orientation and adjustment to divorce. In most of these, nontraditional sex role orientations seem to promote adaptive functioning (Price-Bonham & Balswick, 1980). For example, in a study of sex differences in marital lifestyle, Chiriboga and Thurnher (1980) found that deviation from traditional sex role expectations was associated with better post separation adjustment for both sexes. Likewise, in a study of female postdivorce adjustment, Granvold et al. (1979) determined that women holding more equalitarian sex role expectations were better adjusted than those with more

traditional sex role attitudes. However, in looking at the effect of sex role orientation for both sexes, Bloom and Clement (1984) found that while a high family orientation and low self orientation was associated with a lower level of postseparation adjustment in women, these associations did not hold true in the case of men.

Divorce-related variables. As a class, divorce-related variables primarily concern the circumstances and conditions surrounding the marital breakup that affect divorce-related distress. These include the perceived causes of the divorce, length of marriage, person initiating divorce, and the presence or absence of children in the marriage.

1. Perceived causes. Although the causes of divorce are more often examined in relation to marital breakup, some attention has been given to the relationship between perceived cause and level of divorce adjustment. Davis and Aron (1988) examined the relationship between perceived causes of divorce and postdivorce adjustment for a sample of midlife women. In general, they found that women who identified causes that were either neutral or blamed the spouse had a higher level of adjustment than those who chose a self-accusing cause. The authors interpreted these findings as supporting a theory of self-serving attributional bias. In surveying midlife

participants in a divorce support group, Arnold and McKenry (1986) discovered that a majority of respondents tended to cite their spouse's midlife crisis as the causal factor in their divorce, even though the subjects reported experiencing a midlife crisis themselves. However, any findings about perceived causes should probably be interpreted with caution, since Weiss (1975) discovered that the parties to a divorce tend to develop "accounts" of the breakup which may have only marginal relation to the actual facts.

2. Length of marriage. While the results are limited, it appears that length of marriage may be a factor affecting divorce adjustment. In one study including this variable, Spanier and Lachman (1980) found longer marriages to be associated with greater mood disturbance.

2. Person initiating the divorce. In contrast to the variable influence of many factors moderating divorce adjustment, one of the most consistent findings on divorce adjustment involves the effect of the person initiating the divorce. In most studies to date, initiating the divorce has been shown to be related to lower distress and a quicker readjustment following separation. In contrast, not wanting the divorce and an unexpected separation has been shown to be related to increased emotional difficulty (Spanier & Castro, 1979; Spanier & Thompson, 1983). Moreover, there is also some evidence

(Jordan, 1988) that the partner desiring the divorce experiences greater distress prior to separation (followed by a later reaction of guilt), whereas the non-initiating partner experiences greater distress at the time of separation (coupled with anger and resentment over a sense of rejection). However, one study (Clarke-Stewart & Bailey, 1989) found level of adjustment to be unrelated to the person initiating the divorce.

4. Children. Of the numerous factors affecting divorce adjustment, one the most problematic is the effect of children on divorce-related distress. Although most parents report having to make major adjustments whether or not they obtain custody, parents with custody generally report that they feel more confined and carry greater responsibility, whereas parents without custody generally report that they feel a loss of contact with their children (Spanier & Casto, 1979a).

Despite this general tendency, however, the specific effects of children on adjustment remain unclear (Kitson & Raschke, 1981), apparently because children can serve as either a stressor or a social support depending upon individual circumstances. For example, in reviewing the literature, Daniels-Mohring and Berger (1984) concluded that the presence of children tends to increase the time required for adjustment due to increased parental responsibilities. They also concluded that the presence of

children lengthened the amount of time needed for successful adjustment. In contrast to these findings, however, Probst et al. (1986) found that the number of children was not related to level of distress. Moreover, they also discovered that those with fewer children had higher levels of depression, as did a study by Burman and Turk (1981). Likewise, Brown et al. (1980) found that the number of children was negatively related to degree of distress. This finding led them to hypothesize that children functioned as surrogates for disrupted attachment needs. If so, it is possible that there may be a strong sex bias in this factor, since women tend to have custody of the children. Further, in at least one study, children have been shown to decrease stress for women (Probst et al., 1986). However, Woodward et al. (1980) found that the presence or absence of children did not affect measures of loneliness following divorce.

Social support. Social support has generally been regarded as a primary resource for mediating the effects of stress, particularly when social disruption is involved (Chiriboga, Coho, Stein, & Roberts, 1979). This effect also appears to hold true for divorce adjustment, with a number of studies showing higher levels of social participation to be related to lower levels of divorce-related distress (Raschke, 1977). However, there are ex-

ceptions. For example, Spanier and Lachman (1980) found that the effect of social contact on divorce adjustment was "negligible" (pp. 375-76), even though an earlier study (Spanier & Casto, 1979a) found that social interaction was inversely related to adjustment difficulties. Likewise, in an unanticipated result, Probst et al. (1986) found that perception of social support was unrelated to adjustment level. They interpreted this result as indicating that most subjects in their sample had an effective support system to begin with.

Possible reasons for inconsistencies in the influence of social supports could be that the effect varies with the phase of the adjustment process or the type of support being offered. Raschke (1977) found that social participation diminishes markedly in the first 6 months following separation, increases for the next 18 months, and is followed by a gradual decline and stabilization around 2 years post-separation. She concluded that for both males and females social participation effectively diminished distress in the period following the initial 6 month decline. The supports utilized and the effect of those supports could also be different. Of the variety of social supports available, Chiriboga et al. (1979) found that persons in the process of divorce were most likely to turn to friends, spouse, and counselors, before seeking out relatives and parents, though the utilization

of such resources was found to depend upon the degree of distress produced by the divorce. In their sample, under 20% of the respondents spoke to no one, while roughly 13% utilized six or more types of support. In contrast, for single mothers, Kurdek and Blisk (1983) found that the greatest support was provided by friends and children. In examining the effect of social network changes on adjustment, Daniels-Mohring and Berger (1984) discovered that persons in a high adjustment group had more relational needs being met by a fewer number of persons. Those in the low adjustment groups had twice as many assistance providing relationships than the high adjustment groups (i.e., relationships characterized by receiving financial or physical aid).

Consequently, even though social support has received considerable investigation, results should be interpreted with caution, not only because of the differential influence of particular factors but also because in many of the correlational studies the direction of causality often remains unclear. In such cases, it has generally been assumed that social participation leads to decreased stress, even though it is possible that lower stress could in fact lead to higher levels of social participation. As a case in point, one study (Chirigoba et al., 1979) indicated that support seeking behavior increases with greater levels of distress. Consequently,

interpreting the nature of the relationship between social contact and distress generally remains problematic.

Nonetheless, given the interest the effects of social support, a number of studies have been conducted on specific social factors thought to influence divorce adjustment. These include social network changes, social contacts with friends or relatives, relationship with the former spouse, dating, and presence of an alternate relationship (or remarriage).

1. Social network changes. In general, social context has had a relatively low influence on measures of well-being following divorce (Chiriboga, Roberts, & Stein, 1978). However, the same cannot be said for the effects of social disruption on divorce adjustment. In examining the effect of social network changes on adjustment, Daniels-Mohring and Berger (1984) found that significant disruption in social networks led to increased stress and decreased overall adjustment. In looking at the relationship between social change and role continuity and identity, Kohen (1981) found that divorce upset identities formed around marital roles in her female sample, leading two-thirds of the women to define themselves negatively following divorce (as estranged or displaced). However, she noted that the members of this group were gradually able to reestablish their role identity as a single head of household despite

little social support. She also discovered that almost all of the women who were able to maintain some continuity with their role as a married mother did not report having an emotional crisis during the marriage break-up.

2. Social contacts. Contrary to the general expectations of a positive correlation between social contacts and improved adjustment, the available studies reveal a more variable relationship between social contact and divorce adjustment. In reviewing the literature, Price-Bonham and Boswick (1980) found that interaction with kin was not necessarily related to positive postseparation adjustment, even though families were generally in a position to provide the kind of assistance which could lead to better adjustment. Likewise, Spanier and Lachman (1980) found that social contact with friends and relatives was not a reliable predictor of adjustment. These results replicated findings in an earlier study, where contacts with extended kin were found to be unrelated or negatively related to adjustment (Spanier & Hanson, 1982). In both cases, it was hypothesized that one probable reason for the lack of influence was that relatives were likely to be disapproving of the decision to divorce and to react in a way that would interfere with the adjustment process. Spanier and Thompson (1983) provide some support for this possibility in their finding that persons who reported receiving strong disapproval of the

divorce by the parents of the spouse and by friends displayed higher levels of distress.

3. Relationship with the former spouse. While there has been a number of studies which have examined the impact of the relationship with the former spouse on adjustment (Ahrons, 1980; Goetting, 1979; Goldsmith, 1980; Nelson, 1981), the results have been difficult to interpret. Nelson (1981) found the relationship with the ex-spouse to be one of the best predictors of women's post-divorce adjustment. In a study of single divorced mothers, both positive and negative feelings towards the ex-spouse contributed a significant amount to overall affect balance. In particular, diminished support and heightened conflict were correlated with poorer overall adjustment. However, in an earlier investigation of norms affecting the former spouse relationship, Goetting (1979) concluded that women preferred greater social distance in interacting with their former spouses than did men. She interpreted this finding as reflecting the greater distress typically experienced by women during the divorce process. In contrast, Goldsmith (1980) found no significant differences between males and females on feelings of attachment, hostility, caring or guilt towards the former spouse.

4. Dating. For the most part, it appears that dating exerts a positive influence on postdivorce ad-

justment (Spanier & Casto, 1979a; Spanier & Lachman, 1980), perhaps due in part to improving a person's self concept (Price-Bonham & Balswick, 1980). Moreover, Spanier and Casto (1979a) found that "dating a variety of people with no close or steady relationship seemed to be about as helpful as one very close relationship" (p. 251). However, Spanier and Lachman (1980) found that dating was not a significant factor for persons separated more than 16 months, which suggests that dating may exert an influence only at particular points in the adjustment process. They further noted that the direction of causality in the relationship between new relationships and effective coping remains unclear.

5. Alternate relationships/remarriage. Despite the popular conclusion that alternative relationships or remarriage would exert a positive influence on the adjustment process, the influence of this factor remains unclear. In a nonempirical study of the significance of transitional relationships following divorce, Taibbi (1979) argued that alternate relationships provide a context for redefining a sense of self that often becomes confused following the loss of a major relationship, enabling the person to better manage issues of power, ambivalence, and isolation. However, in examining grief reactions following divorce, Saul and Scherman (1984) found no difference in levels of grief or adjustment between

those who remained single and those who remarried following divorce. Likewise, in reviewing the literature, Crosby et al. (1987) cite findings which indicate that remarriage is not related to measures of well-being.

Sex Differences in Divorce Adjustment

Although sex differences in divorce adjustment have emerged as a topic of considerable interest during the last decade, relatively few studies have specifically examined sex related divorce adjustment differences (Albrecht, 1980; Bloom & Caldwell, 1981; Chiribogo et al., 1978; Clarke-Stewart & Bailey, 1989; Zeiss et al., 1980). Instead, most of the findings concerning sex differences in divorce adjustment have resulted from including sex as a corollary variable in studies of other divorce adjustment factors. As a result, though a number of researchers have found significant sex differences between men and women during the process of divorce (Price-Bonham & Balswick, 1980), these have often proven contradictory or inconclusive, with many studies showing virtually no sex differences at all (Kitson & Raschke, 1981). Consequently, it is difficult and probably premature to draw any clear conclusions from the data currently available, though current findings can serve as a guide for further research.

Of those studies producing sex related differences in the adjustment process, most have tended to describe differential reactions following separation. Bloom and Caldwell (1981) were among the first to note clear sex differences in reactions to divorce at different phases of the separation process. In their sample, women reported poorer emotional adjustment than men prior to separation, while men reported poorer adjustment than women following separation. They interpreted this finding as indicating that before separation women were experiencing greater dissatisfaction with the marriage, whereas after separation men were experiencing greater distress over loss of their spouse. Results in a later study examining the relationship between time since separation and depression (Propst et al., 1986) were interpreted as supporting this finding. In an earlier study, Chiriboga et al. (1978) found qualitative differences in reactions to separation. On their measures of adjustment, they found that the men evidenced a more enduring sense of unhappiness after a relational breakup while the women displayed more temporary experiences of depression and general distress. They interpreted this difference as indicating that men experienced a lower sense of well-being after a relational breakup while women experienced greater emotional turmoil. Albrecht (1980) reported similar findings. In his sample, the divorce experience

proved to be initially more stressful for the women, though overall they proved to be comparatively more happy than the men. In direct contrast to this result, however, Clarke-Stewart and Bailey (1989) concluded from a review of the literature that males are more likely to experience severe depression and pathology following separation, while the females are more likely to experience less traumatic but longer lasting emotional difficulties. They attributed this distinction to the differential influence of financial, employment, child custody and social situations. Since the less severe but longer lasting difficulties were likely to affect the majority of women, whereas only a minority of men suffered severe distress, they concluded that these differences in reaction favor men over women. In a variation of this theme, Deckert and Langelier (1978) found no significant difference between males and females in divorce-related stress levels, but they did discover that the females were more likely to experience long-term distress.

In contradiction to these findings, however, several studies have found minimal or no sex related differences at all, despite examining a broad variety of factors. In looking at the psychological impact of divorce, Gray (1978) found time competence to be the only area with an identifiable sex difference. Likewise, Buehler and Langenbrunner (1987) found only minor differences between

men and woman in overall level of disruptiveness. Out of 34 factors examined, women reported greater disruptiveness on moving and perceived incompetency, and men reported higher difficulty with parent-child relationships. Another study comparing male and female reactions to divorce found no difference on social conditions thought to influence adjustment, such as amount of perceived social support, relocation differences, and degree of conflict with the ex-spouse (Clarke-Stewart & Bailey, 1989). In an early study of reactions to separation, Weiss (1975) found no differences between males and females in the amount of distress related to separation. Looking at emotional reactions to divorce over time, Hackney and Ribordy (1980) found no significant differences between men and women on three different measures of distress. In fact, they noted that "men and women reported experiencing the same negative effects and to the same degree" (p. 110). Likewise, Burman and Turk (1980) found similar patterns of emotional problems in males and females following separation. For late divorce couples, Goldsmith (1980) found similar results, i.e., the process of separation resulted in similar feelings being experienced by both sexes. This type of finding led Price-Bonham and Balswick (1980) to conclude that separation constitutes as much a crisis for men as it does for women.

Given this spectrum of findings, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions about sex differences in divorce. Those studies which have focused on identifying sex differences remain inconclusive or contradictory, while studies focusing exclusively on studying divorce adjustment patterns in either women or men do not invite ready comparison. Consequently, at the present time, it seems possible only to identify trends characterizing possible sex differences based upon a composite presentation of the available findings.

Male Reactions to Divorce. Piecing together findings from various divorce adjustment studies allows a tentative but fairly comprehensive picture of male reactions to separation and divorce to be constructed. In general, it appears that males are likely to be more highly attached to their spouse than females (Brown et al., 1980; Kitson, 1982; Jordan, 1988) and they are less likely to make the decision to divorce (Goldsmith, 1980). They also face more changes in daily routines (Riessman, 1990). As a result, their emotional problems are initially more severe (Burman & Turk, 1981) and they are likely to display more changes in overall mood (Daniels-Mohring & Berger, 1984) which could result in increased drinking (Riessman, 1990). However, they are apt to adjust to change and new roles more readily than women

(Herman, 1974), because they are more likely to participate in social activities (Clarke-Stewart & Bailey, 1989; Price-Bonham & Balswick, 1980) due to their greater opportunity for making social contacts because of working outside of the home (Raschke, 1977). However, males are less likely to seek social support, perhaps because through divorce they lose the one person they are most likely to turn to for help (Chiriboga et al., 1979). If children are involved in the divorce, men are unlikely to be the primary custodial parent and tend to show decreased satisfaction with coparenting arrangements (Goldsmith, 1980). In addition, they are more apt to have decreased contact with their former spouse and children due to work responsibilities (Price-Bonham & Balswick, 1980). Overall, it appears that they are more likely to have a lower sense of well being and more enduring unhappiness following the divorce (Chiriboga et al., 1978), despite having a better economic situation than women.

Female Reactions to Divorce. When the findings on female reactions to divorce are compiled, a composite picture of female reactions to divorce also emerges. In general, it appears that women are more likely to initiate separation and are happier to be out of the marriage (Zeiss et al., 1980). However, even though they

are more apt to terminate the relationship, they are likely to display some depression and increased emotional turmoil (Chiriboga et al., 1978) related to inadequate role development for independent functioning, the stress of separation, or increased loneliness (Herman, 1977), particularly if they were previously unable to share decision-making responsibilities (Woodward et al., 1980). In addition, their emotional reaction may be more sustained (Burman & Turk, 1981) or more stressful, particularly if children are involved (Clarke-Stewart & Bailey, 1989) or if they hold traditional as opposed to nontraditional sex role views (Granvold et al., 1979). However, in adjusting to divorce, women are more likely to be affected by social conditions than men (Clarke-Stewart & Bailey, 1989). Not only are they more likely than men to reach out to someone for help, but they are also more willing to seek a wide variety of supports (Chiriboga et al., 1979). Of these, it appears that their current relationship with their ex-spouse is the best predictor of their affect balance (Nelson, 1981) or degree of post-separation distress (Kurdek & Blisk, 1983), even though they may have greater negative feelings towards the ex-spouse (Zeiss et al., 1980) and are less acceptant of former spouse interaction (Goetting, 1979). A complicating factor may be some women's continued economic dependency upon the ex-spouse, since women receiving

alimony appear to have lower divorce adjustment (Raschke, 1977). Women are also more likely than men to have diminished economic circumstances following divorce (Riessman, 1990) arising in part from their disadvantaged employment situation (Clarke-Stewart & Bailey, 1989). This economic difference seems to hold particularly true for mothers (Buehler et al., 1985) due to the increased financial burdens and decreased employment opportunities created by having primary custody of the children (Price-Bonham & Balswick, 1980). Though these circumstances may create greater initial hardship and stress, it appears that women are more likely to emerge from the adjustment process with an improved sense of self-esteem and generally happier and more content with life (Reissman, 1990).

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Description of the Research Approach

The primary purpose of this study was to determine whether reactions to separation and divorce could be differentiated on the basis of level of ego development. A sample of divorcing persons was drawn at random from court records, divided into groups on the basis of level of ego development, and compared on various measures of emotional adjustment. Utilizing differing measures of adjustment increased the possibility of isolating any significant variations in reactions to divorce between groups of persons at various developmental levels.

