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Stages of Adult Development for Women Religious and Married Women

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Women Religious and Married Women

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University

by

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Richmond, Virginia

December, 1981

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Abstract

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the stages in the adult development of single women living in religious communities and compare these stages with those of married women. Specific research questions about each five year period from age 21 to 50 were answered by this study.

Questionnaires were sent to 200 women religious and 200 married women between the ages of 36 and 50 who live in the Pittsburgh area and are white, middle-class, and Catholic. In addition to requesting biographical information, these questionnaires asked participants to specify which five year period in their lives they experienced certain marker events and developmental processes. Participants also rated marker events according to their positive or negative effect on their lives.

An analysis of the data from the questionnaires included determining participant characteristics, the percentage and mean age of women religious and married women who experienced each developmental issue during each age period, frequency and mean ratings for marker events, and "co-happenings" between marker events and developmental issues for women religious.

The results of this study demonstrate that there is a similar pattern in the stages of development of the women religious and the married women in this sample regarding identity, satisfaction, stress, etc., despite the different marker events occurring in their lives and

their diverse educational backgrounds and employment histories. The sequence of phases in their adult growth also mirrors that described in the review of recent research on this topic. Only on the issues of lower life satisfaction and satisfaction with the community in their early twenties do the women religious in this study deviate from recent findings. The sample of married women follows the predicted pattern except that their initial reactions to marriage were different than those of women in other studies, probably because of their religious affiliation.

The similarity in the findings of the two groups of women in this study suggests that their adult development is not determined by the occurrence and timing of specific marker events in their lives. The sequence they follow appears to be more age than event-related. It seems more dependent on the manner in which they have been socialized regarding acceptable attitudes and roles for women than it is on their choice of a celibate or married lifestyle.

INTRODUCTION

When beginning any study related to the psychology of women, one is confronted immediately with the fact that one treads on territory that was virtually untouched until the last few decades. Previous to that time, women were rarely perceived as human beings with the full range of assets and faults attributed to men. Myths about their powers, motives, and special qualities have been reflected in the literature and religion of most cultures from earliest times (Williams, 1974). Women have been variously described as incarnations of both the highest good and the basest evil, of virtue and deceit, and of the sacred and profane. Obscured by the stereotypes and myths that surrounded them, women were finally scrutinized more closely only in the twentieth century through the eyes of psychoanalysts, beginning with Freud.

The last two decades, however, have been a period of unique, though belated, growth in the study of women. Women's centers, programs, courses, groups, etc., have rapidly developed throughout the country. Studies, articles, and books on a myriad of topics related to women have been undertaken, written, and published in the last twenty years. Spurred, no doubt, by the Women's Liberation Movement, many contemporary women reject the results of past studies completed primarily by men, in which the subjects were male, but the conclusions were supposedly applicable to both sexes. Today, women are conducting their own studies about their own sex, and are often arriving at conclusions quite different from those which seem valid for men. One area in which the difference

between the sexes is most evident is that of adult development. The life stages defined in recent works (Gould, 1978; Levinson, 1978) as typical for men cannot easily be accommodated to describe women. The necessity of further study about the adult development of women is clear. What is also obvious is that what recent work has been done in this area has been conducted primarily with women who are or were married. Because the single woman is somewhat of a rarity and an anomaly in American society, there is a dearth of information regarding her lifestyle and her psychological development.

The present study purports to look at the topic of the adult development of single women. It will concern itself specifically with that unique group of single women who live celibately in religious communities and will be based on speculations and questions which arose as a result of a previous study (Rufft, 1979) on this topic in which case studies of ten single, celibate women were constructed and analyzed. The purpose of the present study is, therefore, to discover the pattern of adult growth which characterized women religious in the past and compare it with what is recently being suggested as typical for married women.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Beginnings of the Psychology of Women: Freud and the Psychoanalysts

In reviewing the literature on female adult development, one becomes immediately aware of the paucity of research in this area. The psychology of women has emerged as an academic entity only in the last two decades. Little attention was given to the study of women separate from the study of the adult human until the rise of functionalism in the United States around 1900. This school of psychology attempted to incorporate evolutionary theory into its subject matter, viewing human behavior as the end result of a process of adaptation and adjustment to the environment. Shields (1975) demonstrates the significance of the marriage of evolutionary theory and psychology for the beginning of the scientific study of female behavior. She notes how observable sex differences in brain size, in intellectual and cultural achievement, and in nurturing behavior, all formerly ascribed to the inherent inferiority of the female, became topics of scientific study. Explanations for the phenomena of female behavior moved from their mythic beginnings to the stereotypes of women which persisted during the decline of functionalism in the thirties. While further scientific study of the psychology of women did not resume until the late sixties, a major statement concerning women was expounded in the meantime by Freud and the school of psychoanalysis, one of the most influential theories of human behavior proposed in modern times.

Freud first presented his theory of psychosexual development in Three

Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (1905). He tentatively suggested the parallel development of girls and boys, based on the model of the male's resolution of the Oedipal conflict. He also referred to the sexual life of adult women, however, as a puzzle, a "dark continent" for psychology. Normal mature femininity flows, according to Freud, from the young girl's pre-Oedipal identification with her mother, her discovery of their common genital inferiority, the shift of her libidinal attachment to her father, and her development away from the active aims of clitoral sexuality to the passive ones of vaginal receptivity. Penis envy has its long-term consequences in traits which Freud thought characterize adult women, i.e., narcissism, vanity, and shame. In addition, because a woman is spared the male's traumatic resolution of his Oedipal complex under threat of castration, she never totally abandons her libidinal interest in her father. Under less duress, her personality, therefore, fails to develop a strong superego from which conscience and morality flow. Thus, women have little sense of justice, a weak social interest, and are rigid by age thirty (Freud, 1933).

