THE EFFECTS OF PARENTAL DIVORCE AND CONFLICT
ON ADOLESCENT SEPARATION-INDIVIDUATION

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

Greg Marsh, B.S., M.S.
Denton, Texas
August, 1993
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The influence of parental marital status and parental conflict on the separation-individuation process of college students was investigated in the present study. Past studies have suggested that parental divorce and parental conflict accelerate separation. However, no studies have measured more than one dimension of separation-individuation. In this study the process of separation-individuation was operationalized as involving three dimensions: psychological separation from parents (Psychological Separation Inventory); emotional attachments to parents and peers (Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment); and the development of an identity (Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status). The sample consisted of 120 male and 120 female undergraduates between the ages of 18 and 22, one-half with parents who were married and one-half with parents who had divorced in the last five years. Subjects completed self-report measures of parental conflict, psychological separation, attachment to parents and to peers, and identity status. Predictions that parental conflict would affect students in intact families
differently than their peers with divorced parents were not supported. Instead, parental divorce and conflict were found to have different effects on the components of the separation-individuation process. Subjects reporting higher parental conflict levels described more independent functioning, more negative feelings toward parents, less attachment to parents and to peers, and greater exploration of identity-related issues in comparison to those reporting low levels of conflict. Subjects with parents who had recently divorced reported lower attachment to parents, and greater identity exploration and reluctance to commit to an identity than subjects from intact families. Males reported greater independence from and less attachment to parents, and had committed to an identity without exploration less often than females. Results suggest that parental divorce and conflict may influence adolescent development in different ways. Exploratory analyses suggested that measures of conflict style are more highly related to indices of separation-individuation than measures of the amount of parental conflict. Theoretical and methodological issues are discussed.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The effects of recent parental divorce and conflict on adolescent separation-individuation are the focus of the current study. Divorce has become increasingly prevalent in the United States in the last 30 years. Current predictions are that half of all marriages will ultimately end in divorce. As awareness of this phenomenon has grown, interest in how parental divorce affects children has also increased. Wallerstein and Kelly’s longitudinal studies (Kelly, 1981; Wallerstein, 1983, 1985, 1987; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980) showed that children have many negative feelings following divorce, and that they commonly attribute the cause of these feelings to the divorce event. Other researchers have found that parent-child relationships typically suffer following a divorce, when parents are commonly less physically and emotionally available to children.

One methodological issue in the divorce literature is the lack of attention to other pertinent family variables commonly associated with parental divorce. As Emery’s (1982) review pointed out, parental conflict is one such
variable that commands attention when studying the effects of divorce on children. One of the main reasons why divorce so often creates difficulties for children is that it is accompanied by conflict between the parents. Although attention to the importance of conflict is growing, many researchers are still attributing the effects of divorce to the breakup itself, with little or no attention to concurrent variables such as conflict.

Going beyond Emery's (1982) conclusion that parental conflict is probably more important than divorce in determining child outcomes, writers have recently begun to discuss the possibility that conflict may have different effects in divorced and intact families. Initial attempts to examine the combination of divorce and conflict have demonstrated that these two variables interact in affecting parent-adolescent relationships.

The focus of the current study was the impact of divorce and conflict on late adolescents, rather than on younger children. Much of the literature examined a range of age groups or younger children, and the assumption has been that the impact of divorce is relatively uniform regardless of the age of the child. However, developmental theorists agree that the impact of trauma or loss during childhood may be exhibited as disruption in the developmental processes most salient for that child. Surprisingly, a developmental model has been applied
infrequently to the effects of divorce. For example, the age of children has been related to divorce without taking into account the particular developmental tasks important at that age. The focus of this research has been on whether younger children suffer more than older ones. More useful investigations might focus on whether the age and salient developmental tasks of children are important variables in predicting the effects of parental divorce.

The present study investigated whether divorce and conflict are impacting a salient developmental task for adolescents, separation-individuation. This process marks the beginning of becoming mature, self-reliant, independent adults. Adolescents must separate and individuate to successfully make the transition from childhood to adulthood.

The process of separation-individuation is thought to operate on several dimensions. The first of these dimensions involves adolescents' relationships with parents. Adolescents typically begin to separate emotionally and attitudinally from their parents, becoming gradually less dependent and reliant on parents to meet their needs. As they do so, they also begin to shift the focus of their interpersonal attachments from family to peers, developing extrafamilial friendships and heterosexual relationships of increasing importance while diminishing their reliance on family. This changing nature of peer relationships
represents a second dimension of this process. A third dimension of separation-individuation involves the development of an independent identity.

Theory conceptualizes separation-individuation as involving changes in these three interacting dimensions. Divorce and conflict have been related to separation from parents, changes in peer activity, and identity development, but only as distinct dimensions. No studies have investigated all three dimensions of the separation-individuation process simultaneously. The literature relating divorce and conflict to each of the three component dimensions of separation-individuation will thus be reviewed separately.

Parent-Adolescent Relationships

The relationship between parental divorce and conflict and adolescents' separation from parents has been discussed by several theorists. Under normal conditions, adolescents progressively become less dependent on parents in terms of guidance, attitudes, emotional and financial support, etc. Daniels (1990) points out that successful separation is affected by the presence of parental conflict and the quality of the parental relationship, as well as the accomplishment of previous developmental tasks by the child. Citing Emery's (1982) exploration of the relative effects of parental conflict and parental divorce on children, Daniels (1990) concludes that these two family variables probably
operate additively in leading to unhealthy resolution of the adolescent’s separation task. Because of this, Daniels (1990) claims that "adolescents from nontraditional families may have more barriers to overcome in order to successfully complete the separation-individuation tasks."

A key point in understanding why parental divorce and conflict may have detrimental effects on adolescent separation from parents is that this dimension is thought to be facilitated by the availability of a consistent home environment, rather than by a simple decrease in exposure to parents. As Kaplan (1987) points out, "emphasis on the developmental task [of separation from parents] should not obscure appreciation of the adolescent's need for stable, reliable parents." Daniels (1990) is consistent, saying it is necessary for the adolescent to maintain contact with each parent during the separation-individuation process and to remain a working member of the family. As Daniels (1990) points out, it is common in families in which the parents are divorced that the children have decreased exposure to the noncustodial, and sometimes to the custodial, parent. She theorizes that this decreased exposure impedes separation because it limits the adolescent’s ability to separate emotionally from the distant parent, gain closure on the ending parent-child bond, and successfully develop a new, adult-adult relationship. Jacobson and Jacobson (1987) have also pointed to the importance of maintenance of
healthy relationships with parents as children adjust to divorce. They list the quality of the relationship with each parent and the amount of time lost with each parent as two important factors in determining how well children cope with parental divorce.

Writers in the developmental literature have made specific predictions of how parental divorce and conflict might disrupt the separation-individuation process. Kalter (1987) discusses how a compromise may be attempted between needs to separate and needs to remain attached to family. He describes three common resolutions to such conflicts: 1) regression to a more dependent, child-like stage, 2) assumption of a pseudomature stance, or 3) an increase in antisocial behavior. Daniels (1990) also points out that pseudomaturity is common in this population. Developmental theorists appear to agree that the presence of parental divorce and conflict are important influences on the process of psychological separation from parents. What is less clear is what form this influence takes. Further empirical research is warranted to investigate whether conflict and divorce impede separation, leading to a more dependent relationship with parents, or whether these variables cause separation to be accelerated or facilitated.

The relationship between divorce, conflict, and changes in parent-adolescent relationships has been empirically investigated by a number of researchers. Initial
descriptive studies by White, Brinkerhoff and Booth (1985) and Fine, Moreland, and Schwebel (1983) indicated that college students who have experienced parental divorce often have a less positive view of their relationships with parents, especially the noncustodial parent. These perceptions are more negative when parental conflict is present. Other descriptive evidence has suggested that college students’ perceptions of their family environments in general (Kennedy, 1985) and of their parents in particular (Boyd, Nunn & Parish, 1983; Parish, 1981; Parish & Wigle, 1985) are detrimentally affected by parental divorce. While these studies suggest that college students with divorced parents see many aspects of their families more negatively than do their intact-family peers, they offer few specifics about the parent-adolescent relationship. It cannot be determined whether these negative attitudes lead to actual differences in how adolescents separate from parents. Another limitation of these studies is that most did not also attend to the potential contributory role of parental conflict. It is possible that effects that might better be explained by the presence of parental conflict have been attributed to the occurrence parental divorce.

The connection between parental divorce and conflict and parent-adolescent separation has been investigated by the home-leaving literature. These studies are designed to
determine why adolescents leave home, and the degree of health or appropriateness of these different reasons. Such methodology more directly tests the theoretical hypothesis that parental conflict and divorce hasten a less-healthy separation. If separation (operationalized as home-leaving) is occurring when the adolescent is developmentally ready, reasons for leaving home should be relatively healthy. In contrast, if the adolescent is leaving home when he or she is ill-prepared for such a transition, this should be reflected in the reasons for doing so. Such premature home-leaving might appear as an emotion-laden, premature detachment from parents, rather than a normal life transition. Moore and Hotch (1982) found that feelings of "emotional separation" from the family (i.e., "feeling of being a visitor when at home," "feeling of not belonging at home anymore") were an important reason for having left home among males from divorced families, but not for males in intact homes or for females with either married or divorced parents. The variable of emotional separation, perhaps better described as emotional detachment or distance, has previously been related to difficult or troubled home leaving among adolescents (Moore & Hotch, 1982). These findings suggest that male college students with divorced parents experience more troublesome home-leaving (separation) than do their female peers or their male peers in intact families.
Another study in this area (Proulx & Koulack, 1987) improved on Moore and Hotch's (1982) methodology by attending to the effects of parental conflict, rather than to parental divorce only. These authors replicated Moore and Hotch's (1982) finding that "emotional separation" was an important home-leaving indicator for subjects (especially males) with divorced parents. The authors also found that subjects were more likely to say they would leave home to increase feelings of personal control (autonomy), and to feel more positive about leaving home, as divorce-related parental conflict was more openly expressed. This suggests subjects were anxious to leave the conflictual home atmosphere for one in which they had more control. Thus, divorce and conflict were related to different reasons for leaving home. A highly conflictual family environment produces in college students a need to leave home in order to gain control over their own lives and to get away from the conflict. Reasons for leaving home after divorce were related to the loss of a comfortable home environment and to feelings of not belonging. These home-leaving studies suggest that college students with divorced parents conceptualize leaving home as a means of distancing themselves from an uncomfortable environment, and that the presence of parental conflict adds further urgency to the need to leave. This evidence is consistent with theoretical predictions that adolescents in families of divorce and
parental conflict may move toward independence from parents before they are emotionally ready for such changes. Such a conclusion is tentative, however, since independence from parents involves more than a physical separation.

To investigate whether family variables impacted how college students separated from parents psychologically, Lopez, Campbell, and Watkins investigated the relationships among parental marital conflict, family structure, college students' psychological separation from parents, and college adjustment in a series of studies (1986, 1988, 1989a, 1989b). Because they operationalized separation as a psychological and multidimensional construct, the authors utilized a different instrument, the Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI; Hoffman, 1984), to measure separation from parents. The PSI is a self-report instrument yielding scores on four types of psychological separation from each parent. Such methodology is an improvement over home-leaving studies because it allows for the conceptualization of separation as involving more than only a physical event. However, the investigators did not examine divorce and conflict together in any of these studies; instead they studied their effects in separate analyses.

In one study, the authors (1988) identified two distinct patterns of relationships between marital conflict, family structure, and separation patterns. This suggested
that the overall health and differentiation of the family influence the way marital conflict effects separation. The first pattern indicated that marital conflict, when accompanied by inappropriate family structure (parent-child overinvolvement, role reversals, and fear of separation), was related to problematic separation from parents. The second pattern suggested that marital conflict within an otherwise well-differentiated family structure was conducive to healthy psychological separation, while an absence of such conflict led to a more dependent, less separated position on the part of the adolescent. These findings suggest that the impact of conflict on adolescents depends on the overall level of health of the parent-child relationships. In any case, parental marital conflict plays an important role in how adolescents separate psychologically from their parents.

In another study, Lopez et al. (1989a) examined more directly the importance of parental marital status in adolescent separation. The authors used the PSI and found that the separation of college students with divorced parents was distinct from that of their intact-family peers. Students with divorced parents showed higher levels of functional and emotional independence from fathers and higher levels of attitudinal independence from both parents relative to their peers from intact families. However, these adolescents showed significantly lower levels of
conflictual independence from both parents, suggesting that they may be separating sooner, but more conflictually.

The possibility that parental divorce and conflict interact to affect separation from parents has been examined and clarified by Marsh (1990). His sample of 140 college students (70 from intact and 70 from divorced homes) completed measures of parental conflict and of psychological separation from parents, as well as other measures of college student functioning. Results indicated that the perceived level of conflict between parents affected students' psychological separation in different ways depending on whether their parents were married or divorced, supporting the interaction hypothesis. These variables predominantly affected students' separation from their fathers, although relationships with mothers were somewhat affected. For students in intact families, higher levels of parental conflict were associated with greater dependence on fathers. Conversely, students whose parents were divorced and experiencing higher levels of conflict exhibited more functional and emotional independence from their fathers but became more involved with angry and resentful feelings toward both parents. This pattern suggests that students in intact families respond to increasing parental conflict by "moving toward" their fathers emotionally and functionally, while students with divorced parents respond by "moving away" from the need for emotional support and functional
assistance from fathers. This pattern is also consistent with Lopez et al. (1989a), adding strength to the hypothesis that parental conflict affects adolescents differently depending on whether their parents are divorced.