Procedure

The study sample was drawn at random from court records (Allegan County, Michigan) of persons who had filed for divorce, so that results could be generalized to a divorcing population (Cantrell & Sprenkle, 1989). The only inclusion criterion was that subjects had been separated no more than 24 months at the time of the evaluation. Despite some indications that the adjustment

period can extend up to five years (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980), most reports have indicated that the highest distress occurs within the first year or two after separation (Kolevzon & Gottlieb, 1983), usually around the time of initial separation (Price-Bonham & Balswick, 1980). No minimum limitation was placed on length of marriage prior to separation, even though Weiss (1975, 1976) postulated that significant attachments require at least two years for adequate formation. Kitson (1982) found no evidence that those married less than two years displayed any less attachment than those married more than two years. Consequently, in this study, the sample consisted of all respondents agreeing to participate who had been separated for no more than 24 months at the start of the evaluation.

The sample was divided into groups on the basis of level of ego development as determined by responses on the Washington University Sentence Completion Test (Loevinger, 1985; Loevinger & Wessler, 1970). These groups were then divided by sex to form the comparison groups for the study. Based on Holt's (1980) study of the distribution of developmental levels in the general population, it was anticipated that there would be an unequal distribution of subjects among the various developmental levels, with the majority of respondents

clustering at Loevinger's Conformist (I-3) and Self-aware (I-3/4) levels. The expected distribution is presented in Table 5 (Holt, 1980, Table 4, p. 916). Given the low frequencies for the lowest and highest levels of ego development (I-2 and I-5 respectively), it seemed unlikely that these levels would be represented in a relatively small sample size.

Table 5

Anticipated Frequency Distribution of Levels of Ego Development in the Sample Population
(from Holt, 1980, Table 4, p. 916)

Stage	Descriptor	Male (%)	Female (%)
I-2	Impulsive	3	2
Delta	Self-protective	10	6
(Delta/3)	Ritual-traditional	12	10
I-3	Conformist	21	20
I-3/4	Self-aware	37	40
I-4	Conscientious	13	16
I-4/5	Individualistic	3	4
I-5	Autonomous	0	1

Because previous studies of divorce adjustment identified the major sources of divorce related distress as loss of an attachment figure and coping with the multiple changes attending the divorce process (Kressel et al.,

1978), it was proposed that measures of attachment distress, general distress, and overall social adjustment be obtained for each group. In this study, attachment distress was seen as reflecting emotional reactions to the loss of an attachment figure and was measured by the Kitson Attachment Scale (Kitson, 1982). General distress was viewed as a measure of the emotional distress created by all divorce related changes and was measured by the SCL-90-R (Derogatis, 1983). Social adjustment was taken as a measure of overall capacity to cope with divorce-related change and was measured by the SAS-SR (Weissman, 1975). Together these measures allowed differential patterns of adjustment to be identified.

Because a number of factors had previously been identified as influencing the amount of divorce-related distress actually experienced, it was proposed that comparative data on these factors be collected in order to assess the equivalency of groups and to assist with the interpretation of results. Some of the more significant areas assessed were sex, person initiating the divorce, whether children were involved in the divorce, custody, the presence of an alternative relationship, and extent of social activity. This additional information allowed any major differences among groups to be identified.

Since the study was also designed to develop divorce adjustment services, it was proposed that data be

collected on the types of adjustment difficulties most frequently encountered, on time periods found to be most problematic during the separation process, and on the nature of preferred social supports. This information aided in clarifying pertinent adjustment issues in the local population.

Selection of Subjects

Because the results of this study were to be utilized by the Divorce Adjustment Program of Allegan County Community Mental Health Services (Allegan, Michigan) to help develop appropriate divorce adjustment services, the sample was drawn from persons who had filed for divorce in Allegan County. The study population initially consisted of all persons who had filed for divorce between three and nine months prior to the start of the study. An initial sample of 400 persons was drawn at random from Allegan County court records using a computer generated random number sequence. Both marital partners were included to provide a sufficient population base. To avoid reducing the number of potential respondents, stratification by sex or filing status was not attempted.

Based on the results of similar sampling processes using court records (Cantrell & Sprenkle, 1989), it was anticipated that approximately one-quarter of the subjects initially contacted would agree to participate,

resulting in a final sample of around 100 persons. However, when the initial number of respondents fell below 100, the population parameters were expanded by one month in each direction (to a range of from 2 to 10 months after filing) and an additional 140 names were drawn at random from this expanded population in an attempt to increase the final sample size to around 100 subjects. Although a total of 114 (21.1%) of the 540 persons contacted signed consent forms and agreed to participate), 72 (13.3%) usable protocols were returned. The final sample consisted of the number of respondents meeting the inclusion criterion who agreed to participate in the study and who returned the necessary data.

Procedure for Data Collection

Potential respondents were sent personal letters under the auspices of the Divorce Adjustment Program of Allegan County Community Mental Health, citing the benefits of the study for developing divorce assistance programs and requesting their cooperation. The subjects were informed that the study would consist of answering a set of questionnaires mailed directly to their homes which would take between one and two hours of their time to complete. They were assured of anonymity regarding all responses, and the procedures for maintaining anonymity were explained. The subjects were be asked to return

a consent form within one week of receipt indicating their willingness to participate.

The following materials were included in the initial contact packet: (a) initial contact letter (Appendix A), (b) consent form (Appendix B), and (c) a stamped, addressed return envelope. After one week, a follow-up letter (Appendix C) was sent to all persons not responding, encouraging their participation and again asking for a response within one week. Following the return of the consent forms, respondents were sent a letter thanking them for their willingness to participate and indicating when they could expect to receive the study materials (Appendix D). Instructions were included informing them of the testing procedure and describing the process for insuring anonymity.

When over 100 persons had agreed to participate, the respondents were sent a data collection packet, consisting of the following items: (a) cover letter (Appendix E); (b) general instruction sheet (Appendix F); (c) demographic data form (Appendix G); (d) instrument instructions, forms, and answer sheets; and (e) a postage paid, preaddressed return envelope. Respondents were requested to answer and return the questionnaires within one week of receipt using the envelope provided. If the materials were not returned within the allotted time, a reminder letter (Appendix H) was sent to encourage the return of

the assessment instruments. Where possible, one phone contact per subject was also made for packets that were not returned after the reminder letter was sent. A second reminder letter (Appendix H) was sent when phone contacts were not possible.

Procedures for Insuring Anonymity

The instruments and answer sheets were assigned code numbers for the purpose of data analysis. The numbered assessment materials were placed in unmarked return envelopes so that no association could be made between the code number and individual packets. The instrument packets were assigned separate mailing code numbers for tracking the response process and placed in mailing envelopes for mailing directly to respondents. Respondents were asked to return the completed instruments using the coded return envelope.

Upon receipt, the instruments and mailing envelope were separated, so that the identity of the respondent remained anonymous. Once the instrument packets and the mailing envelopes had been separated, the mailing envelopes were kept for accounting purposes in order to track the response rate. All materials submitted by the subjects were destroyed at the conclusion of the research project. However, informed consent forms will be held in confidence for three years in a manner consistent with

guidelines established by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board of Western Michigan University (Western Michigan University, n.d.).

Instrumentation

Ego Development

The Washington University Sentence Completion Test (SCT) was used to measure level of ego development. Recently revised (Loevinger, 1985), the SCT was originally constructed by Loevinger and Wessler (1970) as an assessment tool for measuring the stages of ego development in Loevinger's developmental model. Utilizing a sentence completion format, the instrument consists of two forms (male and female) of 36 open ended stems. Responses are independently scored by two trained raters following set criteria in the training manual, resulting in an over-all rating of ego development (TPR or Total Protocol Rating). The raters for this study were two master's level limited license psychologists (State of Michigan) who had completed Loevinger's self study program and who had additional training in developmental theory.

In its original format, the SCT was developed using female subjects (Loevinger & Wessler, 1970) and later expanded to include a male version of the test. The latest revisions have attempted to bring the two versions into

greater uniformity (Loevinger, 1985). In the process, Loevinger paid particular attention to item validity, i.e. "the correlation between the item rating and the rating of the protocol on which the response occurred" (Loevinger, 1985, p. 422). Using a sample of 454 men and 350 women, she found that the items are somewhat more valid for women than for men with validity correlations of .50 and .45 or .46 respectively.

Reliability studies have focused primarily on two interrelated factors, the test as a whole and the scoring system, with particular attention being given to interrater reliability (Hauser, 1976). Loevinger reported median percentage agreement on individual items for pairs of personally trained and manual trained raters at 78% (Loevinger & Wessler, 1970). She also cited median interrater correlations between .89 and .92. On the original sample, the median interrater reliability correlation was .86 for the total protocol ratings (TPRs) and .76 for individual items. Loevinger (1979) argued that these results "testify to the communicability, hence the coherence, of the underlying construct" (p. 284).

The reliability of the test itself has been examined using measures of test-retest, split-half, and internal consistency (alpha). Utilizing data from two reliability studies, Hauser (1976) reported test-retest correlations of .79 (TPR) and .91 (item sum) and .44 (TPR) and .64

(item sum). The split-half reliabilities were .90 and .85 respectively, while the internal consistency coefficients ranged from .80 to .89. In their original validation studies, Loevinger and Wessler (1970) reported similar values, citing a coefficient alpha of .91. Holt (1980) considered this high internal consistency of the instrument (coefficient alpha) to be an indicator of high reliability. Loevinger (1979) added that "a principal components analysis yielded an eigenvalue of 8.8 for the first principle component and a value of 1.2 for the second principal component" (p. 285). She considered this homogeneity or internal consistency to be the primary evidence for "the structural component of validity," concluding that the test measures a unitary dimension.

Several studies have also been conducted on discriminant validity, predictive validity, and construct validity, with the latter receiving the most attention. In reviewing studies involving ego development and anti-social behavior, coping mechanisms, and conformity, Hauser (1976) concluded that there is notable "support for conceptually predicted links between the specific ego development stages and interpersonal behaviors" (p. 940). However, he pointed out that studies of the relationship between ego development and moral development show only "moderate correlation." In contrast, Loevinger (1979) found "substantial correlations with tests of related

conceptions, such as Kohlberg's test of moral maturity" (p. 281). She added that behavioral data supporting her classifications can be found at lower levels of ego development, while at higher levels, qualitative differences in attitudes and ideas provide the supporting evidence. On the basis of these comparisons, she concluded that the construct validity of the SCT is "substantial," even though she acknowledged that the sequentiality of the model has yet to be fully supported.

In a review of the SCT in Buros Seventh Mental Measurements Yearbook, Rafferty (1972) drew similar conclusions:

It would appear that a good case could be made for the construct validity in view of the factor analysis, the internal consistency, and a study which demonstrated the expected growth curve in ego development with four age groups of boys and girls (9-18) non-overlapping ogive curves, and r 's between CA and TPR of .74 for boys and .69 for girls. (p. 1729)

In light of these findings, it can be concluded that "overall, the test has adequate validity for research purposes" (Loevinger, 1979, p. 281).

Attachment Distress

"Attachment distress" is a term used to describe a complex of behaviors resulting from the loss of an attachment figure which a number of authors have described as "loss of attachment" (Weiss, 1976). Degree of attachment distress was assessed by using four items developed

by Kitson (1982), which form the core of the Kitson Attachment Scale. The items on the Kitson scale correspond closely to the specific factors identified by Weiss (1976).

Following the bereavement model presented by Parkes (1972), Kitson utilized factor analysis to construct a unidimensional four-item test reflecting distress resulting from loss of attachment.

The items and their factor score coefficients are: wondering what the spouse is doing (.514), spending a lot of time thinking about the spouse (.259), disbelief that the couple is getting a divorce (.117), and a feeling that the person will never get over the divorce (.113). (Kitson, 1982, p. 383)

Scored on a scale of 1 to 5 ("not at all my feelings" to "very much my feelings"), these four items were used to measure attachment distress. In Kitson's analysis, correlations of the four items result in an alpha reliability for the scale of .80, indicating that either factor score coefficients or raw scores can be used to compute scale scores.

Interspersed with these four items on her attachment scale, Kitson (1982) also included questions to assess opposing attitudes towards the separation process. One set of questions assessed a "relief and guilt" factor, while the other assessed a "reluctance and pressure" factor. Kitson reported the former scale having an alpha value of .64 and the latter having an alpha value of .79.

The relief and guilt items include a) "This has been coming for a long time, and I'm glad we've finally made the break." b) "It isn't an easy decision to divorce your husband (wife), but basically I'm relieved." c) "Although this is the right decision, I know it hurt my husband (wife) very badly." d) "I feel a little guilt about the divorce but it was the right decision for us." The reluctance and pressure items are a) "I'm going ahead with the divorce only because it's what my husband (wife) wants." b) "I feel as if I've been dumped." c) "Perhaps with all things considered, we should have tried longer." and d) "I feel as if this is all a horrible mistake." (Kitson, 1982, p. 391, n. 3)

Like the attachment scale, these items are scored on a scale of 1 to 5, with the lowest score indicating "not at all my feelings" and the highest score indicating "very much my feelings." Though these items do not assess attachment per se, they were included with the attachment questions in order to determine whether there were any basic differences in attitudes towards divorce based on ego development.

General Distress

Used as a measure of the overall emotional distress resulting from the experience of going through separation and divorce, level of general distress was measured by the SCL-90-R (Derogatis, 1983). The SCL-90-R is an updated version of the SCL-90, "a self-report rating scale oriented toward the symptomatic behavior of psychiatric outpatients" (Derogatis et al., 1975). Applicable to a broad range of outpatient populations, this measure

assesses current (the previous 7 days up to the present) disturbances in nine major symptom classes generally found among psychiatric outpatients (i.e., somaticization, obsessive-compulsive, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, hostility, phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation, and psychoticism). Scores are calculated for each of the nine symptom clusters and three global indices (GSI, PST, and PSDI).

The "Global Severity Index" (GSI) is the average rating given to all 90 items. The "Positive Symptom Total" (PST) is the number of symptoms complained of (i.e., the number of items rated higher than zero). The "Positive Symptom Distress Index" (PSDI) is the average rating, from 1 to 4, given to those symptoms which are complained of (i.e., not rated "0"). (Payne, 1985, p. 1326)

The SCL-90-R is composed of 90 items rated on a five-point scale ranging from "not at all" (0) to "extremely" (4), with high scores indicating increasing symptom severity. With its short-item format, it can be completed in 12 to 20 minutes. Norms are available for non-patient normal, psychiatric outpatient, psychiatric inpatient, and adolescent non-patient populations.

Since the study hypotheses concern global differences in reaction patterns, only the primary global measure, the GSI, from the SCL-90-R scales was used to test the main research hypothesis. According to Derogatis (1983), "the GSI provides the most sensitive single numeric indicator of the respondent's psychological

distress, combining information on numbers of symptoms and intensity of distress" (p. 27).

Scores for the individual symptom clusters and other global scales were also calculated in order to assess patterns of responses and to see whether any unexpected differences emerged between groups. Because it seemed that symptom expression might well vary with developmental level, it seemed possible that some subtle differences might be detected on the subscales.

Of the measures of general distress currently available, the SCL-90 displays exceptionally high validity and reliability (Edwards, Yarvis, Mueller, Zingale, & Wagman, 1978). In terms of internal consistency, Edwards and his associates stated that the SCL-90 approaches "perfect" reliability, with a mean alpha rating of .953 over three time periods. In comparison with a number of other adjustment scales, they indicated that the internal consistency of the SCL-90 is one of the best "with two standard errors encompassing .6 standard deviation units" (p. 285). Edwards and his team concluded that of the five measures reviewed, "the SCL-90 is by far the most reliable instrument and, thus, the most sensitive for assessing individual patient change" (p. 285).

Other reviews of the SCL-90 and SCL-90-R show less glowing but basically satisfactory results. In his review in The Ninth Mental Measurements Yearbook, Pauker

(1985) reported that the internal consistency and test retest results are "satisfactory" (p. 1325). In an adjoining review, Payne (1985) reported the following observations:

Measures of factor internal consistency (alpha coefficients) range from .77 (Psychoticism) to .90 (Depression), and test retest (1-week apart) correlation coefficients range from .78 (Hostility) to .90 (Phobic Anxiety) in a psychiatric population. (p. 1327)

In summary, Payne concluded that its reliability is "remarkably high" considering its length.

Though few validity studies have been completed, Pauker (1985) reported that "levels of concurrent, convergent, discriminant, and construct validity ... are at a level comparable to other self-report inventories" (p. 1326). However, Payne (1985) raised questions about the discriminant validity of the SCL-90-R, citing a study in an undergraduate population which suggested that "there was no evidence ... that the nine SCL-90-R scales measured anything beyond a single factor of 'psychiatric disturbance' or 'complaining'" (p. 1328) due to high correlation among the individual scales. Nonetheless, even with these limitations, he concluded that "the SCL-90-R is an interesting and reliable self-administered psychiatric symptom check list which can be very useful in research studies" (p. 1329). Since only the global measures were used to test the main hypotheses in this

study, the high inter-correlations between the individual symptom scales did not prove to be a detracting factor.

While the manual for the SCL-90-R does not specify the differences between the SCL-90 and the SCL-90-R, a comparison of the two instruments reveals primarily format changes with no item differences. Consequently, it seems reasonable to conclude that the two instruments can be considered comparable. Based on comparisons to other adjustment scales, the SCL-90 has been called "the preferred self-assessment instrument" (Edwards et al., 1978, p. 288), and it appears that the same can be said for the SCL-90-R.

Social Adjustment

Level of social adjustment was chosen as an index of overall capacity to adjust to divorce-related changes. In contrast to the measure of general distress which primarily utilized physical symptoms, this measure assessed a person's level of functioning in a number of areas of social activity. As Weissman (1975) puts it,

symptoms are primarily a reflection of internal psychological or physical states that may have consequences in social relations. Social adjustment is a reflection of the patient's interactions with others, satisfactions and performance in roles, which are more likely modified by previous personality, cultural, and family expectation. (p. 357)

Because social adjustment broadly measures recent social performance, it can be considered a measure of a person's

capacity to manage stress arising from divorce-related changes.

The Social Adjustment Scale-Self Report (SAS-SR) (Weissman & Bothwell, 1976) was used to measure social adjustment. An updated form of the Social Adjustment Scale in a self report format, the SAS was originally used to evaluate the effectiveness of psychiatric interventions among a population of depressed women. It has since been used to assess general social functioning in a broad range of populations. A review of the publications listed in the test manual (Weissman, 1988) reveals that the SAS/SAS-SR has been used a number of times to assess marital and divorce-related issues, such as in Nelson's (1981) study of women's adjustment to divorce.

In its current configuration, the SAS-SR consists of 42 items in a self-report format covering general functioning in a variety of social roles. Scores can be obtained for six specific areas of social functioning (work, social and leisure, extended family, marital, parental, and family unit/economic) as well as for a global index of social adjustment.