As one might expect, Freud's theories of female sexuality and personality have not been wanting in critics. The key role of penis envy and the events which proceed from it, i.e., the suppression of the clitoris, the dependence of further sexual satisfaction on penile penetration, the need for a male child as penis substitute, the derived model of feminine personality with its less than flattering traits, rest on a biological base which gives little recognition to the role of social factors in shaping women's behavior. "Anatomy is destiny," says Freud. Indeed, the whole notion of envy of the male organ is based on assumptions of male superiority within a patriarchal society (Williams, 1974). The male is the norm for Freud's theories; the female is an inadequate male.

Empirical evidence does not document the basic Freudian notions of penis envy, Oedipus complex, and vaginal orgasm. From her detailed review of studies conducted to test the evidence regarding the existence of penis envy, Sherman (1971) concludes that there is little indication that women envy the male anatomy. She finds much support, however, for the notion that girls and women envy the male role for its greater social power and privilege. Experiments have also been unable to validate the concept of an Oedipal shift from mother to father. A review of the literature on this topic led Frieze, Parsons, Johnson, Ruble, & Zellman, (1978) to conclude that both sexes at ages four to six remain primarily attached to their mother, the main care-taker. In addition, Freud's notion of the vaginal orgasm has been convincingly disproved by experimental evidence that demonstrates that both the clitoris and the vagina are involved in any female orgasm (Masters & Johnson, 1966).

One cannot ignore the fact that Freud cautioned his readers about the tentative nature of his exploration of femininity and called for further validation of his hypotheses. In describing the personality traits he thought most characteristic of women, he denies claiming more than an "average validity" for his assertions. He also states that he had been describing women only insofar as their nature is determined by their sexual function and that he does not overlook the fact that "an individual woman may be a human being in other respects as well" (1933). One's initial criticism of a theory which so blatantly ascribes inferior personality traits to women must be tempered, therefore, by the recognition that Freud was one of the first psychiatrists to address himself to the subject of female development and, admittedly, based his conclusions on a "handful of cases" (1925).

Carl Jung, originally a disciple of Freud's, disagreed with his

master's emphasis both on the primacy of sexual motives for human behavior and on the extreme importance of one's early childhood experiences. Jung proposes, instead, a theory of development based on an individual's goals in life and involving the creative development of the whole person. He focuses his attention on the adult years and postulates that much personality change can occur after childhood. In Jung's conception of the life stages, the period of youth extends from puberty until middle age (35-45). During midlife, an individual's convictions may begin to harden. They sometimes grow increasingly rigid until, at about age fifty, according to Jung, a period of intolerance or fanaticism may be reached. During the fourth stage of life, its evening (65+), one's values and one's body too, tend to reverse their orientation sexually, i.e., men seem to acquire more feminine characteristics, physically and emotionally, and women more masculine ones (Campbell, 1971).

Jung believes that racial memories are present in the personality in the form of unconscious archetypes, i.e., images of types of people about whom one has emotional responses. Two archetypes which Jung postulates as particularly important for understanding the female personality are the animus and the anima (Campbell, 1971). The animus is the woman's masculine archetype and her unconscious male personality, while the anima is the man's feminine archetype and unconscious female personality. To the extent that the animus or anima is completely unconscious, women or men project their animus or anima on to actual men and women they know. While these archetypes help both sexes understand one another, the projection of part of their own personality on to the other sex might interfere with an accurate perception of the true personalities of others. Jung felt that by bringing the archetypes into one's conscious experience,

by integrating both female and male aspects of oneself, one can be a more complete person. Thus, by the union of opposites, which Jung suggests often occurs in old age, women and men reach their full human potential.

Jung's theory thus gives a biological and spiritual basis for the traditional female and male stereotypes. While his concepts of animus and anima could provide a scientific rationale for the traditional roles of women and men, his stress on the integration of the female and male aspects of one's personality could also be seen as one road to the achievement of androgyny (Frieze et al., 1978). Goldenberg (1976) suggests, however, that the animus/anima model implies that women and men have a qualitatively different kind of unconscious. Jung sees women as characterized by Eros, i.e., an ability to make connections, and men by Logos, a function of analytic thought. Women are valued for their Eros and confined to this sphere. According to Jung, women's "Logos is often only a regrettable accident" (Campbell, 1971, p. 152). As Goldenberg notes, such a model is hardly beneficial to women. It suggests that women are as they are because they are conforming to an absolute, unchangeable archetype, an archetype hypothesized by Jung with little evidence to support its existence.

Like Jung, Erik Erikson, a contemporary psychoanalyst, also departs somewhat from Freud's theory by emphasizing social and cultural factors as they interact with biological ones to maintain sex differences. Erikson (1950) proposes a formulation of the psycho-social stages of adult development. According to his theory, human beings (male and female) pass through eight phases during their life cycle, each phase being characterized by a conflict between two opposing forces. The task for each stage is the resolution of its conflict. The last

three of these phases occur in adulthood. They include the intimacy versus isolation conflict of the twenties, the generativity versus stagnation conflict of "middle adulthood," and the conflict between integrity and despair, usually experienced in old age. If individuals resolve each of these conflicts, they achieve love, develop care, and, finally, acquire wisdom.

Although Erikson's "eight stages of man" are supposedly also appropriate for women, his examples regarding these phases are all male. In fact, Erikson's study of the psychology of women is rather limited when one considers the total context of his work. He was already in his sixties when he published his analysis of female personality development (1964). Eleven years later, he returns to the subject, responding to feminist criticism of his views on women (1975).

Erikson's (1964) first paper on the dynamics of female identity was based in part on the results of a study he conducted on the play construction of children between the ages of ten and twelve (1950). In building imaginary motion picture scenes, his female subjects tended to construct interior peaceful scenes while the males erected high buildings, towers, and facades with protrusions on them. Erikson hypothesizes that the spatial tendencies noted in the constructions of the two sexes are analogous to sexual anatomy, i.e., the males emphasizing erectile, active motifs and the females, enclosure and receptivity. Regarding women, therefore, he proposes that their identity is determined by the somatic design of the female body, the "inner space" of its womb and vagina. Erikson suggests that normal females focus not on "what is not there," i.e., the penis, as Freud asserts, but rather on what does exist, namely, the "inner bodily space." This "inner space" is the locus for her potential for fulfillment, but also the center of despair if she fears

being left empty and unfulfilled.

