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Daughters of divorce are at higher risk of getting divorced than sons of divorce. Researchers have found that positive relationships between adult offspring of divorce (AOD) and their parents buffer AOD from some long-term effects of parental divorce. This study explored the relationships among several mother-daughter relationship variables, and grown daughters' approaches toward (attitudes toward and exploration strategies of) marriage in the post-divorce family.

Correlational analyses were used to assess significant relationships among the independent variables (mother-daughter connection, mother-daughter psychological separation, and mother-to-daughter disclosure) and the dependent variables (daughters' attitudes toward marriage and use of exploration strategies in the realm of marriage). Multiple regression analyses were used to determine which of the predictor variables best predicted the dependent variables. One-way ANOVAs were used to determine whether any of the variables differed according to race, mother's level of educational attainment, or the number of times the mother had divorced and remarried.

Psychological separation and mother-to-daughter disclosures contributed more than anything else to daughters' use of exploration strategies in the realm of marriage, in the opposite direction from that expected. The less psychological separation there was between mothers and daughters, and the more depth in which mothers disclosed to daughters about divorce related topics, the more daughters reported using various

exploration strategies in the realm of marriage. However, none of the relationships were clinically significant. None of the variables were predictive of daughters' attitudes about marriage. Analyses also revealed that various elements of mother-daughter psychological separation correlated differently with mother-daughter connection.

None of the variables differed according to ethnicity or the number of maternal marital transitions. More educated mothers tended to offer their daughters more support.

The findings from the current study underscore the importance of studying risk and resiliency factors for daughters in the post-divorce family and process variables like exploration strategies in the realm of marriage, in addition to marital outcome variables. These findings also add to a small body of research on ethnic similarities among adult offspring of divorce.

ADULT DAUGHTERS OF DIVORCE: RELATIONSHIPS AMONG MOTHER-
DAUGHTER DYNAMICS AND DAUGHTER VIEWS TOWARD AND
EXPLORATION STRATEGIES OF MARRIAGE

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Most ACDs [adult children of divorce] not only want to be married, but also want to have the perfect marriage that eluded their parents. Often they set marital standards so high that they alienate all potential mates. Marital partners are not failure proof, nor, unfortunately, do they come with satisfaction guaranteed or your money back. ACDs fervently wish they did.

Hirschfeld, 1992, p. 158

Divorce might be considered the great social experiment of twentieth century America. Researchers may argue about whether divorce is a societal problem or a normative lifestyle choice, but the fact remains that, divorce is now a larger aspect of Americans' lives than it ever has been. For the first time, roughly half of children under the age of 18 live in homes where divorce has occurred (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). As they grow up, leaving the events and immediate aftermath of parental divorce behind them, they negotiate life's normative transitions against a backdrop of changed family structures, shifted parent and child roles, and the (often unknown) lingering effects of these circumstances.

For the resilient ones, parental divorce, and the changes associated with it, seem to have little or no bearing on successful completion of normal development. For others, the events or circumstances surrounding parental divorce may hinder such developmental tasks as healthy individuation from parents, development of intimacy with an adult partner, or formation and commitment to a family of one's own.

As this cohort of children comes of age, roughly half the new brides and grooms in the United States approach marriage within the context of parental divorce. Never before has a generation of young adults been simultaneously so aware of the pitfalls of marriage (Kinnaird & Gerard, 1986; Zink, 2000), so hopeful and determined to maintain satisfying and enduring relationships (Fassel, 1991; Harvey & Fine, 2004), and yet, in the end, so likely to end up divorced themselves (Amato, 1996; Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Bumpass, Martin, & Sweet, 1991; Engelhardt, Dronkers, & Trappe, 2002; Glenn & Kramer, 1987; Mueller & Pope, 1977; Wolfinger, 1999).

Divorce is a reality with which most Americans are familiar. For decades, divorce had been viewed as a grim reality with socially corrosive consequences. Yet, like most sociological changes, divorce is accompanied by both negative and positive events and opportunities for the people involved. For the first time in U.S. history, the stigma attached to divorce is lessening (Wolfinger, 2000), and children of divorced parents are less singled out from their peers. Counselors, teachers, social workers, and others who work with families must adapt their practices vis-à-vis a gradually improving understanding of divorce and what it means for adults and children.

Whether the consequences of divorce are, overall, harmful or beneficial, this much can be said for this social experiment: it is being conducted longitudinally, and the sample size is huge and representative. Around 2.5 million people get divorced each year, and one million children witness their parents' divorce every year. In fact, 43% of all new marriages are expected to end in divorce (Divorcemagazine.com, 2005). In addition, families and researchers are realizing that parental divorce, once considered an *event*, is

really a *process* that evolves over time (Robinson, 2000; Zander, 1994). As a process, the impact of divorce changes over time as those involved grow and move through different developmental stages. Little is known, however, about the effects parental divorce has on adult offspring as they progress through developmental life stages past adolescence. The focus of this study is on adult offspring of divorce (AOD), specifically women, who are facing the developmental challenge of forming their own intimate relationships.

Adult Offspring of Divorce

Most divorce research has been focused on the impact, especially the short-term impact, of parental divorce on children (Robinson, 2000). The effects of divorce on children, many of which disappear after a few years (Ahrons, 2004), may reappear in different forms when those children become adults (Beal & Hochman, 1991; Wallerstein, Lewis, & Blakeslee, 2000; Zander, 1994). Researchers have termed this the “sleeper effect” (Fassel, 1991; Robinson, 2000; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989; Zink, 2000). Alternately, a different set of effects may appear when children reach adulthood. In fact, Zink (2000) suggested that the impact divorce has on offspring as children is independent from the impact it has on them as adults.

In adulthood, parental divorce is associated with increased levels of psychological distress and maladjustment (Amato & Keith, 1991a; Nava, 2003), increased need for control and structure (January, 2003), unhappy recollections about parental marriages (Macie, 2003), and overall negative relationship outcomes (van-Schaick & Stolberg, 2002). Parental divorce also has been shown to interfere with the completion of developmental tasks in young adulthood, such as healthy individuation from parents,

establishment of healthy intimacy with romantic partners (Johnson, 1996), and, eventually, with success in marriage (Amato & Keith, 1991a).

Intimate Relationships of Adult Offspring of Divorce

The marriages and (frequently) the divorces of AOD represent one variable in the social experiment of divorce. The late 1990s witnessed an increase in both popular and academic interest devoted to adult offspring of divorce and their increased chances of ending their own marriages. The widely read (and criticized) book, *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce: A 25-year Landmark Study* (Wallerstein, Lewis, & Blakeslee, 2000) called public attention to the long-term impacts of divorce, and sparked debate among researchers (Amato, 2003). Despite the cultural popularity and acceptance of the book, many researchers criticized the authors' use of clinical samples to draw dire conclusions about AODs' general inability to form stable, satisfying relationships. These AOD, they stated, were in counseling already, and were *not* representative of the entire population of AOD and their relationship experiences. Given that most individuals in the United States are touched, in some way, by divorce, it is not surprising that long-term effects of divorce are hotly debated. Care must be taken, however, not to throw the proverbial baby out with the bathwater. Amato stated that the book authors' assertions about decreased psychological well-being and increased risks for marital discord among AOD were exaggerated, but reflective, nevertheless, of actual, proven societal trends.

The societal trend of which Amato (2003) spoke is known as the "intergenerational transmission of divorce" (ITD), which was first described in 1976 by Pope and Mueller. Interest in the phenomenon has increased steadily throughout the end

of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, yet the phenomenon remains only partially understood at best. AOD are about twice as likely to divorce as their adult offspring of non-divorce (AOND) peers, both in the U.S. (Amato, 1996) and in Western Europe (Diekman & Schmidheiny, 2004). Two main hypotheses about the causes of ITD predominate in the literature: the attitudes hypothesis and the transmission of interpersonal behaviors hypothesis (Brown, 1999). The attitudes hypothesis, originated by Glenn and Kramer (1987), states that AOD are more tolerant of divorce and less committed to marriage than adults whose parents never divorced. The interpersonal behaviors hypothesis, originated by Pope and Mueller (1976), states that children learn relationship styles from their parents, and end up imitating their parents' marital (or divorce) behaviors. Despite decades of research, neither hypothesis adequately explains the intergenerational transmission of divorce. Even Paul Amato, one of the most prolific researchers on the intergenerational transmission of divorce, has found support for both the attitudes hypothesis (Amato & DeBoer, 2001) and the interpersonal behaviors hypothesis (Amato, 1996; Amato & Booth, 2001).

Adult Daughters of Divorce

One of the most interesting facts about the intergenerational transmission of divorce, overlooked in much of the research on this phenomenon, is that it applies to women more than men (Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Booth & Edwards, 1989; Glenn & Kramer, 1987; Zander, 1994). The odds of divorce in marriages where only the wife's parents are divorced increase by 69% (Amato, 1996); marriages where the husband's parents (only) are divorced are about as divorce-prone as general population marriages. A

read of the literature suggests several possible explanations for these gender differences. Often, parental divorce is preceded by high levels of inter-parental conflict, which is linked with lowered marital satisfaction among women (Zander, 1994). Parental divorce may lower girls' optimism about marriage, leaving daughters of divorce less hopeful about interventions such as marital counseling (Duncan & Wood, 2003). Alternatively, girls' relationships with their divorced mothers, which are closer and sometimes more intense than other parent-child relationships, may play a role in the outcome of girls' future marriages (Beal & Hochman, 1991; Wallerstein & Corbin, 1989).

Low marital optimism, prevalent among AOD, is especially pronounced among daughters of divorce (Duncan & Wood, 2003). These women may possess a heightened awareness of the potential problems in marriage, which could influence them to marry ambivalently and temporarily, or to delay marriage altogether. Kinnaird and Gerard (1986) found that, among unmarried women, those whose parents were divorced were more aware and realistic about potential marital problems than were those from non-divorced families, and that high levels of inter-parental conflict led to skepticism, apprehension, and delays in forming close intimate relationships. Not only do many women from divorced homes feel ambivalence about relationships; they also may feel less certain that counseling could help. In general, young women express more willingness than young men to participate in marriage preparation programs, but the reverse is true among adult offspring of divorce (Duncan & Wood).

Women's lowered optimism and lesser willingness to engage in marital preparation may have an especially strong potential to erode marriage. Women are more

likely than men to initiate divorce (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002), and divorce attitudes of women are more likely than those of men to predict eventual divorce (Matthews, Wickrama, & Conger, 1996). These attitudes and behaviors of adult daughters of divorce could well contribute to their increased divorce risk. But the question remains: where do such dynamics originate, and why girls rather than boys?

Researchers have suggested that girls, when compared to boys, suffer only minimally, or not at all in the years immediately following parental divorce (Gietzen & Lynn, 2000; Hetherington, 1991; Kalter, Riemer, Brickman, & Woo Chen, 1985). Children raised by the same-sex parent (i.e., sons raised by fathers and daughters raised by mothers) tend to have better adjustment outcomes than those raised by the opposite-sex parent (Hetherington), and since most custodial parents are mothers, daughters might be expected to fare better than sons in the years following parental divorce. In the decade following divorce, the mother-child relationship is considered, in fact, the most key relationship to the child's resiliency (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Most of the research that supports the "girl-as-resilient" image, however, focuses on the immediate effects of parental divorce on pre-adolescent girls. Studies that examine the long-term impact of parental divorce on teenage girls and young women paint a different picture, a picture of "sleeper effects" that appear only at a later developmental stage in women's lives (Kalter et al.).

The delayed impact of divorce on girls may have to do with cross-generational alliances formed between mothers and daughters in the wake of parental separation. Post-divorce family reorganization often involves more distant relationships between fathers

and children (Macie, 2003; Riggio, 2001), and increased closeness between mothers and children (Arditti, 1999; Orbuch, Thornton, & Cancio, 2000). When the spousal dyad weakens or dissolves, girls are more likely than boys to join a cross-generational coalition (Lopez, Campbell, & Watkins, 1989; Teyber, 1983), and mothers are more likely than fathers to pull children into such an alliance (Lopez et al., 1989). Strong mother-daughter ties may be quite functional within the family system (Levin, 1996), and may serve as a buffer for individual girls themselves (Shook & Jurich, 1993) during the years following parental divorce. Some close mother-daughter relationships that help protect girls in the decade following divorce may develop later, however, into risk for these girls' marriages. Girls who over-identify with the mother, take on a parentified role, and develop strong loyalty to the mother may find healthy psychological separation from their mothers more difficult later on (Bowman, 1996). Lack of psychological separation from parents has many negative consequences for adult offspring's formation of intimate relationships with others (Fullinwider-Bush & Jacobvitz, 1993; Hoffman, 1984; Valerian, 2002).

The Role of Mother-Daughter Relationships

Strong post-divorce mother-daughter allegiances are sometimes based, in part, on negativity toward the father, and could generalize in some cases to a relationship built on mutual disappointment in men. Young women may believe that by *not* committing to a male partner, they can maintain closeness with the mother, whereas commitment to a male, long considered the common enemy, might threaten the mother-daughter relationship (Beal & Hochman, 1991). During the first 2 years after divorce, most mothers with teenage daughters disclose sensitive information to their daughters about a

number of divorce-related topics, including their negativity toward the ex-husband (Koerner, Wallace, Lehman, & Raymond, 2002). This triangulation of girls into their parents' relationship may make psychological separation from the mother difficult in some families. The resultant merged identity between mother and daughter impedes not only a real, healthy relationship between the two (Wallerstein & Corbin, 1989), but also the psychological growth and well-being of the daughter (Donovan, 1999; Kitamura & Muto, 2001) and her marriage experience (Haws & Mallinckrodt, 1998). This study will examine the role played by women's relationships with their divorced mothers in the daughters' eventual attitudes about and approaches to marriage.

Family Systems Theory

Family systems theory offers an appropriate theoretical basis for understanding mother-daughter relationship dynamics, and the connection these might have with grown daughters' approach to marriage. Bowen (1978) and Minuchin (1974; 1984) both contributed concepts that are key to our understanding of the intense relationships that can develop within family systems, as well as the psychological consequences.

Murray Bowen (1978) described differentiation of self as the degree to which emotional and intellectual functioning of the individual are recognized, separated, and appropriately used by the individual. The more differentiated the individual, Bowen maintained, the more highly functioning and satisfactory her or his life. During times of stress and pressure (such as during a divorce), a person's differentiation level becomes most apparent, and most defines her or his level of healthy functioning.

Minuchin (1974) also stressed the importance of differentiation in the family of origin, balanced by positive feelings of belongingness. Minuchin stated that family relationships should be neither too close (in which case a heightened sense of belonging is traded in for differentiation of family members) nor too disengaged (in which high levels of independence preempt healthy levels of family connection). A healthy balance between differentiation and connection is maintained by a system of clear interpersonal boundaries.

Minuchin (1974) emphasized the importance of the spousal subsystem as the dominant system within the nuclear family. When this subsystem breaks down or dissolves, however, other subsystems become dominant. In the wake of parental separation or divorce, the absence of one parent can leave a vacancy that is sometimes filled by a child. The child confidante role can be constricting to both the child, who may become trapped in the role, and to the parent, who must be able to explore adult relationships without being afraid of betraying the child (Minuchin, 1984). The mother-daughter relationship often becomes the strongest, closest relationship in the post-divorce family (Fullinwider-Bush & Jacobvitz 1993).

Several family processes that are highly relevant to the family involved in divorce, including triangulation, cross-generational coalitions, and parentification, are indicative of poor differentiation levels of family members. Triangulation occurs when an individual (a child in a divorced family, for instance) is pulled into a conflict between two people (such as divorcing parents) in order to lend some stability to the system. Inappropriate triangulation can lead to cross-generational coalitions, where a child sides

with one parent against the other. Sometimes children switch roles with their parents in some functions, a process known as parentification. These processes inhibit differentiation of self and produce a family system characterized by emotional reactivity, separation anxiety, interpersonal coercion, and jealousy (Green & Werner, 1996). The intense closeness between girls and their mothers in the wake of divorce can become damaging if it comes to involve these dynamics.

Such dynamics, stated Bowen (1978), lead to high levels of emotional reactivity, which influence individuals to either replicate or reject family models, rather than act on their own opinions and beliefs. Thus, adults of divorced families who are poorly differentiated might imitate parents' marital behavior (by getting divorced) or react against it (by not marrying at all, or marrying in defiance). Differentiated adults who have emotionally separated from their divorced families of origin, and who are able to trust their own thoughts and opinions, on the other hand, hypothetically are free of the need to imitate or react against, and can create their own marital legacy (Zink, 2000). Such partners can create their own definition of marriage, negotiate marital issues as a couple, attach to and rely on one another, and objectively allow or disallow influences from the family of origin.

Family systems theorists have sometimes been criticized for pathologizing the focus on relationships, connection and support among women in families (see Kenny & Donaldson, 1991, for a review of this literature). Kenny and Donaldson stated that when separation-individuation is viewed as the sole criterion for maturity in adolescence, as it traditionally has been, women are sometimes viewed as less mature and competent than

men. More recent theorists, however, have come to view healthy family connection as a precursor to healthy psychological separation and differentiation of the self, especially in adolescents and young adults (Kalsner & Pistole, 2003; Lopez & Gover 1993). Lopez and Gover stated that whereas more traditional developmental theorists posit that a weakening in the parent-adolescent attachment is required for effective separation-individuation, “more contemporary development perspectives... emphasize that close parent-adolescent attachments during this period facilitate developmental progress by providing the late adolescent with a ‘secure base’ from which to explore and develop competencies within the extrafamilial world” (p. 560). Both connection and psychological separation are key concepts to understanding the relationships between post-divorce mothers and daughters, and how these relationships may be linked to daughters’ eventual approaches to marriage.

Psychological Separation

Psychological separation is one aspect of healthy differentiation. According to family systems theory, psychological separation from one’s family reflects an ability to think and interact rationally with others, rather than based on irrational reactions against, or fearful imitation of, another’s actions. Psychological separation does *not* indicate disconnect or rugged individualism, but rather a level of independence that allows the child to pursue her or his own adult life (Bowen, 1978). According to Hoffman (1984), there are four different kinds of psychological separation relevant to college students and their parents. Conflictual independence, or freedom from conflict, refers to the absence of excessive negative emotionality between a young adult and her or his parents. Emotional

independence refers to absence of excess need for approval and support from a parent. Functional independence refers to the ability to manage one's day-to-day life without excess intervention from one's parents. Finally, attitudinal independence refers to the ability to hold views that are different from those of one's parents.

Parental Attachment

Parental attachment, or a healthy, secure connection between children and parents, is viewed by many researchers as complementary to, and perhaps even a precursor of, healthy psychological separation (Kalsner & Pistole, 2003; Kenny & Donaldson, 1991; Lopez & Gover, 1993). Kenny (1985) defined three areas of parental attachment important to young adults. Parental support refers to the amount of support an adult perceives he or she receives from a parent. Affective quality of the parent-child relationship refers to the warmth and affection perceived in the relationship. Parent fostering of autonomy refers to the degree to which a young adult feels parents have encouraged him or her to venture out on his or her own.

Mother-to-daughter Disclosure

Children who become their parents' confidants are engaged in a form of cross-generational coalition, one of the harmful dynamics discussed by family systems theorists. Bowen stated that in stressed families with low levels of differentiation, fathers often move away from the conflict, while mothers and children move closer together. Throughout a process as transformative as divorce, many people talk to those closest to them as a way of working through new thoughts and emotions. Mothers and daughters often form very close bonds after parental divorce, and sometimes mothers turn to their

daughters as confidantes about divorce-related topics. Some mothers talk to their children about the ex-husband or the divorce in the hopes of counterbalancing stories a father may be telling or maintaining the child's loyalty. Some confide in their daughters about dating, men, marriage and divorce, with the intent of introducing their daughters to adult issues (Koerner, Jacobs, & Raymond, 2000). In-depth (frequent and detailed) disclosures about these divorce-related topics can damage the mother-daughter relationship (Koerner, Wallace, Lehman, & Raymond, 2002) and lead to parentification of the daughter. Parentified daughters serve as emotional care-takers for their mothers. Parentification increases over time, and contributes significantly to daughters' poor adjustment in adulthood (Jurkovic, Thirkield, & Morrell, 2001). It may also contribute to daughters' attitudes about marriage and divorce.

Marital Attitudes

The opinions individuals hold about heterosexual marriage may be influenced by parental divorce, and by some of the relational transformations that occur between a child and her or his parents (Beal & Hochman, 1991). AOD with long-lasting marriages have cited healthy psychological separation from parents as a key to their marital success and longevity (Zink, 2000). Marital attitudes can be held by those who are single, married, divorced, widowed, or remarried. Attitudes about heterosexual marriage differ distinctly from attitudes about homosexual marriage, in that they involve one's views of a union with a member of the opposite sex. Because the same-sex nature of the mother-daughter relationship may have implications for attitudes about opposite-sex commitments, and

because mother-to-daughter disclosures often are about men, the marital attitudes of interest here are those toward heterosexual marriage.

Exploration Strategies in the Domain of Marriage

Young adults, as part of normative development, explore their ideas and attitudes about various life choices in a variety of ways. For example, they may read about a topic, talk to others about a topic, or struggle to create their own ideas and opinions about a topic (Grotevant, 1989). Young women who have not psychologically separated from their mothers tend to foreclose on some exploration, adopting their mothers' views on issues such as friendship and dating (Fullinwider-Bush & Jacobvitz, 1993). Marriage is a major life choice which young adults explore to varying degrees.

Post-divorce Marital Transitions

Marital transitions are changes in marital status. After divorce, increasing numbers of subsequent parental marriages and divorces tend to have detrimental effects on the interpersonal relationships and marital outcomes of young adult offspring (Bolgar, Zweig-Frank, & Paris, 1995; Wolfinger, 2000). Because most children live with their mothers after divorce, maternal post-divorce marital transitions seem especially important to their development (Bolgar, Zweig-Frank, & Paris). Daughters whose mothers never remarry after divorce have the closest relationships with their mothers (Orbuch, Thornton & Cancio, 2000), but it is unknown whether this closeness is associated later on with healthy psychological separation.

Demographic Variables

Ethnicity and maternal educational attainment are two variables that have received scant attention in the research on divorce, and their effects on the intimate relationships and marriages of adult offspring are unclear. Although several studies involving the relationships of AOD have included ethnically representative samples, very few have conducted separate analyses for different ethnic groups. In the current study, independent and dependent variables will be examined by ethnicity. Maternal educational attainment is the only socioeconomic variable that has been found to influence the impact of parental divorce on daughters' marital outcomes. AOD women whose mothers are highly educated were found to be more likely to divorce than daughters whose mothers had lower levels of education (Keith & Finlay, 1988). It will be important to know if mother's education also influences unmarried daughters' attitudes toward, and exploration of, marriage.

Purpose of the Study

Research results reveal that parental divorce impacts the intimate relationships and marriages of offspring, affecting young women more than young men. Young women, who lived post-divorce with their same-sex parent more often than do young men, often form very close bonds with their mothers after divorce. Sometimes these bonds are supportive, affectionate, and encouraging of autonomy. Sometimes, however, they are characterized by poor psychological separation between mothers and daughters and high degrees of mother-to-daughter disclosure about divorce related topics. To date, researchers have not focused on 1) the relationships between mother-daughter

attachment, mother-daughter psychological separation, and mother-to-daughter disclosures about divorce related topics; 2) the links between these mother-daughter dynamics and daughters' attitudes toward marriage, and exploration of the topic of marriage; or 3) how such trends may differ according to ethnicity, mothers' educational level, or the number of maternal marital transitions. The purpose of this study is to examine the possible connections between post-divorce mother-daughter relationships and daughters' own attitudes about, and explorations of, marriage, and how these relationships may differ according to several important demographic variables.

This study will advance the literature in several ways. The focus on daughters of divorce will target the group shown to be associated with the highest divorce rates. The examination of grown daughters' perceptions of mother-daughter relationships will measure potentially beneficial dynamics (including affective quality of the relationship, mother support, and mother encouragement of independence, as well as the four types of parent-child independence (described in Hoffman's 1984 measure of psychological separation), as well as potentially detrimental dynamics (such as mother to daughter disclosures of sensitive divorce related topics). This opens up the possibility that the researcher will uncover some resiliency factors associated with mother-daughter relationships, as well as risk factors.

Statement of the Problem

This study will examine several mother-daughter relationship variables and their potential predictions of adult daughters' own marital attitudes and exploration styles. This study also will analyze trends according to ethnicity, maternal educational attainment,

and number of maternal post-divorce marital transitions. The specific research questions are as follows:

Research Questions

Research question 1: How often, and in how much detail do mothers disclose to their daughters about different divorce-related topics (ex-husband, men/dating, and divorce/remarriage)?

Research question 2A: What are the relationships among mother-daughter psychological separation (as measured by the four subscales of the Psychological Separation Inventory; PSI; Hoffman, 1984), mother-daughter connection (as measured by the Parent Attachment Questionnaire; PAQ; Kenny, 1985), mother-to-daughter divorce-related disclosure (frequency and detail level), daughters' marital attitudes, and daughters' identity exploration in the domain of marriage?

Research question 2B: What are the statistically significant predictors of daughters' marital attitudes scores? For what proportion of the variance of the marital attitude scores can these predictors account? Do ethnicity, mother's educational level, or number of marital transitions significantly predict daughters' marital attitude scores?

Research question 2C: What are the statistically significant predictors of daughters' scores for identity exploration strategies in the domain of marriage? For what proportion of the variance of the exploration scores can these predictors account? Do ethnicity, mother's educational level, or number of marital transitions significantly predict daughters' exploration of marriage scores?

Research question 3: Is there a significant difference in the mean scores of mother-daughter psychological separation, mother-daughter connection, mother-to-daughter disclosure levels, daughters' attitudes toward marriage, and daughters' identity exploration strategies in the domain of marriage among women grouped by ethnicity, mother's educational level, or number of mother's marital transitions?

Need for the Study

This study is needed for counselors working with adult offspring of divorce who are dealing with issues around intimate relationships. Given that half the young adults in the United States belong to, or will soon belong to the population known as adult offspring of divorce, and the fact that many AOD marry adults from intact families, *most* new marriages will contain at least one partner whose parents have divorced. Thus, this study is relevant to counselors who work with *any* type of relationship counseling. The research represented in the literature has adequately established the presence of an intergenerational transmission of divorce, and has shown that this process affects daughters of divorce more than sons of divorce, but there is little explanation of these differences. Information about the specific risk and resiliency factors for adult children of divorce can help counselors recognize and target key individual and familial processes that may promote more satisfying, lasting relationships for adult daughters of divorced parents.

Definition of Terms

The primary terms and constructs used in this study are briefly defined in this section.

Independent Variables

Conflictual independence is the absence of excess anger, resentment, and conflict between a parent and an adult child, as perceived and reported by the adult child. Conflictual independence between mothers and daughters will be measured by the conflictual independence subscale of the maternal form of the Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI; Hoffman, 1984).

Emotional independence is the absence of an adult child's excessive need for a parent's approval, affection, or support. Daughters' emotional independence from their mothers will be measured by the emotional independence subscale of the maternal form of the Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI; Hoffman, 1984).

Functional independence is the ability of an adult to manage his or her day-to-day life without excessive reliance on a parent's intervention or help. Daughters' functional independence from their mothers will be measured by the functional independence subscale of the maternal form of the Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI; Hoffman, 1984).

Attitudinal independence is the degree to which a young adult holds viewpoints about important topics that differ from those of a parent. Daughters' attitudinal independence from their mothers will be measured by the attitudinal independence subscale of the maternal form of the Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI; Hoffman, 1984).

Mother's support is the degree to which a daughter perceives her mother as supporting her, and will be measured by the support subscale on the maternal form of the Parent Attachment Questionnaire (PAQ; Kenny, 1985).

Affective quality of the parent-child relationship is the degree to which an adult perceives his or her relationship with one parent as emotionally warm and affectionate. The affective quality of the mother-daughter relationship will be measured by the affective quality of relationship subscale on the maternal form of the Parent Attachment Questionnaire (PAQ; Kenny, 1985).

Parent facilitation of independence is the degree to which a young adult feels his or her parent has encouraged his or her autonomy. Mother's facilitation of daughter's independence will be measured by the facilitation of independence subscale on the maternal form of the Parent Attachment Questionnaire (PAQ; Kenny, 1985).

Mother to daughter disclosure refers to the depth with which mothers disclose to their daughters about sensitive divorce-related topics. Both frequency and level of detail of mother to daughter disclosures around the following three topics (ex-husband, men/dating, divorce/remarriage) will be measured by the corresponding subscales of the daughter report form for the Mother-to-Adolescent Disclosure Scale (Koerner, Jacobs, & Raymond, 2000).

Dependent Variables

Marital attitudes refer to the views one takes of heterosexual marriage. Marital attitudes can be positive or negative, and can be held by an individual of any marital

status. The marital attitudes of unmarried daughters of divorce will be measured by the Marital Attitude Scale (MAS; Braaten & Rosen, 1998)

Identity exploration in the domain of marriage refers to the frequency with which young adults employ certain exploration strategies in the domain of a specific life choice, such as marriage. Daughters' identity exploration in the domain of marriage will be measured by the Marriage subscale of the Life Choices Questionnaire (LCQ; Grotevant, 1989).

