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The Self in-Relation Model and Sex Differences in Reaction to Marital Termination

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THE SELF-IN-RELATION MODEL
AND SEX DIFFERENCES IN REACTION
TO MARITAL TERMINATION

by

Alice C. Chatillon

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 Doctor of Philosophy

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	4
Theoretical Context	4
Sex Differences in Reaction to Divorce.	14
Mediating Variables	22
Summary and Purpose of the Present Study.	32
III. METHOD	37
Subjects	37
Materials	40
Procedures	50
IV. RESULTS	53
Preliminary Analyses	53
Group Differences	60
Buffering Effects of Friendship	74
Buffering Effects of Sex Role Attitudes	85
Buffering Effects of Occupational Involvement	94
V. DISCUSSION	116
Group Differences	116
Buffering Effects of Friendship	124
Buffering Effects of Sex Role Attitudes	125
Buffering Effects of Occupational Involvement	129
Theoretical Implications	133
Summary and Suggestions for Future Research	139

APPENDIX A	143
APPENDIX B	144
APPENDIX C	146
ENDNOTES	154
REFERENCES	155
VITA.	163

LIST OF TABLES

1.	Measures of Dependent and Mediating Variables Administered to Separated and Non-Separated Groups	52
2.	Initiation Subgroup Frequencies	54
3.	Correlations Between Separation Duration and the Dependent Measures	56
4.	Background Variables Group Means for Marital Status	57
5.	Background Variables Group Means for Sex	58
6.	Psychological Distress Group Means for Marital Status	62
7.	Psychological Distress Group Means for Sex by Marital Status	65
8.	Self-Esteem Group Means for Sex by Marital Status	68
9.	Identity Group Means for Sex by Marital Status	71
10.	Psychological Distress Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Friendship Strength	76
11.	Self-Esteem Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Friendship Strength	80
12.	Identity Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Friendship Strength	83
13.	Psychological Distress Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Sex Role Attitudes	88
14.	Self-Esteem Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Sex Role Attitudes	90
15.	Identity Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Sex Role Attitudes	92
16.	Psychological Distress Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Occupational Status	97
17.	Psychological Distress Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Job Importance.	100
18.	Self-Esteem Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Occupational Status	105
19.	Self-Esteem Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Job Importance	107
20.	Identity Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Occupational Status	109
21.	Identity Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Job Importance	111

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A sense of personal identity that includes at least sketchy answers to the questions, "Who am I?" and "Why am I here?" seems to be basic to adaptive human functioning. Although there is much dissent in the psychological literature on identity, most theoreticians agree that a sense of self provides an individual with meaningful ways to organize reality and to respond to and have an impact upon the world. Many also concur that identity is inextricably linked to issues of interpersonal autonomy and relatedness. It is commonly argued that a strong identity allows a person to enter intimate relationships while retaining a sense of self as an entity that is separate and distinct from others (e.g., Mahler, Pine & Bergman, 1975; Masterson, 1981).

Recent feminist writers, however, have suggested that female identity is more relational in orientation, based in connection with others rather than separation. Jean Baker Miller and her colleagues at the Stone Center at Wellesley College use the term "self-in-relation" to describe this relational sense of self (e.g., Miller, 1976, 1984; Surrey,

1985). In their model of female development, these theorists suggest that the self-in-relation is formed and maintained through relationships that are mutually empathic and empowering, engendering psychological growth in both the self and the other.

Miller (1976) argues, however, that sex role socialization in Western society inhibits the full expression of women's relational capacities. Instead, she suggests that women are trained to become involved in non-mutual heterosexual relationships and to limit their own growth and development. Consequently, the self-in-relation becomes distorted and female identity and self-esteem become contingent upon ongoing relationships - particularly heterosexual involvement and marriage. Miller suggests that when such a relationship terminates, the woman often loses her major source of self-esteem and experiences an identity crisis akin to a loss of the self. The psychological consequences of relationship loss may also be harsh for the man, but would not entail the same damage to his identity and self-esteem.

Although many empirical studies during the past decade have examined the impact of divorce, none to date has focused on the impact of marital termination on men's and women's sense of self. Furthermore, studies investigating other sex differences in reaction to divorce have produced

equivocal results. If Miller's propositions are correct and women are affected differently by marital dissolution than men, this would have important ramifications in both the theoretical and clinical realms. Theoretically, such a finding would supplement our current understanding of identity development and provide empirical support for the Stone Center model of the psychology of women. Clinically, it would add information that could be vital to the treatment of our clients. It would be important, for example, to recognize that men and women may be faced with very different tasks in negotiating the aftermath of a separation.

The present study was designed to test hypotheses derived from the Stone Center model and to extend our knowledge of sex differences in reaction to marital dissolution. Toward this end, 61 men and women who had recently separated from their spouses and 61 men and women who remained in intact marriages were surveyed concerning their emotional status, their sense of identity and their self-esteem.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Context

In developing new models in the psychology of women, feminist theorists such as Nancy Chodorow (1974, 1979) and the Stone Center group (e.g., Jordan, 1984; Kaplan, 1984; Miller, 1976, 1984; Surrey, 1985), argue that relationships and relationship loss hold different meanings for women than for men. These writers suggest that women's very sense of self is relational in nature and that women's identity and self-esteem tend to derive from their capacity to initiate and enhance relationships with others. Men, according to these models, tend to focus on separateness and autonomous action as the paths to selfhood, suppressing the importance of interpersonal connection in their lives.

These writers suggest that such sex differences are neither desirable nor the inevitable outcome of a biological imperative. Chodorow (1979), for example, argues that differences between the male and female sense of self arise

as the product of "social-structurally induced psychological mechanisms" (p. 211). Both Chodorow and the Stone Center group contend that the male emphasis on individuality and the female emphasis on relationship in Western society arise from the impact of social pressures on the development of the self.

Chodorow's argument is grounded in object relations theory, which defines the term "self" as an internal mental representation of experience that serves an organizing function for the individual. Psychological development is described by object relations theorists in terms of the ego's capacity for organizing intrapsychic representations of the self and its relationship to others. According to this perspective, an articulated sense of self is formed during the first three years of life through a process called "separation-individuation" (Mahler, Pine & Bergman, 1975). Psychological growth during this period is divided into a series of developmental milestones, each characterized by the child's increasing sense of separateness from the mother. Although this development takes place within the context of the maternal relationship, it is only through an internal sense of autonomy that the self can become differentiated.

Chodorow largely accepts this theoretical perspective but maintains that current childrearing patterns prohibit

individuals from developing a healthy sense of self: one that is distinct and separate but capable of mature relations with others. Chodorow argues that because women conventionally act as primary caretakers for children of both sexes, girls and boys face asymmetrical tasks in their self-development. The boy, in her view, tends to achieve psychological autonomy in the first years of life because he must separate psychologically from his female caretaker in order to develop his masculinity and heterosexual genitality. The power of his early, exclusive ties with his mother looms large, however, and he must repress their memory and deny the significance of interpersonal relations throughout his life if he is to retain his fragile sense of self. In contrast, the girl shares a common gender with her mother and therefore, in Chodorow's view, need never separate completely in order to develop as a heterosexual female. Chodorow maintains that as a result, the female's sense of self is never fully differentiated and the woman will most likely continue with a poorly defined, relational self for the rest of her life.

Jean Baker Miller and the Stone Center group (Jordan, 1984; Kaplan, 1984; Miller, 1976, 1984; Surrey, 1985) further address this postulated relational orientation among women in the development of their "self-in-relation" model. These theorists concur with much of Chodorow's argument but reject the object relations assumption that separation is

necessary for self-differentiation. Instead, they contend that the primary experience of the self may be relational in nature at the same time that the self is fully articulated with clearly defined boundaries. The concept of the "self" is defined by Surrey (1985) as "a construct useful in describing the organization of a person's experience and construction of reality which illuminates the purpose and directionality of her/his behavior" (p. 1). The term "self" is used interchangeably with that of "identity" in Stone Center papers and the two terms will be treated as representing equivalent constructs in the discussion below.

According to the self-in-relation model, psychological separation is not necessary for identity to be defined in the first three years of life or at any time during the lifespan. In this view it is relationship rather than autonomy that forms the core of the self. Surrey (1985) explains:

The values of individuation have permeated our cultural ideals as well as our clinical theories and practice. In psychological theory the concepts and descriptions of relationship appear to be cast in this model, and much of current theory wrestles with the problem of developing a model of 'object relations' from a basic assumption of narcissism and human separateness. The notion of the self-in-relation makes an important shift in emphasis from separation to relationship as the basis for self-experience and development... [This model assumes] there is no inherent need to disconnect or to sacrifice relationship for self-development (p. 2).

The Stone Center writers argue that the self is formed through relationship and becomes progressively more articulated as relational experience grows. The establishment and maintenance of relationships that are mutually empathic and empowering is considered to be the most basic goal of development. Surrey (1985) describes such relationships as:

an experience of emotional and cognitive intersubjectivity: the ongoing intrinsic inner awareness and responsiveness to the continuous existence of the other and the expectation of mutuality in this regard... [this] also involves the capacity to identify with a unit larger than the single self and a sense of motivation to care for this unit (p. 9).

Miller (1984) uses the phrase "agency within community" to denote the capacity for action which evolves in this interpersonal context. The term "agency" is defined by Miller as the individual's ability to act utilizing all of his or her personal resources. It is suggested, then, that as the self engages in mutually empowering and empathic relations it becomes increasingly differentiated and able to act on its full potential.

Miller (1979; 1984) argues, however, that such relationships represent an ideal and suggests that few people in this society actually exercise the capacity for agency within community. It is far more common, in her view, for women to emphasize relationship at the expense of their agentic strivings and for men to pursue individual

accomplishments while denying their need for emotional connection. Like Chodorow, Miller believes that these sex differences stem from social pressures on identity development that differ in kind for males and females. Miller concurs with Chodorow that the male is pushed toward psychological autonomy in his first years of life. Unlike Chodorow, however, Miller posits that females confront the major obstacles in their identity development in later childhood and adolescence.

According to the self-in-relation model, all infants may experience what Winnicott (1971) calls "good enough mothering": parenting that includes the primary caretaker's ability to tune in and respond empathically to the child. Early on, however, Miller argues that the male is encouraged to define his masculinity by disengaging from this relationship and asserting himself as different from his mother, the person with whom he has experienced his deepest sense of connection. As a result, the boy's internal sense of self becomes one that is based on emotional distance and separation, and he learns to derive his self worth from success in autonomous actions. This notion of autonomy as requisite for identity and personal accomplishment is reinforced explicitly and implicitly throughout the male's lifetime (Miller, 1984).

Miller maintains that the major impediments to girls' identity development tend to arise later in childhood. In contrast to boys, girls are not pressured to sever their original ties with their mothers. They are allowed to differentiate without separation. Within this context of ongoing connection, the girl's own capacity for empathy develops. Gradually, she becomes more attuned to her mother and a mutual process of sharing and understanding evolves. This mutually empathic relationship forms the framework in which the girl forms an articulated, fully agentic sense of self. Miller (1984) explains,

In her internal representation of herself, I would suggest that the girl is developing not a sense of separation, but a more developed sense of her own capacities and a sense of her greater capability to put her 'views' into effect. That is, she has a sense of a larger scope of action - but still with an inner representation of a self that is doing this in relation to other selves. A larger scope of action is not equivalent to separation; it requires a change in her internal configuration of her sense of self and other, but not a separation (p. 6).

In early childhood then, the girl's identity is based in both capacity for action and her ability to engage in mutually empathic and empowering relations with others.

Miller (1976; 1984) contends, however, that this sense of self is buffeted by societal pressures which become particularly intense with the onset of puberty. Throughout childhood, the girl is taught that she should not exercise her agentic abilities freely but should rather subordinate

her own needs to meet the needs of others. As she enters adolescence she is pushed further to abandon her sense of self as an active agent and to focus her attention on the growth and well-being of men. Miller (1984) suggests that faced with this conflict between the inner self and the outside world, most girls choose to modify their self-representations.

I believe that the major tendency is for the girl to opt for the relationship both in her overt actions and also in an alteration of her internal sense of self. She will tend to want most to retain the self that wants to be a 'being-in-relationship', but will begin to lose touch with the definition of herself as a more active 'being-within-relationships'. If one part has to go, and until now it did, most girls lose more of the sense that they can bring their agency... into the relationship (p. 9).

Miller (1976) suggests that girls internalize societal sex role expectations and suppress the development of their agentic abilities to varying degrees. While some girls are able to "retain their own right to self-development and authenticity" (p. 113), most incorporate societal values into their own belief systems to at least some extent. Consequently, many females deny their need for agentic expression and engage in relationships that are not mutually enhancing, tending rather to subordinate their own needs as they seek to gratify others. As a result of this suppression of their own potential, Miller suggests that many women enter adulthood with identities that are organized solely around their ability to make and maintain

affiliations. In addition to being a primary source of self-esteem, then, ongoing relationships become crucial as a means of reinforcing women's sense of themselves as relational beings.

This component of Miller's argument has important implications for women's experience with divorce. When the individual's sense of self is contingent upon ongoing relationships, relationship termination takes on particular significance. For women, relationship termination can involve not only tremendous loss of self-esteem but also the loss of confirmation of their core self-structure (Kaplan, 1984). Miller (1976) contends that, "for many women the threat of disruption of an affiliation is perceived not as just a loss of relationship but as something closer to a total loss of the self" (p. 83). For women, marital disruption may precipitate an identity crisis.

The Stone Center group does not address the male experience of relationship loss directly but one can surmise from their description of male identity that men's reactions to marital termination are quite different from women's. The self-in-relation model suggests that romantic affiliation can be important to men, but is usually secondary to the independent, instrumental achievements on which male identity and self-esteem are based. Relationship loss thus may be emotionally painful, but would precipitate

neither identity crisis nor major loss of self-esteem in the man.

In summary, the self-in-relation model suggests that relationships and relationship loss mean different things to women and men due to sex differences in identity formation. According to this model, the woman's sense of self is formed within the framework of her relationship with her primary caretaker. Her inner representation initially is one of an agentic self that grows and engenders growth in others in the context of relationships. Due to sex role socialization, however, many women abandon their sense of themselves as active agents before reaching adulthood. As a result, their self-esteem and their very identity become contingent upon their ability to make and maintain affiliations. Relationship termination, then, can precipitate massive loss of self-esteem and the subjective experience of the loss of the self. Men, in contrast, develop their sense of self through separation and derive their self-esteem through activities external to the interpersonal realm. Therefore, although relationship termination may be painful and disruptive, it does not affect the core structure of the man's identity or destroy his primary source of self-esteem.

Based on the Stone Center theory of female identity, one would hypothesize that men and women would experience

the dissolution of a marriage quite differently. Females as a group would be expected to undergo more of an identity crisis after separation and to suffer more loss of self-esteem and perhaps more emotional distress than their male counterparts. Substantial variation among women would also be predicted. The Stone Center group suggests that many women need to be involved in ongoing relationships in order to maintain their identity and self-esteem as relational beings. It is reasonable to hypothesize, then, that women who maintain close relationships outside their marriages (e.g., with friends) would experience less of a negative impact from divorce than those who lack other affiliations to reinforce their sense of themselves as relational beings. Similarly, the Stone Center model suggests that women have suppressed their agentic strivings to varying degrees. Women who have internalized social expectations for the female role to a lesser extent and women who continue to value agentic activities in their lives would be expected to experience less identity loss, decrease in self worth and emotional distress than those who have been more singularly focused on their relationships.

Sex Differences in Reaction to Divorce

Despite tremendous growth in the divorce literature in the last ten years, the impact of divorce on men's and women's sense of self has yet to be tested empirically. Many investigators such as Albrecht, Bahr and Goodman (1983)

suggest that women are apt to be more negatively affected by divorce because the female's "self-identity is more likely to be closely intertwined with home and family" (p. 121), but to date, no divorce study has included a measure of identity. Only one study, Chatillon (1984), has considered the impact of relationship loss on men's and women's sense of self. This work investigated the effect of breaking up premarital romantic relationships on the identities of 60 male and female college students. No sex differences in identity loss were found in this study, which the author attributes to the relatively young age of the sample, the apparent lack of serious commitment to relationships prior to breakup and the lack of range found by the single measure of identity employed in the study.

In contrast to the dearth of research in the area of identity, other aspects of psychological adjustment to divorce have been thoroughly investigated. It has been well documented that both men and women experience depression, loneliness, anger, self-blame, lowered self-esteem, relief and sometimes euphoria after the dissolution of a marriage (e.g., Gove & Shin, 1989; Kressal, Lopez-Morillas, Weinglass & Deutsch, 1979, Spanier & Casto, 1979; Spanier & Thompson, 1984; Weiss, 1975). Although the research examining potential sex differences has also been plentiful, the results have been less consistent. Several studies of divorce self-help groups and community samples have found no

differences between men's and women's reactions to marital disruption (Berman & Turk, 1981; Doherty, Su & Needle, 1989; Gove & Shin, 1989; Menaghan & Lieberman, 1986; Pett & Vaughan-Cole, 1986; Weiss, 1975). Other investigations have found sex differences, but while some of these studies demonstrate that men are more negatively affected by divorce (e.g., Bloom, 1975; Riessman & Gerstel, 1985), others indicate that women actually have more difficulty in adjusting to marital termination (e.g., Albrecht, 1980; Tennov, 1979).

Census studies conducted at both the national and local levels suggest that men suffer more in the aftermath of divorce than women do. Such studies typically compare the rates of occurrence of stress-related events among married and divorced men and women. In a study of Pueblo, Colorado psychiatric inpatient records from 1967 to 1971, for example, Bloom (1975) found that admission rates for males with disrupted marriages were almost nine times higher than the rates for men who were married. Rates for separated females, in contrast, were only three times as high as those found for married women. Although Bloom cautions that these data are merely correlational in nature, he suggests that the findings indicate a stronger connection between divorce and stress reactions among men than among women. Bloom, White and Asher (1978) come to the same conclusion in a recent review of the census literature.

Despite some findings to the contrary, they report that, overall, divorced men show higher rates of private and public hospitalization, outpatient mental health care and mortality due to suicide, homicide and disease, than those evidenced by either married men or divorced women.