Thus, like Freud, Erikson makes anatomy destiny. The concept of inner space has in common with that of penis envy a view of woman that assumes that her biology determines her adaptation to life. This flavor of biological determinism is obviously distasteful to contemporary feminist ideology. As Williams (1974) notes, the relationship between Erikson's theory and the psychology of women has three major problems. First, his model for psycho-social development, the "eight stages of man," and the substance of his work from which it was derived both assume the male as the prototype of humanity. It was formulated in terms of a male experiential process which was then adjusted to accommodate women as well. For example, while the stage of identity precedes that of intimacy for males, identity for females, according to Erikson, is contingent on the achievement of intimacy with a man (1968). If women are the exception to Erikson's theory of human development, his formulation is not, in fact, one of "human" development, but of "male" development.

The second problem with Erikson's theory is his persistent identification of woman with mother. Whether women achieve identity through motherhood is not the issue. The problem is, rather, Erikson's emphasis on woman's reproductive role (involving the inner space) as the main determinant of identity. The assertion of such a position, without credible evidence, does not account for observable exceptions in childless women.

Erikson's concept of "inner space" also poses another problem for women. While the modes of play which Erikson observed in his young subjects differed for girls and boys, (although 1/3 of each sex did not conform to the majority) these differences are not necessarily determined

by, or even related to, sexual or reproductive morphology. A simpler, and at least equally plausible explanation, might rely on cultural conditioning as a main factor in the play construction of each sex.

Erikson's 1975 paper is an affirmation of his earlier one on woman's "inner space." He again rejects Freud's view of the feminine experience as essentially negative and traumatic and describes femininity as a positive, moral force in society which could counteract an overemphasis on masculine values. He continues to view woman's maternal function as the determinant of her personality, however, and to underestimate the weight of social factors. Erikson's romantic, idealized, maternal view of women is, then, as male-identified as is Freud's more negative one (Frieze et al., 1978).

The theories of female personality and sexuality which stem from psychoanalytic thought as described in the works of Freud, Jung, and Erikson have been abandoned by many former Freudian disciples. Among those who disagreed with Freud's orthodox position and became particularly concerned with a new interpretation of woman's personality and behavior is Karen Horney. In a series of papers published between 1923 and 1935, Horney (1973) defines her psychological approach as holistic, i.e., a view of the person as a dynamic whole rather than as the mechanistic system of parts which earlier psychoanalytic theory described. She shifts her emphasis from biological determinism to a consideration of the interaction between constitutional factors and the environment.

Horney (1973) notes that little is actually known about psychically healthy women. She attributes this dearth of knowledge to the male bias of psychoanalytic observers. In our society, the concept "human being" is identified with "man," and all its institutions are dominated by men. The psychology of women, therefore, evolved from a male point

of view. In "The Flight from Womanhood," (1926) Horney asserts that the relationship between the sexes has historically been similar to that between master and slave. Because men have power and women hear from infancy of their own inferiority, a woman's masculinity complex, i.e., her flight from womanhood, is reinforced. It moves her to envy males who have the power she lacks. Since the professions are dominated by men, and few women overcome their depreciation of self through accomplishment in the career world, the "flight from womanhood" is again encouraged by the actual social subordination of women. According to Horney, the reason why the "flight from manhood" is seen less frequently in males than the masculinity complex in women is because men have more opportunity for creative achievement in the work world than women do. Thus, women exist in a narrow sphere of life in which their self-esteem is dependent upon successful relationships with men.

Early Theories of Adult Development

In the past two decades, much work regarding the psychology of women has been undertaken by psychologists who, unlike those just reviewed, are neither Freudian nor neo-Freudian. In addition, several major theories concerning adult development have recently been formulated. Unfortunately, for our purposes, these latter have most frequently been proposed by, about, and/or for men. Two of the earlier life stage theorists, Raymond Kuhlen (1964) and Charlotte Buhler (1968), describe the phases of adult life in terms of an individual's goals, an expansion/contraction model of development. Neither of these researchers makes a distinction between the process of growth for males and that for females. Daniel Levinson's The Seasons of a Man's Life (1978) and George Vaillant's Adaptation to Life (1977) are excellent examples of research

on adult development conducted with midlife men. Levinson interviewed forty middle-aged men from four occupations for his study, while Vaillant's work describes ninety-five men, all about age 47, who were part of the original Grant Study at Harvard. Each of these authors proposes a theory which describes chronological stages in the growth of their subjects from early adulthood to middle age. Another contemporary psychologist, Roger Gould, includes women and men between the ages of 16 and 60 in his study of adult personality changes. His subjects include psychiatric outpatients as well as non-patients. In the initial presentation of his results, however, Gould (1972) makes no distinction between differing characteristics for women and men throughout the stages of life. In his later work, based on the same studies and on his own clinical experience, Gould (1978) includes anecdotes of both females and males and discusses the effects of cultural sex role stereotyping on women and men as they age. Despite these attempts to broaden his formulation of the stages of adult development to include women, Gould's Transformations (1978) cannot legitimately be seen as a study of "human" development. It is, rather, another version of the male stages with some accommodation made for women.

In Lowenthal, Thurnher, Chiriboga, & Associates' (1977) study of people at four transitional stages in life, i.e., high school seniors, young newlyweds, middle-aged parents, and pre-retirees, their recurrent finding is that sex differences are greater than differences between the life stages for the same sex on every factor tested, with the sole exception of the area of the self-concept. Further studies of the stages of the female life cycle are, therefore, essential. Though no major research, except perhaps that by Sanguiliano (1978), has as yet been published which delineates the life stages of women

in the manner that some of the above-mentioned works do for men, many studies on female psychology and/or specific topical areas concerning women have been undertaken during the last twenty years. These research efforts range from studies on topics such as sex roles (Laws & Schwartz, 1977; Weitz, 1977), achievement motivation (Hoffman, 1972; Tresemer, 1976), and homemaker versus career issues (Booth, 1977; Helson, 1972), to works on specific time periods in a woman's life. Of this latter research, more has been written about midlife women than about any other life stage in a woman's development (Barnett & Baruch, 1978; Bart, 1969; Rubin, 1979).

