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Psychosocial characteristics and female adjustment to marital dissolution

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City University of New York, 1991

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PSYCHOSOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS and FEMALE ADJUSTMENT to MARITAL DISSOLUTION

by

ETIENNE ELISE SCOTT

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1991

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Chair of Examining Committee

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Abstract

PSYCHOSOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS and FEMALE ADJUSTMENT to MARITAL DISSOLUTION

by

Etienne Elise Scott

Adviser: Professor Vera Paster

The specific objectives of this study were to determine whether sex-role attitudes and perceived social support are variables affecting post divorce adjustment. Adult female subjects aged 21-55 who were within two years of legal separation or divorce were studied. The study utilized the Bem Sex-role Inventory, the Inventory of Attitudes Towards Men and Women, the Procidano and Heller measures of perceived social support, and the Derogatis Symptom Checklist 90-R. T-tests and Pearson correlations were used to determine significant levels of association among the identified variables.

Androgynous women experienced less distress than the other subgroups and feminine women experienced more distress. The masculine subgroup was not found to experience less distress when compared with the others, nor was the

undifferentiated subgroup found to experience more distress.

Support from family was found to have a negative relationship with post-divorce adjustment. Perception of support from friends was not related to post-divorce adjustment.

Women with more traditional attitudes about sex-role were more likely to perceive support from family. White and Black women perceived more support from friends in contrast with Hispanic women. Younger women, and those with less education and income experienced more distress. Women who reported that they initiated the divorce experienced less distress. Length of time separated was found to be negatively associated with distress. Presence of children was not found to be an adjustment factor.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the ancestors, for without them I would not be...

...to my ex-husband, Gordon K. Rutledge, who shared a life with me and was the inspiration for this work...

...and to the memory of my dear friend, Debra Estaba-James, may she rest in peace, who went through the divorce transition before me and helped show me the way.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Divorce is a major life transition that can have far-reaching social and psychological consequences. It requires a legal and personal redefinition, and adjustment to altered social networks and new economic and parental roles (Brown, Perry, & Harburg, 1977). Epidemiological data on the prevalence of physical and mental health problems among divorced populations, especially among the recently divorced, suggest an association between divorce and poor health including poor mental health. After a thorough review of studies concerning the link between marital disruption and emotional and physical illness, Bloom, Asher, and White (1978) suggest that the most appropriate interpretation of the research is that an unequivocal association between marital disruption and physical and emotional disorder has been demonstrated. They state that "this association probably includes at least two interdependent components: First, illness (physical and emotional) can precede and can help precipitate marital disruption. Second, marital disruption can

serve to precipitate physical and psychiatric difficulties in some persons who might otherwise not have developed such problems" (p.866). Holmes and Rahe (1978) describe divorce as being second only to the death of a spouse in its impact as a stressor.

However, divorce need not be viewed as a totally negative event. There has been research which points out the positive consequences of successfully coping with marital dissolution (Singer, 1975; Hunt & Hunt, 1977; Brown, Feldberg, Fox & Cohen, 1976).

Brown et al. (1977) state that the threat and opportunity of divorce make it particularly significant for women's mental health. On the one hand, the loss of the role of wife and mother can cause a woman to mourn both for her husband and for the relationship that principally defined who she was and what she had to do. On the other hand, divorce can provide women with an opportunity to realize potentials for growth that might have been thwarted in the marriage, to exercise new levels of independence and autonomy, and to expand personal competence and esteem (Brown et al., 1977).

Statement of the Problem

Whether divorce becomes a turning point towards distress or towards growth and well-being may depend on certain psychosocial factors which help an individual cope when confronted by new life stresses and opportunities. This study will explore the relationship of two psychosocial variables on the nature of women's reactions to divorce: the sex-role orientation of the women and their perception of the social support which they receive from friends and from family members.

Significance

The documentation of common mental health problems and psychosocial factors associated with women's abilities to cope with the stress of marital dissolution has implications for psychotherapy, career counseling, and the general understanding of women by society. Understanding of mediating factors contributing to resilience would be useful for treatment, theory, and future research.

Specific Objectives

--To determine whether sex-role orientation is

a factor in post-divorce adjustment.

--To determine whether perceived social support is a variable affecting post-divorce adjustment.

Sex-role Orientation

Traditionally women have been socialized to be affectionate, sympathetic, understanding, and sensitive to the needs of others. Men have been socialized to be assertive, independent, dominant, and willing to take risks (Bem, 1981). Some studies have found that non-traditional sex-role attitudes function as a coping resource to ameliorate the stress of marital disruption for women (Brown, Perry, & Harburg, 1977; Felton, Lehman, Brown, & Liberatos, 1980).

The construct of psychological androgyny (Bem, 1974,1975, 1976) posits the idea that there is no necessary conformity between anatomical sex and behaviors and interests. Individuals might be both masculine and feminine, both assertive and yielding, both instrumental and expressive--depending on the situational appropriateness of these behaviors. Bem (1974) suggests that individuals who are limited to traditional sex

roles might be limited in to an excessively narrow range of behaviors as they move through different situations, thereby less able to cope with extraordinary stress, such as divorce.

On the other hand, androgyny is thought to facilitate adaptation and adjustment. Bem (1974) demonstrates that androgynous subjects are more able to cope with the requisites of situations than are strongly masculine or feminine subjects. She describes her subjects who are typed into traditional sex roles as having behavioral deficits. Bem suggests that they do not have the abilities necessary for effective courses of action in certain types of situations. Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1975) demonstrate that psychologically androgynous subjects have higher self-esteem than do masculine, feminine, or undifferentiated subjects. They suggest that this finding is indicative of androgynous persons' greater personal and social effectiveness.

Perceived Social Support

Heller and Swindle (1983) suggest that the perception of social support is one element in an individual's appraisal of stress and subsequent

ability to cope with that stress. Support seeking behavior results from appraisals that there is a threat to which one must respond. Information and/or help is needed to deal with the threat and aid is perceived to be available within one's support network (Procidano & Heller, 1983). Procidano and Heller (1983) suggest that the perception of the availability of support is probably influenced by within person factors which may alter the perception of whether support is available or has been provided. Several studies have found that social support received from friends and from family is instrumental in the adjustment process of women experiencing divorce (Hynes, 1979; Kitson, Lopata, Holmes, & Meyering, 1980).

The next chapter will present the literature concerning causes of marital instability and the consequences of divorce. The psychosocial variables of sex-role orientation and social support will be discussed: (1) as theoretical constructs; (2) in their relationships to coping with stress; and (3) in their specific abilities to ameliorate the stress of marital disruption.

Definition of Terms

Traditional -- traditional women derive their basic satisfactions and sense of identity from the wife and mother roles, feeling that the woman's role is subordinate to the man's and that family responsibilities should take precedence over personal fulfillment outside the family.

Non-traditional -- non-traditional women consider maximization of their own potential equally as important as family duties and acknowledge their need for individual achievement and autonomy.

Masculine -- a masculine sex-role identity is associated with an "instrumental" orientation, a cognitive focus on getting the job done or the problem solved. Traits include assertiveness, independence, dominance, and willingness to take risks.

Feminine -- a feminine sex-role identity is associated with an "expressive" orientation, an affective concern for the welfare of others and the

harmony of the group. Traits include affectionate, sympathetic, understanding, and sensitivity to the needs of others.

Androgyny -- an androgynous sex-role orientation assumes that masculinity and femininity are independent and complementary rather than incompatible dimensions. A person can possess a high degree of both masculine and feminine qualities in his/her sex-role orientation.

Undifferentiated -- an undifferentiated sex-role orientation incorporates a low degree of both masculine and feminine traits.

Social support -- the degree of support provided to an individual, particularly in times of need, by the persons involved with them (network) -- spouse, family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and members of the larger community.

Perceived social support -- the extent to which an individual feels that his/her needs for support, information, and feedback are fulfilled by his/her network.

Divorced -- includes women who are legally separated or divorced within 24 months prior to participating in the study.

Distress -- is measured by the scales of the Symptom Checklist 90-Revised including: somatization, obsessive-compulsive, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, hostility, phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation, and psychoticism.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter will present the literature concerning causes of marital instability and the consequences of divorce. The psychosocial variables of sex-role orientation and social support will be discussed.

Divorce

Norton and Glick (1976) present an overview of trends in marriage and divorce behavior among the adult population of the United States from the early twentieth century to the present time. Their focus was on the increasing incidence of marital dissolution through divorce. They state that a basic transformation of the institution of marriage is underway and that many variables are influencing the direction of the change. The transformation appears to be predicated on a restructuring of the roles which men and women play within the traditional boundaries of marriage and family living. Some people can confront this type of change and adapt to it without much difficulty. Others find that the process of adjustment is much

more difficult and leads ultimately to marital conflict and disruption.

America has the highest marriage and divorce rates in the world (Norton & Glick, 1979). Although the marriage rate declined from the mid 1950's until 1976, from 1976 it increased. The divorce rate began a precipitous increase in the early 1960's which continued into the mid 1970's. Since reaching an all-time high of 5.3 per thousand population in 1979 and 1981, the divorce rate has fluctuated between 4.9 and 5.0 each year (National Center for Health Statistics, 1986). The Census Bureau predicts that about 38% of women, ages 25 to 29 in 1975, may eventually end their first marriages in divorce. Of the three quarters who later remarry, about 44% may redivorce (Norton & Glick, 1979).

Causes of Marital Instability.

Kitson and Raschke (1981) state that a frequent explanation for the increase in divorce involves changes in the organization of the family over the past several hundred years. Cross-cultural ethnographic and demographic studies support the view that greater gender equality and

economic independence play roles in the increase in divorce (Goode, 1963; Winch, 1971; 1977). Weiss (1975) postulates that the United States has a particularly individualistic emphasis that focuses on self-realization. This value may foster divorce as people seek to maximize their personal fulfillment. Glick and Norton (1979) suggest other factors, including the women's movement giving women more options for education and jobs, more liberal attitudes towards personal behavior among most religious denominations, and the liberalization of divorce laws in most states.

Kitson and Raschke (1981) report that there are more divorces among people in low status occupations, among people with less education, and among those with less income. Norton and Glick (1979) however, note that socioeconomic differences in divorce are now smaller than they used to be. Coombs and Zumata (1970) find that the likelihood of divorce is greater in households in which the husband is unemployed periodically. Kitson and Raschke (1981) suggest that it is not simply unemployment per se which leads to divorce since the divorce rate generally has gone down in periods of depression or recession (Ferris, 1970), but

rather that unemployment highlights other problems in the family. Cherlin (1979) reports that instability of income, not its amount, predicts divorce.

Age at marriage is another factor in divorce. Norton and Glick (1979) report that age at first marriage is inversely related to divorce. Couples who marry in their teens are twice as likely to divorce as those who marry in their twenties. Premarital pregnancy also has been shown to increase the likelihood of divorce (Coombs & Zumata, 1970).

A small but consistent relationship has been reported for the intergenerational transmission of marital instability (Pope & Mueller, 1976; Mueller & Pope, 1977). Pope and Mueller (1976), in a review of the literature, report various explanations for this finding including: (1) the personality problems and characteristics of the divorced parents produce similar problems in their children leading to further marital instability; (2) reduced family income and downward social mobility often associated with divorce reduces the kinds of marital choices available; and (3) pre-divorce conflict and the post-divorce broken home

produce inappropriate sex-role learning that reduces the likelihood of a successful marriage.

Mueller and Pope (1977) provide support for a social control hypothesis that parental marital instability leads to high risk mate selection They find that children of divorce are more likely to marry at younger ages, be pregnant at marriage, and marry husbands who have lower status occupations. Pope and Mueller suggest that this occurs because of lack of parental supervision. They find that this high risk mate selection is more likely for women when other siblings are present than for those who are only children.

Divorce and Bereavement.

It has been suggested (Goode, 1956; Weiss, 1976, 1979) that many of the characteristics of the process of adjusting to the loss of a spouse in divorce are similar to those in widowhood. Kitson and Raschke (1981) point out that the two events differ in that the role and cultural expectations established for the widow are missing for the divorcee. Although life events rating scales (Holmes & Rahe, 1967) rank being widowed as requiring more adjustment than being divorced,

Kitson and Raschke (1981) state that role ambiguity and the greater likelihood of ambivalent feelings about the ex-spouse might be expected to lead to greater difficulties in adjustment for divorcees. They suggest that these rankings of events based on votes of judges may reflect the long-standing stigma attached to the divorced status which leads to the belief that losing someone loved should be more distressing than losing someone about whom one's emotions are mixed. Kitson and Raschke (1981) point out that it is often such ambivalence that produces psychological and physical distress. Kitson, Lopata, Holmes, and Meyering (1980) report on the stigma and lack of support experienced by the divorced. After adjusting for the age differences of the samples used, divorcees were found to have more restricted relationships with others than do widows. The divorcees felt more like a fifth wheel, more taken advantage of, and less supported by others.

Kitson and Raschke (1981) state that in the transition from the married to the divorced status, old roles were lost or must be transformed, and many new roles must be created or added. The accompanying norms for these new roles are often

ambiguous. Bohannon (1970) suggests that in developing new role definitions for themselves, the divorced experience six overlapping processes that vary in intensity and in order of occurrence. All must be dealt with at least on a minimal level, but eventually all must be dealt with fully. These include the emotional, legal, economic, coparental, community, and psychic divorce. In addition, individuals have often lost the habit of seeing themselves as individuals instead of as part of a couple. This is exacerbated for those who married in the first place to avoid becoming autonomous individuals. For those individuals, role redefinition is probably especially difficult.

Kitson and Raschke (1981) state that on the psychological level, individuals are often blocked in developing role redefinitions, autonomy, and adjustment to the divorced status by continuing attachment to the former spouse.

Attachment.

Weiss (1976) discusses the nature of the stresses associated with marital disruption. His study of about 150 men and women reveals that both sexes found marital separation distressing. This

distress was minimized only slightly in the spouse who initiated the separation. Weiss' most significant finding is that even when the love and other positive feelings between the separated couple fades, a strong attachment remains. Formerly marrieds feel drawn to one another even when alternative relationships have been established. Weiss compared this marital bond to the attachment of children to parents (Bowlby, 1969). Both the maritally separated and children separated from their parents are described as filled with rage and anxiety. They maintain strong fantasy relationships with the lost person and persist with efforts at reunion.

Kitson (1982) states that attachment theory provides the fullest explanation for the anomalous situation in divorce in which an individual is apparently grieving over the loss of someone whom he or she is often simultaneously glad to be rid of. Bowlby (1975) defines attachment as "the propensity of human beings to make strong affectional bonds to particular others" (p.292). Attachment behavior is specific and focuses on a small number of individuals in a clear order of preference. It is a persistent, learned behavior

that begins to develop in infancy (Bowlby, 1969). While research on attachment originally focused on the development of affectional bonds in children (Bowlby, 1969; 1973), it has more recently been used to explore attachment in adults (Bowlby and Parkes, 1970; Weiss, 1975, 1976).