**Summary**

There is no empirical support for the first of Kalter’s (1987) predictions, that adolescents of divorce regress to a more dependent relationship with parents. In general, the literature supports the second prediction, indicating that adolescents whose parents are divorced and experiencing conflict are more independent of parents than their intact-family peers. What is less clear from the empirical literature is whether this increased independence is a healthy maturity or the pseudomaturity predicted by Kalter (1987) and Daniels (1990). However, there is some suggestion that separating from parents under conditions of divorce and parental conflict is less healthy than under other conditions.

The first indication that this greater independence is not healthy concerns the perceptions such adolescents have of their parents and home life. Adolescents whose parents have divorced have more negative perceptions of their parents and their family environments. These perceptions become even more negative if parental conflict is also present (Boyd et al., 1983; Fine et al., 1983; Kennedy,

A second indication of the unhealthy nature of divorced-family adolescents' independence concerns their reasons for leaving home. Adolescents with divorced parents leave home for less healthy reasons than their intact-family peers, and parental conflict accelerates adolescents' wishes to leave home (Moore & Hotch, 1982; Proulx & Koulack, 1987).

It appears that psychologically separating from parents is also more conflictual, and therefore less healthy, for adolescents whose families have experienced parental divorce than for those whose parents are still married (Lopez et al., 1989b; Marsh, 1990). However, parental divorce does not provide the entire explanatory picture, since parental conflict has been shown to play an interactive role. Students indicating the presence of higher levels of parental conflict were more dependent on their fathers' emotional and functional support, expressed attitudes that were more dissimilar with their fathers', and were more angry and resentful toward both parents. In intact families, adolescents responded to conflict by relying more on their fathers in many ways (Marsh, 1990).

Adolescent Peer Relationships

A second aspect of the adolescent separation-individuation process involves making a gradual shift from reliance on parents to focusing on one's
extrafamilial environment (friends and dating partners) as the primary source of emotional attachments. Adolescents begin to put relatively more importance on friendships and dating, as well as to spend increasing amounts of time away from parents and home. Developmental theorists (Blos, 1962; Havighurst, 1972; Kalter, 1987; Kaplan, 1987; Laufer, 1968, 1976; Sorosky, 1977) have consistently acknowledged the important role of making this shift toward peer group involvement in healthy adolescent development. Sorosky (1977) describes how adolescents typically transfer their "interest and emotional attachments" from the family to peers. Kalter (1987) discusses how the "peer culture becomes decidedly ascendant in the emotional life of adolescents," while parent-child relationships begin to lose their primacy.

Greenberg, Siegel, and Leitch (1983) also discuss the relative importance of parents and peers in adolescent development. The authors review studies indicating that both parents and peers remain salient throughout adolescence, and that under certain circumstances parents are preferred over peers, and vice versa. For instance, in situations involving values and future decision making, the advice of parents is preferred to that of peers. However, when adolescents perceive their parents to be rejecting or indifferent, they may utilize peers for support more than parents. This latter scenario is particularly salient to
the present study, since such perceptions of parents are common in situations of parental divorce and conflict.

The roles of parental divorce and conflict in affecting this normative developmental progression away from family and toward peer involvement have been considered by several authors. Kaplan (1987) contrasts adolescents in divorced families with the "normative" adolescent, who "launches himself or herself outward from the stable, empathetic family." If the level of parental support lessens following a divorce, as it commonly does, Kaplan (1987) predicts that the adolescent will turn to the peer group as a "substitute family," apparently to satisfy unmet emotional needs for closeness and acceptance.

Certain issues related to the effects of divorce and conflict follow from this theoretical review. It is important to further investigate whether adolescents from divorced families shift the locus of their interpersonal relationships from parents to peers, and if they do so differently than adolescents whose parents are still married. The interactive role of parental conflict in affecting this shift also needs attention. Perhaps such conflict leads to a reluctance to become engaged in relationships, or to a greater reliance on extrafamilial bonds. It would also be important to investigate whether adolescents are less satisfied with their peer relationships as a result of such a shift.
A review of the empirical literature indicates that no investigations have directly examined the predicted interpersonal shift from parents to peers. Researchers have indirectly explored how divorce and conflict impact the social functioning of adolescents in a number of ways, however. These studies provide some initial insight into whether adolescents' interpersonal functioning is affected by parental divorce and conflict.

One research method has been to relate these variables to a general measure of interpersonal functioning. In one study (Marsh, 1990) relating parental marital status and parental conflict to measures of common problems and separation patterns of college students, parental divorce was related to a higher number of self-reported problems with social relationships. The results of studies relating parental conflict to general interpersonal functioning are inconsistent, as high parental conflict has been separately demonstrated to have no effect on the level of such problems in one study (Marsh, 1990), but to be associated with lower levels of social adjustment in another investigation (Lopez et al., 1989b). Although more replication studies would normally be called for in the face of such inconsistency, it is probably more fruitful to pursue the relationship between divorce and conflict to dependent variables more specific than general social adjustment.
Divorce and conflict have been related to peer relationship development by looking at the number of relationships engaged in by adolescents. If parental divorce and conflict inhibit the development of extrafamilial relationships, then fewer such bonds would be expected. Conversely, if divorce and conflict somehow encourage extrafamilial social activity, then a greater number of relationships might result. Overall, it appears that parental divorce is associated with a propensity on the part of adolescents to form dating relationships at a greater rate than their intact-family peers (Hepworth, Ryder & Dreyer, 1984). Researchers have also found that adolescents of divorce have more relationships than their peers who have lost a parent by death, and have more sexual partners than others (Hepworth et al., 1984). Adolescents with divorced parents are also more likely to engage in specific behaviors such as premarital sex and cohabitation, (Booth, Brinkerhoff & White, 1984; Hepworth et al., 1984). However, others have found that adolescents with divorced parents do not differ from those from intact families in terms of past or present dating experience (Greenberg & Nay, 1982).

The role of conflict in the relationship between divorce and the heterosexual activity level of adolescents has been investigated somewhat. Conflict has been shown to affect heterosexual activity differently depending on
whether it occurs before or after a divorce (Booth et al., 1984). Adolescents whose parents exhibit high levels of conflict pre-divorce are more heterosexually active than those with low-conflict parents. However, when conflict continues after a divorce, adolescents have been shown to be less likely to date frequently. It appears that parental divorce is associated with generally greater heterosexual activity in adolescents. Parental conflict may also lead to greater activity, unless it continues past the actual parental divorce. Perhaps adolescents attempt to meet needs in other relationships that are left unmet by family turmoil. They may become discouraged or pessimistic about the potential for healthy relationships if their own parents continue to interact conflictually.

A third group of findings involves the likelihood of adolescents forming committed, intimate relationships. It may be that adolescents whose parents are divorced and/or conflictual are hesitant to become emotionally intimate with others. The opposite possibility is also feasible, that such adolescents are eager to participate in committed bonds with others, perhaps to get needs met that cannot be met within the family. Empirical investigations of this relationship are somewhat inconsistent. It has been separately demonstrated that parental divorce is associated with a greater likelihood to be in committed relationships (Hepworth et al., 1984), and that parental breakup has no
effect on whether adolescents will form long-term bonds (Booth et al., 1984). Kobrin & Waite (1984) found that adolescents with divorced parents are less likely to marry during the most common years, perhaps suggesting reluctance to commit to a long-term relationship.

A final research method involves adolescents' level of satisfaction with their heterosexual behavior. It is conceivable that, if adolescents are entering relationships with a high level of emotional need, or if they are seeking to fill a void left by their parents' divorce, they may inevitably become dissatisfied if these needs go unmet. However, the empirical literature offers little support for this idea. Only one study (Booth et al., 1984) was found that investigated the variable of relationship satisfaction. The investigators operationalized satisfaction in four ways. No differences were found between college students from divorced and intact homes on three of the four questions. Equal percentages of both groups judged their relationships to be less than "very happy," had threatened to break up their current relationships, and had reported difficulty in dating people with whom they thought they could develop a serious relationship. Students with divorced parents were found to be less satisfied than their intact-family peers with the frequency of dating. These findings suggest that parental divorce has little effect on college students' level of happiness with their dating activity. Conflict
also may have little effect, unless it continues after divorce. Under such conditions, adolescents reported being less satisfied with their current dating partner than did their peers whose parental conflict diminished after divorce.

Summary

Overall, this evidence is consistent with the prediction that adolescents in divorced families will shift their attachments to peers, although the specifics of this relationship remain unclear. While it appears that such adolescents are relying more on heterosexual relationships, whether this is satisfying is less clear. As previously discussed, Sorosky (1977) delineates three possible ways in which parental divorce might interfere with the heterosexual relationship development of adolescents. The first two mutually exclusive possibilities, that adolescents may fear getting emotionally involved or that they may get overly involved in an attempt to fill an emotional void, have been empirically explored. There is no empirical support for the claim that such adolescents would be reluctant to pursue or form relationships, and only limited evidence that they are less likely to make emotional commitments within relationships (Kobrin & Waite, 1984). The opposite possibility has received greater empirical support. Adolescents with divorced parents demonstrate greater heterosexual activity (Hepworth et al., 1984) and a greater
likelihood to form commitments (Booth et al., 1984; Greenberg & Nay, 1982; Hepworth et al., 1984), although this latter finding is somewhat inconsistent.

A related theoretical point is that, if adolescents are transferring their attachments to their dating partners, this kind of pressure might result in dissatisfaction, since these relationships should not be able to meet all the needs left unmet by the family breakup. However, no empirical evidence was found supporting this explanation, as parental divorce had no effect on satisfaction with relationships (Booth et al., 1984).

Sorosky's (1977) hypothesis that parental conflict during a divorce would also interfere with the relationship development of adolescents, by providing ineffective communication modeling, has not been empirically tested. However, the impact of parental conflict on dating activity and satisfaction with relationships has been explored. Parental conflict that continues after a divorce is associated with less frequent heteroerosexual activity and a lower level of satisfaction with this activity (Booth et al., 1984).

Finally, several comments are required concerning this body of literature. First, a general lack of replication was found, reducing the firmness of any conclusions regarding support or nonsupport for theory. Second, no studies have directly tested the specific relationship
patterns that are theoretically consequent to parental divorce and conflict. A third point involves the selection of dependent variables. Most studies in this area involved attention to heterosexual relationships only, with no attention to peer group activity. The two studies involving measures of general social adjustment are exceptions (Lopez et al., 1989b; Marsh, 1990). A final point involves conceptualization. No studies were found that directly examined the transition from family relationships to those with peers. Although the above evidence indirectly suggests that divorce and conflict impact the transition from family to peers, the hypothesis has yet to be tested directly. In order to accomplish this, methodology would need to be employed which allowed for statements concerning the relative importance of, and involvement in, family and peer relationships.

Adolescent Identity Development

Finally, developmental theory describes a third dimension of adolescent separation-individuation, the development of an independent and stable identity. In his object-relational formulation, Blos (1962) describes adolescence as a second individuation period, a process involving a reorganization of the ego. This reworking of the ego means that it is no longer defined in terms of the parental figures, but as independent of them. Boundaries between the self and parents become more clear, distinct,
and differentiated. Difficulty operationalizing this formulation has limited its empirical application.

Erikson (1956, 1963) described identity formation as a lifelong process which comes to the forefront during adolescence. He conceptualized the crisis of identity vs. role confusion as primarily a psychosocial process, involving both an "exploration" period of experimenting with various roles and ideals, and a relatively stable and enduring "commitment" to an identity. Thus, the development of an identity provides a definition of both self and a place in the larger community. For identity to be achieved healthily, both components must be experienced.

An important addition to the empirical study of adolescent identity development was later made by Marcia (1966, 1976, 1980, 1988), who operationalized Erikson's (1956, 1963) conceptualization of identity. Marcia, like Erikson, sees identity development as a process, marked first by the questioning of previously accepted, parentally influenced values and ideals. The adolescent normally reevaluates the efficacy of these beliefs before finally committing to an identity that is more self-determined. Marcia's main contribution to the study of identity has been to define operationally four ways in which an adolescent might attempt to deal with the identity issue (1966, 1976). Each of these "statuses" differs as to the experience of a "crisis," or exploration of alternatives, and the degree to
which the adolescent has made a commitment in each of two areas (occupation and ideology):

1. Those who are "identity achieved" have experienced a crisis or exploration period and have subsequently committed to a self-chosen occupational and ideological path.

2. Those who are "foreclosed" have prematurely committed to an occupation and ideology that has been predominantly chosen by others rather than self-chosen, and have not experienced a crisis.

3. Those who are "diffused" may or may not have experienced crisis, but have not yet made commitments to occupational or ideological positions.

4. Those in "moratorium" are currently in the midst of a crisis, and have thus not yet made enduring commitments.

Much of the research in the area of adolescent identity development has utilized the identity statuses.