In contrast to these investigations, three self-report studies indicate that divorced women suffer greater distress than their male counterparts. In a survey of 500 subjects, Albrecht (1980) discovered that women recalled their divorces as "traumatic," "stressful" and the result of "personal failure" significantly more often than men did. Similarly, Tennov (1979) surveyed over 500 men and women about their reactions to premarital and marital relationship termination. Females in this sample reported more emotional turmoil in reaction to their breakups than men reported and more difficulty in accepting the fact that their ex-partners no longer loved them. Finally, Farnsworth, Pett and Lund (1989) surveyed 109 recently divorced older men and women. The results indicated that women suffered more feelings of helplessness and avoidance as well as more anger, guilt and confusion than their male counterparts.

It could be argued that this discrepancy between census studies and the above self-report research is due in part to a tendency for males, when queried directly, to deny emotional distress in order to appear stereotypically

masculine. A third group of self-report studies, however, indicates that such an explanation is incomplete. In many instances divorced males actually do report more subjective distress than females. This gender difference seems to vary, albeit inconsistently, both with the specific stage of marital termination under study and with the self-report measure employed to assess post-divorce adjustment.

Longitudinal, cross panel and retrospective studies have shown that people undergoing marital disruption report different reactions at various stages of marital termination. In general, it has been demonstrated that adjustment improves as the time since separation increases (Kitson & Raschke, 1981; Lindsay & Scherman, 1987; Melicher & Chiriboga, 1988; Propst, Pardington, Ostrom & Watson, 1986). This improvement appears to level off over time, with the worst emotional impact experienced in the first two years after separation (Hathaway & McKinley, 1943; Kolevzon & Gottlieb, 1983). In terms of gender, several studies have found that men and women report different reactions at various stages of termination. Although findings across studies have been inconsistent, results do suggest that the stage of divorce selected for study will affect the direction of gender differences found. Two studies demonstrate, for example, that women are more distressed than men during the six months prior to separation and that men and women are equally distressed after the divorce has

been finalized (Chiriboga & Cutler, 1978; Green, 1983). A third investigation corroborates that women are more upset than men immediately prior to separation, but indicates that men actually suffer more emotional turmoil than women in the period immediately following the break-up (Bloom & Caldwell, 1981). Finally, a fourth investigation shows a completely different effect with a sample of subjects ending marriages of 20 or more years duration (Deckert & Langelier, 1978). Although males and females in this study reported equal levels of distress during the initial phases of termination, females reported more subjective stress in the post-divorce period.

Two investigations have demonstrated that sex differences appear to vary according to the dependent measures used to assess post-separation distress. Zeiss, Zeiss and Johnson (1980) found that divorced men appeared to be more poorly adjusted than women when self-reports were obtained with a global measure of emotional distress. More specific indices also showed that males in this study reported more suicidal ideation than females. Women, however, reported more tension, more negative feelings toward their ex-spouses and less sense of stability after divorce than their male counterparts.

Spanier and Thompson (1984) similarly found differences between results obtained by global and specific

dependent measures, although their findings do not correspond completely with those of Zeiss and his colleagues. Using a global index of well-being and self-esteem, Spanier and Thompson (1984) found no sex differences in post-divorce adjustment. A further breakdown of their data, however, revealed that men in this study were more likely than women to long for their former spouses. Women, in contrast, were more likely to consider, plan and actually attempt suicide in the aftermath of divorce. Interestingly, when considering specific reactions, Spanier and Thompson found support for Zeiss and his colleagues' contention that females experience less sense of stability than males with the termination of a marriage. Women reported significantly more increases and decreases in sleeplessness, nervousness, tiredness, moody spells and physical symptoms than men. The investigators conclude that overall, women's emotional lives are less stable and more susceptible to fluctuation than men's in the aftermath of divorce.

In summary, while the impact of divorce on identity remains unexamined, other areas of emotional and behavioral adjustment have been studied with mixed results. Some investigators have found that women tend to be more emotionally upset by divorce while others have determined that men actually suffer greater distress. A third group of researchers has found no sex difference at all in response to marital termination. Studies of methodological issues

suggest that the phase of termination examined and the dependent measures employed to assess emotional distress may have affected these study outcomes. The phase of termination under study represents a particular problem area in previous research because most investigations of sex differences have not controlled for this variable (see for example, Bloom, 1975; Doherty et al., 1989; Gove & Shin, 1989; Tennov, 1979). Instead, such studies tend to report periods of separation ranging from a few months duration up to 15 years. In light of the findings concerning sex differences and changes in adjustment over time, it seems evident that research needs to more clearly limit and define the stage of separation under study. Similarly, global measures of emotional distress appear to be inadequate for assessing sex differences in post-divorce adjustment. Although findings for sex differences for more specific measures have been contradictory across studies, it is clear that a multidimensional definition of distress is necessary for a comprehensive assessment of men's and women's reactions to divorce. Finally, it should be emphasized that the findings on sex differences reported in the literature to date have been generally inconsistent. It seems clear that mediating variables in addition to gender must be considered to understand the differential impact of divorce on men's and women's lives.

Mediating Variables

Several investigators have attempted to delineate factors in addition to gender that are associated with the psychological experience of relationship dissolution. Initiator status and financial security have each been studied and shown to be strongly associated with post-divorce adjustment. In addition, several factors have been investigated that relate more directly to hypotheses derived from self-in-relation theory. The relationship between reactions to marital termination and the divorcee's level of social involvement, sex role attitudes and occupational involvement have each been investigated with varied results.

Initiating Status and Financial Security. It has been well documented among both men and women that marital separation is easier for the initiating partner than it is for the recipient. It appears that the initiator of the separation experiences less trauma, feels more sense of control and perceives more benefits from divorce than the recipient of the decision to separate (e.g., Brown, Felton, Whiteman & Manela, 1980; Kitson, 1982; Kressal, Lopez-Morillas, Weinglass & Deutsch, 1979). There is also some indication that these discrepancies fade with time, with differences between partners becoming almost non-existent after 18 months of separation (Petit & Bloom, 1984).

The impact of economic insecurity and financial loss on post-divorce adjustment has also received extensive attention in the literature. It appears that marital dissolution results in significant income loss for both members of the separated couple (Brown, Feldberg, Fox & Kohen, 1976; Herzog & Sudia, 1968; Weiss, 1984). Not surprisingly, these economic realities appear to have considerable impact on the divorcee's well-being; men and women with lower post-divorce incomes and less economic stability have been found to be more stressed, more depressed and generally more poorly adjusted than those who are more economically secure (Coletta, 1983; Linblad-Goldberg, Dukes, Phil & Lasley, 1988; Menaghan & Lieberman, 1986; Pett & Vaughan-Cole, 1986; Spanier & Thompson, 1984). These findings are particularly pertinent to any comparative study of men's and women's reactions to marital termination, for it has been consistently demonstrated that women suffer more financial loss with divorce than men (Albrecht, 1980; Pett & Vaughan-Cole, 1986; Spanier & Thompson, 1984).

Social Involvement. As noted previously, Jean Baker Miller (1976, 1984) suggests that due to social influences on identity development, many women need to be involved in relationships in order to maintain their sense of identity and self-esteem. With marital dissolution then, such women would be expected to undergo identity crisis, loss of self-esteem and significant emotional distress. Miller, however,

indicates that substantial variation among women's experiences would also be expected. It is reasonable to suggest, for example, that women who maintain close relationships in addition to their marriages (i.e., with friends) would experience less negative impact from divorce than those lacking other affiliations to reinforce their sense of themselves as relational beings. This prediction is partially addressed in studies investigating the role of social involvement in post-divorce adjustment.

Studies examining the impact of social involvement on reactions to divorce typically stem from social support or social network theory. The social support model defines "social support" as "formal and informal contacts with individuals and groups that provide emotional or material resources that may aid a person in adjusting to a crisis such as separation or divorce" (Kitson & Raschke, 1981, p. 25). Research on this topic has consistently demonstrated that people with high levels of any type of social contact (e.g., clubs, dating, contact with friends) adjust better to marital dissolution than those who are more socially isolated (Raschke, 1977; Spanier & Casto, 1979; Weiss, 1975). However, research focusing more closely on specific types of social support has yielded more ambiguous findings.

The results of studies of material support have been directly contradictory. Three investigations have

demonstrated that divorced mothers who receive more financial aid and assistance with childcare, housework and errands tend to be less distressed and less authoritarian and punitive with their children than those receiving less help (Coletta, 1979; Hynes, 1979; Tetzloff & Barrera, 1987). In contrast, other investigations have shown that such assistance after marital breakup is strongly associated with high levels of distress among both men and women (Chiriboga, Coho, Stein & Roberts, 1979; Kitson, Moir, & Mason, 1982; Spanier & Thompson, 1984). It is unclear at this time whether this correlation might reflect the fact that people in greater distress tend to seek out more assistance or whether assistance itself might actually breed greater distress.

Research findings in the emotional realm of social support are also contradictory. Menaghan and Lieberman (1986) studied the relationship between reactions to divorce and the number of confidants available to the divorcee. Confidants were defined in this study as "anyone you could tell just about anything to and could count on for understanding and advice." The results indicated that men and women with fewer available confidants tended to experience higher levels of depression. Using a similar definition for "confidant," however, Propst and her colleagues (1986) found no association between confidant availability and either depression or anxiety among divorced

mothers. Similarly, in a third study, Spanier and Thompson (1984) found no connection between amount of available emotional support and either men's or women's reactions to divorce.

Studies of social networks have explored potential links between changes in pre- and post-divorce friendship patterns and post-divorce distress. In this vein, Daniels-Mohring and Berger (1984) demonstrated that stable friendship patterns are related to well-being and self-esteem among both divorced men and women. Spanier and Thompson (1984), however, found this effect in males only. Men with many new friends experienced more distress, suicidal ideation, loneliness and difficulty accepting the end of their marriages than those with more stable social networks. No connection was found between women's reports of making new friends after divorce and distress. Interestingly, among women, the desire for more friends was positively related to thoughts of suicide, loneliness and difficulty accepting the breakup.

Although studies of social support and social networks begin to address the association between interpersonal involvement and relationship loss, they are seriously flawed for several reasons. First, they are superficial. These studies fail to assess the nature and the depth of the emotional succor received by the divorcee, a weakness

Spanier and Thompson (1984) directly acknowledge. The quality of the divorcee's relationships and his or her satisfaction with them must be analyzed to understand the role of social involvement in post-divorce adjustment. A second and related problem in this research is the lack of theoretical grounding to suggest that "support" should be operationalized in terms of numbers of services rendered, confidants available or changes in social network. There is no reason to suggest, for example, that 10 confidants are any more emotionally gratifying than one. Finally, studies of social support fail to consider the importance of mutuality in relationships. Self-in-relation theory suggests that women are most enhanced by relationships that are mutually empathic and empowering. By focusing only on assistance received, social support studies neglect an aspect of relationships that may be central to understanding the role of social involvement in post-divorce adjustment among women.

One study of social support does consider mutuality, although it does not focus on the formerly married per se. Miller and Ingham (1976) investigated the association between the presence or absence of a "close confidante" and physical symptoms among men and women. Presence of a confidant was scored only when a subject indicated that he or she had a friend with whom personal issues could be discussed, who lived close at hand, who was reasonably

available and who was believed to reciprocate by trusting the subject with personal problems. The results showed that women who lacked a close confidant reported significantly more physical symptoms than those who had a friend in this category. No association was found between close confidants and physical symptoms among men.

Sex Role Attitudes. In addition to highlighting the importance of relationships to female identity, Jean Baker Miller (1976, 1984) suggests that the development of the woman's sense of self is affected by the degree to which she has internalized societal sex role expectations. Miller posits that women who have accepted the traditional notion that females should subordinate their own agency in the service of others will tend to be more dependent upon their relationships for self-definition than those with less traditional attitudes. As a result, women with traditional attitudes would also be expected to be more vulnerable in the event of relationship termination than their less traditional counterparts.

This issue has been addressed in numerous studies of the association between women's sex role attitudes and their adjustment to divorce. Unlike most divorce research, these studies have yielded consistent results. It has been demonstrated repeatedly that traditional women experience more psychological difficulties with divorce than those with

less traditional attitudes. In a typical investigation, Brown, Perry and Harburg (1977) compared psychological status with scores on their Sex Role Attitudes Scale for 253 women who were engaged in the initial steps of separation. Attitudes were classified as traditional or nontraditional along the following three factors: (1) Women's role in the home, (2) Family roles and (3) Job inequality. White women with traditional attitudes appeared to suffer significantly more distress over marital separation than their nontraditional counterparts. Traditional white women additionally enjoyed less well-being, self-esteem, and sense of personal effectiveness. These correlations are echoed by many similar investigations (Bloom & Clement, 1984; Felton, Brown, Lehmann & Liberatos, 1980; Granvold, Pedler & Schellie, 1979; Kurdek & Blisk, 1983) although causality has yet to be established.

In addition, two studies have examined the association between men's sex role attitudes and post-divorce adjustment. In contrast to their findings for women, Bloom and Clement (1984) found no relationship between separated men's attitudes and their psychological status. These researchers attributed their lack of results to problems with the sex role questionnaire used in the study (the MAFERR, developed by Steinmann and Fox [1974]). Employing the Sex Role Attitude Scale developed by Brown and her colleagues (1977), Felton et al. (1980) discovered that

traditional men reported more distress during marital disruption than men with less traditional attitudes. An analysis of the relationship between stressors, sex role attitudes and psychological distress, however, suggested that men's attitudes played no role in reducing their distress.

Occupational Involvement. In developing the self-in-relation model of female psychology, Miller (1976, 1984) also indicates that women have suppressed their agentic strivings to various degrees. While some women may have abandoned their sense of themselves as agentic beings after childhood, others may continue to exercise their agentic capabilities to varying degrees throughout their lives. Miller suggests that women who retain a sense of their own agency in adulthood need to rely less on their ongoing relationships for self-definition. Given this theoretical argument, it would be expected that women who were engaged in agentic activities during their marriages would experience less of a negative impact from divorce than those who were not. This prediction has been partially tested in studies exploring the association between employment and people's reactions to marital dissolution.

Kurdek and Blisk (1983) discovered that rather than buffering the impact of divorce, the more hours that divorced mothers worked per week outside the home the higher

their level of emotional distress. The investigators suggest that juggling job responsibilities with the obligations of single parenthood contributed to these women's daily stress. Interestingly, however, job satisfaction in this study was related to greater overall ease in dealing with the divorce process. Spanier and Thompson (1984) also investigated the effect of employment status and specific types of occupation on men's and women's reactions to marital separation. Although occupational status was shown to be related to men's adjustment, neither occupation nor employment status was found to have any association with women's psychological well-being after marital disruption.

A major flaw in both the Kurdek and Blisk and the Spanier and Thompson studies is that neither explore the impact of employment during marriage on men's and women's adjustment to divorce. In order to assess the relationship between ongoing agentic activities and post-divorce adjustment, some measure of pre-separation occupational involvement is necessary. Coysh, Johnston, Tschann, Wallerstein and Kline (1989) examined the association between pre-divorce occupational status (as measured by the Hollingshead scale) and divorced parents' emotional, social and occupational functioning. The results revealed a positive correlation between women's occupational status prior to divorce and their sense of occupational fulfillment

after filing for divorce. No other relationship was found between women or men's occupational status and post-divorce adjustment.

Although these studies begin to address the role of occupational involvement as a buffer in post-divorce distress, they are inadequate for several reasons. First, only one of these investigations assesses women's employment prior to separation, information that is necessary if we are to understand the role of ongoing agentic involvement in women's reactions to divorce. Second, measurements of "hours worked per week" or "employment versus unemployment" fail to consider the personal value placed on work outside the home. It is fully possible that a women participating 40 hours per week in the work force would actually prefer to be engaged as a full time homemaker. Finally, not one of these studies considers the potentially confounding influence of financial status on employment. Clearly, the income generated in higher status occupations could affect post-divorce adjustment. These issues must be considered if the relationship between occupational involvement and adjustment to marital dissolution is to be adequately assessed.

Summary and Purpose of the Present Study

In summary, the research on sex differences in reaction to divorce has been quite equivocal. While some

studies have indicated that women experience harsher psychological consequences than men do, others suggest that men actually experience greater emotional distress after a separation. A third group of researchers has found no sex differences at all in reaction to marital disruption.

Furthermore, several hypotheses derived from the self-in-relation model either remain untested or have been studied superficially with inconclusive results. To date, the effect of marital dissolution on men's and women's identities has not been investigated. Several researchers have noted that the woman's sense of self is more apt to be negatively affected by divorce than the man's, but a measure of identity has yet to be included in a study of divorce. Although the role of social relationships in a divorcee's experience has been explored, affiliation has been narrowly defined and superficially measured in terms of "social support" or "social networks." A more in depth consideration of the mutual experience of friendship seems warranted. Similar problems are apparent in studies of the effects of occupational involvement on women's experiences with divorce. Employment studies have failed to consider the effects of female employment prior to marital disruption and have not included measures of job satisfaction or the value ascribed to employment by their sample. Furthermore, such studies have not taken into account the fact that paid employment may be confounded with economic variables.

Finally, a positive relationship between women's nontraditional sex role attitudes and post-divorce adjustment has been clearly demonstrated. However, the potential association between such attitudes and the impact of divorce on identity has yet to be investigated.

The purpose of the present study was to test hypotheses derived from the self-in-relation model and to extend the current literature on sex differences in reaction to divorce. Toward this end, 29 males and 32 females who had been separated from their spouses for two years or less were surveyed concerning their reactions to their separation. In addition, 29 males and 32 females in intact marriages were surveyed for purposes of comparison and control.

Hypotheses for this study fall into four categories, the examination of: between group differences in relational orientation, psychological distress, self-esteem and identity; the buffering effects of friendship strength; the buffering effects of sex role attitudes; and the buffering effects of occupational involvement on women's reactions to separation.