Kitson (1982) points out that often there is a history of escalating conflict and animosity prior to the decision to divorce. Regardless, there are still pulls back into the relationship. Kitson (1982) reports that many of the divorced couples studied had separated and reconciled at least once before the separation that led to the divorce.

Kitson (1982) states that attachment theory provides an explanation for the potential for greater ambivalence in divorce. Once established, attachment may continue to a significant degree even when a relationship is no longer rewarding because the predictably familiar is preferred over the strange. Part of the continuing tie between ex-spouses is based on the intensity and variety of emotions and experiences that they shared. The development of affectional bonds produces a complex model of the self and the environment in which attachment figures provide a sense of security,

comfort, and well-being.

The loss of a significant relationship, even one which has gone sour, disrupts the bonds of ease, comfort, and security which attachment figures provide for one another. This loss produces separation anxiety (Bowlby, 1969; 1973). This loss of attachment causes the separation distress which is often exhibited in symptoms of physical and mental health disturbance (Weiss, 1975).

Weiss (1975) concludes that most men and women going through divorce continue to have feelings of attachment towards their spouses. Spanier and Casto (1979) report that 3 out of 10 of their respondents showed no signs of attachment while the remainder exhibited strong or mild attachment. Brown, Felton, White, and Manela (1980) report that 47% of their respondents had low, 31% moderate, and 22% high attachment scores.

Weiss (1975) maintains that once a sense of being married is fully integrated into all areas of a person's life, a process which he estimates takes about two years, working through loss of that attachment is as difficult for those married for five years as it is difficult for those married

twenty-five years.

Although length of marriage has not been found to affect attachment, a relationship has been reported between attachment and high levels of discord before the decision to divorce. An unexpected decision to divorce is also likely to increase distress (Glick, Weiss, & Parkes, 1974). Spanier and Casto (1979) and Brown et al. (1980) find that those who have considered divorce for a longer period of time are less likely to exhibit feelings of attachment and distress than those whose separations came without much forewarning.

Marital Disruption as a Stressor.

Kraus (1979) states that divorce is an event that is extremely stressful. It may induce a state of crisis in nearly everyone. The adjustment period follows, culminating in a range of psychological outcomes, from psychopathology to strengthened functioning.

In a review of the literature examining the stressful nature of marital disruption, Bloom, Asher, and White (1978) find that studies converge on identifying a small but important number of problems faced by persons undergoing marital

disruption. These include: (1) a generally weakened social support system; (2) the need to work through a variety of psychological reactions to the disruption; (3) the need for assistance with issues in child-rearing; (4) resocialization; and (5) the need for help with such practical problems as finances, educational and employment planning, housing, homemaking, and the protection of legal rights.

Hetherington, Cox, and Cox (1977) examined the intense and complex emotional reactions precipitated by marital disruption. They find that divorced persons feel more anxious, depressed, angry, rejected, and incompetent than married persons. Divorced women and men both experience changes in self concept. Men seem to undergo greater initial changes because they are usually the ones to leave familiar surroundings. Fathers feel a lack of identity, rootlessness, and complain of a lack of structure in their lives. Men often engage in a flurry of social activities as a way of resolving some of their identity problems.

Familiar surroundings and the continued presence of their children provide divorced mothers with a greater sense of security. Their changes in

self-concept evolve more slowly but the effects are more long lasting than those of their former husbands. Divorced women complain of feeling unattractive, helpless, and of having lost their identity as married women. The important factor leading back towards a positive self-concept for divorced men and women is the establishment of a satisfying heterosexual relationship (Hetherington et al., 1977).

Divorce Adjustment.

Divorce adjustment has been conceptually and operationally defined in many ways. In a comprehensive review of divorce literature, Kitson and Raschke (1981) define divorce adjustment as "an ability to develop an identity for oneself that is not tied to the status of being married or to the ex-spouse and an ability to function adequately in the role responsibilities of daily life, home, family, work, and leisure time " (1981, p.16).

Price-Bonham (1981) summarized the literature by identifying several components correlated with divorce adjustment; namely: (1) increased acceptance of oneself as an individual; (2) increased acceptance of new roles; (3) establishing

autonomy from the former spouse; (4) building a new life style; (5) connecting with both the micro and macro society; (6) re-generating one's sense of self-concept, self-trust and trust of others.

McPhee (1984) concludes that divorce adjustment constitutes a process of social, familial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal role redefinition. He states that the redefinition is most commonly observed as the family members collectively and individually adapt and adopt roles to systematically account for losses caused by divorce and separation.

Spanier and Casto (1979) state that people who separate and divorce make two separate but overlapping adjustments. The first is the adjustment to the dissolution of the marriage. This includes dealing with the legal process, working out a property settlement, and working out custody arrangements if children are involved. It also involves informing and otherwise dealing with persons in one's social network, such as family, friends, and business acquaintances. Also involved in the adjustment process is coping with the emotional effects of dissolution, including: (1) feelings about the former spouse, such as love,

hate, bitterness, guilt, anger, envy, concern, and attachment; (2) feelings about the marriage, such as regret, disappointment, sadness, and failure; and (3) more general feelings, such as depression, euphoria, relief, lowered self-esteem, and lowered self-confidence.

The second adjustment is to the process of setting up a new life style. This includes such things as finding a new residence, living on less (or occasionally more) money, getting a job or applying for welfare. If children are involved, it includes adjustments to single parenthood if one has custody, or adjusting to occasional and limited visits with the children if one does not. In addition, it includes finding new friends and establishing new heterosexual relationships. The process requires emotional adjustment to such feelings as fear, frustration, loneliness, and inadequacy, as well as possible feelings of freedom, happiness, and heightened self-esteem (Spanier & Casto, 1979).

Wise (1980) describes successful divorce as the emotional acceptance of the permanent separation, the giving up of the emotional involvement with the spouse, the regulation of the

marital relationship to memories, a redefinition and acceptance of the self as a single person, and the psychological capacity to find a new love object.

Wise (1980) looked at divorce in a population for whom external stresses were minimized and found that the women, one to four years post-separation were experiencing considerable psychological distress. Symptomatology included: depression, anger, feelings of vulnerability, low self-esteem, preoccupation with loss, fears of loneliness and aging, awareness of loss of status, fears about financial security and lack of support systems, feelings of being incomplete without a husband, difficulties coping with parenting pressure, and reconciliation fantasies.

Wise (1980) concludes that divorce, especially in marriages of long duration with children at home, can be a long and painful process. Often women remain emotionally involved with and attached to the ex-spouse for years after legal divorce. Wise states that prolonged ambivalence towards him may interfere with mourning the marriage and prevent affective closure despite conscious wishes to be free to move on. The fact that the ex-spouse

is alive and available for sharing of parenting responsibilities and financial support complicates the task of loss resolution. Wise states that "partial divorce" (p.157) may be a more descriptive term when discussing separation in long-term married middle class families with children.

Factors Influencing Divorce Adjustment.

There are a number of factors which appear to be correlated with divorce adjustment. Goode (1956) found high levels of trauma to be related to duration of marriage, perception of divorce as a one-sided decision, and reference group disapproval of divorce. Lower levels of trauma were associated with youth, having a job, and high levels of dating.

Kitson and Raschke (1981) state that the findings on whether males or females have more difficulty adjusting are contradictory. Weiss (1975) found no differences. Chiraboga and Cutler (1977) report greater distress for women in the pre-divorce decision period. Gove (1973) found that divorced men have more symptoms of disturbance than women. Brown and Fox (1978) found that women experience both more situational stress and more

conscious feelings of subjective distress than men during a divorce.

Findings on whether having children or having custody of children affects divorce adjustment are also inconsistent. Goode (1956) found that having more children was associated with a greater degree of trauma. Weiss (1975) suggests that responsibility for children may help keep the parents going. Kitson and Raschke (1981) suggest that since women still generally obtain custody of minor children, they may constitute an adjustment asset which partially accounts for the gender difference which Gove (1973) reports. Brown et al. (1981) also support this finding.

Most of the post-divorce adjustment studies find that individuals who take an active role in the divorce decision, either as initiator, or in a mutual decision, have an easier time adjusting (Goode, 1956; Raschke, 1974; Brown et. al 1981). Weiss (1975) reports differences in the kind of distress felt by the "leaver" and the "left" with the initiator experiencing more guilt and the party left feeling hurt and abandoned.

The time immediately preceding and following physical separation has been shown to be the most

difficult period with a variety of psychophysical symptoms reported. These include: headaches, dizziness, skin rashes, asthma, loss of appetite, pains in the chest and stomach, weight changes, sleep difficulties, difficulty concentrating, heavier smoking and drinking, tiredness, and self-neglect. In addition, the amount of time lapsed since the physical separation is related to adjustment; the longer the time, the lower the physical distress and adjustment problems (Goode, 1956; Raschke, 1974; Chiraboga & Cutler, 1977).

Studies looking at the effects of age and length of marriage on adjustment find that, in general, the ending of a longer marriage produced more traumatic effects and more difficult adjustment (Goode, 1956; Chiraboga, Roberts, & Stein, 1978). Older women in particular, have a more difficult time adjusting than younger individuals (Goode, 1956; Chiraboga et al., 1978).

Goode (1956) and Raschke (1974) have found that level of education has little effect on trauma, distress, or adjustment. Income--actual amount, source, anticipated amount, and stability of income--is related to adjustment. The higher the actual amount of the income, the better the

adjustment and/or the lower the trauma or distress. (Goode, 1956; Raschke, 1974; Bould, 1977) The more economically independent individuals are, particularly women, the better their adjustment or the higher their sense of personal fate control (Raschke, 1974; Bould, 1977).

Pett and Vaughan-Cole (1986) report that in nearly every analysis of the impact of the economic issues on the social and emotional functioning of the custodial parent, the most affected parents are those individuals who were of low socioeconomic status and whose low income derived primarily from public transfer payments (for example, AFDC, social security, vocational school). It is this group which appear to experience the most significant drop in income level and social status, who are not able to take advantage of the possible growth producing effects of divorce, and who continue to feel the least secure about their income sources. This resource deficient group also scores significantly lower in social and emotional functioning than their higher income, higher status, and more functionally secure counterparts. "Needless to say, this group of 'at risk' custodial parents was women" (p.109).

Herman (1977) states that early childhood socialization roles for women do not help them meet the crisis of divorce. She points out that separated and divorced women, hindered by passive behavior, exhibit feelings of helplessness and behave as victims of "a vast and vague society in which they have no control, let alone direction" (p.115) .

Herman (1977) reports that divorced women who have occupied passive, submissive roles and have practiced nurturing and homemaking skills for many years of marriage may suddenly find themselves forced into the unprotected world with no perceived support system, no salary base to negotiate from, no viable job vitae. Their feelings may range from hostility, defensiveness, and hopelessness to, at times, suicide. Suicidal behavior may be used to communicate feelings of loss, alienation, and confusion.

Conclusion.

Numerous factors appear to be related to adjustment to marital dissolution. Some of these include length of marriage, the gratification or dissatisfaction provided by the marriage, who was

the initiator of the breakup, presence of dependent children, the age of the divorcing woman, and her prospects for future income.

In addition to these factors, studies have found that sex-role attitudes (Brown, Perry, & Harburg, 1977; Felton, Lehman, Brown, & Liberatos, 1980) and social support (Goode, 1956; Weiss, 1975; Hynes, 1979; Kitson, Moir, and Mason, 1982) are related to the divorce adjustment process. The next section will review the literature on these psychosocial factors and will discuss how each may provide an ameliorative effect for individuals dealing with stressors and, more specifically, the stress of divorce.

Sex-Role Orientation

Traditionally, women have derived their basic satisfactions and sense of identity from the wife and mother roles, feeling that the woman's role is subordinate to the man's and that family responsibilities should take precedence over personal fulfillment outside the family. Non-traditional women consider maximization of their own potential equally as important as family duties and acknowledge their need for individual

achievement and autonomy.

Felton, Lehman, Brown, and Liberatos (1980) state that non-traditional sex-role attitudes can be viewed as a coping resource that provides individuals with some degree of psychological flexibility in their response to marital difficulties and the threat of divorce. Because marital disruption often confronts people with the need to assume new roles that may not fall within stereotyped sex-role standards (for example, a woman must assume a head of the household role following separation) it is expected that greater sex-role flexibility will be associated with lower distress. Non-traditional sex-role attitudes, presumably reflecting increased degrees of freedom, are therefore assumed to be a measure of such flexibility, which constitute the primary mechanism through which such attitudes alleviate distress.

Felton et al. (1980) point out that support for the central role of attitudes in coping behavior can be seen in Lazurus' (1977) notion of cognitive appraisal. The individual's experience of distress is conceptualized as a function of the examination of the range of problem solutions available to cope with the stress at any point in

time and the consequent assessment of the probability of successful stress management. As Pearlin and Schooler (1978) point out, "the way an experience is recognized and the meaning that is attached to it determine to a large extent the threat posed by that experience" (p.6). A woman whose major identity and esteem are based on her family roles is expected to experience the possibility of divorce in a very different way from a woman who considers her own fulfillment outside the family equally as important to her sense of self as her family responsibilities (Felton et al., 1980).

This section will review the literature on sex-role orientation which posits the notion that an androgynous individual possesses both masculine and feminine qualities and thus has a larger behavioral repertoire capable of meeting the needs of complex situations.

Bem, Martyna, and Watson (1976) state that both historically and cross-culturally, masculinity and femininity have represented complementary domains of positive traits and behaviors. Different theorists have designated different labels for these domains. According to

Parsons and Bales (1955), masculinity has been associated with an "instrumental" orientation, a cognitive focus on getting the job done or the problem solved. Femininity has been associated with an "expressive" orientation, an affective concern for the welfare of others and the harmony of the group. Similarly, Bakan (1966) has suggested that masculinity is associated with an "agentic" orientation, a concern for oneself as an individual. Femininity is associated with a "communal" orientation, a concern for the relationship between oneself and others.

Whitley (1984) states that the research on the relationship between sex-role orientation and psychological well-being has been guided by three competing theoretical models. These models are the congruence model, the androgyny model, and the masculinity model.