Although no developmental theorist has directly discussed how parental divorce and conflict might impact identity development, Marcia (1988) discusses the role of parent-child relationships, a variable that could potentially be related to parental marital turmoil. He states that the parenting style most facilitative to identity formation involves comfort both with the adolescent’s needs for dependency and with his or her explorative efforts. It is feasible that parental divorce and conflict might interfere with or impede healthy identity
development, as the adolescent's energy goes into dealing with the stress in the home. Parents may unwittingly put pressure on an adolescent to remain at home more, or to remain consistent and stable in the face of the instability of the marriage. A second possibility also seems feasible, but is the opposite of the first. Perhaps marital conflict and divorce serves to facilitate the development of an independent identity in adolescent offspring. Parents may encourage independence, self-direction, and autonomy as they become less available physically and emotionally.

Despite the large amount of empirical interest in the identity paradigm, relatively little research has been done relating it to family variables such as divorce and parental conflict. Only three studies have directly examined the relationship between parental divorce and adolescent identity status development. No studies have incorporated parental conflict as a salient variable, although one investigation related variables indirectly linked with divorce and conflict to identity.

St. Clair and Day (1979), utilizing an interview procedure designed by Marcia (1966), found that half of a sample of female high-school seniors were currently involved in exploration, but had not yet made firm commitments (in "moratorium"). The other three identity statuses were equally represented by the remaining subjects. However, the investigators found a significantly different pattern in the
subjects from disrupted homes (either from divorce or parental death). Two-thirds of these subjects had gone through a period of exploration and had made occupational and ideological commitments ("identity achieved"), while only 18% were in moratorium. The remaining subjects were not currently exploring identity options, and were about equally divided between those who had prematurely committed ("foreclosed," 7%) and those who had made no commitments ("diffused," 9%). Although the authors did not control for parental conflict or for the time of the divorce, these results suggest that parental divorce facilitates identity achievement in late adolescents.

Grossman, Shea, and Adams (1980) utilized three different measures theoretically linked with ego functioning in an investigation of the effects of divorce on identity development. Among other instruments, subjects completed an incomplete-sentences blank based on Marcia’s formulations (1966). Results indicated that subjects whose parents had divorced had higher identity scores on the Marcia instrument than did subjects from intact families. The interaction of subject sex and family background was also significant, indicating that males from divorced homes had significantly higher identity scores than males from intact homes or females from divorced or intact homes. It appears that parental divorce may be associated with an earlier identity formation, at least as defined by Marcia (1966, 1976), for
male college students. This finding is consistent with St. Clair and Day (1979), strengthening the possibility that divorce operates to encourage or facilitate identity achievement in late adolescents. Limitations of this study include the lack of attention to parental conflict and the relatively small sample size of parental-divorce subjects. Also, the authors report that 92% of the divorce sample experienced parental breakup between the ages of 3 and 7. Because of the long timespan between the divorce and the time of the study, the possibility of intervening events that might also impact identity development is quite high.

Streitmatter (1987) found a somewhat similar pattern in a sample of 7th graders, although results were not as strong. Utilizing an objective ego identity measure based on Marcia's (1966, 1976) formulation of the construct, the author found that the identity statuses of achievement and moratorium were not related to parental marital status. However, students in intact families were significantly more likely than their peers with divorced parents to have made a premature commitment without experiencing a crisis or exploration period ("foreclosed"). This finding suggests that in intact families there is more hindrance to the exploration of alternatives.

Several issues deserve comment at this point. Although one study (Grossman et al., 1980) indicated that parental divorce may facilitate identity achievement, while another
(Streitmatter, 1987) found no relationship between identity achievement and parental marital status, the fact that the age of the samples was very different makes firm conclusions very difficult to draw concerning this possible relationship. It may be that tasks relevant to identity achievement are not yet salient for young adolescents. Another possibility is that, at certain ages, parental divorce hinders identity exploration and commitment, while at other ages it facilitates such work.

Only one study offers support for the hypothesis that parental divorce and conflict might inhibit identity development. Jordan (1971; cited in Bourne, 1978) related the availability of parents to the identity statuses of college students. Although parental conflict and divorce were not assessed, parental availability is an aspect of family environment that may be related to divorce and conflict. Results indicated that the degree of availability of parents, especially fathers, was a key factor in predicting identity statuses. Those who had made a premature commitment ("foreclosed" status) were more likely to be very close to parents, especially to fathers. They also reported viewing their parents as consistently accepting and encouraging, suggesting that consistent availability is not necessarily conducive to healthy identity development. Adolescents classified as "identity diffused" were more likely to see their parents as detached,
uninvolved, and unconcerned, suggesting that too little availability is also not conducive to identity development. Students in the process of exploration (moratorium), as well as those labeled "identity achieved" were more likely to have parents that were equally accepting and rejecting. These findings suggest that, when adolescents perceive their parents as unavailable or too available, the development of an achieved identity status is hindered. A parenting style which is accepting and supportive, but at the same time encouraging of independence, is most conducive to the healthy development of identity. Since parental divorce and conflict have been related to parental unavailability, it follows, though indirectly, that they may also negatively impact identity development.

Summary

There is consistent empirical support indicating that parental divorce serves to encourage or facilitate development of an identity in late adolescents. The idea that divorce inhibits development of an identity has not received empirical support. Using a variety of methodologies, all based on Marcia’s (1966, 1976) constructs, researchers (Grossman et al., 1980; St. Clair & Day, 1979) found that students with divorced parents were more identity achieved than their intact-family peers. Another study (Streitmatter, 1987) offered weaker support, showing that adolescents from intact families are more
likely to make a commitment without going through an exploration process (foreclosure). Differences in identity achievement were not found, but this may be because tasks relevant to identity achievement are not yet salient for young adolescents. A final study (Jordan, 1971; cited in Bourne, 1978) provided further support that the quality of the family environment is linked to identity development. This study provides the only available support that parental conflict may impact identity, although this link is indirect.

These conclusions must remain tentative, however, as several important methodological issues are present. The first issue involves instrumentation. Although all studies used instruments based on Marcia’s identity statuses (1966, 1976), they ranged from interview, to incomplete sentences, to an objective questionnaire. Comparison of these studies is thus difficult. A second methodological issue involves the ages of the samples. If identity is conceptualized as a developmental process, only subjects for which identity is a salient issue should be included. Streitmatter’s (1987) 7th-grade sample is probably too young to be involved with tasks relevant to identity achievement, whereas the high-school and college-aged samples reviewed are more appropriate. A final issue relevant to the present study is the lack of attention to parental conflict. No studies were found that attended to this variable directly. One question
that warrants research attention is whether parental conflict inhibits or facilitates identity development. It may be that the presence of conflict leads to a premature and thus less healthy resolution of identity concerns. Another possibility, however, is that conflict between parents provides an impetus for adolescents to explore identity issues and is thus facilitative. A further research question that warrants attention involves the possible interactive role of parental marital status. It may be that the effects of parental conflict are different in intact families relative to those broken by divorce.

Review Summary

The empirical literature is fairly consistent in indicating that parental divorce is related to greater separation or individuation in each of the three areas reviewed. This is consistent with the view that parental divorce either accelerates or facilitates each of these dimensions. Studies involving parental conflict as a salient variable are less numerous and less direct. The strongest and most consistent evidence involves the dimension of adolescent psychological separation from parents. Late adolescents with divorced parents have been found to have more negative perceptions of their parents (Boyd et al., 1983; Fine et al., 1983; Kennedy, 1985; Parish, 1981; Parish & Wigle, 1985; White et al., 1985), to leave home for less healthy reasons (Moore & Hotch, 1982;
Proulx & Koulack, 1987), and to separate psychologically sooner but more conflictually (Lopez et al., 1989b; Marsh, 1990). When parental conflict is also at a high level, these negative effects are even greater (Lopez et al., 1988; Marsh, 1990; Proulx & Koulack, 1987). Together, these findings suggest a less healthy, or perhaps pseudomature, independence.

The relationship between parental divorce and conflict and the predicted shift of emotional attachments from parents to peers has also been generally supported. Although no studies have directly examined this shift, numerous studies have related parental divorce and conflict to adolescent heterosexual behavior. These variables have been related to greater heterosexual activity (Booth et al., 1984; Hepworth et al., 1984). Divorce has been shown to have no effect on the level of satisfaction with the dating activity, although conflict that continues after the divorce is associated with lower levels of satisfaction (Booth et al., 1984). Clearly, research is needed to examine the relative importance of family and nonfamily relationships, both heterosexual and friendships, more directly.

The relationship between identity development, the third separation-individuation dimension, and divorce and conflict is also incomplete and somewhat indirect. Evidence appears consistent, however, that parental divorce serves to facilitate or encourage identity development (Grossman et
al., 1980; St. Clair & Day, 1979; Streitmatter, 1987). The possible interactive role of parental conflict is unclear.

Conceptual and Methodological Issues

The review of this literature has revealed several conceptual and methodological issues that are pertinent to the present study. While this literature has added much to our understanding of how parental divorce and conflict impact adolescent development, certain gaps remain.

The first issue involves the need to conceptualize from a developmental perspective. To conceptualize the effects of divorce and conflict within a developmental framework requires three methodological steps. First, the age range of the subject pool must be strictly controlled so only subjects within the particular developmental stage of interest are included. Although many of the studies reviewed limited their subject pools to late adolescents (Booth et al., 1984; Greenberg & Nay, 1982; Jordan, 1971, cited in Bourne, 1978; Kennedy, 1985; Kobrin & Waite, 1984; Marsh, 1990; Moore & Hotch, 1982; St. Clair & Day, 1979; White et al., 1985), most studies utilized a college-student sample without eliminating older-than-average students for which separation-individuation tasks would probably not be salient (Boyd et al., 1983; Fine et al., 1983; Grossman et al., 1980; Hepworth et al., 1984; Lopez et al., 1986, 1988, 1989a, 1989b; Parish, 1981; Parish & Wigle, 1985; Proulx & Koulack, 1987; Streitmatter, 1987). The second issue
relevant to the study of divorce from a developmental framework involves controlling for the age of the child when the parental divorce occurred. Developmental theory predicts that the effects of a traumatic event such as parental divorce will be exhibited as a disruption in the developmental processes most salient for a particular age. It is misleading to assume that parental divorce at age 5 will have the same developmental significance as divorce at 18. Another reason that such control is necessary is that it can decrease the potential for the effects of other life events (that may occur between the time of the divorce and the time of measurement) to confound results. Although total control of such events is impossible, limiting the time between divorce and measurement is preferable over not doing so. The review of the literature indicates that only five studies (Booth et al., 1984; Fine et al., 1983; Grossman et al., 1980; Kobrin & Waite, 1984; Marsh, 1990) controlled for the time of divorce. Of these only one (Marsh, 1990) limited their subject pool to those who experienced parental divorce during their adolescent years.

A second issue relevant to the selection of independent variables involves the need to attend to parental conflict in families of divorce. Many studies have demonstrated the importance of this variable, and it is clear that it continues to have an impact even after parental divorce. Although many studies have attempted to discern whether
parental divorce, or the conflict that so frequently accompanies it, is the more salient explanatory variable, few studies have examined the role of both conflict and divorce. There is growing evidence that these two variables interact in meaningful ways, and the explanatory picture is not complete without knowledge of the effects of both. However, only five studies were found that assessed both conflict and divorce (Booth et al., 1984; Fine et al., 1983; Marsh, 1990; Proulx & Koulack, 1987; White et al., 1985). By far, the majority of studies in this literature include either divorce or conflict (Boyd et al., 1983; Greenberg & Nay, 1982; Grossman et al., 1980; Hepworth et al., 1984; Jordan, 1971, cited in Bourne, 1978; Kennedy, 1985; Kobrin & Waite, 1984; Lopez et al., 1986, 1988, 1989a, 1989b; Moore & Hotch, 1982; Parish, 1981; Parish & Wigle, 1985; St. Clair & Day, 1979; Streitmatter, 1987).

The final methodological issue, perhaps most pertinent to the present study, is the importance of looking at all the dimensions of separation-individuation simultaneously. No studies were found that conceptualized the effects of divorce and conflict on adolescents in such a framework, although many have explored these effects on particular dimensions in isolation. It appears from the review that there is a consistent picture of greater independence across all three areas of development. However, since the effects in all three dimensions have never been demonstrated in the
same sample, confidence in this pattern of effects is limited.

Rationale

The existing literature supports the view that divorce and conflict lead to greater separation-individuation, although this question has not been tested directly. Because the effects of divorce and conflict on separation-individuation have only been demonstrated by isolating the three dimensions, it is difficult to get the full explanatory picture. If it can be demonstrated that all three dimensions are impacted in some consistent manner, we can have more confidence that divorce and conflict are affecting the underlying process of separation-individuation.

To investigate the impact of divorce and conflict on separation-individuation, this process was operationalized as involving the following three dimensions: psychological separation from parents; a shift of interpersonal activity and importance from parents to peers; and the development of an identity.

When measuring parent-adolescent relationships, the relevant developmental issue concerns how adolescents are progressing toward separation. The salient issue is the degree to which the adolescent is psychologically separating from parents and is able to function independently. Therefore, the research question addressed here was whether
parental divorce and conflict interact to affect the degree to which adolescents separate from parents psychologically, resulting in greater separation.

In order to investigate the relationship between divorce and conflict and adolescent peer activity, it was necessary to examine both heterosexual relationships and bonds with friends. Whereas most researchers have recognized the importance of attending to both the amount and type of activity and the level of satisfaction with it, this work has concentrated on romantic relationships to the exclusion of friendships. Clearly, developmental theory describes increased peer activity as involving both friendships and dating relationships. Theory also emphasizes that adolescents are shifting their attention away from family and toward peers. Therefore the salient research issues are whether parental divorce and conflict interact to lead to greater adolescent peer activity and to less interpersonal activity with family. Also of importance is whether these adolescents decrease reliance on parents as they increase peer activity. A final research issue is whether this change is different from that of adolescents in intact families.