Group Differences. Hypotheses pertaining to between group differences are as follows:

1. Overall, women will show more of a relational orientation than men
- 2a. Overall, separated people will show more psychological distress than people in intact marriages. Specifically, separated men and women will report more anxiety, depression and anger than non-separated men and women
- 2b. Separated women will show more psychological distress than any other subgroup. Specifically, separated women will report more anxiety, depression and anger than either separated or non-separated men, or separated women. In addition, separated women will report more suicidal ideation and more difficulty accepting the separation than separated men
- 3a. Separated people will show lower self-esteem than non-separated people
- 3b. Separated women will show less self-esteem than any other subgroup
4. Separated women will report a weaker sense of identity than any other subgroup

Friendship Strength. Hypotheses pertaining to the buffering effects of friendship strength are as follows:

5. Friendship strength will be negatively related to psychological distress among separated women. Specifically, separated women who report stronger friendships will report less anxiety, depression, anger, suicidal ideation and difficulty accepting the separation
6. Friendship strength will be positively related to self-esteem among separated women
7. Friendship strength will be positively related to strength of identity among separated women

Sex Role Attitudes. Hypotheses pertaining to the buffering effects of sex role attitudes are as follows:

8. Sex role attitudes will be negatively related to psychological distress among separated women. Specifically, separated women who report more nontraditional attitudes will report less anxiety, depression, anger, difficulty accepting the separation, and suicidal ideation
9. Sex role attitudes will be positively related to self-esteem among separated women
10. Sex role attitudes will be positively related to strength of identity among separated women

Occupational Involvement. Hypotheses pertaining to the buffering effects of occupational involvement are as follows:

11. Occupational involvement will be negatively related to psychological distress among separated women. Specifically, separated women who report more occupational involvement will report less anxiety, depression, anger, difficulty accepting the separation, and suicidal ideation
12. Occupational involvement will be positively related to self-esteem among separated women
13. Occupational involvement will be positively related to strength of identity among separated women

Although the hypotheses concerning the buffering effects of friendship strength, sex role attitudes and occupational involvement pertain to women only, these relationships will be examined for all four subgroups.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Subjects

Subjects were 29 males and 32 females who were separated from their spouses and, for purposes of comparison, 29 males and 32 females who remained in intact marriages. Separated subjects were recruited from New England chapters of Parents Without Partners (PWP), church groups, public school systems and day care centers, and through snowball sampling techniques. Specifically, 44 separated subjects were recruited through PWP (21 males, 23 females), 12 from church groups (7 males, 5 females), and 3 from public school systems (1 male, 2 females). Two subjects were recruited through snowball sampling from the above groups (0 males, 2 females).

To measure the short term effects of relationship loss, and to maximize the likelihood that separated participants would be in similar phases of relationship termination, all separated subjects were separated from

their spouses for no more than two years' time. Additional inclusion criteria for separated subjects were as follows:

1. Subjects must not have been involved in a previous marriage
2. Subjects' marriages must have lasted at least two years prior to the separation
3. Subjects must be the parent of at least one child

Non-separated subjects were recruited from church groups, public school systems and day care centers, and through snowball sampling techniques. Specifically, 21 non-separated subjects volunteered from church groups (12 males, 9 females), 37 from public school systems (15 males, 22 females), and 2 from day care centers (1 male, 1 female). One subject was recruited through snowball sampling from the above groups (1 male, 0 female). In an attempt to limit spurious between group differences, non-separated participants were recruited from the same communities as separated subjects.

Criteria for inclusion in the study for non-separated subjects were as follows:

1. Subjects must not have been involved in a previous marriage
2. Subjects' marriages must have lasted at least two years prior to the date of testing
3. Subjects must be the parent of at least one child

For the total sample, subjects' ages ranged from 24 to 73 years with a mean age of 41.71 years (SD = 8.36.) All

subjects were white. On the average, participants in this study were married for 17.88 years (SD = 8.14) with a range that extended from 3 to 43 years. Subjects had from one to eight children, with a mean of 2.66 (SD = 1.47) children.

Subjects' mean years of education were 14.87 (SD = 2.56) on a scale which extended from 7 to 20+ years. The range of education for this sample fell between 10 and 20+ years. Subjects' occupational status ranged from a score of 1 (unemployment) to 8 (proprietors of large concerns, executives and major professionals) on the Hollingshead Occupational Scale. The average occupational status for the total sample was a score of 4.78 (SD = 2.09), indicating that the mean occupation fell between a score of 4 (skilled workers) and a score of 5 (clerical or sales workers, owners of little businesses or technicians).

To best understand the economic background of the sample, mean income was calculated using non-separated subjects' current income and separated subjects' income prior to their separation. Serious economic losses are generally associated with marital disruption rendering it unlikely that separated subjects' current income would accurately reflect the background profile of the sample. Using these figures, the mean score for household income was a score of 7.73 on a scale ranging from 1 (less than \$5,000 annual income) to 9 (\$50,000 per year and above). A score

of 7.73 indicates an average household income between \$30,000 and \$49,000 per year. The range of income was between \$15,000 and \$50,000 and above.

Separated subjects had been separated from seven weeks to two years at the time they were surveyed, with a mean separation time of 54.43 weeks ($SD = 29.46$). Thirty-seven subjects, or 61% of the separated sample, had filed for divorce. Twenty-four, or 39% of the sample, had completed divorce proceedings at the time of the study.

Materials

Background Questionnaire - Form A (Separated Subjects). A 25-item background questionnaire was administered to obtain descriptive data about the subject and his or her marriage and separation, and to verify that the criteria for inclusion in the study had been met. This questionnaire also includes two scales designed to assess occupational involvement, the Hollingshead Occupational Status Scale (Hollingshead, 1958) and the Job Importance Scale, developed by the author. The Hollingshead Scale pertains to occupational status prior to the separation and is scored from 1 (unemployed) to 8 (proprietors of large concerns, executives and major professionals).¹ The Job Importance Scale includes the question: "Overall, aside from the financial benefits, how important is it to you that you have a job?" Responses are indicated on a 5-point scale

ranging from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (extremely important). Additional items on the Background Questionnaire pertain to current marital status, marital history, length of marriage, time since separation, custody arrangements, financial status, quality of the marriage prior to separation, reasons for separation, professional support solicited (e.g., clergy member, psychologist), and post-separation dating behavior. (See Appendix A for complete questionnaire.)

Background Questionnaire - Form B (Non-separated Subjects). A 13-item background questionnaire was administered to obtain descriptive data about the subject and his or her marriage, and to verify that the criteria for inclusion in the study had been met. This questionnaire is identical to the Background Questionnaire - Form A that was administered to separated subjects, except that items pertaining to divorce have either been omitted or reworded to be appropriate for a marital context. (See Appendix A for complete questionnaire.)

Self Concept Questionnaire. The Self Concept Questionnaire was used to assess subjects' perceptions of changes in themselves due to their separation. This measure was originally designed to measure changes in reaction to premarital relationship termination (Chatillon, 1984) and was adapted for current use with a sample undergoing marital

separation. It contains the following open-ended questions: (a) Do you feel differently about yourself now as compared to the way you felt about yourself before the separation? If yes, how? (b) Do you think that you have changed in comparison to the person you were before the separation? If yes, how? (c) What do you feel you have lost as a result of your separation (if anything)? and (d) What do you feel you have gained as a result of your separation (if anything)?

Inter-rater reliability was established for the original questionnaire for 14 scoring categories (Chatillon, 1984). Two of these categories were considered to be appropriate for the present study. These categories and their rating scales are: identity (1 - "lost identity," 2 - "no change/no mention," 3 - "found identity") and self-esteem (1 - "decreased self-esteem," 2 - "no change/no mention," 3 - "increased self-esteem") (see Appendix B for complete coding system). A male and female assistant who were blind to the purposes of the study coded responses. Inter-rater reliability was established for each of the two categories using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient ($r = 1.00$ for identity; $r = .88$ for self-esteem).

Identity Versus Identity Diffusion scale (Ochse & Plug, 1986). The Identity Versus Identity Diffusion scale (IVID) was used to assess the strength of subjects' current

identity. This questionnaire was originally a subscale of a self report inventory developed by Ochse and Plug (1986) to investigate Erik Erikson's theory of personality development. It contains 19 statements about feelings and attitudes which Erikson associated with adults who had been either successful or unsuccessful in resolving the adolescent crisis of identity versus identity diffusion (e.g., "I wonder what sort of person I really am"; "I feel my way of life suits me"). Each statement is followed by four response alternatives ranging from 0 - "never applies to me" to 3 - "very often applies to me." A total score is derived from a summation across items, with a high score indicating identity achievement. Ochse and Plug (1986) report a Cronbach's alpha of .83 for internal consistency for use of the IVID with white subjects. Evidence of construct validity is also reported including the demonstration of a common factor underlying items representing aspects of personality that Erikson suggests are inter-related, and the demonstration of a positive relationship between scores on the Erikson subscales and measures of well-being and social desirability that would be predicted from past research.

Although this study is not grounded in Erikson's theory of development per se, the IVID was considered appropriate for use in this study for several reasons. First, as a measure of identity and identity diffusion the

IVID allows comparisons between men and women's experience of identity crisis after the dissolution of their marriages. Erikson (1963) suggests that disruptive events throughout the life cycle will reactivate the conflicts of developmental phases that have already been negotiated. Thus, as suggested by Smart (1977), divorce can precipitate "identity crisis" in Eriksonian terms. As a measure comprised of feelings and attitudes which Erikson has associated with individuals who do and do not have a solid sense of their own identity, the IVID can measure the degree of this crisis. Second, rather than focusing solely on commitment to ideological and occupational goals as other identity measures do (e.g., Adams, Shea & Fitch, 1979; Marcia, 1966), the IVID is based on a construct of identity which includes the social self. This scale contains items which address subjects' perceptions of how well they fit in and are accepted by their community (e.g., "My worth is recognized by others"). Such a measure of identity as something that is formed and maintained in part through social relations is consistent with the self-in-relation model and valuable to the present study. Third, unlike any other measure of Erikson's construct of identity, the IVID was designed for use with adult samples. Finally, Ochse and Plug (1986) found no sex differences on this scale with a sample of 1,859 men and women, providing a useful baseline for study of a separated population.

Personal Identity Scale. The Personal Identity Scale was employed as a third measure of identity. Derived from O'Connell's (1976) Personal Identity Inventory, this scale consists of one item requesting the subject to rate his or her sense of personal identity on a 9-point Likert scale. Responses range from 1 - "weak" to 9 - "strong." O'Connell (1976) reports test-retest reliability coefficients for this scale ranging from $r = .79$ to $r = .96$. Reported evidence of construct validity includes expected strong and weak relationships demonstrated between the Personal Identity Scale and subscales of the California Personality Inventory.

Profile of Mood States (McNair, Lorr & Droppleman, 1971). The Profile of Mood States (POMS) was used to assess the emotional impact of separation. The POMS is a well-standardized and widely used clinical and research tool for the measurement of current mood states (for information on reliability and validity see, for example, Lorr & McNair, 1964; McNair & Lorr, 1964; McNair, Lorr & Droppleman, 1971). This measure contains 65 adjectives and phrases describing moods and feelings, each of which has five responses ranging from "not at all" to "extremely." Subjects were asked to endorse the response for each item which best described how they had been feeling in the past week. The measure was scored according to three of the factors identified by McNair & Lorr (1964): Tension-Anxiety, Depression-Dejection and Anger-Hostility.

The POMS is especially well suited for use in this study because of the range of items included which males might endorse despite possible demand characteristics for a stereotypical masculine response. Descriptions such as "sluggish" and "ready to fight" do not connote weakness, a problem which Tennov (1979) suggests interferes with male reports of emotional distress.

Adapted Tennov Scale. A 10-item Likert-type scale was administered to measure subjects' retrospective reports of their emotional distress in reaction to separation. Items on this scale include seven statements that Tennov (1979) found were differentially endorsed by males and females (e.g., "I knew that ___ no longer cared, but I couldn't accept it") and three statements added by the investigator (e.g., "Since the separation, I have considered committing suicide"). Each statement has five response alternatives ranging from "not at all" to "extremely." Items are scored individually with scores ranging from 0 (no emotional distress) to 4 (extreme emotional distress).

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was used to assess subjects' current level of self-esteem. The Rosenberg Scale is a well-standardized measure of self-esteem which has been utilized in a wide range of research studies with a variety of populations. Rosenberg (1965) reports validity

information and an alpha reliability of .82 in his original investigation. This measure consists of five positive and five negative self-evaluative statements (e.g., "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself," "All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure"). Each item is followed by a Likert-type scale which ranges from 1 - "strongly agree" to 4 - "strongly disagree." A total score is derived by summation across items, with negative items accorded reverse values.

Post-Separation Stress Scale (Kurdek & Blisk, 1983).

A 20-item Likert-type scale was used to measure stressors encountered after separation. This measure includes 20 potential problem areas for people undergoing separation (e.g., "relationship with ex-spouse," "career planning"). Subjects are asked to indicate the extent to which each issue has been a problem to them on a four point scale ranging from 1 - "none" to 4 - "extreme." A total score is derived from summation across items. In an assessment of internal consistency for the total measure, Kurdek and Blisk (1983) obtained a Cronbach alpha of .90.

Scale for Relational-Insular Orientations (Felton, 1986). The Scale for Relational-Insular Orientations is in the early stages of development and has been shown to have poor internal consistency with a college sample (Felton, 1986). This scale was included in the present study

because, although flawed, it has the strongest face validity of any extant measure for the assessment of the construct of the relational self as it is described by the Stone Center group. The scale includes 20 statements about the felt need to "express and enhance the self in a relational context through emotional connectedness, . . . mutual empathy, and mutual empowerment" (Felton, 1986, p.11). Two examples of scale items are, "It makes me uncomfortable to talk with others about my personal problems" and "I am very careful about saying or doing things that might endanger my relationship with another person." Respondents are asked to indicate how well each statement describes them by selecting one of six response alternatives ranging from 1 - "not at all" to 6 - "very well." A total score is derived from summation across items, with negative items accorded reversed values.

Perceived Social Support-Friends (Procidano and Heller, 1983). The Perceived Social Support-Friends scale (PSS-Fr) was administered to assess subjects' perceptions of their non-familial affiliations. The PSS-Fr contains 20 items concerning perceptions of support, information and feedback provided by others, and support mutuality (e.g., "My friends give me the moral support I need," "Certain friends come to me when they have problems or need advice"). Each item is followed by three response alternatives: "Yes," "No" and "Don't know." A score of +1 is assigned to every

"Yes" response, resulting in total scores ranging from 0 (no perceived social support) to 20 (maximum perceived social support). Internal consistency has been shown for this measure ($\alpha = .88$), and construct validity has been demonstrated through expected positive and negative relationships with other measures and with specific friendship behaviors (Prociadano & Heller, 1983). The PSS-Fr is being utilized increasingly in studies of social involvement (e.g., Tardy, 1985; Vaux, Phillips, Holly, Thomson, Williams & Stewart, 1986). This measure is especially useful in the present study because it assesses subjects' perceptions of the quality of their relationships and includes mutuality as one dimension of friendship.

Perceived Social Support-Family (Prociadano and Heller, 1983). The Perceived Social Support-Family scale (PSS-Fa) was used to measure subjects' perceptions of their familial relationships. Like the PSS-Fr, the PSS-Fa contains 20 items designed to assess perceptions of support, information, feedback and support mutuality. Each item is followed by three response alternatives: "Yes," "No" and "Don't know." Scoring follows the same procedure as that of the PSS-Fr. Internal consistency ($\alpha = .90$) and construct validity (including expected positive and negative correlations with other measures and behaviors with family members) has been established for this measure (Prociadano & Heller, 1983).

Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence, Helmreich & Stapp, 1973). The short form of the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS) was used to assess subjects' attitudes towards females' rights and social roles. Spence et al. (1973) report that this form of the AWS is highly correlated with the full version of the scale ($r = .95$), which has been found to be reliable and valid (Spence & Helmreich, 1972). Both versions are used extensively in studies of sex role attitudes. The short form contains 25 statements about the rights and roles of women in vocational and intellectual pursuits, dating behavior, etiquette, sexual activity and marital relations. Each statement has four response alternatives ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Items are assigned scores from 0 to 3, with 0 representing the most traditional view of women and 3 the most non-traditional. A total score is derived from a summation across items.

Procedures

Subjects were tested individually or in small groups during Parents Without Partners, school or church group meetings, or in their homes. Prior to test administration, subjects were informed of the procedures of the study and told that the purpose of the investigation was the examination of peoples' reactions to divorce. They were also reminded that their responses would be anonymous, that their participation was voluntary and that they had the

right to end the testing session at any time. Consent forms were distributed for signatures (see Appendix C). Separated subjects were then asked to complete the Background Questionnaire - Form A, the Self Concept Questionnaire, the IVID, the Personal Identity Scale, the POMS, the Adapted Tennov Scale, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Post-Separation Stress Scale, the Scale for Relational-Insular Orientations, the PSS-Fr, the PSS-Fa and the AWS. Non-separated subjects were asked to complete the same questionnaires with the exception of the Self Concept Questionnaire, the Adapted Tennov Scale and the Post Separation Stress Scale because these measures were considered inappropriate in the context of an intact marriage. (See Table 1 for listing of all questionnaires completed by each marital group.)

Table 1

Measures of Dependent and Mediating Variables Administered to Separated and Non-Separated Samples

Variables	Non-Separated	Separated
<u>Dependent</u>		
Psychological Distress	Profile of Mood States	Profile of Mood States Adapted Tennov Scale
Self-Esteem	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale Self-Concept Questionnaire
Identity	Identity vs. Identity Diffusion Scale Personal Identity Scale	Identity vs. Identity Diffusion Scale Personal Identity Scale Self-Concept Questionnaire
Relational Orientation	Scale for Relational Insular Orientations	Scale for Relational Insular Orientations
<u>Mediating</u>		
Friendship Strength	Perceived Social Support Friendship Scale	Perceived Social Support Friendship Scale
Sex Role Attitudes	Attitudes Toward Women Scale	Attitudes Toward Women Scale
Occupational Involvement	Hollingshead Scale For Occupational Status Job Importance Scale	Hollingshead Scale For Occupational Status Job Importance Scale

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

Because previous research has demonstrated an association between initiation of separation and the impact of marital termination, the relationship between initiation and gender was investigated in the present study. If such a relationship were found to be statistically significant, it could potentially confound interpretation of data analyses. Table 2 presents frequency data on the initiation of separation. All separated subjects in this sample indicated that their separation had been initiated either a) by themselves (41%), b) by their spouses (55.7%), or c) by mutual agreement (3.3%). The computation of the chi square statistic provided no evidence that initiation was related to gender, $\chi(2) = 4.16, n.s.$

Previous research has also demonstrated a relationship between the duration of a separation and the psychological

Table 2

Initiation Subgroup Frequencies

		Males	Females	Totals
Subject Initiated	N	8	17	25
	%*	13.1	27.9	41.0
Spouse Initiated	N	20	14	34
	%	32.8	23.0	55.7
Mutually Initiated	N	1	1	2
	%	1.6	1.6	3.3

*Percentages do not sum to 100 due to rounding.

functioning of both men and women. In order to investigate whether separation duration and sex were confounded in the present sample, a one-way analysis of variance was conducted. No association between sex and time since separation was revealed ($M = 53.24$ weeks for males; $M = 55.50$ weeks for females). To further assess the role of separation duration in responses to marital dissolution, correlational analyses were conducted between separation duration and each of the dependent variables. (See Table 3 for the results of all correlational analyses.) Calculation of the Pearson correlation coefficient indicated that time was not associated with recovery for the present sample.