The congruence model is based on the assumption that masculinity and femininity are opposite poles of a single dimension. One must have either a masculine or a feminine sex-role orientation since these orientations are mutually exclusive and incompatible. This assumption leads to the hypotheses that well-being will be fostered

only when one's sex-role orientation is congruent with one's gender and that such congruence is necessary for psychological well-being (eg. Kagan, 1964; Mussen, 1969). The congruence model has been reformulated with the demonstration that sex-role orientation is not unidimensional but encompasses the two complementary dimensions of masculinity and femininity (Bem, 1974; Spence & Helmreich, 1979). Under this model, psychological well-being is a function of a gender by sex-role interaction. Well-being results from high masculinity and low femininity in men and from low masculinity and high femininity in women (Lubinski, Tellegen, & Butcher, 1981).

Bem et al. (1976) state that the concept of psychological androgyny is the capacity for an individual to be both masculine and feminine, both instrumental and expressive, both agentic and communal, depending upon the situational appropriateness of these various modalities. It further implies that an individual "may even blend these complementary modalities into a single act, being able for example, to fire an employee if the circumstances warrant it, but to do so with sensitivity for the human emotion such an act

inevitably produces" (p.1016).

The androgyny model (Bem, 1974, 1979; Spence & Helmreich, 1978) assumes that masculinity and femininity are independent and complementary, rather than incompatible, dimensions. A person can possess a high degree of both masculinity and femininity in his or her sex-role orientation (an androgynous orientation), a high degree of one sex-role orientation and a low degree of the other (a masculine or feminine orientation), or incorporate a low degree of both (an undifferentiated orientation). The androgyny model proposes that one's psychological well-being will be maximized when one has an androgynous sex-role orientation and suggests that such an orientation would "define a new and more human standard of psychological health" (Bem, 1974, p.643).

Whitley (1984) states that the relationship between androgyny and psychological well-being has been called into question by empirical findings which have suggested that the relationship is primarily attributable to the masculine component of androgyny and that the influence of femininity on well-being is negligible (Kelly & Worrell, 1977; Jones, Chernovertz, & Hansson, 1978;

Locksley & Colton, 1979; Whitley, 1983). These findings can be incorporated into a masculinity model, in which one's psychological well-being is seen to be a function of the extent to which one has a masculine sex-role orientation, irrespective of one's gender. However, others (Flaherty & Dusek, 1980; Waterman & Whitbourne, 1982; Della Selva & Dusek, 1984; Glazer & Dusek, 1985) argue that while a strong masculine orientation may be more predictive of adjustment than a feminine orientation, the combination provides an advantage.

Kelly and Worrell (1977) reviewed the measures of sex- role orientation and the studies intended to validate the constructs. They conclude that the general (but not without exception) finding has been that androgynous and masculine typed persons perform well or "look best" and frequently do not differ significantly from one another on characteristics for which sex-role categories are compared. In contrast, feminine-typed and undifferentiated subjects tend to cluster together and "look worse" relative to the other two groups, especially in self-esteem and life history data. Even on some tasks designed to evoke stereotypically feminine expressiveness and

affection, feminine-typed persons do not do well (Bem, 1975; Bem et al., 1976).

Kelly and Worrell (1977) suggest that this raises the possibility that feminine typed expressive behaviors are less socially effective for an individual than are masculine-typed behaviors, and that they do not lead to positive outcomes as frequently. The authors suggest that if this hypothesis is correct, although androgynous persons possess both masculine and feminine characteristics, it may be principally the masculine-typed behaviors that have greater potential for leading to social reinforcements in our society.

Jones, Chernovertz, and Hansson, (1978) conducted a program of studies to test the hypothesis that psychological androgyny permits greater behavioral flexibility and consequently leads to better adjustment. A variety of methods were used to compare androgynous with sex-typed and opposite sex-typed individuals along several attitudinal, personality, and behavioral dimensions. Contrary to expectation, a pattern of findings replicated across measures of attitudes towards women's issues, gender identification,

neurosis, introversion-extraversion, locus of control, self-esteem, problems with alcohol, creativity, political awareness, confidence in one's own ability, helplessness, and sexual activity indicated that flexibility and adjustment were generally associated with masculinity rather than androgyny for both males and females. A subsequent investigation revealed that feminine subjects, independent of gender, would prefer to become more masculine if that were possible.

Jones et al. (1978) suggest that it appears that general adaptability varies as a direct linear function of a relative mix of traits dominated by such factors as assertiveness, decisiveness, and intellectuality, as opposed to nurturance, responsiveness, and emotionality. What the authors did not anticipate in the study was the finding that females who completely violated societal sex-role expectations appear to be happier, more competent, and more adaptive than either androgynous or sex-typed females. Jones et al. (1978) state that it becomes reasonable to conclude that individuals high in agentic tendencies will not only be more successful within the context of this society's values, but such persons will feel

more confident due to a history of differential application of rewards.

Shaw (1982) investigated the relationship between psychological androgyny and stressful life events. He found that androgynous subjects rated the stressful life events that they experienced as less undesirable than other subjects, but the relationship only held for female subjects. Shaw suggests that sex typing does appear to be a mediator of the effects of stressful life events, but more so for females than for males.

Shaw (1982) also found that undifferentiated subjects were more disadvantaged than androgynous subjects were advantaged. Undifferentiated subjects rated themselves as less happy and their stressful life events as less meaningful. Shaw suggests that a possible explanation for his findings is in a differential access to, use of, and/or attitude towards social support systems by persons of different sex-types.

Adams and Sherer (1982) investigated the relationship between sex-role orientation and psychological adjustment using the BSRI and the MMPI with samples of college women and housewives. The hypothesis of better adjustment

among androgynous and masculine women as compared with the feminine and undifferentiated women received consistent support in the two college samples but none in the housewife sample. The androgynous and masculine college women were better adjusted. They were equally less depressed, less socially uncomfortable and less anxious than the feminine and undifferentiated college women. Among housewives there were no significant differences.

Adams and Sherer (1982) conclude that the failure to find superior adjustment in the androgynous groups, as compared with the masculine groups, does not lend support to Bem's theory of androgyny as an enriched and flexible behavioral repertoire. The authors feel that their data concur with the body of literature that points to equally good adjustment in persons with masculine sex-role orientations as well as persons with androgynous sex-role orientations.

Carter (1985) examined relationships between sex-role orientation and cognitive flexibility in young adults. Androgynous individuals were found to be more cognitively flexible than their feminine and undifferentiated peers. They found that

androgynous persons' masculinity was the principal determinant of their cognitive flexibility.

Flaherty and Dusek (1980) did an investigation of the relationship between psychological androgyny and components of self-concept. Male and female college students were subjects in a study done to clarify whether the higher levels of self-esteem and self-concept in androgynous individuals are due only to a high level of masculinity. The study utilized the BSRI and a semantic differential scale previously used to assess four dimensions of self-concept.

The androgynous and masculine groups scored higher than the feminine and undifferentiated groups on achievement/leadership, which tends to reflect an instrumental role. Androgynous and feminine subjects scored higher than the masculine and undifferentiated subjects on congeniality/socialibility which tends to reflect an expressive role. The masculine and feminine groups scored at appropriate ends of the masculine/feminine self-concept dimension with the androgynous and undifferentiated groups scoring at intermediate levels.

Analysis of variance on the adjustment factor

indicated that androgynous subjects score significantly higher than subjects categorized as undifferentiated. Multiple regression analysis indicated that those who scored higher in masculinity, regardless of gender, and females who scored higher in femininity tended to score high on the adjustment factor. Flaherty and Dusek (1980) state that this finding replicates Bem (1977) who reported that self-esteem for males was significantly related to masculinity, but that self- esteem for females was significantly related to masculinity and femininity. The authors conclude that conflicting findings in the literature on this point may reflect different dimensions of the self-concept in the measure being employed.

Flaherty and Dusek (1980) also conclude that the results support those who argue (Bem, 1975; Spence et al., 1975) that an androgynous orientation leads to greater behavioral flexibility and adaptation. These subjects viewed themselves as adjusted and saw themselves positively in instrumental and expressive aspects of the self. The authors suggest that undifferentiated subjects may be at a psychological disadvantage regardless

of the aspect of the self-concept measured. They had the lowest scores on the adjustment, achievement/leadership, and congeniality/ socialibility factors. They viewed themselves as not sex-typed and also had relatively poor views of themselves in the instrumental and expressive roles.

Waterman and Whitbourne (1982) examined the relationship of androgyny to psychosocial development in the context of Erikson's (1963) theory of personality. Erikson believes that the ability to cope with the demands of later developmental stages rests upon the foundation established during earlier stages of the life span. Samples of male and female college students and adults completed the BSRI and the Inventory of Psychosocial Development (Constantinople, 1969). The highest scores on psychosocial development were obtained by individuals with an androgynous orientation, followed by those with masculine, feminine, or undifferentiated orientations, in that order. Certain aspects of psychosocial development were differentially associated with masculinity and femininity, in accordance with the agentic or

communal quality of successful resolutions of particular developmental crises.

The authors conclude that the results support the view that the simultaneous endorsement of both masculine and feminine qualities represents an added adaptive capacity. The findings applied equally to both sexes and both age groups studied.

Waterman and Whitbourne (1982) state that as in previous research on sex-role orientation and psychological effectiveness, high scores were obtained by androgynous and masculine individuals regardless of gender. They state that this serves to confirm the greater relative importance of masculine over feminine qualities for effective functioning (Jones et al., 1978; Kelly & Worrell, 1977). The authors point out that the significant difference between the androgynous and masculine orientations in the post-hoc comparisons using the full scale psychosocial developmental scores indicates that the endorsement of feminine qualities in conjunction with masculine traits makes a contribution over and above that made by the endorsement of masculine traits alone. This provides support for Bem's view regarding the additive capacity of the androgynous orientation.

Waterman and Whitbourne (1982) also note that the relatively greater association of masculinity with psychosocial development may be a function of the particular qualities emphasized in Erikson's theory which may be more applicable to male development.

The results of this study (Waterman & Whitbourne, 1982) contrast with those of Jones et al. (1978) who failed to find differences between individuals with androgynous and undifferentiated orientations.

Della Selva and Dusek (1984) investigated the relationship between sex-role orientation and the resolution of Eriksonian crises during the later adolescent years. Their sample was a group of male and female college students who completed the BSRI and the Industry vs. Inferiority and Identity vs. Identity Diffusion scales from the Inventory of Psychosocial Development.

Analysis of the difference scores revealed that the androgynous subjects had significantly higher mean scores than the subjects in the other three sex role groups. The masculine subjects had higher mean scores than did the feminine subjects. Feminine subjects, in turn, had higher mean scores

than did the undifferentiated subjects. Della Selva and Dusek report that their data lend support to those (Bem, 1977; Flaherty & Dusek, 1980; Waterman & Whitbourne, 1982) who have argued that an androgynous orientation leads to better adjustment.

Della Selva and Dusek (1984) note that while a strong masculine orientation may be more predictive of adjustment than a feminine orientation, the combination provides an advantage. Androgynous subjects score higher because a sense of industry and a sense of identity involve not only an instrumental orientation but also an expressive one. The undifferentiated subjects were at a disadvantage. They viewed themselves as less successful in resolving crises when the solution was measured either positively or negatively. The authors conclude that it is the masculine component that is predominantly, but not solely, responsible for the positive relationship between androgyny and psychological adjustment. They do not feel that their results support the claims of Jones et al. (1978) and Kelly and Worrell (1977) that masculinity rather than androgyny leads to greater adjustment.

Glazer and Dusek (1985) also investigated the relationship between sex-role orientation and the resolution of Ericksonian developmental crises. They studied male and female undergraduate students using the BSRI and the IPD. Their results support the contention that, in general, an androgynous orientation is associated with better adjustment.

The authors concur with other research (Della Selva & Dusek, 1984; Flaherty & Dusek, 1980; and Waterman & Whitbourne, 1982) which concludes that it appears that to be sex-typed is better than to be undifferentiated. In the same way that viewing the self androgynously leads to optimal development, viewing the self as traditionally sex-typed aids adjustment, even if this is in a somewhat limited manner. This is because it allows one to view the self positively in some ways and because it insulates the individual against viewing the self negatively (Glazer & Dusek, 1985).

Glazer and Dusek (1985) found that the masculine component was a significant predictor more frequently than the feminine component. They felt that this is consistent with the instrumental orientation of Erikson's (1963, 1968) theory and with our cultural setting in which instrumentality

is highly valued and related to adjustment. They note that femininity is related to adjustment and do not support the conclusions of Jones et al. (1978) and Kelly and Worrell (1977). Glazer and Dusek also point out that it appears that the relationship between sex roles and adjustment is closely tied to the expressive or instrumental tone in the measure of adjustment.

Prager and Bailey (1985) examined the relationship of psychological androgyny with psychosocial crisis resolution from the perspective of Erickson's theory (1963) and with ego development in the context of Loevinger's theory (1969). Loevinger's theory is also a hierarchical stage theory in which each developmental stage builds on the preceding ones. A sample of male and female adults completed the BSRI, the IPD, and the Washington University Sentence Completion Test. The results provide support for the hypothesis that androgyny represents a higher level of psychosocial development than sex-typing along stereotypic lines. The authors feel that the study provides empirical support for Block's (1973) theory that the highest levels of ego functioning encompass an awareness and ultimately an integration of traits

and values that are conventionally considered masculine or feminine.

The results of the Prager and Bailey study (1985) also provide support for the notion that the integration of both masculine and feminine traits into the self-concept is related to the successful resolution of important developmental crises. Sex-typed, and more dramatically, undifferentiated orientation is related to less successful coping with psychosocial crises. The authors state that the two sets of results, taken together, provide the strongest support to date for the notion that psychological androgyny may represent a higher, more mature, level of development than sex-typing.

Prager and Bailey (1985) conclude that their study provides evidence for the contention that psychological androgyny is associated with developmental maturity in adulthood and seems to rest on a foundation of successful coping with developmental issues from the early part of the life-span. These findings were consistent for both sexes, regardless of educational level, marital status, or age.

The literature indicates that a good deal of controversy still exists about the relationship

between androgyny and psychological well-being. The masculinity model proposes that one's psychological well-being is a function of the extent to which one has a masculine sex-role orientation, irrespective of one's gender. The supporters of the androgyny concept conclude that it is the concomitant presence of both masculine and feminine qualities, or psychological androgyny which provides an individual with greater developmental maturity and a greater repertoire for coping with stressful life events.

Non-traditional women who consider maximization of their own potential equally as important as family duties and acknowledge their needs for individual achievement and autonomy may find that their attitudes can function as a coping resource in response to marital disruption. It is expected that these non-traditional women, encompassing both the androgynous and masculine sex-role orientations, will demonstrate some degree of sex-role flexibility which will be associated with lower distress while coping with separation/divorce.