Organization of the Study

This study is composed of five chapters. The first chapter briefly introduced the reader to the research on adult offspring of divorce, past and present, and oriented the reader to the state of the research today. This chapter also described and operationalized the constructs of interest. The second chapter is a review of the literature, and contains several sections. The first section provides an overview of how parental divorce affects children, adolescents, and adults. The second section reviews the literature on the impact of parental divorce on intimate relationships of adult offspring. The third section describes several theoretical approaches to the study of relationships of adult offspring of divorce. The fourth section reviews the research on the role of parent-child closeness as a protective factor in offspring relationships. The fifth section reviews family systems theory as it relates to post-divorce mother-daughter relationships, and daughters own approaches to intimate relationships. The second chapter concludes with a critique of the research and implications for the proposed study. The third chapter presents the methodology which will be used in this study, and includes the hypotheses, sample and

sampling strategies, instruments used, and the data analyses which will be applied to answer the research questions. The fourth chapter will present the results of the study. Chapter five will include an interpretation of the results, implications for counselors, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

As the adult child of divorced parents, you already know that you are at greater risk of divorce yourself. If you were the child on whom one or both of your parents focused during their marriage and divorce, and you are still reacting to that, your risk is even higher. And if you don't have a clue as to why your parents' marriage failed, you may be headed for trouble in your own.

Beal & Hochman, 1991, p. 196

This chapter is a review of literature relevant to the proposed study, and includes five major content sections. Included are reviews of the research on the following: (a) the impact of divorce on children, adolescents and adults; (b) the impact of parental divorce on sons' and daughters' intimate relationships; (c) theoretical approaches to the relationships of adult children of divorce; (d) the role of parent-child closeness as a protective factor in offspring relationships; and (e) a review of family systems theory as it relates to the relationships of adult offspring of divorce. The chapter concludes with implications for the proposed study.

The Impact of Divorce on Children, Adolescents, and Adults

The impact of divorce on children has captured the interest of researchers for several decades. Researchers have found that parental divorce is linked to children's academic and behavior problems (Amato & Keith, 1991b; Carlson & Corcoran, 2001; Coleman, Ganong, & Fine, 2000; Demo & Acock, 1996), fear, anger, distress, and triangulation into parental processes (Amato, 1993), lowered socioeconomic security, and lessened amount of contact with fathers. Neither marriage nor divorce is uniform,

however, and certain aspects of divorce influence how and to what extent this process impacts the children. Inter-parental conflict, post-divorce poverty, and higher numbers of negative life events tend to exacerbate the negative effects of divorce on children (Amato, 2000; Emery, 1988). Parents' poor psychological functioning (Amato, 1993; Carlson & Corcoran, 2001), high numbers of parent marital transitions (Amato, 2003; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Wolfinger, 2000), and poor parent-child relationships (Demo & Acock, 1996; Hetherington & Kelly; Sun, 2001) also appear to intensify the detrimental effects divorce has on children. Stewart et al. (1997) found that having to make loyalty choices between parents, as a result of parental divorce, was the single best predictor of poor child adjustment.

Among adolescents, parental divorce is associated with more depression (Aseltine, 1996), substance use (Doherty & Needle, 1991), self-reported delinquent acts (Kalter, Riemer, Brickman, & Woo Chen, 1985), poorer quality mother-adolescent relationships (Demo & Acock, 1996), and increased neediness, sorrow, and underachievement among girls (Wallerstein & Corbin, 1989). Adolescents from divorced families also report more general distrust of others, less certainty about wanting to marry eventually (Giuliani, Iafrate, & Rosnati, 1998), and more alienation from peers (Tews, 1999) than their counterparts from non-divorced homes. On other variables related to social skills, however, teenagers from different family structures appear similar. Parental divorce does *not* seem to affect, for instance, the size and amount of contact with peer groups, whether or not teens date (Giuliani, Iafrate, & Rosnati), or (among boys) ability to tolerate relationship conflict (Guttman, Ben-Asher, & Lazar, 1999). Nor do

adolescents from divorced homes evidence significantly lower self-esteem or more interpersonal problems than those from never-divorced homes (Tews).

Much of the research suggests that the immediate effects of parental divorce on offspring disappear after a few years, as families adjust (Ahrons, 2004, Guttman, 1989). Several aspects of adults' psychosocial development, however, appear to be negatively impacted by their parents' divorce (Amato, 1993; Aro & Palosaari, 1992; Palosaari, Aro, & Laippala, 1996; Summers, Forehand, Armistead, & Tannenbaum, 1998). Social scientists wonder if some effects are only triggered by relevant developmental stages of offspring (Nelson, Allison, & Sundre, 1993), whether some effects go latent for a number of years (Beal & Hochman, 1991; Wallerstein, Lewis, & Blakeslee, 2000; Zander, 1994), or whether entirely new and independent effects of divorce appear in adulthood when "the emotional demands of marriage and parenting create the context for exposure of the emotional impact of parental divorce" (Zink, 2000, p. 136). Other researchers have even questioned whether children's forms of adaptation, the coping mechanisms that buffer them through the early years of parental divorce, can cause dysfunction later on in other areas of their lives (Tews, 1999; Wallerstein & Corbin, 1989). This will be discussed at more length later.

The Impact of Parental Divorce on Sons' and Daughters' Intimate Relationships

The most widely researched effects of divorce on young adults are in the area of intimate relationships, where AOD differ from AOND in a variety of ways. Even though adolescents from divorced homes seem similar to their peers on many social variables, differences in relationships begin to appear in adulthood. In the paragraphs that follow

research results related to differences in attachment style, attitudes and behaviors around relationships, and gender differences among AOD themselves are described.

Ross and Mirowsky (2000) found, in a nationally representative sample of 2,592 adults, that AOD reported more young marriages, more divorces and remarriages, more unhappy relationships, and generally less trust in others than AOND. Young adults whose parents have divorced have also been found to have less secure attachment styles, especially in their romantic relationships (Malone, 1995). Summers, Forehand, Armistead, and Tannenbaum, (1998) compared 119 AOD whose parents divorced when they were adolescents, and 123 AOND on several measures of psychosocial adjustment in young adults, including quality of peer relationships, security of romantic attachments, level of emotional distress, antisocial behavior, and academic achievement. Results indicated that the only young adult outcome measure affected by parental divorce was romantic attachment of AOD. AOD exhibited significantly less secure attachment styles in their romantic relationships than did AOND. The authors speculated that parental divorce “symbolizes that romantic relationships are not always secure and can provide an adolescent with a template for her or his romantic relationships” (p. 332).

The insecure attachment style characteristic of many AOD is not necessarily a carry-over from infancy but is, rather, significantly related to parental divorce. A longitudinal study on the endurance of attachment style found that even among securely attached infants, most of those whose parents divorced ended up having insecure attachment styles in adulthood (Lewis, Feiring, & Rosenthal, 2000). These authors saw 84 infants (age 12 months) and their mothers in a modified Strange Situation (a standard

measure of infant-mother attachment), and classified 60 of them as securely attached and 24 as insecurely attached. When they followed up with these children at age 18 years old (using interviews, and classifying young adults as securely or insecurely attached using the Attachment Interview Q-Sort by Kobak, Cole, & Ferenz-Gillies, 1993), they found that not only was attachment style *not* stable over time, but that young adult attachment style was significantly related to parental divorce. Of the 60 infants who were securely attached at 12 months, 9 of them later experienced parental divorce; all but one of these were classified as insecurely attached at age 18. The young adults who, at age 18, were classified as securely attached were significantly more likely to be from non-divorced families.

The development of intimacy represents a new life challenge for young adults. Those who, as children and teenagers, adapted well enough to parental divorce, often find that issues such as trust, need for control, and fear of helplessness become salient in their young adult relationships (Brown, 1999; Carson & Pauly, 1990; Gelfman, 1995; Hirschfeld, 1992; Sprague & Kinney, 1997). Brown hypothesized that AOD seek more control in their romantic and dating relationships than do those from never-divorced backgrounds. He found in a sample of 132 unmarried college students that those whose parents were divorced were more reluctant than others to fall passionately in love, depend on a partner, or describe their current relationships as serious.

These manifestations of the desire to control relationships could stem from a lack of trust in others. Several researchers have focused on the interplay between parental divorce and young adults' trust in others and in intimate partners. Johnston and Thomas

(1996) found that in a sample of 60 undergraduates, those from divorced backgrounds reported less partner trust than those whose parents remained married. In a related study, Gelfman (1995) found this lack of trust extended to young adults in general. In her study of 122 unmarried college students (64 AOND and 58 AOD), those whose parents had divorced generally believed less in the benevolence of others. Sprague and Kinney (1997) found in a similar sample of 737 college students that AOD reported significantly less trust and altruistic love in their current relationships. Their finding, however, was truer of AOD whose parents had divorced recently and those whose families were characterized by low levels of cohesiveness. The statement “we stayed together because of the children,” so familiar to counselors working with divorcing parents, may need to be challenged in the face of this last finding. Saving the divorce until children grow up and leave home may negatively impact these young adults’ ability to trust intimate partners. Furthermore, waiting to divorce, if a symptom of passivity in terms of working through marital and familial problems, may contribute to low levels of family cohesiveness in the family of origin. Taken together, these research findings suggest that parental divorce in the family of origin, especially when it occurs late in a child’s adolescence and in an environment of low family cohesiveness, is negatively related to a young adult’s ability to trust others and share control in intimate relationships.

Perceived lack of control among AOD can manifest in intensive efforts to maintain control in relationships (Fassel, 1991), rigid or fearful maintenance of independence (Brown, 1999), a tendency to break up with a romantic partner before he or she can terminate the relationship (Brown), and, ultimately, acceptance of divorce as a

way out of an unhappy marriage (Gelfman, 1995). Independence frequently is cited by teenagers and young adults as a major benefit of their parents' divorce (Harvey & Fine, 2004). Developmentally, it is an adolescent's job to separate from his or her parents, so it is natural that increased independence would be perceived as a boon during this phase of life. However, an overly strong need for independence, combined with the desire for relationship control and reluctance to trust or depend on a partner (factors which may not seriously threaten normative childhood or adolescent development), can impede the development of an intimate, mutually supportive relationship with a partner.

AOD believe their lack of control in relationships will continue into their marriages, and thus many of them regard marriage with caution, lacking confidence in their ability to commit to marriage (Russell, 2001) or to succeed in marriage (Franklin, Janoff-Bulman, & Roberts, 1990). In a sample of 94 unmarried college students, Carson and Pauly (1990) found that AOD anticipated having significantly less control in their future marriages than did AOND. Some of this fear of lack of control centers around perceptions of who determines the outcome of the marriage. Many AOD, whose intentions to get married match those of AOND (Gelfman, 1995), do not believe future marital success is very much up to them. Compared with AOND, who are confident that their own goodness and worthiness can carry a marriage, regardless of partner actions, AOD believe that their partners will, to a large extent, determine the success or failure of their future marriages (Franklin et al.). Franklin et al. studied college students from divorced ($n = 110$) and non-divorced ($n = 458$) backgrounds, and found that AOD reported thinking they were less likely to have enduring satisfying marriages. They also

reported higher acceptance of divorce than the AOND group. For this, and perhaps other reasons, unmarried AOD are less optimistic about their future success in marriage, expect significantly less satisfaction out of marriage (Gelfman, 1995), and identify more with troubled couples (Greenberg & Nay, 1982) as compared with AOND.

AODs' reluctance to trust partners and feared lack of control in relationships often lead to a variety of relationship behaviors intended to guarantee marital success. For example, AOD are twice as likely as AOND to live with a partner before marriage (Gelfman, 1995; Russell, 2001; Webster, Orbuch & House, 1995), a practice many AOD have described as a sort of "trial marriage" (Duran-Aydintug, 1997). A large body of research on the "cohabitation effect" suggests this approach does not work. Pre-marital cohabitation is associated with negative forms of marital problem-solving (Cohan & Kelinbaum, 2002), lower marital quality, less commitment to marriage (Thompson & Colella, 2001), and marital instability (Booth & Johnson, 1988; Dush, Cohan, & Amato, 2003). The "selection" hypothesis of the cohabitation effect states that couples who cohabit prior to marriage are less committed to the institution of marriage. The majority of the research on the cohabitation effect, however, was conducted on couples married over two decades ago, when premarital cohabitation was a definite break from the socially acceptable marital path. Research on more recent cohorts suggests that the cohabitation-divorce link may be much smaller (McRae, 1997) or even reversed (Schoen, 2001), as pre-marital cohabitation becomes more normative. Brines and Joyner (1999) found that as cohabiting partners approach equality (in terms of employment and earnings), their chances of breaking up plummet. Cohabiting AOD, who tend to prefer

egalitarian to traditional relationships (Carson & Pauly, 1990; Duran-Aydintug, 1997), may number among those cohabiting couples whose relationships remain stable.

“Playing the field,” or having numerous dating and sexual experiences prior to marriage is another strategy employed by many AOD to improve their eventual marital success. AOD tend to have more sexual partners than AOND (Gabardi & Rosen, 1993; O’Bryne, 1997; Sprague & Kinney, 1997). Hepworth, Ryder, and Dreyer (1984) examined several relationship variables in undergraduate students who had experienced recent parental divorce ($n = 61$), recent parental death ($n = 57$), and a matched control group who had experienced no parental loss ($n = 132$). Of the three groups, the divorce-loss group reported the highest number of sexual partners, and the death-loss group reported the lowest. These researchers concluded that some AOD “may seek to demonstrate, by moving in and out of a series of relationships, that the losses do not hurt and that relationships have a diminished value” (p. 79).

It could be, alternately, that AOD, more than AOND, view sex as an opportunity to explore intimacy. Many AOD themselves believe that dating more people before marriage will ultimately result in choice of the “right” marriage partner (Duran-Aydintug, 1997). If parents explain to their children that they divorced because they were just not right for each other, the children may logically conclude that sound mate choice would protect against their own future divorce. Playing the field could also be a symptom of fear of commitment. “For anyone, making a commitment of exclusivity is a big step,” wrote Mary Hirschfeld (1992), author of *The adult children of divorce workbook: A compassionate program for healing from your parents' divorce*. “For some ACDs [adult

children of divorce], however, putting all their eggs in one basket seems like high level risk” (p. 150).

How are these strategies, intended by AOD to guarantee marital success, working out? Are AOD achieving intimacy in their marriages? Are they creating satisfying, lasting marriages? Most adults, whether or not their parents married, plan to get married themselves (Gelfman, 1995), and anecdotal evidence suggests many AOD approach marriage with an especially strong determination to succeed (Fassel, 1991; Harvey & Fine, 2004). Even after AOD marry, however, parental divorce continues to exert an influence on AOD marital attitudes (Kapinus, 2003). AOD, when compared to AOND, are significantly more afraid their own marriages are in trouble (Webster, Orbuch & House, 1995), and are roughly twice as likely to see their own marriages end in divorce (Amato, 1996; Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Bumpass, Martin, & Sweet, 1991; Engelhardt, Dronkers, & Trappe, 2002; Glenn & Kramer, 1987; Mueller & Pope, 1977; Wolfinger, 1999). Webster, Orbuch and House, using data from 6,333 respondents to the National Survey of Families and Households who were in their first marriage, found that parental divorce did not seem linked to marital happiness, but rather to the perception of marital stability. They reported that AOD and AOND were similar in marital happiness, but that AOD were 70% more likely than AOND to report fear that their marriages had been in trouble during the past year. When they separated out the unhappily married individuals in their sample, they also found that AOD were more likely than AOND to report engaging in the sorts of interpersonal behavioral problems that tend to strain a marriage, such as reduced communication, and escalation of conflict. Their findings suggest that

parental divorce is related to different perceptions of marital success, and that spouses from divorced backgrounds often interact with each other in ways that put their marriages at risk.

Adults from divorced families also emphasize different ideals in relationships than those from non-divorced backgrounds (Conway, Christensen, & Herlihy, 2003). A sample of 315 graduate students at the University of New Orleans, about a quarter of whom had parents who had divorced, were asked to rate the importance of various aspects of relationships. AOD rated affection, acceptance, confrontation of conflict, and independence significantly higher than AOND. How these differences impact AOD relationships, however, is unclear. For some AOD, focus on these aspects of relationships may actually *help* them create these dynamics, whereas for others, such focus may sabotage the fulfillment of these relational qualities. Ideals are a tricky game in marriage. Coyne (2001) found that a large discrepancy between the ideal and the reality of marriage is linked to lower relationship satisfaction among AOD as well as AOND.

Most AOD have been exposed to dysfunctional parental relationships (albeit for varying lengths of time and to varying degrees) that have served as behavioral and cognitive models for marriage. How do these parental marriage models impact their children's marriages, if at all? Parental divorce is linked to interpersonal behavior problems in offspring marriages, including lower levels of constructive communication (Mullett & Stolberg, 2002), a tendency to over-control, decreased ability or willingness to submit to one's spouse (Bolgar, Zweig-Frank, & Paris, 1995), increased hostility and

decreased affection, cooperativeness, and modesty (Silvestri, 1992), and more tendency to deceive their intimate partners (Brown, 1999).

But by what *mechanism* does parental divorce affect AOD relationships? Amato (1996) found that much of the variance in AOD marital stability could be explained by poor marital socialization. Exposure to poor marital models, he explained, resulted in problematic interpersonal behaviors such as quick temper, jealousy, infidelity, oversensitivity, and communication problems, which in turn threatened the stability of AOD marriages. Early childhood family experiences seem to impact couples especially in their first year of marriage. Tallman, Grey, Kullberg, and Henderson (1999) studied 313 newlywed couples, and found that individual factors such as family of origin experience and self-image mediated the link between parents' and children's marital conflict during the first year of offspring marriage. During the second and third year, couple dynamics such as couple trust and magnitude of conflict had a greater impact on marital conflict.

Much of the research linking parental divorce to young adult offspring relationship variables tends to lump men and women together. Male and female AOD are very different, however, when it comes to relationships and marriage. Parental divorce has traditionally been viewed as more traumatic for boys than for girls (see Robinson, 2000, p. 25, for a review of this literature). Among younger children, boys' response to parental divorce appears more negative and severe than does girls' (Gietzen & Lynn, 2000; Hetherington, 1991). The tables may turn when these boys and girls grow up and seek stable marriages of their own. There seems to be what is known as a "sleeper effect" of parental divorce on daughters (Bolgar, Zweig-Frank, & Paris, 1995; Gietzen & Lynn;

Kalter, Riemer, Brickman, & Woo Chen, 1985), whereby the true impact on girls becomes apparent only later in their development. In fact, parental divorce is more strongly associated with daughters' divorce than with sons' (Glenn & Kramer, 1987).

Glenn and Kramer (1987) used data from the 1973-1985 General Social Surveys, in which 1,500 respondents were interviewed face to face. They compared percentages of ever-married adults who had separated or divorced, according to their ethnicity (African-American or Caucasian), gender, and family structure (living with both parents at age 16, or parents separated or divorced when they were 16). These authors found the strongest effects of parental divorce on the marriages of Caucasian women. Moderate effects were found for African-American women, Caucasian men, and African-American men, in order of decreasing effect size. These results suggest that gender is the most important determinant of how much parental divorce impacts offspring divorce, with ethnicity being a less significant predictor.

Silvestri (1991, as cited in Gelfman, 1995) reported that AOD men are three times as likely as AOND men to divorce, whereas AOD women are five times as likely as AOND women to divorce. That girls, who seem to come through parental divorce relatively unscathed, should later find so much difficulty in their relationships, may seem strange at first glance. It could be that boys' responses to divorce are more externalizing and girls' responses are more internalizing (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1985), somewhat obscuring the early negative impact of parental divorce on girls. It also is possible that some of the protective factors that help girls adjust to parental divorce (such as a sense of purpose, importance, and female solidarity born of a strong alliance with the divorced

mother) in childhood may actually contribute to risk in their own marriages later on. A better understanding of the ways in which parental divorce affects the intimate relationships of grown daughters may help clarify the reasons for the five-fold increase in divorce in young women AOD.

Some researchers have studied gender variables relevant to the marriages of AOD. Sons and daughters of divorce differ on many variables related to relationship formation and maintenance, such as attachment styles (Zinbarg, 2002), attitudes toward and expectations about marriage (Jennings, Salts, & Smith, 1992; Kalter, Riemer, Brickman, & Woo Chen, 1985; Kapinus, 2004; Marlar & Jacobs, 1993), and a variety of marital behaviors (Mullett & Stolberg, 2002; Silvestri, 1992). The next section will describe research findings related to these specific gender differences for AOD in the realm of relationships and marriage.

Gender Differences Among AOD in Relationship Variables

Attitudes

Parental divorce seems to impact sons and daughters' attitudes toward marriage and divorce differently. Among women, parental divorce is associated with less optimism about the endurance of future marriage. Kalter et al. (1985) found in a sample of 42 AOD and 42 AOND (all never-married, undergraduate female psychology students, matched for age and religion), that AOD were significantly less optimistic than AOND that their future marriages would last. Guttman (1989) failed to find the same expectation among AOD men (it should be noted, however, that his sample was very different, consisting of 40 male Israeli soldiers, 20 AOD and 20 AOND). Kapinus (2004) posed the question of

how much parents' attitudes about divorce had to do with the apparent intergenerational transmission of divorce attitudes. Kapinus used a random digit dialing procedure to select a sample of married individuals under the age of 55 and their adult offspring. The parents were interviewed four times between 1980 and 1992, and those who had offspring age 18 or older as of 1992 gave contact information for their children, who were then contacted by the interviewers. Eighty-two percent of the eligible offspring were interviewed. Because Kapinus interviewed parents and adult offspring from the same families, she was able to examine the link between parental divorce and sons' and daughters' views of divorce, controlling for parental attitudes. She found that when parental attitudes about divorce were controlled, the *divorce itself* was linked to daughters', but not sons', divorce attitudes. This finding suggests that no matter what parents' views about divorce are, the act of divorce impacts their daughters' views.

Parental divorce also is linked to different preferences for future marriages. Marlal and Jacobs (1993) studied the marital role expectations of 100 college students, and found that AOD women (and AOND men) desire more egalitarian roles in marriage than do AOND women (or AOD men). In other words, women whose parents had divorced wanted and expected their ideal marriages to be more egalitarian (versus "traditional"), whereas men whose parents had divorced, as well as women from intact families, were more traditionally oriented in their ideals about marriage. The attractiveness of egalitarian marriage makes intuitive sense for the daughter of divorce, given that parental divorce is linked with decreased willingness to submit to a marriage partner (Bolgar, Zweig-Frank, & Paris, 1995) and increased fears about control (Brown,

1999; Carson & Pauly, 1990; Gelfman, 1995; Sprague & Kinney, 1997). For daughters of divorce, an egalitarian marriage may represent one form of marriage in which they do not fear being entrapped, controlled, or beholden to an unpredictable partner. The preference for egalitarian-style marriages among AOD women parallels a national trend among college women in general to prefer egalitarian marriages (Botkin, Weeks, & Morris, 2000; Weeks & Botkin, 1988; Weeks & Gage, 1985). Interestingly, however, religiosity reverses this preference in AOD men and women. Highly religious sons of divorce prefer egalitarian relationships significantly more than highly religious men from non-divorced families, who prefer more traditional marriages. On the other hand, highly religious daughters of divorce prefer traditional marriages, and non-religious daughters of divorce prefer egalitarian marriage (Livingston & Kordinak, 1990).

Marriage itself also is differentially linked to pro-divorce attitudes in men and women. Kapinus (2003) used data from a 12-year longitudinal study of a randomly-selected national sample of married respondents who were interviewed in 1980, 1983, 1988, and 1992. She found that the married men were less positive about divorce than were the unmarried men, but among the women, being married was not significantly associated with attitudes about divorce. The women also tended to report more problems and less satisfaction in their marriages than men, and to be more favorable to divorce than men; this result may be linked somehow to Kapinus' finding that marriage does not lower women's acceptance of divorce, as it lowers men's. This finding further underscores the importance of studying marital processes of women.

Behaviors

Interpersonal behaviors also differ for sons and daughters of divorce. For men, parental divorce is linked to lower levels of marital affection, cooperation, obedience, modesty, ability to self-critique, and ability to take on appropriate amounts of responsibility (Silvestri, 1992), but not to intimacy or the frequency of actually breaking up with partners (Guttman, 1989). Women college students from divorced backgrounds show deficits in communication abilities when compared with their peers. Mullett and Stolberg (2002) studied 136 undergraduate psychology students who had been in a serious relationship for at least three months. The authors found that in those couples where the woman was an AOD, there were significantly lower levels of intimacy and mutually constructive communication than in couples where both partners were from intact homes. This was not the case in couples where the man was an AOD; these couples enjoyed levels of intimacy and communication similar to those of AOND couples.

Among daughters of divorce who do end up divorced, certain marital patterns, including early marriage, and pre-marital cohabitation, pregnancy, or childbirth, stand out. Interestingly, AOD daughters who divorce also exhibit a pattern of marrying men who have, themselves, previously divorced (Bumpass, Martin, & Sweet, 1991), and men who are much older, younger, or less educated than their wives (Teachman, 2002).

Though some researchers have suggested that divorce in AOD women is related to lower socioeconomic status (Bumpass, Martin, & Sweet, 1991), others have argued that the intergenerational transmission of divorce is not mediated by socioeconomic status (Amato, 1996). Wolfinger's (1999) findings from a study of nearly 22,000 subjects

supported Amato's argument. Wolfinger found that controlling for parental education and occupational prestige had little impact on intergenerational transmission of divorce (ITD). His findings from a second national sample ($n = 13,008$) revealed that neither parental affluence nor offspring education level had any impact on the increased probability of AOD divorce. The findings about the non-existent relationship between socioeconomic status and ITD are based, however, on the assumption that financial deprivation, common in post-divorce female-headed households, may set children on trajectories that would eventually lead to negative experiences in marriage. The researchers did not consider the other possibility, that higher SES levels might negatively impact offspring marriages. Nor did either researcher pay close attention to the role played by indicators of mothers' (vs. fathers') status.

One research study has found that one aspect of mother's socioeconomic status is related to daughters' marital outcomes. Keith and Finlay (1988) examined the effects of parental divorce on sons' and daughters' marital status, and how these effects varied by mother's educational attainment. Using data from the National Opinion Research Corporation's General Social Surveys, collected from 1972 to 1983, they obtained a final sample size of 10,659. The majority of these were from intact homes (9,968), 261 had mothers who had divorced and remarried, and 430 had divorced mothers who had never remarried. Keith and Finlay found that mother's educational level ("low" being classified as completion of high school or less, and "high" being classified as "some college or more") seemed to have a very slight effect on their adult sons' marital patterns, but a significant effect on their daughters'. They stated that, "for females from higher-status

backgrounds, the impact of parental divorce is the strongest [influence on marital patterns]" (p. 806). Parental divorce, they found, explains very little of the divorce variance in *low-status* female AOD, and a great deal of the divorce variance in high status AOD women. Speaking of the divorced mothers, the authors hypothesized that, "it may be that highly educated women who divorce instill attitudes in their daughters that are less marriage-dependent than do highly educated, non-divorcing women" (p. 806). Daughters of educated mothers, witnessing the frustration of a mother's educational or career aspirations, may view marriage as something that ultimately holds a woman back from reaching her full potential. They may try marriage, but with the understanding that, like their mothers' marriages, it may not work out. Because of the link between daughters' marital patterns and mother's educational attainment, it will be important to consider the influence of mother's education in other aspects of daughters' intimate relationships.

Overall, these research findings suggest that dynamics of the transmission of divorce differ between men and women, and according to the educational attainment of mothers. Because most of these studies were conducted with Caucasian, or primarily Caucasian college samples, very little is known about how ethnicity and educational attainment play into the equation.

Discussions in the Divorce Literature

Two discussions in the divorce literature are important to the current study. First, the family structure versus family experience debate needs to be understood in order to clarify the reasons for the current study's focus on daughters of divorce rather than

daughters whose parents are unhappily married. Second, the risk-resiliency perspective will help orient the reader to the way mother-daughter variables will be approached in the current study.

The family structure versus family experience discussion centers around the question of whether the adverse outcomes of divorce are caused by marital dissolution itself (Amato, 1993) or by other factors related to parents' divorce (Tews, 1999). Forehand, Armistead, and David (1997) measured several elements of psychosocial well-being (social and cognitive competence, and externalizing and internalizing of problems) in 144 adolescents (64 AOD and 80 AOND). The parents of 16 of the AOND eventually got divorced, leaving 64 AOND whose parents remained married. The researchers found that the adolescents whose parents were married at the time of the study but who later divorced functioned better on the outcomes measured than those 64 whose parents were divorced (AOD) at the time of the initial data collection. This finding suggests that the family processes that precede parental divorce have less impact on adolescents' well-being than the actual act of divorce. A much larger study of a similar nature, however, found the opposite to be true. Sun's (2001) longitudinal study of over 10,000 students revealed that adolescent academic, behavioral, and psychological problems were more prevalent in families where divorce occurred, but that the differences were noticeable *before* the divorce took place. This research finding suggests that family of origin processes, rather than the actual parental divorce, contributed to adolescent problems. Other researchers have found that, specifically, the mother's psychological health,

income, and relationship with her adolescents are stronger predictors of adolescent well-being than parents' marital status (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001; Demo & Acock, 1996).

It would appear that divorce (i.e., family structure) is not the culprit; family experience is. However, discrepant conclusions about the impact of divorce on children's well-being are inevitable as long as researchers continue to define "well-being" in very different ways. Some researchers are more interested in immediate, externalized measures of psychosocial well-being, such as academic and behavioral problems, whereas others are more interested in long-term measures related to the formation of intimacy with a partner. It very well could be that family environment, regardless of parents' marital status, impacts short-term measures of well-being such as those mentioned in the studies above. The current study will focus, however, on the long-term effects of divorce on very specific measures of well-being having to do with marital approaches.

The family experience-family structure debate also is waged in the research on the effects of divorce on offspring marriage. The family structure contingent maintains that parental divorce itself negatively affects offspring marriage (Amato, 1996; Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Kapinus, 2004). Those who make the family experience argument, on the other hand, claim that the link between divorce and offspring relational disadvantages is a spurious one (Booth & Edwards, 1989; Flatley, 2004; Gabardi & Rosen, 1993; Henry & Holmes, 1997; Martin, 1996; Tallman, Grey, Kullberg, & Henderson, 1999; Zander, 1994). These two approaches, as related to relationship outcomes of AOD, are briefly described in the following paragraphs.