The identity issue relevant to the present investigation is how well adolescents are able to progress toward achieving an identity. Marcia's (1966, 1976) conceptualization of identity development, as well as
instrumentation based on it, is well suited for this purpose, because it allows for a description of the current status of identity within a developmental model. The research questions relevant to identity are whether the presence of parental divorce and conflict is related to different adolescent identity statuses, and whether identity achievement is facilitated by these variables.

The remaining issues relevant to the present study involve the independent variables. The first issue involves the rationale for limiting the divorced-parents sample to only subjects whose parents who have divorced in the last five years. There are two reasons for this limitation. Since the focus of this study is on the effects of divorce and conflict during adolescence, it is important to restrict the sample to only those subjects whose parents divorced during this developmental period. The second reason for restricting the sample in this manner is that it allows for some control over the confounding effects of early life events that might impact the dependent variables but that may not be related to divorce or conflict. Another issue involves looking at parental conflict in divorced families as well as intact homes. This is important because, in many cases, conflict between parents does not necessarily cease with a divorce. Subject gender was also included as an independent variable for two reasons. Previous analyses have shown that males and females score differently on some
of the dependent variables used in the present study. Also, including gender allowed for the exploration of whether divorce and conflict interact differently for males and females.
CHAPTER II

METHOD

Subjects and Procedure

The subjects for this study were 240 male and female college students from the University of North Texas and Oklahoma State University. Equal numbers of males and females, 18 to 22 years old, comprised the sample. Data were collected during the spring semester of 1992 through the fall semester of 1992. Participation in the study was voluntary, with subjects receiving course credit when possible for involvement in the study. Students were asked to participate in a "study of the relationship between family patterns and developmental processes." Equal numbers of subjects whose biological parents were currently married, and those whose biological parents had divorced within the previous five years, were included. Volunteers were asked to complete a packet of self-report questionnaires. Each packet contained a letter of introduction with instructions, an Informed Consent form, and the instruments described below. To ensure confidentiality and candid responding, subjects were asked not to indicate their names on any of the questionnaires.

Subject recruitment followed a procedure in which an announcement was made in undergraduate courses asking for
volunteers between the ages of 18 and 22. Volunteers were directed to a separate research room, at which time they were given the demographic questionnaire. If their responses to this questionnaire revealed that they were eligible for the current study (biological parents were either married or divorced in the last five years), they were given a packet containing the remaining instruments. If they did not qualify, volunteers were given another packet containing instruments not related to the present study. All volunteers received extra credit for their participation.

Instruments

**Personal Data Questionnaire (PDO).** This form provided relevant demographic information including age, sex, and parental marital status. Subjects whose biological parents were divorced were coded "divorced," while subjects whose biological parents were still married were coded "intact."

**Interparental Conflict Scale (ICS) (Schwarz & Getter, 1980).** The child form of the Interparental Conflict Scale was used to measure adolescents’ perceptions of parental conflict. This scale contains a list of 37 issues over which parents might be in conflict. Subjects were asked to indicate how frequently their biological parents had been in conflict over each issue during the past five years using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from no conflict (0) to argue daily (6). Issues were grouped into four categories:
finance and spouse's responsibilities (eight items; range = 0 to 48); spouse's personal characteristics (13 items; range = 0 to 78); childrearing practices (11 items; range = 0 to 66); joint family activities (five items; range = 0 to 30). In addition to the subscale scores, a total score, representing the overall level of parental conflict, was also calculated. Total scores had a possible range of 0 to 182. Following data collection, the distribution of total scores was used to divide the sample into categories of High Conflict (upper one-third), Medium Conflict (middle one-third), and Low Conflict (lower one-third). The internal consistency for ratings by college students has been reported to be .90, with a one-week test-retest reliability of .86. Convergent validity was investigated by correlating student ratings with those of their parents. The resultant correlation of .42 indicated moderately high convergent validity.

The ICS was also used to measure the pervasiveness and severity of parental conflict. The Pervasiveness score was computed by counting the number of items which the respondent indicates are a source of parental conflict, that is items with a score of one or greater. Scores can range from 1 to 37. The Severity score consisted of a total of the number of ICS items to which subjects responded with a 5 (more than once a week) or greater.
The ICS was used in a previous study (Marsh, 1990) with a similar sample of 18 to 22 year-old college students. Scores in that sample ranged from 0 to 179, and were separated into three groups as in the present study. Group means were 27.02 (Low Conflict), 70.81 (Medium Conflict), and 116.70 (High Conflict).

Interpersonal Conflict Tactics and Strategies Scale (ICTAS) (Cupach, 1980). This 27-item self-report inventory was originally designed to describe the respondent’s and their partner’s behavior during interpersonal conflicts. By permission of the author, the instrument was adapted for use in the present study so that it would be appropriate for an adolescent respondent rating parental conflict. The slight changes in wording of items and instructions were necessary so that the respondent could describe his or her perceptions of parents’ behavior during conflicts. Responses to the items followed a 7-point Likert format, with possible responses indicating how often the respondent saw parents using the tactic, ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (weekly or more). Subjects completed two forms, rating both their mother’s behavior with their father, and their father’s behavior with their mother.

Following factor analysis of the original pool of items, three factors were identified. The first factor is described as Constructive, a style that includes the use of compromise, negotiation, and expressions of trust in the
partner (7 items; range = 7 to 49). The second factor, Destructive, involves the use of tactics such as faulting the partner, hostile questioning, presumptive attribution, demands, and threats (14 items; range = 14 to 98). The third factor, described as Avoidant, includes tactics such as trying to change the subject, avoiding the other person, and trying to postpone the issue as long as possible (6 items; range = 6 to 42). Scores were obtained by summing responses to each of the items of the subscale. A total of six scores were then obtained for each subject, three each for mother's tactics and father's tactics.

Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI) (Hoffman, 1984). This 138-item self-report instrument contains four subscales measuring different aspects of psychological independence from parents. Functional Independence (FI; 13 items) measures the subject's reported ability to manage and direct practical and personal affairs without parental help. Attitudinal Independence (AI; 14 items) assesses the extent to which the subject reports having attitudes, values, and beliefs that were distinct from those held by parents. Emotional Independence (EI; 17 items) measures the degree to which the subject reports freedom from needs for parental approval, closeness, and support. Conflictual Independence (CI; 25 items) assesses the level at which the subject reports freedom from excessive guilt, mistrust, resentment, and anger in relation to parents. Half of the items pertain
to the subject's relationship with the mother and the other half to the relationship with the father. Respondents were asked to rate the degree to which each item pertains to them on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from not at all true of me (0) to very much true of me (5). Higher scores reflect greater psychological separation from parents. Responses were summed to obtain eight subscale scores, four for mother and four for father (Functional, Attitudinal, Emotional, and Conflictual Independence).

Hoffman reported Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients ranging from .84 to .92 for each of the subscales. Estimates of predictive validity were computed by correlating PSI subscale scores with the personal adjustment subscale of the Adjective Check List (Gough & Heilbrun, 1980, cited in Hoffman, 1984) and with single items addressing academic and love relationship problems. Results indicated that the attitudinal independence subscale was negatively related to the personal adjustment scale of the ACL, that the emotional independence subscale was positively correlated with the question regarding academic adjustment, and that the conflictual independence subscale was positively correlated with the question regarding adjustment in love relationships.

The PSI has been used in a similar sample of undergraduates whose parents were either married or divorced (Lopez et al., 1989a). Males in both groups generally had
higher independence scores than their female peers, except for the Conflictual Independence scales. In both the male and female groups, CI scores were similar. Subjects whose parents had divorced were generally more independent from parents than were their peers in intact families.

**Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987).** This self-report instrument contains three 25-item subscales measuring attachment to father, to mother, and to peers. These items are designed to tap internal perceptions, feelings, and attitudes, rather than specific behaviors. Respondents were asked to rate the degree to which each item is descriptive of them via a 5-point Likert scale ranging from almost never (1) to almost always (5). Possible scores range from 25 to 125 for each of the subscales. The authors have reported three-week test-retest reliability coefficients of .93 for a combination of the parent subscales and .86 for the peer subscale. Parent Attachment scores were significantly correlated with five of six indices of family climate on the Family Environment Scale (Moos, 1974, cited in Armsden & Greenberg, 1987), family and social self-concept as measured by the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (Fitts, 1965, cited in Armsden & Greenberg, 1987), and scales of the Inventory of Adolescent Attachment (Greenberg et al., 1983) involving the tendency to seek out family members in times of need (utilization), indicating strong convergent validity. Peer
Attachment was also correlated with the TSCS self-concept scales and the utilization scales of the IAA, but was not correlated significantly with the scales of the FES. Previous factor analytic studies have indicated three distinct factors relevant to relationships with peers, labeled Trust, Communication, and Alienation.

In a previous investigation of 17-20 year-old undergraduates, Armsden & Greenberg (1987) found that females scored higher than males on Peer Attachment. Subjects were slightly more attached to parents (M = 60.7, SD = 16.2) than to peers (M = 56.6, SD = 10.4).

Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (EOMBIS-2) (Bennion & Adams, 1986). This 64-item self-report instrument is theoretically based on Marcia’s (1966, 1980) operationalization of Erikson’s concept of ego identity development, in which individuals are classified as exhibiting one of four distinct identity statuses. These statuses are Achievement (experience of a crisis or exploration and subsequent commitment to a choice based on one’s own exploration of alternatives), Foreclosure (lack of experience of crisis or exploration behaviors, but has committed to an ideology based on little or no exploration of alternatives), Moratorium (currently experiencing a crisis, actively exploring options, but has not yet committed), and Diffusion (lack of exploration or commitment). The instrument is designed to tap the extent
of exploration and commitment in areas of ideology (occupation, religion, politics, and philosophical lifestyle) and in interpersonal content domains of identity (friendship, dating, sex roles, and recreational topics). Often, the ideological and interpersonal domains are combined. For the major analyses, this combination was done. Respondents were asked to rate the degree to which they agreed with each of the 64 items via a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strong disagree (6). Items form four subscales (Achievement, Foreclosure, Moratorium, and Diffusion in both ideology and interpersonal domains) each of which has 16 items (64 total items). Scores for each of the four subscales can therefore range from 16 to 96.

The authors have reported Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients ranging from .58 (Interpersonal Moratorium subscale) to .80 (Interpersonal Foreclosure subscale), indicating good to strong internal consistency. Concurrent validity was assessed by correlating the EOMEIS-2 with another measure of identity (Rosenthal et al., 1981). Identity Achievement subscales of the EOMEIS-2 were positively correlated with the Rosenthal et al. measure, whereas the remaining three EOMEIS-2 subscales were negatively correlated with the Rosenthal et al. (1981) instrument, indicating good concurrent validity. Estimates of discriminant validity were also reported, indicating that
Identity Achievement is either uncorrelated or negatively correlated with the remaining EOMEIS-2 subscales.

In a sample of 2,331 7th to 12th grade students, Adams, Bennion, and Huh (1989) found the highest scale scores to be on Achievement ($M = 65.4$, $SD = 8.2$) and Moratorium ($M = 54.1$, $SD = 9.7$), followed by Diffusion ($M = 44.4$, $SD = 9.2$) and Foreclosure ($M = 39.9$, $SD = 11.1$). When subjects were classified into an identity status, most of the 12th-grade subjects ($n = 435$) were in the Achievement classification (41.6%), followed by Moratorium (21.4%), Foreclosure (19.3%), and Diffusion (17.7%).

**Design**

The independent variables in the present study were subject gender, parental marital status (Intact, Divorced) and level of parental conflict (High, Medium, Low). The dependent variables were the eight scales measuring psychological separation from parents (Emotional, Attitudinal, Functional, and Conflictual independence from mother and from father), the three scales measuring level of attachment to parents and to peers (Mother-Attachment, Father-Attachment, and Peer-Attachment), and the four identity-status scales (Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure, Diffusion). Also, the utility of exploratory measures of parental conflict was examined. These exploratory dimensions were pervasiveness of conflict and
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conflict and health of conflict resolution tactics (Constructive, Destructive, Avoidant).

**Hypotheses**

The following specific hypotheses were tested.

**Hypothesis 1.** Parental marital status and parental conflict interact to affect separation from parents. Divorce and high conflict were expected to be associated with greater independence from mother and father.

**Hypothesis 2.** Parental marital status and parental conflict interact to affect the relative attachments to parents and peers. Divorce and high conflict were expected to be associated with greater attachment to peers and lesser attachment to parents.

**Hypothesis 3.** Parental marital status and parental conflict interact to affect identity development. Divorce and high conflict were expected to be associated with higher scores on identity achievement and moratorium, and lower scores on identity foreclosure and identity diffusion.

**Hypothesis 4.** The interaction of parental marital status and parental conflict affects subjects differently depending on subject gender.