Stages of Female Adult Development

In reviewing the literature on female adult development, therefore, it might be helpful to examine the studies that have been conducted on each stage of adult life in order to determine a reasonable theory of how women change and grow during their life cycle. The themes relevant to the first six of the eight chronological stages suggested by Sales (1978) as plausible for women will be considered, i.e., young adulthood (18-21); choosing life roles (22-24); role completion (25-29); readjustment (30-34); becoming one's own person (35-43); midlife (44-47). While these divisions are, of course, somewhat artificial, they are helpful for purposes of analysis and are important more for the sequence of the stages than for the ages which are rather arbitrarily assigned to them. Though the stages following midlife are at least as interesting as those preceding it and are also in need of further research, they are, unfortunately, beyond the scope of the present study.

Young Adulthood (18-21)

In the first stage of development to be considered (18-21), pressure for women to make an occupational choice is not felt as keenly as it

supposedly is by their male counterparts (Gould, 1978; Levinson et al., 1978). Perhaps this lack of pressure is due to the fact that socialization has emphasized marriage as the most important role for women (Kuhlen & Johnson, 1952). What is felt, however, is pressure to find the "right" man. Women grow up expecting to get married. According to Janeway's (1971) study of social mythology, American women have been taught that it is the choice of a husband, not a career, that most strongly determines their future. The decision for young women is, therefore, not "which" career, as it is for men, but a decision as to whether they will have any career at all in addition to homemaking.

In her study of the psychology of women, Williams (1974) notes that though women report that they are given reinforcement from parents for academic achievement in their elementary and high school days, they experience a reversal of this support in college. During this period, they are no longer applauded for academic success but rather for acquiring an abstract standard of femininity which emphasizes marriage as the appropriate goal. Those who deviate from the norm, by actively pursuing a career, risk criticism from parents and peers for engaging in inappropriate sex-role behavior. Their parents become concerned about their marriageability, while their male peers view them as unfeminine.

Horner (1972) suggests that the attitude of males toward the appropriate role for women is a significant factor in arousing their motive to avoid success. She notes that the stereotype in our society is to view competence, independence, competition, and intellectual achievement as qualities basically inconsistent with femininity, even though they are positively related to masculinity and to mental health. From the six studies which Horner completed and/or reviewed on this

issue, she concludes that most highly competent and otherwise achievement motivated young women, when faced with a conflict between their feminine image and expressing their competencies, adjust their behaviors to their internalized sex-role stereotypes. It is important to point out, however, that the total number of women involved in the six studies Horner reviews is 313 and that four of the studies involve women in only one university. The generalizability of her results indicating 86.6% incidence of fear of success among administrative secretaries in a large corporation becomes suspect for example, when one notes that the sample for this study was only fifteen women. In his review of Horner's studies, Tresemer (1976) suggests that Horner's results indicate only that both female and male subjects who are not particularly achievement-oriented are more vulnerable to the negative effects of fear of success in an arousing testing situation, rather than the conclusion Horner reaches, i.e., that fear of success is especially debilitating to highly competent women. Carlson (1972) sees a danger in even attempting to study women in terms of masculine constructs. She suggests that demonstrating that women are less achievement-oriented than men is saying more about the costs of female adaptation to a segment of the masculine world than it is about the nature of femininity. Despite these questions and concerns regarding past research on women and success, one can at least validly state that a motive to avoid success, especially in competition with males, might be important in the personality dynamics of many intellectually gifted women and that career achievement has not, in general, been as frequently attained by women in our culture as it has been by men. A study of over three hundred Columbia female graduate students (Ginzberg, 1966) indicates that only women with strong commitment, competence, and

independence can persevere in non-traditional goals, e.g., in careers outside the home.

Since many young women accept the stereotypic portrait which equates happiness with choosing the right husband, the period of young adulthood may be viewed as an interregnum between dependence on her parents and her later dependence on her spouse (Bernard, 1975). For young men entering college or the work world, this period is a transition from dependence on parents to the beginning of an independent life (Gould, 1978). A young woman at this stage of life, however, maintains a tentativeness not only in her choices, but even in her quest for personal identity (Lowenthal, 1975). As Erikson notes, for women "the stage of life crucial for the emergence of an integrated female identity is the step from youth to maturity, the state when the young woman, whatever her work career, relinquishes the care received from the paternal family in order to commit herself to the love of a stranger" (1968, p. 265). Thus, while a man can acquire a sense of self independent of any human relationship, a woman's identity is contingent upon intimacy with a male. A woman may, therefore, view her personal growth as irrelevant to, or conflicting with, her later marital role and expend little effort in moving toward self-exploration and independence.

In a study on the ego strength, happiness and achievement plans of 162 college senior women, Gump (1972) found that the subjects with the highest ego-stress scores were those who were actively pursuing both marriage and a career. These results imply that ego strength may be negatively correlated with the adoption of the traditional female sex role which does not include a career outside the home for women. According to Gump's study, therefore, the women with the least ego strength are those who passively wait to be defined by marriage.

Angrist and Almquist (1975) suggest that, since a woman's clarification of her own needs, values, and goals may increase incompatibilities with prospective marriage partners, her continued flexibility may actually be adaptive in allowing for broader marriage options. The price for retaining such malleability is, however, continued dependence and passivity, as well as little growth in a sense of herself as an autonomous individual. Despite this price, many young women reach the end of the young adult period (18-21) without having chosen a career or clarified their life goals. With the increase of women who choose to have both a career and marriage, this trend is slowly being altered (Fitzgerald & Crites, 1980). Nevertheless, in a survey of 2,164 adults (Campbell, Converse & Rodgers, 1976), it was noted that because of the pressure for young women to find the right man and, possibly a career, and for men to decide on an occupation, this period is a difficult one in which general life satisfaction is low and stress high.