In general, the questions in each area fall into four major categories: the patient's performance at expected tasks; the amount of friction with others; finer aspects of interpersonal relations; inner feelings and satisfactions. (Weissman, Prusoff, Thompson, Harding, & Myers, 1978, p. 319)

The responses are rated on a 5-point scale with higher scores indicating increasing impairment or maladjustment and lower scores indicating better social adjustment or coping capacity. The results consist of a set of subscores, the mean scores for each item area, and an overall adjustment score formed by summing all scores and dividing by the number of items actually answered.

Since the study hypotheses concern global differences in reaction patterns, only the overall social adjustment score was used to test the research hypotheses. Scores for each subscale were also calculated in order to test the equivalency of groups and to see whether any unexpected differences emerged between groups. However, specific differences in social performance based on ego level were not anticipated because of the standardization of behavior associated with social role performance.

The reliability and validity of the SAS and SAS-SR have been confirmed by several studies (Edwards et al., 1978; Weissman & Bothwell, 1976; Weissman et al., 1978). Edwards et al. (1978) found the internal consistency of the measure to be in the range of .737 (mean alpha), though they noted that use of coefficient alpha may not be an entirely appropriate measure of internal consistency for the SAS-SR, because subjects are instructed to skip irrelevant items. In the same study, reliability estimates based on test-retest stability revealed mean

correlations of .778 using three time points and .810 using two time points. The original validation studies reported in the SAS Handbook (Weissman, Paykel, & Prusoff, nd) show an interrater reliability of .83 using mean Pearson correlations on individual items. In a later study comparing interview and self-report scores, Weissman and Bothwell (1976) found correlations in the specific areas ranging from .40 to .76, with an overall adjustment correlation of .76, which they considered "excellent agreement" (p. 1113).

The validity of the instrument was assessed by comparing groups of depressed patients with normal controls revealing that "the instrument is highly discriminative between groups on most items" (Weissman et al., nd, p. 9). A follow-up study comparing a community sample and psychiatric outpatients (Weissman et al., 1978) also demonstrated the ability of the instrument to effectively discriminate between these two groups, providing further evidence of concurrent validity. In addition, the latter study showed "the absence of substantial sex differences in role performance in all populations, with the exception of family unit role for depressives" (p. 321).

Demographic Data Form

To assist in clarifying the results and to provide additional information for use in developing divorce adjustment services, a demographic data form (Appendix G) was developed to collect information on demographics, divorce-related variables, the subjective experience of divorce and preferred social supports. These items helped to assess the equivalency of groups and to interpret the primary results.

Demographic Data

To help characterize the nature of the population sample, basic identifying data were gathered on sex, age, race, income and educational level of the participants.

Divorce-Related Variables

Data were also collected on variables related to the marriage and marital breakup. These variables included person suggesting the divorce, the presence or absence of children in the divorce, the presence or absence of an alternative significant relationship, and level of social activity. Two of these variables, the presence or absence of an alternative relationship and the presence or absence of children, were included in the study hypotheses to determine their influence on attachment distress

and general distress respectively. The first was assessed by item 21 on the Demographic Data Form which reads, "Are you currently involved in a significant relationship with a member of the opposite sex, cohabitating, or remarried?" It was answered by checking "yes" or "no" and was scored "1" or "0" respectively. The second was assessed by item 7 on the Demographic Data Form asking for "number of children involved in the divorce" and was scored dichotomously. Although the other divorce-related variables were not included in study hypotheses, they were added to test their relative influence on the main dependent variables.

Subjective Reactions to Divorce

Because the study was also be used to provide information on current divorce adjustment needs, additional data were gathered on subjective responses to divorce, particularly difficult areas of adjustment and on perceived level of distress at various periods in the divorce adjustment process. Specific areas of stress were rated on a five point scale with higher scores reflecting increasing levels of severity or difficulty and zero indicating irrelevant or nonproblematic items. Individual items included relationship with the former spouse, parenting problems or relationship with the children, problems with custody or visitation, financial or employment

difficulties, living alone or being independent, changes in roles or living arrangements, loneliness or divorce-related feelings, and social activities or new relationships.

Preferred Social Supports

Though various types of social supports have been found to affect the way in which a person responds to divorce (Burman & Turk, 1981; Chiriboga et al., 1979), evidence on the effect of social supports has often proven contradictory, particularly since many of the factors classified as supports can also constitute stressors (i.e., family, friends, children) (Kitson, 1982). Because they can have such a variable effect, a number of supports were assessed to determine whether there are any significant differences in preferences for social supports based on level of ego development. Items were included which identified preferences for support groups, counselors or other professionals, relatives, friends, spouse, clergy, involvement in social activities or groups, and dating. In addition, it seemed that level of social activity would likely influence all of the adjustment measures being used in the study. Consequently, social activity was assessed by summing responses to three items involving specific types of social participation (social activity, dating, significant relationship).

These areas were assessed by items 19, 20 and 21 on the Demographic Data Form and were scored dichotomously.

Data Collection and Recording

Data were collected through paper and pencil questionnaires mailed to the respondents. Letters and mailings were generated by a computerized file program created by the researcher using a commercially prepared database program and wordprocessor. Subject contact data were entered directly from county records into this file program to serve as a data base for generating individualized letters and documents. Tracking of the various mailings was accomplished by means of the same program. All data were kept on computer disks accessible only to the researcher. These data disks were erased after the completion of the study.

Data Processing and Analysis

Two trained raters are required for scoring the Sentence Completion Test. To learn the scoring process, the raters first became familiar with the concept of ego development by reviewing the first volume of Loevinger's scoring manual (Loevinger & Wessler, 1970). They then completed a series of practice exercises for rating the 36 items and total protocols (Loevinger, Hy, & Associates, 1989). The measures of developmental level (SCT)

were then scored independently following Loevinger's standardized scoring procedure (Loevinger et al., 1989; Loevinger & Wessler, 1970; Loevinger, Wessler, & Redmore, 1970, 1983). Using the standardized scoring process allows neophytes to obtain results equivalent to experienced scorers.

The actual scoring process itself is fairly straightforward. First, individual items are scored separately by each rater without regard to context using the scoring manuals as guides. Ambiguous items are evaluated by the application of a series of sequentially applied scoring rules. Raters then compare results for each item and resolve any differences through analysis and discussion. Next, the total score for the protocol, the Total Protocol Rating (or TPR), is calculated following a set of ogive rules based on the distribution of scores for the separate items. Experienced raters add two additional steps. Total protocols are rated as a whole by each rater to derive an impressionistic rating. The two ratings (ogive and impressionistic) are then compared and resolved, resulting in a single protocol rating.

In this study, a computer program was developed by the author to expedite the scoring process and to assure the independence of the individual item scores. Although Loevinger (Loevinger et al., 1989) provides detailed instructions in the supplementary manual for scoring the

SCT with the spreadsheet EXCEL on a Macintosh computer, using a spreadsheet can involve the inconvenience of an 80 character limit. Consequently, the author utilized a commercial database program, PFS: Professional File (Software Publishing Corporation, 1986) to create a simplified scoring program that was not hampered by space limitations. Once subject responses were entered into the file program, individual items and total protocols could easily be derived and printed using the list functions on the file program. Finally, individual item scores were entered into a spreadsheet program, PFS: Professional Plan (Software Publishing Corporation, 1987) to display the distribution of scores by subject so ogive scores could be calculated. These procedures are discussed in detail in Appendix P.

Using the same database program, individual scoring programs were created by the researcher for scoring each of the assessment instruments (the Kitson Attachment Scale, the SAS-SR, and SCL-90-R). A customized program was also created recording and computing the demographic data. All of these programs and data files were kept in locked cabinets accessible only to the researcher. After the completion of the study, the data files were destroyed.

Once all data were collected and group means were established, the data were analyzed by using the computer

scoring services of Western Michigan University. The SAS statistical package (Version 6.06) (SAS Institute, Inc., 1990) was used for the statistical analysis.

To determine the degree of relatedness of the multiple dependent variables under consideration, a correlation matrix was developed using the Pearson correlation coefficient (r). Reliability of the primary measures was tested using Cronbach's alpha. The main group differences were analyzed by either one-factor ANOVAs, t tests, or the chi-square procedure. Since unequal group sizes were involved, Levene's test was used to test the homogeneity of variance because of its superior capacity for testing nonnormally distributed data (Milliken, 1984).

Where possible, two-factor ANOVAs were used to test the effects of ego development and selected divorce factors on the various measures of divorce adjustment. This allowed any possible interaction effects to be examined. However, it was recognized from the onset that an unfavorable distribution of data points could limit the possibility of using a two-factor approach. In the absence of interaction effects, pairwise tests of significance were conducted using Tukey's honest significant difference (HSD) (Hopkins & Glass, 1978) or Fisher's protected LSD procedure (Huitema, 1980). On the basis of this information, conclusions and implications for further study were drawn.

Methodological Assumptions

Despite efforts designed to elicit the cooperation of the randomly selected subjects, it was anticipated that a large proportion of the persons contacted would not agree to participate in the study and that it would not be possible to determine the relevant characteristics of this untested proportion of the sample. Since it seemed likely that the variables in question (particularly level of ego development) could influence a subject's willingness to participate, it is possible that a self-selection bias influenced the results. In particular, it seems reasonable that persons with high levels of independence or low levels of divorce-related distress would be less likely to respond, leaving those developmental levels underrepresented in the sample.

Similarly, though it was expected that all developmental levels would be represented to varying degrees in the general population, it was anticipated that not all levels were likely to be represented in the study sample. Consequently, comparisons were made between those groups which were sufficiently represented to allow meaningful comparisons to be made.

Though three different adjustment measures were used, it was recognized from the outset that the various measures of divorce adjustment were likely to be

interdependent. In particular, attachment distress was seen as being positively related to general distress, while overall coping capacity, as reflected in degree of social adjustment, was seen as being negatively related to general distress. In fact, some data are already available on correlations between scores on the the SAS-SR and the SCL-90. A study by Weissman et al. (1978, Table 5, p. 324) found the following correlations between symptom patterns and overall social adjustment: community sample, .59; acute depressives, .66; alcoholics, .76; schizophrenics, .84. Nonetheless, despite the likelihood of high correlations, these constructs were seen as sufficiently independent to warrant separate investigation. In fact, Weissman (1975) argues that precisely because of this possible interdependence, both types of measures are necessary. As she puts it,

there is a debate about the [relative] independence of symptoms and social functioning. A resolution requires that they be measured separately and as accurately as possible. In this way subgroups of patients in whom the relationship may differ can be identified. These different subgroups may require different therapeutic interventions (p. 357).

Because of this possibility of differential response patterns, both types of measures were used.

Limitations

This was an initial, exploratory study intended to determine whether a differential relationship exists

between a measure of ego development and measures of the emotional impact of divorce. Though it is likely that level of ego development is a factor which differentiates human functioning in a broad range of categories, such as adjustment to divorce, causality cannot be inferred.

Moreover, because the effects of separation and divorce cannot be isolated from other impinging variables, it was recognized that extraneous stressors and events could be influencing the results.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

Sample Description

A total of 540 persons were selected at random from a population of 652 persons who had filed for divorce in Allegan County (Michigan) between two and ten months prior to the start of the study. When 28 of the prospective subjects could not be located, an equal number of alternates were randomly selected as replacements. Of the 540 persons contacted, 114 (21.1%) signed consent forms and agreed to participate, a rate that is typical of studies drawn at random from court records. Cantrell and Sprenkle (1989) report that most previous research using names drawn from court records produced response rates in the range of 17% to 22%. However, 27 (23.7%) subjects failed to return the study materials, and 15 (13.2%) subjects returned packets that were unusable, either because they were incomplete or fell outside the study parameters. The final sample consisted of the 72 subjects who returned usable materials.

The actual completion rate was lower than anticipated primarily because of the large number of persons who failed to return the study materials. The most

likely reasons for this lower return rate were probably the timing of the mailings and the time and disclosure demands placed upon the subjects. Unanticipated delays forced postponement of the start of the study from late winter to early summer, the season least likely to encourage participation due to the wide variety of alternative activities available. Moreover, the time and detail required to complete the forms may have discouraged some participants once the study materials were received. In addition, two techniques demonstrated to increase the response rate, newspaper articles and telephone solicitation (Cantrell & Sprenkle, 1989), could not be utilized in the study.

Demographic Characteristics

Though men and women were contacted in roughly equal numbers, the sample of 72 persons consisted of 23 male (31.9%) and 49 female (68.1%) subjects. The males had an average age of 36.6 years and the females 34.8 years, resulting in an average age of 35.3 years for the sample. The males had a slightly higher educational level (13.2 years) than the females (12.8 years), making a sample average of 12.9 years. For the most part, the sample was Caucasian (\underline{n} = 63, 92.6%) with limited ethnic representation (Afro-American, \underline{n} = 1, 1.5%; Native American, \underline{n} = 4,

5.9%), a distribution which probably corresponds to the white, rural nature of the population in the county where the study took place. The average length of marriage for the sample was 126.3 months, with males averaging 115.7 months and females averaging 131.2 months. At the time of testing, males had been separated an average of 9.0 months and females 8.5 months, giving a sample average of 8.7 months. None of these differences proved to be significant. However, as indicated in Table 6, a marked sex differential was apparent in income levels (chi-square [2, $N = 71$] = 17.471; $p = .001$) with men showing proportionally higher income in all brackets in comparison to women. The lower economic circumstances of women following divorce in comparison to men is one of the most consistent findings in the literature (Clarke-Stewart & Bailey, 1989).

Table 6
Level of Income by Sex

Income Level (k=1,000)	Males		Females		Total	
	<u>n</u>	Percent	<u>n</u>	Percent	<u>n</u>	Percent
\$ 0-15k	3	13.0	31	64.6	34	47.9
\$ 15k-30k	15	65.2	15	31.3	30	42.3
\$ +30k	5	21.7	2	4.1	7	9.9

Divorce-Related Factors

In comparison to the demographic factors, the divorce-related factors in the study displayed more sex variability (Appendix I). In this sample, the person suggesting the divorce was clearly more often female (67.4%) than male (18.2%) (chi-square [2, $N = 71$] = 20.648, $p = .001$). Although males and females were both equally likely to have children involved in the marriage (chi-square [1, $N = 72$] = 0.285, $p = .594$), the person having sole custody of the children was more often female (69.4%) than male (8.7%) (chi-square [3, $N = 72$] = 27.088, $p = .001$); all others reported having "other" custodial arrangements. However, the males and females in the sample did not differ significantly in level of social activity (chi-square [1, $N = 71$] = 2.311, $p = .128$) or in being involved in a an alternate relationship (chi-square [1, $N = 70$] = 2.158, $p = .142$).

Ego Level

Using Loevinger's classification system (Chapter I, Table 1), the sample distribution by level of ego development is presented in Table 7. For the sample as a whole, the distribution of subjects by ego level tended to cluster at the I-3/4 (Self-aware) Level ($n = 38$, 52.8%). Males were more evenly distributed across

Table 7
Sample Level of Ego Development by Sex

	Males		Females		Total	
I-level	<u>n</u>	Percent	<u>n</u>	Percent	<u>n</u>	Percent
Delta	3	13.0	1	2.0	4	5.6
I-3	8	34.8	3	6.1	11	15.3
I-3/4	9	39.1	29	59.2	38	52.8
I-4	3	13.0	12	24.5	15	20.8
I-4/5	0	----	4	8.2	4	5.6
Total	23	99.9	49	100.0	72	101.1
Interrater Reliability Coefficient = .834						

developmental levels but unrepresented at the I-4/5 level. Females were underrepresented at the Delta level (n = 1, 2%) and I-3 levels (n = 3, 6.1%), and the female distribution was skewed towards the I-3/4 (n = 29, 59.2%) and I-4 (n = 12, 24.5%) levels. Because of the unequal distribution of male and female subjects across developmental levels, it was necessary to divide the sample into male and female groups and to run separate analyses by sex in order to prevent confounding sex and ego level. However, since there are significant differences in functioning between persons at level I-3 and below as

compared to level I-3/4 and above (Swensen et al., 1981), the effect of this division was to create a relatively homogeneous group for the female sample.

When demographic characteristics were analyzed by sex and level of ego development, only length of marriage emerged as noteworthy. As indicated in Table 8, length of marriage increased with ego level for the males. A one-factor ANOVA (Appendix J) revealed that Delta males ($\bar{M} = 62.7$ months) and I-3 males ($\bar{M} = 81.8$ months) had significantly lower lengths of marriage than I-3/4 (147.9 months) and I-4 males (163.0 months) respectively, $F(3, 23) = 3.62$, $p = .0321$.

Table 8
Length of Marriage by Sex and I-Level

I-level	Males		Females		Total	
	<u>n</u>	months	<u>n</u>	months	<u>n</u>	months
Delta	3	62.7	1	67.1	4	63.8
I-3	8	81.8	3	142.3	11	98.3
I-3/4	9	147.9	29	133.6	38	137.0
I-4	3	163.0	12	138.4	15	143.3
I-4/5	0	----	4	99.8	4	99.8
Total	23	115.7	49	131.2	72	126.3

Linear Relationship Between the Dependent Variables

In this study, the relationships between level of ego development and attachment distress, general distress, and overall social adjustment were measured by the Kitson Attachment Scale, the SCL-90-R, and the Social Adjustment Scale, Self-Report (SAS-SR) respectively. The linear relationship between the global measures of these scales was determined by means of the Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r). Attachment Distress showed a correlation of .347 with the Global Severity Index and .296 with the overall Adjustment Score, while the Global Severity Index and overall Adjustment Score showed a correlation of .641. The probabilities of all correlations were significant at the .0005 level.

These results suggest that attachment distress can be effectively differentiated from the other two measures of adjustment, although it contributes to general distress and overall adjustment to a minor extent. It also shows that general distress and social adjustment are moderately related constructs sharing a fair amount of common variance. Similar results were found in a study by Weissman et al. (1978), with correlations between the two measures ranging from .59 to .84 depending on the population. In this study, the reliability of the

SCL-90-R global scale (alpha, .9749) proved to be somewhat higher than that of the SAS-SR (alpha, .7003 [32 items]; alpha, .7216 [27 items]). However, because respondents are instructed to skip irrelevant items in the SAS-SR, missing data points may make Chronbach's alpha an inappropriate reliability measure for the SAS-SR (Edwards et al., 1978).

In the following presentation of results, findings related to attachment distress are presented first, followed by the findings for general distress and social adjustment. For each measure, results for ego level are given first, then results for the divorce-related variables and sex, followed by a brief summary.

Attachment Distress

In this study, attachment distress refers to distress related to the loss of an attachment figure. It was measured by the global measure of the Kitson Attachment Scale (Kitson, 1982), "Attachment Distress." Differences in feelings about the divorce were also measured, using two subscales, "Reluctance and Pressure" and "Relief and Guilt." The Reluctance and Pressure subscale reflects feelings of resistance to the divorce and was expected to be positively correlated with attachment distress. The Relief and Guilt subscale reflects a preference for the divorce and was expected to be negatively

correlated with attachment distress. Together the two subscales represent opposing attitudes towards the divorce process.

