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## A Typology for Couples Using the Ego Identity Status Construct

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A TYPOLOGY FOR COUPLES USING THE  
EGO IDENTITY STATUS CONSTRUCT

by

Richard F. McGourty

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
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## VITA

The author, Richard Francis McGourty, is the son of Francis E. McGourty and Kathleen (Brice) McGourty. He was born on December 13, 1949, in Chicago, Illinois.

His grammar school education was at St. Therese of the Infant Jesus Grade School on the Southwest side of Chicago, Illinois. After grade school the author entered the Chicago Archdiocesan Seminary system enrolling in Quigley Preparatory Seminary South, where he graduated in 1967.

In September, 1967, he entered Niles College of Loyola University which was also part of the Chicago Archdiocese Seminary system. In September, 1969, the author transferred to the Arts and Sciences College of Loyola University and in June, 1971 graduated with a B.S. in Psychology.

Between 1971 and 1977 the author taught Psychology in secondary schools and also worked for a time as a social worker.

In September of 1977, he began his doctoral studies in Clinical Psychology at Loyola University of Chicago. The author has held two graduate assistantships and in 1979-80 did an internship at Hines Veterans Hospital.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The research presented and discussed here emerges from Erikson's study of identity (1959; 1963; 1968) and, more directly, from John Marcia's (1966) expansion of that work.

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore whether Marcia's (1966) construct "ego identity status" can be extended to form the basis of a typology which can describe patterns of behavior in young marriages.

While Erikson's and Marcia's uses of the terms "ego identity" and "ego identity status" have specific meaning, the wider popular usage these terms have received has tended to obscure their meaning. This is especially true in the case of the terms "identity" and "identity confusion." Before proceeding to the place of the concepts in psychosocial theory some effort should be made at a clear definition of each.

Erikson (1980) states, "identity is the accrued confidence that one's ability to maintain inner sameness and continuity is matched by the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others" (p. 94). This definition has its roots in the writings of William James.

James in his Principles of Psychology (1890) defined the self, the Empirical Me as he referred to it, as the sum total of all that a man can call his. This included body, traits, abilities, possessions,

family, vocation, interests and more. He parsed the concept further to identify constituents of the self. These were the material self, the social self, the spiritual self, and pure ego.

The Eriksonian concept of identity springs from the notion of pure ego and the social self. Pure ego was seen by James to constitute an individual's sense of personal identity. The social self was determined by how an individual is viewed by others. Erikson's theorizing is referred to as psycho-social. There is an emphasis on the interaction of the individual in his society. It would seem, then, that Erikson's approach to identity is a blend of James' pure ego and social self.

More recently, identity has also been defined as "a fairly stable sense of who you are that seems to be shared by the people in your life who are significant to you" (Egan & Cowan, 1980, p. 141). Newman and Newman (1975) characterize identity as "the eventual commitment to a personal integration of values, goals and abilities" (p. 219). These definitions are similar to others in their emphasis on a gradual crystallization of an internalized awareness of self which emerges from past events. They also underscore the culmination of this process in the living out of the commitments that are made.

The above notions are consistent with the concept of identity which underlies Marcia's (1966) development of the ego identity statuses.

I would like to propose another way of constructing identity; as a self-structure, that is, an internal, self-structured, dynamic organization of drives, abilities, beliefs and individual history. The better developed this structure is, the more aware individuals appear to be of their own uniqueness and similarity to others and of their own strengths and weaknesses in making their way in the world. The less developed this structure is, the more confused individuals seem about their own distinctiveness from others and the more they have to rely on external sources to evaluate themselves. (Marcia, 1980, p. 159).

The term "identity confusion" is best understood by tracing its origin. In the prologue of Erikson's (1968) Identity, Youth and Crisis, he states that he himself, is unclear on the first usage of the term "identity confusion." He notes that the likely reason for this is the term came so easily to mind it never occurred to him there was a uniqueness about it. His intuitive awareness of this dimension of human development was something he took for granted and assumed others were also quite aware. So, it was with no special intent that the term entered his clinical work.

The first clinical use of the term occurred during World War II at the Mt. Zion Veteran's Clinic. There were patients there suffering from a clinical disorder which could not be regarded as "shell-shock" and it was obvious that these men were definitely not malingerers. These soldiers were observed to have lost "a sense of personal sameness and historical continuity" (Erikson, 1968, p. 17). Their deficit, using a psychoanalytic frame of reference, was attributed to disturbed ego functioning and Erikson came to regard this as a loss of ego identity.

This phenomenon, this disturbance of self-sameness and continuity,

came to be observed in other severely conflicted young people not associated with the trauma of combat. It was also observed that some young people experienced acute crises which were transient in nature. The term "identity confusion" appealed not only because it described the phenomenon per se but also because it respected both the psychopathological model and a developmental perspective. The diagnostic significance of a term like "identity confusion" rested in its ability to bridge the pathological and developmental aspects of behavior. A young person experiencing a period of disordered behavior, a crisis, need not necessarily be committed to what Erikson (1968) regarded as the "malignant implications of a fatalistic diagnosis" (p. 17). Rather, he could be regarded as being "identity confused," a condition that fits into the broad notion of a normative crisis belonging to a particular stage of individual development.

The concept of "ego identity" and "identity confusion" emerged originally from the observation of traumatized soldiers and were then offered as a conceptual framework to account for transient disordered behavior in young adults.

Marcia's work builds on Erikson's concept of identity and identity formation. And, though the research presented here is concerned with identity, it is important to remember to frame this particular stage of development in its broader theoretical context.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

#### Identity in Psychosocial Theory

Erikson posited eight stages of psychosocial development. Each stage outlines a crisis which must be faced and resolved in relation to significant people in the individual's world. A successful or at least good enough resolution of each crisis equips the individual for coping with future developmental tasks. These stages, the relationships that are intrinsic to their resolution and Freud's psychosexual stages are shown in Figure 1.

This figure, originally proposed in a worksheet (Erikson, 1959), shows how each of Erikson's stages relates to both the internal (psychosexual) world and the external (relational) world of the individual. This integration is the strength of the theory and is referred to by Erikson in the second preface of the 1980 publication of Identity and the Life Cycle as "a new contextual affinity of phenomena previously considered isolated from each other" (p. 10).

These eight stages are not only sequential but interrelated. The underlying principle linking the stages is the epigenetic principle. Erikson (1939) extended the genetic principle of biological development to the psychosocial world.



	Psychosocial Crises	Radius of Significant Relations	Psychosexual Stages
I	Trust vs. Mistrust	Maternal Person	Oral-Respiratory Sensory-Inesthetic (Incorporative Modes)
II	Autonomy vs. Shame, Doubt	Parental Persons	Anal-Urethral, Muscular (Retentive-Eliminative)
III	Initiative vs. Guilt	Basic Family	Infantile-Genital, Locomotor (Intrusive, Inclusive)
IV	Industry vs. Inferiority	"Neighborhood," School	"Latency"
V	Identity and Repudiation vs. Identity Diffusion	Peer Group and Out-groups: Models of Leadership	Puberty
VI	Intimacy and Solidarity vs. Isolation	Partners in Friendship Sex, Competition, Cooperation	Genitality
VII	Generativity vs. Self-absorption	Divided Labor and Shared Household	
VIII	Integrity vs. Despair	"Mankind" "My Kind"	

Figure 1. A diagram summarizing stages and areas of development (Erikson, 1980, p. 178).

The fetus undergoes an epigenetic development, i.e., step-by-step growth of organ systems, each of which dominates the organization of a particular stage: only the proper rate of growth and the proper sequence guarantee the birth of a being properly adaptable to the extrauterine world (pp. 131-132).

Later Erikson (1968) restates the principle without reliance on its biological origins.

Somewhat generalized, this principle states that anything that grows has a ground plan, and that out of this ground plan that parts arise, each part having its special ascendancy, until all parts have arisen to form a functioning whole (p. 92).

The principle holds that all eight developmental stages, trust vs. mistrust, shame vs. doubt, etc., are involved in the process of day to day living but it is at particular times that an individual becomes especially aware of specific critical alternatives. For example, an individual's identity is in formation from the first encounter with life until the last, but it is in late adolescence and early adulthood that the critical alternatives of identity vs. identity confusion are experienced as a crisis, a period of increased vulnerability and heightened potential.

Crisis in this sense does not connote impending disaster, something to be avoided. Here it has its truer meaning. The Chinese symbol for crisis is made of two characters, danger and opportunity. This is how each developmental crisis presents itself, as a necessary turning point, a crucial moment.

Typically the living out of these developmental experiences is done with little or no awareness at the time. The subjects of longitudinal studies are reported to have experienced major events without

awareness of their meaning (Levinson, 1978; Gould, 1978). W. H. Auden once wrote:

When I look back at the three or four choices in my life that have been decisive, I find that, at the time I made them I had little sense of seriousness of what I was doing and only later did I discover that what had seemed an unimportant brook was actually a Rubicon.

So, the relatedness of early developmental crises and later events seems to be available only in retrospective studies. This has been the thrust of the research on identity formation. For example, Blos (1962) and Schafer (1968) link the child's early identifications with parents and the later task of identity formation. Erikson (1959) noted that ego identity begins "where the usefulness identification ends" (p. 113). The notion of identity as emergent and on-going is the central theme of Oneness and Separateness: From Infant to Individual by L. Kaplan (1978). Kaplan drawing chiefly on the work of Margaret Mahler, refers to identity formation when she uses the term "psychological birth."

In the first three years of life every human undergoes yet a second birth, in which he is born as a psychological being possessing selfhood and separate identity (p. 15).

We spend most of our adult life solving and resolving the dilemmas of our second birth (p. 27).

Looking closely at the beginnings of this process she refers to a normative state of oneness between mother and child. This state was referred to by Mahler, borrowing from biology, as symbiosis. As the child separates from the state of oneness with the mother he continues to have a inner experience of a mothering presence which orients him

to the world. This coincides with Erikson's description of the crisis of trust vs. mistrust.

For the child who experiences a warm giving mother, the world appears safe to enter. The child is then not only well prepared to encounter the next crisis of autonomy vs. shame and doubt but can also be considered as having a healthy beginning in the development of ego identity.

What would we consider to be the earliest and most undifferentiated sense of identity? It would suggest that it arises out of the encounter of maternal person and small infant, an encounter which is one of the mutual trustworthiness and mutual recognition (Erikson, 1968, p. 105).

For the child who experiences a flawed symbiotic phase there are two related but contradictory fears. There is the fear of separation from the mother, a situation which leaves the child adrift in the world. This fear occasions a retreat toward the safety of oneness, a merging. Ultimately, however, the merging of oneness is itself also terrifying because it suggests the loss of a separate self, engulfment. This suggests that this early developmental crisis resolves itself in one of three directions; one adaptive and two maladaptive. The subdividing of the maladaptive response into two types calls for a more detailed model to describe future possibilities.

For Erikson the crisis of identity is resolved in one of two directions: identity vs. identity diffusion. This distinction may not be adequate. While the picture of an able young person with a sense of sameness and continuity is clear enough, the population regarded as identity diffused seems to contain sub-types.

Taking Kaplan's two crippling fears as the possible roots of identity diffusion there would then be two types of flawed or delayed identity formation. The subtypes of diffused-due-to-merging-into-others, in most cases the parent, and diffused-due-to-fear-of-being-engulfed-by-others.

The author believes these subdivisions represent the logic Marcia (1966) employed in his refinement of Erikson's work. It should be noted here Marcia employs the term "ego identity status" to describe stages of identity formation. These statuses are what the author refers to here as sub-types of Erikson's terms. A fuller explanation appears later.

The sub-type (status) diffused-due-to-merging-with-others he called Foreclosed. The sub-type, (status) diffused-due-to-fear-of-engulfment he called Diffused. The latter type coincides most closely with Erikson's notion of identity diffusion and with the origins of the term as applied to the young soldiers. Erikson (1980) makes this clear.

The individual suffering from identity diffusion experiences the engagement with another as a loss of identity and exhibits a tense inner reservation, a caution as regards commitment (p. 70).