Family experience. In the general population, unhappy parental marriages are associated with some detrimental marital processes in offspring, and some believe that unhappy parental marriages are worse for young adults than parental divorce. High inter-parental conflict, independent of parental marital status, has been correlated with offspring marital problems, such as negative views toward marriage (Jennings, Salts, & Smith, 1992), self doubt about one's problem solving ability (Flatley, 2004), and poor partner intimacy (Richardson & McCabe, 2002). Booth and Edwards (1989) found that parental marital unhappiness contributed more to offspring's future family problems than did parental divorce. They studied data from 1,979 interviews of randomly selected married individuals under age 55. They found that parental divorce had no significant impact on certain family of procreation variables, such as having children, parent-child relationships, and perception of fairness in the division of labor. Parental marital unhappiness (in the family of origin) was significantly associated, however, with grown children's problems when they started families of their own. Parents' marital unhappiness was linked with grown offspring's problems with their own children, perceptions of unfairness in their marriages, dissatisfaction with their bonds with their children, and with their partners' bonds with the children. This body of research suggests that unhappy, intact parental marriages have just as much of a negative impact on their children's future marriages as divorce would have.

Family structure. Deficient parental marriage models might translate into lower quality marriages among children, but this does not automatically translate into offspring divorce. In fact, when parents remain together, their marital happiness seems to have very

little impact on their children's marital outcomes. Children of unhappily married parents are only slightly (not significantly) more likely to divorce than offspring of happily married parents, whereas AOD are about twice as likely as AOND to get divorced (Amato, 1996; Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Diekman & Schmidheiny, 2004) and three times as likely to have serious divorce thoughts (Amato & DeBoer). Parental marital unhappiness may beget offspring marital unhappiness, and parental divorce may beget offspring divorce; but parents' marital unhappiness is not significantly linked to actual divorce rates among their adult offspring.

The case of AOD from low conflict homes helps illuminate the reason for the link between parents' actual divorce and divorce risk for their offspring. Amato and DeBoer (2001) found that children whose parents divorced after *low* levels of marital discord were more likely to divorce than those whose parents divorced after *high* levels of marital discord. These authors suggested that children who witness low conflict marriages ending in divorce develop weak commitment to lifelong marriage. Coyne (2001) found in a group of AOD whose parents had low levels of pre-divorce conflict that, although especially divorce-prone, these individuals reported similar levels of marital satisfaction as their peers from intact, low conflict homes. In other words, AOD at the *highest* risk of divorce (those whose parents divorced after little obvious fighting) seem to be similar in marital satisfaction as AOND at the *lowest* risk for divorce (those whose parents remained married, with little obvious fighting). These two studies illustrate two important points about the marriages of AOD. First, low levels of conflict in the family of origin do not account for marital stability for grown children. Second, marital satisfaction is *not*

necessarily equated with marital stability. For AOD from low conflict homes (where divorce occurred despite very little parental fighting), divorce may seem an acceptable ending to an unhappy-- though still not highly conflictual-- marriage. For AOND from low conflict homes (where parents remained married in the presence of low conflict), divorce may seem an unacceptable outcome of a good enough marriage.

The notion of divorce acceptability is supported by Gelfman's (1995) finding, in a sample of 122 undergraduate students, that AOD are significantly more likely than AOND to accept divorce as a way to resolve an unhappy marriage. It seems that acceptability of divorce may trump marital dissatisfaction as a motivator to actually get a divorce. Acceptability of divorce is linked to whether or not one's parents got a divorce. Because of the specific effects of parental divorce on AOD marital outcomes, this study will focus specifically on adults whose parents have divorced, rather than those whose parents were unhappily married.

Risk and Resiliency

The second relevant discussion in the divorce literature relates to risk and resiliency perspectives. Although the focus of divorce research historically has been on the risks of those involved in divorce, attention also must be given to the factors that protect certain individuals. Every family is different, and every individual is different. Whereas risk factors predispose some to negative outcomes, protective factors predispose others to normal or positive outcomes. An individual or family characterized by predominantly protective factors will show more resiliency after divorce than one

plagued by many risk factors. The research reveals that resilient individuals and families *do* exist (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002).

The vast body of research on the relational disadvantages of AOD may lead the reader to lose sight of the fact that many couples from divorced families create, manage, and sustain long-term marriages (Zander, 1994). Many AOD marriages are seemingly unaffected by parental divorce, and some may even be affected in positive ways. Only one in five AOD experience marital discord, and one in ten AOD experience decreased psychological well-being *attributable to parental divorce* (Amato, 2003). Statistical differences between AOD and AOND tend to be small. In fact, no statistical differences between adults whose parents are divorced and those whose parents remain continuously married have been found in adults' attitudes toward marriage (Greenberg & Nay, 1982), or attitudes toward commitment (Flatley, 2004), or attitudes toward divorce (Amato, 1996). Although *unmarried* AOD in college hold more positive views toward divorce than unmarried AOND (Greenberg & Nay), the difference is very slight among *married* AOD and AOND. Among married AOD, divorce-related attitudes do not seem to impact their propensity to actually *get* divorced (Amato, 1996). AOD and AOND also are similar in their levels of marital satisfaction (Flatley; Webster, Orbuch, & House, 1995), social support (Ross & Mirowsky, 2000), and relationship conflict (Flatley), and other measures of psychosocial adjustment, including depression, stress, and global self concept (Richardson & McCabe, 2002). Parental divorce does not seem related to offspring's cognitions and behaviors in many relationally-relevant ways.

As is often true of any crisis, trauma, or difficulty, parental divorce may sharpen certain skills and perceptions in some individuals. One of the most oft-cited benefits of parental divorce, from the mouths of the children, is the early development of independence (Harvey & Fine, 2004). Marital distress and divorce in the family of origin are linked to increased attitudinal independence between parents and their college-aged offspring. Lopez, Campbell, and Watkins (1989) studied the relationships between various types of parent-child independence and parents' marital distress in a sample of 815 college students. Although they did find that in maritally distressed families, young adults had achieved lower levels of conflictual independence (meaning they were somewhat enmeshed with a parent), they also displayed significantly higher levels of attitudinal independence from their parents, meaning they reported holding beliefs and values that differed from those of their parents. Young adults from distressed or divorced backgrounds seem to be forced to think for themselves and determine their own values at an early age.

There is also some evidence of other forms of maturity among AOD. Kogos and Snarey (1995) found, in a sample of 103 college students, that AOD had significantly higher levels of moral development than their AOND classmates. These authors suggested that parental divorce teaches some teenagers heightened levels of perspective-taking, which later results in increased levels of moral development. AOD also are thought to have developed a heightened sensitivity about people (Martin, 1996), and an awareness of relationship pitfalls and the reality of divorce (Zink, 2000), especially among daughters of divorce (Kinnaird & Gerard, 1986). Kinnaird and Gerard found that

this awareness of the negative side to marriage among the daughters of divorce and daughters of remarriage was not discouraging them from considering getting married themselves. In their study of 90 undergraduate women in an introduction to psychology course (equally divided among AOND, AOD whose mothers remarried, and AOND whose mothers never remarried), AOD women matched AOND women in their intention and desire to get married within the next 10 years.

Parental divorce also may have the effect of raising offspring standards for marriage, especially among women AOD. Children of divorce tend to reject stereotypical sex roles, and are significantly more androgynous than children of non-divorce (Kurdek & Siesky, 1981; MacKinnon, Stoneman, & Brody, 1984). As adults, they are significantly more oriented toward egalitarian (versus traditional) style marriages than AOND (Carson & Pauly, 1990). This type of marriage implies equality between spouses, shared responsibility and autonomy (Ahrons, 2004), and has been linked to several indicators of marital well-being, marital satisfaction, and decreased risk of “marital burnout” in wives (Erikson, 1993; Gottman & Notarius, 2000). AOD who saw that their parents’ marriage did not work may be trying to create something new and, they believe, more functional, in their own relationships. Women, especially, (no matter what their parents’ marital status) seem to be seeking more equality in marriage (Botkin, Weeks, & Morris, 2000), a trend that has been developing over the past 40 years (Weeks & Botkin, 1988; Weeks & Gage, 1985). High expectations for marriage do not, of course, insure against divorce. Seeking marital equality does not necessarily lower women’s divorce risk. Ahrons, in her categorization of marriage types, identified egalitarian/ companionate

marriages as second in endurance only to traditional marriages. The trend toward egalitarian marriage among AOD women should caution researchers, however, to review findings about their increased divorce rates more broadly. AOD, with their fierce desires and hopes for lasting marriages, seem to be attempting to create a more workable, balanced and equal pattern of marriage.

Risk and protective factors are those that predispose individuals to more negative or positive outcomes, respectively, in the face of something like parental divorce. Some of the risk factors to children of divorce may prove to be resiliency factors to adults of divorce, and vice versa. For example, inter-parental conflict is one of the most frequently cited risk factors associated with parental divorce. Inter-parental conflict leads to more post-divorce adjustment problems in children (Emery, 1988), but actually could be implicated in some *benefits* for AOD. Amato, Loomis, and Booth (1995) found in a 12-year study of 471 AOD, that those whose parents divorced after high levels of conflict had *higher* levels of well being than those whose parents divorced after little or no obvious conflict. As mentioned earlier, they are also at less risk of divorce in their own marriages than other AOD, whose parents' divorce came after low conflict (Amato & DeBoer, 2001). It could be that parental divorce brought a satisfactory solution to a difficult home environment, allowing children to get on with their lives in healthy ways. Perhaps the AOD from highly conflicted families see divorce as a solution to dire circumstances and irreconcilable differences, whereas those from low conflict families see divorce as an acceptable solution to minor marital problems.

In consideration of a risk-resiliency perspective of parental divorce, it is important to remember that risk factors influence different individuals in different ways, and exert different types of impact during different life stages. It is difficult to label any one variable, such as inter-parental conflict, a universal risk factor. Parent-child closeness is another such variable that seems key to the relationships of AOD. The next section will explore what researchers have found about the risk and protective factors (for males and females) associated with parent-child closeness.

Parent-child Closeness as a Protective Factor in AOD Relationships

Intimate closeness with both parents is one of the most important predictors of positive psychosocial adjustment in young AOD (Richardson & McCabe, 2002). The quality of parent-child relationships is significantly related to aspects of psychosocial adjustment in AOD, including high life satisfaction, healthy adult intimate relationships, and decreased likelihood of depression and anxiety (Ojanlatva et al., 2003; Retterath, 1995; Richardson & McCabe). In addition, positive parent-child relationships are thought to buffer young adults from the effects of parental divorce on their own intimate relationships (Ensign, Scherman, & Clark, 1998). Carnelley, Pietromonaco, and Jaffe (1994) found that, for college women, positive relationships with mothers (mediated by the daughters' attachment style and lack of depressive symptoms), was linked to adaptive functioning in intimate relationships.

Transference of this parent-child intimacy into intimacy with one's partner might buffer against some relationship risks that are present for AOD. The research reveals the

importance of both father-child and mother-child quality relationships in the later intimate relationships of offspring.

Although positive, involved father-child relationships are more common in non-divorced homes (Macie, 2003; Orbuch, Thornton, & Cancio, 2000; Riggio, 2001), father-young adult relationships are very important to the adjustment of AOD in divorced families (Summers, Forehand, Armistead, & Tannenbaum, 1998). Close, intimate relationships with fathers are correlated with lower levels of depression, anxiety, and stress (Palossari, Aro, & Laippala, 1996; Richardson & McCabe, 2002). Father-daughter contact also has been linked to self-esteem among girls (Shook & Jurich, 1993). Relationships with fathers are linked to certain aspects of offspring's future intimate relationships as well. For example, closeness with fathers, biological or step, is associated with sons' (though not with daughters') confidence in their ability to have stable marriages in the future (Risch, Jodl, & Eccles, 2004). Living with a father, at least some of the time, after parental divorce decreases the likelihood of AOD divorce, for both sons and daughters (Webster, Orbuch, & House, 1995). Father-daughter contact, in both divorce and non-divorce families, also is associated with higher marital satisfaction among daughters (Dixon, 1998). Consistent with these findings are Richardson and McCabe's (2002) findings that for both sexes, close relationships with fathers were associated with strong relationships with the opposite sex.

Other researchers have emphasized the importance of mother-child relationships to children's post-divorce adjustment. Most children live with their mothers after divorce, which seems to form a context for increased mother-child closeness (Arditti, 1999).

Richardson and McCabe (2002) found that for both sons and daughters, intimacy with mothers was correlated with decreased anxiety, depression and stress, and positive same-sex friendships, self-esteem, and general life satisfaction. Among AOD college students, positive mother-daughter relationships are a strong predictor of responsibility (Sonnenblick, 2001). Johnston (1990) found, however, that among AOD, responsibility was linked to a controlling style in interpersonal relationships and a lack of playfulness.

A mother-daughter alignment against a divorced father can be detrimental to a young woman (Sonnenblick, 2001). In most families, divorce disrupts the father-child relationship more than the mother-child relationship. Most children live with their mothers after parental divorce, and even when they live with their fathers, non-custodial mothers are more involved with their children than non-custodial fathers (Orbuch, Thornton & Cancio, 2000). Whereas sons' relationships with both parents tend to suffer in the post-divorce years, daughters' relationships with their mothers actually improve after divorce. Orbuch, Thornton, and Cancio, in a longitudinal study of 801 mother-child pairs spanning 30 years, compared mother-daughter relationships in divorced and never-divorced families, and found that closeness was highest in those dyads where mothers divorced and never remarried. High quality, supportive relationships with their mothers seem to offer many psychological and interpersonal benefits to daughters in the wake of divorce.

Perhaps because most children live with their mothers after divorce (Orbuch, Thornton, & Cancio, 2000), the mother's post-divorce marital transitions seem to exert a special influence on the relationships of her children. Bolgar, Zweig-Frank, and Paris

(1995) highlighted the importance of categorizing AOD based on variables such as the number of marital transitions of the mother. In a study of 605 undergraduate students (n of AOD = 125; n of AOND = 467), they found that the adult offspring of mothers who never remarried, or who remarried and divorced multiple times, reported more interpersonal difficulties than those whose mothers just remarried once after divorce. One stable remarriage may provide offspring with a positive marriage model, whereas no remarriage or multiple remarriages may do little to develop offspring's faith in and understanding of marriage. Maternal remarriage also might reduce a mother's dependence on older children, thus decreasing their risk of being parentified and triangulated into developmentally inappropriate parental concerns.

Wolfinger (2000) carried the research on multiple parental marital transitions a step further to test the effects on actual marital outcomes of AOD whose parents married multiple times. Using data from the National Survey of Families and Households (n = 13,008) he found that the more times a child stopped living with a parent (due to a marital transition or abandonment), the higher that child's risk of personal divorce later in life. He found, in fact, a direct linear relationship between the number of transitions for the child and the number of the child's own marital transitions, such that those who experienced the most parental marital transitions in childhood also reported the most divorces and remarriages themselves in later life. Thus, it is somewhat unclear whether one remarriage after divorce is beneficial to children's later relationships (as Bolgar, Zweig-Frank, & Paris found in relation to children's interpersonal difficulties), or detrimental (as Wolfinger found in relation to children's marital outcomes). It does seem,

however, that subsequent divorces and remarriages have a detrimental effect on AOD relationships later in life.

Statistically, the increased divorce risk among daughters of divorce is significantly higher than that for sons of divorce (Bumpass, Martin, & Sweet, 1991; Glenn & Kramer, 1987; Wolfinger, 1999). Daughters of divorce also experience more closeness to one parent, namely the mother, than do sons of divorce or AOND. This emotional closeness and support may provide many protective factors for daughters in the early years following divorce. Inappropriate dependence between mothers and daughters, however, sometimes known as enmeshment, fusion, poor individuation, or lack of psychological separation, could negatively influence AOD women's later relationships. Family Systems Theory helps illuminate how such dependence could play out for mothers and daughters of divorce, and the daughters' own adult relationships.

Family Systems Theory

The central premise of family systems theory is that emotional individuation with the family of origin is a prerequisite to mature and healthy relationships with other adults (Charles, 2001). Structural family theorists emphasize the importance of the dominance of the spousal subsystem in the family (Minuchin, 1974). In this section, the implications of individuation and processes related to family subsystems, as they affect adult children of divorce, particularly daughters of divorce and their relationship formation, are discussed.

Beal and Hochman (1991) stated that for AOD desiring marital success, "The key is the extent to which you can extricate yourself from your parents' problems and become

emotionally independent of a family style of relating that does not work for you” (p. 178). These authors suggested techniques for AOD for differentiating from their parents, specifically around issues related to marriage. Participants in Zink’s (2000) study of long-term (ten years or longer) married AOD were probably *not* trained in family systems theory, yet they identified healthy separation from their parents as key to the satisfaction and longevity of their marriages. Differentiation of self, as the basis for autonomy and self-identity, implies an ability to reduce emotional reactivity, take clear positions, and differentiate from others. People who are differentiated need not react emotionally to others or forgo their own individual development in order to maintain the love of others, but can, rather, make their own decisions rationally (Bowen, 1978; Charles, 2001). The differentiated AOD woman should be able to make decisions about relationships based not on an emotional reaction to her mother, but on her own beliefs and opinions. Her attitudes about love and marriage should not be contingent upon those of her mother, or on her desire to remain faithful to her mother.

Family systems theorists maintain that family processes such as triangulation, cross-generational coalitions, and parentification of children diffuse family boundaries and impede differentiation, which is ultimately damaging to the families and to the individuals in them (Abelsohn & Saayman, 1991; Devaux, 2004; Lopez, Campbell, & Watkins, 1989; Orbuch, Thornton & Cancio, 2000; Richardson & McCabe, 2002). Triangulation occurs when a relationship between two individuals (spouses, for example) becomes unstable and the dyad draws a third person or element in to stabilize the situation and reduce discomfort (Charles, 2001). When parents triangulate a child into

their relationship, cross-generational coalitions can form, where a parent-child dyad becomes stronger and more stable than a spousal dyad. Parentification of children, a form of hierarchical reversal in families, occurs when children take on instrumentally and emotionally supportive roles for their parents. Poor individuation from either parent occurs in enmeshed families, in which individuals' autonomy is discouraged. All of these processes involve dissolution of generational boundaries, and tend to occur in families with high inter-parental conflict. Because girls are more likely than boys to intervene in family disputes and take on a care-giving role within the family system, dissolved boundaries tend to affect mother-daughter relationships more than any other dyadic relationship within the family (Fullinwider-Bush & Jacobvitz 1993). In the next paragraphs the family processes of triangulation, cross-generational coalitions, parentification, and individuation as they relate to adults of divorced parents are addressed.

Triangulation

Defined as a combination of scape-goating and the formation of cross-generational coalitions, triangulation occurs in poorly differentiated families, and in marriages that are high in conflict and low in satisfaction (Bell & Bell, 1979; Kerig, 1995). Parents, in order to reduce marital tension, sometimes draw in a child as an ally or distraction. Some children attempt to reduce inter-parental conflict by acting out in ways designed to displace inter-parental tension, and bring parents together to focus on the child (Charles, 2001). Parents and children alike seem to intuit that triangular relationships are inherently more stable than dyads, and thus willingly disrupt dyads in

order to reduce tension and maintain familial homeostasis. Beal and Hochman (1991) stated that many AOD become triangulated into their parents' marital dissolution by becoming the family mediator, spokesperson for one parent, or by acting out or becoming sick at times of high marital conflict in the home. This dynamic, they stated, hinders the young adult's ability to act rationally and independently, and ultimately increases the already high divorce risk of the married AOD. "The more entangled, intense, and emotionally reactive to your parents' difficulties," they wrote, "the more your life became governed by feelings—theirs and yours—and less by rational thinking and reflection. The more your parents put you in a compromising situation and urged you to take sides, the more enmeshed with their problems you became, and the less freedom you had to develop your independence." (p. 187).

Triangulation, whose unstated, often unconscious purpose in divorced or divorcing families is to reduce familial conflict, exacts a price from involved children, especially in their own later intimate partnerships. Devaux (2004) found in a study of 312 college students that triangulation, fusion, and intimidation were significantly related to later anxiety and avoidance in those young adults' romantic relationships. Young adults from triangulated and fused families also tend to report more negative thoughts and feelings about marriage (Larson, Benson, Wilson, & Medora, 1998). Larson et al., in a study of 977 never-married university students found that higher levels of triangulation and fusion in the family of origin were significantly related to negative attitudes about, and negative feelings toward, marriage. Parental triangulation, which may be common in families where divorce occurs, is associated with weak relationships among young adults.

But how does this process interfere, specifically, with the marital attitudes of AOD? Akers-Woody (2004) examined the relationship between family of origin triangulation and marital attitudes in a small sample of young women whose parents were divorced. All nine of her participants held average to negative attitudes about marriage, and reported triangulation at home prior to their parents' divorce. What remains unknown, however, is whether daughters' triangulation into their parents' marriages or divorces is significantly linked to their own marital attitudes. The small sample size and lack of a comparison group in Akers-Woody's study make such statistical analysis impossible. The relationship between family of origin triangulation and the marital attitudes of adult daughters of divorce needs to be studied more methodically and with a larger sample.

Cross-generational Coalitions

Triangulation is related to cross-generational fusion, or inappropriate coalitions between adults and children (Kerr, 2003). Sometimes when parents' marriages weaken or dissolve, destroying the spousal bond, a strong parent-child coalition fills the void (Lopez, Campbell, & Watkins, 1989). A parent may turn to a child (rather than spouse) for emotional support, and children in this situation often are expected to side with one parent against the other (Fullinwider-Bush & Jacobvitz, 1993). According to Minuchin (1974), such a dynamic achieves the function of detouring the family stress away from the marital pair. This de-escalation of the marital conflict may help parents and children survive the immediate crisis of divorce, but, if maintained over time, such coalitions can divert a growing child's energy away from normative developmental struggles (Lopez, Campbell, & Watkins). Adolescents who engage in or who are drawn into cross-

generational coalitions report more anxiety and depression than other teenagers (Sabatelli & Anderson, 1991), are less likely to succeed academically (Teyber, 1983), and often find their attempts at differentiation and self-actualization thwarted (Bell & Bell, 1979).

In families where the spousal dyad is not the strongest dyad, mothers often develop close bonds with their children that do not include fathers (Teyber, 1983). In families where divorce has occurred, mother-daughter coalitions are the most common form of generational boundary diffusion, especially when those daughters are adolescents or young adults. Daughters, in the process of mediating parental conflicts, often are drawn into an alliance with their mothers (Fullinwider-Bush & Jacobvitz, 1993; Levin, 1996). Orbuch, Thornton and Cancio (2000) found, in a longitudinal study (three interviews over 30 years) of 801 mother-child pairs, that divorce, when mothers never remarried, was linked to improved mother-daughter relationships. They suggested that divorced mothers who never remarry may make up for lost spousal support by developing increased closeness with their adolescent daughters. These researchers did not, however, distinguish between mother-daughter closeness and mother-daughter enmeshment. Emotional closeness and support are different from psychological dependence. Family systems theorists posit that the use of adolescents as confidants can increase that child's risk for adjustment problems (Koerner, Wallace, Lehman, & Raymond, 2002), and triangulated mother-daughter relationships are significant contributors to anxiety in young women (Jacobvitz & Bush, 1996). In general, young women raised in families with cross-generational alliances report lack of confidence in themselves and their own judgment, difficulty in self-expression, and difficulty

separating from their parents (Perosa & Perosa, 1997). This is reminiscent of the fears about loss of control and trust experienced by many AOD in their relationships.

Sometimes a strong mother-daughter coalition leads to the daughter's over-identification with her mother. The risk of this appears to be especially strong for young adult daughters, even when parental divorce is in the distant past. Wallerstein and Corbin (1989) were particularly interested in how daughters' ages and stages of development played into the effects of parental divorce. They studied 131 girls from 60 divorcing families over a period of 10 years. They found that daughters who were 19-23 a decade after parental divorce reported lower well-being than younger girls. These young women, who were barely entering adolescence at the time of their parents' divorce, were old enough to fantasize about a loving committed relationship to a partner; yet as adults, over 56% of them reported fear of betrayal in relation to the divorce. The discrepancy between what they wanted and what they feared, reported Wallerstein and Corbin, caused them a great amount of stress. These authors stated that some daughters' attitudes toward their divorced mothers vacillated between admiration of a mother's pro-activeness and independence, and rejection of her "inability" to succeed in the marital relationship. Older daughters identified more strongly with divorced mothers than did younger daughters, which gave rise to confusion when girls began to navigate the world of adult committed relationships. Although these findings do not specify that daughters' decreased well-being had to do with relationship problems, Wallerstein and Corbin's research supports the argument the effects of divorce do not necessarily disappear over

time. Rather, for daughters especially, the effects become salient at a parallel time in a girl's life when she is forming her own intimate relationships.

In the family where divorce has occurred, cross-generational coalitions often entail loyalty choices for the children. For children in divorcing families, being asked to choose between their parents, even in subtle ways, is one of the best predictors of poor adjustment following divorce (Stewart et al., 1997). Conflict in the parental dyad may influence some parents to pull their children into custody discussions, an issue which, arguably, should be discussed and settled by the adults in the family. Children who are asked to make decisions about custody arrangements sometimes feel that by choosing they are abandoning one parent. This can negatively influence a child's ability to create boundaries between self and others. Whereas some children may become overly sensitive to the feelings of others and not learn to make decisions based on their own needs, some children may become desensitized to the needs of others. Believing that no matter what choice is made, someone will be hurt, children may learn to consider only their own needs in making decisions. Both reactions illustrate Bowen's concept (1978) of impaired differentiation.

For some, loyalty choices continue to be a salient issue into adulthood, even among young adults whose parents divorce after they leave home (Russell, 2001). For girls, loyalty to the mother who (in many cases single-handedly) raised her, may be a top priority. Girls may believe (correctly or erroneously) that long-term commitment to a man threatens her loyalty to her mother, to whom she owes so much (Beal & Hochman, 1991). This seems an especially plausible dynamic between daughters and never

remarried mothers, where the women may have developed a strong dependence on each other over the years.

For young adults in serious heterosexual relationships, one aspect of individuation from parents involves transference of attachment from a parent to a sexual partner (Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997). A healthy balance between closeness and autonomy in parent-child relationships provides a stable sense of attachment from which young adults feel secure about exploring their own relationships. Among young women, parental encouragement of autonomy *and* parent-daughter closeness is linked to more exploration in friendships and dating relationships (Fullinwider-Bush & Jacobvitz, 1993). In families where daughters are triangulated into parental conflicts, aligned with mothers against fathers, and united with mothers in a mutual disappointment in men, daughters may be reluctant to transfer their attachment from their mother to a man (Beal & Hochman, 1991). In order to avoid the predicament of either betraying mother (by rejecting the basis of that mother-daughter bond) or betraying self (by not marrying) (Beal & Hochman), some may marry, but maintain the mother as their primary attachment figure. Others may accept a mother's beliefs about marriage, divorce, and men, never choosing to explore their own beliefs.

Parentification

Parentification of children is a version of the cross-generational coalition which occurs when the hierarchical organization of subsystems is reversed. In a coalition, the parent-child subsystem gains dominance over the spousal subsystem, but in parentification, parent and child roles actually are reversed. A parent may expect a child

to lend a listening ear, empathize with him or her, and offer encouragement and affection (Fullinwider-Bush & Jacobvitz, 1993). Arditti (1999) found, in a qualitative study of 58 AOD, that many young adults reported the development of a more equal, friend-like relationship with their mothers after divorce. Arditti pointed out that, contrary to what the family systems theorists say, such role shifts often are experienced by AOD as positive dynamics that foster their independence and autonomy. Many young adults enjoy this equal new status with their mothers, but in some circumstances it can set the stage for parentification of children.

Children growing up in families where divorce has occurred are more likely to take on parentified roles than those growing up in non-divorced families (Jurkovic, Thirkield, & Morrell, 2001). Jurkovic et al. examined care-taking behaviors of undergraduate psychology students (35 AOD and 68 AOND) and found that AOD reported significantly more emotional care-giving in their families of origin than did AOND. Furthermore, the AOD reported that these behaviors had increased as they grew into adulthood, despite increased time since parental divorce and their attending college. Jurkovic et al. found that it was *parentification*, rather than parental divorce, that predicted daughters' depression and anxiety. Johnston (1990) found that role reversal between divorced parents and their children (boys and girls, of varying ages) was predictive of controlling interpersonal styles and constriction of emotional expression.

Martin (1996), hypothesizing that parentification could account for the decrease in functioning of girls following parental divorce, examined this dynamic in women specifically. She found that, of 150 mother-daughter pairs, young women from divorced

families reported higher levels of emotional parentification than women from intact families. The emotional parentification was associated, in turn, with daughters' separation anxiety, timidity, fragile sense of self, conflict avoidance in friendships, and lower rates of self-disclosure. Beal and Hochman (1991) stated that when children are parentified in divorced or divorcing families, they become overly invested in their parents' problems, concerns, and worries, at the expense of working through their own stages of development.