In order to test the reliability of the attachment distress measures for this sample, Cronbach's alpha was run on the global scale and the two subscales. As indicated in Table 9, the results indicate that the scales have acceptable reliability, though the Relief and Guilt scale falls just below the standard limit of .7.

Table 9
Kitson Attachment Scale Reliability Analysis

Scale (<u>N</u> = 70)	Mean	Range	Vari- ance	<u>Alpha</u>	Standard <u>Alpha</u>
Relief & Guilt	3.1036	.8429	.1561	.6613	.6604
Reluctance & Pressure	2.3893	.4143	.0394	.8655	.8652
Attachment Distress	2.6143	.9000	.1433	.8672	.8690

The degree of relationship between the global scale and the subscales was determined by using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r). This analysis showed that Attachment Distress had a correlation of .679 with Reluctance and Pressure and a correlation of -.449 with Relief and Guilt. The correlation between the two

subscales was $-.669$. All correlations were significant at the $.0005$ level. As expected, these results confirm that Attachment Distress is positively related to the Reluctance and Pressure subscale and negatively related to the Relief and Guilt subscale and that the two subscales are opposing constructs.

Main Effects

In this study, it was hypothesized that there would be differences in attachment distress based upon level of ego development. In addition, it was also hypothesized that there would be differences in attachment distress depending upon whether the person was currently involved in a significant relationship. Table 10, Table 11 and Table 12 present the means and distributions for the three Kitson scales by sex and ego level.

To determine whether there were any differences between groups based on ego level and the presence of an alternative relationship, the sample was divided into subgroups on the basis of sex and analyzed with two-factor ANOVAs. No significant differences were found for the female group ($F[8, 49] = 1.29, p = .2781$). However, significant results were obtained for the male group ($F[6, 23] = 4.69, p = .0062$). There was no effect for I-level ($F[3, 23] = 1.94, p = .1631$) but a significant effect for an alternative relationship ($F[1, 23] = 6.72,$

Table 10

Kitson Attachment Scale, Attachment Distress
by Sex and I-Level

I-level	Males			Females		
	<u>n</u>	mean	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	mean	<u>SD</u>
Delta	3	2.25	1.77	1	1.00	0.00
I-3	8	3.00	0.93	3	1.83	0.31
I-3/4	9	3.31	1.00	29	2.67	1.24
I-4	3	3.33	0.72	12	2.23	1.02
I-4/5	0	----	----	4	1.75	0.77
Grand	23	3.07	1.14	49	2.40	1.17

Table 11

Kitson Attachment Scale, Reluctance and Pressure
by Sex and I-Level

I-level	Males			Females		
	<u>n</u>	mean	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	mean	<u>SD</u>
Delta	3	2.17	1.31	1	1.00	0.00
I-3	8	3.44	1.10	3	1.17	0.12
I-3/4	9	3.39	1.43	29	2.14	1.18
I-4	3	4.17	0.62	12	1.90	1.27
I-4/5	0	----	----	4	1.50	0.87
Grand	23	3.35	1.33	49	1.94	1.17

Table 12
Kitson Attachment Scale, Relief and Guilt
by Sex and I-Level

I-level	Males			Females		
	<u>n</u>	mean	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	mean	<u>SD</u>
Delta	3	3.17	0.42	1	3.00	0.00
I-3	8	1.94	0.80	3	3.17	1.20
I-3/4	9	2.53	1.34	29	3.33	0.95
I-4	3	2.25	0.35	12	3.58	1.00
I-4/5	0	----	----	4	3.69	1.11
Grand	23	2.37	1.06	49	3.40	0.99

$p = .0197$). For the group as a whole, males having an alternative relationship displayed significantly lower attachment distress ($\underline{n} = 7$, $\underline{M} = 2.29$) than males who did not have an alternative relationship ($\underline{n} = 16$, $\underline{M} = 3.41$). These findings tend to support the study hypothesis regarding the effect of an alternative relationship on attachment distress but not the hypothesis regarding the effect of ego level on attachment distress.

However, the interpretation was complicated by the presence of an interaction effect ($F[2, 23] = 6.63$, $p = .0080$). No males at level I-3 had an alternative relationship, allowing no comparison to be made at that level, and the general pattern was reversed at level I-4,

with the one male having an alternative relationship displaying greater attachment distress ($\bar{M} = 4.25$) than the two males who did not ($\bar{M} = 2.88$). While these results suggest that an interaction effect could be present at level I-4, the low number of subjects per cell allows no firm conclusions to be drawn, particularly since there is considerable within-cell variability. The analyses are presented in Appendix K.

Divorce-Related Factors

The results of the two-factor ANOVA examining the effects of ego level and an alternative relationship on attachment distress suggested that divorce-related variables were exerting a stronger influence on attachment distress than ego level. Consequently, t tests were run on the primary divorce-related variables considered in this study (i.e., person suggesting divorce, children, social activities, and alternative relationship) to determine their effects on level of attachment distress. All of these variables except the presence of children ($t[70] = -0.0894$, $p = .9290$) produced significant differences in attachment distress. Persons who suggested the divorce themselves showed significantly lower attachment distress ($\bar{M} = 2.304$) than persons whose spouse suggested the divorce ($\bar{M} = 3.056$), $t(65) = -2.6007$, $p = .0115$. Those who were involved in social activities showed

significantly lower attachment distress ($\bar{M} = 2.295$) than those who were not involved in social activities ($\bar{M} = 3.036$), $t[69] = -2.6670$, $p = .0095$, and those who had an alternative relationship scored significantly lower in attachment distress ($\bar{M} = 2.092$) than those who did not ($\bar{M} = 2.961$), $t[68] = -3.1858$, $p = .0022$.

In addition, t tests analyzing the influence of the divorce-related factors on the qualitative subscales produced significant results for the same three variables (person suggesting divorce, social activities, and an alternative relationship). Scores were significantly lower on the Reluctance and Pressure subscale for persons who suggested the divorce ($t[47.4] = -5.2953$), $p = .0001$), for those who were involved in social activities ($t[45.1] = -2.7747$, $p = .0087$), and for those who had an alternative relationship ($t[68] = -3.0065$, $p = .0037$). Conversely, scores were higher on the Relief and Guilt subscale for persons who suggested the divorce ($t[65] = 5.6860$), $p = .0001$), for those who were involved in social activities ($t[69] = 3.0876$, $p = .0029$), and for those who had an alternative relationship ($t[68] = 3.8467$, $p = .0003$). The presence or absence of children had no significant influence on either of the subscales (Relief and Guilt, $t[70] = -0.0904$, $p = .9283$; Reluctance and Pressure, $t[70] = 0.9629$, $p = .3389$).

Sex Differences

When t tests were performed to determine whether there were any sex-related differences in attachment distress, a number of significant results were obtained. On the global measure, men displayed a higher degree of attachment distress ($M = 3.065$) than women ($M = 2.401$), $t(70) = 2.2383$, $p = .0284$. On the two subscales, men reported significantly greater "Reluctance and Pressure" than women, $t(70) = 4.4641$, $p = .0001$, while women reported significantly higher "Relief and Guilt" than men, $t(70) = -3.9678$, $p = .0002$.

These differences are distinctive enough to suggest that males and females may have markedly different experiences of the divorce process. Males appear to suffer more attachment distress than women, which could be related to their increased reluctance to divorce. Females, on the other hand, display less attachment distress and more relief, perhaps because they tend to initiate the divorce and therefore may have begun the disengagement process earlier than males. If so, they are more likely to have largely resolved their attachment issues at a time when males are just beginning to be impacted by the reality of separation.

Summary

Contrary to expectations, the analysis did not reveal any significant differences in attachment distress based on ego level, leaving the hypothesis regarding the effect of ego level on attachment distress unsupported. However, the results did support the hypothesis regarding the effect of an alternative relationship on attachment distress. Primarily a relational construct, attachment distress was moderated by other relational factors, such as social activities and an alternate relationship. It was also lower for the person suggesting the divorce, which could reflect an earlier process of disengagement from the marital relationship. Some significant sex differences in attachment distress were also apparent, with males showing significantly more attachment distress than females.

General Distress

In this study, general distress refers to the overall emotional distress resulting from going through separation and divorce. It was measured with the SCL-90-R (Derogatis, 1983), a symptom inventory composed of three global scales and nine subscales. The major global scale, the Global Severity Index (GSI), was used as a measure of general distress in this study. The

reliability of the GSI is exceptionally high, showing a Cronbach's alpha of .9749 for the study sample.

Main Effects

The study hypothesized that there would be differences in general distress based upon level of ego development and that these differences would likely vary depending upon whether or not children were involved in the divorce. Table 13 presents the means and distribution characteristics for the Global Severity Index (GSI) by sex and ego level. For most ego levels, the level of severity for the sample was well above the mean for the non-patient normal population (GSI, .31) and approaching

Table 13
SCL-90-R, GSI, General Distress
by Sex and I-Level

Males				Females		
I-level	<u>n</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>
Delta	3	0.84	0.51	1	0.33	0.00
I-3	8	0.80	0.68	3	0.46	0.27
I-3/4	9	1.00	0.53	29	1.10	0.68
I-4	3	1.30	0.37	12	1.04	0.64
I-4/5	-	----	----	4	0.51	0.17
Total	23	0.95	0.59	49	0.98	0.66

the mean for psychiatric outpatients (GSI, 1.26) (Derogatis, 1983).

To determine whether there were any significant main effects, the sample was divided into subgroups based on sex and two-factor ANOVAs were run for ego level and the presence of children. Contrary to expectations, no significant differences in general distress were found in either the male ($F[6, 23] = 2.27, p = .0890$) or female groups ($F[6, 49] = 0.96, p = .4632$) for any of the factors tested. These results left the study hypotheses regarding the effects of ego level and children on general distress unsupported. The analyses are presented in Appendix L.

Divorce-Related Factors

In addition, two-factor ANOVAs were run on the male and female groups to determine the effects of I-level and the divorce-related factors previously identified as having significant effects on attachment distress. No significant effects were found for sex, for the person suggesting the divorce, for social activities, or for an alternate relationship. Similarly, t tests on the entire sample revealed no significant differences on any of the comparisons (i.e., whether or not the person suggested the divorce, $t[48.5] = -1.3715, p = .1765$; whether or not

the person had an alternative relationship, $t[68] = 0.1635$, $p = .8706$; and whether or not the person was socially active, $t[69] = 1.0847$, $p = .2818$).

Sex Differences

When the sample was divided into groups by sex and t tests were performed to determine whether there were any sex differences in general distress, the results were not significant ($t[70] = -0.1956$, $p = .8455$).

Summary

Although levels of general distress approached the normative levels for psychiatric outpatients for both the male and female groups, the study hypotheses remained unsupported for the general distress variable. Neither level of ego development nor presence of children proved to have a significant effect on level of general distress as measured by the Global Severity Index. Furthermore, no effects were found for the divorce-related factors tested or for sex. Consequently, despite the high levels of general distress for the sample as a whole, general distress proved to be fairly insensitive to the various factors tested.

Social Adjustment

In this study, the Social Adjustment Scale-Self Report (SAS-SR) was chosen as a measure of overall social adjustment. Scores are computed for six main areas of social functioning, economic circumstances, and an overall index of social adjustment. The overall Adjustment Score, a composite score based on the individual item scores, was chosen as the measure of social adjustment.

On this sample, the overall adjustment score showed adequate reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of .7003 ($N = 29$, 32 items) to .7216 ($N = 41$, 27 items). On this measure, the alpha value can vary, since respondents are instructed to skip irrelevant items. This variability suggests that Cronbach's alpha may not be an entirely appropriate reliability measure for this instrument (Edwards et al., 1978). However, these results compare favorably with early exploratory studies on clinical populations which showed an acceptable mean alpha of .74 (Weissman et al., 1978).

Main Effects

For this study, it was hypothesized that there would be differences in social adjustment or coping capacity based upon level of ego development. In general, social adjustment was anticipated to increase with developmental

level (though this trend would be reflected in decreasing scores on the SAS-SR since higher scores indicate maladjustment). Contrary to expectations, there was relatively little variation in scores across sex or ego level. Most group means were elevated well above community norms (male, 1.56; female, 1.61) but remained considerably below the norms for acute depressives (male, 2.56; female, 2.53) (Weissman et al., 1978). The results are presented in Table 14.

As with the other dependent measures, the sample was divided into subgroups based on sex to avoid confounding sex and level of ego development and was analyzed by one-factor ANOVAS to determine the effects of ego level on

Table 14
SAS-SR, Adjustment Score, Social Adjustment
by Sex and I-Level

I-level	Males			Females		
	<u>n</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>
Delta	3	1.55	0.37	1	1.00	0.00
I-3	8	1.83	0.27	3	1.91	0.19
I-3/4	9	1.88	0.37	29	1.92	0.43
I-4	3	1.90	0.17	12	1.92	0.42
I-4/5	-	----	----	4	1.86	0.09
Total	23	1.82	0.34	49	1.91	0.40

social adjustment. For the female analysis, the Delta and I-3 levels were combined due to the low number of subjects at those particular levels. As indicated in Appendix M, analysis of variance revealed no significant differences based on I-level for either the male group ($F[3, 23] = 0.72, p = .5510$) or the female group ($F[3, 49] = 0.02, p = .9947$). These findings did not support the hypothesis regarding the effect of ego level on social adjustment.

Divorce-Related Factors

Though no hypotheses were made concerning the impact of divorce-related variables and ego level on social adjustment, two-factor ANOVAs were run on the male and female groups for the divorce-related factors noted as having an effect on levels of attachment distress (person suggesting divorce, an alternative relationship, and social activities). There were no significant differences on any of the analyses for the females. For the males, however, persons having an alternate relationship showed significantly better social adjustment ($\bar{n} = 7, \bar{M} = 1.52$) than persons who did not ($\bar{n} = 16, \bar{M} = 1.95, F[1, 23] = 8.35, p = .0107$), although there were no effects for ego level ($F[3, 23] = 1.27, p = .3176$). For the males, social activity also was significant at the .05

level ($F [1, 23] = 4.54, p = .05$) for moderating overall social adjustment. Males who were involved in social activities displayed better overall social adjustment ($n = 11, M = 1.68$) than those who were not ($n = 12, M = 1.96$).

Sex Differences

To determine whether there were any sex differences in level of social adjustment, the sample was divided into groups based on sex and analyzed with t tests. The results were not significant ($t[70] = -0.9410, p = .3500$).

Summary

For the most part, the results for social adjustment scale were much like the results for general distress. Although the average scores for the population were elevated above the community norms, the study hypothesis regarding the effect of ego level on overall social adjustment was not supported, nor were there any significant differences in overall social adjustment based on sex. However, on this measure, some divorce-related factors did have a moderating effect. Males having an alternative relationship showed significantly better social adjustment than those who did not. Moreover, the effect of social activities on social adjustment for males also

was significance. In effect, then, the social adjustment measure showed some sensitivity to divorce-related social factors.

Additional Tests of Significance

For all three measures of distress, the study hypotheses regarding the effects of ego level on divorce-related distress remained unsupported when the male and female groups were analyzed separately. Since splitting the sample on the basis of sex may have contributed to a loss of power by reducing the sample size and number of persons per group, two-factor ANOVAs were run on the entire sample to see whether the increase in power produced any significant results. However, no significant results were obtained for any of the measures. In a second attempt to increase group sizes, ego levels were condensed and analyzed by single factor ANOVAs for each sex by ego level. Again, this procedure produced no significant results. Finally, as a check against any possible violations of the assumptions of ANOVA created by having unequal group sizes, scores were ranked and analyzed with nonparametric statistics. Once more, there were no significant results.

Using these differing analyses, no significant differences were found on the three dependent measures based on ego level, which suggests that ego level does not

effectively differentiate short-term reactions to divorce. It remains unclear whether the results would have been different had the sample size been larger at the two extreme levels of ego development (Delta, I-4/5) where the greatest group differences were expected to be found. Consequently, although this study did not find evidence that ego level can effectively differentiate reactions to divorce, it appears that more definitive results could be obtained with a more even distribution of subjects across ego levels.

Survey Results

The primary purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of ego level on various measures of divorce-related distress. However, in addition to gathering data related to testing the study hypotheses, information on subjective reactions to divorce and on preferred support systems was also collected to assist with developing divorce adjustment services. The results of the survey portion of the study are presented in the following sections. Findings related to the subjective experience of distress are presented first, followed by preferences for social supports and a section summary. The chapter concludes with a general summary of findings for the entire study.

Subjective Experience of Distress

Level of Distress Over Time

In order to determine whether there were any differences in the intensity of subjectively defined distress over the course of the adjustment process, respondents were asked to rate their subjective experience of distress on a scale ranging from none to extreme over five time periods. Although the resulting data were categorical, the responses for each time period were averaged for the males and females in order to allow differences in the subjective experience of distress over time to be compared. The results are presented in Table 15.

Table 15
Subjective Experience of Distress Over Time,
Males and Females

Time Period	Males		Females	
	<u>n</u>	Subjective Distress	<u>n</u>	Subjective Distress
Prior to Separation	23	3.00	49	3.76
Separation	23	3.70	49	3.51
0-6 Months	23	3.70	49	2.94
7-12 Months	19	2.68	40	2.00
12+ Months	7	2.29	9	1.67

Because responses were categorical, analysis of variance could not be utilized to compare group means. Instead, a chi-square analysis was used to determine whether there were any sex differences in the subjective experience of distress over time, but there were no significant results. A chi-square analysis also revealed no significant differences based on level of ego development for any of the time periods.

Nonetheless, the pattern of results suggest that there could be differences in the reaction patterns of males and females. There is some indication that females experience greater distress prior to separation, whereas males experience higher distress following separation. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that out of the 16 subjects separated for more than one year, all of the persons reporting "extensive" or "extreme" difficulty were male ($n = 3$).

Areas of Distress

In order to determine whether there were differences in types of life disruption following separation, respondents were asked to quantify their level of distress in a number of specific areas. These included relationship with the former spouse, parenting problems, custody or visitation problems, financial or employment problems,

living on one's own or being independent, changes in living arrangements, loneliness or divorce-related feelings, and difficulty with social activities. After separating the total sample into male and female groups, a chi-square analysis for differences based on ego level revealed no significant differences for any of the areas tested.

When areas of distress were examined for group differences based on sex, a chi-square ($[5, N = 70] = 11.544, p = .042$) analysis revealed a significant difference between males and females concerning distress related to their relationship with the former spouse (although half of the cells had a count less than 5). While proportionately more females ($n = 24, 53.2\%$) than males ($n = 10, 43.4\%$) reported having high levels of difficulty ("extensive" or "extreme"), the females ($n = 16, 34.0\%$) generally tended to choose a lower level of difficulty ("extensive") than the males ($n = 8, 34.8\%$), who tended to choose the highest level of difficulty ("extreme"). These results suggest that of the males and females experiencing higher levels of distress in their relationship with their former spouse, the males tend to experience a greater intensity of distress than the females. No sex differences were found for the other areas of functioning.