In order to test further for background differences between groups that could potentially confound the interpretation of data analyses, a series of analyses of variance were conducted on the following demographic variables: age, education, occupation, income, length of marriage and number of children. Table 4 presents the group means for each of the demographic variables according to marital status; Table 5 presents the group means according to gender. The results from the analyses of variance revealed that married subjects were significantly better educated than separated subjects, $F(1, 118) = 7.74, p < .01$, and had significantly higher incomes than separated subjects had prior to their separation, $F(1, 114) = 7.21, p < .01$.

Table 3

Correlations Between Separation Duration and Dependent Measures

Measure	Separation Duration	
	Male	Female
	r	r
POMS		
Anxiety	-.224	-.263
Depression	-.262	-.263
Anger	-.314	-.108
Adapted Tennov		
Suicidality	-.081	.028
Difficulty Accepting Separation	-.182	.107
IVID	.066	.310
Personal Identity Scale	.305	.199
Self-Concept Questionnaire		
Sense of Self-Change Scale	.186	.043
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	-.230	.025
Self-Concept Questionnaire		
Self-Esteem Change Scale	.134	.083

Table 4

Background Variables Group Means for Marital Status

Background Variables	<u>Non-separated</u>		<u>Separated</u>	
	M	SD	M	SD
Income ^a	8.11	1.19	7.36	1.67**
Education ^b	15.48	2.65	14.26	2.34**
Occupational Status ^c	5.11	1.87	4.44	2.25
Age ^b	42.21	8.92	41.21	7.79
Length of Marriage ^b	18.46	8.77	17.29	7.48
Number of Children	3.03	1.79	2.30	0.95

^aMeasured by 9-point scale, with values ranging from 1 (less than \$5,000 per year) to 9 (\$50,000 and above). ^bMeasured in years. ^cMeasured by 8-point Hollingshead Occupational Status Scale, with values ranging from 1 (unemployed) to 8 (proprietors of large concerns, executives and major professionals).

**p<.01.

Table 5

Background Variables Group Means for Sex

Background Variables	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>	
	M	SD	M	SD
Income ^a	7.89	1.44	7.58	1.54
Education ^b	15.53	2.72	14.27	2.27**
Occupational Status ^c	5.46	1.82	4.16	2.14***
Age ^b	43.71	7.29	39.91	8.67*
Length of Marriage ^b	18.82	7.46	17.02	8.67
Number of Children	2.71	1.63	2.63	1.33

^aMeasured by 9-point scale, with values ranging from 1 (less than \$5,000 per year) to 9 (\$50,000 and above). ^bMeasured in years.

^cMeasured by 8-point Hollingshead Occupational Status Scale, with values ranging from 1 (unemployed) to 8 (proprietors of large concerns, executives and major professionals).

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Analysis of variance also showed that the males in this sample were significantly older than the females, $F(1, 118) = 6.65$, $p < .05$, were significantly better educated, $F(1, 118) = 8.45$, $p < .01$, and were employed in significantly higher status occupations, $F(1, 118) = 13.32$, $p < .001$. No further between group differences were determined to be statistically significant.

The sex differences demonstrated for education and occupation were considered to reflect differences in the population as a whole and were not viewed as potentially confounding to the present study. Differences between men and women in age, however, and income and education differences between married and separated groups were seen as potentially confounding factors. To understand the effects of these factors, each analysis of variance which yielded results supporting the predictions of this study was followed by three analyses of covariance. Each analysis of covariance included one of the following three covariates: education, age, or prior income. This procedure allowed the effects of the independent variables to be assessed four times, first with an analysis of variance and subsequently with a series of three analyses of covariance, each with one of the three covariates statistically controlled. Although every analysis of variance yielding significant results was followed by the serial analyses of covariance, only findings pertaining to significant covariates will be reported below.

Group Differences

Sex differences and subjects' general reactions to marital separation were addressed by the first four hypotheses of this study. Hypotheses were tested using 2 x 2 analyses of variance (sex x marital status) for measures administered to the total sample. For measures administered only to the separated subgroup, one way analyses of variance were employed. Analyses of variance which yielded significant findings were followed by analyses of covariance which independently assessed the covariates education, age and income. Finally, interactions which remained significant after the variance associated with each covariate was removed were further examined with follow-up simple effects analyses.

Hypothesis 1. Overall, women will show more of a relational orientation than men.

This hypothesis was tested by examining the gender main effect in a 2 x 2 analysis of variance on the Relational-Insular Scale. Consistent with the prediction of Hypothesis 1, the analysis of variance showed a significant main effect for gender on relational orientation, $F(1, 118) = 6.99, p < .01$. Specifically, women ($M = 83.16; S.D. = 11.39$) were found to be more relationally oriented than men ($M = 78.34; S.D. = 8.77$).

Hypothesis 2a. Overall, separated people will show more psychological distress than people in intact marriages. Specifically, separated men and women will report more anxiety, depression and anger than non-separated men and women.

This hypothesis was tested by examining the marital group main effect in a series of 2 x 2 analyses of variance on the anxiety, depression and hostility subscales of the POMS. The results demonstrated full support for the hypothesis. Group means are presented in Table 6. Analysis of variance yielded significant main effects for marital status for each of the POMS subscales. Separated men and women were found to be significantly more anxious, $F(1, 118) = 4.89, p < .05$, more depressed, $F(1, 118) = 16.45, p < .001$, and more angry, $F(1, 118) = 5.81, p < .05$, than their married counterparts.

The results of the subsequent analyses of covariance suggest that these findings were not confounded by group background differences in education, income or age. Although age was determined to be a significant covariate for both anxiety, $F(1, 117) = 6.18, p < .05$, and anger, $F(1, 117) = 8.49, p < .01$, when the variance due to age was removed, the main effect for marital status for each of these variables remained significant ($F(1, 117) = 4.44,$

Table 6

Psychological Distress Group Means for Marital Status

Measure	<u>Non-Separated</u>		<u>Separated</u>	
	M	SD	M	SD
POMS				
Anxiety	16.41	7.27	19.97	10.14*
Depression	7.30	8.26	16.33	15.18***
Anger	9.07	10.23	13.77	11.13*

* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

$p < .05$ for anxiety; $F(1, 117) = 5.31$, $p < .05$, for anger). Thus, although age appears to be related to anxiety and anger, it does not account for the main effects for marital status demonstrated by the initial analysis of variance.

Similarly, in terms of depression, education and prior income were both determined to be significant covariates (for education, $F(1, 117) = 6.21$, $p < .05$; for prior income, $F(1, 110) = 5.11$, $p < .05$). When the variance due to each of these covariates was removed, however, the main effect for marital status remained significant (for education, $F(1, 117) = 12.73$, $p < .01$; for prior income, $F(1, 110) = 10.25$, $p < .01$). This suggests that although education and income may be related to depression, marital status continues to be a significant predictor of depression even after the variance due to these covariates is removed.

In sum, a series of two-way analyses of variance demonstrated a significant main effect for marital status for anxiety, depression and anger. Specifically, separated men and women in this study were found to be more anxious, depressed and angry than their married counterparts. These findings were echoed by the analyses of covariance; the differences between married and separated subjects continued to emerge as significant even when variance due to education, income or age was statistically controlled.

Hypothesis 2b. Separated women will show more psychological distress than any other subgroup. Specifically, separated women will report more anxiety, depression and anger than either separated or non-separated men, or non-separated women. In addition, separated women will report more suicidal ideation and more difficulty accepting the separation than separated men.

This hypothesis was tested for the total sample by examining the sex by marital status interactions for the 2 x 2 analyses of variance conducted for the anxiety, depression and anger subscales of the POMS. In addition, one way analyses of variance were used to compare group means for separated men versus separated women on the Difficulty Accepting Separation and Suicidality subscales of the Tennov Scale.

Group means for the POMS subscales are presented in Table 7. Contrary to the predictions of the hypothesis, no differences in anxiety, depression or anger were demonstrated between separated women and other groups.

Group means for the Difficulty Accepting Separation and the Suicidality subscales of the Tennov Scale are also presented in Table 7. A one way analysis of variance revealed no differences between group means for Suicidality. The results for the Difficulty Accepting Separation subscale were shown to be in the opposite direction of that predicted

Table 7

Psychological Distress Group Means for Sex by Marital Status

Measure		<u>Non-Separated</u>		<u>Separated</u>	
		M	SD	M	SD
POMS					
Anxiety	Male	15.89	6.27	19.48	9.30
	Female	16.88	8.14	20.41	10.98
Depression	Male	6.28	6.21	16.83	15.86
	Female	8.22	9.76	15.88	14.78
Anger	Male	8.79	9.08	13.48	11.97
	Female	9.31	11.31	14.03	10.50
Adapted Tennov					
Suicidality	Male	-	-	1.07	1.36
	Female	-	-	0.75	1.24
Difficulty Accepting Separation	Male	-	-	2.75 ^a	1.46
	Female	-	-	1.83	1.70

Note. - = item not administered to subsample.

^aSignificantly different from M for Difficulty Accepting Separation for separated females, $p < .05$.

by the hypothesis. Specifically, the analysis of variance yielded a significant main effect for sex, indicating that the women in this sample had less difficulty accepting their separation than the men, $F(1, 55) = 4.82, p < .05$.

In summary, Hypothesis 2b was not supported by the results of this study. No differences in anxiety, depression or anger were found between separated women and other subgroups. In addition, no differences were demonstrated between separated women's and separated men's suicidal ideation. Finally, although a significant main effect was found for sex for separated subjects' ability to accept their separation, this effect was in the opposite direction of that predicted by the hypothesis. Separated males in this sample found it more difficult to accept their separation than females.

Hypothesis 3a. Overall, separated people will show lower self-esteem than people in intact marriages.

This hypothesis was tested by examining the marital group main effect in a 2×2 analysis of variance conducted on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Contrary to the prediction of Hypothesis 3a, no main effect was found to be significant for marital status and self-esteem ($M = 34.80, S.D. = 4.15$ for non-separated group; $M = 33.33, S.D. = 6.38$ for separated group).

Hypothesis 3b. Separated women will show less self-esteem than any other subgroup. Specifically, separated women will report less self-esteem than either separated or non-separated men, or non-separated women.

This hypothesis was tested for the total sample by examining the sex by marital status interaction for the 2 x 2 analysis of variance on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. A one way analyses of variance was also used to test for a main effect for sex for separated subjects on the Self Esteem Change Scale from the Self-Concept Questionnaire.

Group means for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale are presented in Table 8. The results from the analysis of variance indicate a sex by marital status interaction, $F(1, 118) = 7.28, p < .01$. The subsequent analyses of covariance showed education to be a significant covariate, $F(1, 117) = 7.03, p < .01$. Nevertheless, when the variance associated with education was removed, the sex by marital status interaction continued to be statistically significant. Follow-up simple effects analyses were used to examine this interaction. Contrary to expectations, the results showed that separated women reported higher self-esteem than separated men. Simple effects analyses also demonstrated that separated men reported lower self-esteem than married men. No differences were found between married and

Table 8

Self-Esteem Group Means for Sex by Marital Status

Measure		<u>Non-Separated</u>		<u>Separated</u>	
		M	SD	M	SD
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	Male	35.76	3.88	31.59	6.93
	Female	33.94	4.25	34.91	5.48
Self-Concept Questionnaire					
Self-Esteem Change Scale	Male	-	-	2.31 ^a	.66
	Female	-	-	2.78	.55

Note. - = item not administered to subsample.

^aSignificantly different from M for Self-Esteem Change Scale for Separated Females, $p < .01$.

separated women's reports of self-esteem or between the self-esteem of married males and females.

Group means for the Self-Esteem Change Scale are also presented in Table 8. The analysis of variance yielded a main effect in the opposite direction of that predicted by the hypothesis. Specifically, separated women reported significantly more increase in self-esteem following separation than separated men did, $F(1, 55) = 9.18, p < .01$.

In summary, Hypothesis 3b was not supported by the findings from this study. The results indicated that rather than reporting less self-esteem, separated women actually reported more self-esteem than separated men. Furthermore, separated women reported experiencing more of an increase in self-esteem following their separation than that reported by separated men. Finally, although separated men reported significantly less self-esteem than married men, no difference was found in self-esteem between married and separated women. The analyses of covariance indicated that each of these findings was due to the relationship between the independent and dependent variables rather than due to background differences between groups in education, income or age.

Hypothesis 4. Separated women will report a weaker sense of identity than either separated or non-separated men, or non-separated women.

This hypothesis was tested for the total sample using 2 x 2 analyses of variance to evaluate sex by marital status interactions on the Identity Versus Identity Diffusion (IVID) and the Personal Identity scales. For separated subjects, a one way analysis of variance was also used to investigate a main effect for sex on the Sense of Self Change Scale of the Self-Concept Questionnaire.

Group means for the IVID are presented in Table 9. The analysis of variance yielded a significant sex by marital status interaction, $F(1, 115) = 4.00, p < .05$. The follow-up simple effects analysis examining this interaction, however, failed to provide support for the hypothesis. No differences were demonstrated between separated women's scores on the IVID and the scores of any other group. Only one difference between groups was demonstrated: separated men reported a significantly weaker sense of identity than married men.

Table 9 also presents group means for the Personal Identity Scale. The analysis of variance showed marginal support for a sex by marital status interaction, $F(1, 115) = 3.46, p = .065$. Similar to the findings for the IVID, the

Table 9

Identity Group Means for Sex by Marital Status

Measure		<u>Non-Separated</u>		<u>Separated</u>	
		M	SD	M	SD
IVID	Male	43.34	7.64	36.14	9.31
	Female	41.29	6.76	40.06	8.90
Personal Identity Scale	Male	7.48	1.59	5.97	1.94
	Female	7.28	1.11	6.91	1.91
Self-Concept Questionnaire					
Sense of Self Change Scale	Male	-	-	2.00	0.38
	Female	-	-	2.06	0.35

Note. - = item not administered to subsample.

follow-up simple effects analysis examining this interaction showed that separated men reported a weaker sense of identity than married men. Unlike the results for the IVID, however, the simple effects analysis also demonstrated that separated females reported a significantly stronger sense of identity than separated males.

Finally, group means for the Sense of Self Change Scale are presented in Table 9. No group differences were found to be significant for this measure using analysis of variance.

In summary, Hypothesis 4 which predicted that separated women would report a weaker sense of identity than any other subgroup was not supported by the results of this study. The hypothesis was tested using three different measures of identity, each of which yielded different results. A sex by marital status interaction was found to be significant when identity was measured by the IVID and to be marginally significant with the Personal Identity Scale. On the IVID, follow-up analyses revealed only one difference between groups: separated men reported a weaker sense of identity than men in intact marriages. This difference was also found with the Personal Identity Scale but, in addition, directly contrary to the expectations of the hypothesis, separated men were shown to report weaker identities than separated women. Finally, when identity was

measured by the Self Concept Questionnaire, a measure administered to separated subjects only, no effects were determined to be statistically significant.

Summary of Group Differences. Sex differences and comparisons between separated and married groups were addressed by Hypotheses 1 - 4 of this study. Full support was demonstrated for the prediction that women would be more relationally oriented than men. Full support was also shown for the prediction that separated subjects would be more anxious, depressed and angry than their married counterparts. Other expectations, however, were not confirmed. No main effect for marital status was found for self-esteem. In addition, there was no evidence to suggest that separated women experienced more psychological distress than other subgroups. In fact, the results indicated that separated women actually had less difficulty accepting their separated status than separated men did. Other findings also directly contradicted hypothesized relationships. While it was expected that separated women would report less self-esteem and a weaker sense of identity than other subgroups, the reverse was found to be true. Separated men actually reported weaker self-esteem and, with one measure of identity, a weaker sense of identity than separated women. Separated men also reported weaker self-esteem and, with two measures of identity, weaker identities than married men. No differences in self-esteem or identity were

demonstrated between separated women and women in intact marriages. Separated women, however, noted experiencing an increase in self-esteem since the time of their separation.

Buffering Effects of Friendship

Hypotheses 5 - 7 pertain to the potential buffering effects of friendship strength on women's reactions to marital disruption. In order to test these hypotheses with analyses of variance, a median split technique was used to divide the total sample into two friendship groups: "strong" and "weak." Subjects who scored 16 or above on the Perceived Social Support-Friends scale (PSS-Fr) (Prociadano & Heller, 1983) were placed in the strong friendship group; subjects who scored 15 or below were placed in the weak friendship group. Hypotheses were then tested using a 2 (sex) x 2 (marital status) x 2 (friendship strength) factorial analysis of variance for measures administered to the total sample. For measures administered only to the separated sample, a two factorial analysis of variance was employed (sex x friendship strength). Analyses of variance which yielded significant findings were followed by analyses of covariance which separately assessed the covariates education, age and prior income. Finally, interactions which remained significant after the variance associated with each covariate was removed, were further examined with follow-up simple effects analyses.

Hypothesis 5. Friendship strength will be negatively related to psychological distress among separated women. Specifically, separated women who report stronger friendships will report less anxiety, depression, anger, suicidal ideation and difficulty accepting the separation.