Social Support

Social support has been found to have a mediating effect on individuals experiencing major life changes. This section will review the literature on social support and social networks. Research on the relationship between social support and marital dissolution will be discussed.

Ganellen and Blaney (1984) state that social support has been defined in several ways. It has generally been characterized by the degree of support provided to an individual, particularly in times of need, by the persons involved with them--spouse, family, friends, neighbors, co- workers, and members of the larger community (Lin, Simeone, Ensel, & Kuo, 1979). Cobb (1976) defined social support more specifically as information that leads individuals to believe that they are cared for and loved, are esteemed and valued, and belong to a social network of communication and obligation. These three areas of information provide the individual with specific kinds of support: esteem support, emotional support and community support.

Cassel (1973), Caplan (1974), and Mechanic (1974) have described social support in somewhat different terms. They have observed that social

networks serve multiple functions in helping an individual adjust to the demands of the environment by providing information concerning what is expected of them, feedback concerning their behavior, assistance with tasks, and rewards for appropriate behavior.

Cassel (1974a) concluded that psychosocial processes play an important role in disease etiology. He hypothesized that disruption of social ties which may occur under stressful environmental conditions increased susceptibility to illness. He further argued that group supports would protect, or buffer, individuals from harmful physiological and psychological consequences of such conditions. He suggested that it would be easier to protect health through the mobilization of social support than through the reduction of exposure to environmental stressors (1974b).

Caplan (1974) extended the conceptualization of social support as a protection against pathology. He characterized social support as consisting of significant others who: (a) help people mobilize their psychological resources in order to deal with emotional problems; (b) share people's tasks and (c) provide individuals with

money, materials, tools, skills, information and advice in order to help them deal with the particular stressful situation to which they are exposed.

Caplan (1976) remarked that it was unfortunate that the term social support has primarily acquired a meaning that suggests the "propping up of someone who is in danger of falling down" (p.7) rather than one that conveys the growth- enhancing or strength-augmentation functions. He also noted that support need not be restricted to crisis situations, but that it can be a part of on-going exchanges between individuals and their support systems which serve to maintain psychological health over time.

Dean and Lin (1977) suggest that social support may be viewed as being organized around two systems: the instrumental system, which is geared to the fulfillment of tasks, and the expressive system, which is geared to the satisfaction of individual needs and the maintenance of social solidarity.

Schaffer, Coyne, and Lazarus (1981) identified three dimensions of social support: emotional support which involves intimacy and receiving reassurance; tangible support, or the provision of

direct aid and services; and informational support, which includes advice concerning solutions to one's problems and feedback about one's behavior.

Tardy (1985) attempts to clarify some of the dimensions of social support through the following terms: direction, disposition, enacted support, description/evaluation, content, and network. Direction describes how social support is both given and received. Disposition refers to support availability which is the quantity or quality of support to which people have access. The actual utilization of support resources is referred to as enacted support. Description describes the support given, whereas evaluation looks at people's satisfaction with their social support. Content (House, 1981) refers to four types of support: emotional (caring); instrumental (for example, loaning money); informational (such as advice); and appraisal (evaluative feedback). Network refers to the actual individuals with whom one interacts who provide support (Tardy, 1985). This includes spouse, family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and members of the larger community.

Social Network

Mueller (1980) has suggested that "the concept of social network may provide the basis for a unifying framework in which the diverse findings with regard to the relationship of social factors to psychiatric disorder may be integrated" (p.148). More specifically, he hypothesizes that inadequate or disrupted networks may be a central explanatory factor in the well-known relationship between psychological well-being and social class, marital status, geographic mobility, and minority status.

Social networks have numerous support functions. Mitchell and Trickett (1980) categorize these according to the following functions: (a) emotional support; (b) task oriented assistance; (c) communication of expectations, evaluation, and a shared world view; and (d) access to new and diverse information and social contacts.

Mitchell and Trickett (1980) define three structural characteristics of social networks: (a) size or range which includes the number of individuals with whom the focal person has direct contact; (b) network density which is the extent to which members of an individual's social network contact each other independent of the focal person,

and (c) degree of connection which is the average number of relationships that each member has with other members of the network.

Mitchell and Trickett (1980) describe several characteristics of component linkages in a support network. Intensity is the strength of the tie as measured by the number of reciprocal functions which characterize the tie. Durability is the degree of stability of the individual's links with others in the network. Multidimensionality describes the number of functions served by a relationship. Directedness and reciprocity are the degree to which affective and instrumental aid is both given and received by the focal person. Relationship density describes the extent to which the focal person's relationships serve a variety of functions. Dispersion is the ease with which the focal person can make contact with members of his or her network. Frequency describes how often the focal person makes contact with his or her network. Homogeneity refers to the extent to which members of a network share common social attributes.

Tolsdorf (1976) describes individuals as having differing "orientations" towards their interpersonal networks. He found that the most

powerful factor in distinguishing a group of V.A. medical patients from a group of V.A. psychiatric patients was their orientation towards mobilizing and using their interpersonal networks during times of stress. Psychiatric patients were more apt to view their networks with distrust and to discount them as sources of support. Stress was avoided by reducing contact with the stress-producing portion of the network. Psychiatric subjects tended to be less selective, gradually withdrawing from all close human contacts. While this withdrawal insulated the psychiatric subjects from stress, it also insulated them from any potential sources of support.

Medical subjects held positive network orientations and sought out members of their network for support, advice, and feedback when individual mobilization failed to overcome stress. In contrast, when the psychiatric subjects experienced a significant life stress and failed to cope using individual mobilization, they chose not to mobilize their networks. They relied instead on their own resources, which had already been shown to be inadequate. This resulted in more failure, higher anxiety, a drop in performance and

self- esteem, followed eventually by a psychotic episode (Tolsdorf,1976).

Tolsdorf (1976) suggests that an individual's perception of his or her network is related to coping ability and that there are clear differences in the structure, content, and function of networks that may be important for network members.

Brownell and Shumaker (1984) state that "in spite of conceptual confusion and methodological problems, the available evidence suggests that social support probably is an important factor in sustaining health and mitigating the impact of stress" (p.5).

Shumaker and Brownell (1984) describe the health- sustaining functions of social support. Support can gratify affiliative needs by meeting the need for contact and companionship thereby mitigating the effects of isolation and loneliness. Support can promote self-identity maintenance and enhancement by providing feedback regarding aspects of the self and providing models of appropriate behavior in ambiguous or stressful situations. Support can also enhance self-esteem by validating a person's sense of value and adequacy.

Two models have been proposed to explain the

beneficial effects of social support on social adjustment. The first model suggests that social support has a direct effect on adjustment. The more support available to people, the better their psychological adjustment will be. The second model suggests that social support mediates the relationship between stress and adjustment. Statistically, this model predicts that there will be an interactive effect between stress and social support when psychological adjustment is the dependent variable (Caldwell & Bloom, 1982).

Thoits (1982) states that there are good sociological reasons why social support should be directly related to psychological well-being, independent of the presence of life events. She cites Durkheim's anomie theory (Durkheim,1951) which assumes that psychological well-being is maintained by social integration. According to Durkheim (1951), the traditional and stable rules of conduct characteristic of socially cohesive groups give members a sense of certainty and purpose in living. Thus, social integration, or normative regulation, protects the person against the uncertainty and despair that may lead to disordered functioning. Thoits (1982) feels that

the implication is that social support, as an aspect of social integration, should have a main effect upon psychological state.

Thoits (1982) cites the literature on social networks which indicate an association between structural features of support networks and psychiatric disturbance (Tolsdorf, 1976; Mueller, 1980). She suggests that the results imply that certain dimensions of social support are directly related to psychological state. There are studies which have defined the interrelationships between social support, life events, and psychological state (Andrews, Tennant, Hewson, & Vailliant, 1978; Lin, Simeone, Ensel, & Kuo, 1979; Schafer, Coyne, & Lazarus, 1981). Their results indicate that social support does not moderate the impact of life events, but instead has a direct or main effect on psychological well-being.

Several investigators have hypothesized that the individual's social support system may help moderate, or buffer, the effects of life events on his/her psychological state (Caplan, 1974; Cassel, 1976; Cobb, 1976; Turner, 1981). The buffering hypothesis suggests that individuals with a strong social support system should be better able

to cope with major life changes. Those with little or no social support may be more vulnerable to life changes, particularly undesirable ones (Thoits, 1982).

The mediating (or buffering) effects of social support have been outlined by La Rocco, House, and French (1980): "Buffering effects reflect a mobilization of support in response to stress or strain. When stress and strain are low, support is not mobilized, though it may potentially be available. When stress and strain increase, support is mobilized to the extent that it seems relevant to alleviating the stress or strain" (p. 213).

It can be concluded that social support has an impact on an individual's ability to cope with major life changes such as divorce. The next section will discuss the concept of perceived social support which Heller and Swindle (1983) suggest is an element in an individual's ability to cope with stress.

Perceived Social Support

Perceived social support (PSS) refers to the impact that networks have on the individual

(Procidano & Heller, 1983). If networks provide support, information, and feedback, then PSS can be defined as the extent to which an individual perceives that his/her needs for support, information, and feedback are fulfilled. Procidano and Heller (1983) state that while the perception of support depends on the availability of supportive structures in the environment, perceived support and the actual support provided by networks are not identical.

"Knowledge of people's subjective appraisals of the adequacy of support is more critical to the prediction of their well-being than simply collecting information about the number of supporters or the quantity of supporters to which they have access" (Barrera, 1981, p.85).

Procidano and Heller (1983) make a distinction between support from friends and support from family members. Different populations may rely on or benefit from friendship or family support to different extents. Relationships with friends are often of relatively shorter duration than are relationships with family. While an individual's social competence probably plays a role in the maintenance of his/her support network, Procidano

and Heller (1983) suggest that this is probably more true for friendship relationships than for family relationships "since some of the latter are, by definition, ours from birth" (p.3).

Shumaker and Brownell (1984) state that situations in which both the provider and the recipient perceive an exchange as supportive represent the optimal form of perceived support. There is a clear match between the recipient's perceived needs and the provider's response to those needs. The authors state that over time, such matches have the highest probability of engendering an on-going satisfying relationship. Incongruent social support exchanges occur in which the recipient does not perceive the exchange as helpful. The effectiveness of an exchange depends on the fit between recipient's needs and resources. Lack of fit does not necessarily mean lack of support.

Social Support, Gender, and Sex-Role Orientation

Kessler (1979) found that higher levels of psychological distress among several "status disadvantaged" groups were due less to differential exposure to stressful life events than to the

differential impact of these events. Apparently, these "low status" groups, which included women, unmarried persons and persons of low socioeconomic status, were more vulnerable to life stresses than their "high status" peers. Kessler (1979) proposed that variations in social support may provide an explanation for these vulnerability differences.

Hirsch (1978) found that in a group of women who were undergoing major life transitions, higher density networks were associated with low self-esteem, less perceived support, and less successful adaptation. The author suggested that high density networks may put more normative pressure on members than less dense networks to maintain existing roles, thereby providing less support for individuals interested in effecting major role changes.

In another study, Hirsch (1979) studied a sample of college students using a measure that tapped both support interactions and satisfaction. He found that, compared to men, women reported receiving significantly more emotional support (defined as the sharing of feelings and personal concerns) and social support (defined as time spent in social interactions). However, the women were

less satisfied with obtained levels of support, suggesting either a difference in the quality of support received or different expectations regarding support.

Billings and Moos (1984) in a study of coping, stress, and social resources among adults with unipolar depression found that enduring role strains, as well as negative life events, are important components of environmental stressors that are related to the dysfunction of depressed persons. They found that social resources were related to functioning, especially for women. Although the number of members and frequency of contact with network members were important, the strength and quality of support involved in these relationships were more strongly related to patients' functioning.

Burda, Vaux, and Schill (1984) investigated the relationship between sex-role orientation and social support using a sample of 133 college students. Using Bem's (1974) scale, subjects were classified as masculine, feminine, androgynous, or undifferentiated. Feminine and androgynous individuals (both types being high on feminine characteristics) reported significantly more global

support than did masculine or undifferentiated subjects. Similar sex-role differences were found for emotional support and for perceptions of support from family.

The research indicates that women are very sensitive to support received from their network. Women who have a high degree of feminine traits, including both the feminine and the androgynous sex-role orientations, were found to be more sensitive to support received than masculine or undifferentiated women.

Divorce and Social Support

Divorce and marital separation typically involve not only the dissolution of the marital relationship, which may have long since ceased to be supportive, but also the disruption of the couple's entire social network. Support may be diminished as friends choose sides, feel awkward about interacting with either member of the couple, or simply fall away from old patterns of association (Bohannon, 1970).

Kitson, Lopata, Holmes, and Meyering (1980) reported that based on findings from age-standardized survey data, divorced women feel more

restricted in their relationships with others and have less favorable attitudes towards their ex-spouses than do widows. The authors state that the greater clarity of the widowed role may provide for more social support and ease adjustment to the end of a marriage in ways unavailable to the still somewhat stigmatized divorcee. There are cultural norms for mourning a death, but not for mourning a divorce.

Adjusting to the loss of a spouse may be made more difficult by the fact that women are generally older when their husbands die, and as a result, widows face age discrimination. However, divorcees also seem to experience discrimination. They report a sense of alienation and restriction in relationships with others that is based on their divorced status. This suggests that if a widow and a divorcee were of the same age, the divorcee, because of her sense of restricted relationships with others would seek and receive less support from others. Thus the adjustment to her new role would be more difficult (Kitson et al., 1980).

Kitson, Moir, and Mason (1982) identified two conditions under which social support from kin is less likely in a crisis. First, if other family

members are themselves experiencing stressful life events, they are less likely to help their divorced relatives. Second, if a potentially distressing life event such as a divorce occurs and family members disapprove of it, they are less likely to provide help.

Spanier and Casto (1979) found that the level of support was lower from parents who disapproved either of divorce in general, or of their child's divorce in particular. They found that divorced individuals who lacked family support had more trouble adjusting to divorce, particularly emotionally.

Chiraboga, Coho, Stein, and Roberts (1979) found a dramatic difference in the frequency with which social supports were sought out by men and women. Women were more likely to seek out contact with others for almost every category of helper (spouse, family, friend, neighbor, counselor, self-help group). They also sought out people from more categories of support than did men. Older persons were found to experience more difficulty with the divorce process. Chiraboga et al. (1979) suggests that the declining availability of an informal social support system may help to explain

the greater vulnerability of older persons to the divorce experience. The authors also found that perception of stress had a major impact on the respondents. The more distressed they had been during the initial stages of divorce, the more likely they were to seek help.

In a study of low-income, single parent mothers, Hynes (1979) found that higher levels of social support, provided through friends and family, organizational participation, and public agencies, are related to lower distress.