Preferred Support Systems

Since social supports have generally been considered helpful in reducing emotional distress, participants were asked to indicate their preferences for various types of social supports. As indicated in Table 16, one series of items inquired about the possible use of support groups, counseling, or relatives and friends. Another series

Table 16

Preferred Support Systems by Sex: Support Groups,
Counseling, Friends and Relatives

	Males		Females		Total	
Variable	<u>n</u>	Percent	<u>n</u>	Percent	<u>n</u>	Percent
Support Group						
yes	7	30.4	26	54.2	33	46.5
no	10	43.5	9	18.8	19	26.8
unsure	6	26.1	13	27.1	19	26.8
Counseling						
yes	11	47.8	33	68.8	44	62.0
no	12	52.2	15	31.3	27	38.0
Friends & Relatives						
yes	20	87.0	46	95.8	66	93.0
no	3	13.0	2	4.2	5	7.0

asked respondents to rank their social support preferences given eight preselected options.

When the first set of preferences were examined by sex and ego level, significant differences were found in the male group concerning the ego level of persons most likely to become involved in a support group or counseling. All of the males indicating they would attend a support group were at level I-3/4 or higher (chi-square [6, \underline{n} = 23] = 14.165, \underline{p} = .028). Similarly, 9 of the 11 males indicating they would consider counseling were at level I-3/4 or higher (chi-square [3, \underline{n} = 23] = 8.807, \underline{p} = .032). For females, no significant differences in social support preferences were detected, probably because all but 3 persons in the female sample were at level I-3/4 or higher.

Subjects were also asked to rank their preferred support systems given the eight choices. Table 17 presents a comparison of rankings for males and females, comparing the combined number of first and second rankings to the number of zero rankings (no preference) for each particular support. However, because all subjects did not rank all eight choices, it was not possible to statistically analyze the rankings by ego level and sex.

Nonetheless, the results showed considerable variability in response patterns, with high percentages of

Table 17
Ranking of Preferred Social Supports by Sex

Support	Male Ranking (<u>n</u> = 17)				Female Ranking (<u>n</u> = 44)			
	1&2	(%)	0	(%)	1&2	(%)	0	(%)
Self	8	47.1	5	29.4	15	34.1	14	31.8
Relatives	10	58.8	3	17.6	19	43.2	4	27.3
Friends	5	29.4	3	17.6	16	36.4	15	34.1
Spouse	1	5.9	14	82.4	0	0	35	79.5
Ex-spouse	1	5.9	13	76.5	2	4.5	36	81.8
Clergy	4	23.5	7	41.2	4	9.1	2	4.5
Lawyer	2	11.8	3	17.6	7	15.9	16	36.4
Counselor	4	23.5	5	29.4	10	22.7	13	29.5

males and females electing not to select categories that were highly ranked by their counterparts. For example, the three categories with the highest rankings (self, relatives and friends) had significant percentages of males and females electing not to rank those options. The contrast was most dramatic for the females, where between 27% and 34% chose not to rank supports generally assumed to have popular appeal (self, relatives, and friends). This splitting continued in the counselor category, with slightly greater numbers electing not to rank that support over those who did. Few persons chose their

spouse or ex-spouse as a support, nor did many perceive their lawyer as a preferred support.

Relatively few sex differences were clearly discernible in the rankings. The most noticeable sex difference was in the clergy category, with 23.5% of the males ranking that option highly and 41.2% leaving that option unranked. By way of contrast, 9.1% of the females chose to rank clergy as a top support in comparison to 4.5% who left clergy unranked. These differences suggest that males tend to be more highly polarized in their views of clergy than females. It also appears that males are more likely to select "self" (47.1%) or "relatives" (58.8%) as their preferred supports, whereas females are more evenly divided, choosing to select "relatives" (43.2%) or "friends" (36.4%) before "self" (34.1%) as their preferred supports.

Summary

The survey results revealed only one significant difference based on ego level. In the category of preferences for social supports, males who indicated a willingness to attend support groups or counseling were generally at the Self-aware level (I-3/4) or higher. There was also only one significant difference based on sex. In the category of areas of distress, distressed males tended to select the highest level of difficulty

("extreme") in their relationship with their former spouse, whereas distressed females tended to select a lower level of difficulty ("extensive") in their relationship with their former spouse. While significant differences in rankings of social supports could not be determined, considerable variability was noted.

General Summary

In this study, the hypotheses related to the effects of ego development on divorce adjustment remained unsupported. Ego development did not differentiate attachment distress, general distress, or overall social adjustment for male and female groups or the entire sample. However, some significant differences were detected for the influence of divorce-related variables and sex, particularly on attachment distress. In this study, attachment distress was significantly lower for persons who had an alternate relationship, who were involved in social activities, or who suggested the divorce. Attachment distress was also significantly lower for females in comparison to males. Relatively few differences were found for general distress or social adjustment. There were no differences based on ego level or sex for either measure, although the presence of an alternate relationship and social activities improved levels of social adjustment for males. Only one sex difference was found in areas of

distress. Distressed males reported the highest level of difficulty in their relationship with their former spouse ("extreme"), whereas distressed females reported a slightly lower level of difficulty ("extensive"). For females, no differences in preferences for social supports were detected, whereas males indicating a willingness to attend either support groups or counseling tended to be at the Self-aware ego level (I-3/4) or higher. For both males and females, other preferences for social support showed considerable variability.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Discussion of Group Differences

The purpose of this study was to determine whether reactions to separation and divorce could be differentiated on the basis of ego development. Based on Loevinger's (1976) theory of development and relevant divorce-related research, it was anticipated that reactions to separation would vary with type of distress and level of ego development. In general, it seemed likely that persons functioning at lower levels of ego development would have greater difficulty coping with stressors related to general life change, whereas those functioning at higher levels would have more difficulty in adjusting to the loss of a major relationship. Furthermore, it also seemed likely that these trends would be modified by relevant situational factors and sex-related differences.

Ego Level

Contrary to expectations, the effects of ego level on the three dependent measures (attachment distress, general distress, and social adjustment) were not

significant, even though the general trends on attachment distress and general distress were in the directions predicted. In fact, only two meaningful differences based on ego level were found in the study. For males, there were significant differences in length of marriage based on ego level and also significant differences in willingness to utilize divorce adjustment groups and counseling as social supports. For females, there were no significant differences based on ego level.

These results indicate that ego level did not differentiate patterns of distress with the measures used in this study, leaving the major hypotheses related to the effects of ego level unsupported. While there are probably a number of reasons for the lack of significant findings (including the possibility that ego level does not differentiate reactions to divorce), the most likely explanations concern both procedural and methodological difficulties that may have introduced possible sources of error.

Procedurally, one of the more subtle possibilities involves utilizing a survey method to obtain the data. Although this method was initially chosen to increase the convenience to the subjects (and hence increase the response rate) and to decrease the time required for collecting the needed information, it inadvertently

introduced nonstandardized data collecting procedures, since subjects were allowed to respond to the instruments at their own convenience over a week period. As a result, unknown variables may have been introduced through differing test-taking conditions which subsequently affected the results.

A more dramatic and apparent problem, involved the random sampling process, which, despite its theoretical benefits, produced an unequal distribution of subjects across developmental levels. In this sample, 73.9% of the males clustered at the I-3 and I-3/4 levels, while 83.7% of the females clustered at the I-3/4 and I-4 levels. As a result, males were unrepresented at the I-4/5 level and females were underrepresented at I-3 and below, the levels where the greatest differences were expected. In addition, the lowest male group (Delta) had very sparse representation combined with high within-group variability on most measures, making the detection of significant differences extremely difficult.

Furthermore, the disproportionate distribution of subjects across ego level by sex forced separate analyses by sex in order to avoid confounding sex and I-level. Splitting the sample on the basis of sex further decreased the number of subjects per group, resulting in an additional loss of statistical power. This effect was most pronounced for the female subjects, where the rela-

tive lack of representation below the I-3/4 level resulted in the creation of a virtually homogeneous female group, displaying relatively few significant differences.

Although the uneven distribution of subjects across developmental levels created marked problems for the analysis, low representation at the lower developmental levels and clustering at the I-3/4 level were anticipated. At the Delta stage and below, lower response rates seemed likely, because such persons are generally more egocentric and less inclined to put effort into activities that have no immediate advantage to them. On the other hand, relatively high response rates were expected at the I-3/4 level, because it is the modal level for the general population (Holt, 1980) and the characteristics of such persons make them inclined to participate in altruistic projects. Consequently, the uneven distribution across ego levels was generally predictable and was probably unavoidable when utilizing a random sampling procedure with a general population.

Nonetheless, the relative lack of responses at the higher developmental levels was unexpected, since the social consciousness of such persons would seem to make them likely respondents. Therefore, the relatively few responses above level I-4 may reflect a lower distribution of such persons in the rural population where the study was conducted, or it could indicate that persons

above level I-4 are less likely to be found in a divorcing population, since they are likely to have a greater capacity for managing marital conflict.

In addition to these procedural and distribution difficulties, there also appear to be at least two methodological explanations for the failure to detect significant results based on ego level. These concern the applicability of the measure of ego development to a divorcing population and the impact of stressful situations on ego functioning itself.

From the onset of the study, the lack of a specifically relational focus was apparent in Loevinger's model, although this drawback seemed minor in comparison to the advantages of its other features. In retrospect, though, the highly cognitive focus of the model (particularly as operationalized through the SCT), may not have allowed sufficient distinction to be made between the levels of relational functioning thought to be associated with the different developmental stages. Likewise, it is also possible that differences in relational functioning are more global than differences in cognitive functioning, in which case relational differences would cut across developmental stages and not be detected by the SCT. In fact, in earlier study of marital differences based on ego level (Swensen et al., 1981) was only able to differentiate relational functioning between persons at level I-3 and

below and those at level I-3/4 and above, which suggests that the relational distinctions predicted in the study hypotheses may have been too fine for the instrument to detect.

Another methodological consideration concerns the possibility that ego functioning does not remain constant under stress but instead becomes more regressive or reactive in response to novel circumstances. If so, then responses under stress could easily reflect adaptative behavior reflecting changes in the immediate social environment rather than characteristic personality patterns related to ego development. If this is the case, then predictions based on relational functioning under normal conditions would not necessarily hold true when relationships fall apart. In this study, it was assumed that ego functioning would remain relatively unaffected by changes in personal circumstances. However, in light of the results, it seems possible that this may not be the case.

Moreover, if normative relational functioning does regress to less mature modes of relational functioning following separation or divorce, then it also seems likely that it might take some time for normal functioning to be restored. In this study, reactions were sampled at a time when distress levels were expected to be fairly high. However, in light of the possible negative effects of stress on normative ego functioning, sampling

reactions at an average of 8.7 months may have been too early to allow normal ego functioning to be fully restored. Instead, it seems likely that it could take a much longer time for ego functioning to be reestablished, in which case, it will be more likely to affect the long-term readjustment process rather than short-term reactions to relational disruption.

One of the few results based on ego level found in this study lends some credence to this possibility. For males, the two levels at I-3 and below showed significantly shorter length of marriage than the two levels at I-3/4 and above. This result is consistent with the findings of Swensen et al. (1981), who found that persons functioning at levels I-3 and below have a more limited capacity to sustain a marriage over a long period of time. Since this type of difference takes several years to develop, it suggests that distinctions based on ego level may take a considerable amount of time to develop and are therefore more likely to shape long-term trends and outcomes rather than short-term, acute reactions.

For a number of reasons, then, it appears that ego level exerts relatively little influence on the intensity of divorce-related distress in the first few months following separation compared to the more dramatic effects of situational factors. Rather, given the more subtle influence of ego level on individual functioning, it

seems likely that the effects of ego level take longer to manifest themselves and tend to shape the general course and outcome of the adjustment process rather than the intensity of initial distress.

Based on these considerations, ego level appears to a factor that merits continuing research, even though the main hypotheses in this study remained unsupported. Given the distribution of persons across ego levels in this sample and the relatively short time span utilized following separation, the study probably did not allow a fair determination of the effects of ego level on divorce-related distress to be made. Consequently, it seems that future research using quantitative methods would benefit from taking a series of post-separation measures over a longer period of time or else from measuring outcome differences after a much longer post-separation interval.

Divorce-Related Factors

In contrast to the minimal effects detected for ego level, the divorce-related factors utilized in this study showed more definitive results. In the study hypotheses, it was predicted that presence of an alternative relationship would modify attachment distress, and it was found that an alternative relationship significantly diminished attachment distress for the males (though not

for the females). It was also predicted that the presence of children would moderate general distress, but children had no significant influence on the level of general distress for either the male or female group.

The effects of four major divorce-related variables were also tested to determine their influence on the distress reactions of the entire sample. While significant results were obtained for three of the four factors examined, the effects of the divorce-related factors appeared to vary with the measure being used. Three of the divorce-related variables had effects on attachment distress (person suggesting the divorce, social activities, and an alternative relationship), none had an effect on general distress, and two (alternate relationship and social activities) had an effect on social adjustment.

These results suggest that divorce-related factors can moderate levels of distress following separation, although the impact of such factors may be fairly specific to the dependent measure being used. In this study, general distress proved to be fairly insensitive to such moderating influences in comparison to attachment distress and social adjustment. This difference indicates that the more global measure was less affected by specific variables than the more delimited measures, which suggests that the impact of divorce-related factors may be specific to particular areas of life functioning. In

this study, attachment distress appeared to be most directly related to the loss of a significant relationship, hence it was highly influenced by reestablishing an alternative relationship. Similarly, social adjustment seemed to be closely related to social functioning and was highly affected by social factors (social activities and an alternative relationship). Consequently, the impact of moderating variables may depend to a large extent on the measure being used and the type of factor being tested.

These results are consistent with Burman and Turk's (1981) finding that the effectiveness of coping strategies (moderating variables) was problem specific. Using multiple regression techniques, they found that out of six coping factors, only two (social activities and autonomy) were related to a positive mood state. Moreover, these factors reduced difficulties in only two specific areas, loneliness and interpersonal relations. As a result, the authors concluded that "neither problems alone nor coping alone are sufficient to understand the phenomenon of divorce; on the contrary, both aspects should be examined concurrently to understand accurately the process of adjustment to divorce" (p. 186).

Similarly, the results of this study demonstrate the value of using a variety of measures when assessing the impact of divorce on personal functioning, especially

measures designed to assess the effects of the loss of the marital relationship. In this study, using multiple measures revealed that the measure least utilized in most studies of divorce, attachment distress, displayed the greatest sensitivity to moderating factors as well as a significant sex-related difference. In contrast, the type of measure most often used in divorce adjustment studies, general distress, displayed the least sensitivity to any of the moderating factors. In fact, even though general distress and social adjustment were moderately related constructs (Pearson Correlation Coefficient $r = .641$), general distress was practically insensitive to the influence of divorce-related variables, whereas social adjustment displayed sensitivity to social activity and relationship variables. Consequently, it appears that utilizing a variety of dependent measures provides a greater opportunity for determining the specific effects of divorce-related variables, even though it might involve some overlapping variability. In fact, the relatively specific influence of moderating variables on areas of life functioning may help to explain the widely differing results frequently encountered in the literature, since lack of standardization appears to be the norm.

Sex Differences

Considering the wide number of variables utilized in this study, very few significant differences were detected based on sex. Of the three measures of distress used in the study, only attachment distress displayed any sex related differences, with men showing more attachment distress than women. On the Kitson subscales, men were also more likely to show greater "reluctance and pressure" than women, while women were more likely to display greater "relief and guilt" than men. For general distress or social adjustment, no significant sex differences were found.

Even though very few sex differences were detected, the results suggest that men and women tend to have quite different experiences of the divorce process. Women appear to initiate the divorce, experiencing less attachment distress and more "relief and guilt." Men appear to be the ones who are typically "left" and who experience greater attachment distress along with more "reluctance and pressure." Consequently, the sex differences detected in the study lend credence to Reissman's (1990) observation that there seems to be two reactions to divorce, "his" and "hers."

Summary

Although the study did not support the hypotheses related to differentiating reactions to divorce based on ego level, the results revealed significant differences in the types of factors that will moderate divorce-related distress and in the degree of distress experienced by males and females. In this study, both attachment distress and social adjustment proved to be more sensitive to divorce-related influences than general distress. Furthermore, the effects of divorce-related variables on the various measures of distress tended to be fairly specific. Attachment distress was affected by three moderating factors and social adjustment was affected by two. In contrast, there were very few sex-related differences using these same measures. However, the differences detected proved to be highly meaningful, suggesting differing adjustment reactions for males and females, which may be partially situationally determined.

Conclusions

Based on these observations, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Since divorce-related factors moderated some types of distress and ego level did not, it appears that circumstantial or situational factors have a more direct

influence on the intensity of divorce-related distress than ego development, apparently because situational factors are more directly related to the areas of life disruption. In this study, circumstantial factors affected the more specific measures of distress, whereas ego development influenced length of marriage and preferences for particular social supports, factors which seem directly related to coping strategies and long-term relational outcomes. These findings suggest that circumstantial factors influence the adjustment process by affecting the degree and extent of personal disruption and that ego development influences the adjustment process by affecting the way such disruptions are understood and managed. Consequently, it appears that circumstantial factors are more likely to affect the initial intensity of divorce-related reactions, whereas ego development is more likely to affect the duration and outcome of the adjustment process.

2. The sex difference detected in attachment distress suggests that males and females may have quite differing experiences of the adjustment process. In this study, females were more likely to initiate the divorce and showed lower attachment distress than males, while males seemed more reluctant to divorce and displayed greater attachment distress than females. These results suggest that females are more likely to be dissatisfied

with the marriage than males and that females may have fewer constraints to leaving the marriage.

In light of previous research, these findings also suggest that that the marital relationship may have different meaning for females than males, which may make it easier for females to leave the marriage. As Reissman (1990) has noted, the marital relationship constitutes one relationship among many for females, providing a source of emotional intimacy within a network of important relationships. For males, however, the marital relationship appears to be much more exclusive, providing a singular source of support and personal attention. In fact, it has even been suggested that males actually form stronger attachment bonds than females (Jordan, 1988). If so, then males have much more to lose in a marital breakup than females, since they lose a relationship that may have relatively greater significance for them than their spouse and which is also their primary social support.

These differences suggest that males and females would experience differing types of distress at differing points in the adjustment process. Since females initiate the divorce, it seems that females would experience greater attachment distress prior to separation (in the course of debating whether or not to separate), while males would have greater difficulty once separation had

occurred. In contrast, following separation, it seems likely that females would have relatively greater difficulty coping with general life change than males, since separation typically brings greater economic disadvantage to females than to males and may require greater role changes. However, as the study results suggest, this does not necessarily mean that females would experience greater degrees of general distress. Because the experience of distress is influenced by personal meanings as well as degree of disruption (Buehler & Langenbrunner, 1987) and females tend to look upon divorce-related change as positive (Reissman, 1990; Zeiss et al., 1978), it seems that females are likely to experience no greater general distress than males despite their increased stress and to experience greater overall satisfaction with the divorce and its outcome.