Daughters in divorced families often become their mothers' confidantes, listening to information about sensitive topics such as frustrations with the ex (the girl's father), as well as financial and job worries (Arditti, 1999; Fullinwider-Bush & Jacobvitz, 1993). Arditti's (1999) interviews with 58 AOD indicated that many AOD thrive on the sense of being needed by their mothers. She suggested, however, that some AOD put discussion of fathers off-limits, thereby creating a boundary designed to prevent loyalty conflicts. More quantitative research suggests that this boundary is neither created nor maintained in most mother-daughter post-divorce relationships. Koerner, Wallace, Lehman, and Raymond (2002) studied 62 mother-daughter dyads from recently divorced homes and found that 85% of mothers related their complaints about their ex husbands to their daughters, nearly half of them complaining in great detail. Such mother-daughter disclosure is associated with daughters' worrying about their mothers and, consequently, high levels of distress in daughters and low levels of mother-daughter closeness. Clearly, this type of confiding in daughters can have some negative consequences. To date, however, there has been no research investigating a possible influence of this type of

mother-to-daughter disclosures on daughters' attitudes about marriage, or daughters' exploration of ideas in the domain of marriage.

Differentiation

Processes such as triangulation into parental conflict, cross-generational coalitions, loyalty choices, over-identification with mothers, and parentification of children, compromise the family structure. Young women from compromised family structures score lower on measures of separation-individuation than young women from more sound family systems (Bowman, 1996). Known variously as separation-individuation, differentiation, and psychological separation, this dynamic is at the heart of family and individual health (Minuchin, 1974). Hoffman (1984) defined psychological separation of college students from parents as being composed of four types of independence. *Conflictual independence* (freedom from conflict) refers to the absence of extreme anger, resentment, and guilt toward one's parents. *Functional independence* refers to one's ability to manage one's life without constant help or interference from parents. *Emotional independence* indicates a freedom for extreme need for approval and support from parents. Finally, *attitudinal independence* refers to the ability to hold views and attitudes about important topics that differ from those of one's parents. Hoffman found that emotional and conflictual independence from parents are especially important to college women's psychological well-being, and that freedom from excessive conflict is significantly related to women's freedom from problems in their love relationships.

Separation-individuation from the family of origin has important implications for young adults' intimate relationships outside of the family. Valerian (2002) found that,

among 208 college students, parent-child individuation was a significant predictor of young adults' attitudes toward marriage and the likelihood of getting a future divorce. One reason may be that individuation is associated with one's ability to explore one's own ideas and opinions about something (like dating and marriage), rather than modeling or reacting against one's parents' ideas. Fullinwider-Bush and Jacobvitz (1993) studied the identity exploration strategies of 45 young women whose parents were still married. They found that boundary dissolution in mother-daughter dyads was linked to daughters' foreclosed identity in the realm of dating relationships. In other words, college women in enmeshed relationships with their mothers were more likely than other women to base their decisions about relationships on the values and expectations of their mothers.

Boundary dissolutions could endanger the relationships of AOD daughters for several reasons. First, lack of autonomy in a woman's relationship decisions bodes poorly for the outcome of said relationship. Second, a mother who has herself divorced may hold more positive views of divorce and more cautious or negative views toward marriage. A daughter who perceives herself as the confidant and caretaker of a divorced, never remarried mother may equate commitment to a man with betrayal of, or competition with, her mother (Beal & Hochman, 1991). What remains to be studied is how the mother-daughter relationship is linked to the daughter's marital attitudes and ability to explore ideas about marriage, and how the mother's marital status (divorced, or remarried) plays into this.

Family systems theorists have been criticized as being overly focused on parent-child separation, to the exclusion of connection. Moreover, women's needs for

connection are sometimes viewed as dependent and equated with poor differentiation, resulting in a pathologizing of normative relationship dynamics in women (Kenny & Donaldson, 1991). More recent interpretations of family systems theory emphasize, however, the importance of connection as the basis for successful individuation. Both processes, stated Kalsner and Pistole (2003), are concerned with the healthy balance between separateness and connectedness. The authors stated that these are complementary, rather than opposing, processes. For older adolescents, or college students, healthy parent-child attachments may actually be the precursor to healthy individuation (Lopez & Gover 1993). Such attachment to the parent offers the older adolescent (just as it offers the infant) a secure base from which to explore. Kenny and Donaldson found that, for college women especially, close parental attachment combined with family of origin individuation, were more adaptive than either process alone. In their study of 173 first-year college women and 53 men, the female students reported being emotionally closer to their parents and more willing to seek parents' help than the male students. These same women also reported more social competence and higher levels of well-being than their male classmates. It seems plausible, then, that young women who experience both positive, connected relationships with their mothers, as well as individuated relationships with them, may have more positive attitudes toward intimate relationships with others, and perhaps toward marriage.

Just as poor differentiation between parents and children can interfere with children's relationships, so can positive psychological separation contribute to the success of these relationships. Beal and Hochman (1991) stated that, for AOD, awareness

of family patterns can lead to emotional independence and freedom from parents' legacy of divorce. Such independence, they stated, often brings increased healthy closeness with parents, as well as with intimate partners. Valerian (2002) found in a sample of 209 students that differentiation was a significant predictor of marital attitudes and the likelihood of divorce. Among women, it could be that divorced mothers who foster daughter independence do not triangulate their daughters into the relationships with their ex-husbands, ask them to take sides against the father, or place them in a parentified role. They may therefore be less likely to feel criticized by a daughter's decision to marry, and less threatened by a daughter's confidence that she will remain married. Likewise, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that adult daughters who perceive themselves as psychologically separate from their mothers are unlikely to see the formation of healthy, enduring heterosexual relationships as threatening to their mothers. This is important for adults of divorce, who need to draw a distinction between their parents' marriage choices and their own (Zink, 2000), and not worry that a healthy marriage represents a rejection of the parental model (Robinson, 2000). Such an individual need not obsess about rejecting parents' marital choices by having a happy marriage of one's own. The individuated adult, rather, may enjoy connection to the family of origin, but take charge of his or her own decisions about marriage and other lifestyle issues.

Summary of the Research and Implications for this Study

Research findings indicate that parental divorce impacts the relationships, and the ability to succeed in those relationships, of adult offspring of divorce in a variety of ways. These young adults exhibit insecure attachment styles in adulthood, tend to lack trust in

their partners (Brown, 1999; Carson & Pauly, 1990; Gelfman, 1995; Hirschfeld, 1992; Sprague & Kinney, 1997), and lack confidence in their own abilities to commit to marriage and to determine the success or failure of their own future marriages (Franklin, Janoff-Bulman, & Roberts, 1990; Russell, 2001). Many AOD try to control their relationships through an array of behaviors and attitudes that may actually sabotage their outcomes (Brown; Fassel, 1991). After they actually do marry, AOD are roughly twice as likely to get divorced as adults whose parents never divorced.

The research also reveals that males and females respond very differently to parental divorce. Boys typically act out in childhood and experience few (if any) repercussions later in their adult relationships. Girls, on the other hand, often seem to outside observers to be resilient in childhood, but tend to experience a variety of relationship-related troubles later when they enter young adulthood, including more risk of getting divorced (Glenn & Kramer, 1987). It is possible that some of the gender differences in adulthood have to do with the close-knit relationships formed between custodial mothers and their daughters in the aftermath of divorce (Fullinwider-Bush & Jacobvitz, 1993). This closeness may benefit girls, but closeness to the exclusion of healthy separation may have some harmful effects as these young girls go through adolescence and young adulthood.

Family systems theorists emphasize the importance of healthy individuation to one's psychological health. Individuation from parents allows children to act autonomously and rationally, rather than emotionally and reactively. Several researchers believe that individuation from parents is important to the successful relationships of

AOD (Beal & Hochman, 1991; Fassel, 1991; Hoffman, 1984). Attachment theorists state that healthy connection to one's parents is a prerequisite to individuation (Kalsner & Pistole, 2003; Kenny & Donaldson, 1991; Lopez & Gover 1993). Connection provides humans with a secure bond from which they can branch out and explore. In fact, close relationships with parents have been shown to be beneficial to AOD in many ways, including their approaches to intimate adult relationships and marriage (Carnelley, Pietromonaco, & Jaffe, 1994; Ensign, Scherman, & Clark, 1998).

Several studies have focused on AOD girls and women specifically, and their relationships with their parents (Kalter, Riemer, Brickman, & Woo Chen, 1985; Levin, 1996; Wallerstein & Corbin, 1989; Zander, 1994). Close, positive relationships with girls' fathers have been found to be linked to daughters' marital satisfaction (Dixon, 1998). Daughters are typically closer, however, to their mothers after their parents' divorce. The mother-daughter relationship, and the role it plays in a young woman's attitudes about and approaches toward marriage, deserve closer examination.

Hypothetically, the ideal type of relationship for mothers and daughters who have gone through divorce would be one in which closeness and autonomy (or psychological separation) are well balanced. Close relationships would be characterized by high degrees of emotional (or affective) quality, mother-to-daughter support, and mother's facilitation of her daughter's independence. Psychologically separated relationships would be characterized by several types of independence. Specifically, daughters would be *conflictually* independent from mothers, meaning they would be free of excess guilt, anger, resentment, anxiety, and mistrust of their mothers. They would be *emotionally*

independent, meaning that they would not rely excessively on mother's approval. They would be *functionally* independent, meaning they would be able to manage their day-to-day personal lives without excessive help or interference from their mothers. And they would be *attitudinally* independent, meaning that they would have some viewpoints that differed from those of their mothers. Support from such a close, yet individuated relationship may allow daughters increased freedom to explore and generate their own ideas about marriage, and may be associated with more positive views toward marriage.

Several researchers have examined the relationships of AOD from a Bowenian family systems perspective (Devaux, 2004; Haws & Mallinckrodt, 1998; Jurkovic, Thirkield, & Morrell, 2001; Valerian, 2002; Zink, 2000). The findings of this research suggest that family of origin dynamics such as triangulation, cross-generational coalitions, and parentification, may negatively impact AOD's future intimate relationships. These dynamics need to be studied in women, specifically, whose parents are divorced. Very little research, however, has applied the Bowenian perspective specifically to *AOD women's relationships*. Akers-Woody, in her 2004 dissertation, explored marital attitudes of adult daughters of divorce from a Bowenian perspective. This study was limited, however, to global family patterns (rather than mother-daughter patterns, specifically). The sample size of nine and the exploratory nature of her research questions limit the generalizability of her findings. Given the importance of family systems concepts in our understanding of the relationships of AOD, and the higher marital risk experienced by women AOD, it makes sense to apply these concepts to a larger sample of adult daughters of divorce. Given also the prominence of the mother-

daughter relationship after divorce, it makes sense to specifically study these relationships in young adult AOD. This study, then, will examine Bowenian family dynamics between mothers and daughters of divorce, and their possible link to daughters' marital attitudes and approaches to learning more about marriage.

Lack of psychological separation between girls and their mothers may be evident in families where mothers make their daughters their confidantes after divorce, frequently disclosing a high degree of detail about divorce-related topics (Fullinwider-Bush & Jacobvitz, 1993). Girls whose mothers criticize their fathers in great detail may have more negative views of heterosexual marriage. They may accept mother's views rather than exploring their own views, out of a vague fear that too much interest in or endorsement of marriage may be a betrayal of their mothers (Beal & Hochman, 1991).

The research also reveals that some demographic characteristics of mothers and their daughters could play a role in grown daughters' approach to marriage. Although parents' education and occupational prestige have been shown to play no role in the degree to which divorce is passed on from generation to generation (Amato, 1996; Wolfinger, 1999), mother's educational achievement increases the degree to which parents' divorce impacts daughters' marriages (Keith & Finlay, 1988). Hypothetically, the link between the mother-daughter relationship and the daughter's approach to marriage could be stronger in families where the mother went to college. The research also has revealed that the more parents divorce and remarry, the more their children experience interpersonal difficulties in their relationships, and go on to have multiple divorces and remarriages themselves (Bolgar, Zweig-Frank, & Paris, 1995; Wolfinger,

2000). Perhaps the link will be stronger in mother-daughter dyads where the mother has only remarried once, and remained in that second marriage.

Researchers have rarely examined the impact of ethnicity on the intergenerational transmission of divorce. Glenn and Kramer (1987) found that the intergenerational transmission of divorce was strongest for Caucasian females, followed by African-American females. They concluded that gender was a more powerful predictor than ethnicity of how parents' marital status affects offspring's marital status. Although many studies on adult offspring of divorce have included Caucasian and African-American subjects, very few have specifically analyzed results by ethnicity. Gelfman's (1995) study is a notable exception. Gelfman, in her comparison of AOD and AOND, took ethnicity into account in her examination of several variables. Her sample consisted of 83 Caucasians, 33 Asian-Americans, 14 African-Americans, 19 Hispanics, and 29 who identified as "other." Gelfman found that ethnicity accounted for more of the variance in premarital cohabitation than parental marital status, but that parental marital status accounted for most of the variance in expectations of future marital satisfaction and acceptance of divorce as an end to an unhappy marriage. Considering the dearth of research on ethnic differences among AOD, it will be important to pay attention to how the relationship between mother-daughter variables and marital attitude variables differ across racial groups.

Most researchers on family of origin dynamics and young adults' marital views has focused on negative family of origin dynamics to the exclusion of positive ones. This study will address this gap by examining the predictive power of both positive and

negative mother-daughter variables on daughters' attitudes toward marriage and strategies of marriage identity exploration. Improved understanding of family of origin issues that help and hinder women's healthy relationships will benefit marriage and family counselors. Whether they are working with divorcing families, or couples in which the woman's parents are divorced, improved understanding of the problem may illuminate possible routes to a solution.

Conclusion

Divorced parents' attitudes, behaviors and relationships with each other and their children influence the marital processes and outcomes of their children. Positive, supportive, individuated relationships with parents are counted among the secrets to marital success by long-term married AOD couples (Zink, 2000). At the same time, poor parent-child relationships can adversely affect a child's probability of maintaining a first marriage, and daughters' marriages are more severely impacted than are sons'. It is hypothesized that certain elements of the post-divorce relationships with mothers plays a key role in a young women's views about marriage. Psychological separation with mothers, high quality, supportive relationships with mothers where daughters' autonomy is encouraged, and a limited amount of detailed divorce-related disclosures are thought to contribute to girls' positive views about marriage, and a willingness to explore and develop their own ideas and expectations in the domain of marriage.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The young woman in the divorced family faces a serious dilemma. The pain of adolescent separation is characteristically resolved by strengthened identification with the object that is lost; yet, for daughters in divorced families, the prospect of identifying with mother raises a host of fears. For whatever her virtues, the divorced mother is often regarded by her daughter as having failed at the major developmental task, that of love and marriage, faced by the young woman herself at this time.

Wallerstein & Corbin, 1989, p. 603

The preceding review of the literature revealed that the intergenerational transmission of divorce impacts women and men differently, and suggested that elements of the mother-daughter relationship could impair or support the marital attitudes and exploration strategies of daughters of divorce. Specifically, it appears that strong, supportive, well-individuated mother-daughter relationships could enhance AOD women's views toward marriage, and that triangulated, poorly differentiated relationships could prove detrimental.

This chapter outlines the design and methodology for the current study, beginning with research questions and hypotheses. This chapter includes a description of participants, sampling method, instruments used, and data analyses accompanying each research question. The methodology incorporates changes made as a result of the pilot study, which is described in Appendix H.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research question 1: How often, and in how much detail do mothers disclose to their daughters about different divorce-related topics (ex-husband, men/dating, and divorce/remarriage)?

Research question 2A: How are the scores on the instruments assessing elements of mother-daughter psychological separation (i.e. conflictual, emotional, functional, and attitudinal independence), mother-daughter connection (i.e. affective quality of the relationship, mother's facilitation of daughter's independence, and mother support), mother-to-daughter divorce-related disclosure levels (degree of detail and frequency of disclosures), daughters' marital attitudes, and daughters' identity exploration in the domain of marriage, correlated?

Research question 2B: What are the statistically significant predictors of daughters' marital attitudes scores? For what proportion of the variance of the marital attitude scores can these predictors account? Do ethnicity, mother's educational level, or number of marital transitions significantly predict daughters' marital attitude scores?

Hypothesis 2B: Less frequent and less detailed mother-to daughter disclosure, and high scores on the measures of both mother-daughter psychological separation variables and mother-daughter connection variables will be predictive of daughters' positive attitudes about marriage.

Research question 2C: What are the statistically significant predictors of daughters' scores for identity exploration strategies in the domain of marriage? For what proportion of the variance of the exploration scores can these predictors account? Do

ethnicity, mother's educational level, or number of marital transitions significantly predict daughters' exploration of marriage scores?

Hypothesis 2C: Infrequent and non-detailed mother-to daughter disclosure, and high scores on the measures of both mother-daughter psychological separation variables and mother-daughter connection variables will be predictive of daughters' use of identity exploration strategies in the domain of marriage.

Research question 3: Is there a significant difference in the mean scores of mother-daughter psychological separation, mother-daughter connection, mother-to-daughter disclosure levels, daughters' attitudes toward marriage, and daughters' identity exploration strategies in the domain of marriage among women grouped by ethnicity, mother's educational level, or number of mother's marital transitions?

Hypothesis 3: None of these variables will have significant mean differences when group by ethnicity, but that they will vary by the level of mother's education and the number of marital transitions she has experienced.

Participants

The population of interest for this study was never-married adult daughters of divorce. Participants were recruited from the entire population of women in their junior and senior years of college at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). Data from those who had never been married, whose biological parents had divorced (but were still living) and for whom English is the primary language were used in the current study.

It was believed that juniors and seniors, who had had several years to adjust to being in college, would have had a chance to individuate from their mothers and to begin thinking about marriage. Because of the confounding role of marital experience on the dependent variables, only never married women were included in the analyses. Researchers have found that the longer women are married, the less the role parental relationships play in their eventual attitudes and feelings about marriage (Carnelley, Pietromonaco, & Jaffe, 1994). Marital attitudes among married women may be more influenced by their particular experiences in marriage, and by family of procreation processes, than by family of origin dynamics. The attitudes of never married women were expected to be unbiased by the experience of being married themselves. In addition, the use of never married women allowed the measurement of identity exploration in the area of marriage, something that could not be measured in a group of already or previously married respondents.

Participants were limited to those for whom English is the primary language spoken at home. Charles (2001), in a review of studies testing the validity of family systems concepts, noted that most such research has used primarily female Caucasian students. It is unknown how family systems constructs might play out in a population of a different ethnic, national, or gender make-up. In fact, one of the key constructs of this study, psychological separation, is highly associated with Western cultures. For this reason, this study focused on eligible participants who grew up and adapted to culture in the United States. The use of English as the primary language spoken at home was used as a proxy for acculturation into the United States. Although the specific focus on U.S.

women was important to the current study, the focus on Caucasian women was not, and so ethnicity was not an eligibility requirement. In fact, because large enough numbers of eligible Caucasian and African-American women participated, ethnicity was specifically examined in every research question. The effects of divorce on young adults from other countries and linguistic backgrounds represent very important areas of inquiry, but were not within the scope of this study.

Demographically, the population at UNCG breaks down as follows: 69.9% Caucasian, 19.8% African-Americans 0.4% American Indian, 3.3% Asian, 2.2% Hispanic, and 4.3% listed as other. Only 0.7% of the population is composed of international students (K. Blackwell, personal communication, November 17, 2005). In the spring of 2006 there were a total of 4,206 third and fourth year undergraduate women enrolled at UNCG. Roughly half of these were expected to have already experienced their parents' divorce, bringing the eligible sample down to 2,103. The proportion of these who met the remaining study criteria could only be estimated. Approximately 2,088 were estimated to be U.S. citizens. The criteria of the current study ruled out not only international students, however, but U.S. citizens for whom a language other than English was still the primary language spoken at home. Some of these lost one or both parents to death, or were already been married, further reducing the population of eligible participants. It was estimated that roughly 1,000 to 1,500 women in the population would meet all the eligibility requirements of the current study. It was expected that from the eligible population, between 150-200 respondents would choose to participate.

The researcher needed to obtain a minimum sample size of 159 in order to conduct meaningful statistical analyses. To detect significant differences in marital attitudes and marriage identity exploration strategies among students in three groups (grouped according to the number of mother's post-divorce marital transitions), with a power of .80, a moderate effect size of .25, and $p < .05$, the researcher needed to obtain data from a minimum of 159 participants. (UCLA, 2005). In fact, 212 eligible respondents completed all the survey instruments, exceeding the minimum sample size needed.

Assessments

All participants completed a demographic questionnaire designed to gather descriptive data. To measure independent variables, participants completed the maternal forms of the Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI; Hoffman, 1984) and the Parent Attachment Questionnaire (PAQ; Kenny, 1985). They completed three subscales from the daughter form of the Mother-to-Adolescent disclosure scale (ex-husband, men/dating, divorce/remarriage) (MADS; Koerner, Jacobs, & Raymond, 2000). To measure dependent variables, participants completed the Marital Attitude Scale (MAS; Braaten & Rosen, 1998) and the Life Choices Questionnaire, Marriage domain (LCQ-M; Grotevant, 1989). All subscales of the instruments used are contained in the Appendices.

Independent Variables

Demographic questionnaire. The demographic questionnaire created for this study was designed to gather descriptive information about the participants and information relevant to their family background and current relationships. Date of birth,

ethnicity, and year in school were included for descriptive purposes. One item requested the participant's age (in years) at each post-divorce marital transition of both the mother and the father. For example, the participant was asked to list her age at mother's remarriage, mother's 2nd divorce, mother's 3rd marriage, and so on, and to do the same for the father. Participants were given a chance to explain any other aspects of their parents' marital histories that were not captured by the question. This question was designed to gather information about the number of post-divorce marital transitions of parents, how much time passed between the various transitions, and how old the participant was at the time of each transition. One item about the number of years of education the mother completed was used to assess the mother's education level. Finally, several items were included about what language was spoken primarily at home, and whether or not the participant had ever been legally married. These items were included to ensure that all participants met the criteria for the study.

Psychological Separation Inventory. The Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI; Hoffman, 1984) was developed to assess the psychological separation of college students from their parents. Hoffman, having studied the separation-individuation that occurs in infancy and early childhood, wanted to be able to measure the comparable separation dynamics that occur in early adulthood. Hoffman's conceptualization of psychological separation was based in both psychoanalytic and structural family systems theory (Hoffman & Weiss, 1987). He was especially interested in the cross-generational, cross-gender separation-individuation problems characteristic of oedipal and electra complexes. He also was interested in the impact that parents' emotional dependence on

their adolescent children (perhaps as a result of marital conflict or divorce) would have on these children's healthy separation and adjustment. His research results support the notion that family dynamics continue to exert influence on young adults, even when they are physically separated from their families of origin.

Hoffman contended that psychological separation is best considered a multidimensional construct consisting of four factors: conflictual, emotional, functional, and attitudinal independence from parents. *Conflictual independence* refers to the young person's lack of excessive anger, guilt, resentment, anxiety, and mistrust of parents. *Emotional independence* refers to a person's "freedom from an excessive need for approval, closeness, and emotional support" from one's parents (Hoffman & Weiss, 1987, p. 157). *Functional independence* assesses the young adult's "ability to manage practical and personal affairs without soliciting parental help" (Hoffman & Weiss, p. 157). Finally, *attitudinal independence* measures the extent to which adolescents show attitudes and values that are distinct from those of their parents (Beyers & Goossens, 2003, p. 364).

The PSI has a paternal and a maternal scale, each of which contain 69 items (identical except for gender-specific terms). Within each of these, there are four subscales measuring functional independence, conflictual independence, emotional independence, and attitudinal independence. Researchers have used the maternal and paternal scales separately, and some studies have used only specific subscales of the maternal and paternal scales (Hoffman & Weiss, 1987). In this study, only the maternal scale was used. Completion of either the maternal or the paternal scales takes about six minutes.

Respondents were asked to respond to statements such as “ I feel longing if I am away from my mother for too long” with a 5-point Likert-type scale. Responses ranged from 1 (“not at all true of me”) to 5 (“very true of me”). Scores were obtained for each separate subscale by summing the numbers assigned to each item, and then subtracting this total from the total possible score for that subscale (Hoffman, 1984).

Psychometrically, evidence suggests that the PSI is a sound measure for college students. Based on college student samples, evidence of the internal consistency for the subscales tends to be high. For the maternal scale, alphas for the subscales have previously been calculated as follows: emotional independence, $\alpha = .88$; conflictual independence, $\alpha = .88$; functional independence, $\alpha = .84$; and attitudinal independence, $\alpha = .91$ (Hoffman, 1984). Alphas from the current study ranged from .91 to .93.

To test construct validity, Hoffman compared scores on the PSI to scores on a scale of personal adjustment, called the Adjective Checklist (ACL). This scale specifically tested academic and love-related problems of college students. Hoffman found that for young women, conflictual independence from both parents was significantly related to personal adjustment ($r = .41$ for mothers and $.37$ for fathers), and specifically to love problems ($r = -.38$ for mothers and $-.33$ for fathers). For young women, emotional independence from both parents was significantly related to academic problems ($r = -.30$ for mothers and $-.25$ for fathers). Functional independence from mothers and fathers was not significantly related to personal adjustment, for males or for females. For young women, attitudinal independence from mothers was not significantly related to personal adjustment, although independence from fathers was negatively

associated with personal adjustment. From Hoffman's research, the most relevant findings to this study are the consistent relationships between conflictual independence and lack of interpersonal problems in love relationships. In other words, the better these young adults do in their intimate relationships, the more they are free of disproportionate anger, guilt, resentment, anxiety, and mistrust of parents.

The PSI has been used most commonly to study the relationship between separation-individuation from parents and a young adult's adjustment to college. Most of these studies have found a strong positive relationship between conflictual independence and different factors of college adjustment (Beyers & Goossens, 2003). Results regarding the relationship of the other scales to college adjustment have been mixed. Rice et al. (1990, as cited in Beyers & Goossens) conducted both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses on the PSI and found that two factors, *positive separation feelings* (composed of the conflictual independence subscale) and *independence from parents* (composed of the functional, emotional and attitudinal independence subscales) made up the PSI. Beyers and Goossens confirmed this factor structure in a study of 969 university students in Dutch-speaking Belgium.

The PSI also has been used to explore the relationship between parental conflict, separation-individuation from parents, and emotional problems in college. Hoffman and Weiss (1987) found significant correlations between parental conflict and conflictual dependence (i.e. a lack of conflictual independence) on parents, and they found that conflictual dependence on the mother was the best predictor of emotional problems in college. Lopez, Campbell, and Watkins (1989) found that college students from maritally

distressed homes reported both significantly lower levels of conflictual independence from their parents, and poorer adjustment to college. This study of 222 college men and 332 college women suggested that intergenerational enmeshment is more common in homes where parents' relationships are distressed, and that this type of enmeshment is detrimental to young adults' adjustment when they leave home. These authors also found, however, that students from maritally distressed homes reported *greater* attitudinal independence from both their parents, making it plausible that they would explore their own ideas about marriage rather than passively accept their parents' ideas. Levin (1996) used the PSI specifically with college women from divorced and non-divorced homes to compare the functionality of close mother-daughter relationships in both family structures. Her hypothesis, that close mother-daughter pairs in divorced homes are less enmeshed than those in non-divorced homes, was not supported. Given the importance of freeing oneself from excessive negative feelings toward one's parents (especially mothers) to the positive personal, emotional and relationship adjustment in college, and given the link between parental conflict and conflictual dependence between parents and their college children, Hoffman called for further research using PSI with young adults from divorced and blended families (1984; Hoffman & Weiss, 1987).

Parent Attachment Questionnaire (PAQ) Maureen Kenny (1985) developed the PAQ as a bridge between family systems concepts of separation-individuation and attachment theories. The PAQ is based in Ainsworth's model of parent-child attachment (Kenny, 1987; Lopez & Gover, 1993). Ainsworth's (1989) finding that a child's exploration of the world was facilitated by secure attachment to the parent has been

extended by Kenny to late adolescence. The PAQ is based in the notion that older adolescents experience a second individuation, which also may be facilitated by a secure attachment to the parents. The PAQ measures three different relationship aspects between grown children and their mothers and fathers: parental support, affective quality of the parent-child relationship, and parent fostering of autonomy.

Though separation-individuation and attachment were once considered two distinct, exclusive concepts, modern conceptualizations of family systems theories and attachment theories maintain that healthy parent-adolescent attachments form the basis for young adults to individuate from their families of origin (Kalsner & Pistole, 2003; Lopez & Gover, 1993). Kenny and Donaldson's (1991) study of college students underscored the importance of close relationships with parents *combined with* parental support for individuation, specifically for young women. Given the critique of family systems' emphasis on separation-individuation, to the exclusion of connection in the family of origin, especially when applied to women (Kalsner & Pistole), it seems appropriate in this study to measure both individuation *and* aspects of connection. Specific information about the mother-daughter relationship, such as that assessed by the PAQ, will provide a richer picture of a young woman's individuation from her mother.

The PAQ is a 55-item Likert-type scale that takes about seven minutes to complete. Several versions of the PAQ are available, allowing assessment of an adult child's relationships with both parents, or with either the mother or the father specifically. In the current study, the mother version was used. Items include perceived traits and behaviors of the mother in relation to the child (e.g., "In general, my mother is someone

who I can count on to provide emotional support when I feel troubled,” or “In general, my mother respects my privacy”), mother-child interactions (e.g., “During recent visits or time spent together, my mother was someone who made me angry,” or “During recent visits or time spent together, my mother was someone who I wanted to be with all the time”), and the child’s response to the mother (e.g., “Following time spent together, I leave my mother with warm and positive feelings,” or “When I go to my mother for help, I continue to feel unsure of myself”. Respondents rated the degree to which they agree with each statement, with responses ranging from 1 (“not at all”) to 5 (“very much”). There are 27 items that measure affective quality of the relationship, 14 items that measure parent facilitation of child’s independence, and 13 items that measure parental support. Scores are obtained by adding the values of the responses to items in each subscale, after first reverse coding certain items.