Marcia has added greater definition to the concept of identity diffusion. He has also articulated the normative process of identity formation. His sequence begins with the young adult attached to his parents values, beliefs, and vocational goals for him. This is a natural starting point. If the young person is to develop his own

sense of identity, however, there must be a breaking away, a transitional period. Finally, after this time of exploration (crisis) the individual makes commitments and develops a sense of sameness and continuity. Marcia labeled these steps Foreclosed, Moratorium and Achieved. His Diffused category was reserved for those Erikson referred to as having "a somewhat more malignant identity confusion" (1968, p. 29).

The Foreclosed status can be a normative step along the way or, as the label suggests, it can represent a stoppage. Similarly, Diffusion can be a situation that simply delays development or it can contribute to enduring problems. Again, these statuses will be more fully explored later. Their mention here is to place Marcia's elaboration beside Erikson's work to establish their relationship to one another.

The effort to dissect the notion of identity diffusion is not to determine whether a particular sub-type of diffusion is or is not pathological but to ask how these various identity statuses may influence the overlapping stage of intimacy vs. isolation.

If "identity. . .provides a necessary condition for the ego's power to integrate mature sexuality, ripened capacities and adult commitments" as Erikson (1980, p. 175) states, how will a flawed or underdeveloped sense of identity influence an intimate relationship? This is the question this study seeks to answer in part.

### The Ego Identity Status Construct

Marcia developed the ego identity status construct to study Erikson's (1959; 1963; 1968) theoretical notions of identity. Erikson

(1980) in a reissue of Identity and the Life Cycle referred to identity as a psychosocial concept. What he refers to is both a psychological dimension, "the immediate perception of one's self-sameness" (p. 22), and a social dimension, "the simultaneous perception of the fact that others recognize one's sameness and continuity" (p. 22). Marcia studied identity development in college students and concluded that an individual's status in terms of identity formation could be described by considering two critical issues: crisis and commitment. Crisis refers to the experience of confusion and anxiety regarding important decisions that are self-defining (for example, career, leaving home, values). Commitment refers to making stable choices in these central areas of life. These choices may be only initial life decisions as in the case of a career choice. Nevertheless, the commitments taken together tend to establish a pattern.

The four identity statuses emerge from the encounter with crisis and commitment which Marcia found to be so central in his research on identity. Figure 2 represents where each of the statuses stand in regard to crisis and commitment:

		Commitment	
		Yes	No
Crisis	Yes	Achieved	Moratorium
	No	Foreclosure	Diffusion

Figure 2. A crisis/commitment grid from Egan and Cowan (1980).

Identity achievements are individuals who have experienced a decision-making period (crisis) and are pursuing self-chosen occupational and ideological goals. Moratoriums are individuals who are currently struggling with occupational and/or ideological issues; they are in an identity crisis. Foreclosures are persons who are committed to occupational and ideological positions, but these have been parentally chosen rather than self-chosen. They show little or no evidence of crisis. Identity diffusions are young people with little or not set occupational or ideological direction, regardless of whether or not they may have experienced a decision-making period (Marcia, 1980, p. 161).

The four identity statuses Marcia outlines are preferred as a framework. They offer a clearer understanding of the complexity involved in identity formation than does Erikson's division of identity versus identity confusion. This is particularly true in the case of Marcia's foreclosed and diffused statuses. The moratorium status captures the crisis period per se. This is a helpful distinction in industrialized societies where adolescence has become protracted. Marcia's achieved status and Erikson's identity group refer to the same population (see Figure 3).

The four statuses have been defined more sharply in the course of research using this construct. What follows is a description of each status compiled by reviewing the results of experiments. Each description contains statements that are assumed to apply to both men and women. However, because most of the experiments used male subjects a section of statements drawn from the relatively few studies on women are included.

#### Achieved

"Identity achievements are individuals who have experienced a



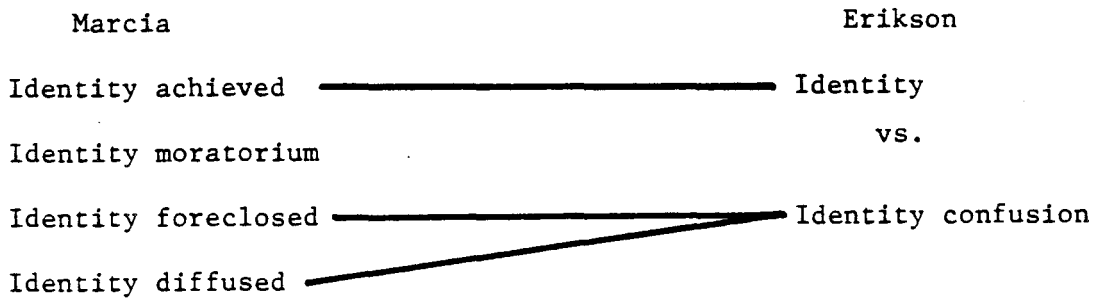


Figure 3. A comparison of Marcia's Ego Identity Statuses and Erikson's Fifth Developmental Crisis

decision-making period (crisis) and are pursuing self-chosen occupational and ideological goals" (Marcia, 1980, p. 161).

Achievements, for the most part, are seen as strong, self-directed and highly adaptive. They tend to have higher self-esteem than Foreclosures and Diffusions (Breur, 1973), and exhibit post-conventional levels of reasoning (Podd, 1972). They are inclined to take personal responsibility for their lives (Genthner, 1977).

The identity achieved person is more reflective than impulsive and is neither overly-simplistic nor disorganized in their thinking (Waterman & Waterman, 1974). They tend to get good grades, have better study habits and they are more likely to write poetry (Cross & Allen, 1970). In their dealings with others they demonstrated a nondefensive strength and a capacity to care in a non-compulsive, non-binding way (Donovan, 1975).

Achievements tend to be fairly balanced in their views of their parents. They express moderate ambivalence about family relationships but without any agitation or feelings of abandonment (Jordon, 1970; 1971).

The identity achieved woman tends to be more invested in the exercise of their own skills and knowledge than in winning the love and approval of the parents. They tend to trust their own capabilities and choose men who would be cooperative companions rather than protective parents. They are more concerned with who they might be than by whom they might be loved (Josselson, 1973).

Identity achieved women have reestablished a tie with their

mothers but had an awareness of the differences between them (Allen, 1976). They may feel they were "pushed out of the nest" (Morse, 1973).

It seems that they have adopted, lived through and partially rejected traditional social forms. Often they have rearranged their family structures to meet their occupational and ideological needs. This process has costs and achieved women can have greater anxiety than achieved men (Josselson, 1973).

### Moratoriums

"Moratoriums are individuals who are currently struggling with occupational and/or ideological issues; they are in an identity crisis" (Marcia, 1980, p. 161).

Moratoriums can be viewed as either sensitive or anxiety ridden, highly ethical or self-righteous, flexible or vacillating.

Moratoriums, due to their "in crisis" position, are the most anxious of the statuses (Marcia, 1967). However, they tend to be higher in self-esteem than both Foreclosures and Diffusions (Breur, 1973) and they exhibit post-conventional levels of moral reasoning (Podd, 1972). Also, they tend to take personal responsibility for their lives (Genthner, 1977).

Moratoriums tend to be more reflective than impulsive (Waterman & Waterman, 1974). They show more interest in art, music, and literature than Foreclosures and Diffusions. In this way they are similar to achieved individuals (Waterman & Waterman, 1971).

Moratoriums are most likely to express dissatisfaction with their

college experience in contrast to Foreclosures who are least likely. They are likely to change college majors (Waterman, 1972).

Moratoriums evidence their ambivalence in that they are less co-operative with authorities than with peers yet retain a capacity to conform. They reflect concurrent needs for both rebellion and conformity (Podd, Marcia, & Rubin, 1970).

Moratoriums seem to be as volatile as Foreclosures are placid. They seem to have a stake in being attractive, visible people. They express their feelings and tend to thrive on intense relationships, depth of self-knowledge and exploration of their world. Relationships are often marked by ambivalence, competitiveness and intense engagement and disengagement (Donovan, 1975).

They appear to be struggling to free themselves from parental introjects. Sons seem to especially need to free themselves from their mothers. Moratoriums tend to see their parents as disappointed in them or as disapproving of them. They tend to give in less to their parents (Donovan, 1975).

Some have described Moratorium women as being caught in the guilty oedipal bind of rejecting the mother and attendant dependency, while identifying with the father and striving to fulfill his ambitions. They tend to daydream a great deal and to have an excessive need to be "right." Their interpersonal relationships are intense and ambivalent. There is a quality of "wanting everything" about this status. However, for all of their conflicts and anxiety, the Moratoriums emerged as the most sensitive, insightful, and likeable of the groups (Josselson,

1973).

Moratorium women are the most critical of their mothers and see themselves as unlike them (Allen, 1976).

Moratorium women have been described as involved in a "yes-but" game wherein they "want to be themselves" but feel guilty, defiant, approval-seeking and afraid. They feel ambivalent about their wife-mother roles and seem to want a guarantee of security (Josselson, 1973).

### Foreclosed

"Foreclosures are persons who are committed to occupational and ideological positions, but these have been parentally chosen rather than self-chosen. They show a little or no evidence of crisis" (Marcia, 1980, p. 161).

Again there are advantages and disadvantages. They can be seen as steadfast or rigid, committed or dogmatic, cooperative or conforming.

Foreclosures, perhaps for defensive reasons, are the least anxious. They show the greatest susceptibility to external indications of what they "should do." Their self-esteem seems to be externally controlled (Marcia, 1967). They operate at pre-conventional and conventional levels of moral reasoning (Podd, 1972).

Foreclosures are the most endorsing of authoritarian values and tend to score low on measures of self-directedness (Breur, 1973). They show the greatest willingness to involve their families in the making of their own life decisions (Waterman & Waterman, 1971).

Foreclosures tend to cognitive simplicity (Kirby, 1977) and they tend to be well-behaved. They study diligently, keep regular hours and seem happy, even in the face of upsetting circumstances. They describe their homes as loving and affectionate and seem bent on recreating a similar situation for themselves as adults. They appreciate structure and eschew expression of any strong feelings, positive or negative. They employ repression as a defense mechanism (Donovan, 1975).

Foreclosures have been described as "participating in a love affair" with their families. Foreclosure families emphasize harmony and are the most task-oriented of the statuses. Fathers tend to dominate their sons and emotional expression is not encouraged. There is considerable pressure and support for conformity to family values and this is perceived as positive by the male children (Jordan, 1970; 1971).

Foreclosed women attempt to recreate familial closeness in their current interpersonal relationships. They are firmly tied to parentally based superegos and are generally inhibited in impulse expression (Josselson, 1973). Foreclosures are the least aware of mother-daughter differences and seem unable to criticize their mothers. Fathers are seen as accepting and child centered (Morse, 1973). They see themselves as nurturing, loving and devoted but not particularly competent outside of their home. Any unhappiness or discontent not suppressed is often dismissed as part of "women's role" (Josselson, 1973).

#### Diffused

"Identity diffusions are young people with little or no set

occupational or ideological direction, regardless of whether they have experienced a decision-making period" (Marcia, 1980, p. 161).

At their best they can be carefree, charming and independent. At their worse they are careless, psychopathic and schizoid. Their scores on measures of self-esteem tend to be lower than Achievements and Moratoriums (Breur, 1973). They tend to exhibit preconventional and conventional levels of moral reasoning (Podd, 1972).

Diffusions score low on measures of self-directedness. They tend to know much more what they do not want than what they do want (Orlofsky, Marcia, & Lesser, 1973).

As a matter of style, diffusions are more impulsive than reflective, and in contrast to foreclosures, their thinking can become quite complex (Waterman, 1974).

Diffusions can be withdrawn, feel out of place in the world and keep rather odd hours. They describe their parents as distant and misunderstanding. A bit wary of both peers and authorities, they tend to project their aggressive feelings and then retreat into fantasy (Donovan, 1975).