3. The fact that attachment distress could be differentiated from general distress and social adjustment tends to support the conclusions of Spanier and Casto (1979a) that there are (at least) two types of reactions to divorce, one related to loss of the relationship and the other related to general life change. However, because reactions to divorce appear to vary with social circumstances, the type of distress being considered, and the period of the adjustment process, it is probably overly simplistic to categorize reactions to divorce

purely on the basis of the type of life disruption involved.

4. Because differing types of distress are moderated by relatively specific divorce-related factors, the results show the value of using multiple measures of distress in divorce research in order to more fully assess the effects of divorce-related change. While it appears that most divorcing persons tend to experience uniformly high levels of general distress following separation, the differential effects of divorce appear to be experienced in relatively specific areas of social functioning. Consequently, it seems that future research would benefit from using a number of relatively specific measures to assess differences in reaction patterns, particularly measures which assess the effects of losing the marital relationship.

In summary, these observations suggest that research addressing short-term reactions to divorce would benefit from using a variety of dependent measures and from looking for specific rather than general effects. They also suggest that ego development could best be used as a measure for differentiating the course of adjustment over time or for testing predictions related to long-term outcomes of the divorce process and to how future, new relationships are viewed. Moreover, the differential circumstances of males and females and their differing

reactions to separation indicate that sex differences continue to require serious consideration in research designs despite the relatively few specific sex-related findings in the literature. Further, this finding argues for a broadening of the types of measures generally being used in divorce research to include relational and attitudinal factors.

Suggestions for Further Study

In this study, an attempt was made to combine developmental and stress models in order to differentiate reactions to divorce based on levels of ego development. Groups of divorced persons were formed on the basis of level of ego development and their reactions to divorce were determined by utilizing various measures of distress. In effect, this procedure combined two differing types of measurement, one qualitative and the other quantitative, in hopes of showing quantitative differences in distress based on qualitative differences in ego functioning.

In retrospect, it appears that the effect of combining both types of measures was to diminish the advantages of using the qualitative measure, since the range of information that could be assessed with the qualitative measure (ego development) could not be replicated with the quantitative measures (divorce-related

distress). With the qualitative measure, distinctions could be made in the way individuals perceived, conceptualized, and processed information, whereas with the quantitative measures, distinctions were generally limited to data derived from responses to preselected alternatives. As a result, information on divorce adjustment was limited to a fairly narrow range of functioning in comparison to the breadth of information gathered on levels of ego functioning.

This inherent limitation in quantitative procedures argues for a differing approach to measurement when using a qualitative construct such as ego development. Because the assessment of ego development relies highly on cognitive processes, it would seem that procedures which focus on the way the experience of divorce is individually interpreted and understood would be particularly appropriate for exploring differential reactions to the divorce process. Such an emphasis would allow the actual process of adjustment to be identified, rather than simply the degree of distress. In fact, it would enable divorce adjustment to be redefined in its fullest sense as a both a process and an outcome.

One possible method has been suggested by Reissman (1990), who utilized symbolic interaction theory to develop qualitative procedures for analyzing differences in the "accounts" persons develop to make sense of their

divorce experiences. In her approach, emphasis was placed on the meaning that persons give their experience and the way they attempt to reconstruct a new life order and identity through interpreting the events related to the marital breakup. Although Weiss (1975, 1976) recognized early on that developing accounts was part of the divorce adjustment process, Reissman (1990) maintained that such narrative reinterpretation constitutes the core of the adjustment process. In her view, "narrativizing is a major way that individuals make sense of their past marriages and heal biographical discontinuities" (p. 230). Moreover, she maintained that meaning is derived from both form and content, which forces attention to be given to the narrative structure of individual divorce accounts. "The how of the telling is important in understanding what it is that is significant for the teller" (p. xi). In studying the process of divorce adjustment, then, Reissman utilized narrative analysis in conjunction with traditional quantitative methods to arrive at her results, concluding that men and women construe marriage differently and consequently perceive and experience divorce in differing ways.

Because differences in ego development are based on similar qualitative distinctions, it seems that Reissman's method holds possibilities for future research which go beyond the limitations of current quantitative

methods. Such procedures would allow process distinctions to be made which would allow the way that persons conceptualize and resolve their experience of distress to be investigated. Such process distinctions could then be correlated with outcome studies to allow a fuller picture of divorce adjustment to be drawn. In light of these considerations, it seems that future research on the relationship between ego development and reaction patterns would benefit from using designs that incorporate both quantitative and qualitative measures and procedures.

Implications for Clinical Practice

Given the limited results regarding the influence of level of ego development on divorce-related distress found in this study, it would seem fairly easy to conclude that degree of distress is a more relevant therapeutic issue for the practicing clinician than level of ego development in treating this particular population. In fact, the majority of divorce adjustment models developed by clinicians appear to have been based precisely on this assumption, as though the primary reason divorcing persons seek treatment is for relieving situational stress (Kraus, 1979; Wiseman, 1975).

However, although degree of distress appears to be generally high during the separation process, the results of this study suggest that it is not level of distress

alone that is most likely to prompt a person to seek professional help. Although most persons in this sample reported experiencing relatively high levels of distress, only a little over half (62%) thought about seeking professional help. Consequently, it seems that distress alone is not sufficient to motivate a person to seek professional services. Instead, judging from the results of this study, it seems possible that factors such as individual circumstances, sex, time, and level of ego development could all play a role in influencing who is inclined to seek professional treatment. Although these conclusions are inferential, the results also suggest that persons entering treatment are more likely to be troubled by high levels of attachment distress than by general distress and that they are more likely to be concerned about relational loss rather than situational adjustment.

Beyond these general considerations, however, the most telling influence affecting who is likely to seek treatment seems to be level of ego development. In this study, of those persons who indicated that they were inclined to seek professional help, virtually all were at the Self-aware Level (I-3/4) or higher. Only two persons below level I-3/4 reported that they considered seeking professional help. Consequently, while ego level may not have affected the degree of distress experienced

following marital separation, it clearly seems to play a role in determining who is most likely to seek treatment. Therefore, when it comes to the divorce adjustment process, it appears that ego level actually plays a stronger role in affecting who considers treatment than degree of distress.

While there are probably a number of explanations for this finding, it makes intuitive sense in light of developmental theory. Those persons at I-3/4 and above have developed sufficient individuality and insight to be able to view their difficulties as involving internal psychological conflicts. Below level I-3, persons remain role bound and are more apt to perceive their problems as externally based and therefore likely to be resolved by external changes. Consequently, those at I-3/4 and above would be likely to see a need for psychological treatment, whereas those below level I-3/4 would not. Moreover, the marked differences in functioning between these two groups suggest that different treatment approaches and modalities would also be needed.

For persons operating at stages I-3 and below, the disruption of role-related functioning and the loss of the support which the partner provided are apt to be the most disturbing issues. Such persons would therefore probably benefit from emotional support and some assistance in developing an extended repertoire of coping

skills, but they would probably not respond well to interventions designed to increase psychological understanding. Moreover, they would probably be more comfortable with group rather than individual therapy due to the increased social support which the group process can provide.

On the other hand, persons functioning at the higher developmental levels, I-3/4 and above, are more apt to be distressed by issues related to loss of attachment and to present with more pronounced depressive symptoms. With their increased autonomy and coping skills, they would probably manage divorce-related changes fairly well, but they would have difficulty managing loss-related issues due to their capacity to develop more meaningful personal relationships. Moreover, since their concerns are more individually focused and they tend to process conflict intrapsychically, they would probably respond more favorably to individual treatment having an insight-oriented focus and be less inclined to utilize group approaches.

There are also some specific issues at each of the higher developmental levels that are likely to become a specific focus of treatment. For persons making the I-3 to I-3/4 transition, divorce-related concerns are apt to be complicated by moving from role-bound to more independent functioning. Consequently, therapy will be likely to center on validating individually derived personal

meanings in contrast to collectively held opinions. At the I-3/4 and I-4 levels, significant relationships are central to an individual's functioning and sense of identity, consequently such persons are likely to be disturbed by both the loss of the relationship and the meaning which the relationship held. Consequently, clinical issues are apt to focus on issues of loss, identity and personal meaning. At the next higher level, I-4/5, the relational loss occurs as the person is moving towards increasing autonomy. Consequently, treatment is less likely to focus on the loss of the relationship and more on legitimating the movement towards greater independence. However, persons at this level may also have some difficulty with integrating future relationships, which could become a treatment issue. Since they have lost a significant relationship at a time when relationships have lost their central meaning, they could be inclined to strengthen autonomy at the expense of further relational development.

In each of these cases, then, it is not intensity of general distress that is likely to bring a person into treatment. Instead, it is the meaning and place of relational functioning in the person's life, given the changes in their life situation created by divorce. For persons at the higher developmental levels, therapy provides a congruent, interpersonal context for making sense

of the experience of relational loss, since such work occurs within the context of another significant relationship. In fact, since it now appears that talking about divorce is the way that persons adjust to the divorce experience (Reissman, 1990), it seems that it is precisely in the therapeutic realm that ego development will play a particularly critical role.

Consequently, from a developmental perspective, ego functioning remains a central treatment concern regardless of its influence on the intensity of divorce-related distress. It influences who is likely to seek treatment and the nature of their concerns, and therefore affects the nature of the therapeutic relationship, the relevant clinical issues and the direction of positive change. Because of its relevance for treatment, then, it appears that ego level merits continuing attention as a treatment issue, even though it may have relatively little impact on the degree of distress experienced during marital separation.

APPENDICES

Appendix A
Initial Contact Letter

DIVORCE ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM

194

P.O. Drawer 130, 3285 - 122nd. Avenue, Allegan, Michigan 49010 (616)673-6617

date

Sally J. Beyer, M.A.
Program Director

contact
address
city, state, zip

Consultants

Gary E. Beyer, M.A.
Richard L. Church, M.A.
Gary J. Ciever, M.A.
R. Hope Kerr, M.A.
Marcia L. McEvoy, Ph.D.
Richard A. Strait, M.A.

Dear first name:

The Divorce Adjustment Program of Allegan County is currently working on improving its services to better meet the needs of Allegan County residents. As part of this process, a research study has been planned to help identify the specific needs of divorcing county residents and to see whether there are any major differences in the way various types of people adjust to divorce related changes.

Through random selection, you have been chosen to have the opportunity to participate in this study. As a participant, you would be asked to answer a set of questionnaires concerning your reactions to going through a divorce. All the necessary materials will be mailed directly to you, along with a postage paid return envelope. These materials take between one and two hours to complete, and your responses will remain strictly anonymous.

While your participation in this research study is totally voluntary, I would like to encourage you to become involved. Your answers will play an important part in determining the kinds of divorce adjustment services that will be developed for the entire county, and they will contribute to doctoral research at Western Michigan University investigating reaction patterns to the divorce process.

Personally, I think you will find the project interesting and informative. If you would like to participate, please review and sign the enclosed consent form and return it to me by (date specified). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 616/673-6617. Thank you for your consideration and cooperation.

For the Divorce Adjustment Program,

Richard A. Strait, M.A.
Divorce Adjustment Consultant
Study Director

i-contct.ps

MEMBER - ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY CONCILIATION COURTS

Appendix B
Consent Form

DIVORCE ADJUSTMENT SURVEY

Professional Statement and Informed Consent

You have been selected to participate in a research study intended to identify the specific needs of persons going through the process of divorce and to determine whether there are any major differences in the way that different kinds of people adjust to divorce related changes. You are under no obligation to participate and may decline without penalty. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to give up to two hours of your time to fill out a series of questionnaires related to your divorce, your personality style, and your current situation and functioning. Your responses will remain strictly anonymous and used in a way that is consistent with ethical and professional standards safeguarding the confidentiality of such information. Any forms will held in a manner that will protect your confidentiality for up to three years following the completion of the study, at which point they will be destroyed.

This study will be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the Ethical Principles in the Conduct of Research with Human Participants published by the American Psychological Association (1981). The results of this study will be used by the Divorce Adjustment Program to help develop divorce adjustment services for Allegan County residents and for doctoral dissertation research at Western Michigan University exploring differences in the process of adjusting to a divorce.

If you have any questions about the research study or your participation in it, you may contact the Study Coordinator, Richard A. Strait, at 616/673-6617. Questions about the Divorce Adjustment Program may be directed to the Program Director, Sally J. Beyer, at 616/673-6617.

I have read the above statement and hereby agree to participate in the research study. I understand that I am free to drop out of the study at any time.

(Signature)

(Date)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: MI ZIP: _____

Number of months you have been
separated from your (ex)spouse: _____

Please retain one copy of this form for your records and return the completed copy using the enclosed preaddressed envelope.

consent2.ps 5/5/90

Appendix C
Follow-Up Letter

DIVORCE ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM 198

P.O. Drawer 130, 3285 - 122nd. Avenue, Allegan, Michigan 49010 (616)673-6617

Sally J. Beyer, M.A.
Program Director

date

Consultants

Gary E. Beyer, M.A.
Richard L. Church, M.A.
Gary J. Giever, M.A.
R. Hope Kerr, M.A.
Marcia L. McEvoy, Ph.D.
Richard A. Strait, M.A.

contact
address
city, state, zip

Dear first name:

A little over a week ago, you were sent a letter explaining about a research study being conducted by the Divorce Adjustment Program of Allegan County to improve its services to better meet the needs of Allegan County residents. Hopefully, you have had a chance to read through the letter and to consider being a part of the research project.

As indicated earlier, your individual responses will play an important role in determining the kinds of divorce adjustment services that will be developed for persons like yourself throughout the whole county.

Consequently, I hope you will decide to participate in the study. It will only take between one and two hours of your time, and I think that you will find the questions interesting and informative.

Consent forms and a stamped, return envelope were included in the previous mailing. In case you have mislaid that letter, additional forms have been enclosed (your postage costs will be reimbursed). If you wish to be included, please fill out the consent form and return it by (date specified). Thanks again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Strait, M.A.
Divorce Adjustment Consultant
Research Study Coordinator

followup.ltr

MEMBER - ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY CONCILIATION COURTS

Appendix D
Acknowledgment Letter

DIVORCE ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM

200

P.O. Drawer 130, 3285 - 122nd. Avenue, Allegan, Michigan 49010 (616)673-6617

Sally J. Beyer, M.A.
Program Director

date

Consultants

Gary E. Beyer, M.A.
Richard L. Church, M.A.
Gary J. Giever, M.A.
R. Hope Kerr, M.A.
Marcia L. McEvoy, Ph.D.
Richard A. Strait, M.A.

contact
address
city, state, zip

Dear first name:

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the research study on reactions to divorce being conducted through The Divorce Adjustment Program. Your support and cooperation will be a valuable contribution towards identifying the divorce adjustment needs of Allegan County residents.

At the present time, I am anticipating being able to send out the research packets on (date). When the questionnaires arrive, you will notice that each has been assigned a code number for analysis purposes. This is NOT an identification number; you are the only person who will know the number on your set of forms.

Instructions for completing the forms will be included in the study packet. Most items are multiple choice, though one questionnaire asks that you complete a number of sentences. Though use of ink is acceptable, using a pencil to answer the questions will make any changes easier.

Once the questionnaires arrive, please try to complete and return the forms within ten days. This should provide ample time to complete the survey at your leisure. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 616/673-6617.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Strait
Divorce Adjustment Consultant
Research Study Coordinator

response.ltr 4/4/90

MEMBER - ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY CONCILIATION COURTS

Appendix E
Cover Letter

DIVORCE ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM

P.O. Drawer 130, 3285 - 122nd. Avenue, Allegan, Michigan 49010 (616)673-6617

Sally J. Beyer, M.A.
Program Director

date

Consultants

Gary E. Beyer, M.A.
Richard L. Church, M.A.
Gary J. Ciever, M.A.
R. Hope Kerr, M.A.
Marcia L. McEvoy, Ph.D.
Richard A. Strait, M.A.

Dear Study Participant:

I am enclosing the research questionnaires for the study on divorce adjustment needs and reactions being sponsored by The Divorce Adjustment Program. I hope that you will find the process of completing them interesting and informative.

As indicated earlier, these forms will take between one and two hours to complete, though you do not have to complete them at one sitting. While the different forms are given letters for identification purposes, they can be answered in any order. Instructions are included in the research packet.

Please try to complete and return all of the forms within ten days (or, date specified). Before sending them back, please double check to see that you have filled in all of the questions. Then, simply mail back the forms in the postagepaid return envelope.

Again, if any questions should arise, feel free to call me at 673-6617. Thank you for your help and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Strait
Divorce Adjustment Consultant
Study Coordinator

cover.ltr 4/4/90

MEMBER — ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY CONCILIATION COURTS

Appendix F
General Instruction Sheet

DIVORCE ADJUSTMENT SURVEY
RESEARCH PACKET

General Instructions

In this survey packet, you should find five different color coded questionnaires. These are listed below with their corresponding identification letter and approximate completion time. You may answer the instruments in any order. Instructions are printed on the first page of each questionnaire.

FORM "A": Demographic Data Form (10-15 minutes)

FORM "B": Kitson Attachment Questionnaire (5-10 minutes)

FORM "C": SCL-90-R (15-20 minutes)

FORM "D": Social Adjustment Survey - Self Report
(20-25 minutes))

FORM "E": Sentence Completion for Men (Form 81),
OR
Sentence Completion for Women (Form 81)
(30-45 minutes)

Please note: some questionnaires are printed on BOTH sides.

Procedures for Insuring Anonymity

You will notice that each form in your research packet has been assigned a number. This number will be used only for analyzing the study results and does not identify you personally. The prenumbered questionnaires were placed into the mailing envelopes in random order, so that you are the only person who knows the number printed on your particular forms.

Mailing Instructions

When you have finished filling in your answers, please check both sides of each page to see that you have answered all the questions. Then, simply place the forms back into the preaddressed, postage paid envelope and mail. PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES WITHIN TEN DAYS.

If cannot locate an instrument, or if you have any questions, please contact the study coordinator, Richard A. Strait, at 616-673-6617.

gen-inst.frm 4/4/90

Appendix G
Demographic Data Form

DIVORCE ADJUSTMENT SURVEY

Demographic Data Form # _____

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer all of the following items as accurately and completely as possible. This information will be used for comparison purposes only and remains strictly anonymous.