This hypothesis was tested for the total sample using a series of 2 x 2 x 2 analyses of variance to assess interactions for the anxiety, depression and hostility subscales of the POMS. For the separated sample, a series of 2 x 2 (sex x friendship strength) analyses of variance were also used to assess interactions for the Difficulty Accepting Separation and the Suicidality subscales of the Tenno Scale.

The results demonstrated only partial support for the hypothesis. Table 10 presents the group means for the POMS subscales. No effect for sex was revealed by the analyses. In addition, no association was found between anxiety and friendship strength. However, a marital status x friendship strength interaction was determined to be significant for both depression, $F(1, 114) = 4.59, p < .05$, and anger, $F(1, 114) = 12.55, p = .001$. The subsequent analyses of covariance showed both education and income to be significant covariates for depression ($F(1, 113) = 6.44, p < .05$ for education; $F(1, 106) = 5.17, p < .05$ for income). When the variance due to education and income was removed,

Table 10

Psychological Distress Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Friendship Strength (PSS-Fr)

Measure		Non-Separated				Separated			
		Low PSS-Fr (n=36)		High PSS-Fr (n=25)		Low PSS-Fr (n=23)		High PSS-Fr (n=38)	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
POMS									
Anxiety	Male	16.05	6.21	15.56	6.77	22.87	10.47	15.86	6.40
	Female	15.81	5.98	17.94	9.94	22.88	12.14	19.58	10.71
Depression	Male	6.15	6.19	6.56	6.62	22.00	18.27	11.29	10.89
	Female	5.88	5.91	10.56	12.25	19.00	16.94	14.83	14.24
Anger	Male	7.10	6.16	12.56	13.24	17.40	13.32	9.29	8.97
	Female	4.75	4.60	13.88	14.10	18.13	14.00	12.67	9.02
Adapted Tennov									
Suicidality	Male	-	-	-	-	1.14	1.66	1.00	1.04
	Female	-	-	-	-	0.50	1.41	0.83	1.20
Difficulty									
Accepting	Male	-	-	-	-	2.50	1.50	2.92	1.44
	Female	-	-	-	-	2.43	1.62	1.65	1.72

Note. - = item not administered to subsample.

however, the marital status x friendship strength interaction remained statistically significant. Similarly, although age was shown to be a significant covariate for anger, $F(1, 113) = 9.28, p < .01$, the marital status x friendship strength interaction remained significant after the variance for age was eliminated. These findings suggest that the interactions for depression and hostility demonstrated by the initial analyses of variance were due to the relationship between the independent and dependent variables rather than the result of spurious background differences between groups.

Follow-up simple effects analyses were employed to examine these interactions. For depression, the results demonstrated that separated subjects with strong friendships were significantly less depressed than separated subjects with weak friendships. No such association was found between friendship and depression for married subjects. Furthermore, among subjects with low friendship scores, those who were separated were significantly more depressed than those who remained in intact marriages. In contrast, subjects with high friendship scores showed no differences in depression across marital groups. These findings are consistent with the hypothesis that friendship serves as a buffer in both men's and women's reactions to separation.

The simple effects analysis revealed similar results for anger. Separated subjects who reported strong friendships were shown to be significantly less angry than those who reported weak friendships. Interestingly, the reverse was demonstrated with married subjects; married people in this sample who reported strong friendships were found to be significantly more hostile than those who reported weak friendships. Finally, among subjects with low friendship scores, separated subjects were found to be significantly more angry than their married counterparts. No differences in hostility were seen across marriage groups among subjects with high friendship scores. As for depression, the results from the analysis of variance and the follow-up simple effects analyses suggest that strong friendships may be associated with better psychological functioning for both men and women undergoing separation.

Group means for the Difficulty Accepting Separation and Suicidality subscales of the Tennov Scale are presented in Table 10. Two by two (sex x friendship strength) analyses of variance revealed no relationship between friendship strength and either Difficulty Accepting Separation or Suicidality.

In summary, the results of this study provided only partial support for the prediction that friendship strength would be negatively related to psychological distress among

separated women. No association was found between friendship strength and anxiety, suicidality or difficulty accepting the separation, and no sex differences were demonstrated by the analyses. However, the results do show a negative relationship between friendship strength and both separated men's and women's experience of depression and anger.

Hypothesis 6. Friendship strength will be positively related to self-esteem among separated women.

This hypothesis was tested for the total sample using a 2 x 2 x 2 analysis of variance to assess interactions on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. For the separated sample, a 2 x 2 (sex x friendship strength) analysis of variance was also used to assess interactions for the Self-Esteem Change Scale from the Self-Concept Questionnaire.

The results of the analyses yielded partial support for the hypothesis. Table 11 presents the group means for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Although no sex differences were demonstrated, a marital status by friendship strength interaction was determined to be statistically significant, $F(1, 114) = 4.82, p < .05$. Subsequent analyses of variance revealed education to be a significant covariate in this analysis, $F(1, 113) = 7.32, p < .01$. The interaction remained significant, however, when the variance associated with education was removed,

Table 11

Self-Esteem Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Friendship Strength (PSS-Fr)

Measure		Non-Separated				Separated			
		Low PSS-Fr (n=36)		High PSS-Fr (n=25)		Low PSS-Fr (n=23)		High PSS-Fr (n=38)	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Rosenberg Self- Esteem Scale	Male	35.85	3.60	35.56	4.67	29.47	7.70	33.86	5.38
	Female	34.19	3.51	33.69	4.99	32.25	3.73	35.79	5.75
Self-Concept Questionnaire Self-Esteem Change Scale	Male	-	-	-	-	2.14	0.61	2.54	0.65
	Female	-	-	-	-	2.71	0.48	2.78	0.59

Note. - = item not administered to subsample.

indicating that the findings were not contaminated by background differences between groups.

A follow-up simple effects analysis was used to examine the above marital status by friendship strength interaction. The results showed that separated men and women who reported strong friendships had significantly higher self-esteem than separated subjects who reported weak friendships. In contrast, no differences in self-esteem were seen between married subjects with high and low friendship scores. Among subjects who reported weak friendships, separated men and women were shown to have significantly lower self-esteem than their married counterparts. No differences were found across marital status among subjects who reported strong friendships. These findings are consistent with the hypothesis that friendship may mediate the impact of separation on both men's and women's self-esteem.

Group means for the Self-Esteem Change Scale from the Self-Concept Questionnaire are presented in Table 11. The analysis of variance yielded no support for the hypothesis. Specifically, friendship strength was found to be unrelated to self-esteem as measured by the Self-Esteem Change Scale.

In sum, partial support was demonstrated for Hypothesis 6 which predicts that friendship strength will be positively related to self-esteem among separated women.

The results for the Rosenberg Scale are consistent with the notion that friendship serves a buffering role for both separated men's and women's self-esteem. However, no sex differences were demonstrated and no relationship was found between self-esteem and friendship strength when self-esteem was measured with the Self-Esteem Change Scale of the Self-Concept Questionnaire.

Hypothesis 7. Friendship strength will be positively related to strength of identity among separated women.

This hypothesis was tested for the total sample using 2 x 2 x 2 analyses of variance to assess interactions for the IVID and the Personal Identity scales. For the separated sample, an additional 2 x 2 (sex x friendship strength) analysis of variance was used to assess interactions on the Sense of Self Change Scale from the Self-Concept Questionnaire.

The results showed partial support for the hypothesis. Group means for the IVID are presented in Table 12. Although the results indicated no effect for sex, a marital status x friendship strength interaction was determined to be significant, $F(1, 111) = 4.54, p < .05$. The follow-up simple effects analysis used to examine the interaction revealed that separated men and women with strong friendships reported significantly stronger identities on the IVID than

Table 12

Identity Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Friendship Strength (PSS-Fr)

Measure		<u>Non-Separated</u>				<u>Separated</u>			
		<u>Low PSS-Fr</u>		<u>High PSS-Fr</u>		<u>Low PSS-Fr</u>		<u>High PSS-Fr</u>	
		<u>(n=36)</u>		<u>(n=25)</u>		<u>(n=23)</u>		<u>(n=38)</u>	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
IVID	Male	43.70	7.60	42.56	8.16	32.13	9.43	40.43	7.27
	Female	41.64	6.12	41.07	7.25	37.63	9.13	40.88	8.87
Personal Identity Scale	Male	7.40	1.67	7.67	1.50	5.67	2.13	6.29	1.73
	Female	7.29	1.27	7.27	1.03	6.63	1.85	7.00	1.96
Self-Concept Questionnaire Sense of Self Change Scale	Male	-	-	-	-	1.93	0.26	2.08	0.51
	Female	-	-	-	-	2.14	0.38	2.04	0.37

Note. - = item not administered to subsample.

those with weak friendships. In contrast, no differences in identity were found between married groups with high and low friendship scores. In addition, the simple effects analysis showed that, among subjects who reported weak friendships, those who were separated from their spouses reported significantly weaker identities than those who remained in intact marriages. No differences were seen between married and separated subjects with high friendship scores.

Table 12 also presents the group means for the Personal Identity Scale. The three way analysis of variance yielded no support for the hypothesis; specifically, no relationship was demonstrated between friendship strength and identity as measured by the Personal Identity Scale.

For separated subjects only, group means for the Sense of Self Change Scale are presented in Table 12. The two way analysis of variance provided no support for the hypothesis; no relationship was found among separated subjects between friendship strength and identity measured by the Sense of Self Change Scale.

In summary, support for the prediction that friendship strength would be positively related to identity strength among separated women was mixed. The results for the IVID lend support to the contention that friendship strength is related to strength of identity among both separated men and women. However, no sex differences were determined to be

significant and no relationship between identity and friendship was found for either the Personal Identity Scale or the more open-ended Self-Concept Questionnaire.

Summary of the Findings on the Buffering Effects of Friendship. Hypotheses 5 - 7 pertained to the potential buffering effects of friendship on women's reactions to marital separation. Specifically, these hypotheses predicted that friendship strength would be negatively related to separated women's psychological distress, and positively related to women's self-esteem and strength of identity. The results yielded partial support for the hypotheses. Although no sex differences were demonstrated, friendship strength appeared to be related to several aspects of both men's and women's functioning in the aftermath of separation. Among separated subjects, friendship strength was shown to be negatively related to depression and hostility, and, for certain measures, to be positively associated with self-esteem and strength of identity. None of these relationships was demonstrated for married subjects. These results are consistent with the notion that friendships may play a buffering role in both men's and women's reactions to separation.

Buffering Effects of Sex Role Attitudes

Hypotheses 8 - 10 pertain to the potential buffering effects of sex role attitudes on subjects' reactions to

marital separation. In order to test these hypotheses with analyses of variance, a median split technique was used to divide the total sample into two groups on the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS): "nontraditional" and "traditional." Subjects who scored 60 and above on this measure were placed in the nontraditional sex role attitudes group; subjects who scored 59 or below were placed in the traditional sex role attitudes group. Hypotheses were then tested using a 2 (sex) x 2 (marital status) x 2 (sex role attitudes) factorial analysis of variance for measures administered to the total sample. For measures administered only to separated subjects, a 2 (sex) x 2 (sex role attitudes) factorial analysis of variance was employed. Analyses of variance which yielded significant interactions were followed by analyses of covariance which separately assessed the covariates education, age and prior income. Interactions which remained statistically significant after each covariate was evaluated were further examined with follow-up simple effects analyses.

Hypothesis 8. Sex role attitudes will be negatively related to psychological distress among separated women. Specifically, separated women who report more nontraditional attitudes will report less anxiety, depression, anger, difficulty accepting the separation, and suicidal ideation.

This hypothesis was tested for the total sample using a series of 2 x 2 x 2 analyses of variance to assess interactions on the anxiety, depression and hostility subscales of the POMS. Among separated subjects, this hypothesis was additionally tested using 2 x 2 (sex x sex role attitudes) analyses of variance to test interactions on the Difficulty Accepting Separation and Suicidality subscales of the Tennov Scale.

Table 13 presents group means for the POMS subscales. The results from the analyses of variance yielded no main effects or interactions and thus failed to support the hypothesis. Specifically, no relationship was demonstrated between sex role attitudes and anxiety, depression or anger.

Group means for the Difficulty Accepting Separation and Suicidality subscales of the Tennov Scale are also presented in Table 13. The hypothesis was not supported by the results. Specifically, no relationship was demonstrated between sex role attitudes and difficulty in acceptance of the breakup or suicidal ideation.

In summary, the results of this study failed to support the prediction that sex role attitudes would be negatively related to psychological distress among separated women. No relationship was found between sex role attitudes and anxiety, depression, anger, suicidal ideation or the ability to accept the separation.

Table 13

Psychological Distress Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Sex Role Attitudes (AWS)

Measure		Non-Separated				Separated			
		Low AWS (n=27)		High AWS (n=28)		Low AWS (n=30)		High AWS (n=29)	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
POMS									
Anxiety	Male	15.36	5.79	16.46	7.11	20.44	10.22	18.83	8.43
	Female	16.46	9.54	16.53	6.50	20.00	12.10	20.24	10.48
Depression	Male	6.07	5.81	6.38	6.71	17.94	16.50	15.42	16.28
	Female	8.15	12.04	7.87	7.94	17.50	18.61	13.53	10.75
Anger	Male	6.86	5.61	10.92	11.69	16.19	11.40	10.42	12.75
	Female	7.08	12.42	10.67	9.47	14.43	10.29	12.88	10.68
Adapted Tennov									
Suicidality	Male	-	-	-	-	0.81	1.38	1.50	1.43
	Female	-	-	-	-	0.57	1.09	0.80	1.42
Difficulty									
Accepting Separation	Male	-	-	-	-	2.50	1.63	2.90	1.20
	Female	-	-	-	-	1.64	1.74	1.87	1.68

Note. - = item not administered to subsample.

Hypothesis 9. Sex role attitudes will be positively related to self-esteem among separated women.

This hypothesis was tested for the total sample using 2 x 2 x 2 analyses of variance to assess interactions on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. This hypothesis was additionally tested for separated subjects using a 2 x 2 (sex x sex role attitudes) analysis of variance to assess interactions on the Self-Esteem Change Scale of the Self-Concept Questionnaire.

Group means for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale are presented in Table 14. The analysis of variance showed a trend for a main effect for sex role attitudes, $F(1, 106) = 5.78$, $p = .057$. Overall, subjects in this sample with more nontraditional AWS scores reported higher self-esteem than subjects with less nontraditional AWS scores. However, no specific relationships between the AWS and sex or marital status were found for self-esteem. Subsequent analyses of covariance to control for confounding background differences between groups were considered unnecessary as no differences between sex and marital status groups were demonstrated.

Table 14 also presents the group means for the Self-Esteem Change Scale. The results demonstrated no relationship between sex role attitudes and the Self-Esteem Change Scale.

Table 14

Self-Esteem Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Sex Role Attitudes (AWS)

		<u>Non-Separated</u>				<u>Separated</u>			
		<u>Low AWS</u>		<u>High AWS</u>		<u>Low AWS</u>		<u>High AWS</u>	
		<u>(n=27)</u>		<u>(n=28)</u>		<u>(n=30)</u>		<u>(n=29)</u>	
<u>Self Esteem</u>		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	Male	34.93	4.70	36.54	2.76	30.94	6.46	32.75	7.88
	Female	34.23	4.15	34.27	3.99	33.14	6.62	36.76	3.65
Self-Concept Questionnaire Self-Esteem Change Scale	Male	-	-	-	-	2.38	0.62	2.30	0.82
	Female	-	-	-	-	2.57	0.76	2.93	0.26

Note. - = item not administered to subsample.

In sum, the results of this study do not support Hypothesis 9. The analyses revealed an overall trend indicating that, for the sample as a whole, nontraditional sex role attitudes were associated with positive self esteem on the Rosenberg Scale. However, there was no evidence from these findings that sex role attitudes yielded any particular buffering effects for separated individuals or for separated women as a distinct subgroup. Finally, no relationship was demonstrated between sex role attitudes and self-esteem when self-esteem was assessed with the Self-Esteem Change Scale.

Hypothesis 10. Sex role attitudes will be positively related to strength of identity for separated women.

This hypothesis was tested for the total sample using 2 x 2 x 2 analyses of variance to assess interactions on the IVID and the Personal Identity scales. For separated subjects, this hypothesis was additionally tested using a 2 x 2 analysis of variance to assess between group differences on the Sense of Self Change Scale from the Self-Concept Questionnaire.

No support was demonstrated for the hypothesis. Group means for the IVID and the Personal Identity scales are presented in Table 15. The findings showed no relationship between sex role attitudes and identity as measured by the IVID or the Personal Identity Scale.

Table 15

Identity Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Sex Role Attitudes (AWS)

Measure		Non-Separated				Separated			
		Low AWS (n=27)		High AWS (n=28)		Low AWS (n=30)		High AWS (n=29)	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
IVID	Male	44.21	8.44	41.77	6.38	35.69	9.16	36.42	10.24
	Female	42.23	6.93	41.00	6.79	40.43	9.91	40.47	8.02
Personal Identity Scale	Male	7.57	1.83	7.38	1.50	6.19	1.83	5.83	2.12
	Female	7.25	1.22	7.53	0.92	6.64	2.24	7.24	1.60
Self-Concept Questionnaire Sense of Self Change Scale	Male	-	-	-	-	2.00	0.00	2.10	0.57
	Female	-	-	-	-	1.93	0.27	2.20	0.41

Note. - = item not administered to subsample.

Group means for the Sense of Self Change Scale are presented in Table 15. The results demonstrated no relationship between sex role attitudes and identity as measured by the Sense of Self Change Scale.

Overall, no relationship was demonstrated between sex role attitudes and any of the three measures of identity employed in this investigation.

Summary of the Findings on the Buffering Effects of Sex Role Attitudes. Hypotheses 8 - 10 pertained to the potential buffering effects of nontraditional sex role attitudes on women's reactions to marital separation. Specifically, these hypotheses predicted that nontraditional attitudes would be negatively related to separated women's psychological distress, and positively related to women's self-esteem and strength of identity. The predictions were largely unsupported by the results of this study. No relationship was found between sex role attitudes and either psychological distress or identity. Although nontraditional attitudes tended to be positively related to self-esteem overall, no specific relationship was found between attitudes and sex or marital status. It must be concluded, therefore, that sex role attitudes played no unique role in separated women's reactions to the dissolution of their marriages.