Kenny (1987) reported the internal consistency of the full PAQ as .93 for a sample of first year college men and .95 for a sample of first-year college women. In the sample of women, relationship quality scores also were predictors of dating competence and self-assertion. In a second study with a sample of first and fourth year college students, Kenny (1990) found adequate reliability for each of the individual subscales (α = .96 for relationship quality, α = .88 for emotional support, and α = .88 for fostering autonomy), with 2-week test-retest reliability coefficients of .82-.91. These alpha coefficients are similar to those obtained in the current study, where overall reliability was .97, with alphas for the individual subscales ranging from .89 to .97.

The construct validity of the three subscales was supported through comparisons with the Family Environment Scale (FES; Moos & Moos, 1986). The parental support and affective quality of parent-child relationship subscales of the PAQ correlated well with the cohesiveness subscale of the FES and the parent fostering of autonomy subscale on the PAQ correlated well with the expressiveness and conflict subscales of the FES. (Wright, Scherman, & Beesley, 2003). Discriminant validity was supported through a study that showed a negative correlation between the PAQ autonomy scale and another measure of parent-adolescent enmeshment (Kenny & Donaldson, 1991).

The PAQ has been used in at least one study with several different ethnic groups. Kalsner and Pistole (2003) used an adapted version of the PAQ (allowing participants to identify someone other than a parent as a primary attachment figure) with a sample of undergraduates from a variety of ethnic backgrounds (31.3% Asian, 16.3 % Asian-Indian, 22.2% African-American, 31.6% Hispanic, 13.1% Caucasian, and 7.5 % other). Even with 37% of the students choosing to identify someone other than the parent as the main attachment figure, the reliability coefficients obtained were very similar to those reported with the original PAQ.

Mother-to-Adolescent Disclosure Scale (MADS). The Mother-to-Adolescent Disclosure Scale (MADS) was created by Koerner, Jacobs, and Raymond (2000) to measure the depth of disclosure about sensitive topics that occurred between post-divorce mothers and their adolescent (age 11-17) children. The scale, grounded in structural family systems theory, is based on the concept that forms of intergenerational boundary dissolution can be harmful to adolescent development. Parents who confide in their

adolescents about sensitive topics that are usually reserved for intimate adult relationships, the authors stated, could unwittingly contribute to adolescents' psychological distress. Overwhelming or burdensome worries about the family situation and/or the parent's well-being may supplant the adolescent's normative developmental worries about growing up, increasing vulnerability to adjustment difficulties.

The scale was designed to measure both the frequency and the detail of mothers' disclosures to their adolescents about seven sensitive topics: finances, child support, ex-husband, intimacy/sex, parenting, men/ dating, job, divorce/remarriage, and leisure/personal issues. The scale consists of 50 Likert-style items. For the first 25 items, respondents rate (1-5) the frequency with which their mothers disclose to them about the specific topics, with 1 indicating "never" to 5 indicating "almost every day." On the next 25 items respondents rate (1-5) the level of detail in which mothers disclose about those exact same topics, with 1 indicating "My mom never says anything about this topic to me" to 5 indicating "My mom talked about this topic in quite a bit of detail." The scale can be used with either sons or daughters, and there is a version written for mothers (mother report) as well as one written for adolescents (adolescent report). Due to findings that mother reports of relationships with their children reflect a high degree of social desirability, and that daughter reports of parental behavior more accurately match reports of independent observers (Koerner, Wallace, Lehman, & Raymond, 2002), the authors of the scale more recently have used only the daughter-report version.

Although written for use with either sons or daughters, the scale has been used primarily with daughters. Koerner, Jacobs, and Raymond (2000) used the scale to

document mother-to-daughter disclosure patterns in the wake of divorce, to determine whether disclosures were related to daughter behavioral or psychological adjustment problems and to test the moderating role of daughter's age in such a relationship. They gave the financial and ex-husband subscales to 267 randomly selected mother-daughter dyads, receiving responses from 67. These authors found that daughter reports of maternal disclosure (but not mothers' reports) were negatively associated with daughters' psychological well-being (but unrelated to behavioral adjustment), regardless of daughters' age.

A qualitative component assessed the motivations behind disclosures. Mothers' comments revealed that mothers' disclosures were prompted by several motivations, including a desire to expose daughters to adult issues, help daughters de-idealize their fathers, or convince daughters that the mother was not solely to blame for the divorce. Daughters' perceptions of disclosures were characterized by high levels of intense emotions, including confusion, hurt, desire to help mother, and frustration at her inability to do so. Some daughters reported clear agreement with their mothers about negativity toward the father.

A later study (Koerner, Wallace, Lehman, & Raymond, 2002) revealed that most mothers talked to their adolescent daughters about all the sensitive divorce-related topics. Sixty-eight percent of mothers complained about the girl's father in detail, and 62% disclosed their feelings of anger and upset toward the father in detail. Findings from this study suggested that daughters' worries about their mothers mediated the link between maternal disclosure and daughter's decreased psychological well-being.

The internal reliability for the entire original scale was .93, with Cronbach alphas for the individual subscales ranging from .80 (financial) to .82 (ex-husband) (Koerner, Jacobs, & Raymond, 2000). To date, there is no published reliability data on the individual subscales. Results of the current study indicated high reliability for the subscales used in this study, with an overall reliability of .88.

Because of the current study's focus on the relationship between mother-daughter variables and daughters' approaches to heterosexual marriage, three of the mother-to-adolescent disclosure subscales were deemed especially relevant. The ex-husband subscale consists of three items, measuring the depth of disclosure involving mother's anger and complaints about the girl's father, and about his choices regarding dating and/or remarriage. The men/dating subscale, also consisting of three items, measures disclosures about the mother's feelings about men, dating, relationships, and her current relationship situation. The divorce/remarriage subscale, also consisting of three items, measures the depth of disclosure about a mother's feelings regarding divorce, remarriage, and the reasons she and her ex-husband got a divorce. Respondents were asked to rate these nine items both for frequency of mother's disclosure and for level of detail of disclosure.

Dependent Variables

Marital Attitude Scale (MAS.) The Marital Attitude Scale (MAS; Braaten & Rosen, 1998) was originally designed to measure an individual's attitudes toward heterosexual marriage. Braaten and Rosen (1998) defined marital attitudes as "a person's subjective opinion of the institution of heterosexual marriage" (p. 84). Unlike previous

instruments which were designed to measure marital attitudes of those who were already married, the authors designed the MAS to be used with individuals from varying marital backgrounds, including the never married, the married, the divorced, and the remarried (Bassett, Braaten, & Rosen, 1999). Given changing attitudes toward marriage, and the increasing need to understand the marital attitudes of AOD, the authors stressed the importance of a scale that could be used in research with young adults who have never married (Braaten & Rosen). In the current study, the MAS was used to measure attitudes about marriage among never married women.

The MAS is a 23-item 4-point Likert-scale, whose responses to items range from 1 (“Strongly agree”) to 4 (“Strongly disagree). Six items assess feelings about one’s own present or possible future marriage. For example, one item reads, “I have little confidence that my marriage will be a success.” On the remaining seventeen items, participants respond to general statements about the concept of marriage. Sample items here include “People should marry,” “Marriage restricts people from achieving their goals,” and “When people don’t get along, I believe they should divorce.”

The scale was normed on a sample of 499 college undergraduates (175 men and 324 women) and yielded an overall test-retest reliability of .85. When subjects were divided by gender, however, test-retest reliability was found to be higher for women ($\alpha = .87$) than for men ($\alpha = .81$) (Bassett, Braaten & Rosen, 1999). Internal reliability was found to be .82, indicating a moderate degree of internal consistency (Braaten & Rosen, 1998). Reliability analysis from the current sample yielded an internal consistency coefficient of .88.

Construct validity of the instrument was supported through comparison with the Attitudes toward Marriage Scale ($\rho = .77$) (Gabardi & Rosen, 1993). Discriminant validity was supported through comparison with certain subscales of the Relationship Beliefs Inventory ($\rho = -.11$ on the “disagreement is destructive” and $\rho = -.24$ on the “partners cannot change” subscales) (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982). Scores on the MAS correlated significantly with those on the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale, indicating that, to some degree, people’s responses to questions about marriage are governed by what they deem to be appropriate answers. This was true of the RBI and the ATM as well. When the authors divided the original norming sample of 499 students between AOD and AOND, they found that marital attitudes of AOD ($M = 53.62$) differed significantly from those of AOND ($M = 56.72$). There was no significant effect, however, for the gender/ parental marital status interaction.

Some items on the scale are reverse keyed. Once items are reverse-scored, higher scores on the scale indicate a positive attitude toward marriage.

Life Choices Questionnaire. The Life Choices Questionnaire (LCQ; Grotevant, 1989) measures identity exploration strategies across 12 domains of identity exploration, including the domains of occupation, religion, politics, friendship, dating, marriage, parenting, family roles, adult child roles, leisure, sexual expression, and sex roles. The original instrument is simply a grid, with the twelve domains of identity exploration listed across the top, and the 11 exploration strategies listed down the side. Some of the strategies include “I think about this topic on a daily basis,” and “I talk to others about this topic.” Participants rate the frequency (on a scale of 1-5) with which they engage

each strategy in relation to the specific domain or topic. Thus, the score for each domain ranges from 11-55, with higher scores indicating more identity exploration in that area and lower scores indicating more identity foreclosure.

Separate subscales (domains) from the LCQ were used with female college students to measure levels of identity formation in the specific domains of occupation, dating, and friendship (Fullinwider-Bush & Jacobvitz, 1993). These authors found that mother-daughter boundary dissolution was linked with less identity exploration in the area of dating, and that family of origin encouragement of individuation was associated with higher levels of identity exploration. The current study is designed to explore whether this applies in the domain of marriage identity formation. Because only one of the original twelve domains will be used in the current study, the scale has been adapted to a Likert-format, with the author's permission (H. Grotevant, personal communication, October 12, 2005).

Internal consistency for the 12 domains range from .87-.95, and test-retest correlations ranged from .57-.78. The test-retest correlations for the identity exploration strategies range from .71-.82 (Fullinwider-Bush & Jacobvitz, 1993). This scale has been used infrequently (H. Grotevant, personal communication, September 20, 2005), and there is no reliability information for the other subscales, including the subscale of marriage. Given the scale's unique ability to measure identity formation in the domain of marriage, the LCQ was deemed appropriate for the current study. Reliability analysis in the current study yielded an alpha coefficient of .91 for the marriage subscale.

Procedures

Before collecting data from participants, the primary researcher submitted the research proposal to UNCG's Institutional Review Board. After approval, the researcher sent an email to all women undergraduates at UNCG who were in their junior and senior years, inviting their participation. The email also included a brief description of the topic of the research, the time required for participation, an offer to be entered into a drawing for \$50 cash prize, contact information for the primary researcher, and a link to the survey instrument.

Participants who clicked on the link were directed to a consent form that described the study, potential harms and benefits, the time required for participation, and contact information for the researchers and the Office of Research Compliance. The consent form indicated that clicking on “next” and completing the survey would be taken as indication of consent to participate, and participants were encouraged to print out the informed consent page for their own records. Students who provided their consent by clicking on “next” were directed to the first page of survey questions. Subsequent directions for completion of the survey were provided throughout the survey. Survey instruments were administered in the following order: the Parent-Attachment Questionnaire, maternal form (PAQ), the Psychological Separation Inventory, maternal subscale (PSI), Marital Attitudes Scale (MAS), Life Choices Questionnaire (LCQ), marital domain, and Mother-to-Adolescent Disclosure Scale (MADS), daughter form. Because the MADS was designed for the post-divorce family, a “not applicable” option was included, and participants were directed to select this option if their parents had

never divorced. The order of instruments was determined to lessen the chances of affective responses to items that may influence responses to future items. Thus, scales including what the researcher deemed the least threatening and easiest to answer were included first, and those going into more detail about parental divorce were included toward the end. Because the first subscales were also the longest, participants were notified periodically what proportion of the entire survey they have completed. After completion, students were thanked and asked to enter their email addresses and names if they would like to be entered into the drawing for the cash prize.

Two weeks following the initial email to students, a reminder email was sent out, again with the link to the survey. After one month, the survey was closed.

Data Analysis

This section describes the statistical analyses that were used to answer the research questions described in Chapter 1, and to address the hypotheses enumerated earlier in the current chapter. Data analyses included descriptive statistics, frequency tables, correlation matrices, multiple regression analyses, and one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA). All analyses were completed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 14, 2005).

Methods for Statistical Analysis

Research question 1 did not include a hypothesis, but asked, “how often, and in how much detail do mothers disclose to their daughters about different divorce-related topics (ex-husband, men/dating, and divorce/remarriage)?” A frequency table was prepared, listing the three divorce-related topics (ex-husband, men/dating,

divorce/remarriage) in the questionnaire, and displaying the percentage of respondents, Caucasian and African-American, who stated that their mothers never discussed the topic with them, that the topic unintentionally “popped out”, that their mothers talked about the topic with no details, or quite a bit of detail. A second, nearly identical table categorized these topics according to how frequently mothers reportedly brought up these topics with their daughters.

Research question 2A concerned the correlations between all the independent and dependent variables of interest. The question asked, “how are the scores on the instruments assessing elements of mother-daughter psychological separation (i.e. conflictual, emotional, functional, and attitudinal independence), mother-daughter connection (i.e. affective quality of the relationship, mother’s facilitation of daughter’s independence, and mother support), mother-to-daughter divorce-related disclosure levels (degree of detail and frequency of disclosures), daughters’ marital attitudes, and daughters’ identity exploration in the domain of marriage, correlated?” A correlation matrix was prepared showing how the variables were related to one another.

Research question 2B was concerned with finding what factors contribute to daughters’ marital attitude scores and asked, “what are the statistically significant predictors of daughters’ marital attitudes scores? For what proportion of the variance of the marital attitude scores can these predictors account? Do ethnicity, mother’s educational level, or number of marital transitions significantly predict daughters’ marital attitude scores?” It was hypothesized that less frequent, less detailed mother-to daughter disclosures, and high scores on measures of both mother-daughter psychological

separation and mother-daughter connection would be predictive of daughters' positive attitudes about marriage. A multiple regression was performed, with the MAS score entered as the dependent variable, and PSI, PAQ, and MADS total scores entered as independent variables. Standardized beta weights were computed for each independent variable in order to determine how much of the variance in marital attitudes was explained by each independent variable, and an R^2 was computed to determine how much of the variance could be explained by the entire model. A second multiple regression was run in which ethnicity, maternal educational attainment, and the number of maternal marital transitions were added to the list of independent variables.

Research question 2C was similar to 2B, looking for the contributing factors to women's exploration strategies in the domain of marriage. The question asked, "what are the statistically significant predictors of daughters' scores for identity exploration strategies in the domain of marriage? For what proportion of the variance of the exploration scores can these predictors account? Do ethnicity, mother's educational level, or number of marital transitions significantly predict daughters' exploration of marriage scores?" Like in RQ2B, it was hypothesized that less frequent and less detailed mother-to daughter disclosure, and high scores on measures of both mother-daughter psychological separation and mother-daughter connection would be predictive of daughters' use of identity exploration strategies in the domain of marriage. A multiple regression was performed, with the LCQ-M score entered as the dependent variable, and PSI, PAQ, and MDDS total scores entered as independent variables. Standardized beta weights were computed for each independent variable in order to determine how much of the variance

in marital attitudes was explained by each independent variable, and an R^2 was computed to determine how much of the variance could be explained by the entire model. A second multiple regression was run in which ethnicity, maternal educational attainment, and the number of maternal marital transitions were added to the list of independent variables.

Research question 3 was concerned with how all the variables differed according to certain demographic factors. The question asked, specifically, "is there a significant difference in the mean scores of mother-daughter psychological separation, mother-daughter connection, mother-to-daughter disclosure levels, daughters' attitudes toward marriage, and daughters' identity exploration strategies in the domain of marriage among women grouped by ethnicity, mother's educational level, or number of mother's marital transitions?" It was hypothesized that none of the variables would differ according to ethnicity, but that some variables would differ according to maternal education and the number of maternal marital transitions. Several one-way analyses of variance were computed to determine whether the variables differed according to demographics. In the first ANOVA, ethnicity (defined as Caucasian or African-American) was used as the independent variable, and subscales of the PAQ, PSI, MAS, and LCQ were entered separately as the dependent variables. In the second ANOVA, the dependent variables remained the same, but maternal educational attainment was entered as the independent variable. On the third ANOVA, the dependent variables remained the same, but the number of maternal marital transitions was formed as the independent variable.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the relationships among mother-daughter relationship dynamics in the post-divorce family and adult daughters' views toward and exploration strategies of marriage. This chapter presents the results from the current study. All third and fourth year college women at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro ($n = 4,200$) were emailed and invited to participate in the study. A total of 3,960 emails appeared to be delivered successfully. An additional eleven students sent personal emails to explain why they were not going to participate, the most common reason being that the participant's mother had died. Of the remaining 3,949 students, a total of 906 began taking the survey, making an initial response rate of 23%. A total of 737 students completed the survey in its entirety. Of this original sample of 737, 34.9% indicated that their parents had divorced, 98.3% stated that their mothers were still alive, 91.5% indicated that their fathers were still alive, and 17.8% indicated that they had been married. Nearly all of them (96.1%) indicated that English was the language spoken in the family home. Ethnically, the respondents disproportionately represented Caucasian students (80.2% of the respondents as opposed to 69.9% of the UNCG student body) and underrepresented African-Americans (14.4% of the respondents, as opposed to 19.8% of the UNCG student body). Rates of Native American, Hispanic or Hispanic American, and Asian or Asian American students were similar among the respondents and the general student body at UNCG.

Of the 737 who completed the survey, those who met the eligibility criteria for the current study were selected for data analyses, resulting in a final sample of 212 students who indicated their parents had divorced, they themselves had never been married, that both parents were still living, and English was the primary language spoken in their homes. In this chapter, demographic data for the final sample are presented, and reliability analyses for all scales and subscales are provided. Results of the analyses used to test the research questions and hypotheses are presented.

Description of the Respondents

The students in the final sample were fairly evenly divided among juniors (46.2%) and seniors (52.4%). The final sample was slightly more ethnically representative of the student body at UNCG than was the total group of 787 respondents, with 78.1% identifying themselves as Caucasian, 17% identifying as African-American (a number of these students wrote in “Black”), and 1.4% identifying as Hispanic or Hispanic American. Although only one student in the final sample identified herself as Native American, several of the students in the biracial category described themselves as African-American and Native American. Thus, Native American students may have been slightly over-represented in this sample as compared to the general student body (0.4%).

Students ranged in age from 20 to 36 years old ($M = 23.36$, $SD = 3.22$), with most (81.7%) participants in their early twenties. Students also reported fairly high educational attainments for their mothers, with a total of 161 (76%) reporting their mothers had gone to college and 25 (11.8%) reporting that their mothers had begun or completed graduate studies. Most students (92%) identified themselves as heterosexual,

with the rest identifying themselves as homosexual, bisexual, or “other.” Most of those who checked the “other” box indicated they had not yet decided and/or did not want to be labeled. Demographic data for the current sample are included in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Information for Participants in Current Study

	<u>n</u>	%
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	164	78.1
African-American	36	17.0
Hispanic American	3	1.4
Native American	1	0.5
Asian American	1	0.5
Biracial	5	2.5
Age		
20-24 years old	167	81.7
25-30 years old	32	14.0
31-36 years old	9	4.3
Year in school		
Junior	98	46.2
Senior	111	52.4
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual	195	92.0
Homosexual	4	1.9
Bisexual	11	5.2
Other/undecided	2	0.9
Mother's educational attainment		
Did not complete high school	4	1.9
Completed high school or GED	43	20.3
Completed some college	61	28.8
Graduated from college	75	35.4
Has completed, or is working on, graduate degree	25	11.8
Mother's marital transitions		
Never remarried	91	42.9
Remarried	79	37.3
Remarried and divorced	19	9.0
Remarried, divorced, and remarried again (or more)	13	6.1

Reliability of the Instruments Used in the Study

Reliability analyses of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) were conducted on the final sample of 212 students who met the research criteria. Analyses revealed moderate to high reliability for all scales and subscales. The Parent Attachment Questionnaire (PAQ; Kenny, 1985) yielded an overall reliability of .97, with reliabilities for the subscales ranging from .89 (mother's facilitation of daughter's independence) to .97 (affective quality of relationship). The Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI; Hoffman, 1984) yielded an overall reliability of .91, with subscale reliabilities ranging from .91 (attitudinal independence) to .93 (conflictual independence and functional independence). The Marital Attitude Scale (MAS; Braaten & Rosen, 1998) yielded an internal consistency of .87 and the Life Choices Questionnaire (LCQ; Grotewalt, 1989), marriage subscale, yielded a reliability of .91. Internal consistency was overall a little lower for both portions of the Mother-to-Adolescent Disclosure Scale (MADS; Koerner, Jacobs, & Raymond, 2000). The frequency of disclosure subscale yielded a reliability of .82, and the detail of disclosure subscale yielded a reliability of .81. Because this scale was specific to those whose parents had divorced (and the survey was being taken by the general population of third and fourth year women), the scale was adapted for the current study to include a "not applicable" option, with directions indicating that those whose parents had never divorced should select this option for all the MADS questions. However, many respondents whose parents *were* divorced selected this option for certain items. Where these respondents selected "not applicable" their responses were coded the same as "never" (for the frequency subscale) or "My mom never says anything about this

to me” (for the detail subscale). This adaptation may have lowered the overall reliability of these two scales.

In addition, due to a technological error, the detail of disclosure subscale allowed participants to select among only four Likert options rather than the five in the original scale. In other words, participants could choose: 1 (“My mom never says anything about this topic to me”); 2 (“This topic popped out when my mom didn’t really mean it to”); 3 (“My mom has talked about this topic without giving any details”); or 5 (“My mom has talked about this topic in quite a bit of detail”). However, option 4 (“My mom has talked about this topic giving a few details”) was not offered. Several respondents chose both options 3 and 5, perhaps in an attempt to express that their mothers talked about the topic in *some* detail. However, double responses were eliminated for these analyses. Fortunately, this glitch did not impact the frequency scale, allowing us to compare the reliability of the two scales. In fact, the detail scale yielded a reliability that was, overall, slightly higher ($\alpha = .820$) than that of the frequency scale ($\alpha = .810$). In addition, specific subscale coefficients are similar to those found by Koerner et al. (2004), who reported alpha coefficients for the ex-husband, detail subscale ($\alpha = .77$) and ex-husband frequency scale ($\alpha = .79$). Overall, the subscales used in the current study yielded satisfactory reliability. Cronbach’s alphas for the scales and the subscales are listed in Table 2.

Table 2

Reliability Information for Instruments Used

	Number of items	<u>n</u>	Cronbach's alpha
Parent Attachment Questionnaire (PAQ)	55	212	.97
Affective quality	27		.97
Facilitation of Independence	14		.89
Support	13		.90
Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI)	69	211	.91
Functional Independence	13		.93
Emotional Independence	17		.93
Conflictual Independence	25		.93
Attitudinal Independence	14		.91
Marital Attitudes Scale	23	211	.87
Life Choices Questionnaire	11	212	
Marriage subscale			.91
Mother-to-Adolescent Disclosure scale (MADS)	18	176	.88
Detail	9	191	.82
Ex-husband subscale	3		.76
Men/dating subscale	3		.76
Divorce/remarriage subscale	3		.78
Frequency	9	192	.81
Ex-husband subscale	3		.82
Men/dating subscale	3		.76
Divorce/remarriage subscale	3		.77

Testing of Hypotheses

Research question 1

Research question one was a descriptive question concerning the frequency and detail levels with which post-divorce mothers of the different ethnic groups disclosed to their daughters about divorce-related topics. RQ1 asked, "How often, and in how much detail do mothers disclose to their daughters about different divorce-related topics?" The frequencies with which Caucasian and African-American mothers reportedly disclosed about these topics are presented in Table 3. The reported levels of detail of such disclosures are presented in Table 4. Responses from 36 African-American and 160 Caucasian students are included. Several respondents entered more than one answer for certain items, and these responses were deleted.

The most frequently discussed topic among mothers and daughters was men and dating, with an average 57% of Caucasian and 55% of African-American mothers disclosing to their daughters about these items at least on a monthly basis. Complaints and upset about the ex-husband were the second most frequently discussed topics, with 38% of Caucasian and 36% of African-Americans discussing this with their daughters once a month or more. Divorce and remarriage followed closely behind, with 33% of Caucasian and 38% of African-American mothers talking about this monthly or more frequently with their grown daughters.

The topic that received the greatest detail of disclosure, however, was divorce and remarriage, with 47% of Caucasian and 44% of African-American mothers talking to their daughters in quite a bit of detail about this. Men and dating was the second most

detailed topic of discussion, with 42% of Caucasian and 31% of African American mothers talking about this in great detail. Finally, 42% of Caucasian and 26% of African American mothers disclosed to their daughters in great detail regarding their negative feelings about the girl's father. Results regarding this last topic are somewhat lower than those of Koerner, Jacobs and Raymond (2000) who found that about two thirds of daughters reported their mothers talked to them in detail about their complaints or upset regarding their ex-husbands. Given a) that most of the deleted double answers for the current study indicated high levels of detail, and b) that respondents did not have the option to state that their mothers talked to them in *some* detail (i.e., they were forced to choose between no detail or quite a bit of detail), these results probably are underestimates of how much detail daughters actually think their mothers use around these topics.

Table 3

Disclosure Frequencies from the Mother-to-Adolescent Disclosure Scale (MADS)

Disclosure topic	Never		Once or twice a year		Once or twice a month		About once a week		Almost everyday	
	C	AA	C	AA	C	AA	C	AA	C	AA
Ex-husband subscale										
Anger she feels toward my father	25.3	20.0	34.6	31.4	25.9	28.6	10.5	11.4	3.7	.6
Her complaints about my father	13.6	17.1	39.5	28.6	32.7	31.4	10.5	14.3	3.7	8.6
Her feelings about my father's dating partner or new wife	51.8	54.3	22.0	31.4	16.5	8.6	7.9	2.9	1.8	2.9
Men/dating subscale										
Her feelings about men and relationships	18.1	11.8	23.8	26.5	26.3	41.2	23.8	17.6	8.1	2.9
Her previous or current dating situation	34.8	30.3	13.0	21.2	22.4	21.2	22.4	21.2	7.5	6.1
Her feelings about her new dating partner or husband	25.9	45.7	13.6	0.0	27.2	22.9	24.7	20.0	8.6	11.4
Divorce/ remarriage subscale										
Her feelings regarding divorce	27.6	36.1	42.9	30.6	22.1	22.2	5.5	11.1	1.8	0.0
Her feelings regarding marriage	16.6	12.1	42.3	39.4	26.4	27.3	11.7	18.2	3.1	3.0
Reasons for her divorce	23.5	28.6	48.1	40.0	18.5	17.1	6.2	14.3	3.7	0.0

Note. C = Caucasian; AA = African-American

Table 4

Disclosure Detail from the Mother-to-Adolescent Disclosure Scale (MADS)

	My mom never says anything about this to me		This topic has “popped out” when my mom didn’t really mean it to		My mom has talked about this topic without giving any details		My mom has talked about this topic in <i>quite a bit of</i> <i>detail</i>	
Ethnicity	C	AA	C	AA	C	AA	C	AA
Ex-husband subscale								
Anger she feels toward my father	23.1	25.0	10.0	19.4	17.5	11.1	49.4	44.4
Her complaints about my father	14.4	20.0	15.0	17.1	16.9	20.0	53.8	42.9
Her feelings about my father’s dating partner or new wife	48.1	55.6	11.7	19.4	17.3	8.3	22.8	16.7
Men/dating subscale								
Her feelings about men and relationships	13.8	13.9	6.9	19.4	30.0	22.2	49.4	44.4
Her previous or current dating situation	32.9	45.7	5.6	14.3	24.2	22.9	37.3	17.1
Her feelings about her new dating partner or husband	32.1	44.4	3.7	8.3	24.1	16.7	40.1	30.6
Divorce/ remarriage subscale								
Her feelings regarding divorce	28.9	33.3	12.6	13.9	17.6	19.4	40.9	33.3
Her feelings regarding marriage	19.6	11.4	12.3	11.4	23.3	28.6	44.8	48.6
Reasons for her divorce	16.1	28.6	9.9	8.6	18.0	11.4	55.9	51.4

Note. C = Caucasian; AA = African-American

A series of Chi square analyses were conducted to determine whether mother-to-daughter disclosures were independent of ethnicity. It was hypothesized that neither

disclosure frequency nor detail level would vary with ethnicity. The results of the Chi square tests are reported in Table 5. To keep the family-wise Type 1 error at .05, α was set to .002. The high Chi square values for all disclosure items, and the fact that none of the items on either scale had a significance level of .002 or lower, indicate independence between these variables. In other words, divorced Caucasian and African-American mothers were similar in the frequency and detail level with which they talked to their daughters about all of the items in these two scales.

Table 5

Mother-to-Adolescent Disclosure Scale Items

Item	Detail		Frequency	
	Pearson Chi χ^2 Value	df	Pearson Chi χ^2 Value	df
1	3.16	3	2.01	4
2	1.50	3	3.05	4
3	3.69	3	3.53	4
4	5.83	3	4.42	4
5	7.86	3	1.53	4
6	4.11	3	9.29	4
7	0.71	3	3.92	4
8	1.51	3	1.32	4
9	3.32	3	4.53	4

Research question 2

Research questions 2A, 2B, and 2C were concerned with the relationships among the independent variables (those measuring mother to daughter connection, separation, and disclosure) and dependent variables (daughters' attitudes about and approaches

toward marriage). Question 2A was a descriptive question about general relationships, and a correlation matrix was generated depicting the relationships among all the relevant subscales. The correlation matrix is presented in Tables 6, 7 and 8. Since this was a descriptive question, no hypothesis testing was performed.