1. Sex: (1) male ____ (2) female ____ 2. Age: _____
3. Race: (1) Caucasian ____ (2) Afro-American ____
(3) Latino ____ (4) Native American ____ (5) Other ____
4. School grade completed: _____ Years of college: _____
5. Annual income: (1) under \$15,000 ____
(2) \$15,000-30,000 ____ (3) over \$30,000 ____
6. Number of marriages (including present): _____
7. Number of children a) involved in the divorce: _____
b) from other marriages: _____
8. Custody: (1) self ____ (2) spouse ____ (3) other ____
10. Person who first suggested separation or divorce:
(1) self ____ (2) spouse ____ (3) mutual ____
11. Length of time you lived together prior to separation:
_____ years _____ months
12. Length of time a) since separation: _____ years _____ months
b) since divorce: _____ years _____ months
13. Use the most appropriate number (1-5) to indicate the degree of emotional difficulty you experienced during separation:
(0=no difficulty or does not apply, 1=minimal difficulty, 2=mild difficulty, 3=moderate difficulty, 4=extensive difficulty, 5=extreme difficulty).
 - a. _____ time prior to separation
 - b. _____ time of separation
 - c. _____ first few months following separation
 - d. _____ six months to one year following separation
 - e. _____ more than one year following separation

(CONTINUED)

Divorce Adjustment Survey
Demographic Data Form
Page 2 of 3

14. Use the most appropriate number to indicate the extent of difficulty you have experienced in making adjustments in the following areas:

(0=no difficulty or does not apply, 1=minimal difficulty, 2=mild difficulty, 3=moderate difficulty, 4=extensive difficulty, 5=extreme difficulty).

- a. ____ relationship with former spouse
 - b. ____ parenting problems/relationship with children
 - c. ____ problems with custody and/or visitation
 - d. ____ financial or employment problems
 - e. ____ living on own or being independent
 - f. ____ changes in living arrangements
 - g. ____ loneliness or divorce related feelings
 - h. ____ social activities or new relationships
 - g. ____ other _____
15. If a divorce support group or divorce information session had been available to address any of the concerns listed above in question 14, would you have been likely to attend?
- (1) yes ____ (2) no ____ (3) unsure ____
16. Have you sought counseling or seriously considered seeking counseling or similar professional help for problems related to your divorce or separation?
- (1) yes ____ (2) no ____
17. Have you sought the advice or support of relatives or friends for your divorce related concerns?
- (1) yes ____ (2) no ____

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

Divorce Adjustment Survey
Demographic Data Form
Page 3 of 3

18. If necessary, which of the following would you be most likely to turn to for support or help for divorce related problems?

Please indicate your first choice with a "1", your second choice with a "2", etc. Skip any that do not apply.

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| a. _____ self | e. _____ ex-spouse |
| b. _____ relative(s) | f. _____ clergy person |
| c. _____ friend(s) | g. _____ lawyer |
| d. _____ spouse | h. _____ counselor or other professional |

19. Are you currently involved in social activities either with other individuals or through groups and organizations?

(1) yes _____ (2) no _____

20. On the average, what is your frequency of dating each month?

- a. _____ never
b. _____ about once a month
c. _____ about once every two weeks
d. _____ about once a week
e. _____ more than once a week

21. Are you currently involved in a significant relationship with a member of the opposite sex, cohabitating, or remarried?

(1) yes _____ (2) no _____

data-1b.frm revised 5/22/90

Appendix H
Reminder Letter

DIVORCE ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM

210

P.O. Drawer 130, 3285 - 122nd. Avenue, Allegan, Michigan 49010 (616)673-6617

Sally J. Beyer, M.A.
Program Director

date

Consultants

Gary E. Beyer, M.A.
Richard L. Church, M.A.
Gary J. Ciever, M.A.
R. Hope Kerr, M.A.
Marcia L. McEvoy, Ph.D.
Richard A. Strait, M.A.

contact
address
city, state, zip

Dear first name:

It has been a little over a week since the due date for returning the Divorce Adjustment Survey packet sent to you earlier on (date). So far, we have not received your completed forms.

In case you did not receive your packet of questionnaires, please call me collect at 616-673-6617 so that another packet can be sent immediately. However, if you simply set the packet aside intending to get to it later, please try to complete and return the questionnaires as soon as you can but hopefully no latter than (date specified).

If any particular problems have arisen that might interfere with returning the packet on time and you still wish to complete the project, please feel free to call me collect to discuss your particular situation.

Thanks again for your willingness to help. Your cooperation will enable us to have a much more accurate view of the needs of Allegan County residents in planning future divorce adjustment services.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Strait, M.A.
Divorce Adjustment Consultant
Research Study Coordinator

reminder.ltr 4/4/90

MEMBER - ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY CONCILIATION COURTS

Appendix I

Distribution of Divorce-Related Factors by Sex

Table 18
Distribution of Divorce-Related Factors by Sex

Variable	Males		Females		Total	
	<u>n</u>	Percent	<u>n</u>	Percent	<u>n</u>	Percent
Children						
yes	16	69.6	37	75.5	53	73.6
no	7	30.4	12	24.5	19	26.4
Custody						
NA	4	17.4	4	8.2	8	11.1
self	2	8.7	34	69.4	36	50.0
spouse	7	30.4	1	2.0	8	11.1
other	10	43.5	10	20.4	20	27.8
Person Suggesting Divorce						
self	4	18.2	33	67.3	37	52.1
spouse	18	81.8	12	24.5	30	42.3
other	0	----	4	8.2	4	5.6
Social Activity						
yes	11	47.8	32	66.7	43	60.6
no	12	52.2	16	33.3	28	39.4
Significant Other						
yes	7	30.4	23	48.9	30	42.9
no	16	69.6	24	51.1	40	57.1

Appendix J

Length of Marriage, Males, One-Factor ANOVA and Least Squares Mean

Table 19

Length of Marriage, Males, One-Factor ANOVA for I-Level

Source	<u>DF</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u> Value	Pr <u>F</u>
Model	3	33695.379	11231.793	3.62	.0321
Error	19	58989.056	3104.687		
Corrected Total	22	92684.435			
Mean	115.739				

Table 20

Length of Marriage, Males
Least Squares Mean

I-level	<u>LS</u> <u>Mean</u>	<u>T</u> for $H_0: \underline{LS} \text{ Mean } (i) = \underline{LS} \text{ Mean } (J)$ <u>i/j</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Delta	62.667	1	.	-0.50589 <u>p=.619</u>	-2.29422 <u>p=.033</u>	-2.20573 <u>p=.040</u>
I-3	81.750	2	0.50589 <u>p=.619</u>	.	-2.44281 <u>p=.025</u>	-2.15389 <u>p=.044</u>
I-3/4	147.889	3	2.29422 <u>p=.033</u>	2.44281 <u>p=.025</u>	.	-0.4068 <u>p=.689</u>
I-4	163.000	4	2.20537 <u>p=.040</u>	2.15389 <u>p=.044</u>	0.4068 <u>p=.689</u>	.

Appendix K

Attachment Distress, Males and Females, Two-Factor ANOVAs for I-Level and an Alternate Relationship

Table 21

Attachment Distress, Females, Two-Factor ANOVA
for I-Level and an Alternate Relationship

Source	<u>DF</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u> Value	Pr <u>F</u>
Model	8	13.306	1.663	1.29	0.2781
Error	38	49.016	1.290		
Corrected Total	46	62.321			
I-level	4	6.537	1.634	1.27	0.2999
Alt. Rel.	1	2.453	2.453	1.90	0.1759
Interaction	3	0.748	0.249	0.19	0.9002

Table 22

Attachment Distress, Males, Two-Factor ANOVA
for I-Level and an Alternate Relationship

Source	<u>DF</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u> Value	Pr <u>F</u>
Model	6	18.824	3.137	4.69	0.0062*
Error	16	10.703	0.669		
Corrected Total	22	29.527			
I-level	3	3.902	1.301	1.94	0.1631
Alt. Rel.	1	4.494	4.494	6.72	0.0197*
Interaction	2	8.872	4.436	6.63	0.0080*

Appendix L

**General Distress, Males and Females, Two-Factor ANOVAs
for I-Level and Presence of Children**

Table 23

General Distress, Males, Two-Factor ANOVA for I-Level
and Presence of Children

Source	<u>DF</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u> Value	Pr <u>F</u>
Model	6	3.737	0.623	2.27	.0890
Error	16	4.389	0.274		
Corrected Total	22	8.126			
I-level	3	1.364	0.455	1.66	.2160
Children	1	0.118	0.118	0.43	.5211
Interaction	2	2.004	1.002	3.65	.0493

Table 24

General Distress, Females, Two-Factor ANOVA for I-Level
and Presence of Children

Source	<u>DF</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u> Value	Pr <u>F</u>
Model	6	2.581	0.430	0.96	.4632
Error	42	18.805	0.448		
Corrected Total	48	21.386			
I-level	4	2.397	0.599	1.43	.2716
Children	1	0.019	0.019	0.04	.8367
Interaction	1	0.036	0.036	0.08	.7767

Appendix M
Social Adjustment, Males and Females,
One-Factor ANOVAs

Table 25
Social Adjustment, Males,
One-Factor ANOVA

Source	<u>DF</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u> Value	Pr <u>F</u>
Model	3	0.266	0.089	0.72	.5510
Error	19	2.330	0.123		
Corrected Total	22	2.595			

Table 26
Social Adjustment, Females,
One-Factor ANOVA

Source	<u>DF</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u> Value	Pr <u>F</u>
Model	3	0.0128	0.004	0.02	.9947
Error	44	7.632	0.173		
Corrected Total	47	7.645			

Appendix N

**Approval Letter, Allegan County Community
Mental Health Services**

ALLEGAN COUNTY COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

P.O. Drawer 130, 3285 - 122nd. Avenue, Allegan, Michigan 49010 (616) 673-6617

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Flora Moore
Chairman

Anthony Wykstra
Vice-Chairman

Ralph Collins
Treasurer

Vernon Sill
Secretary

Mona Ayers
Jon Campbell
Rev. Rick DeBruyne
Cleon Duryea
Stephen Kastran
Dr. Van O. Keeler
Leslie Roell
Beth Swagman

Paul M. Brinkley, ACSW
County Director

Jerilyn J. Roebing, M.S.W.
Clinical Director

John B. Anderson
Business Director

Robert Banner, M.A.
Workshop/DD Director

Date: April 17, 1990

To: Richard A. Strait, M.A.
1018 San Jose, SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506

From: Paul M. Brinkley, ACSW
County Director

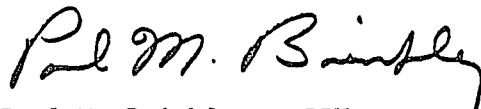
Re: Permission for Divorce Adjustment Research

Dear Richard:

As per our recent conversation, this letter will confirm my authorization to conduct the study entitled, "Level of Ego Development and Degree of Distress Experienced during Marital Separation" at Allegan County Community Mental Health Services under the auspices of the Divorce Adjustment Program.

This authorization is granted pending formal approval of the study by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at Western Michigan University.

Sincerely,



Paul M. Brinkley, ACSW
County Director
Allegan County Community Mental Health Services

Appendix 0
Approval Letters, Human Subjects
Institutional Review Board



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Date: May 9, 1990

To: Richard A. Strait

From: Mary Anne Bunda, Chair *Mary Anne Bunda*

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research protocol, "Level of Ego Development and Degree of Distress Experienced During Marital Separation", has been approved as expedited by the HSIRB. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the approval application.

You must seek reapproval for any change in this design. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals and thank you for releasing your application for use as a model by other students. We are sure that the high quality of your application will facilitate other students' research.

xc: E. Trembley, CECF

HSIRB Project Number 90-04-14

Approval Termination May 9, 1991



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Date: June 1, 1990

To: Richard A. Strait

From: Mary Anne Bunda, Chair *Mary Anne Bunda*

This letter will serve as confirmation that the changes (memo from May 24, 1990) to your research protocol, "Level of Ego Development and Degree of Distress Experienced During Marital Separation", have been approved by the HSIRB. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the approval application.

You must seek reapproval for any change in this design. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

xc: E. Trembley, CECF

HSIRB Project Number 90-04-14

Approval Termination May 9, 1991

Appendix P
Computer Scoring Procedure for
the Sentence Completion Test

In this study, an early version of a database program, PFS: Professional File (Software Publishing Corporation, 1986), was used to create a scoring program for Loevinger's Sentence Completion Test. This is an MS-DOS program which can be run on an IBM compatible computer.

To prepare the scoring program, individual fields were created for each of the variables required. In this application the following fields were used:

1. Identification Number (ID). This field allows individual subjects to be identified.
2. Random Number (RN#). This number allows the order of items on a page to be changed so that subjects cannot be identified by their position on the page. These numbers can be derived through a random number table or computerized random number generator. In this study, four printing variations proved to be sufficient for masking subject responses.
3. Fold. This field allows the identifying data to be hidden during the scoring process by creating a space for folding under the preceeding items.
4. Score#1 (SCOR#1). This field provides a space for recording the first rater's score during the scoring process.
5. Score#2 (SCOR#2). This field creates a space for adding the second rater's score during the comparison process.
6. Compromise Score (COMSCOR). This field provides a space for placing reconciled scores when there are differences between raters.
7. Gender (SEX). This field allows sex of the subject to be recorded for later scoring purposes.
8. Item Number (1, 2, etc.) This field allows space for recording individual responses (without the stems) so they can be printed on a single page and scored as a group.

Once the fields were created, the data from the individual protocols were entered into the fields. Scoring sheets were printed by selecting the "print/list" option on the printing menu and specifying the order of columns to be printed. The scoring sheets were printed in

compressed print to use less space for lengthy responses. In this study, 20 responses were printed per page.

Total protocols were printed by using a word processor, PFS: Professional Write (Software Publishing Corporation, 1986), that was compatible with the database program to create a form containing the stems and response numbers. Total protocols were then generated by using the merge function on the word processor and assigning the appropriate identification numbers for automatically inserting data from the file program into the protocol form.

Score distribution forms for each subject were created by using a spreadsheet program, PFS: Professional Plan (Software Publishing Corporation, 1987), to generate a form containing the necessary identifying data plus the scores for each of the 36 responses. Although the file program could have been expanded for this purpose, it was simpler to enter the data in columns on the spreadsheet, sort responses by subject, and automatically count the number of responses in each column with the count function. Regardless of which program is used, scores must first be converted into numerical equivalents if the computer is to perform statistical calculations. Loevinger (Loevinger, Hy, & Associates, 1989) now recommends using an 11 point scale running from I-2 = 1 to I-6 = 11. Once the number of responses at each level have been calculated, it is relatively simple to calculate the ogive distribution by hand.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ahrons, C. R. (1980). Divorce: A crisis of family transition and change. Family Relations, 29, 533-540.
- Albrecht, S. L. (1980). Reactions and adjustments to divorce: Differences in the experiences of males and females. Family Relations, 29, 59-68.
- Albrecht, S. L., & Kunz, P. R. (1980). The decision to divorce: A social exchange perspective. Journal of Divorce, 3, 319-337.
- Arnold, K. D., & McKenry, P. C. (1986). Divorce and the mid-life transition: Some preliminary findings. Journal of Divorce, 9, 55-63.
- Belitsky, R., & Jacobs, S. (1986). Bereavement, attachment theory, and mental disorders. Psychiatric Annals, 16, 276-280.
- Berman, W. H., & Turk, D. C. (1981). Adaptation to divorce: Problems and coping strategies. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 43, 179-188.
- Bernay, T. (1982). Separation and the sense of competence loss in women. The American Journal of Psychoanalysis, 42, 293-305.
- Bloom, B. L., & Caldwell, R. A. (1981). Sex differences in adjustment during the process of marital separation. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 43, 693-701.
- Bloom, B. L., & Clement, C. (1984). Marital sex role orientation and adjustment to separation and divorce. Journal of Divorce, 7, 87-98.
- Bloom, B. L., White, S. W., & Asher, S. J. (1979). Marital disruption as a life stressor. In G. Levinger & O. C. Moles (Eds.), Divorce and separation: Context, causes, and consequences (pp. 184-200). New York: Basic Books.
- Bohannon, P. (1970). The six stations of divorce. In P. Bohannon (Ed.), Divorce and after (pp. 29-55). Garden City: Doubleday.

- Booth, A., & White, L. (1980). Thinking about divorce. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 42, 605-616.
- Bowlby, J. (1961). Separation anxiety: A critical review of the literature. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 1, 251-269.
- Bowlby, J. (1969, 1982). Attachment and Loss, Vol. I: Attachment (2nd ed.). New York: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1973). Attachment and Loss, Vol. II: Separation: Anxiety and Anger. New York: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1980). Attachment and Loss, Vol. III: Loss: Sadness and Depression. New York: Basic Books.
- Brice, C. W. (1984). Pathological modes of human relating and therapeutic mutuality; A dialogue between Buber's existential relational theory and object-relations theory. Psychiatry, 47, 109-123.
- Brown, P., Felton, B. J., Whiteman, V., & Manela, R. (1980). Attachment and distress following marital separation. Journal of Divorce, 3, 303-317.
- Buehler, C. A., Hogan, M. J., Robinson, B. E., & Levy, R. J. (1985). The parental divorce transition: Divorce related stressors and well-being. Journal of Divorce, 9, 61-81.
- Buehler, C. & Langenbrunner, M. (1987). Divorce-related stressors: Occurrence, disruptiveness, and area of life change. Journal of Divorce, 11, 25-50.
- Bugaighis, M. A., Schumm, W. R., Jurich, A. P., & Bollman, S. R. (1985/86). Factors associated with thoughts of marital separation. Journal of Divorce, 9, 49-59.
- Burman, W. H., & Turk, D. C. (1981). Adaptation to divorce: Problems and coping strategies. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 43, 179-189.
- Cantor, D. W. (1982). Divorce: Separation or separation-individuation? The American Journal of Psychoanalysis, 42, 307-313.
- Cantrell, R. G., & Sprenkle, D. H. (1989). Increasing the response rate in court record divorce studies: A practical approach. Journal of Divorce, 13, 113-121.

- Chan, L. Y. W., & Heaton, T. B. (1989). Demographic determinants of delayed divorce. Journal of Divorce, 13, 97-112.
- Cherlin, A. (1979). Work life and marital dissolution. In G. Levinger & O. C. Moles (Eds.), Divorce and separation: Context, causes and consequences (pp. 151-166). New York: Basic Books.
- Chiancola, S. P. (1978). The process of separation and divorce: A new approach. Social Casework, 59, 494-499.
- Chiriboga, D. A., Coho, A., Stein, J. A., & Roberts, J. (1979). Divorce, stress, and social supports: A study in helpseeking behavior. Journal of Divorce, 3, 121-135.
- Chiriboga, D. A., Roberts, J., & Stein, J. A. (1978). Psychological well-being during marital separation. Journal of Divorce, 2, 21-36.
- Chiriboga, D. A., & Thurnher, M. (1980). Marital lifestyles and adjustment to separation. Journal of Divorce, 3, 379-390.
- Clarke-Stewart, K. A., & Bailey, B. B. (1989). Adjusting to divorce: Why do men have it easier? Journal of Divorce, 13, 75-94.
- Cleek, M. G. & Pearson, T. A. (1985). Perceived causes of divorce: An analysis of interrelationships. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 47, 179-183.
- Cleveland, M. (1979). Divorce in the middle years: The sexual dimension. Journal of Divorce, 3, 255-262.
- Cohen, L. J. (1974). The operational definition of human attachment. Psychological Bulletin, 81, 207-217.
- Constantine, J. A., & Bahr, S. J. (1980). Locus of control and marital stability: A longitudinal study. Journal of Divorce, 4, 11-22.
- Crosby, J. R., Gage, B. A., & Raymond, M. C. (1983). The grief resolution process in divorce. Journal of Divorce, 7, 3-18.