Buffering Effects of Occupational Involvement

Hypotheses 11 - 13 pertain to the potential buffering effects of occupational involvement on women's reactions to marital separation. Occupational involvement was measured by two scales in this study, Occupational Status and Job Importance. In order to test the hypotheses with analyses of variance, a median split technique was employed to divide the total sample into two groups for each of these measures. Subjects who scored 6 or above on Hollingshead's Occupational Status scale were placed in the high occupational group; subjects who obtained scores of 5 or below on the scale were placed in the low occupational group. In terms of Job Importance, subjects who indicated a score of over 4 on the Job Importance scale were placed in the high job importance group; subjects who scored 4 or below were placed in the low job importance group. Hypotheses were tested using a 2 (sex) x 2 (marital status) x 2 (occupational involvement) factorial analysis of variance for dependent measures administered to the total sample. For measures administered only to separated subjects, a 2 factorial design was employed (sex x occupational involvement). Analyses of variance which revealed significant interactions were followed by a series of analyses of covariance to independently assess the effects of the covariates education, age and prior income. Interactions which remained statistically significant after

the variance associated with significant covariates was removed were further examined with follow-up simple effects analyses.

In a divergence from previous analyses, an analysis of covariance using the covariate prior income was also employed in those cases where significant main effects were uncovered in the absence of significant interactions. The relationship between employment and economic status has been well documented in the literature. An analysis of covariance therefore was used as a means of assessing the variance associated with occupational involvement while controlling the variance for income.

Hypothesis 11. Occupational involvement will be negatively related to psychological distress among separated women. Specifically, separated women who report more occupational involvement will report less anxiety, depression, anger, difficulty accepting the separation, and suicidal ideation.

This hypothesis was tested for the total sample using a series of 2 x 2 x 2 analyses of variance to assess interactions for the POMS subscales using Occupational Status and Job Importance as measures of occupational involvement. This hypothesis was additionally tested for the separated sample using 2 x 2 (sex x occupational involvement) analyses of variance to assess between group

differences on the Difficulty Accepting Separation and Suicidality subscales of the Tennen Scale.

Table 16 presents the group means for the POMS subscales for Occupational Status. Although none of the findings indicated a relationship between Occupational Status and psychological functioning that was unique to separated women, the results demonstrated several significant relationships among variables, thus providing partial support for the hypothesis. For anxiety, an Occupational Status x sex interaction was determined to be statistically significant $F(1, 114) = 4.53, p < .05$. The subsequent analyses of covariance found age to be a significant covariate in this analysis, $F(1, 113) = 6.30, p < .05$. When the variance associated with age was removed, however, the interaction remained significant. The follow-up simple effects analysis examining this interaction revealed that women in high status occupations were significantly less anxious than women in low status occupations. This effect was not found for men.

The results additionally yielded a marginally significant effect for Occupational Status for depression, $F(1, 114) = 3.74, p = .056$. These findings indicated that, overall, subjects who were employed in low status occupations were more depressed than subjects employed in high status

Table 16

Psychological Distress Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Occupational Status

		<u>Non-Separated</u>				<u>Separated</u>			
		<u>Low Status (n=29)</u>		<u>High Status (n=32)</u>		<u>Low Status (n=39)</u>		<u>High Status (n=22)</u>	
<u>Psychological Distress</u>		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
POMS									
Anxiety	Male	13.11	5.04	17.15	6.47	20.00	9.66	18.85	9.19
	Female	18.80	8.95	13.63	5.52	22.17	11.62	15.89	7.89
Depression	Male	6.56	5.90	6.15	6.49	18.13	16.09	15.23	16.08
	Female	10.00	11.31	5.25	5.66	18.57	16.34	9.00	6.20
Anger	Male	6.44	6.93	9.85	9.87	14.94	13.31	11.69	10.31
	Female	10.55	12.14	7.25	9.93	15.83	11.83	9.44	3.17
Adapted Tennov									
Suicidality	Male	-	-	-	-	1.13	1.36	1.00	1.47
	Female	-	-	-	-	0.86	1.39	0.38	0.74
Difficulty									
Accepting Separation	Male	-	-	-	-	3.07	1.49	2.25	1.36
	Female	-	-	-	-	2.14	1.70	1.00	1.51

Note. - = item not administered to subsample.

occupations. A subsequent analysis of covariance was conducted to assess the contribution of income to this effect. Although the results revealed that income was a significant covariate in the analysis, $F(1, 106) = 5.20$, $p < .05$, when the variance associated with income was removed, the relationship between Occupational Status and depression remained marginally significant. This suggests that high status occupations may play a buffering role in depression that is unrelated to income.

No relationship was demonstrated between Occupational Status and anger.

Table 16 also presents the group means for the Difficulty Accepting Separation and the Suicidality subscales of the Tenno Scale for Occupational Status. The results of the analysis of variance revealed no relationship between Occupational Status and Suicidality. However, a significant main effect for Occupational Status was found for subjects' reported ability to accept the separation, $F(1, 53) = 4.85$, $p < .05$. The results indicated that men and women in high status occupations had less difficulty accepting their separations than those in low status occupations. As with depression, an analysis of covariance was conducted to assess the contribution of income to this effect. This analysis found income to be nonsignificant as

a covariate, indicating that the effect for Occupational Status was unrelated to financial gains.

The findings for Occupational Involvement as measured by Job Importance are reported below. Table 17 presents the group means for the POMS subscales when Job Importance was employed as the measure of occupational involvement. The series of analyses of variance yielded significant sex x marital status x Job Importance interactions for anxiety, $F(1, 112) = 5.46, p < .05$, and for depression, $F(1, 112) = 4.42, p < .05$. Furthermore, a marital status x Job Importance interaction was determined to be significant for anger, $F(1, 112) = 5.13, p < .05$.

The subsequent analyses of covariance revealed that age was a significant covariate for anxiety, $F(1, 111) = 9.40, p < .01$. When the variance associated with age was removed, the three way relationship between sex, marital status and Job Importance was reduced to a trend, $F(1, 111) = 3.18, p = .077$. This finding suggests that the significant interaction which emerged in the initial analysis of variance was partly due to age. However, the fact that the interaction remained marginally supported after the removal of the variance associated with age also indicates that it was due in part to the relationship among the variables. Therefore, the sex x marital status x Job Importance interaction found for anxiety was examined

Table 17

Psychological Distress Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Job Importance

Measure		Non-Separated				Separated				
		Low Importance (n=27)		High Importance (n=28)		Low Importance (n=30)		High Importance (n=29)		
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
POMS										
Anxiety	Male	16.00	6.60	15.83	6.25	18.30	10.45	20.11	8.88	
	Female	14.92	5.96	22.50	12.03	23.69	11.15	17.13	10.09	
Depression	Male	7.27	6.48	5.67	6.15	15.20	18.70	17.68	14.64	
	Female	6.08	7.00	15.50	15.93	19.38	15.63	12.38	13.46	
Anger	Male	6.82	4.85	10.00	10.85	12.80	14.06	13.84	11.11	
	Female	7.50	8.55	16.33	19.38	18.50	12.35	9.56	5.74	
Adapted Tenrov										
Suicidality	Male	-	-	-	-	1.00	1.32	1.11	1.41	
	Female	-	-	-	-	0.75	1.24	0.71	1.33	
Difficulty Accepting Separation	Male	-	-	-	-	3.33	1.00	2.39	1.58	
	Female	-	-	-	-	2.25	1.84	1.36	1.45	

Note. - = item not administered to subsample.

further with a follow-up simple effects analysis. The results showed that separated women who placed low importance on working outside the home were significantly more anxious than separated women who placed high importance on working outside the home. In contrast, no differences in anxiety were seen between married women who ascribed high and low importance to jobs. Furthermore, the simple effects analysis showed that among women who reported low job importance, the separated women in this group were significantly more anxious than their married counterparts. No difference was seen across marital status for women who ascribed high value to jobs. Finally, no differences were found between male subgroups. These findings are consistent with the notion that occupational involvement provides unique buffering effects for anxiety among women undergoing separation.

For depression, the series of analyses of covariance found both education and income to be significant covariates (for education, $F(1, 111) = 5.07, p < .05$; for income, $F(1, 104) = 4.86, p < .05$). When the variance associated with education was removed, the sex x marital status x Job Importance interaction which emerged in the initial analysis of variance continued to be significant. However, when the variance associated with income was removed, the three way interaction was reduced to a trend, $F(1, 104) = 3.63, p = .06$. As for anxiety, these findings suggest that the

initial interaction may have been due in part to an effect for income. The fact that the three way relationship continued to be marginally significant after the variance associated with income was removed, however, indicates that it was also due to the relationship among the variables. Therefore, the sex x marital status x Job Importance interaction found for depression was examined further with a follow-up simple effects analysis. The findings showed that among women who placed low importance on jobs, separated women were significantly more depressed than those in intact marriages. No significant differences were demonstrated between married and separated women who placed high value on employment outside the home. Among men who indicated high job importance, however, separated males were shown to be significantly more depressed than their married counterparts. These findings are consistent with the notion that the value ascribed to holding a job may play a buffering role in depression that is unique for women undergoing marital separation.

For anger, the analyses of covariance found age to be a significant covariate, $F(1, 111) = 9.86, p < .01$. When the variance associated with age was removed, however, the marital status x Job Importance interaction which emerged in the initial analysis of variance continued to be significant. These results suggest that this interaction was due to the relationship between the two independent

variables and the dependent variable anger. The follow-up simple effects analysis revealed that among subjects who ascribed low importance to having a job, those who were separated from their spouses reported significantly more anger than those who remained in intact marriages. No differences between marital groups were demonstrated among subjects who ascribed high importance to jobs. These results suggest that the value placed on jobs may be related to the experience of anger for both men and women undergoing a separation.

Table 17 also presents the unadjusted group means for the Difficulty Accepting Separation and the Suicidality subscales from the Tenov Scale when Job Importance was used as the measure of occupational involvement. The results demonstrated a main effect for Job Importance for the Difficulty Accepting Separation subscale, $F(1, 53) = 4.66$, $p < .05$. These findings indicated that high Job Importance was related to greater ease in accepting a separation for both men and women. The subsequent analysis of covariance used to explore a potential effect for income found income to be nonsignificant as a covariate.

In summary, the results of this study showed partial support for Hypothesis 11. When occupational involvement was measured with the Job Importance Scale, the results were consistent with the notion that occupational involvement

serves a buffering role for separated women's anxiety and depression and for both separated men's and women's anger and difficulty accepting the separation. However, the results for Job Importance and suicidal ideation failed to support the hypothesis. When Occupational Status was used as the measure of occupational involvement, the findings were consistent with the notion that occupational involvement serves a buffering function for both separated men's and women's difficulty in accepting their separation. Finally, Occupational Status was found to be negatively related to women's anxiety overall, and to both men's and women's feelings of depression. No relationship was found between Occupational Status and suicidal ideation.

Hypothesis 12. Occupational involvement will be positively related to self-esteem among separated women.

This hypothesis was tested for the total sample using a 2 x 2 x 2 analysis of variance to assess interactions for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. For the separated sample, this hypothesis was additionally tested using a 2 x 2 (sex x occupational involvement) analysis of variance to assess interactions on the Self-Esteem Change Scale of the Self-Concept Questionnaire.

Group means for the Rosenberg Scale for Occupational Status are presented in Table 18. The analysis of variance yielded a significant main effect for occupational status,

Table 18

Self-Esteem Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Occupational Status

Measure		Non-Separated				Separated			
		Low Status (n=27)		High Status (n=28)		Low Status (n=30)		High Status (n=29)	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	Male	34.67	2.55	36.25	4.31	29.75	7.82	33.85	5.06
	Female	32.90	4.49	35.67	3.28	33.96	6.02	37.33	2.78
Self-Concept Questionnaire Self-Esteem Change Scale	Male	-	-	-	-	2.40	0.63	2.25	0.75
	Female	-	-	-	-	2.68	0.65	3.00	0.00

Note. - = item not administered to subsample.

$F(1, 114) = 10.62, p < .01$, indicating that, overall, subjects in high status occupations experienced greater self-esteem than subjects in low status occupations. A subsequent analysis of covariance was conducted to assess the contribution of income to this effect. The results showed income to be nonsignificant as a covariate.

The group means for the Self-Esteem Change Scale and Occupational Status are also presented in Table 18. The results revealed no relationship between Occupational Status and the Self-Esteem Change Scale.

Table 19 presents the group means for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale when occupational involvement was measured with the Job Importance Scale. No relationship was found to be significant between the Rosenberg Scale and Job Importance.

Group means for the Self-Esteem Change Scale and Job Importance are also presented in Table 19. The results of the analysis of variance showed no significant relationship between Job Importance and the Self-Esteem Change Scale.

Table 19

Self-Esteem Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Job Importance

Measure		Non-Separated				Separated			
		Low Importance (n=35)		High Importance (n=24)		Low Importance (n=26)		High Importance (n=35)	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	Male	34.55	3.78	36.50	3.85	31.10	8.36	31.84	6.29
	Female	34.79	3.55	32.33	5.96	33.63	6.04	36.19	4.71
Self-Concept Questionnaire Self-Esteem Change Scale	Male	-	-	-	-	2.44	0.73	2.28	0.67
	Female	-	-	-	-	2.75	0.57	2.79	0.59

Note. - = item not administered to subsample.

In summary, no support was demonstrated for the prediction that occupational involvement would be related to self-esteem among separated women. Only a main effect for Occupational Status was found to be significant, indicating, in the most general terms, that subjects in high status occupations enjoyed greater self-esteem than subjects in low status occupations.

Hypothesis 13. Occupational involvement will be positively related to strength of identity among separated women.

This hypothesis was tested for the total sample using 2 x 2 x 2 analyses of variance to assess interactions on the IVID and Personal Identity scales. For separated subjects, this hypothesis was also tested with a 2 x 2 (sex x occupational involvement) analysis of variance to assess interactions on the Sense of Self Change Scale of the Self Concept Questionnaire.

The hypothesis was not supported by the results when occupational involvement was measured by the Occupational Status scale. Group means for the IVID, the Personal Identity Scale and the Sense of Self Change Scale for Occupational Status are shown in Table 20. The results showed no significant main effects or interactions for the IVID, the Personal Identity Scale or the Sense of Self Change Scale when Occupational Status was employed as the

Table 20

Identity Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Occupational Status

Measure		<u>Non-Separated</u>				<u>Separated</u>			
		<u>Low Status</u>		<u>High Status</u>		<u>Low Status</u>		<u>High Status</u>	
		<u>(n=29)</u>		<u>(n=32)</u>		<u>(n=39)</u>		<u>(n=22)</u>	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
IVID	Male	42.78	8.00	43.60	7.68	35.31	9.76	37.15	9.02
	Female	40.41	7.42	42.67	5.31	38.96	9.90	42.89	4.99
Personal Identity Scale	Male	7.78	1.30	7.35	1.73	5.88	1.96	6.08	1.98
	Female	7.06	1.21	7.58	0.90	6.61	2.13	7.67	0.87
Self-Concept Questionnaire Sense of Self Change Scale	Male	-	-	-	-	2.00	0.38	2.00	0.43
	Female	-	-	-	-	2.05	0.37	2.13	0.35

Note. - = item not administered to subsample.

measure of occupational involvement.

Partial support for the hypothesis was demonstrated when occupational involvement was measured by the Job Importance scale. Table 21 presents the group means for the IVID and Personal Identity scales. The results from the analysis of variance showed a significant sex x marital status x Job Importance interaction for the IVID, $F(1, 109) = 4.94, p < .05$. This interaction was examined further with a follow-up simple effects analysis. The results showed that among women who ascribed low importance to jobs, those who remained in intact marriages reported significantly stronger identities than those who were separated from their spouses. In contrast, no differences across marital status were seen for women who ascribed high importance to jobs and no differences in identity were demonstrated between separated and married men who placed low value on jobs. Furthermore, among men with high job importance, those who remained married indicated significantly stronger identities than those who were separated from their spouses. The simple effects analysis further showed that separated women who reported high Job Importance had significantly stronger identities than separated men with high Job Importance. In contrast, among married subjects, males with high Job Importance scores reported significantly stronger identities than females with high scores. These findings are

Table 21

Identity Group Means for Sex by Marital Status by Job Importance

Measure		Non-Separated				Separated			
		Low Importance (n=35)		High Importance (n=24)		Low Importance (n=26)		High Importance (n=35)	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
IVID	Male	41.45	7.95	44.50	7.44	36.50	12.13	35.95	7.83
	Female	42.83	5.93	37.63	9.04	42.50	8.33	42.67	5.31
Personal Identity Scale	Male	7.18	1.94	7.67	1.37	5.50	2.32	6.21	1.72
	Female	7.48	1.12	6.50	1.00	6.31	2.21	7.50	1.37
Self-Concept Questionnaire Sense of Self Change Scale	Male	-	-	-	-	2.00	0.50	2.00	0.34
	Female	-	-	-	-	2.13	0.50	2.00	0.00

Note. - = item not administered to subsample.

consistent with the suggestion that occupational involvement may play a role in identity that is unique to separated females.

For the Personal Identity Scale, the analysis of variance demonstrated a main effect for Job Importance, $F(1, 109) = 3.90$, $p = .05$, indicating that higher job importance was generally associated with stronger identity. No sex differences were identified.

The group means for the Sense of Self Change scale are also presented in Table 21. The results of the analysis of variance yielded no significant relationships between Job Importance and the Sense of Self Change scale.

Overall, the prediction that occupational involvement would be positively related to strength of identity among separated women was partially supported by the results of the present study. When occupational involvement was measured with the Job Importance scale, the results for the IVID were consistent with the notion that occupational involvement has a unique buffering effect on separated women's sense of identity. The results for the Personal Identity Scale, however, suggested only an overall relationship between Job Importance and identity, regardless of gender or marital status. No relationship was found between Job Importance and the Sense of Self Change Scale or

between any measure of identity and occupational involvement as measured by Occupational Status.