In general, it appears that, although there are several statistically significant relationships between the independent and dependent variables, there are no *clinically* important relationships. With a sample this large ($n = 212$), statistical significance can occur with a Pearson correlation coefficient as low as .12. For the current study, clinically important relationships would be those that reached a correlation of .50 or higher. Although subscales of individual scales showed high correlations with each other, none of the relationships between independent and dependent variables (MAS total scores and LCQ total scores) had r values above .50, thus none of the independent variables explained more than 25% of the variance in the dependent variables.

When separate correlations were run for respondents who self-described as heterosexual, similar results were obtained. A few independent variables related more strongly to LCQ scores (notably detail of maternal disclosures, $r = .23$ and frequency of disclosures, $r = .27$), but no correlations produced r values above the .50 cut-off point deemed necessary for clinical importance. The results listed in Tables 6, 7, and 8 reflect the answers of all respondents.

Table 6

Correlations Between PAQ Subscale Scores and MAS and LCQ Scores

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Affective quality of relationship	--	.75*	.83*	.08	.08
2. Facilitation of Independence		--	.54*	-.06	.04
3. Support			--	.10	.14
4. MAS total score				--	.29*
5. LCQ total score					--

Note. * indicates statistical significance, $p < .01$

Table 7

Correlations Between PSI Subscale Scores and MAS and LCQ Scores

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Functional Independence	--	.81*	-.28*	.68*	-.11	-.23*
2. Emotional Independence		--	-.34*	.64*	-.10	-.21*
3. Conflictual Independence			--	-.46*	.09	-.08
4. Attitudinal Independence				--	-.18	-.13
5. MAS total score					--	.29*
6. LCQ total score						--

Note. * indicates statistical significance, $p < .01$

Table 8

Correlations Between MADS Subscale Scores and MAS and LCQ Scores

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Disclosure frequency								
1. Ex-husband	--	.30*	.47*	.66*	.10	.27*	.02	.12
2. Men/ dating		--	.38*	.27*	.73*	.28*	.03	.20*
3. Divorce/ remarriage			--	.35*	.20*	.51*	.05	.25*
Disclosure detail								
4. Ex-husband				--	.33*	.50*	-.10	.13
5. Men/ dating					--	.43*	-.04	.11
6. Divorce/ remarriage						--	-.04	.18
Dependent variables								
7. MAS total score						--	.29*	
8. LCQ total score							--	

Note. * indicates statistical significance, $p < .01$

Most of the significant correlations found were between subscales of entire scales.

Several statistically and clinically significant correlations were also found, however, between subscales of the PAQ and the PSI. Affective quality of the mother-daughter relationship was strongly related to conflictual independence from mothers ($r = .79$), and strongly *negatively* related to functional ($r = -.60$), emotional ($r = -.65$), and attitudinal independence ($-.63$). Maternal facilitation of daughter's independence was strongly related to conflictual independence from the mother ($r = .75$). Maternal support for the daughter was related to conflictual independence ($r = .57$) and negatively related to functional ($r = -.75$), emotional ($r = -.77$), and attitudinal ($r = -.68$) independence from the mother. These correlations are displayed in Table 9.

Table 9

Correlations Between PAQ Subscales Scores and PSI Subscale Scores

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Affective quality of relationship	--	.75*	.83*	-.60*	-.65*	.79*	-.63*
2. Facilitation of Independence		--	.54*	-.30*	-.34*	.75*	-.48*
3. Support			--	-.75*	-.77*	.57*	-.68*
4. Functional Independence				--	.81*	-.28*	.68*
5. Emotional Independence					--	-.34*	.64*
6. Conflictual Independence						--	-.46*
7. Attitudinal Independence							--

Note. * indicates statistical significance, $p < .01$

Research question 2B asked, "What are the statistically significant predictors of the daughters' marital attitudes scores? What proportion of the variance of the marital attitude scores can these predictors account for? Do ethnicity, mother's educational level, or number of marital transitions make a difference?" It was hypothesized that infrequent and non-detailed mother-to daughter disclosure (MADS scores), and high levels of both mother-daughter psychological separation (PSI scores) and mother-daughter connection (PAQ scores) would be linked to daughters' positive attitudes about marriage (MAS scores), regardless of ethnicity, mother's educational level, or number of marital transitions. The hypothesis was tested by performing two multiple regression analyses. First, PAQ total scores, PSI total scores, and MADS total scores were entered as independent variables, and MAS scores were entered as the dependent variable. Standardized beta weights are listed for all of the independent variables in Table 10.

As can be seen here, none of the predictor variables had a significant effect on daughters' marital attitude scores. With an adjusted R^2 of -.01, this model explains only 1% of the variance in daughters' attitudes toward marriage.

Table 10

Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting MAS Scores

Variable	B	SE B	β
PAQ total score	.01	.02	.02
PSI total score	-.02	.02	-.08
MADS total score	-.02	.05	-.03

Note. Adjusted R^2 = -.01. * $p < .05$.

A second regression was run in which the demographic variables were added to the list of independent variables. These results are reported in Table 11. With an adjusted R^2 of .01, this model explains only 1% of the variance in daughters' attitudes toward marriage. The only significant predictor of marital attitude scores was the mother's educational attainment, at $p = .04$. When both analyses were re-run with self-reported heterosexual respondents, results were similar. Thus, hypothesis 2B was not supported. None of the individual predictor variables contributed significantly to daughters' attitudes about marriage.

Table 11

Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting MAS Scores

Variable	B	SE B	β
PAQ total score	.00	.02	.03
PSI total score	-.02	.02	-.08
MADS total score	-.01	.05	-.01
Ethnicity	1.24	.88	.11
Mother's educational attainment	-1.65	.78	-.17*
No. of mother's marital transitions	-.14	.89	-.01

Note. Adjusted $R^2 = .01$. * $p < .05$.

Research question 2C asked a similar question about daughters' use of exploration strategies in the domain of marriage, specifically, "What are the statistically significant predictors of daughters' scores for identity exploration strategies in the domain of marriage? What proportion of the variance of the exploration scores can these predictors account for? Do ethnicity, mother's educational level, or number of marital transitions make a difference?" As in RQ2B, it was hypothesized that infrequent and non-detailed mother-to daughter disclosure, and high levels of both mother-daughter psychological separation and mother-daughter connection would be linked to daughters' use of identity exploration strategies in the domain of marriage regardless of ethnicity, mother's educational level, or number of marital transitions.

This hypothesis was tested by performing two multiple regression analyses. First, a regression was run where PAQ total scores, PSI total scores, and MADS total score were listed as the independent variables, and LCQ scores were listed as the dependent variable. These results are listed in Table 12. With an adjusted R^2 value of .09, this model explains 9% of the variance in daughters' exploration strategies in the domain of

marriage. The relative contributions of the independent variables are indicated by the standardized beta coefficients. Psychological separation (indicated by PSI total score) and maternal disclosure (indicated by MAD total scores) both contributed significantly to daughters' exploration strategies in the domain of marriage.

Table 12

Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting LCQ Scores

Variable	B	SE B	β
PAQ total score	.00	.02	.02
PSI total score	-.06	.02	-.21*
MADS total score	.14	.05	.21*

Note. Adjusted $R^2 = .09$. $p < .05$.

A second analysis was run where demographic variables were added to the list of independent variables. Ethnicity, mother's educational attainment, and number of maternal marital transitions, altogether decreased the amount of variance explained. These results are listed in Table 13.

With an adjusted R^2 value of .08, the new model explains only 8% of the variance in daughters' exploration strategies in the domain of marriage. When both analyses were run for self-reported heterosexual clients, results were similar. Thus, hypothesis 2C was only weakly supported. Most of the predictor variables explained very little of the variance in daughters' exploration strategies of marriage. The only significant predictors of daughters' use of exploration strategies were the degree to which mothers disclosed to their daughters about divorce related topics.

Table 13

Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting LCQ Scores

Variable	B	SE B	β
PAQ total score	.00	.02	.00
PSI total score	-.06	.02	-.20*
MADS total score	.15	.05	.22*
Ethnicity	-.14	.85	-.01
Mother's educational attainment	-.90	.76	-.09
No. of mother's marital transitions	.57	.87	.05

Note. Adjusted $R^2 = .08$. $p < .05$.

Research question 3

The third research question was concerned with the impact certain demographic variables may have had on the variables of interest in this study. The question asked, "Is there a significant difference in the mean scores of mother-daughter psychological separation, mother-daughter connection, mother-to-daughter disclosure levels, daughters' attitudes toward marriage, and daughters' identity exploration strategies in the domain of marriage among women grouped by ethnicity, mother's educational level, or number of mother's marital transitions?" It was hypothesized that there would be no significant mean differences among these variables for ethnicity, but that significant mean differences would occur for level of mother's education and the number of marital transitions she had experienced. To test these hypotheses, a series of one-way ANOVAs was performed in which ethnicity, mother's educational level, and the number of mother's marital transitions were listed as the independent variables, and each of subscales of the PAQ, PSI, MAS, and LCQ were listed as the dependent variables. To

control for an inflated Type 1 error, α was set at .02. These results are listed in Tables 14, 15, and 16, respectively.

Table 14

One-Way ANOVAs for Ethnicity

		df	F	Sig	Partial eta ²	Power
PAQ total score	Between groups	5	.37	.87	.01	.07
	Within groups	204				
PSI total score	Between groups	5	1.16	.33	.03	.27
	Within groups	203				
MAS total score	Between groups	5	2.11	.07	.05	.55
	Within groups	203				
LCQ total score	Between groups	5	.54	.75	.01	.11
	Within groups	204				
MAD total score	Between groups	4	.71	.59	.02	.13
	Within groups	169				

Note. * = $p < .02$

The first hypothesis, regarding ethnicity, was supported. The high Chi square values for all items, and p values greater than .02, indicated independence between ethnicity and the variables measured. Caucasian and African-American women did not differ significantly on any of the measures used in the current study.

Table 15

One-Way ANOVAs for Mother's Educational Level

		df	F	Partial eta ²	Power
PAQ total score	Between groups	4	3.16*	.06	.70
	Within groups	203			
Affective quality of relationship	Between groups	4	2.68	.05	.61
	Within groups	203			
Facilitation of Independence	Between groups	4	3.54*	.07	.76
	Within groups	203			
Support	Between groups	4	2.42	.05	.55
	Within groups	203			
PSI total score	Between groups	4	2.21	.04	.50
	Within groups	202			
MAS total score	Between groups	4	.90	.02	.17
	Within groups	202			
LCQ total score	Between groups	4	1.31	.03	.27
	Within groups	203			
MAD total score	Between groups	4	1.09	.03	.21
	Within groups	168			

Note. * = p < .02

The second hypothesis, regarding the effect of mother's educational level on the variables of interest, was partially supported. Because mother's level of educational attainment significantly affected the total PAQ score, the effect on subscale scores was included in this ANOVA. More educated mothers were reported to be more supportive of

their daughters' independence ($F[4, 203] = 3.54$, $p < .008$). Affective quality of the mother-daughter relationship and maternal support for daughters also revealed mean differences in maternal educational attainment, although not significantly so at the $p < .02$ level.

Table 16

One-Way ANOVAs for Number of Mother's Marital Transitions

		df	F	Partial eta ²	Power
PAQ total score	Between groups	4	.81	.02	.15
	Within groups	198			
PSI total score	Between groups	4	2.04	.04	.46
	Within groups	197			
MAS total score	Between groups	4	1.08	.02	.21
	Within groups	197			
LCQ total score	Between groups	4	.84	.02	.16
	Within groups	198			
MAD total score	Between groups	4	.18	.00	.04
	Within groups	164			

Note. * = $p < .02$

The third hypothesis, regarding the effect of the number of mother's marital transitions on the variables of interest, was unsupported. Contrary to expectations, the number of times the mother divorced and remarried appeared to be unrelated to any of the variables of interest. The mean degree of psychological separation reported by

daughters varied somewhat according to the number of maternal divorces and remarriages, but not significantly so ($F [4, 197] = 2.04$, $p < .09$).

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a summary and discussion of the results of the current study, and implications for counseling adult daughters of divorce and divorced or divorcing mothers. The limitations of the study are examined, and directions for future research are recommended.

Summary of Results

The current study was conducted in the spring of 2006 with never married adult daughters of divorce attending the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. All third and fourth year female students at the University were invited to participate via an on-line survey, and of the 737 who completed all the survey instruments, those who met the study criteria were selected for further analyses. A total of 212 adult daughters of divorce, who reported both parents were still living, they had never married, and English was the main language spoken at home, comprised the final sample. In the following paragraphs, results related to each research question are summarized and discussed.

Results Related to the Instruments

Participants' scores on the instruments used were, for the most part, similar to scores obtained in previous studies. Except for the PAQ scores, all scores obtained in the current study were normally distributed.

Participants' scores on the PAQ (measuring mother-daughter connection) ranged from 78 to 258 ($M = 204.6$; $SD = 41.6$). Possible scores on this scale ranged from 55

(where a respondent would answer “Not at all” to every item) to 275 (where a respondent would answer “Very much” to every item), so the range of obtained scores was somewhat close to the range possible, with the average item being rated 3.72. Scores on the PAQ were negatively skewed. The current sample reported especially positive relationships with their mothers. Previous studies with college women have revealed similar reports of positive relationships with parents. Kenny and Donaldson’s (1991) sample of college women, when asked to rate their relationships with both parents, gave average item responses ranging from 3.93 (parental fostering of independence) to 4.12 (affective quality of relationship) on the subscales of the PAQ. Kalsner and Pistole (2003) found that women’s average response to PAQ items for mothers ranged from 3.78 (maternal fostering of independence; emotional support) to 4.09 (affective quality of relationship) for the different subscales.

Participants’ scores on the PSI (measuring mother-daughter psychological separation) ranged from 90 to 261 ($M = 172.6$; $SD = 34.7$). Potential scores could have ranged from 69 (where a respondent answered “not at all true of me” to every item) to 345 (where the respondent answered “very true of me” to every item), so the obtained range of scores was somewhat lower than the possible range. A comparison of the current study’s subscale scores to those obtained by Haws and Mallinckrodt (1998) in a sample of married women is provided in Table 17. The largest differences between the two samples were in the subscales measuring functional and emotional independence, where the married women reported much higher levels of independence from their mothers than the unmarried women in the current sample.

Table 17

Comparison of Subscale Scores on the Psychological Separation Inventory

Subscale	Current study		Haws & Mallinckrodt, 1998	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Functional independence	32.85	12.82	42.64	7.43
Conflictual independence	76.48	18.31	79.56	13.33
Emotional independence	38.73	16.10	46.80	13.12
Attitudinal independence	24.49	12.92	27.68	14.32

Scores on the MAS (measuring attitudes toward marriage) ranged from 40 to 92 ($\underline{M} = 67.22$; $\underline{SD} = 9.467$). With a possible range of 23 (for a respondent with the most negative opinion of marriage) to 92 (or respondents with the most positive views toward marriage), these scores seem to fall about in the middle. They are higher overall than previously reported scores on the MAS. Braaten and Rosen's (1998) use of the MAS with undergraduates yielded lower average marital attitude scores ($\underline{M} = 53.62$ for AOD and 56.72 for AOND) than the current study. The exclusion of freshmen, sophomores, and males in the current study may account for the more positive views toward marriage. Upper level women undergraduates may, in general, regard marriage more positively than other groups of college students.

Scores on the LCQ, marriage subscale (measuring the degree of exploration in the domain of marriage) ranged from 11 to 55 ($\underline{M} = 30.07$; $\underline{SD} = 9.768$). This range reflected the entire range of possible scores, indicating that some respondents reported use of absolutely no exploration strategies in the domain of marriage during the past year, and others reported active and serious use of all the strategies during the past year. The lack

of published data on the LCQ, marriage subscale, prevents comparison of the current respondents' answers.

Scores on the MADS scales (measuring mother-to-daughter disclosure) ranged from 18 to 88 ($M = 50.6$; $SD = 14.3$). The range of possible scores on this scale, as it was presented to participants, was 9 to 36 for the detail subscale and 9 to 45 for the frequency subscale. Both subscales should have had a range of 9 to 45; due to a technological glitch in the on-line format, however, participants were only allowed to select from among four Likert responses (rather than five) for the detail subscales. The responses obtained closely matched the possible range of responses. Comparisons with Koerner et al.'s (2004) findings on the ex-husband frequency subscale reveal somewhat similar results to those found in the current study. Daughters' answers on this subscale (composed of three items) averaged 1.32 in the 2004 study, whereas daughters' responses in the current study averaged 1.69 per item. Koerner's sample averaged 1.60 in the detail of maternal disclosure on items related to the ex-husband. Respondents in the current study averaged 2.20 on the same three items. Thus, the current participants reported considerably more detailed maternal disclosures about negativity toward the ex-husband than did those in the 2004 study. It is hard to draw meaningful comparisons between the detail scales, however, due to the glitch that limited the number of possible responses in the current study. A number of responses in the current study were deleted because a respondent had selected two responses rather than one. This would not account for the inflated average score, however, since most of the deleted responses were 3-4 combinations.

Mother-to-daughter Divorce Related Disclosures

Confiding in adolescent children is thought to represent a violation of intergenerational boundaries (Koerner, Jacobs, & Raymond, 2000), and may compromise the well-being of adolescents in post-divorce families (Koerner et al., 2004). Moreover, mother-daughter closeness based on complaints about the girl's father or men in general may engage young women in a loyalty dilemma that can negatively impact their willingness to marry (Beal & Hochman, 1991). Very little research has been focused, however, on how much and how often mothers confide in their daughters about divorce-related topics. Thus, the first research question addressed the frequency and detail with which mothers disclosed to their daughters about different divorce-related topics. It was found that, on average, over half of the mothers in the current study talked to their daughters once a month or more frequently about men and dating. This topic included a mother's feelings about men and dating in general, and her feelings about her own dating situation and partner in particular. Just over a third of mothers also voiced their complaints about their ex-husbands at least once a month.

In terms of details of disclosure, mothers used the most detail in their disclosures about divorce and remarriage, with nearly half of all mothers talking in great detail to their daughters about their own feelings about divorce and remarriage and the reasons for their own divorces.

These results expand on previous research showing that adolescent children often become their mothers' confidantes after divorce (Arditti, 1999; Koerner, Jacobs, & Raymond, 2000) by clarifying what topics are discussed the most. The current study does

not address why, exactly, mothers talked to their grown daughters so frequently about men and dating, or in such detail about divorce and remarriage. In the first case, it could be that dating came up frequently in conversations between grown, unmarried daughters and their mothers simply because of daughters' developmental stage, and, as part of the conversation, mothers provided information about their own experiences, feelings, and opinions. In the second case, it is possible that mothers were motivated by the desire to help their daughters negotiate their own future marriages and avoid divorce. It is also possible that mothers wanted daughters to reduce their idealism regarding marriage, and develop more realistic views. The current study did not assess the tone of maternal disclosures, except in the case of the ex-husband subscale, but only the general topics.

Forty-two percent of Caucasian and 26% of African-American mothers reportedly employed a high level of detail in their complaints about their ex-husbands. Koerner, Jacobs, and Raymond (2000), in a qualitative component of a study about mother to daughter disclosure, asked mothers what motivated them to speak or remain silent on the topic of their ex-husbands. Mothers who held back generally stated that speaking negatively to their daughters about the girl's father might be unfair or detrimental to the daughter's well-being. Those who chose to speak with their daughters, on the other hand, were generally motivated by one of two incentives: either to help the daughter relinquish an idealized view of the father, or to help her understand that the mother was not wholly to blame for the parents' divorce. Tensions and loyalty conflicts arising after divorce may prompt this topic, especially in families where mothers and fathers encourage their children to take sides. Since the current study did not address the motivations behind the

complaints about ex-husbands, however, it is unknown why the mothers used a large degree of detail when talking about this to their daughters.

The second part of this research question addressed differences between Caucasian and African-American mother-daughter pairs in regards to maternal disclosures. Seldom has race or ethnicity been included in analyses in studies about adult offspring of divorce. A number of researchers intentionally used ethnically representative samples in their studies of AOD (Amato, 1996; Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Conway, Christensen, & Herlihy, 2003; Webster, Orbuch, & House, 1995; Wolfinger, 1999), but very few have analyzed results separately for different ethnic groups. Gelfman (1995) did incorporate ethnicity into her study of young adults' expectations around intimate partnerships and marriage. She found that ethnicity accounted for *some* of the difference in expectations for marital happiness, intentions about pre-marital cohabitation, and acceptance of divorce, but most of the time parents' marital status accounted for more of the variance than did ethnicity. Jurkovic, Thirkield, and Morrell (2001) examined the role of ethnicity in the care-giving AOD provide in their families of origin and found very few differences between Caucasian and African-American participants. Other than these two exceptions, which revealed almost no differences in the outcome variables between Caucasian and African-American AOD, most researchers conducted analyses without regard to ethnicity.

Koerner, Jacobs, and Raymond's (2000) study involving the original Mother-to-Adolescent scale used a random sample of mother-daughter dyads from court records in southern/central Arizona that was ethnically representative of the geographic area. The

authors did not report any testing of ethnic differences, however, in the detail or frequency with which mothers from different groups disclosed to their daughters about divorce-related topics. One goal of the current study was to examine possible ethnic differences between the two largest groups in the sample (Caucasian and African-American) in the frequency or detail level with which mothers disclosed to their daughters. The hypothesis, which stated that ethnicity would be independent of both disclosure frequency and detail level, was supported for all the specific disclosure items. In other words, the two groups were very similar in the frequency and detail levels of disclosure with their daughters, even when the disclosure scales were compared item by item. This result adds to a small, but growing body of research that indicates that Caucasian and African-American AOD are very similar on some outcome variables (Gelfman, 1995; Jurkovic, Thirkield, & Morrell, 2001).

Relationships among Mother-Daughter Dynamics and Daughters' Approaches to Marriage

The second group of research questions was concerned with the relationships among all the independent and dependent variables. First, preliminary exploratory analyses were conducted to find out if any of the variables were significantly related. To gain the maximum amount of information possible, the scales were broken down into their individual subscales. Although several statistically significant relationships between independent and dependent variables were found, that is to be expected in a sample size this large. In this case, statistical significance does not necessarily imply a strong linear relationship between variables. It was estimated that, to determine *clinical* importance, a

significance level of .50 or higher would be set. However, none of the r coefficients were higher than .50, which means that none of the independent variables explained more than 25% of the variance in the dependent variables. There were no relationships among mother-daughter dynamics and daughters' attitudes toward marriage or explorations of marriage that were *clinically* important enough to discuss. Given Hoffman's (1985) finding that conflictual independence between young women and their mothers was significantly related to love problems ($r = -.38$), it was surprising that such a weak correlation was found in the current study with attitudes about marriage ($r = .09$). Of course, young adults who experience positive love relationships could still have negative views toward marriage. This may be especially true of a cohort of young adults for whom divorce is more of a norm than an exception. It is also possible that two decades later, there is simply a weaker link between relationships with parents and young adults' relationship processes.

Several strong relationships were found among the independent variables, however, helping us to understand how parental connection and parental psychological separation are linked in mother-daughter pairs.

Affective quality of the mother-daughter relationship was strongly related to conflictual independence from mothers ($r = .79$). This makes intuitive sense; the more emotionally close daughters felt to their mothers, the more they reported an absence of negative intensity (anger, guilt, resentment, anxiety, and mistrust) with their mothers. More surprising, perhaps, was the finding that affective quality of the mother-daughter relationship was strongly *negatively* related to functional, emotional, and attitudinal

independence from mothers. Daughters who reported very positive emotional relationships with their mothers also reported high degrees of maternal involvement and management in their day-to-day lives, reliance on mothers for high levels of approval, and emotional support, and high degrees of attitudinal similarity with their mothers.

Maternal facilitation of daughter's independence was strongly related to conflictual independence from the mother ($r = .75$). Thus, the more mothers encouraged autonomy in their daughters, the more free these daughters felt from the intense negativity in their relationships. Maternal support for the daughter also was related to conflictual independence ($r = .57$) and negatively related to functional ($r = -.75$), emotional ($r = -.77$), and attitudinal ($r = -.68$) independence from the mother. In other words, daughters who perceived their mothers as supportive also reported high degrees of maternal involvement in their day-to-day lives, reliance on maternal approval and emotional support, and similarity of attitudes and beliefs with their mothers.

These support earlier findings that conflictual independence (freedom from excessive anger, guilt, resentment, anxiety, and mistrust) from mothers was associated with better personal adjustment (Hoffman, 1984) and lack of emotional problems (Hoffman & Weiss, 1987) in college-aged women. The current study shows that conflictual independence is also strongly associated with positively connected mother-daughter relationships. Hoffman also found that functional and attitudinal independence from mothers were unrelated to women's personal adjustment. The current study adds that they are negatively related to positive relationships with mothers. It seems that the mother-daughter relationship benefits by maternal involvement in daughters' daily lives.

These findings make sense in light of Beyers and Goossens (2003) factor analysis of the PSI, which found that two factors really composed the scale: positive separation feelings (composed only of the conflictual independence subscale) and independence from parents (composed of the other three subscales). Psychological separation cannot be treated as a single entity, nor can it be said to be categorically associated with positive outcomes for young women.

After these preliminary analyses, several regressions were run to test the comparative predictive abilities of the independent variables on dependent variables. Even though none of the correlations between independent and dependent variables were very strong, the researcher wanted to know which variables were the best predictors. These questions also addressed the issue of whether or not ethnicity, maternal educational attainment, or the number of maternal marital transitions played any role in daughters' approaches to marriage.

Two multiple regressions were conducted to answer the question about marital attitudes, the first including the scores on mother-daughter connection, mother-daughter psychological separation, and mother-daughter disclosure as predictor variables, and the second adding in demographic (ethnicity, mother's educational attainment, and the number of mother's marital transitions) variables. None of the predictor variables significantly predicted daughters' marital attitudes, however, and the overall model explained only 1% of the variance in daughters' attitudes. When a second regression was run incorporating the demographic variables, the predictive ability of the model went down to .9%. In other words, even though parental divorce is significantly related to

reduced marital optimism among grown daughters (Kalter et al., 1985; Kapinus, 2004), none of the mother-daughter relationship variables or demographic variables in the current study helped explain why.

Beal and Hochman (1991) had suggested that when mother-daughter closeness was based on a mutual disappointment and anger towards men, daughters might regard marriage to a man as a betrayal of a mother. It was thought, then, that mothers might pass on negative views about marriage to their daughters via some of the relational dynamics under review in this study. It was guessed that mothers who confided a great deal in their daughters after divorce (especially about men, dating, the girl's father, marriage, and divorce), and encouraged daughter dependence rather than independence, would contribute to a relationship in which daughters felt compelled out of loyalty to agree with their mothers' views about marriage and divorce, which were assumed to be somewhat negative. This was not found to be true, however. The mother-daughter relationship variables played no role in daughters' positive or negative views about marriage.

It is possible that, in the current study, maternal views about divorce and remarriage ranged from positive to negative, so that daughters inherited from their mothers both pessimism *and* hopefulness about getting married. Although the current study allowed for measurement of the frequency and detail in which mothers talked to their daughters about divorce and remarriage, the assessments used did not measure the positivity or negativity with mothers discussed these topics. Thus, mothers' expressed feelings *may* actually be related to daughters' outlook on marriage, but because the assessment did not tap into tone of disclosures, we were not able to find out.

It also is possible that mothers' views about marriage simply have nothing to do with daughters' views and therefore cannot be passed on. There is some basis for this in the literature. Kapinus (2004) found that, even when parents' attitudes about divorce were controlled, divorce *itself* negatively impacted daughters' attitudes toward marriage. The women in the current study held, overall, more positive attitudes toward marriage ($M = 67.22$) than a group of male and female undergraduate AOD in a previous study ($M = 53.62$) (Braaten & Rosen, 1998). It is unknown whether the exclusive use of female upper level undergraduates in the current study may have resulted in more positive views. However, the results of the current study revealed that the relationships women have with their divorced mothers do *not* significantly predict their own attitudes about marriage.

Finally, measuring family dynamics can be tricky due to the difficulty of distinguishing between linear and curvilinear constructs. In the current study, mother-daughter connection and mother-daughter psychological separation were both assumed to be linear constructs, whereby the higher the PAQ score, the more connected the dyad, and the higher the PSI score, the more psychologically independent the dyad. This is a somewhat arbitrary assumption to make, however. The very strong *negative* relationships between elements of connection and some elements of psychological separation lead one to wonder if some of these constructs were actually curvilinear. In other words, there may be an ideal degree of connection and an ideal degree of psychological separation between mothers and daughters, not necessarily expressed by the highest possible scores on the instruments. The dependent variables, on the other hand, were linear. Higher scores on

the MAS clearly indicated more positive views toward marriage, and higher scores on the LCQ clearly indicated more frequent use of marital exploration strategies.

It also was found in the current study that several demographic variables (ethnicity, maternal educational attainment, and number of mother's marital transitions) played no role in daughters' marital attitudes. Keith and Finlay had found in 1988 that divorce probability was passed on the most strongly between highly educated mothers and their daughters (rather than less educated pairs, or any of the mother-son pairs). It was thought that perhaps highly educated mothers would pass along negative views about marriage to their daughters as well. For example, perhaps mothers who found the opportunity to pursue education and career after divorce would communicate to their daughters that marriage could impede a woman's achievement. No evidence for this was found; maternal educational achievement played no role in daughters' marital attitudes. It could be that a particular dynamic at play in 1988 is no longer relevant in 2006 when more women, including married women, are educated past the high school level, and more women expect to be equals with their husbands (Botkin, Weeks, & Morris, 2000; Weeks & Botkin, 1988; Weeks & Gage, 1985). Both mothers and daughters may view marriage as more compatible with women's education than was the case nearly two decades ago. It should be remembered, however, that Keith and Finlay studied daughters' marital *outcomes* rather than daughters' marital *attitudes*. Scores on the MAS are somewhat prone to the bias of social desirability (Gabardi & Rosen, 1993), whereas actual marital outcomes are not subject to any type of response bias.