- Crosby, J. R., Lybarger, S. K., & Mason, R. L. (1987). The grief resolution process in divorce: Phase II. Journal of Divorce, 11, 17-40.
- Daniels-Mohring, D., & Berger, M. (1984). Social network changes and the adjustment to divorce. Journal of Divorce, 8, 17-32.
- Dasteel, J. C. (1982). Stress reactions to marital dissolution as experienced by adults attending courses on divorce. Journal of Divorce, 5, 37-47.
- Davis, B., & Aron, A. (1988). Perceived causes of divorce and postdivorce adjustment among recently divorced midlife women. Journal of Divorce, 12, 41-55.
- Deckert, P., & Langelier, R. (1978). The late-divorce phenomenon: The causes and impact of ending 20-year-old or longer marriages. Journal of Divorce, 1, 381-390.
- Derogatis, L. R. (1983). SCL-90-R: Administration, scoring & procedures manual - II for the r(evised) version (2nd ed.). Towson, MD: Clinical Psychometric Research.
- Derogatis, L. R., Lipman, R. S., & Covi, L. (1975). SCL-90: An outpatient psychiatric rating scale--preliminary report. Psychopharmacology Bulletin, 9, 13-28.
- Doherty, W. J. (1980). Divorce and belief in internal versus external control of one's life: Data from a national probability sample. Journal of Divorce, 3, 391-401.
- Edwards, D. W., Yarvis, R. M., Mueller, D. P., Zingale, H. C., & Wagman, W. J. (1978). Test-taking and the stability of adjustment scales: Can we assess patient deterioration? Evaluation Quarterly, 2, 275-291.
- Edwards, J. N., & Saunders, J. M. (1981). Coming apart: A model of the marital dissolution decision. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 41, 379-389.
- Federico, J. (1979). The marital termination period of the divorce adjustment process. Journal of Divorce, 3, 93-106.

- Froiland, D. J., & Hozman, T. L. (1977). Counseling for constructive divorce. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 55, 525-529.
- Gilfillan, S. S. (1985). Adult intimate love relationships as new editions of symbiosis and the separation-individuation process. Smith College Studies in Social Work, 55, 183-196.
- Goetting, A. (1979). The normative integration of the former-spouse relationship. Journal of Divorce, 2, 395-414.
- Goldsmith, J. (1980). Relationships between former spouses: Descriptive findings. Journal of Divorce, 4, 1-20.
- Goode, W. J. (1956). After divorce. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Granvold, D. K., Pedler, L. M., & Schellie, S. G. (1979). A study in sex role expectancy and female postdivorce adjustment. Journal of Divorce, 2, 383-393.
- Gray, B. M. (1978). The nature of the psychological impact of divorce upon the individual. Journal of Divorce, 1, 289-301.
- Green, R. G., & Sporakowski, M. J. (1983). The dynamics of divorce: Marital quality, alternative attractions and external pressures. Journal of Divorce, 7, 77-88.
- Greenberg, J. R., & Mitchell, S. A. (1983). Object relations in psychoanalytic theory. Cambridge, MA: Harvard.
- Hackney, G. R., & Ribordy, S. C. (1980). An empirical investigation of emotional reactions to divorce. Journal of Clinical Psychology, 36, 105-110.
- Hamilton, N. G. (1988). Self and others: Object relations theory in practice. Northvale, NJ: Aronson.
- Hauser, S. T. (1976). Loevinger's model and measure of ego development: A critical review. Psychological Bulletin, 83, 928-955.
- Hayes, M. P., Stinnett, N., & Defrain, J. (1980). Learning about marriage from the divorced. Journal of Divorce, 4, 23-29.

- Herman, S. J. (1974). Divorce: A grief process. Perspectives in Psychiatric Care, 12, 108-112.
- Herman, S. J. (1977). Women, divorce, and suicide. Journal of Divorce, 1, 107-117.
- Hill, C. T., Rubin, Z., & Peplau, L. A. (1976). Break-ups before marriage: The end of 103 affairs. Journal of Social Issues, 32, 147-168.
- Hirschfeld, R. M. A., Klerman, G. L., Gough, H. G., Barrett, J., Korchin, S. J., & Chodoff, P. (1977). A measure of interpersonal dependency. Journal of Personality Assessment, 41, 610-618.
- Holt, R. R. (1980). Loevinger's measure of ego development: Reliability and national norms for male and female short forms. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 39, 909-920.
- Hopkins, D. H., & Glass, G. V. (1978). Basic statistics for the behavioral sciences. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Huitema, B. E. (1980). The analysis of covariance and alternatives. New York: John Wiley.
- Jones, B. W. (1987). The ambivalent spouse syndrome. Journal of Divorce, 11, 57-67.
- Jones, L. (1988). The relationship between unemployment and divorce. Journal of Divorce, 12, 99-112.
- Jordan, P. (1988). The effects of marital separation on men. Journal of Divorce, 12, 57-82.
- Kegan, R. (1982). The evolving self: Problem and process in human development. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.
- Kitson, G. C. (1982). Attachment to the spouse in divorce: A scale and its application. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 44, 379-393.
- Kitson, G. C., Graham, A. V., & Schmidt, D.D. (1983). Troubled marriages and divorce: A prospective suburban study. The Journal of Family Practice, 17, 249-258.

- Kitson, G. C., & Raschke, H. J. (1981). Divorce re-search: What we know; what we need to know. Journal of Divorce, 4, 1-37.
- Kohen, J. A. (1981). From wife to family head: Transitions in self-identity. Psychiatry, 44, 230-240.
- Kolevzon, M. S., & Gottlieb, S. J. (1983). The impact of divorce: A multivariate study. Journal of Divorce, 7, 89-98.
- Kraus, S. (1979). The crisis of divorce: Growth promoting or pathogenic? Journal of Divorce, 3, 107-119.
- Kressel, K., Lopez-Morillas, M., Weinglass, J., & Deutsch, M. (1978). Professional intervention in divorce: A summary of views of lawyers, psychotherapists, and clergy. Journal of Divorce, 2, 119-155.
- Kübler-Ross, E. (1969). On death and dying. New York: MacMillan.
- Kunz, P. R., & England, J. L. (1988). Age-specific divorce rates. Journal of Divorce, 12, 113-126.
- Kurdek, L. A., & Blisk, D. (1983). Dimensions and correlates of mother's divorce experiences. Journal of Divorce, 6, 1-24.
- Levinger, G. (1965). Marital cohesiveness and dissolution: An integrative review. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 27, 19-28.
- Levinger, G. (1966). Sources of marital dissatisfaction among applicants for divorce. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 36, 803-807.
- Levinger, G. (1976). A social psychological perspective on marital dissolution. Journal of Social Issues, 32, 21-47.
- Levinger, G. (1979). Marital cohesiveness at the brink: The fate of applications for divorce. In G. Levinger & O. C. Moles (Eds.), Divorce and separation: Context, causes, and consequences (pp. 137-150). New York: Basic Books.
- Lloyd, S. A., & Zick, C. D. (1986). Divorce at mid and later life: Does the empirical evidence support the theory? Journal of Divorce, 9, 89-102.

- Loevinger, J. (1976). Ego development: Conceptions and theories. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Loevinger, J. (1979). Construct validity of the sentence completion test of ego development. Applied Psychological Measurement, 3, 281-311.
- Loevinger, J. (1983). Personality: Stages, traits, and the self. Annual Review of Psychology, 34, 195-222.
- Loevinger, J. (1985). Revision of the sentence completion test for ego development. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 48, 420-427.
- Loevinger, J., Hy, L. X., & Associates. (1989). Measuring ego development: Supplementary manual and exercises for Form 81 of the Washington University Sentence Completion Test (Vols. 1-2). St. Louis, MO: Washington University.
- Loevinger, J., & Wessler, R. (1970). Measuring ego development 1: Construction and use of a sentence completion test. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Loevinger, J., Wessler, R., & Redmore, C. (1970, 1983). Measuring ego development 2: Scoring manual for women and girls. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lyon, E., Silverman, M. L., Howe, G. W., Bishop, G. & Armstrong, B. (1985). Stages of divorce: Implications for service delivery. Social Casework: The Journal of Contemporary Social Work, 66, 259-267.
- Magura, M., & Shapiro, E. (1988). Alcohol consumption and divorce: Which causes which? Journal of Divorce, 12, 127-136.
- Mahler, M. S., Pine, F., & Bergman, A. (1975). The psychological birth of the human infant: Symbiosis and individuation. New York: Basic Books.
- Mahon, E. (1985). Some aspects of separation and loss in therapy with disturbed children. The American Journal of Psychoanalysis, 45, 35-51.
- Mann, C. H. (1985). Adult development: Individuation, separation and the role of reality. Contemporary Psychoanalysis, 21, 285-296.

- Marcus, G., & Forster, J. (1988). Assessing self-efficacy during marital separation. Journal of Divorce, 11, 77-85.
- McPhee, J. T. (1984). Ambiguity and change in the post-divorce family: Towards a model of divorce adjustment. Journal of Divorce, 8, 1-15.
- Menaghan, E. G., & Lieberman, M. A. (1986). Changes in depression following divorce: A panel study. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 48, 319-328.
- Milliken, G. A. (1984). Analysis of messy data. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Morgan, L. A. (1988). Locus of control and marital termination: Comparing divorced and widowed women. Journal of Divorce, 11, 35-47.
- Morris, J. D., & Prescott, M. R. (1975). Transition groups: An approach to dealing with post-partnership anguish. The Family Coordinator, 24, 325-330.
- Mott, F. L., & Moore, S. F. (1979). The causes of marital disruption among young American women: An interdisciplinary perspective. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 41, 355-365.
- Nelson, G. (1981). Moderators of women's and children's adjustment to divorce following parental divorce. Journal of Divorce, 4, 71-83.
- Newcomb, M. D. (1984). Marital discord and problem areas: Longitudinal personality prediction of sex differences among the divorced. Journal of Divorce, 8, 67-77.
- Pais, J., & White, P. (1979). Family redefinition: A review of the literature toward a model of divorce adjustment. Journal of Divorce, 2, 271-281.
- Parkes, C. M. (1972). Bereavement: Studies of grief in adult life. New York: International Universities.
- Pauker, J. D. (1985). [1082] SCL-90-R. In J. V. Mitchell, Jr. (Ed.), The ninth mental measurements yearbook (Vol. II), pp. 1325-1326. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska.

- Payne, R. W. (1985). [1082] SCL-90-R. In J. V. Mitchell, Jr. (Ed.), The ninth mental measurements yearbook (Vol. II), pp. 1326-1329. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska.
- Pino, C. J. (1980). Research and clinical application of marital autopsy in divorce counseling. Journal of Divorce, 4, 31-48.
- Ponzetti, J. J., Jr. & Cate, R.M. (1987). The developmental course of conflict of the marital dissolution process. Journal of Divorce, 10, 1-15.
- Ponzetti, J. J., & Cate, R.M. (1988). The divorce process: Toward a typology of marital dissolution. Journal of Divorce, 11, 1-20.
- Power, R. (1987). Group work with emotionally attached or ambivalent spouses in process of separating, separated, or recently divorced. Journal of Divorce, 10, 229-240.
- Price-Bonham, S., & Balswick, J. O. (1980). The noninstitutions: Divorce, desertion, and remarriage. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 42, 959-972.
- Propst, L. R., Pardington, A., Ostrom, R., & Watkins, P. (1986). Predictors of coping in divorced single mothers. Journal of Divorce, 9, 33-102.
- Rafferty, J. (1972). [B395]. In O. K. Buros (Ed.), The seventh mental measurements yearbook (Vol. 2, pp. 1728-1729). Highland Park, NJ: Gryphon.
- Raschke, H. J. (1977). The role of social participation in postseparation and postdivorce adjustment. Journal of Divorce, 3, 129-140.
- Reissman, C. K. (1990). Divorce talk: Women and men make sense of personal relationships. New Brunswick: Rutgers University.
- Roberts, T. W., & Price, S. J. (1985/86). A systems analysis of the remarriage process: Implications for the clinician. Journal of Divorce, 9, 1-25.
- Rose, V. L., & Price-Bonham, S. (1973). Divorce adjustment: A woman's problem?. The Family Coordinator, 22, 291-297.

- Salts, C. J. (1979). Divorce process: Integration of theory. Journal of Divorce, 2, 233-240.
- Salts, C. J., & Zongker, C. E. (1983). Effects of divorce counseling groups on adjustment and self concept. Journal of Divorce, 6, 55-67.
- SAS Institute, Inc. (1990). SAS (Version 6.06) [Computer program]. Cary, NC: SAS Institute.
- Saul, S. C., & Scherman, A. (1984). Divorce grief and personal adjustment in divorced persons who remarry or remain single. Journal of Divorce, 7, 1984.
- Schumm, W. R., & Bugaighis, M. A. (1985). Marital quality and marital stability: Resolving a controversy. Journal of Divorce, 9, 73-77.
- Smart, L. S. (1977). An application of Erikson's theory to the recover-from-divorce process. Journal of Divorce, 1, 67-79.
- Software Publishing Corporation. (1986). PFS: Professional File [Computer program]. Mountain View, CA: Software Publishing.
- Software Publishing Corporation. (1986). PFS: Professional Write [Computer program]. Mountain View, CA: Software Publishing.
- Software Publishing Corporation. (1987). PFS: Professional Plan [Computer program]. Mountain View, CA: Software Publishing.
- Spanier, G. B., & Casto, R. F. (1979a). Adjustment to separation and divorce: An analysis of 50 case studies. Journal of Divorce, 2, 241-253.
- Spanier, G. B., & Casto R. F. (1979b). Adjustment to separation and divorce: A qualitative analysis. In G. Levinger & O. C. Moles (Eds.), Divorce and separation: Context, causes, and consequences (pp. 211-227). New York: Basic Books.
- Spanier, G. B., & Hanson, S. (1982). The role of extended kin in the adjustment to marital separation. Journal of Divorce, 5, 33-48.
- Spanier, G. B., & Lachman, M. E. (1980). Factors associated with adjustment to marital separation. Sociological Focus, 13, 369-381.

- Spanier, G. B. & Thompson, L. (1983). Relief and distress after marital separation. Journal of Divorce, 7, 31-49.
- Spanier, G. B., & Thompson, L. (1984). Parting: The aftermath of separation and divorce. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Spivey, P. B., & Scherman, A. (1980). The effects of time lapse on personality characteristics and stress on divorced women. Journal of Divorce, 4, 49-59.
- Stephen, T. D. (1984). Symbolic interdependence and post-break-up distress: A reformulation of the attachment construct. Journal of Divorce, 8, 1-16.
- Storm, C. L., & Sprenkle, D. H. (1982). Individual treatment in divorce therapy: A critique of an assumption. Journal of Divorce, 6, 87-97.
- Swensen, C. H., Eskew, R. W., & Kohlhepp, K. A. (1981). Stage of family life cycle, ego development, and the marriage relationship. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 43, 841-853.
- Symonds, A. (1985). Separation and loss: Significance for women. The American Journal of Psychoanalysis, 45, 53-58.
- Taibbi, R. (1979). Transitional relationships after divorce. Journal of Divorce, 2, 263-269.
- Thomas, S. P. (1982). After divorce: Personality factors related to the process of adjustment. Journal of Divorce, 3, 19-36.
- Thompson, L., & Spanier, G. B. (1983). The end of marriage and acceptance of marital termination. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 45, 103-113.
- Thurnher, M., Fenn, C. B., Melichar, J., & Chiriboga, D. A. (1983). Sociodemographic perspectives on reasons for divorce. Journal of Divorce, 6, 25-35.
- Vaillant, G. E. (1985). Loss as a metaphor for attachment. The American Journal of Psychoanalysis, 45, 59-67.

- Ver Merriis, D. (1987). Guilt, ego development, and Christian faith (Doctoral dissertation, Western Michigan University, 1987). Dissertation Abstracts International, 48, 1164B.
- Wallerstein, J. S., & Blakeslee, S. (1989). Second chances: Men, women, and children a decade after divorce. New York: Ticknor & Fields.
- Wallerstein, J. S., & Kelly, J. B. (1980). Surviving the breakup: How children and parents cope with divorce. New York: Basic Books.
- Watson, D., & Friend, R. (1969). Measurement of social-evaluative anxiety. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 33, 448-457.
- Weingarten, H. R. (1988). The impact of late life divorce: A conceptual and empirical study. Journal of Divorce, 12, 21-39.
- Weiss, R. S. (1975). Marital separation. New York: Basic Books.
- Weiss, R. S. (1976). The emotional impact of marital separation. Journal of Social Issues, 32, 135-145.
- Weissman, M. M. (1975). The assessment of social adjustment: A review of techniques. Archives of General Psychiatry, 32, 357-365.
- Weissman, M. M. (1988). Social adjustment scale: Reference to publications using the various versions of the scale and information on translations. New York: Author.
- Weissman, M. M. (1989). Information on the social adjustment scale-self report (SAS-SR). New York: Author.
- Weissman, M. M. (n.d.). Social adjustment scale: Interview format and scoring guide. New York: Author.
- Weissman, M. M., & Bothwell, S. (1976). Assessment of social adjustment by patient self-report. Archives of General Psychiatry, 33, 1111-1115.
- Weissman, M. M., Paykel, E. S., & Prusoff, B. A. (n.d.). Social adjustment scale handbook: Rationale, reliability, validity, scoring, and training guide. New York: Author.

- Weissman, M. M., Prusoff, B. A., Thompson, W. D., Harding, P. S., & Meyers, J.K. (1978). Social adjustment by self-report in a community sample and in psychiatric outpatients. Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, 166, 317-326.
- Western Michigan University. (n.d.) Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects. Kalamazoo, MI: Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Western Michigan University.
- Wiseman, R. S. (1975). Crisis theory and the process of divorce. Social Casework, 56, 205-212.
- Woodward, J. C., Zabel, J., & DeCosta, C. (1980). Loneliness and divorce. Journal of Divorce, 4, 73-82.
- Wright, D. (1988). Revitalizing exchange models of divorce. Journal of Divorce, 12, 1-19.
- Zeiss, A. M., Zeiss, R. A., & Johnson, S. M. (1980). Sex differences in initiation of and adjustment to divorce. Journal of Divorce, 4, 21-33.