Diffused women tend to doubt their adult femininity and seem preoccupied with infantile battles and fantasies. They see their mothers as nonemulatable or discouraging and their fathers as idealized but unattainable. In the company of inadequate men, they dream of Prince Charming. Extremely afraid of being hurt or betrayed, any consistent "identity" is a negative one. They describe their parents as "not there." They seem to sense little past to integrate, little

future for which to plan (Josselson, 1973).

### Normal Development

These four statuses are not offered as traits. Marcia puts them forward as part of normal development with the exception of diffusion.

Foreclosure represents the fact that most if not all people take as their first values and beliefs those of their parents. Moratorium refers to the period when the young person departs from the value and beliefs of their parents yet remains vague and somewhat adrift, not yet able to articulate their own choices. The college years represent a natural almost institutionalized period of moratorium. For young people who do not attend college the developmental task of "leaving home" may be accomplished in any number of ways, for example, the armed services or getting an apartment. More subtle leaving may involve the choice of companions, or ideological differences.

Finally, achieved individuals have a fairly stable sense of who they are which is clearly evidenced in their choices and commitments. Some of their choices may reflect their parents and some will not. The critical factors are that the identity is self-chosen and emerges after a genuine experience of questioning (crisis).

The literature on ego identity statuses has been well received and offers good descriptions for individuals wrestling with the developmental task of identity formation. This study seeks to determine if this typology can be extended to couples.



### Marriage as a Corporate Identity

Identity and intimacy are linked because a secure sense of individual identity is needed to withstand stress and vulnerability inherent in the development of genuine intimacy. In the logic of Erikson's framework, for genuine intimacy to develop a firm sense of identity must first be achieved. Seen another way, an individual's identity is tested in the crucible of the couple's corporate identity.

The movement from one developmental stage to another allows an evaluation of how successfully the tasks of the prior stage were handled. Erikson makes this clear:

The outcome of the developmental crisis of identity is never as clear as when the individual moves on to the intimacy vs. isolation stage. There the identity of the individual may be exposed to the demands of true intimacy, which is really a counter-pointing as well as a fusing of identities (Erikson, 1968, p. 135).

This fusing of identities normally occurs in the context of a marriage. The marriage relationship at its best offers each person opportunity to be at once joined with another while retaining their own identity. What is created in the joining together is referred to by Erikson (1980) as a "true twoness" (p. 101). It can also be thought of as a corporate identity, an admixture of the identities of the two individuals that is yet distinct. For example, it is common to overhear couples referring separately to me, you and our relationship. In so doing there is evidenced an intuitive awareness of this corporate identity which has emerged.

The critical developmental factor in the functioning of a corporate identity is the ability of each partner to be attuned to the

other's needs in a context of closeness and mutuality while retaining a separate identity. Understanding how two individuals come together to form a corporate identity or a true twoness requires focusing on the relationship between identity formation and the growth of intimacy.

Testing the identity-intimacy connection, Orlofsky, Marcia, and Lesser (1973) combined the four identity statuses and three intimacy statuses. They then tested for certain predictable connections between identity status and intimacy status. The results showed some support for a relationship between the attainment of a sense of identity and certain intimacy styles (see Figure 4).

Individuals categorized as identity achievements and moratoriums showed a tendency to be in the intimate category; the foreclosures and diffusions were the dominant groups in the stereotyped classification and the diffusions were the groups most often represented in the isolated category. Literally no diffusions and very few foreclosures were in the intimate category.

However, this study was conducted using 53 junior and senior male students at SUNY at Buffalo. This is typical of a majority of the studies done using identity statuses. That is, the populations studied are frequently all male and are usually college students. Consequently, the intimacy statuses assessed were in the context of college relationships and do not reflect the dimension of commitment and demand that marriage involves.

One study has been done that involved a follow-up and which focused on subsequent personality development. Marcia (1976)

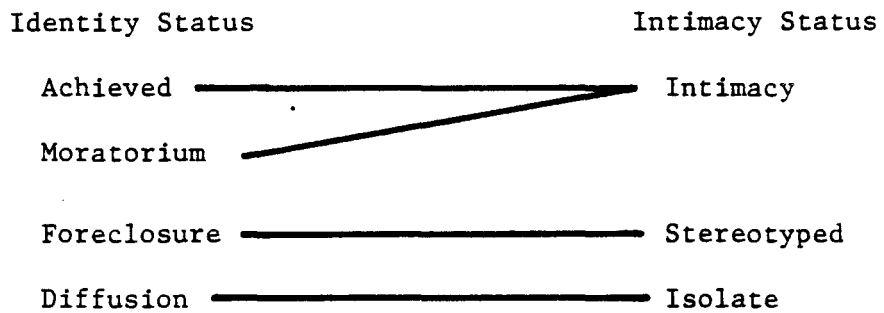


Figure 4. Identity statuses related to styles of intimacy  
(Orlofsky, Marcia, & Lesser, 1973)

reinterviewed subjects 6 to 7 years after the initial assessment for identity status. His study offered some support for the findings reported by Orlofsky et al. Also his report offered some evidence suggesting the ego identity status that takes shape in college tends to endure for at least 6 to 7 years. If an individual was found to be high in identity status (achievement or moratorium) there was a 43% chance he would later be assessed as in either the achieved or moratorium status. Those found to be foreclosed or diffused while in college was quite likely to be found (84%) in either the foreclosed or diffused categories 6 to 7 years later. This study included only males. It was also limited to the study of identity without the context of marriage.

The research cited above also focuses on individual identity and individual behavior. The study presented here analyzes individuals in their development of identity and seeks to determine if couple identity can be better described. The unit under study is the couple. This fact in part, detaches this research from psychosocial theory.

In partial contrast to psychosocial theory, which has as its unit of study the individual and posits an internal, deterministic view, is the family systems approach. This approach is based on cybernetic theory which was formalized by N. Weiner (1948). In this view, the couple is seen not separately but as an on-going group responding to each other and the environment in interactive ways. Behavior is seen as having present causes. A thriving literature has developed around this approach and is most often applied to family and marital

psychotherapy (Haley, 1980; Madanes, 1981; Minuchin, 1974).

These two traditions are often seen as competing points of view and in some respects they are. They can, however, be considered not so much as competing theories but as different levels of analysis. Each conveys some truth.

Common sense above all else tells us that how people behave and choose in their day to day living is influenced by their past. Stepping back, it is equally obvious that early childhood and early family experience sets an individual's life on a trajectory that is traceable years, even decades later. Psychoanalytic theory and its refinements explain how and why the past exercises can influence the present. Erikson's eight stages of development is just such a blueprint. Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, and McKee (1978) in a longitudinal study of men's lives clearly demonstrate the relatedness of early developmental events and later behavior and choices.

But common sense also tells us individuals are not the only reality. Individuals come together by fate or choice to be in groups, for example, in marriage. Even though these groups are necessarily composed of individuals, there exists another reality which is different if not greater than the sum of its parts. It seems clear that beyond two individuals there exists another entity, their relationship. Sharpe (1981) in discussing the symbiotic marriage notes that all attempts to discuss the marriage relationship per se rests on the rationale that the interaction between partners in a marriage produces a dynamic, stabilized system wherein the whole is greater than the sum

of its parts. This approach readily admits the notion of a corporate identity as something unique beyond the identities of the two individuals.

Some writers address this dimension of living by "hyphenating" the couple along stylistic lines, as in "the obsessional-hysterical marriage" (Barnett, 1971). This approach taps how problems with intimacy are related to differences in personality style.

The study presented here seeks to "hyphenate" the couple along developmental lines and hypothesizes that there is descriptive value in studying the couple as a couple while also employing individual histories to establish a developmental as opposed to a strictly stylistic basis for viewing the relationship.

Marcia's ego identity statuses form the categories for assessing each individual's progress in developing an identity. The couples typology explored here was derived from these statuses.

#### Measuring Ego Identity and Identity Status

Since the emergence of Erikson's concept of ego identity and Marcia's ego identity statuses, there have been various approaches to their measurement.

Rasmussen (1964) and Constantinople (1969) developed paper and pencil instruments. Rasmussen's "Ego Identity Scale" was a compilation of statements which characterized the successful or unsuccessful completion of earlier developmental tasks. There were 72 items, based on these an overall ego identity score was derived as well as six stage scores. Constantinople's "Inventory of Psychosocial Development"

approach employed a questionnaire which measured the level of ego development.

There have been short form measures of ego identity. Tan, Kendis, Fine, and Porac (1977) developed the Ego Identity Scale-Short Form, a 12-item forced-choice questionnaire which seeks to measure the level of ego identity.

Because Erikson distinguished simply between achieving ego identity and being identity confused these attempts at measurement sought simply to characterize a person as "high," identity achieved, or "low" identity confused. These single score efforts came under criticism (Bach & Verdile, 1975) as being vulnerable to misclassifying respondents as achieved who were not. Marcia's (1966) identity statuses in effect identify sub-groups of Erikson's original achieved vs. confused distinction. According to Bach and Verdile (1975) it seems likely that these misclassifications were foreclosures or perhaps moratoriums who score "high" on a single score measure of ego identity.

Marcia (1964) created a structured Identity Statuses Interview (ISI) to capture the finer distinctions he sought. The ISI is a 15-30 minute semi-structured interview technique. The interviewer can ask whatever questions that would help determine status but must ask all the questions included on the interview sheet. The task that is kept in mind is to determine the presence or absence of crisis and commitment in the young person's life.

The ISI has demonstrated itself to be both accurate and reliable in assessing identity status. The single score instruments render only

high and low estimates and are not amenable to Marcia's four identity status construct.

For this particular study, an archival study, none of the above methods can be used. The task, however, is the same. The question was, can the presence or absence of crisis and commitment be determined from biographical documents assisted by interview? The decision to use the personal documents as a data base was prefaced on the success that Josselson (1972; 1973) and Donovan (1975) had in using indirect, document-based determination of identity status.

Using three independent raters Marcia achieved a 70% inter-rater reliability when he initially explored the construct (Marcia, 1964). Later, reliability improved to 75% inter-rater agreement. Other studies using roughly the same approach have clustered in the same 70%-75% area (Marcia & Friedman, 1970; Podd, Marcia, & Rubin, 1970; Waterman & Waterman, 1970). Some others have achieved even higher levels notably Josselson (1972) at 80%. Josselson's success in establishing higher inter-rater reliability is worthy of special note because she did not use Marcia's structured interview technique to determine identity status. She based her categorizations on extensive interview material covering biographical information, defensive structures, conflict areas and object relations. Also important to note is that her study is the principal study on women. Donovan's (1975) study employs similar techniques focusing on males. It was their departure from the usual categorizing methods that encouraged the author to consider the biographical archives at the Matrimonial Tribunal as



lending themselves to identity status research.

### The Hypotheses

Figure 5 below shows the status pairings and the dependent variables. The three same-type status pairings, M-M; F-F; D-D, represent couples where both individuals were adjudged to have been in the same ego identity status at the time of the marriage. Each of the nine dependent measures are followed by the three couple types indicating their relative positions. The hypothesized relationship between the three couple types and each of the measures is explained in terms drawn from previous ego identity status research.

Length of Marriage: F-F M-M D-D

Foreclosed couples are expected to remain in a stressed marriage longer because 1) they are "well defined" i.e., their use of defense mechanisms enable them to live with stress; 2) their tendency to conform to parental and institutional values reduces the likelihood of early divorce despite serious conflict; and 3) the expression of conflict in the marriage per se is likely to be muted owing to generally inhibited impulse expression.

Moratorium couples are expected to fall between the Foreclosed and Diffused couples because 1) they experience ambivalence about taking definitive action; and 2) even though their marriage may be stressful for them there is an inherent attraction in the intensity of the relationship.

Diffused couples are expected to exit a stressed marriage earliest

Couple Type<sup>1</sup>

Couple Behavior	M-M	F-F	D-D
Length of Marriage (in months)			
Length of premarital relationship (in months)			
Number of Children			
Premarital Sex			
Expendable Income			
Leisure Time			
Family of Origin			
Alcohol or Drug Abuse			
Physical Fighting			

Figure 5. Couple types and the couple behaviors serving as dependent measures.