Summary of the Buffering Effects of Occupational Involvement. Hypotheses 11 - 13 pertained to the potential buffering effects of occupational involvement on women's reactions to marital separation. Specifically, these hypotheses predicted that occupational involvement would be negatively related to separated women's psychological distress, and positively related to women's self-esteem and strength of identity. The results from this study provided mixed support for these predictions. Although variation was seen across multiple measures of the variables, substantial evidence emerged from the findings to suggest that occupational involvement was associated with women's adjustment to the dissolution of their marriages. It should be noted that in all cases of statistically significant results, follow-up analyses were employed to remove any variance associated with financial income. Therefore, the results reported below pertain to the construct "occupational involvement" after any effect for income had been removed.

When occupational involvement was measured with the Job Importance Scale, the results indicated that separated women who ascribed high importance to working outside the home experienced significantly less anxiety than separated

women who did not value outside employment. Furthermore, among women in the sample who placed low value on jobs, those who were separated from their husbands were significantly more anxious and depressed. Moreover, according to one measure of identity (the IVID), they suffered significantly weaker identities than those who remained in intact marriages. In contrast, no differences in anxiety, depression or identity were found between married and separated females who placed high value on jobs. Interestingly, this positive association between job importance and adjustment did not appear to extend to separated males. Among men who placed high value on jobs, the separated subgroup appeared to be significantly more depressed and, according to scores on the IVID, to suffer a significantly weaker sense of identity than their married counterparts. No differences were seen between married and separated men who placed low value on jobs. Finally, separated men with high job importance scores reported a significantly weaker sense of identity on the IVID than separated women who ascribed high value to jobs.

Other aspects of adjustment were also associated with job importance, although not for separated women per se. Both separated women and men who ascribed high importance to jobs reported less difficulty accepting their separations than those who ascribed low importance. In addition, among women and men with low job importance scores, separated

subjects were shown to be significantly more angry than those in intact marriages. No effect for marital status was seen among subjects who ascribed high importance to jobs. Finally, when the Personal Identity Scale was used as the measure of identity, a main effect for job importance indicated that, overall, subjects who ascribed high importance to jobs enjoyed stronger identities than those who ascribed low importance.

Occupational Status as a measure of occupational involvement was found to be a poorer predictor of post-separation adjustment than Job Importance. Mirroring the findings for Job Importance, the results indicated that both separated women and men in high status occupations reported significantly less difficulty accepting their separations than subjects in low status occupations. In addition, a significant main effect for occupational status showed that, overall, subjects in high status occupations reported stronger self-esteem than those in low status occupations. No other findings for occupational status were determined to be significant.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to test several hypotheses derived from the Stone Center model of the psychology of women and to extend the current literature on sex differences in response to marital dissolution. Toward this end, group differences between married and separated men and women were investigated. The potential buffering effects of friendship, sex role attitudes and occupational involvement on reactions to separation were also explored. The following discussion will address group differences, as well as the buffering effects of friendship, sex role attitudes and occupational involvement. Finally, the theoretical implications of the present study for the Stone Center model will be addressed.

Group Differences

Because the concept of a female "self-in-relation" is the major construct of the Stone Center model, the first analysis of this study compared the relational orientations

of females and males. Relational orientation was measured by the "Relational-Insular Orientations" scale (Felton, 1986), an instrument designed specifically to assess attributes of the self-in-relation as it is defined by the Stone Center. The results supported the prediction that women would be more relationally oriented than men. The findings indicated that women in this sample tended to experience a greater capacity to express themselves and to experience psychological growth in the context of mutually empathic and empowering relationships. These results lend support to the Stone Center model of female development and contribute to the growing body of research documenting women's relational focus and capabilities (e.g., Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Cochran & Peplau, 1985; Gilligan, 1982).

A second set of analyses tested group differences between separated individuals and those who remained in intact marriages. The hypotheses predicted that separated men and women would experience more psychological distress and suffer lower self-esteem than married subjects. The findings supported the expectations for psychological distress; separated men and women were more anxious, depressed and angry than their married counterparts. Although causality cannot be inferred from the present investigation, this study echoes numerous others which have suggested that marital dissolution represents a period of

emotional crisis for both partners (e.g., Gove & Shin, 1989; Spanier & Thompson, 1984). However, the results did not support the prediction that separated individuals as a group would report less self-esteem than those in intact marriages. Instead, the results showed that although separated men reported lower self-esteem than married men, there were no differences between the reported self-esteem of separated and married women.

A third group of hypotheses from this study pertained specifically to women's experience of marital dissolution. Based on Jean Baker Miller's (1976, 1984) delineation of women's experience of relationship loss, these hypotheses predicted that separated women would suffer lower self-esteem, more emotional distress, and weaker identities than any other subgroup. None of these expectations was confirmed. No sex differences were found in anxiety, anger, depression or suicidality. In other areas, the results indicated that females might actually suffer less in the aftermath of separation than males.

In terms of self-esteem, separated women not only reported levels of self-esteem equivalent to those of married women, they also appeared to enjoy stronger self-esteem than separated men. Furthermore, when asked how they believed they had changed since their separation, separated women reported experiencing significantly greater increase

in self-esteem than that reported by men. Similarly, although separated men reported weaker identities than married men on two measures of identity (the IVID and the Personal Identity Scale), no differences in identity were found between married and separated women. On one measure (the Personal Identity Scale), in fact, separated woman appeared to experience a stronger sense of identity than separated men. Finally, in response to a question concerning their ability to accept the breakup of their marriages, men reported more difficulty in accepting their separation than women did.

In interpreting these unexpected results, it is necessary to consider both the limitations of the present research and possible weaknesses in the self-in-relation model. Methodological limitations in sample selection, stage of marital termination under study and the dependent measures employed could all serve to bias the results of the present study. On the other hand, predictions derived from the Stone Center model may be inaccurate and women may actually suffer less severe consequences from relationship loss than the model suggests.

The unexpected findings for group differences might be explained by the sampling procedures of the present study. First, error may have been introduced because the separated and non-separated groups were actually two distinct samples

rather than one sample tested pre- and post-separation. Although efforts were made to limit spurious between group differences (e.g., samples were drawn from the same communities and analyses of covariance were employed to remove variance associated with spurious differences), these measures cannot eradicate the limitations of the present research design. Therefore, the possibility that the married and separated groups differed in addition to their marital status cannot be ruled out. It remains the task of future research to address this concern, ideally in the context of a longitudinal study in which the separated and non-separated samples could be one and the same.

A second, related difficulty with the sampling procedures of the present study is that subjects were not randomly selected. The non-separated sample was drawn largely from parent/teacher school groups; the balance of the separated sample was recruited from divorce self-help groups. Both groups were self-selected and may well not be representative of the total populations of non-separated and separated individuals. A particular difficulty with these sampling procedures is the likelihood that the male sample is especially skewed. Although women recruited through schools and support groups probably also comprise a nonrepresentative sample, it could be argued that they may deviate less from the general population than their male counterparts. In terms of the married group, males are

still a minority in public school systems, both as teachers and as involved parents. Males recruited from parent/teacher settings, therefore, may differ from the general population in ways that caused them to seek out and participate in a predominantly female domain. Perhaps even more significant are the ways in which separated men in this sample could be expected to differ from the total population of separated males. Males in this society are known to turn less to others to openly share concerns and receive social support than females (e.g., Aukett, Ritchie & Mill, 1988; Caldwell & Peplau, 1982). One could posit, therefore, that men in self-help groups such as Parents Without Partners might be more prone than their brothers to seek out others in time of need. It is also reasonable to suggest that these men may have been pushed to join support groups by the intensity of their emotional crisis. In either case, it could be argued that the men in this sample are both more likely to derive their self-esteem and sense of identity from their relationships and to report more costs of relationship loss than males in the total population². This sampling bias could contribute to the findings that men in this study appeared to suffer more in the aftermath of separation than women. Future studies could circumvent this methodological problem through the use of random sampling techniques, perhaps in the context of large scale epidemiological research.

A second methodological problem that might be suggested to have contaminated the results of the present study was the stage of marital termination selected for investigation. The recruitment of subjects who had been separated for two years or less time may have excluded the true period of crisis for females. Several studies have suggested that the most difficult period in marital termination for women is the six months prior to physical separation (Bloom & Caldwell, 1981; Chiriboga & Cutler, 1978; Green, 1983). Because the present study examined only the two years following separation, this earlier stage was not investigated. It is possible, therefore, that the current research may have failed to capture the lowest points of women's experience, focusing instead on a period of relative adjustment and psychological growth. The fact that women in this study reported that their self-esteem had increased since their separation is indirectly supportive of this interpretation. Future research on the Stone Center model and divorce could consider this earlier phase of marital termination using a longitudinal, cross panel or retrospective approach.

A final methodological issue concerns the dependent measures used to assess identity in this investigation. No measure exists that assesses the construct of "identity" or "the sense of self" as it has been described in the Stone Center model. In fact, the developers of the self-in-

relation model are currently working toward operationalizing the construct of the "self" so that it can be empirically evaluated (A. Kaplan, personal communication, February 10, 1988). To compensate for the lack of an appropriate assessment tool, the present study employed three measures of identity, each based on somewhat different definitions of the construct. While this approach represents an interesting first step, interpretation of the findings for identity in this study are clearly limited, and we must qualify assertions about the Stone Center model based on these data. A clear direction for future research is the development and standardization of a measure of identity that is grounded in the self-in-relation perspective.

The methodological problems in sampling, stage of marital termination under study and dependent measures notwithstanding, the unexpected findings from this study have important theoretical implications. Many of the group differences predicted were not born out by the data, indicating that relationship loss may not affect women's sense of self, self-esteem and emotional functioning as described by Jean Baker Miller. However, Miller suggests that there is much variation in women's experience of relationship loss, variation that should be explained at least in part by the strength of other relationships, acceptance of the female role and investment in agentic activities. Therefore, before discussing the possible

theoretical meaning of these results, an examination of the findings for each of the three mediating variables, friendship strength, sex role attitudes and occupational involvement, should aid in the interpretation of the findings for group differences.

Buffering Effects of Friendship Strength

Jean Baker Miller (1976, 1984) suggests that women need to be involved in ongoing relationships to maintain their identity and self-esteem as relational beings. Women who maintained strong affiliations outside their marriages, then, were expected to experience less negative impact from separation than those who lacked such extramarital bonds. Although the current findings did not demonstrate an effect for friendship strength that was unique to women per se, they were consistent with this argument. The results indicated that for both separated men and women, strong friendships are related to reduced psychological distress (depression and anger), stronger self-esteem (as measured by the Rosenberg Scale) and stronger identity (as measured by the IVID). No relationship was found between friendship and these variables for the non-separated sample.

It is important to note that although these findings are consistent with the argument that affiliations buffer the effects of heterosexual relationship loss, plausible alternative explanations cannot be ruled out. It is

impossible to discern whether people in this study with strong friendships responded better to separation than those with weak friendships, for example, or whether people who responded well to separation later went on to develop strong friendships. Given the limitations of the present research, it is also conceivable that individuals who had stronger friendships after separation were actually functioning better emotionally than their peers prior to separation. Future research employing longitudinal data is needed to address these rival hypotheses.

Buffering Effects of Sex Role Attitudes

Miller (1976, 1984) also suggests that women's tendency to derive their self-esteem and sense of self from heterosexual relationships is related in part to the degree to which they have internalized societal expectations for the female role. Women who have internalized traditional sex role attitudes are considered more likely to have suppressed their agentic strivings, and therefore to be more reliant on their relationships for self-definition. A fifth set of analyses, therefore, addressed predictions concerning the relationship between sex role attitudes and psychological distress, self-esteem and sense of identity. Specifically, it was hypothesized that separated women with nontraditional attitudes would experience less distress and stronger self-esteem and sense of identity than women with traditional attitudes. None of these hypotheses was

supported, indicating that sex role attitudes played no role in ameliorating the negative impact of separation.

These findings are particularly surprising in light of the literature on sex role attitudes and adjustment to marital dissolution. Previous research has consistently demonstrated an association between sex role attitudes and women's reactions to separation (e.g., Bloom & Clement, 1984; Brown et al., 1977; Felton et al., 1980; Granvold et al., 1979; Kurdek & Blisk, 1983.) One explanation for the current results could lie in the instrument employed to measure attitudes in this study. Although the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS) has been well standardized and is widely used in attitude research, it has not been employed previously in investigations of divorce. It is possible, therefore, that the AWS may tap different aspects of sex role attitudes, which in turn relate differently to post-separation adjustment.

A second point of consideration in any study of sex role attitudes must be the potential for effects for historical context. During the past two decades, the United States has witnessed a resurgence of the woman's movement and a dramatic increase in women's participation in the labor force. These changes have been accompanied by rapid shifts in society toward more egalitarian sex role attitudes (Finlay, Starnes & Alvarez, 1985). Studies of historical

trends during this period have reported significant liberal shifts in societal sex role attitudes over time spans as short as three or five years (McBroom, 1984; Thornton, Alwin & Camburn, 1983). These changes seem to be attributable to both period effects (i.e., individuals appear to embrace less traditional attitudes over time) and cohort effects (i.e. younger cohorts appear to be less traditional than older cohorts) (McBroom, 1984; Stake & Rogers, 1989; Thornton et al., 1983; Thornton & Freedman, 1979). These period and cohort effects are robust even when age and life stage are taken into account, and are more pronounced for women than for men (Helmreich, Spence & Gibson, 1982; Larsen & Long, 1988; Martin, Osmond & Hesselbart, 1980; McBroom, 1984; Thornton et al., 1983).

Given this rapid rate of change in sex role attitudes, McBroom (1984) warns "that there will be limited comparability among studies done more than a few years apart" (p. 591). While the present study is based on data collected in 1988, the most recent investigation of attitudes and divorce cited in the literature (Bloom & Clement, 1984) is based on data that could have been obtained no later than 1979. Data from the remaining studies cited appear to have been collected as early as 1970. It appears, then, that a gap of between nine and eighteen years exists between the implementation of the

present study and previous research on sex role attitudes and divorce.

Identifying the specific implications of this time gap for the current findings on attitudes and divorce is beyond the scope of the present research. It does seem clear, however, that a separated woman with non-traditional attitudes in 1970 may differ from her 1988 counterpart in ways that could well affect the relationship between attitudes and post-separation adjustment. In 1970, egalitarian sex role attitudes were part of an ideology that departed widely from the mainstream. Women who embraced this ideology therefore could be described as deviating from the norm or as radical. Many characteristics associated with a radical position could arguably help a woman cope with divorce. A tendency toward activism, involvement in a social cause and even identified rage toward men could each conceivably ease the aftermath of separation. Particularly helpful to women with nontraditional attitudes in the 1970's might have been a willingness to be viewed by others as non-conformist or "deviant." Miller (1976) suggests that women without men are judged as atypical by societal standards. If this is the case then women who rejected traditional views in the 1970's would be more comfortable with their separated status than their more conforming counterparts.

None of these benefits would necessarily accrue to separated women endorsing egalitarian sex role attitudes in 1988. Because more egalitarian views have become mainstream, neither a radical nor perhaps even an identified feminist perspective is required to express such beliefs. Thus, buffering effects associated with a nontraditional stance might also have diminished. Research delineating characteristics associated with traditional and nontraditional attitudes and adjustment to divorce in different eras might shed additional light on this issue.

Buffering Effects of Occupational Involvement

The role of a second variable concerning commitment to agentic pursuits, that of occupational involvement, was also assessed in the present study. Women who retained a sense of themselves as agentic beings, as shown by their occupational investment, were expected to fare better than their counterparts in the aftermath of separation. A final set of analyses, therefore, examined the association between occupational involvement and post-separation distress, self-esteem and sense of identity. Unlike other investigations which have confounded occupational involvement with economic status, the effect for income in this study was statistically controlled for all analyses of occupation. The discussion below, therefore, pertains to the relationship between reactions to separation and

occupational involvement after any effect for income has been statistically removed.

Results for occupational involvement as assessed by the Job Importance Scale supported predictions derived from the Stone Center model. Consistent with the expectations of this study, placing high value on work outside the home was associated with unique psychological benefits for separated women. High job importance scores were related to reduced anxiety and depression in separated females and, on one measure (the IVID), with a stronger sense of identity. Additional findings for job importance are also consistent with the Stone Center model, although they do not demonstrate an effect for occupational involvement that is unique to women. Job importance was found to be negatively related to anger and difficulty accepting the separation for both males and females.

Interestingly, most of the predictions concerning occupational involvement were not supported when involvement was measured by the Occupational Status Scale. Although occupational status was found to be associated with reduced anxiety for women overall, no specific relationship was demonstrated between status and anxiety after separation. Furthermore, occupational status was shown to be unrelated to either men's or women's anger, depression, self-esteem or sense of identity after separation. The only post-

separation effect found to be significant for occupational status was that status was negatively related to both men's and women's difficulty in accepting the separation.

These results clearly suggest that job importance is a better predictor of post-separation adjustment for women than occupational status. In order to understand these findings fully, it is necessary to consider what each of these scales actually measures. The Job Importance Scale is a one item instrument which asks the respondent to rank the importance he or she ascribes to holding a job, aside from financial considerations. The purpose of this scale is to measure how important the notion of working is to the individual, apart from the specific requirements of a particular job. As such, this instrument appears to have good face validity as a measure of what Miller describes as women's view of the role of agentic activities in their adult lives.

In contrast, the Occupational Status Scale does not tap the respondent's subjective view of the role of employment. Rather, this scale is premised on the assumption that different occupations have different values attached to them by members of society as a whole (Hollingshead & Redlich, 1958; Myers & Bean, 1968). The ranking of occupations is based on skill level and the

degree of control exercised over others in the workplace (i.e. management). Often employed as a factor in indices of social class, occupational status is closely associated with class status (Hollingshead & Redlich, 1958; Myers & Bean, 1968).

The pattern of results from this study suggests that it is the value ascribed to employment rather than the relative status or responsibility for others in the workplace that is most closely associated with post-separation adjustment. It appears that women who consider it important to be working, who, in other words, maintain a sense of the value of nonmarital agentic activity in their lives, fare better in the face of marital dissolution. The actual rank of women's status in the workplace prior to separation appears to be related only to ability to accept the finality of marital termination.