**Analysis**

To test the hypotheses involving the relationship between parental marital status, parental conflict, and the dependent variables, separate 2 X 2 X 3 MANOVA's were computed for each set of dependent variables. Univariate
analyses were then conducted for the individual scales of the dependent measures. Significant interactions were further explored using simple effects analysis. Correlation coefficients were calculated between the exploratory measures of conflict and the dependent variables.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Description of the Sample

The sample consisted of 240 undergraduate students enrolled at either the University of North Texas or Oklahoma State University. Most subjects were enrolled in psychology courses (a small proportion of subjects were recruited from other university departments). The sample was evenly divided by gender. Ages ranged from 18 to 22 ($M = 19.56$, $SD = 1.36$). One hundred (41.7%) were freshmen, 75 (31.3%) were sophomores, 41 (17.1%) were juniors, and 24 (10.0%) were seniors. The sample was predominately single ($n = 231, 96.5\%$), with most of these subjects either in a long-term relationship ($n = 82, 34.2\%$) or actively dating ($n = 91, 37.9\%$). Six subjects reported being currently married, and three subjects were either separated or divorced. Most subjects reported living out of the home, either with another person off-campus ($n = 101, 42.1\%$) or in a residence hall ($n = 88, 36.7\%$). Some students were living alone off-campus ($n = 16, 6.7\%$) and the remainder ($n = 35, 14.6\%$) were living with one or both parents at the parents' home. A majority of the subjects ($n = 173, 72.1\%$) reported that less than half of their living expenses were paid for by their parents.
Description of Parental-Marital-Status Groups

Subjects were recruited to fill two groups of equal size, those whose biological parents were still married and those whose parents had divorced within the previous five years (M years since divorce = 3.00, SD = 1.65; M age at time of divorce = 16.78, SD = 2.18). Of the subjects with divorced parents, 54 (45.0%) indicated that neither parent had remarried since the divorce, 51 (42.5%) indicated that one parent had remarried, and 15 (12.5%) indicated that both parents had remarried. Table 1 presents demographic information and subjects’ responses to descriptive questions for the two groups. Overall, characteristics of the groups were very similar.

Description of Parental-Conflict Groups

The Interparental Conflict Scale (ICS) total score was used to form three conflict groups based on a percentile split. The mean for the total ICS score for the overall sample was 60.38 (SD = 38.86). In a previous sample of 140 college students (Marsh, 1990), the overall ICS mean was 71.31 (SD = 40.50). Table 2 presents the number of subjects, ranges, and mean ICS scores for the three conflict groups.

To investigate whether parental conflict levels varied by marital status, a t test was performed comparing means on the ICS. Results indicated that the parental conflict scores in this sample were very similar between
intact-family subjects (M = 59.92) and those whose parents had divorced (M = 60.83), t(236) = -0.18. It was also thought that gender might influence conflict level. There were not differences between males (M = 62.10) and females (M = 58.67), t(232) = 0.68.

Because it was thought that the relationship between marital status and conflict level might be different for males than for females, t tests were performed, which indicated no differences between intact-family males (M = 63.41) and divorced-family males (M = 60.82), t(116) = 0.34, or between intact-family females (M = 56.48) and divorced-family females (M = 60.85), t(117) = 0.51.

Description of Dependent Measures

Three dependent measures were used in the present study. The Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI) measures four types of independence from mother and from father (Functional, Attitudinal, Conflictual, and Emotional). The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) measures the degree to which subjects are attached to their mother, their father, and to peers. The Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (EOMEIS-2) provides four identity scores (Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure, Diffusion). Table 3 presents means, standard deviations, and ranges for the three dependent measures for the entire sample. Table 4 summarizes means on the dependent variables.
at each conflict level and Table 5 summarizes means on the dependent variables for each marital status.

**Major Findings**

The data was examined utilizing three MANOVA procedures, with subject gender, parental marital status, and parental marital conflict level as independent variables. A separate MANOVA procedure was performed on each of the three sets of dependent measures (PSI, IPPA, EOMEIS-2).

**Psychological Separation.** A 2 X 2 X 3 MANOVA procedure was performed to determine the effects of the independent variables on psychological separation (PSI). Results indicated a significant main effect for parental conflict, $F(16, 444) = 4.79, p < .0001$. The main effect for gender was also significant, $F(8, 221) = 4.88, p < .0001$. The main effect for parental marital status was not significant. None of the interaction effects were significant for the PSI.

Univariate analyses were then performed to follow up the significant MANOVA results. The analyses of the main effect for parental conflict indicated that conflict was significantly related to all four types of independence from father, and to three types of independence from mother (functional, conflictual, and attitudinal). Table 6 summarizes the results of these analyses. Mean scores indicated that, at higher levels of parental conflict,
subjects were less conflictually independent from mother and from father. Subjects indicating higher parental conflict levels were also more functionally, emotionally, and attitudinally independent from mother and from father (with the exception of emotional independence from mother, which only approached significance). Post hoc analyses indicated that significant mean differences existed between low- and medium-conflict groups and between medium- and high-conflict groups on mother-conflictual independence, with the higher conflict mean being lower in each case. Significant mean differences were also found between high-conflict means and the other two groups on mother-attitudinal independence, father-functional independence, father-emotional independence, and father-attitudinal independence, with the higher conflict mean being higher in each case. Finally, the low-conflict mean was significantly higher than the other two groups on father-conflictual independence.

A second set of univariate analyses was performed to investigate the significant main effect for subject gender. This procedure indicated that subject gender was significantly related to three of the four types of independence from mother and for father (functional, emotional, and attitudinal). Table 7 summarizes the results of these analyses. Mean scores indicated that males were more functionally, emotionally, and attitudinally independent than females from mothers and from fathers.
Attachment to Parents and Peers. A second 2 X 2 X 3 MANOVA procedure was performed to determine the effects of the independent variables on attachment to parents and to peers (IPPA). Results indicated significant main effects for parental marital status, $F(3, 226) = 5.57, p < .005$, for parental conflict $F(6, 454) = 8.18, p < .0001$, and for subject gender $F(3, 226) = 3.67, p < .05$. None of the interactions were significant for the IPPA.

Univariate procedures were then performed to investigate the significant MANOVA results. The analysis of the main effect for parental marital status indicated that it was significantly related to attachment to mother, $F(1,239) = 9.77, p < .005$, and to attachment to father, $F(1,239) = 12.36, p < .0005)$. Examination of mean scores indicated that subjects whose parents were married were more attached to each parent than were subjects with divorced parents.

Univariate analyses investigating the main effect for parental conflict revealed that it was related to attachment to mother, $F(2, 239) = 17.65, p < .0001$, to father, $F(2,239) = 14.89, p < .0001$, and to peers, $F(2,239) = 4.22, p < .05$. An examination of mean scores indicated that subjects reporting higher levels of parental conflict were less attached to both parents and to peers than were subjects reporting lower parental conflict levels. Post hoc analyses indicated that the high-conflict mean was significantly
lower than the other two group means on mother-attachment and on father-attachment, and lower than the low-conflict mean on peer-attachment.

Finally, the univariate analysis investigating the main effect for subject gender indicated that this variable was related to attachment to mother, $F(1,239) = 7.80, p < .01$, and to peers, $F(1,239) = 6.35, p < .05$. Examination of mean scores revealed that males were less attached to mothers and to peers than were females. Males were also less attached to fathers than were females, but this difference only approached significance.

**Ego Identity Status.** A third 2 X 2 X 3 MANOVA procedure was performed to determine the effects of the independent variables on ego identity status (EOMEIS-2). Results indicated significant main effects for parental marital status, $F(4,225) = 2.84, p < .05$, and for parental conflict, $F(8,452) = 3.13, p < .005$. The interaction between parental marital status and subject gender was also significant, $F(4,225) = 2.59, p < .05$.

Univariate analyses were performed to investigate the significant MANOVA results. The analysis of the main effect for parental marital status indicated it was significantly related only to the Identity Foreclosure scale, $F(1,239) = 8.10, p < .005$. Examination of mean scores indicated that subjects whose parents were divorced had lower scores on the Foreclosure scale than did their peers with married parents.
A second univariate analysis was performed to follow up on the significant main effect for parental conflict. This procedure revealed that parental conflict was related to the Foreclosure scale, $F(2,239) = 5.77, p < .005$ and the Moratorium scale, $F(2,239) = 3.09, p < .05$. Examination of mean scores indicated that higher levels of parental conflict were related to lower Foreclosure scores and higher Moratorium scores. Post hoc analyses indicated that the high-conflict mean was significantly different from the other two group means only for the foreclosure score.

Finally, the parental-marital-status by subject-gender interaction was investigated by way of the univariate procedure, revealing that the interaction was significant only for the Moratorium scores, $F(1,239) = 8.46, p < .005$. Simple effects analysis revealed that males whose parents were divorced had lower Moratorium scores than their male peers with married parents, while the opposite was true for females. Females whose parents were married had lower Moratorium scores than did their peers with divorced parents.

**Exploratory Measures of Parental Conflict**

In order to examine the functioning of other measures of parental conflict, two sets of correlations were computed. The first set was between subjects' ICS total score and the exploratory measures, and the second set was between those measures and scores on the dependent variable
measures. The exploratory measures were Pervasiveness of Conflict, defined as the number of content areas on the ICS to which a subject responded, Severity of Conflict, defined as the number of ICS content areas to which the subject responded with a 5 (more than once a week) or greater, and scores on the six subscales of the ICTAS, Avoidant, Destructive, and Constructive tactics for mother and for father. Tables 8 and 9 present a summary of these correlations. Scores on Pervasiveness ranged from 0 to 37 ($M = 20.39$, $SD = 9.82$), and were significantly positively correlated with the total conflict score (.86), Destructive (.49) and Avoidant (.39) conflict tactics by fathers, and Destructive (.51) and Avoidant (.45) conflict tactics by mothers. Pervasiveness was also negatively correlated with Conflictual Independence from mother (-.34) and from father (-.26), and with attachment to mothers (-.29), fathers (-.22), and peers (-.20). Table 10 presents a summary of means, ranges, and standard deviations for the six ICTAS subscales.

Scores on Severity ranged from 0 to 21 ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 5.15$), and was also highly correlated with the total conflict score (.87), Destructive (.48), Avoidant (.39), and Constructive (-.26) conflict tactics by fathers, Destructive (.42), Avoidant (.35), and Constructive (-.13) tactics by mothers. Severity was also negatively correlated with Conflictual Independence from mother (-.36) and from father
(-.31), and with attachment to mothers (-.31), fathers (-.32), and peers (-.14). Severity was positively correlated with Mother-Functional Independence (.14), Mother-Attitudinal Independence (.17), Father-Functional Independence (.19), Father-Emotional Independence (.18), Father-Attitudinal Independence (.23), and Identity Foreclosure (.17). Overall, it appears that Severity is a more important variable relative to Pervasiveness, suggesting that high conflict in a few content areas is more important than lower conflict over many areas.

Subjects from divorced and intact families were compared on the ICTAS as they were in the major analyses for the ICS score. Results indicated that subjects in intact families perceived their parents as using different conflict tactics than did their peers with divorced parents. Relative to those from intact families, subjects in divorced parents reported that both fathers (M divorced = 15.39; M intact = 12.78; t[236] = -.294) and mothers (M divorced = 13.50; M intact = 11.74; t[230] = -2.06) used Avoidant tactics more often. So, in contrast to the lack of marital-status differences on the ICS, important group differences were found using the ICTAS.

To parallel the overall analyses, the possibility that the independent variables interacted in affecting the exploratory measures was investigated. Results suggest that gender plays an important role in influencing how
adolescents perceive the health of their parents' conflict tactics, at least in divorced families. Males (M = 26.24) saw their mothers as using less constructive conflict tactics than did females (M = 29.44), t(237) = -2.30, p < .05. To see if gender interacted with parental marital status on the tactics scales, additional t tests were performed. Males in divorced families (M = 23.51) viewed their mothers as using less constructive tactics than did their intact-family peers (M = 28.92). Divorced-family females perceived both parents as utilizing avoidant tactics more than did females in intact families. T tests were significant for father-avoidant tactics (M divorced = 16.20; M intact = 11.85; t(116) = -3.58, and for mother-avoidant tactics (M divorced = 14.30; M intact = 11.03; t(108) = -2.80. Males with divorced parents differed from their female peers as to which parent they saw as using the more Destructive conflict tactics.

Follow-Up Analyses
Because ego identity is conceptualized as an individual being in one of four statuses, and using the four scale scores does not allow the use of the four statuses, there are decision rules to identify each individual's identity status. Chi-square analyses were done to see if the distribution of statuses was different in the two marital-status groups or in the three conflict-level groups. Results indicated that marital status was significantly
related to both ideological components, $X^2(3, n = 240) = 10.11, p < .05$, and interpersonal components, $X^2(3, n = 240) = 11.49, p < .01$, of identity status. Examination of scores suggests that subjects with divorced parents were more likely than their intact-family peers to be in Moratorium and less likely to be in Foreclosure in relation to ideological and to interpersonal issues. Parental conflict was significantly related to the interpersonal component of identity status, $X^2(6, n = 240) = 12.76, p < .05$. At higher levels of conflict, subjects were more likely to be in Moratorium and less likely to be in Foreclosure in relation to interpersonal issues.

Summary of Results

The different independent variables of parental marital status, parental conflict, and subject gender affected certain aspects of college-student separation-individuation and not others. Parental marital status was related to the level of attachment to parents and to identity status. Parental marital conflict was related to independence from parents, attachment to parents and to peers, and to identity status. Subject gender was related to independence from parents, and to attachment to mother and to peers. Only one interaction, parental-marital-status by subject-gender, was significant, as it was related to identity status.