<sup>1</sup> M-M represents couples both of whom were assessed as in Moratorium at the time of their marriage; F-F represent couples assessed as Foreclosed; and D-D represent couples assessed as Diffused. The theoretically possible A-A couple were not studied as they were too few in the population studied.

of the three groups because 1) they are more inclined to active withdrawal from conflict; 2) they are sensitive to feeling out of place, and 3) due to oppositional posture they tend to express conflict in non-negotiable ways.

#### Length of Premarital Relationships: F-F M-M D-D

Foreclosed couples are expected to have had the lengthiest premarital relationships because they have a tendency to make early and strong attachments in their dating. It is predicted they will more often marry the first person with whom they develop a relationship.

Moratorium couples are expected to show the greatest variance yet will average somewhere between the Foreclosed and Diffused couples. This is related to their tendency to be at times, reflective and careful and at other times to be rebellious. Some marriages may be prefaced by longer, sometimes turbulent relationships, while others may be fairly brief with the decision to marry finally occasioned by the opposition of their parents.

Diffused couples are expected to have the briefest premarital relationship because they tend to be more impulsive. Also, because they are not as a group self-directed, the brevity of their premarital relationship may owe to their vulnerability to external factors, e.g., financial expedience, pregnancy, "we figured why not."

#### Number of Children: F-F M-M D-D

The Foreclosed couples are expected to have the greatest number of children due to their attraction to the notion of family and their

lack of ambivalence about their relationship.

Moratorium couples are expected to have fewer children due to their ambivalence about commitment.

Diffused couples are expected to have fewest number of children due to their weak commitment and discomfort with responsibility.

Premarital Sexual Intercourse: (couple types appear in the predicted order, i.e., from left to right the couple type most likely to endorse that response to the least.)

A we abstained: F-F M-M D-D

B after commitment: M-M F-F D-D

C before commitment: D-D M-M F-F

Foreclosed couples are predicted to be most likely to abstain from premarital intercourse primarily due to their conformist tendencies and their attachment to parental values and wishes.

Moratorium couples are expected to have adhered to a more self-fashioned morality that falls somewhere between adherence to an external rule and simple impulse gratification.

Diffused couples are predicted to be the most likely to have engaged in sexual intercourse without concern for commitment in the relationship. This relates to their live for today lifestyle that tends to circumvent the issue of commitment whether that be in vocation or in relationship.

Expendable Income:

A reflected couple's interest and needs: F-F M-M D-D

LF

B reflected both individual's need but not as couple: M-M D-D F-F

C reflected one person's interests and needs: D-D M-M F-F

#### Leisure Time:

A almost always spent together: F-F M-M D-D

B split evenly between together and apart: M-M F-F D-D

C most spent apart: D-D M-M F-F

#### Expendable Income and Leisure Time

These variables can be taken together because the logic underlying the predictions is the same for both.

Foreclosures are expected to endorse the first response because they are heavily role bound and cling to each other out of deficit needs for security and belonging.

Moratoriums are expected by theory to be protective of individuality. That is, while they enjoy being a couple they find at times being part of a couple suffocating, a thread to their individual identity.

Diffused couples are predicted to be couples often only in a nominal way. They prize their "freedom" and will tend to resent their marriage if their money and time is no longer subject only to their wishes.

#### Involvement with Family of Origin:

A frequent contact: F-F M-M D-D

B contact on family occasions: M-M F-F D-D

C rare contact: D-D M-M F-F

### Involvement with Family Origin

Foreclosed couples are predicted to have frequent contact with their parents due to their close relationships and incomplete individuation.

Moratorium couples are predicted to want to maintain some distance from their parents but are yet still interested in their families, especially on family occasions. This reflects their needs to control and moderate their parents' influence.

Diffused couples are predicted to be in rare contact with their parents due in theory to a poor relationship.

### Alcohol or Drug Abuse:

A neither: F-F M-M D-D

B one: M-M D-D F-F

C both: D-D M-M F-F

### Physical Fighting

A none: F-F M-M D-D

B few: M-M D-D F-F

C frequent: D-D M-M F-F

### Alcohol or Drug Abuse and Physical Fighting

These two variables can be taken together because they share the same underlying logic.

Foreclosed couples are seen as least likely to engage in these behaviors due in theory to their tendency to be conforming and externally controlled and because they are more reflective than impulsive.

Moratorium couples are predicted to fall between the Foreclosed and Diffused as a function of these two groups' distinct characteristics.

Diffused couples are predicted to be most often involved in these behaviors due to their impulsivity, oppositional stance and tendency to withdraw.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### Subjects

All 90 subjects (45 couples) in this study were drawn from individuals seeking declarations of nullity for a prior marriage. These declarations are adjudicated through an ecclesiastical Matrimonial Tribunal in a large metropolitan area. An ecclesiastical declaration of nullity is a finding which holds a marriage to be invalid due to a defect of sacramental form or flawed consent on behalf of one or both parties.

The Roman Catholic Church holds that a sacramental marriage is indissoluble, and therefore those parties who have been civilly divorced must obtain a declaration of nullity before they can be validly remarried in the Church. An individual who seeks such a declaration petitions the Matrimonial Tribunal to investigate the circumstances of their marriage and is identified as the Petitioner. In the process of the investigation considerable information about the spouses and their marriage is generated. Most of this information is autobiographical in nature and is thought of for the purposes of this study as a personal document (Allport, 1942). The petition if accepted becomes a case, and is decided by a judge who is a member of the Tribunal. All subjects had been civilly divorced prior to their application for a declaration of nullity



and all had been divorced at least one year at the time of the interview and categorization.

Though the subject population is correctly described as 45 couples, it is important to note that the data base (documents, questionnaire and interview responses) was generated by one person per couple, the Petitioner. The caution this raises with regard to validity of the data is taken up as a methodological concern in Chapter V.

Subjects in the study actually represent a sub-group of the population seeking a judgment from the Matrimonial Tribunal. The subjects included in the study were required, as part of the annulment process, to undergo a psychological evaluation. This requirement was requested by the judge in each particular case. Since the judges vary in their utilization of psychological testing, some subjects were referred for testing because they appeared to be dysfunctional and others because the judge tends to request testing almost as a matter of routine. This selection factor was expected to skew the population in the direction of identity diffusions and in fact, it was the group most quickly filled up. There were very few Achieved-Achieved couples (2) and this was also anticipated. The design of the study does not call for an Achieved-Achieved group.

The data were gathered over a period of six months in order to gather an adequate number of each couple type. As was mentioned there were more D-D couples than any other type. The M-M type were the last group to get to the target of N of 15 per couple type. Though all couple types had more than 15 cases by the time the author stopped the data

gathering there was no difficulty in remaining unbiased in that the 15 cases finally selected for the study were in all cases the first 15 chronologically.

The sample is limited to those couples for whom the marriage in question is their first. Also, because the subjects rely on their memory in the preparation of the personal documents, an age limit was established. All subjects were under 35 years old at the time they created the archive this study draws upon.

### Materials

All the personal documents used for the study were generated as part of the annulment process. These include the subjects' responses to a biographical questionnaire (Appendix A) and a brief couples behavior questionnaire (Appendix B).

Four clinicians performed the ego identity status categorizations. Three of the clinicians are doctoral level and one, the investigator, is a doctoral candidate. The issue of inter-clinician reliability is discussed in the Results section.

### Procedures

The study is essential archival. The categorizations by the clinicians were done by examining the autobiographical documents though an interview with the subjects (Petitioner) was included. This interview offered an opportunity for the clinician to clarify statements made in the documents. While this interview was primarily intended to assist the clinician in his task of providing a psychological evaluation for

the annulment process, it lends itself easily to the purposes of this study.

Once the clinicians were familiar with the categorizing criteria and established adequate reliability the data were gathered. The exact procedure was drawn to guide the clinician through the documents, to keep the categorization true to the construct and to guard against the inclusion of questionable data (Appendix C).

The clinicians were directed to read only that part of the personal document concerned with individual history. In this way, categorization would reflect each individual's ego identity status at the time of the marriage without drawing on subsequent behavior as part of a couple.

The procedure includes a reminder that the categorization task has as its coordinates the experience of crisis and commitment. This reminder is included to ground the criteria in the basics of the ego identity status construct.

To guard against the inclusion of questionable data the clinicians were encouraged to eliminate data that were not adequate. They were asked to serve as gatekeepers. Data were excluded if they failed either of two non-quantitative indicators of validity, feelings of subjective certainty and self-confrontation (Allport, 1942).

As the clinicians examined the personal documents they were asked to make their determinations of categories based on descriptive criteria. These criteria (Appendix D) were extracted from the research Marcia and others have done in establishing the validity of the identity status

construct.

Once the clinician had studied the biographical documents and interviewed the subject (Petitioner), a categorization for both the subject and the former spouse was made (Appendix E).

The subjects were grouped by pairings. There are three same type pairings: Moratorium-Moratorium; Foreclosed-Forelcosed; and Diffused-Diffused. Those subjects who were evaluated as being of the same type fell into one of these three categories.

There is a fourth status in Marcia's scheme, Achieved. Theoretically, there exists a fourth same-type pairing, Achieved-Achieved. However, because the population of subjects includes only divorced people and then only those whose annulment cases warranted a psychological evaluation, it was believed that an Achieved-Achieved group would be very difficult to collect. These suspicions were strengthened when the investigator found only one couple in 30 to be Achieved-Achieved in the pilot for the study. In the actual data-gathering the clinicians also identified only two such couples of the 105 cases examined.

The main analyses of the data were done in three stages. The three couple types were explored as a group to determine the ability of the couple type construct to predict couple behavior. Then each of the couple types were explored individually. Finally, each of the variables were considered.

The first three variables were quantitative and for these the predicted pattern appears as a simple function of the means. Each of the six non-quantitative variables have three responses, A, B, and C. Each

of the couple status groups has one of the three responses designated as the response which will be endorsed most frequently. These predictions appear in the hypotheses.

For all analyses a hit is defined as the appearance of a couple type in its predicted place. So, for example, if the F-F group were to have been married longer on average than either of the other two groups as predicted, a hit would be registered. Again, if the D-D group most frequently endorsed response A "frequent incidents" to item 9 "Physical Fighting or Physical Abuse" as predicted, a hit would be registered.

For each of the nine variables there are three possible hits, 27 in all. Chance would predict a 1 in 3 probability of a hit. The analysis for whether the couple type construct exceeds chance as a predictor or couple behavior will be done using the formula for the binomial test (Murphy, DeWolfe, & Mozdzierz, 1984).

The second stage of the data analysis focused on each of the couple types. Taken individually each couple type was predicted to have fallen into a predicted spot for the first three variables relative to the other types. A hit here was defined simply in terms of whether the predicted spot in the pattern was in fact occupied by the type. For the non-quantitative variables a pattern is predicted for each variable. For example, for the F-F type item 4 response A was predicted to be the most frequently endorsed; B next most frequently, and C least often. A hit here was defined as either an exact response pattern, A most, B next most, C least, or the predicted pattern with a single adjacent reversal, A most, C next most, B least. The analysis to determine the predictive

strength for each of the couple types was done using the formula for the binomial test (Murphy et al., 1984).

The third stage of the analysis examined each of the dependent variables asking whether the dimension of behavior being tapped was responsive to the construct. Put another way, the analysis asked whether the dependent variables conformed to predicted patterns. For this analysis the approach was similar to the previous two. Each variable predicts a pattern of endorsements by each of the couple types. There are three possible hits for the non-quantitative variables and one for the quantitative variables. Hits were recorded for patterns exactly conforming to predictions or for single adjacent reversals. The formula for the binomial test (Murphy et al., 1984) was the statistic for this analysis.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Inter-Clinician Reliability

Prior to the collection of data the four contributing clinicians each independently categorized 10 couples in an effort to establish reliability. Reliability was established at a level that is common for ego identity status research,  $r = .72$ .