Coughey (1981) examined the types of support provided by family and friendship networks for a representative sample of divorced women in Pennsylvania. She found that the divorced women's families provided both practical and emotional support, and that the level of support was enhanced by the presence of young children and residential proximity. Older women and those who had established a relationship with another male, were likely to receive a lower level of familial support. The types of support provided by kin tended to focus upon the home situation, while support from friends was directed toward the woman's dealings with the outside world.

Leon and Isaacs (1986) found that the types of parental support received by a divorcing mother is mediated not only by her relationship with her parents, but also varies by race, income, employment status, life-cycle characteristics, and aspects of the separation process. Emotional support was influenced by parent's approval of the separation. Younger women, black women, and mothers who were not employed were more likely to move back with their parents following marital separation.

Isaacs and Leon (1986) report that the literature on social networks following separation suggests that contact between divorced individuals and their respective family networks is an extension of the pre-separation patterns of interaction. The type and level of support provided the divorced individual by his or her family is mediated by factors such as proximity, the frequency of interaction, and the approval of family members of the divorce. Family network support is a determinant of the adjustment of both the divorced individuals and their children.

Additional research, however, suggests that the relationship is neither as simple nor as linear

as previously assumed. Hirsch (1978) and Wilcox (1981) found that for women undergoing three major life changes-- divorce, widowhood, and returning to school-- dense networks, especially networks in which friends have relationships with members of the nuclear family, were associated with poor adjustment on self-ratings of symptoms, mood, and self-esteem and on interviewer ratings of adjustment. Low density networks involving more relationships outside the family sphere, presumably allowed women to develop new social roles appropriate to their new statuses.

Leslie and Grady (1988) address the discrepancies in findings and suggest that adjustment is a process and that what is needed varies as a woman passes through different stages of the adjustment process. At these different stages, a woman may benefit from different types of support from her network or different types of networks altogether. They also indicate that there appears to be a delayed effect, in that support following divorce was not associated with immediate functioning, but was related to well-being at a later point in time. Leslie and Grady suggest that the distress associated with divorce cannot be

quickly mediated, but that, with time, a supportive network will facilitate more rapid psychological adjustment.

Leslie and Grady (1988) and Hughes (1988) point out, the divorce transition is a process. Women rely on different members of their social network for different types of support during the various stages of the divorce transition.

In summary, the literature reports a relationship between social support and an individual's ability to cope with major life transitions. A woman's social network can serve multiple functions in helping her to adjust to the stress of marital dissolution by providing her with love, advice, information, feedback, money, and assistance with actual tasks. The literature suggests that those with little or no social support may be more vulnerable to life changes, particularly undesirable ones.

Perception of support depends on the availability of supportive structures in the environment, however, perceived support and the actual support provided by networks are not always identical. Some distinctions between support provided by friends and that provided by family

have been discussed as well as distinctions related to sex-role orientation and support perception. Support from family and from friends has been linked to better post-divorce adjustment.

Conclusion

Numerous factors are related to a woman's adjustment to marital dissolution. Some of these include length of marriage, the gratification or dissatisfaction provided by the marriage, who initiated the breakup, presence of dependent children, the age of the divorcing woman, and her prospects for future income. This study posits the idea that two of the crucial variables affecting a woman's post-divorce adjustment are the psychosocial factors of sex-role orientation and perception of social support received during this period.

This literature review has discussed the information related to the study variables. The following questions have been formulated: Do non-traditional sex-role attitudes function as a coping resource in response to marital dissolution? Is there a relationship between sex-role attitudes and the perception of support availability? Does

the perception of social support affect the experience of distress during marital dissolution? Is there an interaction between these factors (sex-role attitudes and perception of support) and post-divorce adjustment?

Accordingly, the following hypotheses will be tested:

1. Among recently divorced women, sex-role attitudes will be related to the ability to cope emotionally during the period of post-divorce adjustment.

1a. Women who have a feminine or an undifferentiated sex-role orientation will experience more distress.

1b. Women who have an androgynous or masculine orientation will experience less distress.

2. Among recently divorced women, those who perceive positive support from family and from friends will experience less distress during the period of post-divorce adjustment.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

This chapter will describe the population sample and will detail the measures and the methodological procedures that were utilized.

Procedure

Subjects were obtained primarily through a network approach. Letters were sent to friends, acquaintances, colleagues, and organizations explaining that the researcher needed subjects of various ages and backgrounds for a study of women and divorce. In addition, the researcher visited college psychology classes and advertised in a women's organizational newsletter to try to recruit subjects.

Women either volunteered personally and were given a questionnaire packet or gave the participation form to a friend, relative, or colleague. The volunteer returned the tear-off part to the researcher indicating willingness to participate in the study. A questionnaire packet was then sent in a stamped, self-addressed envelope to facilitate return. A phone number was provided

in case a subject had a questions. The questionnaire packet consisted of instructions, a consent form, and the questionnaires.

Each subject read the Introduction to Questionnaires on Women and Divorce (see Appendix) which explained the nature and purpose of the study. They were reinformed that participation in the study was both voluntary and anonymous, that all information was confidential and was used for this research purpose only. A code number was chosen by the participant and at no time did a subject's name appear. If a subject desired, she opted to be further contacted for additional information and/or for follow-up by filling out the Participant Contact Sheet (see Appendix).

The subject then filled out the questionnaires which took approximately one hour. Upon completion, questionnaires were then mailed in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided by the researcher.

Sample

Efforts were made to develop a heterogeneous sample in terms of age, socioeconomic status, educational background, ethnicity, and presence of

dependent children. These factors were weighed for influence in the final results.

The final sample consisted of 64 women who were legally separated or divorced for a period of not more than 24 months prior to participating in the study. Legal separation is tantamount to divorce in New York State. The filing of separation papers is the first step towards the granting of an uncontested divorce.

The women ranged in age from 25-51. Level of income ranged from under 10,000 to over 70,000 dollars per year and level of education ranged from less than completion of high school to graduate training including master's level and legal degrees. Eighty percent of the women were employed full-time, 17% worked part-time and 3% were unemployed. Thirty-three percent of the subjects were Black, 16% were Hispanic, 47% were White, 3% were Asian American, and 1% was Native American. Eighty-eight percent of the women were married once and 12% of the women were married twice. Twelve of the women had no children and 52 of the women had children ranging in age from 1 to 26. Length of marriage ranged from 1 to 26 years. Age at marriage ranged from 16 to 38 years. Months

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N=64)

Variable	Range	Mean	S.D.
Age	25-51	36	6.8
Age at marriage	16-38	23.2	4.7
Years married	1-26	10	6.3
Months separated	2-96	28.5	20.3
Months legally separated	0-24	14.8	14.2
Months divorced	0-24	7.8	7.4
Ages of children	1-26		

Variable	N	%	Variable	N	%
Ethnicity			# of Children		
Black	21	32.8	0	12	18.8
Hispanic	10	15.6	1	24	37.5
White	30	46.9	2	23	35.9
Native American	1	1.6	3 or more	5	7.8
Asian American	2	3.1			
Total	64	100	Total	64	100

Table 1 (continued)

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N=64)

Variable	N	%	Variable	N	%
Education			Income $		
Some high school or less	3	4.7	under 10,000	6	9.4
High school graduates	8	12.5	10 - 19,999	4	6.3
Some college or technical school	19	29.7	20 - 20,999	19	29.7
College graduates	13	20.3	30 - 39,999	17	26.6
Some graduate credits	5	7.8	40 - 49,999	8	12.5
Master's degree	12	18.8	50 - 59,999	4	6.3
Other	4	6.3	60 - 69,999	1	1.6
			70 - above	5	7.8
Total	64	100	Total	64	100

Employment	N	%	Divorce Initiators	N	%
Full-time	51	79.7	Self	38	59.4
Part-time	11	17.2	Spouse	13	20.3
Unemployed	2	3.1	Mutual	13	20.3
Total	64	100	Total	64	100

separated ranged from 2 to 96 months, months legally separated ranged from 0 to 24 months. All women were divorced within 24 months of participation in the study. Fifty-nine percent of the women initiated the divorce. In 20% of the cases the spouse initiated the divorce and in 20% of the cases the decision was by mutual agreement. Table 1 summarizes the sociodemographic characteristics of the sample.

Research Instrumentation

The following materials were used to test research questions. A questionnaire specifically developed for this study was used to gather demographic information. The Bem Sex-Role Inventory and the Inventory of Attitudes Towards Men and Women were used to examine the sex-role attitudes of the subjects. The Perceived Social Support from Family and Perceived Social Support from Friends Scales (Procidano and Heller, 1983) were used along with demographic variables to determine kind of support potentially available and the level of satisfaction with the support received. The Symptom Checklist-90-Revised measured the subject's level of adjustment. In addition, the Life Now

question from the demographic questionnaire was used to obtain a subjective measure of level of distress. (This was a 5 point rating scale in which the respondent indicated "how has life been since you separated", from much worse (1) to much better (5). See item 33, Demographic Questionnaire, in Appendix).

Measures

Bem Sex Role Inventory.

The BEM Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) was designed to implement empirical research on psychological androgyny. It differs from most masculinity-femininity scales in that it treats femininity and masculinity as two independent dimensions rather than as two ends of a single continuum. Thus, a person can be classified as "androgynous" (high on both dimensions), "undifferentiated" (low on both eimensions), or either "feminine" or "masculine" (high on one dimension but low on the other (Bem, 1981).

Although since 1974 comparable instruments have been introduced, the BSRI remains the most utilized of all sex-role attitude scales. A computerized reference search carried out in 1984

yielded 432 research studies involving the BSRI (Lippa, 1985).

To increase the internal consistency of the BSRI scales, Bem developed a short form described as a "refinement of the original BSRI" and as "a convenience in scoring" (Bem, 1981). Payne (1985) states that the short BSRI is a "psychometrically superior, factorially purer index of instrumental and expressive traits." He notes that it should be chosen over the original BSRI. Bem developed the short form by means of a factor analytic study of the forty masculine and feminine items in the original version. Payne (1985) states that what has emerged from this approach appears to be relatively pure measures of "assertiveness-dominance" or "instrumentality" and "nurturance-interpersonal warmth" or "expressiveness".

This short form of the BSRI was used in this study. The BSRI short form includes ten "masculine" characteristics, ten "feminine" characteristics, and ten "filler" items designed to provide a context for the masculinity and femininity scales. Test administration is approximately ten minutes. The subject is asked to indicate how well each of the characteristics fits

him or her on a seven point scale. The scale scores range from one to seven corresponding to "never or almost never" (1) to "always or almost always true" (7). As noted above, subjects may be classified as masculine, feminine, androgynous, or undifferentiated. In order to classify subjects, this study utilized the median split analysis described by Bem (1981).

The original BSRI displays good internal consistency and reliability. Bem (1981) reports the following coefficient alphas: for females, .75 for the femininity scale and .87 for the masculinity scale; for males, .78 for the femininity scale and .86 for the masculinity scale. Alphas for the short form of the BSRI are comparable for the masculinity scale and higher for the femininity scale (for females, .84 on the femininity scale and .84 on the masculinity scale; for males, .87 on the femininity scale and .85 on the masculinity scale). The BSRI has good test-retest reliability. Product-moment correlations were computed between two administrations yielding scores ranging from .76 to .91. The femininity scale and the masculinity scale prove to be virtually uncorrelated. The correlation between

the long and short forms of the BSRI is about .90.

The BSRI remains one of the major instruments for the independent assessment and identification of attitudes and behaviors which are traditionally classified as masculine and feminine. It has enabled considerable research. Lippa (1985) states that the short form of the BSRI promises to solve some of the psychometric problems of the long form and thereby aid researchers in studying the effects of sex-role identification on behavior and cognition.

Inventory of Attitudes Towards Men and Women.

The Inventory of Attitudes Towards Men and Women (IAMW) (Cole, 1979) was developed to be a reliable and valid measure to assess the existence of consensual attitudes--stereotypes--regarding the roles and characteristics of men and women in this society. The inventory identifies eleven content areas in which different expectations are thought to operate for males and females. A brief description and summary of the content areas is given in the Appendix. The items in the item pool are written in Likert format with six response alternatives. The six response alternatives are:

"Strongly Agree", "Moderately Agree", "Slightly Agree", "Slightly Disagree", "Moderately Disagree", and "Strongly Disagree". In order to control for acquiescence, approximately half of the items are negatively keyed and half the items are positively keyed. Each item is given a score from 1 to 6. with 6 representing the choice of the alternative reflecting the more traditional, stereotyped attitude. Each subject's score on the scale is obtained by summing the values for individual items. Thus, theoretically possible are total scores ranging from 138 to 828 (Cole, 1979).

The 138 item measure of the IAMW was administered to a sample of undergraduate men and women at the City University of New York. Coefficient alpha, a measure of internal reliability, was computed for the complete sample of undergraduates and for each of six sub samples. In all instances, alpha exceeded .90. More specifically, the alpha coefficients were of the following magnitudes: total sample (.97); total White sample (.98); total minority sample (.95); White females (.97); White males (.98); minority females (.94); and minority males (.96). This high level of internal consistency across all samples

suggests that the items composing the measure share a common core, that there is homogeneity within the scale (Cole, 1979).

The data derived from administration of the 138 item version of the IAMW scale were subjected to various statistical analyses in order to derive a shorter version of the scale that might be used with a male-female sample composed of ethnically distinct groups. A 34 item version of the scale was selected as most useful, inasmuch as it was the shortest form in which alpha coefficients of .90 or better were obtained for each subsample. This study utilized the 34 item short form version of the IAMW scale.

Cole (1979) states that the finding of similar response patterns among same-sex, different ethnic group subjects, in combination with the high internal consistency estimates obtained for the various sample groupings studied, and the absence of acquiescence response set as a contaminating factor, support the interpretation that the results obtained using the IAMW reflect stable rather than random results. Thus, he recommends the use of the scale for investigations into the study of sex-role stereotypes.

Perceived Social Support Scale.

The Perceived Social Support Scale (PSS) measures (Procidano & Heller, 1983) were designed to measure the extent to which an individual perceives that his/her needs for support, information and feedback are fulfilled by friends (PSS-Fr) and by family members (PSS-Fa). The 20-item self-report measures require a simple "yes","no", or "don't know" response. For each item, the response indicative of PSS is scored as +1 so that scores range from 0, indicating no PSS, to 20, indicating maximum PSS, as provided by family or friends.

The 20 items for friends yielded an alpha coefficient of .88. The family items yielded an alpha coefficient of .90. A pretest indicated a high test-retest reliability (r = .83). Factor analysis of each instrument resulted in a single factor solution, further indicating internal consistency (Procidano and Heller, 1983; Tardy, 1985).