Of course, the correlational nature of these data render it impossible to discern causation in the relationship between job importance and reactions to marital dissolution. It is fully possible, for example, that better adjustment to separation enables women to value their work more highly. Alternatively, separated women who ascribe high importance to jobs may have been functioning better psychologically than their peers prior to their separation.

Again, longitudinal research is needed to establish the direction of the relationship between variables.

Theoretical Implications

Although limitations in the design and procedures of the present study temper the conclusions that may be drawn from the results, it is important to consider the theoretical implications of the findings as they stand. For instance, the results for relational orientation provide strong support for the contention that women are more relationally oriented than men. While the data support this proposition of the Stone Center, other findings suggest that there may be aspects of the model that need reformulation. Many of the results of group comparisons across sex and marital status, for example, directly contradict the relationships hypothesized in this study. Although findings regarding mediating variables are generally more consistent with the self-in-relation approach, they too fail to provide complete support for hypotheses derived from this perspective.

The analyses which perhaps most strongly address the core tenets of the Stone Center model are those which compare the relational orientations of men and women. The notion that women possess a self-in-relation rather than a self that is grounded in separation and autonomy is the central thesis of the Stone Center perspective. The self-

in-relation is described as a self that seeks out and maintains connections with others that are mutually empowering and empathic. The findings from the present study were directly supportive of this thesis, indicating that women in this sample experienced a greater need and capacity than men for expressing and enhancing themselves in the context of mutual relationships.

On the other hand, Miller's (1976, 1984) suggestion that the relationally oriented self is particularly vulnerable in the face of relationship loss was not supported by the findings of this study. Miller posits that the female self-in-relation becomes distorted due to pressures to conform to the socially prescribed female role. By adolescence, she suggests that many young women have learned to abandon their own sense of agency and to become virtually dependent upon their relationships for self-definition and self-esteem. When these relationships terminate, it is expected that the woman faces an identity crisis and the loss of her major source of positive self-evaluation.

Although separation was associated with increased emotional distress for the sample overall, there was no evidence from the present findings to suggest that women are particularly vulnerable in the aftermath of separation. Comparisons between married and separated women yielded no

identity differences between groups. The findings for self-esteem furthermore, directly contradicted the model; 84% of the female separated sample reported experiencing an increase in self-esteem following their separation. Despite the methodological and design limitations of the present study discussed previously, these results clearly indicate that women's sense of identity and self-esteem may not necessarily be contingent on their ongoing heterosexual relationships.

Moreover, females were not found to be more vulnerable than males to the effects of separation. Miller does not address men's experience with relationship dissolution directly, but she does state that male identity and self-esteem are derived from autonomous achievements rather than relational activities. It was expected, therefore, that separated men in this study would experience less identity crisis, loss of self-esteem and emotional distress than their female counterparts. None of these expectations was confirmed. In fact, the males in this sample appeared in many ways to be more vulnerable to relationship dissolution than the females.

Results concerning the mediating variables provide somewhat more support for the self-in-relation perspective. First, the findings for friendship are consistent with Miller's suggestion that mutual affiliative bonds can

ameliorate the negative impact of relationship termination among women. Although the design limitations of the present study prohibit conclusions about causality, strong mutual friendships were found to be associated with reduced levels of anger and depression and with enhanced self-esteem and identity for both separated men and women.

However, Miller's description of the role of nonmarital relationships is premised on the assumption of unique characteristics of the female self-in-relation. Women are suggested to turn to relationships to enhance their identity and self-esteem whereas men are not. An effect for friendship, therefore, was expected for separated women but not for separated men. In the absence of this expected sex difference, the support for the theory is weakened. The findings do not lend support for a uniquely female self-in-relation. One can speculate that the association between friendship strength and adjustment was based on different mechanisms for women than for men. For example, perhaps women's relationships reinforced their sense of themselves as relational beings as Miller suggests, while men's friendships merely buffered the effects of social isolation. However, the current results contribute nothing to such an interpretation.

Sex role attitudes was employed as a second mediating variable in this study in order to examine the relationship

between beliefs about the female role and post-separation adjustment. Contrary to the predictions derived from the self-in-relation model, no relationship was demonstrated between degree of traditionalism and women's reactions to separation. Although issues related to historical context and the measure of attitudes employed in this research may account for these unexpected findings, the current results indicate that women's belief systems about the female role are unrelated to post-separation adjustment. This specifically contradicts the expectation that women who have embraced traditional attitudes will be more vulnerable than others at the time of relationship termination.

Occupational involvement was used as a third mediating variable to evaluate the association between the value ascribed to agentic activity and reactions to separation. This variable was measured along two dimensions: the occupational status achieved by the individual and the importance the individual ascribed to holding a job. Similar to role attitudes, the results for occupational status provided little support for the theoretical propositions of the Stone Center model. Except for an association found between status and women's ability to accept their separation, occupational rank was found to be unrelated to post-separation adjustment. In contrast, the results for job importance provided strong support for Miller's theoretical argument. Ascribing more value to

holding a job was found to be associated with greater gains in identity and with reductions in anxiety and depression that were unique to separated females. Additional findings indicating that job importance was associated with reduced anger and increased ability to accept the separation for both men and women, provide supplementary evidence for this theoretical position. Unlike friendship, the Stone Center model does not imply that valuing employment will be uniquely associated with aspects of the self-in-relation.

In order to understand the contradictory results obtained for the two measures of occupational involvement, it is useful to consider the relationship between these measures and the Stone Center model. The inclusion of a measure of occupational status in the present study was based in the supposition that the level of skill and responsibility required by higher ranking positions also entails greater degrees of agentic investment. This assumed association between occupational rank and agentic investment was neither suggested nor alluded to by the Stone Center theoreticians. Job importance, in contrast, appears to be one fairly direct measure of what Miller describes as the value accorded to the role of agentic activity in the individual's daily life. As such, it can be argued that the results for job importance should bear relatively more weight than those attained with occupational status. It can be tentatively advanced, therefore, that the results

concerning occupational involvement support Miller's contention that women who maintain a sense of their own agency during marriage, will be less vulnerable to the negative effects of marital termination.

Summary and Suggestions for Future Research

In summary, many of the findings from the present study supported the hypotheses. The separated group appeared to be more anxious, angry and depressed than those who remained in intact marriages. Consistent with predictions derived from the Stone Center model of women's development, women overall were found to be more relationally oriented than men. In addition, the results provided support for the argument derived from this model that occupational involvement wields a buffering effect for anxiety, depression and identity loss that is unique to women's adjustment to separation. Furthermore, although no sex differences were demonstrated, a relationship was shown between occupational involvement and both anger and difficulty accepting the separation. These findings indicate that investment in agentic activities may ameliorate some of the negative consequences of separation for both men and women. Finally, men's and women's perceptions of the strength of their friendships were found to be negatively related to post-separation depression and anger, and positively related to self-esteem and identity. While predictions concerning the unique benefits of

friendship for separated women were not supported, the findings as they stand are consistent with the argument that nonmarital relational bonds play an important role in aiding women's adjustment to marital termination.

Other results, however, are more troublesome in light of the expectations of the present study. Most problematic for interpretation are the indications that the women in this sample were no more negatively affected by the dissolution of their marriages than the men. Miller and her colleagues suggest that women rely on their relationships for their sense of self and self-esteem while men's major sources of self-esteem and identity lie outside the relational context. Women in this study were therefore expected to be more vulnerable than men to the negative effects of marital separation. Instead, no differences were found between the anger, depression, anxiety or suicidality expressed by separated women and any other subgroup. Furthermore, no differences in self-esteem or identity were seen between separated women and either women or men who remained in intact marriages. There was additional indication that males actually suffered more loss of self-esteem, more of an identity crisis and more difficulty in accepting their separation than females did. Finally, in contrast to women, separated men in this study appeared to be more distressed, and to suffer lower self-esteem and weaker identities than their married counterparts. These

findings for group differences directly contradict the hypotheses derived from the Stone Center model of female development and suggest several aspects of the model which may need reformulation.

However, any interpretation of the findings from this study and their theoretical implications should be approached with caution. First, limitations in the present research design prohibit inferences that can be made about causality. The correlational nature of the data render it impossible to discern, for example, the direction of the association between the mediating and dependent variables. Furthermore, because different groups were employed for the pre-and post-separation samples, there is no means of accurately assessing effects for marital status and sex while ruling out alternative explanations for the current findings. Additional problems affecting interpretation are potential difficulties associated with the period of marital termination under study and the measures employed to evaluate identity. Finally, the fact that the sampling procedures of the present study were not random severely limits the possible generalizations which can be made from these results.

Future studies using the Stone Center model as a framework for understanding sex differences and divorce would be most useful if they were based on data collected

from representative samples and were longitudinal in design. A longitudinal design would not only allow stronger inferences about causality, it could also include assessment during the period immediately preceding separation - the stage suggested by some researchers as the most difficult for women. Finally, future research on the Stone Center model needs to include a measure of identity that is grounded in the self-in-relation approach. The development and standardization of such an assessment tool represents an important next step in the empirical evaluation of the self-in-relation model.

APPENDIX A

CODING SYSTEM FOR SELF-CONCEPT QUESTIONNAIRE

A) IDENTITY

Score for loss or gain of identity or the sense of self. Score only for statements pertaining to a found or new identity, an identity crisis, sense of having a self, knowing the "real me", or "knowing who I am". May also score for gaining or losing a piece of the self or "feeling whole" or "feeling like a piece of me is missing".

It is important to differentiate this category from insight or increased self-knowledge. Many subjects may indicate that they've learned about themselves, are more self-aware or have a better understanding of their own needs. But these statements do not necessarily indicate an actual change in identity.

Score either:

Identity crisis/Lost sense of self	1
No change/No mention	2
Found identity/Sense of self	3

B) SELF-ESTEEM

Score for perceived change in self-esteem, sense of worthiness, competence, self-confidence, potency or capability. Score also for phrases concerning "self-respect" or liking of the self.

Score either:

Decrease in self-esteem, self worth	1
No change/no mention	2
Increase in self-esteem, self worth	3

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM FOR NON-SEPARATED SUBJECTS

The present study is concerned with investigating people's reactions to marriage and marital separation. As a participant in the study, you will be asked to complete several questionnaires that are designed to tell us something about your marriage and some of your social attitudes and feelings. Your responses to all questions will be anonymous. Your name will not appear on any of the questionnaires and there will be no way to identify you with your responses. The number that appears on your questionnaires is simply to insure that sets of questionnaires are not separated. Your participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

I have read the above description and agree to participate in this study.

Signature

Date

Witness Signature

Date

CONSENT FORM FOR SEPARATED SUBJECTS

The present study is concerned with investigating people's reactions to marriage and marital separation. As a participant in the study, you will be asked to complete several questionnaires that are designed to tell us something about your marriage, your separation and some of your social attitudes and feelings. Your responses to all questions will be anonymous. Your name will not appear on any of the questionnaires and there will be no way to identify you with your responses. The number that appears on your questionnaires is simply to insure that sets of questionnaires are not separated. Your participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

I have read the above description and agree to participate in this study.

Signature

Date

Witness Signature

Date

APPENDIX C

BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE - SEPARATED SUBJECTS

Age _____

Sex _____

Race _____

1. What is your present marital status? (Please check one.)

Separated, haven't filed for divorce _____

Separated, have filed for divorce _____

Divorced _____

2. How long ago were you separated? _____

3. How long were you married prior to this separation? _____

4. Whose decision was it to separate or divorce? _____

5. If you or your (former) spouse have filed for divorce, how long ago did you file? _____

6. If you are divorced, how long ago was the divorce actually granted? _____

7. Have you ever been married before? _____

8. Please circle the highest level of schooling completed by:

You	Junior High			High School			College or Trade School				Graduate School			
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
Your (former) spouse	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+

9. What degrees, certificates or licenses do you have? _____

10. How many children did you and your (former) spouse have in your marriage? _____

11. Please indicate the sex, age and grade in school of each of these children:

	Sex	Age	Grade
1st child	_____	_____	_____
2nd child	_____	_____	_____
3rd child	_____	_____	_____
4th child	_____	_____	_____
5th child	_____	_____	_____
6th child	_____	_____	_____

12. Who has custody of your children and what is the nature of the custodial arrangement?

13. The following scale has numbers representing different degrees of happiness in your (former) marriage. The middle point "happy" represents the degree of happiness of most marriages. Please circle the number which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your marriage during the last few months before your separation.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Extremely Unhappy	Fairly Unhappy	A Little Unhappy	Happy	Very Happy	Extremely Happy	Perfect

14. Please explain briefly, in your own words, why you think your marriage did not work out.

15. Many people feel they have experienced both losses and gains as the result of their separation or divorce.

a. Please explain what you feel you have lost, if anything.

b. Please explain what you feel you have gained, if anything.

16. Some relationships and marriages involve some physical violence. Was there ever any violence in your marriage to your (former) spouse? _____

17. Since your separation, have you initiated contact with any of the following professionals for support? (Please check "yes" or "no" for each category.)

	YES	NO
a. Clergy member, priest or rabbi	_____	_____
b. Psychiatrist	_____	_____
c. Physician	_____	_____
d. Psychologist	_____	_____
e. Social worker	_____	_____
f. Nurse	_____	_____
g. Other (please specify)	_____	

18. Are you dating currently? _____

19. If you are dating, please place a check mark on the scale below to describe your emotional involvement in your dating relationship or relationships

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
very casual/ no real involvement		some involvement		serious involvement in exclusive relationship		commitment to marry		definite date set for wedding

20. What was your occupation the month prior to your separation? _____

Please describe what you did in a few words. _____

How long were you employed in this occupation? _____

How many hours per week did you spend in this occupation? _____

How personally satisfying was this work for you? (Please circle ONE number on the following scale.)

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all Satisfying				Extremely Satisfying

Overall, aside from the financial benefits, how important is it to you that you have a job? (Please circle ONE number on the following scale.)

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all Important				Extremely Important

21. Please describe your current occupation if different from above. _____

How many hours per week do you spend in your current occupation? _____

22. What is your (former) spouse's current occupation?

23. Please circle the letter that best reflects your total yearly income before taxes.

- a. Less than \$5,000
- b. \$5,000 to 9,999
- c. \$10,000 to 14,999
- d. \$15,000 to 19,999
- e. \$20,000 to 24,999
- f. \$25,000 to 29,999
- g. \$30,000 to 39,999
- h. \$40,000 to 49,999
- i. \$50,000 and above

24. Please circle the letter that best reflects the combined yearly income of you and your (former) spouse one month before separation.

- a. Less than \$5,000
- b. \$5,000 to 9,999
- c. \$10,000 to 14,999
- d. \$15,000 to 19,999
- e. \$20,000 to 24,999
- f. \$25,000 to 29,999
- g. \$30,000 to 39,999
- h. \$40,000 to 49,999
- i. \$50,000 and above

25. How do you feel about your present financial situation?
(Please check one.)

- I feel a lot of financial strain _____
- I feel some financial strain _____
- I feel very little financial strain .. _____
- I feel no financial strain at all _____

BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE - NON-SEPARATED SUBJECTS

Age _____

Sex _____

Race _____

1. How long have you been married? _____

2. Have you ever been married before? _____

3. Please circle the highest level of schooling completed by:

You	Junior	High	College or	Graduate									
	High	School	Trade School	School									
	7 8 9	10 11 12	13 14 15 16	17 18 19 20+									

Your Spouse													
	7 8 9	10 11 12	13 14 15 16	17 18 19 20+									

4. What degrees, certificates or licenses do you have?

5. How many children do you and your spouse have in your marriage? _____

6. Please indicate the sex, age and grade in school of each of these children:

	Sex	Age	Grade
1st child	_____	_____	_____
2nd child	_____	_____	_____
3rd child	_____	_____	_____
4th child	_____	_____	_____
5th child	_____	_____	_____
6th child	_____	_____	_____

7. The following scale has numbers representing different degrees of happiness in your marriage. The middle point "happy" represents the degree of happiness of most marriages. Please circle the number which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your marriage during the last few months.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Extremely Unhappy	Fairly Unhappy	A Little Unhappy	Happy	Very Happy	Extremely Happy	Perfect

8. Some relationships and marriages involve some physical violence. Has there ever been any violence in your marriage?
9. During the past year, have you initiated contact with any of the following professionals for support? (Please check "yes" or "no" for each category.)

	YES	NO
a. Clergy member, priest or rabbi	_____	_____
b. Psychiatrist	_____	_____
c. Physician	_____	_____
d. Psychologist	_____	_____
e. Social worker	_____	_____
f. Nurse	_____	_____
g. Other (please specify) _____	_____	_____

10. What is your occupation? _____

Please describe what you do in a few words . _____

How long have you been employed in this occupation? _____

How many hours per week do you spend in this occupation?

How personally satisfying is this work for you?
 (Please circle ONE number on the following scale.)

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all Satisfying				Extremely Satisfying

Overall, aside from the financial benefits, how important is it to you that you have a job? (Please circle ONE number on the following scale.)

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all Important				Extremely Important

11. What is your spouse's occupation? _____

12. Please circle the letter that best reflects the combined yearly income of you and your spouse before taxes.

- a. Less than \$5,000
- b. \$5,000 to 9,999
- c. \$10,000 to 14,999
- d. \$15,000 to 19,999
- e. \$20,000 to 24,999
- f. \$25,000 to 29,999
- g. \$30,000 to 39,999
- h. \$40,000 to 49,999
- i. \$50,000 and above

13. How do you feel about your present financial situation?
 (Please check one.)

- I feel a lot of financial strain _____
- I feel some financial strain _____
- I feel very little financial strain .. _____
- I feel no financial strain at all _____

ENDNOTES

¹All scales employed in this study range from low to high values unless otherwise stated.

²The possibility that men in this study may rely on relationships for self-esteem and identity more than the larger male population does not imply that they possess a "self-in-relation" in Stone Center terms. The self-in-relation has many qualities of a relational orientation that the men in this study appear to lack compared to the women. These include the desire and ability to engage in mutually empathic and empowering connections with others.

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VITA

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She obtained her elementary and secondary education in the public school system of New Canaan, Connecticut where she received her high school diploma in June, 1972. She attended Mount Holyoke College and received the degree of Bachelor of Arts cum laude in May, 1976. Her major was in psychology.

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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.

November 30, 1990
Date

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