The categorizations of each clinician were grouped by couple type to determine if any of the clinicians were loading disproportionately on one couple type. This could be regarded as a check on the threat to internal validity from a change in instrumentation. It was expected that there would be rough parity between clinicians. A percentage basis was used because there was some variance between clinicians on the number of cases each saw.

Table 1 shows the percentage of the clinician's total categorizations that each couple type represented. The percent figures do not sum to one-hundred because a number of cases were discarded due to insufficient data and still others were excluded because the categories represented mixed types not under consideration.

The results of this breakdown tend to support the continued reliability of the categorizations through the course of the study. No tendency is seen that would suggest that any of the clinicians were inclined to skew their ratings to one or another type. The Foreclosures

Table 1

Clinician's Ratings for Couple Types: Moratorium-Moratorium, M-M;  
Foreclosed-Foreclosed, F-F; and Diffused-Diffused, D-D.

Clinician	Couple Types		
	% M-M	% F-F	% D-D
A	11	22	25
B	12	20	24
C	16	16	22
D	10	20	20

Note. The percent figure do not sum to one-hundred because a number of cases were discarded due to insufficient data and others because they represented mixed types not under consideration.



and Diffusions were identified more frequently than the Moratoriums. However, this tendency held true across the clinicians and may be attributable to the fact that the Moratoriums are less distinctive due to their ambivalence than the other statuses. The issue is taken up in the discussion section.

### Analysis of Hypotheses

In general the hypotheses can be organized into three areas: those hypotheses dealing with whether the ego identity status construct has value when extended to couples; those dealing with the validity of each of the couple types (F-F, M-M, D-D); and, those dealing with the dependent measures. Of the three the first analysis is major. The second and third analyses enter the data to identify in detail the strengths and weaknesses of the statements emerging from the first analysis.

The data were compiled into means for the first three dependent measures. For the six non-quantitative measures the subjects' responses were tallied as frequencies. These results were then analyzed as to whether they conformed to the predicted relationships between couple type and couple behavior stated in the hypotheses. (See Table 2.)

Hits and misses were recorded in a different manner for the three quantitative measures as compared to the non-quantitative measures. For the first three measures, Length of Marriage, Length of Premarital Relationship, and Number of Children means were calculated. The means were then compared to the predicted order, High (H); Medium (M); Low (L); for the three couple types. A hit was recorded when a couple type

Table 2

Means and Response Frequencies for Couple Behaviors

Couple Behaviors		M-M	F-F	D-D
Length of Marriage		64 mos. Medium	79 mos. High	39 mos. Low
Length of Premarital Relationship		30 mos. Medium	38 mos. High	38 mos. Low
Number of Children		.42 Medium	.73 High	.40 Low
Premarital Sex	A <sup>1</sup>	3	(6)	2
	B	(8)	4	6
	C	4	5	(7)
Expendable Income	A	6	(5)	4
	B	6	7	(5)
	C	(3)	3	6
Leisure Time	A	6	(4)	7
	B	(5)	4	7
	C	4	7	(4)
Family of Origin	A	7	(8)	4
	B	(4)	4	3
	C	4	3	(8)
Alcohol or Drug Abuse	A	2	(7)	3
	B	(6)	6	5
	C	7	3	(6)
Physical Fighting	A	2	(6)	2
	B	(5)	5	4
	C	8	4	(9)

Note. Frequencies bracketed by parentheses were predicted to be the most frequently endorsed.

<sup>1</sup>A, B and C represent the responses to each item on the Couple Behaviors Questionnaire (Appendix B).

occurred in its predicted place vis-a-vis the other types. For the non-quantitative measures a hit was recorded when the predicted response was endorsed most often. Table 3 represents hits (+) and misses (-) in the data for all three couple types.

### Couple Type and Couple Behavior

The first question was whether the three couple types taken together prove to have descriptive value with regard to the selected couple behaviors. A total of 16 hits occurred out of a possible 27 (see Table 3). The binomial test yielded a significant  $z$  of 2.88  $p < .01$ . This result supported the descriptive value of all three couple types taken together across all nine of the couple behaviors.

To clarify the relationship between couple type and couple behavior each of the couple types were considered independently.

### The M-M Couple Type and Couple Behavior

The raw data for the M-M couple type can be seen in Table 2. The hits and misses reflect the descriptive value of the M-M type for the behaviors selected appear in Table 4. The M-M type registered 3 hits out of a possible 9. The binomial test of these results was not significant. Obviously, the M-M type did not contribute to the overall significance of the couple type construct. The possible reasons for the failure of the M-M type is taken up in the discussion section. The possible problems related to categorization are addressed as a methodological concern. The remaining types, F-F and D-D, account for the strength of the overall result.

Table 3

Couple Behavior: Hits (+) and Misses (-) for Predictions Between Couple Types: Moratorium-Moratorium, M-M; Foreclosed-Foreclosed, F-F; Diffused-Diffused, D-D.

Couple Behavior	M-M	F-F	D-D
Length of Marriage	+	+	+
Length of Premarital Relationship	-	+	-
Number of Children	+	+	+
Premarital Sex	+	+	+
Expendable Income	-	-	-
Leisure Time	-	-	-
Family of Origin	-	+	+
Alcohol or Drug Abuse	-	+	+
Physical Fighting	-	+	+

$z = 2.88, p < .01$  (one-tailed)

Note. For actual frequencies see Table 2.

Table 4

Couple Behavior: Hits (+) and Misses (-) for Predictions Within theM-M Couple Type

## Couple Behavior

## M-M

Lenth of Marriage

+

Length of Premarital  
Relationship

-

Number of Children

+

Premarital Sex

A<sup>1</sup>

B

+

C

Expendable Income

A

B

C

-

Leisure Time

A

B

-

C

Family of Origin

A

B

-

C

Alcohol or Drug Abuse

A

B

-

C

Physical Fighting

A

B

-

C

Note. Hits (+) and misses (-) are placed in the response which was predicted to have the highest frequency. For frequencies see Table 2.

<sup>1</sup>A, B and C represent the responses to each item on the Couple Behaviors Questionnaire (Appendix B).

The binomial test was not significant.

### The F-F Couple Type and Couple Behavior

Of the couple types the F-F type obtained results that fell closest to the predictions. Of the 9 possible hits 7 were scored. A binomial test yielded a  $p < .05$ , one-tailed (see Table 5). Unlike the M-M, the F-F couple type conformed to the predicted relationships between type and couple behavior. The significance achieved by the overall construct is attributable in part to the F-F type.

### The D-D Couple Type and Couple Behavior

The D-D couple type, like the F-F, tended to conform to the predictions. A total of 6 hits were recorded from a possible 9 and a binomial test yielded a  $p < .05$ , (one-tailed). The D-D couple type combined with the F-F type appears to be principally responsible for the finding of significance for the overall couple type construct (see Table 6).

### Dependent Measures and Couple Type

All but 3 of the dependent measures recorded 2 of 3 or 3 of 3 hits for the couple types (see Table 3). Length of Marriage, Number of Children, Premarital Sex, Family of Origin, Alcohol or Drug Abuse and Physical Fighting appear to be couple behaviors that are influenced by the identity status of couples.

Length of Premarital Relationships scored one hit for the F-F type as the couples who remained married for the longest period of time. However, the F-F type and D-D type were found to have similar scores, 38 months. They were predicted to be significantly different from one

Table 5

Couple Behavior: Hits (+) and Misses (-) for Predictions Within the F-F Couple Type

Couple Behavior	F-F	
Length of Marriage		+
Length of Premarital Relationship		+
Number of Children		+
Premarital Sex	A <sup>1</sup>	+
	B	
	C	
Expendable Income	A	-
	B	
	C	
Leisure Time	A	-
	B	
	C	
Family of Origin	A	+
	B	
	C	
Alcohol or Drug Abuse	A	
	B	
	C	+
Physical Fighting	A	
	B	
	C	+

Note. Hits (+) and misses (-) are placed in the response which was predicted to have the highest frequency. For frequencies see Table 2.

<sup>1</sup>A, B and C represent the responses to each item on the Couple Behaviors Questionnaire (Appendix B).  
The binomial test yielded a  $p < .05$ .

Table 6

Couple Behavior: Hits (+) and Misses (-) For Predictions Within theD-D Couple Type

## Couple Behavior

	D-D
Length of Marriage	+
Length of Premarital Relationship	-
Number of Children	+
Premarital Sex	A <sup>1</sup>
	B
	C
Expendable Income	A
	B
	C
Leisure Time	A
	B
	C
Family of Origin	A
	B
	C
Alcohol or Drug Abuse	A
	B
	C
Physical Fighting	A
	B
	C

Note. Hits (+) and misses (-) are placed in the response which was predicted to have the highest frequency. For frequencies see Table 2.

<sup>1</sup>A, B and C represent the responses to each item on the Couple Behaviors Questionnaire (Appendix B).

The binomial test yielded a  $p < .05$ .



another with the F-F couples having the lengthiest premarital relationships and the D-D couples the shortest. The fact that the predicted order produced one hit does not suggest that this dependent measure has some descriptive value. Rather, because the F-F and D-D types, predicted to be far apart, produced similar results, this measure is seen as insensitive to the couple types, the single hit notwithstanding.

The two quantitative measures, Length of Marriage and Number of Children were examined using a test for differences between uncorrelated means with equal  $N$ . The length of marriage measure offered the closest difference. The results of the test,  $t(28) = 3.92$ ,  $p < .01$  (see Table 7), indicates that the Length of Marriage measure is sensitive to a difference between the F-F and D-D couple types. Though the M-M couple type falls in its predicted place between the other two types it is not significantly different from the F-F type.

The Number of Children measure also proved to be sensitive to a difference between the F-F and D-D types but less so than the Length of Marriage,  $t(28) = 1.82$ ,  $p < .05$  (see Table 8). Again, the M-M type scored a hit for falling between the F-F and D-D types. Though the M-M type fell in its predicted place, in this case it does not differ significantly from the D-D type.

Two other measures, Expendable Income and Leisure Time, registered no hits at all. Either they are insensitive to the couples typology or the couples typology is not a strong influence on these behaviors.

These three dimensions of married life many indeed be unresponsive

Table 7

Length of Marriage by the F-F and D-D Couple Types by the Foreclosed-  
Foreclosed, F-F, and the Diffused-Diffused, D-D Types

Length of Marriage	Couple Types	
	F-F	D-D
<u>X</u>	79	39
<u>n</u>	15	15
	—	—

Note.  $t(28) = 3.92, p < .01$

Table 8

Number of Children by the F-F and D-D Couple Types by the Foreclosed-  
Foreclosed, F-F, and the Diffused-Diffused, D-D Types

Number of Children	Couple Types	
	F-F	D-D
<u>X</u>	.73	.40
<u>n</u>	15	15
	—	—

Note.  $t(28) = 1.82, p < .05$

to the developmental status of the couples or there may be an effect of instrumentation involved. This is taken up as a methodological concern. The focus shifts to the six couple behaviors that registered 2 of 3 or 3 of 3 hits.

A simple glance at Table 3 reveals that of the six sensitive couple behaviors three (Family of Origin; Alcohol or Drug Abuse; and, Physical Fighting) involve 2 of 3 hits with the sole miss being the M-M type in each case. The remaining sensitive couple behaviors (Length of Marriage; Number of Children and Premarital Sex) scored 3 of 3 hits.

Given the fact that the responses of the M-M couples did not have a systematic relationship to the couple behaviors, the strength of the dependent measures are best considered by examining their descriptive value for the F-F and D-D couples alone.

Each of the behaviors that did discriminate the F-F and D-D couples were examined.

The remaining four non-quantitative measures were tested during a series of binomial tests (see Table 9). Though all eight points of comparison between the F-F and D-D couple types were in the predicted direction relative to one another, a fact which is itself significant,  $p < .01$ , only two measures proved to be statistically significant. The weakest of the four measures were Premarital Sex and Alcohol and Drug Abuse while Family of Origin and Physical Fighting proved significant.