Some statements may be worded to refer to either friends or family, eg."My friends give me the moral support I need" (item 1), or "My family

gives me the moral support I need" (item 1) The scale includes items related to both social support provision, eg. "Certain friends come to me when they have problems or need advice" (item 12), as well as receipt, eg. "My friends are good at helping me solve problems" (item 12). The items refer to both enactment and availability. Most items refer to emotional support. Tardy (1985) states that the instrument is a general measure of social support which does not differentiate among the dimensions of direction, disposition, and content. He cautions that because the receipt items overwhelmingly outnumber the provision items, the scale should be interpreted primarily as a measure of social support receipt. In addition, he states that the scale should be interpreted as measuring primarily emotional support since almost all of the items assess this type of support (Tardy, 1985).

Tardy (1985) finds that the behavioral evidence reported by Procidano and Heller is quite impressive and concludes that self-reports can predict behaviors associated with social support. Procidano and Heller (1983) found that the PSS-Fr and PSS-Fa scales were better predictors of

symptomatology than life events or social network characteristics.

Symptom Checklist-90 Revised.

The Symptom Checklist-90 Revised (SCL-90-R) (Derogotis, 1977) is a 90 item, self-report inventory designed to assess the psychological symptoms of psychiatric and medical patients. The test consists of 90 self-descriptive items that list symptoms related to various aspects of psychopathology. Respondents note the degree to which they are distressed by the symptoms on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 4 (extremely). The test administrator sets a reference time period for which the symptoms, typically the last month.

The subtests include measures of somatization, obsessive-compulsive symptoms, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, phobic anxiety, psychoticism, paranoid ideation, and hostility. In addition, three global indices provide an assessment of the intensity of perceived distress, the number of symptoms experienced, and a summary measure combining intensity and a number of symptoms. Finally, seven additional items that load onto several symptom dimensions, but are not

scored as a subscale, are included for their clinical relevance.

Derogotis, Rickels, and Rock (1976) assessed the homogeneity of each of the nine symptoms in a group of 219 symptomatic volunteers who completed the SCL-90-R. Coefficient alphas ranged from .77 for the psychoticism dimension to .90 for depression. Clark and Friedman (1983a; 1983b) also reported extremely high internal consistency for the SCL-90 but found that the symptom subscales were highly intercorrelated.

Derogotis (1977) presents test-retest coefficients from a sample of 94 psychiatric out-patients who completed the SCL-90-R during an initial evaluation and again before their first therapeutic hour. Test-retest coefficients ranged from .78 for the hostility dimension to .90 for phobic anxiety.

Tennen, Afflek, and Herzberger (1985) state that the SCL-90-R is a widely used measure of psychopathology with sound psychometric properties, including high levels of internal consistency and temporal stability. The authors state that the SCL-90 version of the test appears sensitive to clinical change and has been used successfully in

psychotherapy outcome studies, epidemiological studies, investigations during treatment, studies of victimized individuals, and studies of psychopathology in medical patients.

Tennen et al. (1985) report that the weaknesses of the SCL-90-R are similar to those of many self-report instruments:

1) there is an assumption that the research participant or patient will accurately describe symptoms and behavior

2) the measure is based on the premise that response bias and social desirability do not contribute to scores in a symptomatic fashion and

3) there is equivocal concordance between patient reports and clinician ratings. However, because of its sound psychometric properties, and practicality of administration and scoring, Tennen et al. (1985) conclude that based on current knowledge, the SCL-90-R is a sound self-report assessment instrument of psychopathology which warrants the confidence of the researcher.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This section will present the results of testing the main hypotheses and also will present other significant findings of interest.

T-test comparisons were done between women who were divorced once (N=56) and those who were divorced twice (N=8). No significant differences were found and the two populations were grouped together for subsequent data analysis.

Initial Data Summary

Table 2 presents comparisons of the mean values of key variables of the divorced women population with the norm reference group. In general, this sample of recently divorced women obtained mean scores on the distress measure, the Symptom Checklist 90-Revised (SCL-90-R), that were a standard deviation higher than the mean scores of the norm reference group. Each of these scores reached significance at at least the .01 level of probability.

Mean scores on the Bem measure were significantly higher for the Masculine score

Table 2

Mean Values of Key Variables (N=64)

Variable	Published Norm Group		Divorced Women		t (63)
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Masculine BEM[a]	4.78	.81	5.07	1.09	+2.13*
Feminine BEM[a]	5.57	.76	5.61	1.00	+0.32
IAMW[b]	not available		72.90	24.27	
PSS-Family[c]	13.40	4.83	10.78	3.50	-5.98***
PSS-Friends[c]	15.15	5.08	11.90	3.18	-8.17***
SCL-90-R[d] Subscales					
Somatization	.36	.42	.51	.44	2.73**
Obsessive Compulsive	.39	.45	.93	.68	6.35***
Interpersonal Sensitivity	.29	.39	.77	.54	7.06***
Depression	.36	.44	.94	.62	7.44***
Anxiety	.30	.37	.61	.53	4.70***
Hostility	.30	.40	.69	.73	4.29***
Phobic Anxiety	.13	.31	.28	.44	2.73**
Paranoid Ideation	.34	.44	.72	.57	5.35***
Psychoticism	.14	.25	.43	.49	4.75***
Positive Symptom Total	19.29	15.48	38.03	18.92	7.92***

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, two-tailed

a Bem Sex-Role Inventory
b Inventory of Attitudes Towards Men and Women
c Perceived Social Support
d Symptom Checklist-90-Revised

Table 3

Mean Values of BEM Sex-Role Inventory Subgroups
(Total N=64)

		Masculine BEM		Feminine BEM	
N	Group	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
14	Masculine	58.0	5.6	52.1	4.2
13	Feminine	43.6	3.8	62.5	4.1
18	Undifferentiated	40.9	9.7	47.2	12.1
19	Androgynous	59.6	6.5	63.2	4.2

($t=2.13$, $p<.05$) and comparable for the Feminine score. The mean scores on the Perceived Social Support (PSS) measures were significantly lower than those obtained by the norm group.

Hypothesis I

1. Among recently divorced women, sex-role attitudes will be related to the ability to cope emotionally during the period of post-divorce adjustment.

1a. Women who have a feminine or an undifferentiated sex-role orientation will experience more distress.

1b. Women who have an androgynous or masculine orientation will experience less distress.

Median split analysis as outlined by Bem (1981) was done to divide the population into subgroups--masculine (N=14), feminine (N=13), androgynous (N=19), and undifferentiated (N=18). Table 3 indicates the Bem scores for the groups after these splits were created.

T-test comparisons were done comparing the Bem subgroups of women (masculine, feminine, androgynous, and undifferentiated) on the scales of the SCL-90-R and the Life Now question on the

demographic questionnaire. (This was a 5 point rating scale in which the respondent indicated "how has life been since you separated", from much worse (1) to much better (5). See item 33 in Demographic Questionnaire in Appendix). Tables 4-9 contrast each Bem defined group with each other group on the 11 scores derived from the SCL-90-R and the Life Now question. With the sole exception of a significantly higher perception of Life Now by the feminine group contrasted with the undifferentiated group, all remaining significant differences were between the androgynous group and the other three groups.

No significant findings or trends emerged when masculine and feminine groups and masculine and undifferentiated groups were compared.

T-test comparisons comparing feminine and undifferentiated women indicate that in this sample of recently divorced women, those with an undifferentiated sex-role orientation had a significantly more positive feeling about life now after the divorce suggesting a subjective experience of less distress ($t = 2.26$, $p < .05$).

When masculine and androgynous women were compared, several findings emerged:

(1) Among recently divorced women, those with an androgynous orientation experienced significantly less distress as measured by the interpersonal sensitivity scale (t = 2.38, p < .05) and the paranoid ideation scale (t = 2.23, p < .05) of the SCL-90-R.

(2) Two trends were found: Among recently divorced women, those with an androgynous orientation experienced less distress as measured by the psychoticism scale (t = 1.87, p <.10) and the SCL-Total scale (t = 1.73, p <.10) of the SCL-90-R.

T-test comparisons comparing feminine and androgynous women indicate a trend that, among recently divorced women, androgynous women experience less distress as indicated by the paranoid ideation scale of the SCL-90-R (t = 1.73, p < .10).

Several findings emerged when T-test comparisons were done between androgynous and undifferentiated women. Among recently divorced women, those with an androgynous sex-role orientation experienced significantly less distress as measured by the interpersonal sensitivity scale (t = 2.11, p < .05) and the phobic anxiety scale

Table 4

Symptom Checklist-90-R and Life Now Scores for Masculine and Feminine Subjects

	Masculine N=14		Feminine N=13		
Variable	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	t
SCL-Total	79.21	67.03	64.46	37.39	0.70
Positive Symptom Total	38.93	24.46	43.54	22.21	0.51
Somatization	69.05	65.90	51.92	30.27	0.86
Obsessive Compulsive	104.28	107.75	99.23	58.38	0.15
Interpersonal Sensitivity	103.17	75.67	72.65	47.28	1.25
Depression	123.08	91.37	95.27	51.66	0.96
Anxiety	72.85	73.94	75.38	67.40	0.09
Hostility	91.67	109.54	64.10	48.99	0.83
Phobic Anxiety	25.51	45.93	41.76	72.72	0.70
Paranoid Ideation	100.00	92.45	70.51	37.36	1.07
Psychoticism	68.57	83.84	43.07	44.04	0.98
Life Now	4.14	0.66	3.77	1.17	1.03

~p<.10(trend), *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, two-tailed

Table 5

Symptom Checklist-90-R and Life Now Scores for Masculine and Undifferentiated Subjects

	Masculine N=14		Undifferentiated N=18		
Variable	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	t
SCL-Total	79.21	67.02	56.67	30.18	1.27
Positive Symptom Total	38.93	24.46	38.61	16.18	0.04
Somatization	69.05	65.90	42.12	38.40	1.45
Obsessive Compulsive	104.29	107.75	98.33	48.90	0.21
Interpersonal Sensitivity	103.17	75.67	82.72	40.01	0.99
Depression	123.08	91.37	80.77	49.66	1.68
Anxiety	72.86	73.95	51.67	37.92	1.05
Hostility	91.67	109.54	57.41	60.83	1.13
Phobic Anxiety	25.51	45.93	34.92	36.75	0.65
Paranoid Ideation	100.00	92.45	75.93	47.56	0.96
Psychoticism	68.57	83.84	36.11	29.73	1.53
Life Now	4.14	0.66	4.50	0.62	1.57

~p<.10(trend), *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, two-tailed

Table 6

Symptom Checklist-90-R and Life Now Scores for Masculine and Androgynous Subjects

	Masculine N=14		Androgynous N=19		
Variable	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	t
SCL-Total	79.21	67.02	50.36	24.53	1.73~
Positive Symptom Total	38.93	24.46	33.05	13.99	0.87
Somatization	69.05	65.90	45.61	36.79	1.30
Obsessive Compulsive	104.29	107.75	74.74	51.35	1.05
Interpersonal Sensitivity	103.17	75.67	53.80	43.08	2.38*
Depression	123.08	91.37	84.62	48.85	1.56
Anxiety	72.86	73.95	50.00	32.49	1.20
Hostility	91.67	109.54	67.54	66.55	0.79
Phobic Anxiety	25.51	45.93	13.53	15.41	1.06
Paranoid Ideation	100.00	92.45	49.12	32.14	2.23*
Psychoticism	68.57	83.84	30.53	24.48	1.87~
Life Now	4.14	0.66	4.21	1.13	0.20

~p<.10(trend), *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, two-tailed

Table 7

Symptom Checklist-90-R and Life Now Scores for Feminine and Undifferentiated Subjects

	Feminine N=13		Undifferentiated N=18		
Variable	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	t
SCL-Total	64.46	37.39	56.67	30.19	0.64
Positive Symptom Total	43.54	22.21	38.61	16.18	0.72
Somatization	51.92	30.27	42.13	38.40	0.76
Obsessive Compulsive	99.23	58.38	98.33	48.90	0.05
Interpersonal Sensitivity	72.65	47.28	82.72	40.01	0.64
Depression	95.27	51.65	80.77	49.66	0.79
Anxiety	75.38	67.40	51.67	37.92	1.25
Hostility	64.10	48.99	57.41	60.83	0.33
Phobic Anxiety	41.76	72.72	34.92	35.75	0.35
Paranoid Ideation	70.51	37.36	75.93	47.56	
Psychoticism	43.08	44.04	36.11	29.73	0.53
Life Now	3.77	1.67	4.50	0.62	2.26*

~p<.10(trend), *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, two-tailed

Table 8

Symptom Checklist-90-R and Life Now Scores for Feminine and Androgynous Subjects

	Feminine N=13		Androgynous N=19		
Variable	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	t
SCL-Total	64.46	37.39	50.37	24.53	1.29
Positive Symptom Total	43.54	22.21	33.05	13.99	1.64
Somatization	51.92	30.27	45.61	36.79	0.51
Obsessive Compulsive	99.23	58.38	74.74	51.36	1.25
Interpersonal Sensitivity	72.65	47.28	53.80	43.08	1.17
Depression	95.27	51.65	84.62	48.85	0.59
Anxiety	75.38	67.41	50.00	32.49	1.42
Hostility	64.10	48.99	67.54	66.55	0.16
Phobic Anxiety	41.76	72.72	13.53	15.41	1.65
Paranoid Ideation	70.51	37.36	49.12	32.14	1.73~
Psychoticism	43.08	44.04	30.53	25.49	1.02
Life Now	3.77	1.17	4.21	1.13	1.07

~p<.10(trend), *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, two-tailed

Table 9

Symptom Checklist-90-R and Life Now Scores for Undifferentiated and Androgynous Subjects

	Undifferentiated N=18		Androgynous N=19		
Variable	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	t
SCL-Total	56.67	30.18	50.37	24.53	0.70
Positive Symptom Total	38.61	16.18	33.05	13.99	1.12
Somatization	42.13	38.40	45.61	36.79	0.28
Obsessive Compulsive	98.33	48.90	74.74	51.36	1.43
Interpersonal Sensitivity	82.72	40.01	53.80	43.08	2.11*
Depression	80.77	49.66	84.62	48.85	0.24
Anxiety	51.67	37.92	50.00	32.49	0.16
Hostility	57.41	60.83	67.54	66.55	0.48
Phobic Anxiety	34.92	35.75	13.53	15.41	2.39*
Paranoid Ideation	75.93	47.56	49.12	32.14	2.02~
Psychoticism	36.11	29.73	30.53	25.49	0.61
Life Now	4.50	0.62	4.21	1.13	0.96

~p<.10(trend), *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, two-tailed

of the SCL-90-R (t = 2.39, p < .05). There was a strong trend that androgynous women experienced less distress as measured by the paranoid ideation scale of the SCL-90-R (t = 2.02, p < .10).