Subjects whose parents were divorced were less attached to both their mothers and their fathers, and were less
likely to have committed to an identity without much exploration of alternatives (Identity Foreclosure). Males with divorced parents had lower scores on Identity Moratorium, indicating they were less likely to have made an identity commitment, but were actively exploring alternatives (Identity Moratorium). Females with divorced parents, however, were more likely to be in Moratorium than if their parents were married.

Subjects reporting higher levels of parental conflict were different in many ways from their peers who reported their parents engaged in only low levels of conflict. They experienced more feelings of resentment and anger toward parents, but were better able to manage their daily affairs, less dependent on parental approval and support, and were more likely to have attitudes and beliefs that are distinct from those of their parents. Also, subjects reporting high conflict between their parents reported feeling less attached to parents, but also less attached to peers. Finally, these subjects indicated higher scores on Identity Foreclosure and lower scores on Identity Moratorium. This finding indicated that high-parental-conflict subjects were more likely to have assumed an identity, but less likely to have experienced a period of crisis or exploration from which this identity developed.

The final independent variable, subject gender, was related to each of the dependent variables. When compared
to females, males reported handling more of their daily activities, being less dependent on parental support and approval, and having attitudes and beliefs that are distinct from their parents’. Males were also less attached to their mothers and to peers when compared to females. As previously noted, males whose parents were divorced had higher scores on Identity Moratorium than their male peers with married parents, indicating they were more likely to be currently engaged in an exploration of their beliefs. However, females with divorced females had lower Moratorium scores than their intact-family female peers.
supported. However, each of these variables were separately related to adolescents attachment patterns. Finally, the hypothesis that these variables worked together to affect how adolescents went about developing an identity was not supported. Parental conflict level was associated with differences in this process, while parental marital status had a somewhat lesser impact, which was different for males than for females. In addition to the three major analyses, the possibility that gender would influence the relationship between marital status and conflict and the dependent variables was largely not supported. Males were found to be more independent from, and less attached to, parents, as well as less attached to peers. Nonetheless, it can be said with confidence that parental marital status and parental conflict have a major impact on the separation-individuation process in adolescence.

The following statements can be made from the results. The level of parental conflict is significantly related to separation from parents, to attachment to parents and peers, and to identity development. Whether parents are married or recently divorced is related to attachment to parents and to identity development. Finally, subject gender is related to separation from parents, to attachment to parents and peers, and to identity development.
The Impact of Parental Conflict

Overall, adolescents in high-conflict homes appear to be progressing through the separation-individuation process in qualitatively different ways than are their peers who report lower levels of conflict between parents. They are more independent from, and feel less emotionally close to, parents, and are more likely to be engaged in a period of evaluation of their beliefs and attitudes regarding issues of identity. It appears that these adolescents are pulling away from their parents emotionally and functionally, attempting to become more independent and self-sufficient. The evidence is strong that these adolescence experience painful and negative emotions toward parents, as subjects reported significant anger, resentment, and guilt in relation to parents. The effects of higher parental conflict are not limited to the parent-adolescent bond. The process of shifting focus from parents to peers may also be affected. At lower conflict levels, subjects reported higher attachment to parents than to peers. At higher levels of parental conflict, however, levels of attachment to parents and peers were more similar. Seeing their parents' highly conflictual relationship is also related to more questioning and examination of adolescents' views of relationships in general. Subjects perceiving their parents' relationship as exhibiting high conflict were more
likely to be actively engaged in an exploration of their beliefs.

The current findings are generally consistent with past research. Parental conflict has been consistently associated with less positive views of parents (White et al., 1985; Fine et al., 1985), more independent behavioral and emotional functioning (Lopez et al., 1988; Marsh, 1990), and an active exploration of adolescents' attitudes and beliefs (Jordan, 1971). Although there has been relatively little attention to adolescents' peer relationships in this body of literature, adolescents have been found to be more heterosexually active when their parents are in conflict, and to be less satisfied with their interpersonal relationships when parental conflict continues over time (Booth et al., 1984).

There are two possible interpretations of the effects of conflict found in this study. It may be that these changes are indicative of an "acceleration" of the normal developmental process of separation-individuation, involving a relatively non-problematic progression of the adolescent-parent bond toward a more mature, adult-adult relationship. Developmental theorists have begun to consider the possible beneficial results of conflict in family environments on adolescent developmental processes. Parental conflict has been discussed, often in conjunction with divorce, as having an important impact on adolescents.
Daniels (1990) points out that the negative emotional reactions adolescents frequently experience when parents are in conflict, such as anger and blame, may actually facilitate separation-individuation. The expression of these feelings may serve to "legitimize" separation by allowing adolescents to send the message that they are distinct from parents and desire changes in their relationships with them. Sessa and Steinberg (1991) also point to the potentially facilitative results of parental conflict, as they present a theoretical analysis of the development of autonomy during adolescence, and the ways in which this process may be different in single-parent families. They discuss how a certain degree of instability and conflict is necessary to initiate the separation process. Since parental conflict is often thought to be associated with greater familial instability and changes in family relationships, it can actually facilitate the adolescent’s movement toward independence. In this way, interparental turmoil can promote the deidealizing of parents, the initiation of more independent functioning, and the self-examination needed to successfully separate and individuate from parents. Additionally, because parents are frequently less able to effectively parent when they are in conflict with each other, it may be adaptive for adolescents to rely less on them during this time. This is assuming that the actual level of parental conflict present in the
home actually is being measured. It could also be that, as adolescents progress through separation-individuation, they begin to perceive parents as being in conflict.

An alternate interpretation of these findings, perhaps the more traditional viewpoint, is that conflict in the home has a predominantly negative impact on adolescent development. Adolescents may be reactively disengaging or detaching from parents, gaining distance from them without actually psychologically separating and individuating. This possibility that adolescent development is negatively affected by parental conflict has also been discussed in the theoretical literature. Kalter (1987) theorizes that parental acrimony creates conflictual demands to which adolescents often react in one of three negative ways. When they experience the competing needs to "recapitulate earlier separation-individuation issues" within family relationships, but also to reduce involvement with family in favor of peer relationships, Kalter predicts that they may regressively become more dependent on family, denying the developmental need to separate. The second option is one of pseudomaturity, in which the adolescent eschews the need to increase peer involvement in favor of modeling the responsible, stable behavior of adults. A final option involves engagement in antisocial behaviors in an attempt by the adolescent to gain distance from parents. All of these possible outcomes during adolescence carry a heavy negative
toll in terms of the likelihood of successfully and healthily completing the necessary developmental processes of adolescence.

Kaplan (1987) likewise predicts negative developmental consequences of conflictual parental relationships, in that adolescents in such families commonly turn to peers as a "substitute family". This suggests that they are putting additional weight on these relationships in an attempt to compensate for emotional needs that are not being met within the family. Though he does not discuss the potential cost of such pressure, it is quite feasible that adolescent peer relationships do not provide adequate stability and consistent support to be a sufficient familial substitute.

Much of the current empirical evidence could be interpreted as indicating a less healthy attempt on the part of the adolescent to deny reliance on parents and to increase the distance from the frustrating and dissatisfying conflictual home environment. The greater exploration under high-conflict conditions suggests that, rather than model their parents' attitudes or accept them as their own without question, these adolescents are motivated to develop beliefs about interpersonal bonds distinct from those held by their parents. The unwillingness to accept their parents' views may be a reactive attempt to gain distance from them and to angrily reject anything that is similar to parents. The fact that they report experiencing difficult emotions toward
parents, such as anger, resentment, and guilt, may be suggesting that they are unable to emotionally separate themselves from the problems their parents are having. Whether high levels of parental conflict act to accelerate, or hinder, a healthy separation-individuation process for adolescents is unclear at this point. Both of these possibilities have been discussed in the theoretical literature and have found support in previous empirical studies. Further empirical investigations are warranted to determine if adolescents whose parents are experiencing significant levels of conflict respond by progressing more rapidly toward individuated functioning or if they are detaching from parents and thus not truly psychologically separating.

The Impact of Parental Divorce

Overall, adolescents whose parents have recently divorced were different from their intact-family peers in some important ways. The marital status of adolescents' parents was shown to have an impact on attachment to parents and on identity development, but not on psychological separation from parents. Adolescents with divorced parents reported feeling less attached to both parents, especially their fathers. Their level of attachment relationship they had with their peers, however, was not significantly different from that described by intact-family adolescents. Interestingly, though more likely to explore identity
issues, those with divorced parents indicated they were less likely to commit to particular philosophical, political, or interpersonal points of view than were their peers in intact families.

The lack of a significant relationship between parental divorce and separation from parents deserves comment. Contrary to previous studies (Lopez et al., 1989a; Marsh, 1990), parental marital status was not related to psychological separation from parents. These findings are somewhat inconsistent with previous studies. Lopez et al. (1989a) found clear differences between adolescents in divorced and intact families using the same measure of psychological independence. Those with divorced parents were more functionally, emotionally, and attitudinally independent, but more conflictually dependent when compared to intact-family subjects. However, these authors did not control for the time of the divorce, the age of the subject when the divorce occurred, or parental conflict, leaving comparisons tenuous. In the present study, levels of conflict were very similar in the two marital-status groups. This may be unique to this sample. In a different sample in which conflict levels were significantly higher in the divorced group, Marsh (1990) found that divorce was associated with greater independence from fathers, while limiting the time since the divorce to five years or less. No group differences in independence from mother were found.
These inconsistencies suggest that other variables may be involved in the relationship between parental divorce and independence from parents.

The relationship between parental divorce and identity development is consistent with previous research (St. Clair & Day, 1979; Grossman et al., 1980). The authors of the first study found that a majority of high school students with divorced parents were identity achieved. The younger age of their sample makes comparisons difficult, however. In the second of these studies, the authors used a similar identity measure and found that college students with divorced parents had higher identity scores than did their intact-family peers. Although the age range of this sample was comparable to the present study, the authors reported that most subjects had experienced parental divorce between the ages of 3 and 7, again making comparisons to the present recently-divorced sample risky. Neither of these previous studies took parental conflict into account.

Overall, these findings suggest that adolescents whose parents are divorced feel less close to and trusting of parents than those whose parents have remained married, although they are no more independent from them. They are also doing more reorganizing, or at least questioning, of their belief system than their intact-family peers, but appear hesitant to commit to particular points of view regarding interpersonal or ideological issues. This finding
suggests that parental divorce may cause some confusion in how adolescents view the world, or at least lead them to think more seriously about their views. This is consistent with Jordan (1971), who found that identity development was hindered by parents that were insufficiently available. The fact that divorce is not associated with greater independence suggests that divorce is not encouraging a more separated, independent style of functioning. Perhaps these adolescents process the divorce as an unpredicted loss experience and are less willing to be any more independent from parents than necessary. It may also be that they are caught ill-prepared for the greater independence the divorce would necessitate, and have yet to separate from parents functionally or emotionally.

Theoretical discussions of the impact of divorce consistently suggest that there is a period of adjustment that follows the parental break-up, during which parents are relatively less available to their children due to their own distress. Daniels (1990) points out that, for separation-individuation to progress normally, it is important that parents be consistently available. One possible explanation for the current findings is that the lower attachment between adolescents and their divorced parents is currently serving to discourage the greater independence commonly seen by these adolescents. Longitudinal studies would be required to test whether
adolescents are more successful at separating and
individuating when parents adjust to the divorce and become
more available to them. It may be that the present sample
experienced divorce recently enough that their families are
still in the adjustment phase, temporarily delaying the
normal separation-individuation process. Another possible
explanation has to do with the unusual finding that the
level of parental conflict was not significantly higher in
the divorced group than in the intact group. Previous
samples (Marsh, 1990) have found that adolescents whose
parents are divorced report their parents expressing much
more conflict than their peers in intact families. The lack
of replication in the current study may be further, though
indirect, evidence that it is parental conflict rather than
parental divorce that leads to greater independence in
adolescents. It may also be that effects previously
attributed to parental divorce may be due more to the highly
conflictual nature of many divorce processes than the
divorce event itself.

**Differential Effects of Parental Conflict and Divorce**

Results suggest that both parental conflict and
parental divorce have significant effects on how adolescents
progress through the separation-individuation process.
Rather than the predicted interaction between these two
variables, results indicate that they impact development in
similar, but distinct ways.
Both divorce and high levels of conflict between parents are associated with the quality of the parent-adolescent attachment bond. Adolescents in both groups report a lower level of attachment to parents, relative to the intact group and the low conflict group. They also are more likely to be engaged in an active exploration of identity-related issues, examining their interpersonal and ideological belief systems.

Divorce and conflict also affect the various aspects of separation-individuation in different ways. The most significant example of these differential effects involves adolescents' psychological separation from parents. Adolescents with divorced parents are no more functionally, conflictually, attitudinally, or emotionally independent from parents than their peers in intact families. However, high levels of conflict greatly impact the separation process. Relative to their peers in low-conflict homes, these adolescents are more functionally, attitudinally, and emotionally independent from both parents, but are more conflictually dependent on them. Another difference between the effects of divorce and conflict involves adolescents' identity development. Relative to their intact-family peers, adolescents with divorced parents are exploring identity-related issues more, but are less likely to commit to a system of beliefs and attitudes (identity achievement). Adolescents reporting high levels of parental conflict are
also exploring identity issues more, but are not necessarily committing less in relation to those whose parents exhibit lower levels of conflict.