In summary, the couples typology appears to have some descriptive value for the selected behaviors. There is especially strong support for two of the three couple types, the F-F and D-D. The M-M type did

Table 9

Frequencies of Couple Behaviors by the F-F and D-D Couple Types by the Foreclosed-Foreclosed, F-F, and the Diffused-Diffused, D-D Types

<u>Couple Behavior</u>	<u>F-F</u>	<u>D-D</u>	<u>Binomial z</u>
Premarital Sex	A. (6) C. 5	2 (7)	<u>z</u> = .97, ns
Family of Origin	A. (8) C. 3	4 (8)	<u>z</u> = 2.63*
Alcohol or Drug Abuse	A. (7) C. 3	3 (6)	<u>z</u> = .97, ns
Physical Fighting	A. (6) C. 4	2 (9)	<u>z</u> = 1.74*

Note. Frequencies bracketed by parentheses were predicted to be the most frequently endorsed.

\* $p < .05$ , one-tailed

not perform as predicted with regard to the couple behaviors nor when compared to the other types. Six of the nine selected couple behaviors are sensitive to the couple types in that the predicted directions for the F-F and D-D types held true. Of these six, four (Length of Marriage; Number of Children; Family of Origin; and Physical Fighting) were statistically significant in differentiating between the F-F and D-D types. The remaining two (Premarital Sex and Alcohol or Drug Abuse) fell short of statistical significance.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

This chapter examines the results reported in Chapter IV. The first part of this chapter focuses on the findings of the experiment, their relationship to previous research and their place in developmental theory. The second part deals with methodological concerns including some recommendations for future research.

### EXPERIMENTAL FINDINGS

#### Couple Type and Couple Behavior

The results of the study support two of the three couple types. These mixed results cast some uncertainty over the development of a couples typology based on the ego identity status construct. The two couple types that emerge as having descriptive value are the F-F or Foreclosed type and the D-D or Diffused type. The M-M or Moratoriums, however, did not conform to the hypothesized pattern of responses. There may be a theoretical explanation for why the M-M couples responded as they did.

The failure of the M-M couple type to conform to a pattern does not necessarily invalidate the notion of a couple-type construct. Theoretically, Moratoriums are somewhat erratic due to their "in-crisis" position (Marcia, 1967). They are thought to be in a state of transition during which values and behavior are subject to experimentation.

This transition is a normal developmental shift from Foreclosure to Moratorium and finally to the status of Identity Achieved (see Figure 2). But, though Moratoriums are "in crisis," it is also expected that they retain some residual sense of commitment from the Foreclosed status they left. This may account for more variability within the status. If this reasoning were sound the M-M couples, though erratic, would be more similar to the F-F couples than the D-D couples. Such appears to be the case when the response frequencies are compared (see Table 2).

There is another possible theoretical explanation for the clarity of the F-F and D-D couple types as opposed to the variability of the M-M couples. Both the F-F and D-D couple types are more likely to include individuals who are caricatures of the type. That is, couples who are extremely Foreclosed in their identity or extremely Diffused.

Henry and Renaud (1972) offer a helpful distinction when they differentiate between "psychically" and "situationally" determined statuses. A "psychically" determined status would be more like a trait while a "situationally" determined status would be under environmental control. The application of these terms to the Foreclosed and Diffused statuses create sub-types that would reflect a developmental stoppage or at least a delay. And, while it is plausible to think of a couple as "psychically" Moratorium it is less likely because all couples in Moratorium have by definition engaged in some developmental movement already.



Three couple types were tested against nine couple behaviors. Two, the Foreclosed and Diffused couple, exhibited the predicted behavioral tendencies. The couples categorized as in Moratoriums did not. The discussion continues around the two types per se and in contrast to one another.

#### The F-F and D-D Couple Types

Foreclosed couples scoring seven hits of the nine dependent variables is support for the construct (see Table 5). It should be noted that the two misses were on variables that proved to be unresponsive to all three couple types.

That Foreclosed couples who ultimately divorced, stayed together longer than Diffused couples who divorced, lends support to the notion of Foreclosures as responsive to external expectations (Breur, 1973; Marcia, 1967). They perhaps would stay together longer because their families, community or religion or all three prohibit divorce.

Another factor that gains support from Foreclosures' longer marriages is their tendency to employ repression as a defense mechanism (Donovan, 1975). This allows Foreclosures to insulate themselves from events that would stimulate conflict. As Waterman and Waterman (1974) have noted,

The failure of some Foreclosures to undergo a crisis may be a function of their use of a cognitive style characterized by rapid exclusion of alternatives after superficial investigation (p. 1).

This is all the more likely when marital events are in conflict with family values. Following divorce a typical Foreclosure may reflect,

"I should have divorced long ago but in my family divorce was just not an option."

Diffused couples who ultimately divorce are more quick about it than others. This was a clear result and offers support to the picture of Diffusions as impulsive and sharply focused on what they do not want (Waterman, 1974; Orlofsky, Marcia, & Lesser, 1973). This would be especially true of commitments that delimit freedom and increase responsibility, as is often the case with marriage.

That Foreclosures and Diffusions did not differ with regard to Length of Pre-Marital Relationship was unexpected. The same characteristics of conformity and caution that incline Foreclosures to longer marriages were thought to incline them to longer courtships. In fact the three types do not significantly differ on this measure. What is more remarkable is that Diffusions' courtship is as long as the Foreclosures'. Moreover, the courtship period for the Diffused couples is as long as their marriage itself (see Table 2).

It is suspected Foreclosures and Diffusions may court for similar lengths of time but would differ as to the stability of their courtship. This suspicion is based on an extension of the within marriage data that shows the marriage of a Diffused couple to be more likely to include alcohol or drug abuse and physical fighting than the marriage of a Foreclosed couple. The courtship of the Foreclosed couple would likely be marked by uninterrupted harmony whereas the Diffused couple would have more fights and break-ups. This would be in line with Marcia's (1967) observation that Foreclosures exhibit the least anxiety

of the types due to externally defined role clarity.

Length of courtship for the Diffused couples was equal in length to their marriage. The author is inclined to view this as the Diffusion's tendency to react against structures that impose limits or set expectations. Consequently, the picture that emerges is that of a somewhat stormy courtship concluding with a decision to marry without a commitment to marriage.

The Foreclosed couples were more likely than the Diffused couples to have a child (see Table 2). This may be attributable to the Foreclosed couples concern to recreate their family of origin (Donovan, 1975). It would also seem to be a function of their unquestioned commitment to their marriage, at least in the earliest years. Conversely, the disinclination of Diffused couples to have children reflects their instability and aversion to burdensome responsibility.

With regard to Premarital Sex, the Foreclosed couples were most likely to abstain. It would be theoretically consistent to view this behavior as due to family training and religious beliefs. Of all the dependent variables this one gets at the tendency of Foreclosures to lean on external sources for governance of their behavior (Podd, 1972; Breur, 1973). Operating at the opposite extreme are the Diffused couples whose carefree and impulsive nature is more likely to include sexual involvement without commitment.

The variable Family of Origin taps the degree of involvement with families, especially the parents. This has significance for the construct because identity development is strongly influenced by the parental relationship. The definition Marcia (1980) gives to the Fore-

closed status emphasizes that the commitments made by Foreclosures are "parentally chosen." At the other extreme, Diffusions characterize their parents as distant and misunderstanding.

The heavy involvement with the Family of Origin that Foreclosures indicate is in keeping with Waterman and Waterman 's (1971) finding that they show a willingness to involve their families in life decisions. The Diffused couples' distance from their families parallels Donovan's (1975) and Josselson's (1973) findings of estrangement in the relationship between Diffused individuals and their parents.

The hypotheses related to the behaviors Alcohol or Drug Use and Physical Fighting were directed at the likelihood of poorly controlled behavior. The results on these two variables show the predicted differences between the F-F and D-D couples.

The Foreclosure's disinclination to poorly controlled, socially disapproved behavior is clear. This is in keeping with Kirby's (1977) characterization of Foreclosed individuals as well-behaved and moderate in expressing feelings. It could be expected that the decline of a Foreclosed marriage would be characterized by a drifting apart. The final break occurring when one of the two shifts into Moratorium due to an environmental change, for example, a job change or a move away from family.

A Diffused couple's marriage is more likely to include impulsive behavior. They are uninhibited and tend to be pre-conventional in their moral reasoning. These characterizations, drawn from Breur (1973) and Podd (1972), were supported by the results. A Diffused couple's marriage

could be expected to end more with a bang than a whimper.

It is also possible that the D-D couples were composed of proportionately more "psychically" determined types than the F-F group. This presumes the predicted behavioral tendencies for a couple type are even more likely if a couple is "psychically" determined to be in their particular status. Such a presumption would need to be tested. However, the increased likelihood of "psychically" determined D-D couples is suggested by Erikson's (1968) observation that these were those who had, "a somewhat more malignant identity diffusion" (p. 29).

So, while both the F-F and D-D types may contain subtypes of "psychically" and "situationally" determined, the proportion of D-D couples being "psychically" determined may be high. This would account for the sharp distinction between the types on the behaviors Alcohol and Drug Use and Physical Fighting.

The results suggest the Foreclosed couple and Diffused couple represent distinct behavioral predispositions to certain couple behaviors within courtship and marriage.

#### Dependent Measures and Couple Type

The dependent measures are divided into two groups: the three quantitative measures; and, six non-quantitative measures.

Of the three quantitative measures two, Length of Marriage and Number of Children, scored hits for all three couple types. The strong difference between the F-F and D-D types shows in the Length of Marriage

and Number of Children. That the Moratorium couples fell in between on both and scored hits for those measures is perhaps better attributed to chance given the absence of predicted hits elsewhere.

It is possible that the differences seen on Length of Marriage and Number of Children would be even more striking were couples over age 35 included in the study. Foreclosed couples would be more likely to develop a family and "stay together for the children." This would incline them to more children and longer marriages. The Diffused couples that would have children at all may be more likely to have the one child that occasioned their marriage and then find the responsibility burdensome.

The lack of a difference between the F-F and D-D couples on the Length of Courtship measure has already been commented upon. It can be added this measure has a built-in limitation inasmuch as length of a couple's courtship is somewhat prescribed by the culture. Individual differences related to identity development may have been washed out by these other influences.

Another consideration which may account in part for this finding is the element of commitment which is explicit in marriage. Being a couple in courtship would be vastly different from being a married couple for Diffusions. The principle difference resides in the external structure and expectations the marriage commitment brings. Diffusions, who react to the fear of engulfment, would find the reality of the marital bond stressful in a way courtship never could be. Consequently, Diffused couples may be able to manage courtship better than marriage

itself due to the increased expectations for intimacy in marriage.

Of the six non-quantitative measures four, Premarital Sex; Family of Origin; Alcohol and Drug Abuse; and, Physical Fighting, were found to be responsive to the F-F and D-D couple types.

The two measures, Expendable Income and Leisure Time, may have failed to perform according to the predictions due to the other influences that effect how finances and leisure time are handled. That is, because these couple behaviors are determined by other factors, whatever behavioral disposition the couples' identity status may exert is not a significant influence.

The non-quantitative couple behaviors that were responsive to the construct tended to be discrete behaviors for which extremes existed. For example, Physical Fighting is both a very identifiable event and can be regarded in the extremes "never" or "frequent." The non-quantitative measures that tapped styles of decision-making were less responsive. This is perhaps due to the influence of other factors or simply the vagueness that is attached to asking questions related to style of behavior rather than to the relative frequency of behavior.

The findings can be examined piece by piece and they can be considered in terms of whether they represent a pattern. Certainly, the findings on the Moratorium couple type offer no support for that part of the construct. Some theoretical explanations were offered but for now it remains unestablished. The Foreclosed and Diffused couple type were supported by the findings especially when the measures focused on discrete behaviors. Given the support for two of the three couple types over a variety of measures, a behavioral pattern, the potential

for the further development of a couples typology seems warranted.



## METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS AND SUGGESTIONS

### FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

#### The Use of Personal Documents

The major source of data for status categorizations was the personal document created by the petitioner in response to the biographical questionnaire (Appendix A). Allport (1942) cautions the users of personal documents to take into account the writer's motives. He distinguishes a dozen possibilities two of which have special application to the document generated by a petitioner for an annulment. "Special pleading" (p. 69) represents the writer's effort toward self-justification and blaming. "Redemption and social re-incorporation" (p. 73) is a more confessional approach that aims to restore a person's status.

In the case of "special pleading" there is the potential for intentional distortion. The problem is different for "redemption and social re-incorporation" which is more likely to be the writer's most honest effort. The possibility for unintentional distortion remains.

This study had some safeguards against the inclusion of documents whose intention was to make a special plea. First the questions at issue were not those that deal directly with events in the marriage. Marriage related questions were seen to be most vulnerable to distortion. The data used was less likely to be distorted as it dealt largely with the pre-marital history of the individuals. Second, the clinician doing

the categorizations were both experienced and long familiar with the data generated by the questionnaire. Their ability as gatekeepers was especially strong.

The methodological concern hinges on the unusual combination of raw clinical experience and familiarity with the documents this study enjoyed. The inter-clinician reliability in a replication without these advantages might well be unacceptable.

Studies which make heavy use of personal documents to determine identity status need to take special precautions against the admission of distorted data. In this study the petitioner was also interviewed to allow the clinician to clarify the document. This augmentation of the document seems important.

#### Couples Behavior Questionnaire

The Couple Behavior Questionnaire asks for one party of a divorced couple to report on some of the events of their former marriage. The obvious problem here is the potential for distortion.

The non-quantitative items in the questionnaire were designed to reduce self-exoneration and blaming by asking the questions so that the person engaging in a particular behavior, for example, drinking, is not identified. The questions were asked simply, "Did this occur in your former marriage?" And, then, to what extent?

It was planned that by removing any invitation to "special pleading" the responses to the questionnaire would be honest. This was further enhanced by designing individual items to address discrete, easily recalled behaviors which called for little interpretation on the

part of the petitioner.

A possible solution for this methodological problem would be to secure the responses of the petitioner's former spouse to the same questionnaire. The circumstances under which this study was conducted did not permit gathering this data.

### Suggestions for Future Research

This study explored whether the ego identity status construct could be extended to form the basis of a typology for couples. Three same-type couple types were examined for the existence of theoretically likely behavior patterns. A number of the findings merit further study.

1. Further examination of the M-M couple type. It is not clear whether this type is methodologically elusive, too vague in its definition or simply not a valid construct for couples.
2. An attempt should be made to examine the differences between psychically and situationally determined F-F and D-D couples. This would seem to have useful clinical applications.
3. An exploration of certain mixed-type couples, especially F-D (Foreclosed-Diffused) and F-M (Foreclosed-Moratorium) may be valuable. The F-D couple type may represent the developmental equivalent of an "attraction of opposites." The F-M type may offer a developmental look into a marriage in normative crisis.

## Summary

The study explored the descriptive potential of the ego identity status construct for couples. The couples in the study were known to have eventually divorced. Consequently, the focus of the study was on couples whose efforts to develop intimacy were, in part, influenced by incomplete or arrested identity formation.

Data were gathered on each couple through the efforts of one partner who was seeking an ecclesiastical declaration of nullity. In the course of that process data in the form of personal documents, an interview and a couple behavior questionnaire were gathered.

The 45 couples studied represented three same-type couple categories; the Moratorium (M-M), the Foreclosed (F-F) and the Diffused (D-D). The results were mixed. The Moratorium couples did not conform to the predicted behavioral tendencies whereas the Foreclosed and Diffused couples conformed closely to the predictions.

The couple behaviors that were responsive to the proposed typology were those that were most concrete and subject to extremes. Those behaviors that were vulnerable to extrinsic situational demands were unresponsive to the typology.

Theoretical and methodological issues were discussed relevant to the failure of the typology to account for the behavior of Moratorium couples. The Foreclosed and Diffused couples were discussed together since they appear to have behavioral characteristics that sharply distinguish one from the other. The further distinction of "situational" and "psychic" for the Foreclosed and Diffused couples may be of great

value in understanding this relationship.

The creation of a developmentally based couples typology based on the ego identity status construct shows some promise but faces substantial theoretical and methodological difficulties.

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**APPENDIX A**

TOP-5

## CONCERNING YOUR FORMER SPOUSE

1. What nationality or nationalities were the parents of your former spouse? What was their socio-economic level (poor, wealthy, middle-class, etc.)?

How many brothers and sisters were there, if any, and what were their differences in age from your former spouse? How did he/she get along with them?

What religion(s) were his/her parents? How active were they in practicing their religious beliefs?

How would you describe his/her mother? What was her personality like? How would you describe his/her father? What was his personality like?

How did his/her mother and father get along? How did he/she get along with them? Were there any significant situations or problems that you are aware of?

How was affection displayed in his/her family? How was anger expressed?

What was the nature of discipline in the family? What was rewarded? How? What was punished? How?

Are his/her parents now alive? If not, how old was he/she when they died? Was there anything unusual about their death(s) or anything that was especially traumatic for him/her? Please elaborate.

Were there any instances of divorce in the family?

2. How did he/she do academically in school? What schools did he/she attend? How far did he/she go in school? If possible, describe his/her relationships with teachers and other students. Extracurricular activities? Any disciplinary problems?

3. Did he/she have any health problems as a child? Any emotional or adjustment problems? Please describe.

4. What jobs did he/she have since finished with school? Reasons for job changes?

5. Please describe his/her religious beliefs and practices during the marriage and at the present time.

6. In general, how would you describe his/her predominant emotional characteristics (what were his/her prevailing moods, etc.)? What kinds of things would bring out a strong emotional response in him/her? Can you describe any instances of what you would regard as an extreme loss of emotional control?

Has he/she ever become physically aggressive or violent? Describe the circumstances.

Has his/her conduct ever been strange, bizarre or peculiar? Give specific examples.

Has he/she ever shown nervous, anxious or agitated behavior for no apparent reason? Describe situations in which he/she would show such behavior.

Has he/she ever demonstrated any irrational fears of any sort? Describe the circumstances.

Has he/she ever threatened, or attempted suicide? If so, please elaborate.

7. What is his/her general attitude toward personal health? Any severe medical problems? Is he/she regularly under a doctor's care? For what problems? Has he/she ever shown a marked disturbance in sleep or any eating problems (either overweight or loss of appetite)?

Has he/she ever used drugs, even prescription drugs, on a regular basis? What type of drugs were they? What type of effect did they have on him/her? Did he/she use marijuana on a regular basis? Did he/she try LSD, mescaline, or other hallucinogenic drugs? Describe the nature of use. What were the effects?

Did he/she drink alcohol excessively? How frequently? Give an estimate of the amount and indicate the kind of beverage. What were the effect on him/her?

8. What is his/her dating history? What were his/her attitudes towards sex? Do you know of any abnormal tendencies? Homosexuality/Lesbianism? What was his/her sexual behavior before and after the marriage?
9. What is his/her general reputation in the community? To what extent has he/she been involved in any parish or community activities or other service projects?
10. Has he/she ever been in the military service? If so, what kind of record did he/she have? What type of discharge?

Has he/she ever been arrested for something other than a parking violation? Many traffic tickets? Give details.

11. Were there situations in which he/she tended to exercise poor judgment? How often? Can you describe situations in which he/she acted irresponsibly? Did he/she often repeat the same mistakes? Examples. When? How did he/she react to efforts to correct his/her behavior?

Was he/she an extremely selfish person? Was he/she envious of others? Jealous? Extremely ungrateful? Thoughtless of other's feelings? Please give examples.

Were there situations in which he/she might lie? Cheat? Please describe.

12. Did he/she tend to live for the day or did he/she have long-range plans that he/she was willing to sacrifice for? Did he/she follow through on plans? Please give examples.

How would you describe his/her ability to handle money and to plan financial affairs? Has he/she ever had serious problems with creditors? Did he/she spend money foolishly? Misuse credit cards?

13. What is your present opinion of his/her maturity and stability prior to your marriage?

14. Has he/she ever had any counseling? Is he/she presently in counseling? For what reason? Please describe the situation and duration of the counseling. What were the results of the counseling?

Has he/she ever been hospitalized for a nervous breakdown or emotional disorder? If so, please elaborate.

### CONCERNING YOUR MARRIAGE

1. Prior to this marriage, were either you or your former spouse married before? Please give a brief description of the circumstances surrounding that marriage/those marriages.

2. Describe the circumstances under which you met your former spouse. How did your relationship develop? How did you feel about each other and how did you treat each other?

What did each of your parents and friends think about this relationship?

Were there any characteristics about your former spouse that struck you as unusual or problematic but you disregarded? Did you argue very often? How deep was your communication with each other? Did you ever break off your relationship for a while? Describe the circumstances.

3. Please describe your mutual decision to marry. When and why did you both decide to marry? How old were each of you?

What were the reactions of each of your parents and friends? Did anyone try to convince either of you to marry, or, on the other hand, to dissuade either of you from marrying?

Compared to other people your age, how ready were each of you for the marriage?

During the engagement, were there any problems which worsened? Did either of you break off your engagement at any time? Before or during the wedding did either of you have any misgivings about the future success of this marriage? Please explain. Were there any unusual circumstances about the wedding? If so, please explain.

4. Please give a brief description of your married life together.

At the time you married, did you each intend to be faithful to the other? Did either of you engage in any extra-marital relations? Were there any sexual problems in the beginning or later on in the marriage? If so, please elaborate.

Were there responsibilities that either one of you found extremely difficult to cope with? How did each of you fulfill your basic responsibility to each other?

At the beginning of your marriage, did either of you intend to delay having children? Who? Why? For how long? Was there complete agreement on this? What would have happened if one of you wanted to start a family right away?

Was birth control used for the entire marriage? If so, what means were used?

Did either of you ask at any time to start a family? Did the other spouse refuse? Why? Was any time limit expressed?

If there were children, how did each of you treat them? How did each of you get along with friends and acquaintances at this time? Was this marriage ever a good marriage?

4. What were the circumstances that led to the breakdown of the marriage? What do you feel was your responsibility and what do you feel was your spouse's responsibility for the breakdown of the marriage?

What was the reaction of each of your families to the divorce? Please elaborate.

5. What has happened since the divorce? If there were children, who got custody of them? Have either of you remarried? How have things gone for each of you since the divorce? If you have remarried, are you planning to remarry? Was your present spouse or fiance/fiancee ever married before? Please explain.

What is your opinion of the present stability and maturity of yourself and your former spouse?



**APPENDIX B**

## Couple Behavior Questionnaire

On this questionnaire you will be asked a number of questions pertaining to your former marriage. First, we'd like to thank you for your cooperation and assure you one more time that this information, like all the testimony you have submitted to the Matrimonial Tribunal, will be held in strict confidence.

Your initials \_\_\_\_\_

Today's date \_\_\_\_\_

1. How long were you married? (this means from the day you were married until the date the divorce became final) \_\_\_\_\_ months.
2. How long was your premarital relationship? (this means the period of time before your marriage when you and your former spouse were dating only each other) \_\_\_\_\_ months (give your best estimate, if you can't be exact)
3. How many children did you have with your former spouse? \_\_\_\_\_

The following questions will relate to various aspects of your relationship with your former spouse. You will be asked to check one of the three responses for each item. You may find that none of the three responses truly characterize your former relationship. Nevertheless, we ask that you endorse the response that best represents your former marriage. Feel free to use the back of the form to make comments.

#### 4. Premarital Sexual Intercourse

\_\_\_\_\_ We abstained from sexual intercourse prior to our marriage. (e.g., due to religious beliefs, deference to parents wishes).

\_\_\_\_\_ There was some limited sexual intercourse (e.g., only after the engagement or some other symbol of commitment).

\_\_\_\_\_ Sexual intercourse was part of our relationship early on, even before there was a true sense of commitment.

5. Expendable Income

\_\_\_\_\_ When we had extra money it was often spent on something we could enjoy as a couple.