The second part of this question focused on daughters' use of exploration strategies around marriage, and asked which of the independent variables (mother-daughter closeness, mother-daughter psychological separation, and mother-to-daughter disclosure), and which of the demographic variables best predicted the degree to which daughters used varied strategies in their explorations around marriage. As in the preceding question, two multiple regression analyses were conducted, the first including the major independent variables (total PAQ, PSI, and MAD scores) and the second including those plus demographic variables. Together the first three variables explained 8.9% of the variance in daughters' use of marital exploration strategies. Altogether, this model does not really explain much about daughters' exploration strategies, leaving 91.1% of the variance to be explained by something else. It is interesting to compare, however, the degree to which specific mother-daughter dynamics played some, albeit very small, role in their daughters' exploration strategies.

An examination of the standardized beta weights revealed that mother-daughter psychological separation and maternal disclosures contributed the most significantly to daughters' explorations. It was very interesting to note that, contrary to the expectation that *low* levels of maternal disclosure would predict *high* levels of exploration, the opposite was true. The more mothers talked to their daughters about divorce related topics, the more likely daughters were to employ a variety of exploration strategies around the concept of marriage.

It is possible that maternal disclosures about marriage, if negative, brought up a kind of psychological dissonance for daughters, who wanted to or did hold differing

beliefs. Such dissonance may have motivated daughters to spend more time and focus on figuring out their own viewpoints. As previously mentioned, however, the tone of maternal disclosures was not assessed (except in the case of the ex-husband subscale), and so it is unknown whether mothers' views about marriage were largely positive or negative, or whether or not they were in agreement with daughters' views. There was no single item in any of the survey instruments that assessed the degree of agreement between mothers and daughters on the topics of marriage, divorce, and men.

Maternal disclosures about marriage also could have contributed to a daughter's sense of being grown up, which may have empowered her to explore her own ideas about marriage. Arditti's (1999) qualitative research on role shifts between adolescents and divorced mothers revealed that children valued the sense of equality, friendship, and closeness they gained when mothers relied on them for emotional support. Perhaps the more mothers talked with their daughters about these adult topics, the more daughters felt equipped to explore these topics on their own. They could have been inspired by mothers' abilities to critically discuss marriage and divorce, and they may have been especially motivated to figure out how to avoid divorce in their own futures.

In a similar vein, though it was expected that high levels of psychological separation would predict high levels of exploration, the opposite held true, with every component of psychological separation having a statistically significant *negative* relationship with the use of exploration strategies. The strongest association was with functional independence; more maternal involvement in daughters' daily lives and decision-making, was associated with more reported use of a variety of exploration

strategies in regards to marriage. This was a little surprising, given Fullinwider-Bush and Jacobvitz' (1993) finding that mother-daughter boundary dissolution was linked with *less* exploration in the area of dating, and that parental encouragement of individuation was associated with *more* exploration. However, Fullinwider-Bush and Jacobvitz did not use the PSI to measure boundary dissolution; our previous findings about the PSI indicate that it does not measure entirely unhealthy processes between mothers and daughters.

Lopez, Campbell, and Watkins (1989) found that students from maritally distressed homes reported *greater* attitudinal independence from both their parents, making it plausible that they would explore their own ideas about marriage rather than passively accept their parents' ideas. The negative associations between some types of psychological separation and the mother-daughter relationship may also help us understand why psychological separation was a negative predictor of daughters' exploration strategies in the realm of marriage. It could be that, even in divorced families, young women need a positive relationship with their mothers before they can set out and explore marriage on their own. Results of the current study suggest a weak, though not clinically important, association between a mother's involvement in her daughter's daily life and decisions, and her daughter's exploration of her own ideas about marriage.

Demographics

Almost no researchers studying adult offspring of divorce have taken demographic variables such as ethnicity, maternal educational attainment, or number of maternal marital transitions into account. Yet these variables may have some bearing on the variables of interest in the current study. The dearth of research on ethnic differences

begs for the inclusion of ethnicity into any and all analyses involving AOD. Studies on the role of maternal educational status on the intergenerational transmission of divorce (Keith & Finlay, 1988) and the impact of parents' multiple marital transitions on offsprings' marital patterns (Teachman, 2002) have indicated that these variables also need to be included in research on the marriages of AOD. The final set of questions addressed differences or similarities in all mother-daughter relationship variables, and daughter outcome variables, among groups who differed according to ethnicity, education, or marital transitions. Three hypotheses were generated and tested through a series of three one-way ANOVA analyses.

The first hypothesis, that there would be no significant differences in scores among African-American and Caucasian women was supported. African-American and Caucasian mothers were statistically similar to each other on all measures. This finding adds to the small body of research on ethnic comparisons of AOD and their families, where studies have shown that ethnicity accounted for very little, if any, of the variance in the AOD marital expectations (Gelfman, 1995) or care-taking in their families of origin (Jurkovic, Thirkield, & Morrell, 2001). The current study shows that the two groups are also similar in regards to mother-daughter connection, mother-daughter psychological separation, mother-to-daughter divorce related disclosures, daughter's attitudes toward marriage, and the degree to which daughters explore the idea of marriage.

The second hypothesis, which stated that women would differ on the variables of interest according to the level of their mother's educational attainment, was partially

supported. There were significantly higher levels of maternal facilitation of daughter independence in families where mothers had received higher levels of education. There were also higher levels of affective quality in the mother-daughter relationship, and higher levels of maternal support for daughters when mothers were more educated, although these relationships only approached significance.

Other variables, including daughters' attitudes toward marriage and their exploration strategies around marriage, did not differ according to maternal educational attainment. This was surprising giving the link Keith and Finlay (1988) found between high educational levels among divorced mothers, and the high divorce rates of their daughters. Marital attitudes and exploration strategies of unmarried women aren't necessarily predictive, however, of eventual marital outcome. Those who, as college students, hold negative views about marriage, or never explore the idea of marriage on their own, may end up in very stable marriages. Although the current study found that mothers' education was not linked to these early marital attitudes and exploration behaviors, it may still be linked to daughters' eventual stability in marriage. On the other hand, Keith and Finlay's research was conducted nearly twenty years ago, when the educational attainment of women was not considered the norm as much as it is today. Their results might not be replicated in a sample of today's highly educated mothers and daughters.

The third hypothesis stated that the number of maternal marital transitions (the number of times the mother divorced and remarried) would impact the other variables of interest. Given the salience of marriage in the lives of mothers going through multiple

marital transitions, it was thought that they might talk more to their daughters. It also was thought that daughters might form more negative views about marriage, after watching mothers divorce and remarry many times. This hypothesis was unsupported. There was some positive relationship between the number of divorces and remarriages of the mother and the amount of detail in which she talked to her daughter about men and dating, but this relationship did not reach statistical significance. Teachman (2002) found that the number of parental marital transitions did not influence offsprings' likelihood of divorce. Apparently, neither does it influence daughters' marital attitudes, exploration strategies of marriage, or relationships with their mothers.

Implications for Counseling

These findings can be used by counselors working with daughters of divorce, and with divorced or divorcing mothers who may be concerned about how parental divorce will impact children as they mature into adulthood. Based on the results of the current study, the following foci for counseling are relevant and important.

It is important for counselors to be aware of the degree to which young women are privy to their divorced mothers' experiences of dating, marriage, and divorce, and to their mother's complaints about their ex-husbands. Because many mothers confide both frequently and in detail to their daughters about these issues, it will be important for counselors to help women process these disclosures and examine their impact. At the same time, counselors need to be aware that roughly half of mothers refrain from frequent and detailed disclosures with their daughters, and assumptions should not be made about particular mother-daughter dyads. Results from the current study indicate that

maternal disclosures have no impact on daughters' marital attitudes, and may have a very slightly positive impact on the frequency with which daughters use exploration strategies around the issue of marriage. This information is also important to counselors working with mothers who are divorcing or already divorced. Counselors can help mothers normalize the desire to disclose to their daughters, better understand the reasons for these disclosures, and explore the possible consequences to their grown daughters. It is also important for counselors to understand that such disclosures are not mediated by ethnicity, at least among Caucasian and African-American families.

The relationship between psychological separation and connection in the mother-daughter relationship will be key to counselors working with families. Strong negative associations between several types of mother-daughter independence (functional, emotional, and attitudinal) and mother-daughter connection variables indicate that these types of independence are *not* best for the mother-daughter relationship. A degree of reliance on mothers, even when young adults have left home and gone off to college, actually appears to be related to positive, supportive mother-daughter relationships. Conflictual independence seems to be the exception. Counselors may want to help families rid themselves of excess anger, guilt, resentment and mistrust among mothers and daughters, as part of the improvement in the mother-daughter relationship.

Counselors may help divorcing or divorced mothers realize that their daughters will probably form their own attitudes about marriage, regardless of what the mothers say, or how well connected or separated the mother-daughter relationship is. Much of the literature focuses on the relationship disadvantages of daughters of divorce; mothers may

be believed to know, then, that their relationships with their daughters do not influence how positively or negatively their unmarried grown daughters feel about marriage. This seems to be true for both Caucasian and African-American families, and regardless of mother's educational attainment or the number of times mothers have married and divorced. Ultimately, daughters will decide for themselves. Counselors can help mothers to understand their lack of influence over daughters' attitudes toward marriage, and daughters can be helped to take responsibility for developing their own ideas and attitudes about marriage.

Taking charge of one's own ideas and attitudes about marriage was, in fact, one of the keys to successful marriage frequently cited among successfully married AOD (Zink, 2000). Use of various strategies to explore marriage, may therefore be a desirable goal for AOD who intend to marry. Although it is not the counselor's job to help the daughter of divorce improve her attitude toward marriage, *it is* the counselor's job to help her explore and develop her own views about a major life choice such as marriage. Whereas societal norms or religious expectations may have once controlled the frequency of divorce, individuals today are deciding for themselves whether and how to stay married or get divorced. Because of the individual's role in making these decisions, conscious thought and exploration in the realm of marriage should be considered essential to more informed and perhaps more sound marital decisions. Family counselors can help mothers explore the link between their divorce-related disclosures and their daughters' use of exploration strategies, and fine-tune their talks with their daughters in ways that further encourage a daughter's ability and willingness to undertake her own exploration. Mothers should not

be counseled, based on the results of the current research, that divorce related disclosures will instill negative marital attitudes in their daughters, or cause them to foreclose on any exploration in this area.

The knowledge that psychological separation between mothers and daughters does not have a positive effect on daughters' exploration strategies, but rather has a small negative effect, is also important knowledge for counselors. Counselors will need to help families negotiate the various types of independence between mothers and daughters in ways that are the most helpful to daughters and the most conducive to daughters' explorations of their own ideas.

Finally, it is important for counselors working with mothers and daughters from divorced families to have some background knowledge about the specific demographic backgrounds of their clients, and the specific risk or resiliency factors faced by particular families. In general, it appears that highly educated divorced mothers are more likely to encourage independence in their daughters, which may prove a resiliency factor to these girls as they navigate their own intimate relationships with others. There appear to be no risk or resiliency factors (at least regarding the variables studied here) linked to ethnicity or the number of maternal marital transitions. Although it is possible these variables may impact other issues for daughters, or mother-daughter dyads, they do not appear to impact many aspects of the mother-daughter relationship, or daughters' approaches to marriage.

Limitations

Although it is anticipated that the results of this study may be valuable to counselors working with AOD college students, couples, and even families who are

contemplating divorce, there are some limitations to this research that should be addressed. First, due to the limitation of participants to English-speaking U.S. citizens, little is known about the generalizability of these results to international families, or first or second generation U.S. citizens who still speak a language other than English at home. Given recent increases in immigration rates (especially from Mexico, Central, and South America), it would be very interesting to know how families in these cultures interact around divorce, and what family dynamics influence children's approaches to marriage.

The current sample reflects characteristics of UNCG students, and caution must be exercised in generalizing results to other U.S. citizens. It is unknown whether women undergraduates attending UNCG are different in any consistent ways from other women of similar age and ethnic background on any of the variables studied. Because the sample only consists of women in their junior and senior years in college, those who did not attend college, or who dropped out in their first two years are not represented. Results may differ somewhat among participants from a more broad educational background.

There also is a limitation related to self-report. All of the mother-daughter interaction variables were measured by asking for the daughter's report only. Although research indicates that young adult daughters' reports of their relationships with their mothers is more accurate than mothers' reports (see Koerner, et al., 2004, for a discussion of this literature), it is not known whether this dynamic holds true of all the measures included here.

Finally, it should be remembered that the dependent variables measured in this study are but a few of the ones relevant to the marriages of young adults of divorced

parents. Marital attitudes and marital exploration strategies tell but the beginning of the story. Other important outcome variables include the likelihood to divorce, presence of actual divorce predictors in AOD women's marriages, and marital outcomes (e.g. marital stability, satisfaction, and dissolution) among women AOD.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study focused only on daughters of divorce. So much of the research, which has focused on comparisons between AOD and AOND, has led to an impression of general impairment in the relationships of adult offspring of divorce. Focusing only on daughters of divorce enables the researcher to assess risk and resiliency factors specific to this group. There are still some variables, however, that have been under researched, and comparisons between AOD and AOND on these variables may still yield some useful information about the relationships of daughters of divorce. Explorations around the issue of marriage is one such variable. In modern U.S. society the decision to marry is a complex one, and conscious awareness of one's reasons for marrying may be an important factor in a satisfying and stable union. It would be interesting to know whether unmarried male and female AOD and AOND differ in the degree to which they explore the concept of marriage.

More researchers need to use exploration strategies in the domain of marriage as an outcome measure. The findings of the current study suggest that mother's involvement in daughters' daily lives and mothers' disclosures about divorce-related topics somewhat influence daughters to undertake their own explorations in the area of marriage. This only explains a small portion of the variance, however. Other potential predictor variables

should also be explored. For example, given the importance of father-young adult relationships to the overall psychological well-being of AOD (Palossari, Aro, & Laippala, 1996; Richardson & McCabe, 2002; Shook & Jurich, 1993 Summers, Forehand, Armistead, & Tannenbaum, 1998), to the decreased likelihood of divorce in AOD (Webster, Orbuch, & House, 1995), and higher marital satisfaction among daughters of divorce (Dixon, 1998), it would be important to understand whether aspects of the father-daughter relationship play a role in daughters' exploration of marriage.

Qualitative research needs to be done with mothers to better understand the motivations for divorce-related disclosures, and with daughters to better understand how such disclosures affect them. Koerner et al. (2004) incorporated open-ended questions for both mothers and adolescents in their study of mother-to-adolescent post-divorce disclosures, but they focused on mothers' disclosures regarding the ex-husband and financial and personal concerns. Given the current findings that the most frequently disclosed topic was divorce and remarriage, it would be important to understand why this topic is discussed so often, and how the disclosure impacts both mothers and daughters. In addition, it would be important to know how daughters tend to respond to and interact with such disclosures. For example, do they listen to, discuss, argue with, or ignore their mothers' disclosures about these topics? It would also be interesting to measure mother-daughter agreement about the various divorce-related topics. This, in combination with maternal disclosures, may impact the amount of exploration daughters do in the area of marriage.

The mystery of how parental divorce affects daughters' attitudes toward marriage remains. Kapinus (2004) found that, although AOD women did hold more negative views of marriage than AOND women, it was not because of parental attitudes. The results of the current research reveal that many aspects of the mother-daughter relationship play virtually no role in the positive or negative attitudes about marriage that daughters hold. Other potential predictive factors need to be explored. For example, the current study yielded no information about the tone or the intent of maternal disclosures. It would be interesting to know whether daughters' perceptions of their mothers' positivity or negativity toward divorce and remarriage, or men and dating, affected their own marital attitudes. It is also possible that daughters' reactions to their mothers' disclosures may impact their marital attitudes.

It would also be useful to examine any possible link between maternal educational attainment and daughters' marital outcome. Expectations regarding women's education have changed in the 18 years since Keith and Finlay published their findings showing that more highly educated divorced women were more likely to see their daughters get divorced than less educated divorced women. It would be important to know whether these results are still true today.

The current study also investigated potential differences between African-American and Caucasian mothers-daughter relationships, and between daughter outcomes. However, modern U.S. society is composed of many different groups, and divorce is not limited to the two groups under study here. It would be interesting and

helpful to know whether there are significant differences for Native American, Hispanic/
Latino, Asian American, or international groups as well.

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APPENDIX A: PARENT ATTACHMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Your relationship with your mother. The following pages contain statements that describe mother-child relationships and the kinds of feelings and experiences frequently reported by young adults. Please respond to each item by filling in the number on a scale of 1-5 (A-E) that best describes your mother, your relationship with your mother, and your experiences and feelings. Please provide a single rating to describe your mother and your relationship with her.

	Not at all	Some- what	A moderate amount	Quite a bit	Very much
In general, my mother...					
1. is someone I can count on to provide emotional support when I feel troubled.	1	2	3	4	5
2. supports my goals and interests.	1	2	3	4	5
3. lives in a different world.	1	2	3	4	5
4. understands my problems and concerns.	1	2	3	4	5
5. respects my privacy.	1	2	3	4	5
6. restricts my freedom or independence.	1	2	3	4	5
7. is available to give me advice or guidance when I want it.	1	2	3	4	5
8. takes my opinions seriously.	1	2	3	4	5
9. encourages me to make my own decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
10. is critical of what I can do.	1	2	3	4	5
11. imposes her ideas and values on me.	1	2	3	4	5

12. has given me as much attention as I have wanted.	1	2	3	4	5
13. is someone to whom I can express differences of opinion on important matters.	1	2	3	4	5
14. has no idea what I am feeling or thinking.	1	2	3	4	5
15. has provided me with the freedom to experiment and learn things on my own.	1	2	3	4	5
16. is too busy or otherwise involved to help me.	1	2	3	4	5
17. has trust and confidence in me.	1	2	3	4	5
18. tries to control my life.	1	2	3	4	5
19. protects me from danger and difficulty.	1	2	3	4	5
20. ignores what I have to say.	1	2	3	4	5
21. is sensitive to my feelings and needs.	1	2	3	4	5
22. is disappointed in me.	1	2	3	4	5
23. gives me advice whether or not I want it.	1	2	3	4	5
24. respects my judgment and decisions, even if different from what she would want.	1	2	3	4	5
25. does things for me, which I could do for myself.	1	2	3	4	5
26. is someone whose expectations I feel obligated to meet.	1	2	3	4	5
27. treats me like a younger child.	1	2	3	4	5

During recent visits or time spent together, my mother was someone...

28. I looked forward to seeing.	1	2	3	4	5
29. with whom I argued.	1	2	3	4	5
30. with whom I felt relaxed and comfortable.	1	2	3	4	5

31. who made me angry.	1	2	3	4	5
32. I wanted to be with all the time.	1	2	3	4	5
33. towards whom I felt cool and distant.	1	2	3	4	5
34. who got on my nerves	1	2	3	4	5
35. who aroused feelings of guilt and anxiety.	1	2	3	4	5
36. to whom I enjoyed telling about the things I have done and learned.	1	2	3	4	5
37. for whom I felt a feeling of love.	1	2	3	4	5
38. I tried to ignore.	1	2	3	4	5
39. to whom I confided my most personal thoughts and feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
40. whose company I enjoyed.	1	2	3	4	5
41. I avoided telling about my experiences.	1	2	3	4	5

Following time spent together, I leave my mother...

42. with warm and positive feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
43. feeling let down and disappointed by my family.	1	2	3	4	5

When I have a serious problem or decision to make...

44. I look to my family for support, encouragement, and/or guidance.	1	2	3	4	5
45. I seek help from a professional, such as a therapist, college counselor, or clergy.	1	2	3	4	5
46. I think about how my mother might respond and what she might say.	1	2	3	4	5
47. I work it out on my own,	1	2	3	4	5

without help or discussion with others.					
48. I discuss the matter with a friend.	1	2	3	4	5
49. I know that my mother will know what to do.	1	2	3	4	5
50. I contact my mother if I am not able to resolve the situation after talking it over with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5

When I go to my mother for help...

51. I feel more confident in my ability to handle the problems on my own.	1	2	3	4	5
52. I continue to feel unsure of myself.	1	2	3	4	5
53. I feel that I would have obtained more understanding and comfort from a friend.	1	2	3	4	5
54. I feel confident that things will work out as long as I follow my mother's advice.	1	2	3	4	5
55. I am disappointed with her response.	1	2	3	4	5

**APPENDIX B: PSYCHOLOGICAL SEPARATION INVENTORY, MATERNAL
SCALE**

Instructions: The following list of statements describes different aspects of students' relationships with their mother. Imagine a scale ranging from 1 to 5 that tells how well each statement applies to you. Please check the number from "1" (Not at all true of me) to "5" (Very true of me). If the statement does not apply enter "1". Please be completely honest. Your answers are entirely confidential and will be useful only if they accurately describe you.

	Not at all true of me	A little bit true of me	Moderately true of me	Quite a bit true of me	Very true of me
1. I like to show my friends pictures of my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Sometimes my mother is a burden to me.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I feel longing if I am away from my mother for too long.	1	2	3	4	5
4. My ideas regarding racial equality are similar to my mother's.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My mother's wishes have influenced my selection of friends.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I feel like I am constantly at war with my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I blame my mother for many of the problems I have.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I wish I could trust my mother more.	1	2	3	4	5
9. My attitudes about	1	2	3	4	5

obscurity are similar to my mother's.					
10. When I am in difficulty I usually call upon my mother to help me out of trouble.	1	2	3	4	5
11. My mother is the most important person in the world to me.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I have to be careful not to hurt my mother's feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I wish that my mother lived nearer so that I could visit her more frequently.	1	2	3	4	5
14. My opinions regarding the role of women are similar to my mother's.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I often ask my mother to assist me in solving my personal problems.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I sometimes feel like I'm being punished by my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Being away from my mother makes me feel lonely.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I wish my mother wasn't so overprotective.	1	2	3	4	5
19. My opinions regarding the role of men are similar to my mother's.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I wouldn't make a major purchase without my mother's approval.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I wish my mother wouldn't try to manipulate me.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I wish my mother wouldn't try to make fun of me.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I sometimes call home just to hear my mother's voice.	1	2	3	4	5
24. My religious beliefs are similar to my mother's.	1	2	3	4	5

25. My mother's wishes have influenced my choice of major at school.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I feel that I have obligations to my mother that I wish I didn't have.	1	2	3	4	5
27. My mother expects too much from me.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I wish I could stop lying to my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
29. My beliefs regarding how to raise children are similar to my mother's.	1	2	3	4	5
30. My mother helps me to make my budget.	1	2	3	4	5
31. While I am home on a vacation I like to spend most of my time with my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
32. I often wish that my mother would treat me more like an adult.	1	2	3	4	5
33. After being with my mother for a vacation I find it difficult to leave her.	1	2	3	4	5
34. My values regarding honesty are similar to my mother's.	1	2	3	4	5
35. I generally consult with my mother when I make plans for an out of town weekend.	1	2	3	4	5
36. I am often angry at my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
37. I like to hug and kiss my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
38. I hate it when my mother makes suggestions about what I do.	1	2	3	4	5
39. My attitudes about solitude are similar to my mother's.	1	2	3	4	5
40. I consult with my mother when deciding about part-	1	2	3	4	5

time employment.	1	2	3	4	5
41. I decide what to do according to whether my mother will approve of it.					
42. Even when my mother has a good idea I refuse to listen to it because she made it.					
43. When I do poorly in school I feel I'm letting my mother down.					
44. My attitudes regarding environmental protection are similar to my mother's.					
45. I ask my mother what to do when I get into a tough situation.					
46. I wish my mother wouldn't try to get me to take sides with her.					
47. My mother is my best friend.					
48. I argue with my mother over little things.					
49. My beliefs about how the world began are similar to my mother's.					
50. I do what my mother decides on most questions that come up.					
51. I seem to be closer to my mother than most people my age.					
52. My mother is sometimes a source of embarrassment to me.					
53. Sometimes I think I am too dependent on my mother.					
54. My beliefs about what happens to people when they die are similar to my mother's.					

55. I ask for my mother's advice when I am planning my vacation time.	1	2	3	4	5
56. I am sometimes ashamed of my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
57. I care too much about my mother's reactions.	1	2	3	4	5
58. I get angry when my mother criticizes me.	1	2	3	4	5
59. My attitudes regarding sex are similar to my mother's.	1	2	3	4	5
60. I like to have my mother help me pick out the clothing I buy for special occasions.	1	2	3	4	5
61. I sometimes feel like an extension of my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
62. When I don't write my mother often enough I feel guilty.	1	2	3	4	5
63. I feel uncomfortable keeping things from my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
64. My attitudes regarding national defense are similar to my mother's.	1	2	3	4	5
65. I call my mother whenever anything goes wrong.	1	2	3	4	5
66. I often have to make decisions for my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
67. I'm not sure I could make it in life without my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
68. I sometimes resent it when my mother tells me what to do.	1	2	3	4	5
69. My attitudes regarding mentally ill people are similar to my mother's.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX C: MARITAL ATTITUDES SCALE

Your ideas and attitudes about marriage. Please indicate by how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements regarding marriage.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. People should marry.	1	2	3	4
2. I have little confidence that my marriage will be a success.	1	2	3	4
3. People should stay married to their spouses for the rest of their lives.	1	2	3	4
4. Most couples are either unhappy in their marriages or are divorced.	1	2	3	4
5. I will be satisfied when I get married.	1	2	3	4
6. I am fearful of marriage.	1	2	3	4
7. I have doubts about marriage.	1	2	3	4
8. People should only get married if they are sure that it will last forever.	1	2	3	4
9. People should feel very cautious about entering into a marriage.	1	2	3	4
10. Most marriages are unhappy situations.	1	2	3	4
11. Marriage is only a legal contract.	1	2	3	4
12. Marriage is a sacred act.	1	2	3	4
13. Most marriages aren't equal partnerships.	1	2	3	4
14. Most people have to sacrifice too much in marriage.	1	2	3	4
15. Because half of all marriages end in divorce, marriage seems futile.	1	2	3	4
16. If I divorce, I would probably remarry.	1	2	3	4
17. When people don't get along, I believe they should divorce.	1	2	3	4
18. I believe a relationship can be just as strong without having to go through the marriage ceremony.	1	2	3	4

19. My lifelong dream includes a happy marriage.	1	2	3	4
20. There is not such a thing as a happy marriage.	1	2	3	4
21. Marriage restricts individuals from achieving their goals.	1	2	3	4
22. People weren't meant to stay in one relationship for their entire lives.	1	2	3	4
23. Marriage provides companionship that is missing from other types of relationships.	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX D: LIFE CHOICES QUESTIONNAIRE, MARRIAGE DOMAIN

Life Choices Questionnaire, marriage subscale: We are interested in finding out how actively you have been exploring different ideas and life choices in the area of marriage, and yourself as a marriage partner. In other words, what strategies have you used when you think of yourself and how you would relate to a marriage partner. Think about whether you have considered choices by using any of the strategies listed. Please rate your own degree of exploration by that strategy DURING THE PAST YEAR.

	1 Not used	2	3 Used to a moderate degree	4	5 Actively and seriously used
1. Thought about marriage	1	2	3	4	5
2. Talked with others about marriage.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Tried to develop new ideas about marriage.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Searched for new and different ways to deal with marriage.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Compared your ideas with those of others.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Tried to find better ideas about marriage.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Searched for more information about marriage.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Found out what others think about marriage.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Read about marriage.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Talked with people who should be experts in marriage.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Gained first-hand experience with marriage.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX E: MOTHER-TO-ADOLESCENT DISCLOSURE SCALE, DAUGHTER
REPORT FORM

Talking about divorce. Some of you have experienced the divorce of your parents (biological or adoptive). We would like to know how often, if at all, your mother talks to you about a variety of things that may be a part of her life. Please read each column heading carefully, then check the choice that best describes how often your mother has talked to you about the following topics since her divorce (or final separation) from your dad. If your parents never divorced, please mark “not applicable” to all these items.

	Not applicable	Never	Once or twice a year	About once a month	About once a week	Almost everyday
1. Anger she feels toward my father	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. Her complaints about my father	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. Her feelings about my father's dating partner or new wife	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. Her feelings about men and relationships	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. Her previous or current dating situation	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. Her feelings about her new dating partner or husband	0	1	2	3	4	5
7. Her feelings regarding divorce	0	1	2	3	4	5
8. Her feelings regarding remarriage	0	1	2	3	4	5
9. Reasons for her divorce	0	1	2	3	4	5

The same topics are listed below. THIS TIME we would like to know in how much detail your mother (biological or adoptive) talks to you about these topics. Please read each column heading carefully (the choices are different than in the previous questions). Check the choice that best describes in how much detail, if any, your mom has talked to you about these topics since her divorce (or final separation) from your dad.

	Not applicable	My mom never says anything about this topic to me	This topic has “popped out” when my mom didn’t really mean it to	My mom has talked about this topic without giving any details	My mom has talked about this topic giving a few details	My mom has talked about this topic in quite a bit of detail
1. Anger she feels toward my father	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. Her complaints about my father	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. Her feelings about my father’s dating partner or new wife	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. Her feelings about men and relationships	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. Her previous or current dating situation	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. Her feelings about her new dating partner or husband	0	1	2	3	4	5
7. Her feelings regarding divorce	0	1	2	3	4	5
8. Her feelings regarding remarriage	0	1	2	3	4	5
9. Reasons for her divorce	0	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX F: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

A little about you...