Choosing Life Roles (22-24)

Women who marry. The next phase of adulthood, defined by Sales (1978) as the period of choosing one's life roles, occurs in the early twenties (22-24). Central to this stage is, as Erikson (1950) suggests, the development of one's capacity for intimacy. During this period, young people reach out to others in a desire to share their new-found sense of self. Their search for intimacy often leads these young women and men to the choice of a marriage partner. Even as recently as 1974, the American woman married at the median age of 21.1, barely out of college and into the working world (Sanguiliano, 1978).

For women, there are several problems in this phase of development whether they choose to marry or not. As was noted previously, women are

not as likely to have a real sense of their identity at this age as men supposedly do. If a woman decides to marry at 22, therefore, she has no "new-found sense of self" to share with a spouse. Instead, she is likely to attempt to discover her identity in her partner and, during the initial stages of marriage, many women seem able to do just that. Research (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Campbell, 1975) indicates that young married women (with no children) report higher levels of life satisfaction than any other group of women or men at any stage of life. Their stress level decreases dramatically, presumably because they are now freed from uncertainties about their future.

The above scenario is obviously more accurate for the traditional woman who accepts the role of homemaker as her major task in life, than it is for the woman who wishes to combine career and marriage, or for the single woman. A woman, married or single, who wishes to pursue a career must often do so within a social environment that is, at best, indifferent, and, at worst, actively resistant to her efforts (Sales, 1978). According to Helson's (1972) review of the changing image of career women, in the 1950's and early 1960's, it became acceptable for married women to work if family needs required it and if the family itself remained the woman's top priority. Women who wanted a career for its own sake were still looked upon negatively and considered an exception. The first well-documented study favoring the success of career women was not published until 1966 (Ginzberg).

If a woman is married and working, she also has the problem of learning to juggle the time demands of a career with the responsibilities of maintaining a home. Research about the satisfaction of women carrying this double burden shows varied results depending partially on the age level of the women used in the sample. Birnbaum (1975), for example,

studied the life patterns and self-esteem in gifted family-oriented and career-committed women. She notes that career women have lower self-esteem and more doubts about themselves than their traditional home-maker counterparts during the early adult period. Ferree's (1976) study of married working-class women of varying ages suggests, however, that full-time housewives are dissatisfied with how they are spending their lives and feel socially isolated, whereas working women have higher self-esteem even when their jobs are clerical or service-oriented. In a replication of Ferree's work, but using national survey data from 1971-76, Wright (1978) found no significant difference between working wives and housewives regarding life satisfaction in general, work, or marriage. Again, the women in his study were of different ages, while those in Birnbaum's were all women in the early adult stage.

Single women. While a woman who marries faces one set of problems regarding the establishment of a career, the single woman is confronted with others. Although the number of single women is increasing in both absolute numbers and in their ratio to the general population (Bequaert, 1976), the 1974 U. S. Bureau of Statistics shows that about 95% of American women have been married at least once by age 35 (cited in Sanguiliano, 1978). There is, then, great social pressure in the United States for people to marry (Troll, 1975). According to the traditional sexual script (Laws, 1977), a single woman is less womanly than a wife; marriage confers adult status on her and makes her truly a woman. As the single woman approaches her mid-twenties, therefore, she is often the object of mounting concern from her parents as well as her peer friends who are already married.

A distinction exists, of course, between the attitudes of women who are single by choice and those who remain so unwillingly. Adams (1976)

refutes the assumption that all women have an innate desire to be married. Rather, she discovered that some women choose to remain single because of a sustained commitment to personal independence in living and to a preoccupation with intellectual pursuits. In her discussions with single women of various ages, she found that singleness did not mean that their lives were lacking in intimate relationships, much less that these women were incapable of forming them. Through her sociohistorical survey, Adams attempts to destroy the myth that psychological deviance and being single are correlated. She rejects Erikson's model of the life stages, therefore, because in that model singleness is described as either a rare gift or a defect, rather than an ordinary state.

In interviewing women who by choice had never married, Bequaert (1976) found the assets of singleness for them to be: autonomy in making life plans, relative freedom from conflicting demands of work and homelife, and better mental health. Since these women have consciously rejected the traditional female role of dependence on a husband's income and status, the importance of self-sustaining work is evident. Therefore, educational opportunities and economic security are of greater concern to the single woman than to those married homemaker counterparts who are content to rely on their husband's salary for security and who experience achievement only vicariously through his success. The major problem Bequaert's (1976) single women defined, however, as the source of greatest conflict for them is the negative image of the single woman which our society promotes. Stein (1976) suggests that, in the United States, adulthood and emotional maturity are synonymous with marriage and parenthood. Those who remain single are often seen as immature, inadequate, or deviant. Based on her study

of American widows, Lopata (1973) notes that single women are distrusted as well as pitied. They are an enigma to married women, especially if they appear happy; they are also considered dangerous or, at least, inconvenient.

For the woman who remains unwillingly single as she approaches her mid-twenties, there is a different script. Since marriage in our society is seen as inevitable and, in theory, long-lasing (Bequaert, 1976), she continues to form her life plans on a contingency basis waiting for the "right" man to appear to free her from the necessity of defining herself. She puts on the necessary "mask of beauty" (Stannard, 1971) in her attempt to capture a husband and, though engaged in some type of occupation, continues to make all decisions, including those regarding her own identity, tentatively. As early as 1934, Horney (1973) suggested that the core problem of many women who came to her for therapy was an overvaluation of love relationships, of men, and of sex, to the extent that a heterosexual relationship was the most valuable thing in their lives. These women depreciated their own real gifts in what Horney called a "falsification of values." An overvaluation of marriage seems to still exist in many young women today, for though women receive fewer benefits from marriage than men, the majority are more eager to enter that state than are their male counterparts (Bernard, 1972b). Kuhlen and Johnson's (1952) study of the way in which goals change with age includes single women. Their results indicate that not until age 45 does the desire to marry completely end for these women. When considering the psychological development of single women, therefore, it is essential to distinguish between those for whom singleness is a choice and those who feel they failed in their quest to find the "right" man.