Another important distinction between the effects of conflict and divorce is that parental break-up apparently has little or no effect on peer relationships. While both variables are associated with a decrease in attachments to parents, only high levels of conflict seem to be associated with a lower attachment to peers.

As previously discussed, this body of literature has steadily progressed from attributing all post-divorce changes to the divorce event itself to its current trend of considering salient variables that frequently accompany marital dissolution. While variables such as parental conflict have proved worthy of such attention, it would be a mistake to ignore the fact that adolescents with divorced parents are different from their intact-family peers in significant ways. Perhaps the next level of inquiry needs to be to delineate and differentiate the effects of parental marital status from those of parental conflict.

Overall, it appears that parental conflict and parental divorce have qualitatively different effects on the way adolescents go about the separation-individuation process. Parental conflict seems to serve to accelerate adolescents' movement toward greater independence. When parents exhibit high levels of conflict, adolescents report that they
exhibit more independent functioning. They are also actively engaged in an exploration of identity-related issues. Evidence suggests that parental divorce, however, may not encourage such movement, and may actually cause adolescents to stall in this process. Those with divorced parents are equally dependent on parents, but are less willing to commit to an identity independent from that of parents in comparison to their intact-family peers. This may only be true, however, when divorce is not accompanied by high levels of parental conflict, as in the present sample.

One possible explanation for this difference between the effects of divorce and conflict involves the fact that parental conflict may be a more ongoing process, whereas parental divorce, at least in the present sample, is a more recent time-limited event. Adolescents may still be in an active phase of adjusting to divorce, because it is a more recent event (as defined in the present sample). Because parental conflict may have been a more long-term family variable, adolescents may have had more time to adjust to it. In a longitudinal study (Block, Block, & Gjerde, 1986, cited in Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992), children whose parents would later divorce demonstrated more behavior problems before as well as after the breakup. This suggests that the parental conflict concomitant with later divorce is impacting children before the actual divorce occurs.
An additional issue concerning past research deserves comment at this point. As previously discussed, an interaction between parental marital status and conflict found in a previous study, indicating that the marital status of parents mediated the effect that conflict had on adolescents' independence from parents, is not replicated here. To investigate the possible explanations of this inconsistency, we compared conflict levels in the two samples. The relatively lower levels of conflict in this sample suggests that the previous interaction may have been primarily due to the relationship between parental conflict level and parent-child relationships, rather than to parental marital status. This again points to the possibility that the effects of parental divorce may be confounded with those of parental conflict in many studies.

When divorce is not automatically associated with higher parental conflict, as is the case in the present sample, the impact is less evident. Though these adolescents pull away somewhat from parents, the main difference between them and their intact-family peers is in the realm of identity development. They seem to be thrust into a questioning period and postpone making ideological or interpersonal commitments. Perhaps this questioning period is a more immediate response, and that, over more time, adolescents distance themselves more from their difficult home environment.
There is a paucity of theoretical or empirical discussion of the relative influences of divorce and conflict. Clearly, future studies need to take both variables into account and further investigate their differential effects. Results of the present study suggest that the effects of parental divorce may be limited to the process of identity development, leading adolescents to reorganize their belief system and rethink their ideological and interpersonal attitudes. Parental conflict, on the other hand, perhaps because it may be a more long-term process in the home, significantly affects not only adolescents' relationships with parents, but also the very meaning they give relationships in general.

While some theorists have suggested that separation-individuation can actually be facilitated by divorce, these findings do not suggest it. Parental conflict does seem to have such a facilitative effect, though. It is a viable hypothesis that the greater independence commonly seen and reported in adolescents of divorce may actually be attributable to the conflict that existed, or still exists, between parents rather than to the divorce event itself.

Another possibility worthy of further exploration is that the greater independence seen in children of divorce in previous studies is related to their developmental stage. Perhaps younger children react to divorce by taking on more
responsibility and otherwise exhibiting greater maturity. At later developmental stages, such as late adolescence, it may be more difficult to see such a difference.

**Qualitative Aspects of Parental Conflict**

Because parental conflict is a global variable which can be measured in a variety of ways, only one of which (level) was part of the major analyses here, other more specific aspects of conflict were also examined in an exploratory fashion. The fact that the pervasiveness of conflict was related to adolescents' perceptions of how healthily parents engaged in conflict, as well as how dependent on and attached to parents they felt, suggests that this variable deserves further attention in the future.

A second variable, severity of parental conflict, perhaps showed even more promise as a way to further delineate and understand how conflict impacts adolescents. It was associated with most of the dependent measures utilized, suggesting that frequent conflict, even over a few areas, is more impactful on adolescents than occasional conflict.

A third exploratory measure (ICTAS), consisted of subscales measuring the style of the conflict tactics utilized by parents rather than the frequency or severity of conflict. It appears that the health of tactics utilized by fathers, as perceived by adolescents, is primarily related to how adolescents separate from him, while mothers' tactics are more strongly related to adolescents' separation from
mothers. This variable may actually be more salient when investigating the parent-adolescent relationship.

The manner in which parents behave in conflict is also relevant when they are divorced. Adolescents with divorced parents, not surprisingly, report that their parents engage in more destructive tactics than do those whose parents are still married. This suggests that marital status may not be related to the level of parental conflict, but rather to the quality, or style, of conflict resolution. Results also indicate that males tend to see their mothers as being more destructive in divorced families, while females view their fathers as using more destructive tactics.

Overall, these findings clearly indicate the need to investigate parental conflict in a variety of ways. Frequency of arguments, methods utilized to resolve conflicts, the effectiveness of these methods, and the content all deserve attention when attempting to make connections between parental conflict and its effects on adolescents.

Limitations

Certain characteristics of the present study limit the generalizability of the results. Only 18 to 22 year-olds were included. The applicability of these findings to younger or older individuals is questionable. Although the focus of this study was on the adolescent process of
separation-individuation, a broader age range of adolescents would allow for a more thorough examination of this process.

Only college students were included in the present sample. It is feasible that parental divorce and conflict would have a different effect on late adolescents who were not in college. Because of the financial requirements of having a child in college, and the fact that divorce is often associated with a decrease in the financial flexibility of families, the current sample may be a select group. Also, because many college students are still financially dependent on parents, measuring the process of becoming independent from them during this time may have affected the results.

The current cross-sectional design does not allow for an assessment of family functioning or adolescent characteristics before divorce. Also, tighter control of variables, so that causality could be examined, would be helpful.

Only the level, but not the type, of parental conflict was of concern in the present investigation. The possibility that marital or family-related conflict has a different impact on separation-individuation processes than do other types of conflict was not addressed here. Preliminary results involving measures of parental conflict tactics show particular promise as a means of further clarifying the impact of conflict on development.
The reliance on adolescents' self-reporting of parental behavior is tenuous. The possibility exists that parents did not actually engage in the level of conflict described, or that their conflict-resolution styles were not accurately represented. Although adolescent perceptions are a salient variable to which to attend, additional measurement of actual parent behavior would add clarity.

**Recommendations**

A wider range of subjects is needed in future investigations. Samples should include subjects at different stages of the separation process in order to investigate whether divorce and conflict have a different impact at earlier or later ages. Adolescents not in college, especially those not living at home, should be included to see if divorce and conflict are associated with different styles of separation-individuation. Also, early-adolescent subjects, who may be more currently involved in the separation-individuation process, should be included. In order to more tightly control for the effects of events between parental divorce and measurement, only subjects whose parents divorced more recently should be included.

Longitudinal designs, allowing for the assessment of family functioning before, during, and after parental divorce, are also needed. It would be helpful to explore whether parental conflict and divorce led to changes in adolescent separation, or whether the adolescent's behavior
contributed to the parental conflict. Such a design would also allow for a more thorough and accurate assessment of the family environment over a longer period of time. Examining any differences between adolescent perceptions of conflict vs. behavioral evidence would then be possible.

Parental conflict needs to be more thoroughly examined using a variety of instruments to tap more aspects of conflict. Examining the qualities of the conflict, such as its overall level, severity, and pervasiveness, have proven useful. Understanding the specific behaviors utilized by parents in conflict, as was done with the tactics instrument in the current study, is also promising. Further studies should examine variables such as the extent to which adolescents are the topic of, or are actively involved in, family conflict. An understanding of the degree to which adolescents perceive parental conflict as threatening to them or to their family would also be relevant, as it is feasible that high conflict would have a different impact on those who saw it as more acceptable behavior.

Adolescents' relationships with peers need to be more thoroughly examined as well. Previous examinations of heterosexual behavior have looked at a small piece, whereas the present study examined only the overall quality of the bond to peers and the degree to which adolescents were considering their general beliefs about interpersonal functioning. More specific, behaviorally-based instruments
should be employed that tap both friend and heterosexual relationships, and that look at level of activity, as well as qualitative variables such as satisfaction and dependence. The degree to which these variables change over time should also be examined.
APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
INFORMED CONSENT

This study is exploring college students' development and family relationships. It is hoped that the results will increase our understanding of young adult development. Participation will involve completing questionnaires that will take approximately one hour of your time. If you choose to participate in this study your answers will be kept confidential. There will be no risks or discomforts involved in the study. You may withdraw from the study at any time if you choose to do so.

The questionnaires each contain instructions which are self explanatory. It is very important that you answer every question. Please be completely honest. Your answers are entirely confidential and will be useful only if they accurately describe you.

If you are willing to participate please sign below. This form will be separated from your questionnaires upon receipt.

Thank you for your participation.

Greg Marsh, M.S.
Graduate Student
Psychology Department
University of North Texas

Name (print) __________________________________________

Signature ____________________________________________

Social Security # ________________________________

Date __________________________
APPENDIX B

PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE
INSTRUCTIONS: In the space next to the items below, please enter the number that best answers the question. Fill in information when requested in the spaces provided. Please answer every item.

(7-8) _____ AGE

(9-10) _____ YEAR OF BIRTH (e.g., 70 if born in 1970)

(11) _____ SEX
  1. male
  2. female

(12) _____ CLASS
  1. freshman
  2. sophomore
  3. junior
  4. senior
  5. graduate student
  6. other

(13-15) _____ GRADE POINT AVERAGE (e.g. 3.0)

(16) _____ ETHNIC/RACIAL BACKGROUND
  1. African American
  2. native American
  3. Caucasian
  4. Asian
  5. Hispanic
  6. other

(17) _____ RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION
  1. Protestant
  2. Catholic
  3. Jewish
  4. Islam
  5. Eastern religions
  6. None
  7. Other (please specify)

(18) _____ RELATIONSHIP STATUS
  1. currently married
  2. currently separated
  3. divorced
  4. widowed
  5. single, long-term relationship
  6. single, actively dating
  7. single, not actively dating

Please continue on the next page
(19) CURRENT LIVING SITUATION
1. with both parents at parents' home
2. with one parent at parent's home
3. alone in house/apt.
4. with other(s) in house/apt.
5. in residence hall

(20) MY BIOLOGICAL PARENTS ARE:
1. married, living together
2. married, living apart
3. divorced, not remarried
4. divorced, one remarried
5. divorced, both remarried
6. both parents deceased
7. mother deceased
8. father deceased

Answer the next two questions only if your biological parents are divorced.

(21-22) WHAT YEAR DID YOUR BIOLOGICAL PARENTS DIVORCE? ("75" if 1975)
(23-24) HOW OLD WERE YOU AT THE TIME OF YOUR PARENT'S DIVORCE?

(25) HOW CLOSE IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR BIOLOGICAL FATHER?
1. extremely
2. very
3. somewhat
4. not very
5. not at all

IF YOU DO NOT LIVE WITH YOUR BIOLOGICAL FATHER HOW OFTEN DO YOU SEE HIM?
1. about once a week
2. about once a month
3. about once every few months
4. about once a year
5. about once every few years
6. never

HOW CLOSE IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR BIOLOGICAL MOTHER?
1. extremely
2. very
3. somewhat
4. not very
5. not at all

IF YOU DO NOT LIVE WITH YOUR BIOLOGICAL MOTHER HOW OFTEN DO YOU SEE HER?
1. about once a week
2. about once a month
3. about once every few months
4. about once a year
5. about once every few years
6. never

Please continue on the next page
(29) WHAT PERCENT OF YOUR LIVING EXPENSES DO YOU PAY?
1. 0 %
2. 0 - 25%
3. 26 - 50%
4. 51 - 75%
5. 76 - 100%

HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU WORK AT A JOB EACH WEEK?
1. more than 35 hours a week
2. 25-35 hours
3. 15-24 hours
4. less than 15 hours
5. not employed

FATHER'S OCCUPATION
1. professional
2. managerial
3. sales
4. trained worker
5. laborer
6. does not work outside the home

MOTHER'S OCCUPATION
1. professional
2. managerial
3. sales
4. trained worker
5. laborer
6. does not work outside the home

For the next two questions use the scale below to indicate highest year of education completed in numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Master's</th>
<th>Doctoral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(33-34) FATHER'S EDUCATIONAL LEVEL
(35-36) MOTHER'S EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ARE SOURCES OF SUPPORT YOU CAN CALL ON?
Place a '1' by all that apply

father
mother
siblings
other family
friends
dating relationship/marital partner

other (please specify)

Please continue on the next page
The following questions ask about your relationship to one special person in your life. We call this special person your "attachment figure". By attachment figure, we mean:

1. The person you feel closest to right now.
2. The person you'd turn to for comfort, help, advice, love or understanding.
3. The person you'd be most likely to depend on, and who may depend on you for some things.