\_\_\_\_\_ Extra money seemed to be spent for one person's benefit with the other being neglected for the most part.

\_\_\_\_\_ Extra money was spent by both but on individual interests and very rarely for the individuals as a couple (e.g., there is my money and your money but rarely our money).

6. Leisure Time

\_\_\_\_\_ Our free time was almost always spent together (e.g., we went to parties together, went to visit friends together and generally seemed to do things as a couple).

\_\_\_\_\_ Our free time was split between doing things as a couple and maintaining a set of involvements that each of us did without our spouse (e.g., a weekly or twice weekly getting together with guys/girls).

\_\_\_\_\_ For the most part our social lives were independent from one another. Occasionally we went to events as a couple but a social's life as a couple never really developed. We spent our leisure time apart.

7. Involvement with the Families of Origin

\_\_\_\_\_ There was frequent contact with our families or one of the families. There were visits and/or phone calls each week beyond regular family occasions like birthdays and holidays.

\_\_\_\_\_ We maintained contact with our families or one of the families. Mostly we visited or called when there was a family occasion like a birthday, holiday, or graduation, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_ There was rare contact with our families. Though we visited or called on some occasion, our families played a very small part in our lives in that we tended to spend little times with them.

8. Alcohol or Drug Abuse During the Marriage

\_\_\_\_\_ Both of us saw our lives suffer due to our alcohol or drug abuse (this could refer to serious financial loss, health problems, alienation from family and friends, loss of a job or failure to advance in the job, arrests or the loss of the marriage).

8. Alcohol or Drug Abuse During the Marriage cont'd:

\_\_\_\_\_ One of us abused alcohol or drugs.

\_\_\_\_\_ Neither of us abused alcohol or drugs.

9. Physical Fighting or Physical Abuse

\_\_\_\_\_ There were frequent incidents of physical fighting (frequent = 1 every 2 months at any point in the marriage).

\_\_\_\_\_ There were a few incidents where one person hit another or in some way physically hurt or frightened their spouse.

\_\_\_\_\_ There were no real incidents where one person deliberately hurt the other.

A last reminder: Your participation in this study and your responses will not influence the outcome of the case you have brought to the Matrimonial Tribunal.

Thank you for your cooperation.

**APPENDIX C**

## Procedure for Establishing Identity Status

Here's the procedure for working with the cases in the study, but first a few comments. You will not have to decide who is in the study. Cases to be included will have a check (✓) in the upper left corner of the folder or blue cover sheet. Just look for that check mark.

Chris will include a questionnaire in the testing materials she gives each individual and she will collect them. If you happen to get the completed questionnaire simply put it in the folder on the table in the psychologist's office.

Your job is to categorize the petitioner and the respondent for their ego identity status at the time of their marriage. You are concerned with each person as an individual. Consequently, the data from the Tribunal questionnaire that is relevant is the data on the individual's history up to the time of marriage. Keep in mind the essential ingredients: crisis and commitment.

		Commitment	
		Yes	No
Crisis	Yes	Achieved	Moratorium
	No	Foreclosed	Diffused

Here's the procedure:

- 1) Become familiar with the category descriptions;
- 1) Read the responses to "Concerning Yourself"
- 2) If the data are adequate, make a preliminary categorization<sup>1</sup> for the Petitioner. If not, the case is dropped. Make the check and put the form in the folder.
- 3) Read the responses to "Concerning Your Former Spouse."
- 4) If the data are adequate, make a preliminary categorization for the Respondent. If not, the case is dropped.

- 5) Read the responses to "Concerning Your Marriage" items 2 and 3 only.
- 6) Interview the individual.
- 7) Make your final categorizations.
- 8) Place completed form in the folder.

<sup>1</sup>A note on "adequacy." There are two points where you as the clinician serve as gatekeeper. You should drop a case as inadequate if it fails either of these non-quantitative indicators of validity:

- plausibility, i.e. Consider the documents in terms of your past experience. Is the portrayal rendered in the testimony plausible? If not, drop the case.
- self-confrontation, i.e. Does the document hang together? Is there an internal consistency that represents a structured configuration of a human life. If not, drop the case.

Once you've considered the data and interviewed the individual, you are asked to make a categorization. If you find yourself unable to make a categorization, the case can be dropped.

To admit a case you have considered there should be:

- a feeling of subjective certainty, i.e. There should be a good fit between the data and the description of a particular ego identity status;
- it is probable that none of our documents are free from self-justification. The task for each of us is to decide: 1) whether the data needed for the categorization is present in the document; and 2) whether it is distorted by attempts to expiate fault or blame others.

**APPENDIX D**



## Criteria for Establishing Identity Status

(The following descriptions have been compiled by reviewing the results of experiments most of which are designed to validate the identity status as an approach to the study of ego identity.)

### Achieved

Identity achievements are individuals who have experienced a decision-making period (crisis) and are pursuing self-chosen occupational and ideological goals.

Achievements, for the most part, are seen as strong, self-directed and highly adaptive. They tend to have higher self-esteem than Foreclosures and Diffusions and exhibit post-conventional levels of reasoning. They are inclined to take personal responsibility for their lives.

The identity achieved person is more reflective than impulsive and is neither overly-simplistic nor disorganized in their thinking. They tend to get good grades, have better study habits and they are more likely to write poetry.

In their dealings with others they demonstrate a nondefensive strength and a capacity to care in a non-compulsive, non-binding way.

Achievements tend to be fairly balanced in their views of their parents. They express moderate ambivalence about family relationships but without any agitation or feelings of abandonment.

For women add these considerations:

The identity Achieved woman tends to be more invested in the exercise of her own abilities toward her own goals rather than in winning the love and approval of the parents. They tend to trust their own capabilities and choose men who would be cooperative companions rather protective parents. They are more concerned with who they might be than by whom they might be loved.

Identity Achieved women have reestablished a tie with their mothers but had an awareness of the differences between them. They may

feel they were "pushed out of the nest."

It seems that they have adopted, lived through and partially rejected traditional social forms. Often they have rearranged their family structures to meet their occupational and ideological needs. This process has costs and achieved women can have greater anxiety than achieved men.

### Moratorium

Moratoriums are individuals who are currently struggling with occupational and/or ideological issues; they are in an identity crisis.

There are both healthy and pathological aspects of each of the styles, save the Achieved. Moratoriums can be viewed as either sensitive or anxiety ridden, highly ethical or self-righteous, flexible or vacillating.

Moratoriums, due to their "in crisis" position, are the most anxious of the statuses. However, they tend to be higher in self-esteem than both Foreclosures and Diffusions and they exhibit post-conventional levels of moral reasoning. Also, they tend to take personal responsibility for their lives.

Moratoriums tend to be more reflective than impulsive. They show more interest in art, music and literature than Foreclosures and Diffusions. In this way they are similar to achieved individuals.

Moratoriums are most likely to express dissatisfaction with their college experience in contrast to Foreclosures who are least likely. They are likely to change college majors.

Moratoriums evidence their ambivalence in that they are less cooperative with authorities than with peers yet retain a capacity to conform. They reflect concurrent needs for both rebellion and conformity.

Moratoriums seem to be as volatile as Foreclosures are placid. They seem to have a stake in being attractive, visible people. They express their feelings and tend to thrive on intense relationships, depth of self-knowledge and exploration of their world. Relationships

are often marked by ambivalence, competitiveness and intense engagement and disengagement.

They appear to be struggling to free themselves from parental introjects. Sons seem to especially need to free themselves from their mothers. Moratoriums tend to see their parents as disappointed in them or as disapproving of them. They tend to give in less to their parents.

For women add these considerations:

Some have described Moratorium women as being caught in the guilty oedipal bind of rejecting the mother and attendant dependency, while identifying with the father and striving to fulfill his ambitions. They tend to daydream a great deal and to have an excessive need to be "right." Their interpersonal relationships are intense and ambivalent. There is a quality of "wanting everything" about this status. However, for all their conflicts and anxiety, the Moratoriums emerged as the most sensitive, insightful, and likeable of the groups.

Moratorium women are the most critical of their mothers and see themselves as unlike them.

Moratorium women have been described as involved in a "yes-but" game wherein they "want to be themselves" but feel guilty, defiant, approval-seeking and afraid. They feel ambivalent about their wife-mother roles and seem to want a guarantee of security.

### Foreclosed

Foreclosures are persons who are committed to occupational and ideological positions, but these have been parentally chosen rather than self-chosen. They show little or no evidence of crisis.

Again there are advantages and disadvantages. They can be seen as steadfast or rigid, committed or dogmatic, cooperative or conforming.

Foreclosures, perhaps for defensive reasons, are the least anxious. They show the greatest susceptibility external indications

of what they "should" do. Their self-esteem seems to be externally controlled. They operate at pre-conventional and conventional levels of moral reasoning.

Foreclosures are the most endorsing of authoritarian values and tend to score low on measures of self-directedness. They show the greatest willingness to involve their families in the making of their own life decisions.

Foreclosures tend to cognitive simplicity. Foreclosures tend to be well-behaved. They study diligently, keep regular hours and seem happy - even in the face of upsetting circumstances. They describe their homes as loving and affectionate and seem bent on recreating a similar situation for themselves as adults. They appreciate structure and eschew expression of any strong feelings, positive or negative. They employ repression as a defense mechanism.

Foreclosures have been described as "participating in a love affair" with their families. Foreclosure families emphasize harmony and are the most task-oriented of the statuses. Fathers tend to dominate their sons and emotional expression is not encouraged. There is considerable pressure and support for conformity to family values and this is perceived as positive by the male children.

For women add these considerations:

Foreclosure women attempt to recreate familial closeness in their current interpersonal relationships. They are firmly tied to parentally based superegos and are generally inhibited in impulse expression. Foreclosures are the least aware of mother-daughter differences and seem unable to criticize their mothers. Fathers are seen as accepting and child centered.

They see themselves as nurturing, loving and devoted but not particularly competent outside of their homes. Any unhappiness or discontent not suppressed is often dismissed as part of "woman's role."

### Diffused

Identity diffusions are young people with little or no set occupational or ideological direction, regardless of whether or not they may have experienced a decision-making period.

At their best they can be carefree, charming and independent. At their worse they are careless, psychopathic or schizoid.

Their scores on measures of self-esteem tend to be lower than Achievements and Moratoriums. They tend to exhibit preconventional and conventional levels of moral reasoning.

Diffusions score low on measures of self-directedness. They tend to know much more what they do not want than what they do want.

As a matter of style, diffusions are more impulsive than reflective and, in contrast to Foreclosures, they experience extreme cognitive complexity (disorganization?).

Diffusions can be withdrawn, feel out of place in the world and keep rather odd hours. They describe their parents as distant and misunderstanding. A bit wary of both peers and authorities, they tend to project their aggressive feelings and then retreat into fantasy.

For women add these considerations:

They tend to doubt their adult femininity and seem preoccupied with infantile battles and fantasies. They see their mothers as non-emulatable or discouraging and their fathers as idealized but unattainable. In the company of inadequate men, they dream of Prince Charmings. Extremely afraid of being hurt or betrayed, any consistent "identity" is a negative one.

APPENDIX E

## Status Categorization Sheet

Clinician's Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Petitioner's Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ The data in this case, i.e., the responses to the questionnaire "Concerning Myself" and "Concerning My Former Spouse" are not extensive enough to permit a categorization.

\_\_\_\_\_ The data in this case are not reliable and therefore do not permit a categorization.

Petitioner (at the time of marriage)

\_\_\_\_\_ Achieved

\_\_\_\_\_ Foreclosed

\_\_\_\_\_ Moratorium

\_\_\_\_\_ Diffused

Respondent (at the time of marriage)

\_\_\_\_\_ Achieved

\_\_\_\_\_ Foreclosed

\_\_\_\_\_ Moratorium

\_\_\_\_\_ Diffused

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Richard F. McGourty has been read and approved by the following committee:

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

14 November 1984  
Date

Robert C. Nicolay Ph.D.  
Director's Signature