Hypothesis I is partially supported. From the results obtained, it can be concluded that among recently divorced women, androgynous women experienced less distress than the other subgroups and feminine women experienced more distress. However, the masculine subgroup was not found to experience less distress when compared with the others, nor was the undifferentiated subgroup found to experience more distress.

Hypothesis II

Among recently divorced women, those who perceive positive support from family and from friends will experience less distress during the period of post-divorce adjustment.

Pearson correlations were conducted to determine whether there were any significant relationships between PSS-Fr, PSS-Fam, and the other scales. Table 10 summarizes these results. There were no significant relationships found between PSS-Fr and the scales of the SCL-90-R

suggesting that perception of social support from friends was not associated with post-divorce adjustment for this population.

However, a significant negative relationship was found to exist between PSS- Fam and the following scales of the SCL-90-R: obsessive-compulsive (r = -.25, p <.05), interpersonal sensitivity (r =-.32, p <.01), and phobic anxiety (r = -.24, p <.05). Those women who perceived more support from family experienced more distress in the post-divorce adjustment period as measured by these three scales.

In addition, a significant negative relationship was found between PSS-Fam and Life Now (r = -.28, p <.05). This indicates that in this sample of recently divorced women, not only were objective measures of distress related to the perception of support from family, but also the subjective experience of life now was worse when there was a greater perception of social support from family.

Thus, Hypothesis II is not supported at all. Although support from family was found to be associated with post-divorce adjustment, it had a negative relationship. Perception of support from

Table 10

Correlations of 3 Variables with 12 Indices of Distress

Distress Index	PSS[a] Friend	PSS[a] Family	IAMW[b]
SCL[c]-Total	-02	-19	17
Positive Symptom Total	-06	-19	27*
Somatization	-16	-06	08
Obsessive Compulsive	03	-25*	12
Interpersonal Sensitivity	-03	-32**	14
Depression	-05	-13	12
Anxiety	07	-18	05
Hostility	-09	-02	22
Phobic Anxiety	-03	-24*	31**
Paranoid Ideation	03	-13	19
Psychoticism	04	-17	20
Life Now	-01	-28**	-09

*p<.05, **p<.01, one-tailed

a Perceived Social Support
b Inventory of Attitudes Towards Men and Women
c Symptom Checklist-90-R

friends was not related to post-divorce adjustment for this sample at all.

Other Findings

Pearson correlations were conducted to determine if there were any significant relationships between the IAMW scale reflecting sex-role attitudes and the subscales of the SCL-90-R. These results are summarized in Table 10.

The IAMW scale was positively correlated with the positive symptom total (r = .27, p < .05), the hostility scale (r = .22, p < .05), and the phobic anxiety scale (r = .31, p < .01) of the SCL-90-R. No significant correlations were obtained between the IAMW scale and the SCL-Total score. Those women with more traditional sex-role attitudes obtained significantly higher scores on the positive symptom total, and the hostility and phobic anxiety scales of the SCL-90-R reflecting a greater degree of post-divorce distress.

Pearson correlations were conducted to determine if there were any significant relationships between the various scales. Table 11 summarizes these findings.

There were no significant correlations of the

Table 11

Intercorrelations Among 7 Primary Variables

		1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	IAMW[a]						
2.	SCL-Total[b]	17					
3.	Masculine[c] BEM	-09	03				
4.	Feminine BEM[c]	01	00	52***			
5.	PSS Family[d]	-05	-19	19	25*		
6.	PSS Friends[d]	-34**	-02	16	24*	02	
7.	Life Now	-09	-23*	01	-07	-28*	-01

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, one-tailed

a Inventory of Attitudes Towards Men and Women
b Symptom Checklist-90-R
c Bem Sex-Role Inventory
d Perceived Social Support

IAMW scale reflecting sex-role attitudes and the Bem scales reflecting sex-role orientation. The IAMW scale was negatively correlated with PSS-Fr (r = -.34, p < .01). Those subjects with more traditional sex-role attitudes perceived less social support from friends.

Significant correlations were found between the Feminine Bem scale and perception of support from family and from friends. Among recently divorced women, the greater the degree of feminine sex-role orientation, the higher the perception of support from family (r = .25, p < .05) and from friends (r = .24, p < .05).

There was a significant correlation between Life Now and SCL-Total reflecting the greater the satisfaction with life now, the less the experience of symptomatic distress (r = -.23, p < .05).

No significant relationship was found between perception of support from family and perception of support from friends.

Pearson correlations were done to see if there were any significant relationships of key variables with education, income, and age. Table 12 summarizes these data. A significant negative correlation was found between the IAMW scale and

Table 12

Correlations of Key Variables with Education, Income and Age

Variable	Education	Income	Age
IAMW[a]	-41***	-47***	-30**
SCL-Total[b]	-31**	-01	-24*
Masculine BEM[c]	-06	16	-01
Feminine BEM[c]	12	14	10
PSS Family[d]	-06	-12	12
PSS Friends[d]	20	32**	28*
Life Now	03	-12	-15

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, one-tailed

a Inventory of Attitudes Towards Men and Women
b Symptom Checklist-90-R
c Bem Sex-Role Inventory
d Perceived Social Support

education (r = -.41, p < .001), income (r = -.47, p < .001), and age (r = -.30, p < .01). Among this sample of recently divorced women, the more traditional sex-role attitudes held, the lower the educational level, income, and age.

There was a significant negative correlation between the SCL Total and education (r = -.31, p < .01) and age (r = -.24, p < .05). Those women who were younger and with less education experienced a greater degree of post-divorce distress.

A significant relationship was found between perception of support from friends and income (r = .32, p < .01) and age (r = .28, p < .05). Among recently divorced women, those who were older and those with higher incomes perceived a greater degree of support from friends during the post-divorce transition period.

T-test comparisons were done comparing the major ethnic group subpopulations on key variables. Raw data for these comparisons appears in the Appendix. When Black and Hispanic women were compared Black women were found to perceive a greater degree of support from friends during the post-divorce adjustment period (t = 4.01, p <

.001). No significant differences were found when Blacks and Whites were compared.

When Hispanic and White women were compared, Hispanic women were found to be more traditional as reflected by significantly higher scores on the IAMW scale (t = 2.74, p < .01). White women were found to perceive a greater degree of support from friends during the post-divorce adjustment period (t = 5.46, p < .001).

T-test comparisons were done comparing women with children (N=52) and those without children (N=12). No significant differences were found.

T-test comparisons were done looking at who was the initiator of the divorce and the degree of post-divorce distress experienced. Raw data for these comparisons appears in the Appendix.
When the woman initiated the divorce, as compared with those cases when the spouse did, her perception of how life is now after the divorce was significantly better (t = 2.50, p <.05).

When the woman initiated the divorce, as compared with those cases when the decision was mutual, she experienced less distress as measured by the SCL-total score (t = 2.28, p <.05).

When the spouse's decision and mutual decision

were grouped together and compared with those cases in which the woman was the initiator of the decision to divorce, the woman experienced less distress as measured by the SCL-total score (t = 2.13, $p < .05$) and her perception of how life is now after the divorce was better (t = 2.19, $p < .05$).

When those cases where the spouse made the decision to divorce were compared with those cases in which the decision was mutual, it was found that the women in the former group had significantly higher feminine Bem scores (t = 2.29, $p < .05$).

Length of time physically separated was correlated negatively with three subscales of the SCL-90-R: depression (r = -.34, $p < .01$); interpersonal sensitivity (r = -.23, $p < .05$); and paranoid ideation (r = -.21, $p < .05$).

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This chapter will summarize the findings and discuss their implications. Limitations of the study will also be discussed and suggestions will be made for future research.

Summary of Results and Implications of Findings

As a group, this sample of recently divorced women obtained scores on the distress measure (Symptom Checklist-90-R) that were significantly higher (one standard deviation) than the norm reference group. It is presumed that these women were having difficulties with post-divorce adjustment. However, their mean scores were well below the mean scores for the psychiatrically diagnosed population either in-patient or out-patient.

Scores on the Perceived Social Support (PSS) measures were significantly lower than those obtained by the norm group indicating that the sample of recently divorced women perceived less support from their social network than did the college students in the norm population.

The mean masculinity score on the Bem scale was significantly higher for this population, while the mean femininity score was comparable to that obtained by the college students in the norm group.

Each Bem defined group was contrasted with each other group on the 11 scores derived from the SCL-90-R and the Life Now question. With the sole exception of a significantly higher perception of Life Now by the feminine group contrasted with the undifferentiated group, all remaining significant differences were between the androgynous group and the other three groups.

Hypothesis I was partially supported. From the results obtained, it can be concluded that among recently divorced women, androgynous women experienced less distress than the other subgroups and feminine women experienced more distress. However, the masculine subgroup was not found to experience less distress when compared with the others, nor was the undifferentiated subgroup found to experience more distress.

As expected, feminine women experienced more distress than the undifferentiated group. This finding supports the literature (Bem, 1974; 1976; 1979; Felton et al. 1980) which suggests that

women who are limited to traditional sex-roles might be limited in their repertoire of behaviors, thereby less able to cope with extraordinary stress, such as divorce. Also, it is probable that feminine women felt more uncomfortable than the undifferentiated women about not living up to the role expectations of wife and mother. The disruption of the family structure was probably experienced as very disorienting since so much of the feminine woman's identity is related to the function of the family.

Undifferentiated women were not found to experience more distress which does not support Flaherty and Dusek's findings that they have poorer adjustment and lower self-concept. Not does it support the work of Prager and Bailey (1985) who found that an undifferentiated orientation was related to less successful coping with psychosocial crises.

In a contradiction to the literature, (Kelly & Worrell, 1977; Jones et al., 1978; Locksley & Colton, 1979; Whitley, 1983) which argues that psychological well-being is seen to be a function of the extent to which one has a masculine sex-role orientation, the masculine subgroup was not found

to experience less distress when compared with the others.

As expected, the androgynous group was found to experience less distress than the other subgroups which is consistent with research (Flaherty & Dusek, 1980; Waterman & Whitbourne, 1982; Della Selva & Dusek, 1984; Glaser & Dusek, 1985; Prager & Bailey, 1985) which supports the notion that it is the concomitant presence of both masculine and feminine qualities, or psychological androgyny, which provides an individual with greater maturity and a greater repertoire for coping with stressful life events.

No significant relationships were found between perception of support received from friends and measures of symptomatology. A significant negative relationship was found, however, between perception of support from family and three of the symptom measure subscales. Also, a significant relationship was found between perception of support from family and perception of life now. This indicates that in this sample of recently divorced women, not only were objective measures of distress related to the perception of support from family, but also that the subjective experience of

life now was worse when there was a greater perception of social support from family.

Hypothesis II was not supported at all. It was expected that perception of support from family and from friends would be a mitigating factor in post-divorce adjustment. Although support from family was found to be associated with post-divorce adjustment, it had a negative relationship. Perception of support from friends was not related to post-divorce adjustment for this sample at all. No significant relationship was found between perception of support from family and perception of support from friends.

It was a striking finding that Hypothesis II was not supported at all. It was expected that perception of support from friends would be found to be related to post-divorce adjustment. This finding does not support the literature which indicates that perception of support from friends is an important factor in post-divorce adjustment (Hynes, 1979; Chiraboga et al., 1979; Weiss, 1979).

The literature presents differing opinions on the relationship between divorce adjustment and perception of support from family. Hynes (1979), Coughey (1981), and Isaacs and Leon (1986) found

that family network support is a determinant of the adjustment of divorced women. However, Hirsch (1979) and Wilcox (1981) found that for women undergoing divorce, dense networks were associated with poor adjustment. Low density networks involving more relationships outside the family sphere presumably allowed women to develop new social roles appropriate to their new status. Also, these high density networks were probably shared by the couple and probably tended to continue to perceive the individuals in certain roles. After the divorce, there was probably a tendency to reduce or lose contact because of role changes thus reducing support given or perceived and thereby contributing to poor adjustment.

In the present study, perception of support from family was found to have a negative association with post-divorce adjustment. The findings are probably confounded because the women in the study are at different stages in the divorce transition.

Leslie and Grady (1988) address the discrepancies in findings about social support and divorce adjustment. They suggest that adjustment is a process and that what is needed varies as a woman

passes through different stages of the adjustment process. At these different stages, a woman may benefit from different types of support from her network or different types of networks altogether. They also indicate that there appears to be a delayed effect, in that support following divorce was not associated with immediate functioning, but was related to well-being at a later point in time. Leslie and Grady suggest that the distress associated with divorce cannot be quickly mediated, but that, with time, a supportive network will facilitate more rapid psychological adjustment.

Perception of support from family and perception of support from friends were not at all related for this population. Procidano and Heller (1983) make a distinction between these different types of support and state that different populations may rely on or benefit from friendship or family support to different extents.

The significant correlation between perception of life now and the symptomatology measure indicates that for this population, the greater the satisfaction with life now, the less the experience of symptomatic distress. This finding indicates that the scales are measuring related factors.

The masculinity and femininity scales of the Bem were found to be significantly correlated for this population. This is in contrast with the norm population where the scores are virtually uncorrelated. The sample population is very different from the norm population of Stanford University college students who are generally white and middle-class with little life experience. The sample population is a heterogeneous mixture in terms of age, education, income, and ethnicity.

There were no significant correlations between the Inventory of Attitudes toward Men and Women (IAMW) and the Bem scales. This was a surprising finding. Although each scale purports to measure sex-role attitudes and traditionality, for this population they are measuring different things. It would be interesting to see if this holds true for different populations.

The Bem scale measures instrumentality, a cognitive focus on getting the job done, and expresssiveness, an affective concern for the welfare of others and the harmony of the group. The IAMW scale assesses the degree to which a subject endorses stereotyped or traditional views of sex-roles--that is, consensual attitudes,

beliefs, and expectations about the dispositions and typical behaviors supposedly characteristic of males and females in American society.

The Bem scale measures intrapersonal attributes that an individual experiences about herself whereas the IAMW measures attitudes that a person has about interpersonal behaviors in society.

The IAMW scale was positively correlated with several of the symptomatology scales indicating that women with more traditional sex-role attitudes experienced a greater degree of post-divorce distress. This finding supports the research (Brown et al., 1977; Felton et al., 1980) which found that women with non-traditional sex-role attitudes experience better post-divorce adjustment. This would seem to lend some support to Hypothesis I although, as mentioned above, there was no significant relationship between traditionality as measured by the Bem scales and the IAMW.