Role Completion (25-29)

Married women and motherhood. The next stage of adult development, which occurs around the ages of 25 to 29, involves for most married women the role of motherhood. For the full-time homemaker, the birth of a child involves added, new responsibilities; for the working mother, it also means at least a temporary absence from the work world. In either case, according to a series of studies conducted by Feldman (1974), the intense involvement between husband and wife which characterizes early marriage diminishes after parenthood. LeMasters' (1957) study of 46 couples shows new mothers often feeling overwhelmed by child-care responsibilities, having less time for friends and leisure activities and experiencing a feeling of confinement to the home. The husbands in this study reported concern about the decreased sexual responsiveness of their wives at this time as well as the added economic burdens imposed by the temporary loss of her income.

Many couples experience, therefore, a life crisis after the birth of their first child (LeMasters, 1957). Campbell et al.'s (1976) results indicate that married couples with children under six report the highest stress levels of any group at any stage in the life cycle, with the exception of separated or divorced women. Thus, studies over a time span of almost twenty years (1957-1976) report similar results regarding the stress-producing effects child-bearing has on marriage. Such consistency is as remarkable as it is unusual in studies about any of the life stages. One study (Blood and Wolfe, 1960), involving over 900 women, also shows that some women who are dissatisfied with their marital relationship tend to have a greater number of children. Being surrounded by their progeny makes them feel personally more satisfied, for a time, yet it paradoxically places even greater strain on the marriage.

According to several researchers, though this stress dissipates somewhat as children grow older, the decline in marital satisfaction continues until children reach maturity (Campbell et al., 1976; Feldman, 1974; Gould, 1972).

Bernard (1972a) also suggests that radical women see reproduction as only a minor part of life in the future. According to Weitz's (1977) study of sex roles, there are variations in women's interest in child-rearing rather than the universal maternal instinct often ascribed to women. She asserts that both postpartum depression and child-abuse argue against the existence of such an instinct. In their study of correlations between family size and sex role stereotypes, Clarkson, Vogel, Broverman, Broverman, & Rosenkrantz, (1970) found a relationship between a woman's self-perception and the number of children she has. Their results show that, in their sample, mothers with high competency self-concepts had significantly fewer children.

Hoffman and Hoffman (1973) suggest four motivational variables whose relative strengths are determinants of the desire to have or not to have children: alternative sources of the value, costs, barriers, and facilitators. By alternatives, are meant the existence of other sources besides children for actualization of a value. Costs are the sacrifices necessary to obtain the values associated with having children. Barriers and facilitators are the factors which realistically lower or raise the probability that the value can be realized by having children. Even though alternative sources of gratification are increasingly available for women, and the costs and barriers often outweigh the facilitators, some women, unlike the radical ones Bernard (1972a) mentions, still want to have children. The results of a survey of a national sample of

freshman women showed that 58% felt that raising a family was an essential or very important personal objective (Wilson, 1974). According to the 1978 U. S. Bureau of Census report, however, the proportion of childless married women is increasing. In 1960, only 24% of married women between 20 and 24 and 13% between 25 and 29 were childless. In 1978, 41% of the former group and 25% of the latter had no children.

Married career and non-career women. An important variable affecting a couple's reaction to parenthood is the occupational status of the woman. As has been noted, some husbands resent the loss of their wife's income if she quits work; other more traditional men, however, are disturbed if their wives retain their jobs. According to Andrisani's (1978) study which used a representative national sample of 5000 working wives, half of the women surveyed who worked between the years 1967 and 1972 perceived their husbands as unfavorably disposed to their doing so. In Burke and Weir's (1976) questionnaire survey of the relationship of wives' employment status to husband and wife satisfaction, employed women exhibited better physical and emotional health than homemakers, but their husbands were in poorer health and were less contented. Booth (1977) notes procedural deficiencies in this study, however, major of which was the fact that the sampling of husbands included only engineers and accountants and only 28% of their wives were employed full-time. In a replication of Burke and Weir's study, Booth (1977) interviewed 856 men and women in urban families having one or more children, all of the women being under 45. His results indicate that husbands of employed women show no more signs of marital discord or stress than spouses of housewives. The husbands report that their wives are just as loving and are not more critical. These men scored lower on a psychological impairment scale than did the spouses of housewives and noted that the added money

and personal fulfillment acquired by their wives' employment were also beneficial to them.

Regardless of the effects on husbands and children, increasing numbers of women in recent years do maintain their work involvement during their child-bearing years or return to work as soon as their children begin school (Sales, 1978). These women add another demanding role to the already stressing ones of wife, mother, and homemaker, but they also avoid the problems of confinement and total financial dependence on their husbands experienced by the non-working mother.

When one attempts to determine the effect on marital satisfaction of a mother working when her children are young, a main variable seems to be whether she is working by choice or necessity. In Hoffman and Nye's (1974) review of studies on the consequences of mothers working, they found that women who need to work are less satisfied with their marriages than non-working mothers, but that working has little effect on marital satisfaction for women who choose to work. College-educated women find the dual role choice most satisfactory, perhaps because they have more work options than women with less education. In a survey of college women in 1971, only 18% said they would prefer not to work after the birth of their first child (Komarovsky, 1973).