1. In what year were you born? _____
2. How would you describe your ethnicity?
 - A. Caucasian
 - B. African-American
 - C. Native American
 - D. Hispanic or Hispanic American
 - E. Asian or Asian American
 - F. Other (please specify): _____
3. Have your parents ever divorced?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
4. Is your mother still living?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
5. Is your father still living?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
6. Have you ever been legally married?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
7. Is English the language primarily spoken in your parents' home?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
 - C. If no, please explain: _____
8. How would you describe your sexual orientation?
 - A. Heterosexual
 - B. Homosexual
 - C. Bisexual
 - D. Other (please specify): _____
9. How would you describe your current relationship status?
 - A. Not dating
 - B. Dating different people

- C. Dating one exclusive person
D. In a long-term (one year or more) relationship with one person
E. Living with an unmarried partner
F. Engaged
G. Married
H. Separated
I. Divorced
J. Widowed
K. Other (please specify): _____
10. How many years of school did your mother complete?
A. Did not complete high school
B. Completed high school or GED
C. Completed some college
D. Graduated from college
E. Is working on, or has completed, graduate degree
11. What is your current status in school?
A. Junior
B. Senior
12. In what way(s), if any, do you believe our relationship with your mother has impacted your views about marriage?
13. In what way(s), if any, do you believe your parents' relationship (or divorce) has impacted your views about marriage?
14. These last questions apply only to those of you whose parents have divorced; if your parents never divorced, please skip these questions. These questions are designed to determine your age at each of your parents' marital transitions, starting with the divorce of your parents. Please list your age (in whole numbers) when each of the following transitions occurred, and ONLY answer items that apply to your situation.
- What was your age (in years) when your parents divorced?
 - What was your age (in years) when your mother remarried? If she never remarried, leave this question blank.
 - What was your age (in years) when your mother divorced your stepfather? If she is still married to him, leave this question blank.
 - What was your age (in years) when your mother married your second stepfather? If she never married again, leave this item blank.
 - What was your age (in years) when your father remarried? If he never remarried, leave this question blank.
 - What was your age (in years) when your father divorced your stepmother? If he is still married to her, leave this question blank.

- What was your age (in years) when your father married your second stepmother? If he never married again, leave this item blank.
- Were there any other changes to your mother's or father's marital status that were not captured by this set of questions? If so, please explain.

APPENDIX G: PILOT STUDY INFORMED CONSENT

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO

CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT

Project Title: Post-divorce mother-daughter relationships and adult daughters' marital attitudes and marriage exploration behaviors

Project Director: Rebecca L. Withrow

DESCRIPTION AND EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURES:

Thank you for your participation in this study. There are two main purposes of this research. The first is to better understand mother-daughter relationships in families that have gone through a divorce and families that have never divorced. The second purpose is to understand how women view and think about marriage. Your responses will be very helpful in helping us better understand these dynamics. You will be asked to answer a series of questions about your relationship with your mother, and about your views on marriage, in the pages that follow. Directions will be provided periodically for different parts of the survey. Once you have completed all the questions, your participation will be completed. The entire survey should take about 20 minutes to complete. You may withdraw your participation at any time.

Your confidentiality will be maintained throughout this project. Your name will *not* be connected to the answers you provide, and no one other than the project director will have access to the names of the respondents. Your data will be stored securely through an encryption service at Survey Monkey, and kept under lock and key. After all

work related to the data has been completed, the data will be destroyed through a clearing process through Survey Monkey that thoroughly destroys all trace of the data.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS:

All participants who complete the survey will be entered in a drawing for a \$50 prize at the end of the data collection. In addition, it is possible that some participants will begin to think more deeply about some of their family relationships and/or their thoughts about marriage after completing this survey. The primary benefits of your participation, however, will be to society. The results of this research may help counselors understand family relationships from the point of view of women. This information will be useful to counselors working with adults on family and relationship issues, and to those working with families struggling with issues surrounding divorce.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS:

Although unlikely, it is possible that some of the questions may bring up painful thoughts, feelings or memories for some participants. If you would like to speak with a counselor after completing this survey, please contact the Counseling and Testing Center at 334-5874 or the Nicholas A. Vacc Counseling and Consulting Clinic at 334-5112.

By completing this survey, you agree that you understand the procedures and any risks and benefits involved in this research. You are free to refuse to participate or to withdraw your consent to participate in this research (by ending the survey) at any time without penalty or prejudice; your participation is entirely voluntary. Your privacy will be protected in that your answers will be kept separate from your identifying information, and your identifying information will be stored securely (as described above) by Survey

Monkey. You are urged to download and/or print out a copy of your survey responses for your own records, after you complete the survey.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Institutional Review Board, which insures that research involving people follows federal regulations, has approved the research and this consent form. Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this project can be answered by calling Mr. Eric Allen at (336) 256-1482. Questions regarding the research itself will be answered by Rebecca L. Withrow by calling (828) 253-7592, or by Dr. L. DiAnne Borders by calling 336-334-3425. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided to you if the information might affect your willingness to continue participation in the project.

By completing this survey, you are agreeing to participate in the project described to you by Rebecca L. Withrow

APPENDIX H: PILOT STUDY

Researchers have found that many of the relational disadvantages experienced by adult offspring of divorce (AOD), including an increased tendency to end one's own marriage in divorce, are disproportionately suffered by women. Although research findings have clearly established the dominance of the mother-daughter relationship in the wake of divorce, few researchers have studied the impact that cross-generational alliances with mothers could have on daughters' own approaches to marriage. This lack of research leaves counselors uncertain as to how to work with mothers who want to know how their divorce will affect their daughters, as well as grown daughters who encounter their own difficulties in their intimate relationships with men.

Literature Review

For years, researchers have believed that girls are more resilient than boys in the wake of parental divorce (Hetherington, 1991). As AOD grow up, and researchers are able to study long-term effects of parental divorce on children, they have discovered that some of the effects of parental divorce on girls are dormant during childhood and early adolescence, only manifesting once young women begin to explore and establish their own intimate relationships (Bolgar, Zweig-Frank, & Paris, 1995; Gietzen & Lynn, 2000; Kalter, Riemer, Brickman, & Woo Chen, 1985). Parental divorce seems to impact daughters'- more than sons'- attitudes and beliefs about divorce and remarriage, their interpersonal behaviors, and, finally, their marital outcomes. Specifically, daughters of divorce are less optimistic than sons that their future marriages will endure (Kalter et al.), their marriages are characterized by lower levels of mutually constructive communication

and intimacy (Mullett & Stolberg, 2002), and ultimately, their marriages are more likely to end in divorce than the marriages of sons of divorce (Glenn & Kramer, 1987).

As AOD reach adulthood and begin to marry, researchers have begun to study the association between family of origin dynamics and AOD intimate relationships. By and large, close and supportive relationships with parents tend to be associated with positive psychosocial adjustment among AOD and healthy intimate relationships with partners (Ensign, Scherman, & Clark, 1998; Richardson & McCabe, 2002). Certain dynamics, however, such as triangulation, cross-generational coalitions, and parentification *negatively* impact AOD future intimate relationships (Devaux, 2004; Haws & Mallinckrodt, 1998; Jurkovic, Thirkield, & Morrell, 2001; Valerian, 2002; Zink, 2000).

Mother-daughter relationships are especially strong after parental divorce, especially if the mothers never remarry (Orbuch, Thornton, & Cancio, 2000), and some have hypothesized that certain aspects of the mother-daughter relationship could interfere with daughters' own intimate relationships with male partners (Beal & Hochman, 1991). No one, however, has specifically studied mother-daughter relationships and daughters' approaches to marriage. Given what is already known about AOD daughters' increased divorce risk, the important role of parent-child relationships to AOD intimate relationships, and the dominance of the mother-daughter dyad after divorce, it makes sense to study mothers and daughters, and daughters' approach to marriage, from a Family Systems perspective.

The larger research study poses the following research questions: 1) How often, and in how much detail do mothers disclose to their daughters about different divorce-

related topics?; 2A) How are the scores on the instruments assessing mother-daughter psychological separation, mother-daughter connection, mother-to-daughter divorce-related disclosure levels (degree of detail and frequency of disclosures), daughters' marital attitudes, and daughters' identity exploration in the domain of marriage, related?; 2B) What are the statistically significant predictors of the daughters' marital attitudes scores? What proportion of the variance of the marital attitude scores can these predictors account for?; 2C) What are the statistically significant predictors of daughters' scores for identity exploration strategies in the domain of marriage? What proportion of the variance of the exploration scores can these predictors account for?; 3A) Are there identifiable (linear or quadratic) trends in the means of the measures for mother-daughter psychological separation, mother-daughter connection, daughters' attitudes toward marriage, and daughters' identity exploration strategies in the domain of marriage, as the number of mother's post-divorce marital transitions increases?; 3B) Do these trends differ for African-American and Caucasian women?; 3C) Do these trends differ according to mother's educational attainment?

To facilitate the larger study, the pilot study was conducted to achieve the following purposes: 1) check reliability information for some of the subscales specific to this study, including the Mother-to-Adolescent Disclosure scale, daughter report form, and the Life Choices Questionnaire, Marriage subscale; 2) conduct a preliminary analysis of the relationships among all the variables; 3) test the clarity and ease of use of the instruments; 4) test the emailing strategy, and 5) work out any problems with the use of the online survey format.

This section will include a description of the participants and the recruitment strategy, methods for data collection and analysis, results of preliminary data analysis, discussion of these results, and implications for the larger study.

Method

Participants

The participants of interest for the current study were adult, never married, English-speaking women, whose biological parents had divorced but were still living. Female undergraduates in their junior and senior years at the University of North Carolina were targeted. Three hundred randomly selected students were contacted, given the eligibility requirements, and invited to participate. A total of 19 students answered the survey, of which 15 responses were complete and valid.

Of the 15 valid responses received, students varied on some demographic variables, and were strikingly similar on others. There was an age range of 19-34, with the average age being 22 ($SD = 3.4$). Nine of the students (60%) stated that they were in their fourth year in school, and six (40%) stated that they were in their third year. Fourteen of the students identified themselves as Caucasian and one as African-American. One of the original respondents identified herself as Asian-American, but her responses were not included because she indicated that her parents had not divorced.

Participants reported some variation in terms of their mothers' educational level, although on the whole the respondents' mothers appeared fairly well-educated. All had graduated from high school, but only three had stopped at the high school or GED level. Five had begun but not completed college, and three had graduated from college. In

addition, five mothers were working on or had completed a graduate degree. Thus, 80% of these respondents' mothers had educational attainment beyond the high school level, with 26.7% working toward or having completed graduate degrees. Participants reported little variation in their mothers' marital status, with roughly half never having remarried, and the other half having remarried and remained remarried to that partner. No one reported more than one post-divorce marital transition. A summary of selected demographic variables is presented in Table 18.

Table 18

Demographics of Pilot Study Participants

	<u>n</u>	%
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	14	93.3
African-American	1	6.7
Age		
19 years old	1	6.7
20 years old	1	6.7
21 years old	7	46.7
22 years old	5	7.0
34 years old	1	6.7
Year in school		
Junior	6	40.0
Senior	9	60.0
Mother's educational attainment		
Did not complete high school	0	0.0
Completed high school or GED	3	20.0
Completed some college	5	33.3
Graduated from college	3	20.0
Has completed, or is working on, graduate degree	4	26.7
Mother's marital transitions		
Never remarried	8	53.3
Remarried	7	46.7

Instrumentation

Participants completed the maternal forms of the Parent Attachment Questionnaire (PAQ; Kenny, 1985) and the Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI; Hoffman, 1984). They also completed the Marital Attitude Scale (MAS; Braaten & Rosen, 1998), the Life Choices Questionnaire, Marriage subscale (LCQ-M; Grotevant, 1989), and three subscales from the daughter report form of the Mother-to-Adolescent

Disclosure scale (ex-husband, men/dating, and divorce/remarriage) (MADS; Koerner, Jacobs, & Raymond, 2000). Finally they completed a brief demographic questionnaire designed to gather descriptive data, such as age, year in school, ethnicity, mother's educational attainment level, and age at each post-divorce marital transition of the mother and the father.

The Parent Attachment Questionnaire (PAQ; Kenny, 1985) was designed to measure variables related to parent-adolescent attachment or connection. The three subscales of the maternal form assess the affective quality of the mother-adolescent relationship, the role of the mother as a facilitator of the adolescent's independence, and the mother as a source of support.

The Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI; Hoffman, 1984) was written to assess healthy psychological separation between college students and their parents. The four subscales of the maternal form measure the following types of independence from the mother: conflictual independence (the absence of excessive anger toward, guilt, resentment, anxiety, and mistrust of the mother); emotional independence (the absence of excessive need for approval, closeness, and emotional support from the mother); functional independence (the capacity to manage one's life without excessive help or intervention from the mother); and attitudinal independence (the ability to hold attitudes and values that are distinct from those of the mother).

The Marital Attitude Scale (MAS; Braaten & Rosen, 1998) was designed to assess a person's attitudes and beliefs about heterosexual marriage. The Life Choices Questionnaire, (LCQ; Grotevant, 1989) was designed to assess a young adult's

exploration strategies in a variety of life choices. The marriage subscale measures the frequency of use of eleven different exploration strategies in the domain of marriage.

The Mother-to-Adolescent Disclosure scale, daughter-report form (MADS; Koerner, Jacobs, & Raymond, 2000) was designed to measure a woman's perception of the depth (frequency and detail) with which her divorced mother disclosed to her about sensitive topics. Three subscales, or topics of disclosure, were measured in the pilot study: ex-husband, men/dating, divorce/remarriage. Each of these subscales consists of three items. The reliability of the scales and the subscales used, as determined in the pilot study, is reported in Table 19.

The instruments were completed in the order listed above, so that the least emotionally sensitive questions were answered first, with more sensitive and personal questions being answered last. Having respondents answer the more objective questions first was believed to help avoid bias in their answers to later more sensitive questions. It also was believed that this would encourage students to complete the on-line survey.

Procedures

Prior to collection of data, the principal investigator completed the review process for the Institutional Review Board and received approval for completion of the pilot study. She then contacted the Office of Institutional Research and requested a random sampling of student emails. The Office was able to categorize students according to some but not all of the eligibility criteria for this study. They were able to generate a list of female undergraduate students who were in their third or fourth years at UNCG, but were unable to determine who had ever been married, whose parents were divorced and/or still

living, and what language was primarily spoken at home. Thus, in an attempt to obtain 30 participants, the principal investigator requested a random list of 300 women student emails. The Office randomized the list of all 4,002 women listed as juniors and seniors. For the pilot study, only the first 300 emails from this list were used. The principal investigator sent out an email to these 300 students which stated the topic of the study, explained the time commitment needed, offered the chance to be entered into a drawing for a \$50 cash prize, explained the eligibility requirements, and included a link to the on-line survey instrument.

The emails were sent out 50 at a time. Of the 300 emails originally sent out, five accounts had been disabled. Several more students emailed to state that they were ineligible for one of various reasons. Some stated their parents had never divorced or one parent had died. One stated that she was 48 and therefore did not meet the requirement of “young” women. These few emails did not reveal much information about the sampling pool, but they did allow the researcher to spot-check the successful sending of the emails. One week after the initial emailing, the principal investigator sent out a reminder email including the same information as the first.

When respondents clicked on the link to the survey, they were directed to a consent form that explained the purposes of the research, procedures involved, potential benefits and risks, and researchers’ contact information. They were informed that completion of the survey would indicate their consent to participate. Each page of the survey contained a brief set of instructions about answering the questions. Nineteen students took the on-line survey, and, of these, four responses were eliminated. Three did

not complete the survey and one answered the question “what was your age at the time of your parents divorced?” with the response, “they are not divorced.”

Data analysis

Participants completed the survey on-line, and at the end of the data collection period the principal investigator exported the data to an excel file. Incomplete responses were eliminated, and the one response from a woman whose parents were not divorced was eliminated. Data were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 14, 2005). The first purpose of the pilot study, to check reliability information for some of the subscales specific to this study, was accomplished through reliability analyses. The second purpose, conduct a preliminary analysis of the relationships between the variables, was conducted through the generation of a correlation matrix. The third purpose, to test the clarity and ease of use of the instruments, was addressed through an invitation of questions from research participants, researcher observation, and the researcher’s taking the on-line test herself prior to the pilot study. The fourth purpose, to test the emailing strategy, was addressed by actually employing the emailing strategy, researcher observation of glitches encountered, and consultation with the IT department at UNCG. The fifth purpose, to work out any problems with the use of the online survey format, was addressed through the process of putting up the survey, having several colleagues more familiar with on-line surveys look at it and advise, and actually administering the survey to pilot study participants.

Results

Results Related to Procedures

The actual instruments, which were all designed for adolescents or college students, appeared to be clear and easy to complete. No one complained about not understanding items, and no individual items were skipped. Those who did not complete the survey stopped mid-way through, and simply never returned. It is possible they began the survey completion on a campus computer and were unable to return to the same computer for completion, or simply never got back around to completing the survey. This might have been avoided had the consent form not contained instructions about stopping the survey and returning at a later time. Frequent researcher observation revealed that most of those who completed the survey probably did so at one sitting. Prior to the collection of data from the participants, the researcher herself took the survey (later deleting her own results) to ensure that the link to the survey worked, that one and only one response was allowed per question, and that it was easy to progress through the survey. One respondent completed the entire survey, and when filling out the demographic portion at the end, indicated that her parents were not divorced. This situation may have been avoided had the researcher (rather than the participants) taken on the responsibility of determining who was and who was not eligible to participate (based on responses to items in the demographic questionnaire rather than on information in the email message).

The emailing strategy appeared effective. The sample was divided into groups of 50, and six separate emails were sent out. A number of “delivery failure messages”

appeared alarming at first, but a consultant from IT services helped the researcher sort through which emails had actually failed to deliver, and which had been delivered. In addition, a few people emailed the researcher for various reasons, and by checking these email addresses (and those of the ones who actually completed the survey) against the six lists, the researcher was able to verify which of the six lists were delivered. All six lists were delivered, with only five individual messages failing to deliver because accounts had been disabled. There appeared to be some confusion about the eligibility criteria which were listed in the invitation to participate email. A few participants emailed the researcher to state that they could not participate because their parents were not divorced, one parent had died, or that they were too old. Another one completed the survey even though she did not meet one of the eligibility criteria. It is possible that the eligibility requirements were bulky to read, and students either did not read them or were confused by them. Inclusion of these criteria in the demographic portion of the survey itself (rather than in the email to students) would streamline the invitation email, and help the researcher better assess the demographic breakdown of the respondents.

The on-line survey format appeared to work effectively by the time respondents actually logged on. No one reported any difficulties with accessing the link to the survey, proceeding through the survey, or submitting their responses. The survey was designed to allow only one answer per item, and to prompt respondents to answer any items they had missed before proceeding to the next page. The only potential difficulty noted with the on-line format was the complication of stopping the survey mid-way through and continuing at a later time. Students might ignore or misunderstand the instruction that the

survey must be completed on the same computer on which it was begun. Given that students are accustomed to getting on-line from any computer, and many probably use a variety of computers on campus, this requirement may present an unreasonable burden to some participants.

Reliability Data

Instrument psychometric data was analyzed to test the reliability of all subscales, but especially to ensure the psychometric properties of the scales about which little reliability information is known. All instrument subscales yielded high reliability, ranging from $\alpha = .78$ (Support subscale of the PAQ) to $\alpha = .93$ (Detail subscale of the MADS). Cronbach's alphas for the PAQ ranged from .78 (support) to .89 (affective quality). Alphas for the PSI ranged from .87 (functional independence) to .90 (emotional independence). The MAS yielded an alpha coefficient of .88. Cronbach's alpha for the LCQ, marriage subscale was .92. The MAD yielded alphas of .93 (detail) and .87 (frequency). All reliability values are reported in Table 19.

Table 19

Reliability Analysis of Instruments used in Pilot Study

	Cronbach's alpha <u>n = 15</u>
Parent Attachment Questionnaire	
Affective quality90
Facilitation of Independence	.86
Support	.78
Psychological Separation Inventory	
Functional Independence	.87
Emotional Independence	.90
Conflictual Independence	.88
Attitudinal Independence	.90
Marital Attitudes Scale	.88
Life Choices Questionnaire	
Marriage subscale	.92
Mother-to-Adolescent Disclosure scale	
Detail	.93
Frequency	.87

Results of Statistical Analyses

A correlation matrix was generated to view the relationships among the variables. Significant correlations are presented in Table 20, with correlations significant at the $p < .01$ level printed in bold. As can be seen, some of the strongest correlations are between

subscales of the same instrument (for example, facilitation of independence and support correlated strongly with affective quality of relationship on the PAQ).

However, several significant findings were found between scales. Conflictual independence was significantly related to affective quality of the mother-daughter relationship ($r = .57$) and strongly related to the mother's facilitation of the daughter's independence ($r = .79$). Emotional independence from the mother was negatively related to exploration strategies in the domain of marriage ($r = -.49$). Attitudinal independence from the mother was significantly *negatively* related to daughters' attitudes about heterosexual marriage ($r = -.50$).

Mother's disclosures about divorce related topics were significantly *negatively* related to several aspects of the mother-daughter relationship. First, frequent and detailed mother-to-daughter disclosure about topics such as anger and complaints about the girls' father, men and dating, and divorce and remarriage, were negatively associated with the affective quality of the mother-daughter relationship, and with the mother's facilitation of daughter independence. Mother disclosure about these topics may be an indication that a mother needs her daughter as a confidant, and is not ready or able to facilitate the daughter's independence. Frequent and detailed disclosures about these divorce related topics are also strongly negatively associated with conflictual independence between mothers and daughters. In other words, these disclosures are strongly related to daughters' feelings of anger, resentment, and mistrust of the mother, as well as guilt and anxiety about being around her. The disclosures, however, are not significantly related to daughters' approach to marriage.

Table 20

Significant Correlations between Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Affective quality of relationship	.67	.75				.57				-.56	-.56
2. Facilitation of Independence	--					.79				-.45	-.53
3. Support		--				-.45					
4. Functional Independence			--			.87					
5. Emotional Independence				--						-.49	
6. Conflictual Independence					--					-.61	-.66
7. Attitudinal Independence						--					-.50
8. Life Choices Questionnaire							--				.48
9. Marital Attitudes Scale								--			
10. Mother-to Adolescent Disclosure Scale, frequency									--		.84
11. Mother-to Adolescent Disclosure Scale, detail											--

Discussion

The larger study is designed to explore the relationships among various aspects of mother-daughter relationships, and daughters' approaches to marriage. The pilot study was designed and conducted to: check reliability information for some of the subscales specific to this study, including the Mother-to-Adolescent Disclosure scale, daughter report form, and the Life Choices Questionnaire, Marriage subscale; to conduct a preliminary analysis of the relationships among all the variables; to test the clarity and ease of use of the instruments; to test the emailing strategy; and to work out any problems with the use of the online survey format. Each of these purposes was addressed in the pilot study.

The first goal of the pilot study was to check reliability information for all subscales, especially for the MADS subscales and the LCQ marriage subscale, about which little information was available. An analysis of reliability revealed moderate to high reliability for all the subscales, including the MADS detail ($\alpha = .93$) and frequency ($\alpha = .87$) subscales, and the LCQ ($\alpha = .92$).

The second goal of the pilot study was to conduct a preliminary analysis of the relationships among all the variables. Although there were several significant correlations among the subscales, several significant correlations related to the original research questions stand out in particular. First, it was hypothesized that elements of mother-daughter psychological separation would be positively correlated with elements of mother-daughter connection. Of the four psychological separation subscales and the parent attachment subscales, the only significant relationships were between conflictual

independence and affective quality ($r = .57$), and between conflictual independence and mother's facilitation of daughter's independence ($r = .79$). Thus, the more freedom mothers and daughters enjoyed from excessive guilt, resentment, mistrust and anger around each other, the more daughters reported their relationships were emotionally positive, and the more they reported that their mothers supported their independence. This makes intuitive sense, because freedom from conflict seems a requirement for a positive emotional relationship characterized by adequate support for another's autonomy.

Second, it was predicted that elements of both psychological separation and parent attachment would be significantly negatively related to the frequency and level of detail of mother's disclosures about divorce-related topics. One of the four elements of psychological separation, and two of the three elements of parent attachment, behaved as predicted. Conflictual independence was strongly negatively related to mother's disclosure of divorce related topics (-.61 and -.66 for level of detail and frequency of disclosures, respectively). The *more* the relationship was characterized by freedom from guilt, resentment, anger, anxiety, and mistrust, the *less* mothers disclosed to their daughters about divorce related topics. An easier way of stating this is: mothers who disclosed frequently and in great detail to their daughters about divorced related topics also tended to have daughters who reported their relationships to be excessively angry, anxious, resentful, and mistrustful. Affective quality of the mother-daughter relationship and the mother's support for daughter's independence were both significantly negatively related to mothers' disclosures (both frequency and detail level). The more mother-

daughter relationships were described as emotionally positive and supportive of the daughter's independence, the less mothers disclosed to their daughters about the divorce and related issues.

Finally, it was predicted that elements of mother-daughter separation and mother-daughter attachment would be positively correlated with daughters' positive attitudes toward marriage, and use of exploration strategies in the domain of marriage. Attitudinal independence from the mother was the only separation variable significantly related to daughters' attitudes toward marriage ($r = -.50$), and it was correlated in the opposite direction from that expected. It had been thought that women who disagreed with their mothers on other important topics would also disagree with their mothers about divorce, and would have positive attitudes about heterosexual marriage. However, the pilot study results indicated that the more independence women had from their mothers in terms of attitudes held about important topics, the *less* positive their views toward marriage. It is possible that college aged daughters who broke away from mothers' views about other important topics also rejected their mothers' marital pattern, which began with marriage. Thus, the attitudinal break with mothers may have been about getting married in the first place, rather than about getting divorced. It is also possible that some daughters of heterosexual mothers did not self-identify as heterosexual themselves; because this question was not asked in the pilot study, we cannot know for certain. Because attitudinal independence was unrelated to other mother-daughter relationship variables, it does not seem to be an indicator of unhealthy separation from or enmeshment to the mother, but simply of less positive views toward heterosexual marriage. Emotional independence

from the mother was *negatively* related to exploration strategies in the domain of marriage ($r = -.50$). This finding was in opposition to the original hypothesis, which stated that elements of psychological separation (including emotional independence) would be *positively* related to use of exploration strategies in the domain of marriage. The pilot study results indicated instead that the less reliance girls reported on their mothers' approval, closeness, and emotional support, the *less* they reported exploring their own ideas about marriage. None of the parent attachment variables were significantly related to either the daughter's views toward marriage or to her exploration strategies around marriage.

These preliminary findings from the pilot study should be considered with caution, given the small sample size and low response rate. However, they indicate that some of these variables are linked in meaningful ways, and that the study should proceed with a larger sample of women.

The third goal of the pilot study was to test the clarity and ease of use of the instruments. Based on observation of participants' response, few changes are deemed necessary to the instruments used. Questions about eligibility will be incorporated into the demographic questionnaire and removed from the invitational email. This means that more data will be collected than is needed, but it also means that 1) the email will be shorter and easier to read; 2) the responsibility for determining eligibility for the study will be on the researcher rather than on the participants, thus decreasing confusion and errors; and 3) a more accurate response rate can be determined. As a result of this change, the MADS subscales, which only apply to AOD, will need a "not applicable" option to

all questions, and a sentence added to the directions instructing those whose biological parents have never divorced to answer “not applicable” to all items. Finally, a question about sexual orientation will be added to the demographic portion. Obviously, sexual orientation will affect a woman’s views about heterosexual marriage for herself.

The fourth goal of the pilot study was to test the emailing strategy. As stated in the previous paragraph, there seemed to be some confusion around the initial invitation email, which originally included the eligibility requirements for the survey. Several students evidenced their confusion about these requirements in their personal emails to the principal investigator, and one student completed the survey despite the fact that she did not meet all the requirements. Many other students may have chosen not to participate at all because they were confused by the list of requirements, or put off by the bulkiness of the email. The eligibility requirements will instead be included in the survey itself, where they will be listed as individual questions and answered one at a time by all respondents. Responses will then be sorted according to responses to these questions, so that responses from eligible participants only will be used.

The fifth goal of the pilot study was to test the use of the on-line survey format. Based on the observation that three students began but never completed the survey, instructions about completing the survey at a later time will be deleted from the consent page. Although surveymonkey does allow a respondent to begin a survey, leave it, and log in later to complete it, respondents must return to the same computer in order to complete this process. Since many students use one of the on-campus computer labs, this would be difficult or impossible for some.

Limitations

Due to the small size ($n = 15$) of the pilot sample, these results need to be considered with caution. In the larger study, a much larger sample of women will be contacted ($n = 3,700$) in order to obtain a minimum sample size large enough to draw significant conclusions.

The low response rate limits the generalizability of these results. The pilot study was conducted in early December, immediately before and during the final exam period at UNCG. The larger study will be conducted mid-semester and will not interfere with students' final exam schedule. It actually was impossible to determine the exact response rate in this study because it was unknown how many subjects were ineligible to participate, and how many simply chose not to. In the larger study, eligibility screening will take place at the level of data sorting, rather than with the initial emailed invitation to participate, thus transferring the responsibility from the students to the principal investigator. Students will simply be invited to participate, and will answer the eligibility questions as they complete the survey. Responses from those who are eligible will then be separated out from those who are ineligible. This screening method will allow the researcher to accurately estimate the response rate. It also is hoped that, by eliminating confusion about eligibility and shortening the invitation email, more students will choose to participate.

The respondents in the pilot study were almost entirely Caucasian, making testing of differential trends among African-American and Caucasian women impossible. It is

hoped that by obtaining a larger sample size, a large enough group of African-American women will respond to allow for such testing.