(44) HOW CLEARLY CAN YOU IDENTIFY SOMEONE IN YOUR LIFE RIGHT NOW WHOM YOU WOULD DESCRIBE AS YOUR ATTACHMENT FIGURE?
1. No one in my life fits this description very well.
2. More than one person fits this description.
3. I can identify one person who fits this description.
4. I don't understand exactly what this means.

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO YOUR ATTACHMENT FIGURE?
1. mother
2. father
3. friend
4. relative
5. husband or wife
6. person romantically involved with
7. other

(please specify)

(49) HOW COMFORTABLE ARE YOU WITH YOUR DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE?
1. very comfortable
2. comfortable
3. somewhat comfortable
4. not very comfortable
5. not at all comfortable

Please continue on the next page
APPENDIX C

INTERPARENTAL CONFLICT SCALE
The following are a series of issues that are often areas of conflict between a husband and a wife. Using the scale below, please indicate how frequently your biological parents have been in conflict or have argued about these matters over the past five years. The frequency scale is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>never</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>once or twice in 5 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about once per year</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about every few months</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about every month</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about every week</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about every day</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finance & Spouse's Responsibilities
1. _______ Budgeting
2. _______ Providing financial assistance to relatives
3. _______ Luxury spending
4. _______ Transporting family members
5. _______ Satisfaction with family income
6. _______ Buying on credit
7. _______ Balancing checkbook
8. _______ Automobile maintenance
9. _______ Insensitivity
10. _______ Ignoring spouse's needs
11. _______ Personal grooming
12. _______ Flirting
13. _______ Smoking
14. _______ Mutuality of recreational interest
15. _______ Personal crudeness
16. _______ Punctuality
17. _______ Overeating
18. _______ Backseat driving
19. _______ TV watching
20. _______ Spouse's feelings toward in-laws
(27) 21. _______ Acceptability of specific friends

Childcare Practices
22. _______ Children's household duties and responsibilities
23. _______ Sexual language
24. _______ Methods of discipline
25. _______ Mealtime etiquette
26. _______ Demands for obedience
27. _______ Children's sexual behavior
28. _______ Homework requirements
29. _______ Control of children's choice of friends
30. _______ Eating
31. _______ Tolerance of children's fighting and arguing
32. _______ Spouse's degree of involvement

Joint Family Activities
33. _______ Vacation plans
34. _______ Organizing leisure-time activities
35. _______ Frequency of visiting with relatives
36. _______ Family vs. individual recreation
(43) 37. _______ Relative importance of recreation

Please continue on next page
APPENDIX D

INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT TACTICS AND STRATEGIES SCALE
The next section asks that you consider the extent to which your biological parents use certain types of behavior in their interactions with each other in their relationship. We are particularly interested in the ways in which they handle conflict, "fights," and/or arguments in this relationship. You will be asked to describe the behavior of each parent separately. Some of the items may seem similar to one another. Others may seem strange, and others may seem highly personal. Please be assured that all your answers are held in strictest confidence. Your honesty is vital, and appreciated. Please use the following response scale:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Never Once A Few Occasionally Monthly More Than Weekly
Weekly Times Quite a Few Monthly or More Times

HOW OFTEN IN CONFLICT DOES YOUR BIOLOGICAL FATHER:

(7) ______ Insult your mother.
______ Calmly discuss the issue.
______ Use threats.
______ Shout.
______ Make your mother feel guilty.
______ Act defensive.
______ Punish your mother.
______ Be hostile.
______ Get angry.
______ Lose his temper.
______ Escalate the conflict.
______ Criticize your mother.
______ Intimidate your mother.
______ Call your mother nasty names.
______ Avoid the issue.
______ Pretend to be hurt by your mother.
______ Try to postpone the issue as long as possible.
______ Tease your mother.
______ Ignore the issue.
______ Try to make your mother jealous.
______ Compromise with your mother.
______ Explore alternative solutions.
______ Seek a mutually-beneficial solution.
______ Reward your mother.
______ Negotiate with your mother.
______ Seek areas of agreement.
______ Express his trust in your mother.

Please continue on the next page.
HOW OFTEN IN CONFLICT DOES YOUR BIOLOGICAL MOTHER:

(35)  ____ Insult your father.
      ____ Calmly discuss the issue.
      ____ Use threats.
      ____ Shout.
      ____ Make your father feel guilty.
      ____ Act defensive.
      ____ Punish your father.
      ____ Be hostile.
      ____ Get angry.
      ____ Lose her temper.
      ____ Escalate the conflict.
      ____ Criticize your father.
      ____ Intimidate your father.
      ____ Call your father nasty names.
      ____ Avoid the issue.
      ____ Pretend to be hurt by your father.
      ____ Try to postpone the issue as long as possible.
      ____ Tease your father.
      ____ Ignore the issue.
      ____ Try to make your father jealous.
      ____ Compromise with your father.
      ____ Explore alternative solutions.
      ____ Seek a mutually-beneficial solution.
      ____ Reward your father.
      ____ Negotiate with your father.
      ____ Seek areas of agreement.

(62)  ____ Express her trust in your father.

Thank you for your participation.
APPENDIX E

TABLES
Table 1

Demographic Information for Parental-Marital-Status Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Parental Marital Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intact (n = 120)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Status:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>currently married or divorced</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>single, long-term relation.</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>single, actively dating</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>single, not actively dating</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Living Situation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with parent(s) at home</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alone in own house/apt.</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with others in house/apt.</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>residence hall</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeness to mother:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extremely</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>somewhat</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not very</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not at all</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeness to father:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extremely</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>somewhat</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not very</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not at all</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

**Subjects, Ranges, and Means for ICS Conflict Groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICS Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Conflict</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0-40</td>
<td>18.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Conflict</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>41-75</td>
<td>56.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Conflict</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>76-159</td>
<td>106.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. ICS = Interparental Conflict Scale.*
Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges of the Dependent Measures for the Entire Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Possible Range</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSI-Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>31.00</td>
<td>11.92</td>
<td>0-52</td>
<td>0-52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>12.59</td>
<td>0-56</td>
<td>0-54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>77.61</td>
<td>14.98</td>
<td>0-100</td>
<td>27-99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI</td>
<td>40.54</td>
<td>14.17</td>
<td>0-68</td>
<td>8-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSI-Father</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>35.58</td>
<td>12.26</td>
<td>0-52</td>
<td>5-52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>27.98</td>
<td>14.41</td>
<td>0-56</td>
<td>0-56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>78.62</td>
<td>15.90</td>
<td>0-100</td>
<td>28-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI</td>
<td>43.88</td>
<td>16.32</td>
<td>0-68</td>
<td>4-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPPA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>98.17</td>
<td>18.78</td>
<td>25-125</td>
<td>39-125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>86.77</td>
<td>22.59</td>
<td>25-125</td>
<td>29-125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>102.78</td>
<td>13.32</td>
<td>25-125</td>
<td>65-125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOMEIS-2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>67.79</td>
<td>9.41</td>
<td>16-96</td>
<td>41-94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moratorium</td>
<td>50.81</td>
<td>9.82</td>
<td>16-96</td>
<td>24-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td>42.52</td>
<td>12.53</td>
<td>16-96</td>
<td>16-81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion</td>
<td>42.37</td>
<td>9.27</td>
<td>16-96</td>
<td>19-76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. PSI = Psychological Separation Inventory. IPPA = Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment. EOMEIS-2 = Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status. FI = Functional Independence. AI = Attitudinal Independence. CI = Conflictual Independence. EI = Emotional Independence.
### Table 4

**Dependent Variable Means At Each Conflict Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Conflict Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSI-Mother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>30.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI</td>
<td>39.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>84.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>22.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSI-Father</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>34.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI</td>
<td>42.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>86.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>25.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPPA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>103.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>94.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>105.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOMEIS-2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>67.44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td>44.35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diffusion</td>
<td>41.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moratorium</td>
<td>48.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** PSI = Psychological Separation Inventory. AI = Attitudinal Independence. EI = Emotional Independence. CI = Confictual Independence. FI = Functional Independence. IPPA = Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment. EOMEIS-2 = Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Parental Marital Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>PSI-Mother</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>29.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI</td>
<td>38.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>77.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>23.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PSI-Father</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>33.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI</td>
<td>41.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>79.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>25.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IPPA</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>101.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>91.61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
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<td>Diffusion</td>
<td>41.56</td>
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<td>Moratorium</td>
<td>50.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** PSI = Psychological Separation Inventory; AI = Attitudinal Independence; EI = Emotional Independence; CI = Conflictual Independence; FI = Functional Independence; IPPA = Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment; EOMEIS-2 = Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status.
Table 6

**Results of Univariate Analyses of the Effect of Parental Conflict on PSI Subscales**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSI-Mother</th>
<th>F value</th>
<th>PSI-Father</th>
<th>F value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional</td>
<td>3.17*</td>
<td>Functional</td>
<td>3.84*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>4.31*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflictual</td>
<td>25.28****</td>
<td>Conflictual</td>
<td>17.34****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudinal</td>
<td>6.28**</td>
<td>Attitudinal</td>
<td>7.44***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. PSI = Psychological Separation Inventory.*

*p<.05. **p<.005. ***p<.001. ****p<.0001.*
Table 7

Results of Univariate Analyses of the Effect of Subject Gender on PSI Subscales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSI-mother</th>
<th>F value</th>
<th>PSI-father</th>
<th>F value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional</td>
<td>21.06****</td>
<td>Functional</td>
<td>5.84*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>24.05****</td>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>15.16****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflictual</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>Conflictual</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudinal</td>
<td>20.15****</td>
<td>Attitudinal</td>
<td>6.77*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. PSI = Psychological Separation Inventory.

*p<.05. **p<.005. ***p<.001. ****p<.0001.
Table 8

Correlations Between Exploratory Conflict Measures and Conflict Total Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ICTAS-Father</th>
<th></th>
<th>ICTAS-Mother</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ICS</td>
<td>Per</td>
<td>Dest</td>
<td>Avoid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICS</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pervasive</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dest</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Const</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dest</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Const</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. ICTAS = Interpersonal Conflict Tactics and Strategies Scale; ICS = Interparental Conflict Scale; Per = pervasiveness; Dest = Destructive Conflict Tactics; Avoid = Avoidant Conflict Tactics; Const = Constructive Conflict Tactics. *p<.05. **p<.0001.
Table 9

Correlations Between Exploratory Conflict Measures and Dependent Variables

| Dependent Variables | Per | ICTAS | | | Mother | | |
|---------------------|-----|-------||--|--|--|--|
| PSI-Mother          |     | Father | | | | | |
| FI                  | .04 | .18   | .03 | -.19 | .18 | .17 | -.35 |
| EI                  | .08 | .14   | .03 | -.09 | .19 | .19 | -.28 |
| CI                  | -.34| -.29  | -.28| .03  | -.43| -.32| .03  |
| AI                  | .15 | .22   | .04 | -.23 | .21 | .30 | -.33 |
| PSI-Father          |     | Father | | | | | |
| FI                  | .04 | .32   | .22 | -.39 | .14 | .09 | -.36 |
| EI                  | .05 | .29   | .16 | -.35 | .06 | .05 | -.29 |
| CI                  | -.26| -.36  | -.24| .16  | -.17| -.09| -.04 |
| AI                  | .14 | .30   | .13 | -.41 | .20 | .19 | -.34 |
| IPPA                |     | Father | | | | | |
| Mother              | -.29| -.35  | -.18| .19  | -.44| -.47| .31  |
| Father              | -.22| -.51  | -.31| .43  | -.28| -.25| .29  |
| Peers               | -.20| -.21  | -.01| .16  | -.13| -.26| .14  |
| EOMEIS-2            |     | Achievement | | | | | |
| Achievement         | -.01| .12   | .00 | -.17 | .02 | .12 | -.09 |
| Foreclosure         | .07 | .29   | .17 | -.18 | .33 | .25 | -.16 |
| Diffusion           | .01 | -.05  | -.01| .08  | .01 | -.02| .09  |
| Moratorium          | -.19| -.13  | -.14| -.08 | -.11| -.10| -.11 |

Note. ICTAS = Interpersonal Conflict Tactics and Strategies Scale; Per = Pervasiveness; Dest = Destructive Tactics; Avoid = Avoidant Tactics; Const = Constructive Tactics; PSI = Psychological Separation Inventory; FI = Functional Independence; EI = Emotional Independence; CI = Conflictual Independence; AI = Attitudinal Independence; IPPA = Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment; EOMEIS-2 = Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status.

*p<.05. **p<.005. ***p<.001. ****p<.0001.
Table 10

Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges for the ICTAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ICTAS-Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructive</td>
<td>27.85</td>
<td>10.87</td>
<td>7-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidant</td>
<td>12.62</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>6-36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destructive</td>
<td>36.09</td>
<td>14.47</td>
<td>14-94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTAS-Father</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructive</td>
<td>24.51</td>
<td>10.92</td>
<td>1-47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidant</td>
<td>14.08</td>
<td>6.95</td>
<td>6-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destructive</td>
<td>39.05</td>
<td>16.99</td>
<td>14-93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. ICTAS = Interpersonal Conflict Tactics and Strategies Scale.
REFERENCES