While women with children report greater positive feelings about their lives than childless women, couples without children are higher in general life satisfaction and lower in stress than those with children (Campbell et al., 1976). Childless women in their late twenties feel pressure, however, from family and friends to have children. Because their peer friends are usually already involved in parenting, the childless couple is, according to Veevers' research (1974), often labeled as unstable, selfish, or immature. In addition, though the working wife

may be experiencing success in her career, she also feels the internal pressure of her own awareness that her child-bearing days are diminishing and that a decision regarding children must be made soon. Thus, while the major life choices of men regarding occupation and marriage are usually made by their mid-twenties, women's choices regarding child-bearing and/or a career are often postponed until five to ten years later.

Single women. Though some single women in the United States bear or adopt children and raise them as single parents, most unmarried women in their late twenties are not involved in a mother role. They are, instead, either career-oriented or still waiting for the right man. It is difficult to trace their developmental stages, therefore, since they deviate from the pattern of the majority of women who choose to marry and bear children. In his work, Adulthood and Aging (1974), Kimmel notes the dearth of research on the life stages of single people. He speculates that the milestones in their development might involve primarily their occupations, love affairs, or, perhaps, reflect the family cycle they would be following if they had married. It seems likely that career-oriented women, who are single by choice, might be, as Kimmel suggests, most involved in their occupation and in personal relationships or love affairs. It is plausible also that women who are involuntarily single and regret the waning possibility of marriage might follow Kimmel's second suggested pattern, i.e., one of reflecting the family cycle that would have been theirs if they had married.

Tasks of Early Adult Stages

Levinson (1978) describes the four developmental tasks of the "novice" phase of the adult life cycle (ages 17-33) for men as: forming a Dream, an occupation, a love relationship and a mentor relationship.

Married career women concern themselves with at least two of these tasks, i.e., occupation and love relationship, although they do so at ages that vary among themselves as well as differing from the male's timing. How much they form their own Dream, defined by Levinson as the purpose or spirit that underlies their whole life structure, depends upon factors such as the priority they give to career versus family, the importance they assign to their husband's Dream over their own, etc. Career women who are single by choice are also certainly concerned with the developmental task of choosing an occupation which might for them be closely related to their Dream. Most also form more than one love relationship in their lives, some with people of either sex. One of the major problems for both married and single career women, however, is that of accomplishing the fourth task described by Levinson, i.e., forming a mentor relationship.

Mentor relationships. According to Levinson (1978), a mentor is a person, usually of one's own sex, who functions as one's teacher, sponsor, or exemplar. She is a transitional figure, a mixture of parent and peer, not quite old enough to be the former nor young enough to be the latter. The most important function of the mentor is to support and facilitate the realization of the young adult's Dream. Levinson's studies on men suggest that mentoring creates a love relationship that is difficult to terminate in a reasonable manner. Often the young person begins to see the mentor as critical and demanding while the mentor views the mentee as unreceptive and ungrateful. The relationship either shifts, then, to greater mutuality or ends in conflict, the latter being more frequent for Levinson's male subjects.

In the past, most young girls learned about the traditional role of women from their mothers' modeling of it, since most mothers then did

not work outside the home. Socialized from youth to believe that marriage and child-rearing would be the major activities of their adult lives, little girls learned to imitate their mothers' behavior as they played house with their dolls and toy furniture. Models for non-traditional roles for women, however, were certainly not nearly as numerous. Some suggest that they are not as critical for women as for men. Erikson (1950), for example, emphasizes the use young girls make of their peers rather than of their mothers as identification figures, and Alice Rossi (1973) makes a compelling argument for the importance of the sibling paradigm in her study of friendships among 19th century feminists. Douvan (1976) notes, however, that both her own experience and the limited data that exists, indicate that many women also need and use older models for their growth.

Studies of college women report that those whose mothers worked outside the home perceive women to be more competent (Vogel, Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1970) and are more likely to aspire to higher-skill, innovative jobs than are those whose mothers were full-time homemakers (Baruch, 1972; Tangri, 1972). Seventy-five percent of a sample of Columbia women graduate students had mothers who worked outside the home (Ginzberg, 1966). In her study of women in medicine, Lopate (1968) notes that daughters of employed women find it easier to handle the stress of that masculine-oriented career. Daughters of women working for pay often choose their own mothers as role models, at least during their adolescent years (Douvan and Adelson, 1966). In her study of twenty-five married women Ph.D.'s, Walum (1974) found that these subjects, who were managing to combine traditional family roles with professional careers, had a strong, positive identification with some female model. She was not necessarily their mother, but was often a relative or

teacher. These women not only stimulated the younger ones in their professional careers but also in alleviating the guilt they might otherwise have felt about being working mothers.

Many successful working women interviewed in other studies mention the importance of having close relationships with a teacher or other professional person as influential in their professional life (Almquist and Angrist, 1971; Ginzberg, 1966). Douvan (1976) points out how eastern women's colleges produce a disproportionate number of women who achieve prominent positions in the arts, professions, business, and politics. She suggests that one of the reasons for this phenomenon is the modeling that occurs from the familiarity these college women acquire with older women who have integrated achievement into gratifying lives and who have a stake in encouraging intellectual excellence in younger women. This role model might be a woman who is a committed scholar and at the same time has a husband and children or, as in the case of Douvan's model, she might be an unmarried woman. Though Weitz (1977) suggests that female college professors who are middle-aged and unmarried are negative role models, Douvan's mentor was quite the opposite. Douvan (1976) describes her role model as contradicting two stereotypes she had had about being single, i.e., that a woman who did not marry was by definition unhappy and unfulfilled and that an unmarried woman could not have freely chosen that status.

Until recently, when women entered male-dominated occupational fields, there were no older female figures available with whom they could professionally identify. In many careers, female role models are still lacking. Women deal with this problem either by de-emphasizing their femininity and identifying with male models, by minimizing their professional goals and acting seductively or dependently, or by

attempting to integrate professional and feminine goals (Douvan, 1976). Because the latter course of action is difficult, the woman who chooses it has special need for models to help sustain her belief that such integration is possible. While career women who choose to de-emphasize their femininity can use males as models, those who choose to minimize their professional goals will not ordinarily remain in the competitive work world for long. The integrator, whether married or single, remains, however, and cannot use only male models. To her, a relationship with an adult woman who is managing the balance to which she aspires is vitally important in determining her professional development. In fact, Epstein (1971) asserts that the lack of female mentors is the major obstacle in the professional development of women. The fourth developmental task which Levinson's (1978) male subjects ordinarily accomplish in their twenties, i.e., forming a mentor relationship, is, therefore, not as easily completed by their female professional peers. For these women, the choices are limited, though the need is at least equally great.