The IAMW was negatively correlated with perception of support from friends indicating that women with more traditional attitudes perceived less social support from friends.

In contrast with these findings, significant correlations were found between the feminine Bem scale and both perception of support from friends and perception of support from family indicating that the greater the degree of feminine sex-role orientation, the higher the perception of support from family and from friends. However, there were no significant correlations between the IAMW scale reflecting sex-role attitudes and the Bem scale reflecting sex-role orientation .

The finding that women with a feminine sex-role orientation perceived more support from family and from friends than the other groups partially supports research by Burda et al. (1984) which found that women with a feminine orientation experienced more social support. However, this study did not find that androgynous women who are also high on feminine characteristics also perceived more support as they did in the Burda et al. study.

The androgynous women in this study may have been more independent and experienced less of a need to focus on support from others than did the feminine women. They therefore may have been less perceptive of support available to them from their

network.

Traditional sex-role attitudes, measured by the IAMW, were found to be negatively related to educational level, income, and age. Women who were younger and with less education were found to experience a greater degree of post-divorce distress. Women who were older and those with higher incomes perceived a greater degree of support from friends.

Women who marry at a young age, those with less education, and those with lower incomes have more limited opportunities to explore and to experience different situations and input which would expand their capacity to entertain different sex-role expectations. Or conversely, it could be that their very traditionality, and lack of psychological flexibility limited their opportunities to explore relationships, to complete higher levels of education, to pursue greater goals, and to compete for more challenging jobs with higher wages. All of these variables would tend to make these women more dependent on the role of wife.

The finding that women with less education experienced more post-divorce distress does not

support the research (Goode, 1956; Raschke, 1974) which found no relationship. The finding that younger women had poorer post-divorce adjustment does not support the work of Goode (1956) and Chiraboga and his colleagues (1978) who found that older women had a more difficult time adjusting to divorce.

In the last ten to fifteen years women have redefined their roles. Values about divorce have changed along with its prevalence. Women have completed more years of education and training. Higher levels of education are generally related to better employment opportunities and better sense of control over one's life. In this study, women who were older and with higher incomes perceived a greater degree of support from friends. They were more likely to make use of available support systems.

There were no significant differences among ethnic groups in perception of support from family. However, Black women and White women perceived more support from friends when each group was contrasted with Hispanic women. Hispanic women were found to be more traditional, as measured by the IAMW scale, in contrast to White women.

The results from this study indicating that post divorce adjustment was better when the woman was the initiator of the divorce supports the work of several researchers (Goode, 1956; Raschke, 1974; Brown et al., 1981). It is probable that having a sense of control over the termination of the marriage, as opposed to the experience of being left, with little or no voice in the process, was a factor in reducing divorce distress.

Length of time separated was found to be negatively associated with distress. The longer a woman was separated, the less symptomatology she reported. It was expected that symptomatology would be reduced as time passed and the women made adjustments to the new living situation. This finding supports the research of several investigators who found that the time immediately following separation was the most stressful (Goode, 1956; Raschke, 1974; Chiraboga and Cutler, 1977).

Although this study did not find the presence of children to be a significant variable, the findings of other researchers were inconsistent. Goode (1956) found presence of children to be associated with more trauma. Others (Weiss, 1975; Kitson & Raschke, 1981; Brown et al., 1981) found

that they may constitute an adjustment asset.

Limitations of the Study

The sample encompassed a heterogeneous population in terms of age, income, educational level, ethnicity, and presence of dependent children. In many ways the sample is reflective of the broad range of divorced women in the general population.

The weakness of all of the measures used is that they are self-report instruments in which there is the assumption that the research participant will accurately describe symptoms and behaviors. The measures are based on the premise that response bias and social desirability do not contribute to scores in a systematic fashion.

The interrelationship among many of the variables made it difficult to separate out the contribution of each variable. Future studies will have to control for this.

Another limitation of the study is that both the Bem scale and the PSS measures were normed on college age students with little life experience. This homogeneous group tends to be young, white, and middle-class. The validity of the scales for

more heterogeneous populations has to be called in to question.

However, the major limitation of the study was the methodological weakness of grouping separated and divorced women together. Although all the women were legally separated or divorced within 24 months prior to participating in the study, the range of time for actual marital separation was from 0-96 months. Without doubt, women from the upper ranges of this separation period had considerable time to adjust and would therefore be expected to experience less distress. It is highly likely that by allowing a lengthy range of time following actual separation, this study underestimated the degree of distress generally present in divorcing women.

The social support variable was probably affected by this limitation. As Leslie and Grady (1988) and Hughes (1988) point out, the divorce transition is a process. Women rely on different members of their social network for different types of support during the various stages of the divorce transition.

Conclusions

Non-traditional sex-role attitudes played an important role in mitigating the effects of divorce. It was the concomitant presence of both masculine and feminine attributes, or psychological androgyny, which allowed for the greatest psychological flexibility and increased behavioral repertoire which reduced the experience of distress for women in the post divorce adjustment period.

Women who perceived the availability of support from family members did not evidence less distress during the post divorce adjustment period. While social support is probably useful for facilitating adjustment to marital dissolution, it is not a panacea.

During the post divorce adjustment period, women with more traditional attitudes about sex-role were more likely to perceive support from family. White and Black women perceived more support from friends in contrast with Hispanic women. Younger women, and those with less education and income experienced more distress. Women who reported that they initiated the

divorce experienced less distress. Length of time separated was found to be negatively associated with distress. Presence of children was not found to be an adjustment factor.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research needs to clearly differentiate the separated and divorced populations and to control for the time frames from decision to divorce and the obtaining of the divorce. Since women have different needs at different points within the continuum, longitudinal assessment would help to address this issue. Defining these differing needs and kinds of distress is necessary in order to develop appropriate intervention plans. Future research will need to attend to the possibility of a delayed dual effect of social support which may manifest itself over time.

APPENDIX A

Means and Standard Deviations of Significant Correlations: Ethnicity and Divorce Initiators

		Mean	S.D.
Ethnic Comparisons			
PSS Friends	Black	12.62	2.60
	Hispanic	7.90	3.90
IAMW	Hispanic	86.70	17.38
	White	64.90	22.99
PSS Friends	Hispanic	7.90	3.90
	White	13.00	1.97
Divorce Initiators			
Life Now	self	4.39	0.64
	spouse	3.62	1.61
SCL-Total	self	52.42	29.60
	mutual	82.62	64.99
SCL-Total	self	52.42	29.60
	spouse & mutual	74.30	52.53
Life Now	self	4.39	0.64
	spouse & mutual	3.88	1.21
Fem Bem	spouse	58.62	6.60
	mutual	50.84	10.29

APPENDIX B

Subscales of the Inventory of Attitudes towards Men and Women

Subscale 1: Biological, Emotional, and Rational Equality

Subscale 2: Divorce, Alimony, Child Custody and Support Attitudes

Subscale 3: Child Rearing Attitudes

Subscale 4: Attitudes toward Educational and Occupational Sexual Equality

Subscale 5: Marital Relationship, Childbearing, and Marital Role Obligation Attitudes

Subscale 6: Attitudes toward Family Decision Process, Shared Household Responsibilities, and Working Mothers

Subscale 7: Observance of Conventional Sex-Role Social Etiquette

Subscale 8: Conceptions of Women's Abilities and Susceptibility to Influence

Subscale 9: Attitudes toward Male-Female Sexual Freedom

Subscale 10: Male-Female Differences in Sexual Interest and Enjoyment

Subscale 11: Attitude toward Homosexuality

APPENDIX C: RESEARCH MATERIALS

Dear Colleague,

I am contacting colleagues, friends, and associates to enlist their aid in finding women to participate in my doctoral research. The study is on women and divorce.

The research will involve asking women from a variety of backgrounds questions about how they think and feel about things related to their separation/divorce. The study will be conducted in a questionnaire format which will be completely anonymous and confidential. Only group results will be reported. People who participate in this study will help add to the knowledge and understanding of the impact of divorce on women.

I would appreciate your suggestion of recently (within two years) separated or divorced women who might be willing to participate in this research. Please forward to them the attached letter which describes the study and provides a tear-off form indicating their willingness to participate or please give me their names and I will contact them.

I am depending on your cooperation and appreciate your help. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Etienne Lisa Scott
Doctoral Candidate
Clinical Psychology
City University of New York

I am conducting a study on women and divorce. It will involve asking recently (within two years) legally separated or divorced women from a variety of backgrounds how they think and feel about things related to their separation/divorce. You will be asked to complete some questionnaires which will take about an hour. Your responses will be completely anonymous and confidential. Only group results will be reported. People who participate in this study will help to add to the knowledge and understanding of the impact of divorce on women.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please complete the tear-off sheet on the bottom and return it to me. You will be sent a questionnaire along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. If you like, you may contact me by telephone and I will send you a questionnaire.

If you have any questions whatsoever, please do not hesitate to contact me. I appreciate your cooperation very much and hope to hear from you within the next week.

Etienne Lisa Scott
Doctoral Candidate
Clinical Psychology
City University of New York

I am interested in participating in the study on women and divorce. Please send me a questionnaire.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: ( ) _____

Please mail to:

Etienne Lisa Scott
184-17th Street
Brooklyn, N. Y. 11215

Or call:

(718) 965-3721
Leave message

INTRODUCTION to QUESTIONNAIRES on WOMEN and DIVORCE

This is a study of the reactions of women to their divorce. It is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a doctoral degree at the City University of New York.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary so you may withdraw at any time. Your responses will be strictly anonymous and confidential. Please choose a code of three numbers and place the number on the upper right hand corner of each page of the questionnaires. Your name will not be connected with the code number. All results will be reported as group data. No individual results will be available. The findings will be used for this study only and will not be used for other research purposes.

If you are willing to be contacted for future information, please indicate below. If you would like to receive a copy of the summary of the study, or would like to talk over your answers, please indicate below.

It is extremely important that you answer each item. Please do not omit any question. When you finish a questionnaire, please look it over to be sure that you did not skip any items. After completing the questionnaires, please return them to me in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Thank-you for your interest and participation in this research. More and more women are divorcing, the findings from this study should lead to a better understanding of some of the effects of divorce on women.

Etienne Lisa Scott
Doctoral Candidate
Clinical Psychology Program
City University of New York

Please send me a copy of the findings _____.

I would like to talk with you about these matters _____.

I am willing to be interviewed about these matters_____.

My code # is _____. Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

Code _____

CONSENT FORM

I, _____(please print) agree to participate in the study on women and divorce. The nature and purpose of the study have been explained to me. I am aware that the study will require approximately one hour of my time. I understand that all the material is strictly confidential and that I may withdraw from participation at any time.

Signature: _____

Date:

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your educational level?
   _____a.some high school or less
   _____b.high school diploma
   _____c.some college or technical school
   _____d.college degree
   _____e.some graduate credits
   _____f.master's degree
   _____g.Ph.D.
   _____h.other_____

2. Are you currently employed?
   _____a.yes, full time
   _____b.yes, part-time
   _____c.no

3. What type of job do you have at this time?
   _____a. unskilled; domestic
   _____b. clerical
   _____c. technical
   _____d. professional
   _____e. managerial

4. Which describes your yearly gross income from all sources?
   _____a.under 10,000
   _____b.10,000 to 19,999
   _____c.20,000 to 29,999
   _____d.30,000 to 39,999
   _____e.40,000 to 49,999
   _____f.50,000 to 59,999
   _____g.60,000 to 69,999
   _____h.70,000 or above

5. Have you experienced a change in income since your separation?
   _____a.yes
   _____b.no

6. If yes, has your income
   _____a. increased substantially
   _____b. increased somewhat
   _____c. decreased somewhat
   _____d. decreased substantially

7. Do you feel yourself to be religious?
   _____a. yes
   _____b. no

8. Do you attend religious services?
_____a.every day
_____b.nearly every day
_____c.at least once a week
_____d.a few times a month
_____e.at least once a month
_____f.a few times a year
_____g.hardly ever
_____h.never

9. Do you pray, read the Bible or religious literature?
_____a.every day
_____b.nearly every day
_____c.at least once a week
_____d.a few times a month
_____e.at least once a month
_____f.a few times a year
_____g.hardly ever
_____h.never

10. How many children do you have?
_____a.0
_____b.1
_____c.2
_____d.3
_____e.4
_____f.5
_____g.more than 5:_____

11. What are their ages? _____

12. Where do your children live?
_____a. with you
_____b. with your (ex) spouse
_____c. joint custody
_____d. other arrangements_____
_____e. not applicable

13. Does your (ex) spouse give child support?
_____a.not at all
_____b.once in a while
_____c.regularly

14. How often does your (ex) spouse see the children?
_____a.every day
_____b.nearly every day
_____c.at least once a week
_____d.a few times a month
_____e.at least once a month
_____f.a few times a year
_____g.hardly ever
_____h.never

15.With what ethnic group do you identify?
_____a.Asian American
_____b.Black/Afro American
_____c.Hispanic
_____d.Indian/Native American
_____e.White/Caucasian
_____f.other:_____

16.Please state your year of birth_____

17.How many times have you been married?
_____a.once
_____b.twice
_____c.three times
_____d._____times

18.How long have you and your (ex) spouse been living apart from each other?
_____months/years (indicate which)

19.How long have you and your (ex) spouse been legally separated?
_____months/years (indicate which)

20.How long have you been divorced?
_____months/years (indicate which)

21.Whose idea was the marital separation?
_____a.yours
_____b.spouse
_____c.mutual decision

22.Is your divorce legally final at this point?
_____a. yes
_____b. no

23.What was your age at marriage?: _____ years

24.How many years were you married?:_____ years

25.During your marital separation have you sought the advice or assistance of:(Please check all that apply)

_____a.mother
_____b.father
_____c.child
_____d.relative
_____e.friend
_____f.neighbor
_____g.co-worker
_____h. doctor
_____i. clergy
_____j. counselor, social worker, psychiatrist, psychologist
_____k. self-help group
_____l. other_____

26.a. Who was most helpful?_____
b. Who was least helpful?_____

27. If you were involved in counseling was it (Please check all that apply)
_____a. individual
_____b. as a couple
_____c. other

28. Since the decision to separate did you make a change in residence?
_____a. yes
_____b. no

29. Do you have family members who have been divorced?
_____a. yes: (give relationship) _____
_____b. no

30. Have you remarried?
_____a. yes
_____b. no

31. Do you have plans for remarriage?
_____a. yes
_____b. no

32. Are you currently involved in a dating relationship?
_____a. yes
_____b. no

33. In general, how has life been since you separated?
a._____much worse than while married
b._____worse than while married
c._____about the same as while married
d._____better than while married
e._____much better than while married

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