Readjustment (30-34)

Married women. For both men and women, a major transition point seems to take place around age thirty. Sales (1978) describes the stage in the life cycle ushered in by this transition as the period of readjustment. During this time, marriages are often strained, children replace parents as centrally important, and, for men and career women, work concerns grow more pronounced (Gould, 1972). The readjustments made during this period (30-34) have major impact on the future happiness of both sexes.

For many married women, it is in their early thirties that they are confronted with a real identity crisis. Their children are now in school,

their husbands preoccupied with work, and they are suddenly faced with a rediscovery of their own lives. These women often seek to maintain their faltering sense of self-worth by looking toward work, school, volunteer activities, or sexual affairs as alternative sources of personal fulfillment (Sales, 1978). For traditional women, this is often their first attempt to establish themselves in the adult world. This growth implies for many a shift from dependence to independence and from passivity to activity. Bernard's (1975) extensive research on women led her to the belief that women who do not become independent from parents, husbands, and children during this time will probably never develop an independent identity and will remain immature for the rest of their lives. In order to acquire this autonomy, the traditional woman must relinquish many aspects of feminine sex-role traits, endure the possible resentment of her husband and children regarding her more frequent absence from the home, and deal with the guilt she feels at "neglecting" her family.

Despite these difficulties, many women do manage to overcome their family-centered definitions of self and return to school, enter or reenter the work world, or begin volunteer activities. Of the 160 women Rubin (1979) interviewed, half held jobs outside the home. Interestingly, though some women were in high-level positions, not one working woman described herself in relation to her work. They described themselves instead in the roles of wife and mother, applying stereotypic female traits to themselves, such as kind, warm, giving, etc. The women who were doing volunteer work, however, described themselves as competent more frequently than the paid workers. Rubin speculates that the reason for this seeming incongruity is that volunteer work is in accord with the typical social role definition for women, i.e.,

volunteers make no money and are still dependent on and subordinate to their husbands. Sex role stereotypes die hard, even among the women who are apparently contradicting them in their daily lives.

During the early thirties, marital satisfaction is reported as very low. Some studies show that partners find their spouses least accepting of them at this time (Gould, 1975). The distance that has come between them during their twenties due to the man's work involvement and the women's preoccupation with child-care often becomes more evident as the partners resurface from their different worlds. Since both spouses are likely to be undergoing transitional struggles at this time, they may have a strong need for one another's support without the accompanying ability to understand each other's concerns.

Other studies on marital satisfaction during this period and throughout the life cycle give conflicting results. Blood and Wolfe (1960) report a general decline in the happiness of both partners as the marriage continues, as do Bossard and Boll (1955). Rollins and Feldman (1970) suggest a U-shaped curve effect which indicates that marital satisfaction is highest during its first and last stages and lowest in the middle years. This U-shaped effect was supported in a number of other studies (Bradburn & Caplovitz, 1965; Burr, 1970). However, Rollins and Cannon (1974) questioned the methodology used in some of the above research and, in their study, using three different measures, found Blood and Wolfe's (1960) measure to be inadequate. The Rollins and Feldman, as well as the third measure, yielded U-shaped curves. Interestingly, however, Rollins and Cannon (1974) also discovered that the stage of the life cycle, sex differences, and the stage/sex interaction account for only 8% of the variance in marital satisfaction. The amount of variance accounted for by other important variables such as communication, emotional maturity,

age, etc., has not yet been sufficiently researched. The value of former research on marital satisfaction as related to life stages and sex differences is, therefore, questionable.

Single women. Single women in the life stage begun with the age thirty transition probably also experience a time of readjustment. According to the results of the longitudinal Student Council Study begun by Earl Bond and continued by R. Cox (1977), the life cycle of single women closely resembles that of married men because both groups are career-oriented. If these researchers are correct, single women in their early thirties are primarily concerned with advancement in the work world. Kuhlen and Johnson's (1952) study indicates that single women who are school teachers desire to get a different job or a promotion more from age 28 to 35 than in any other life stage. Their results also show that the desire these women have to be married decreases steadily from age 20 until it ends at 45.

Presumably, women who are single involuntarily are, at this stage, slowly beginning to give up hope of a husband and children. They are doubtless aware of the limited number of child-bearing years remaining for them. Though some few at this time decide to adopt and raise a child without a partner, the majority resign themselves, with varying degrees of success, to being single and childless. The woman who has chosen to be single, while equally aware of the decreasing possibility of marriage and children, is probably less disturbed by the fact since she has freely decided the direction of her life. Because so little research has been done on single women, it is difficult to speculate about the role in their life cycle played by these and other factors, such as love affairs, relationships to older parents, involvement with other women, etc. As Laws (1977)

notes, we know little about women who prefer singlehood and try to protect their independence. A social script has not yet been written for them.

Becoming One's Own Person (35-43)

Married women. The stage of adult development immediately preceding midlife (35-43) is characterized by Levinson et al. (1978) as the BOOM period for men (Becoming One's Own Man). According to these researchers and others (Vaillant & McArthur, 1972), women in their mid-thirties also reach a point of clarity about their future life direction. Since most research has been done on middle-class, educated, white married women, more is known about this segment of the population than any other group of women. For middle-class married women, then, who are working outside the home, but not for purely economic reasons, there is a possibility of much satisfaction during this period. If these women have maintained earlier career commitments or returned to the work world after the birth or entrance into school of their children, they may be as involved in their work role at this age as are their husbands. Research (Hoffman & Nye, 1974; Orden & Bradburn, 1969) indicates that women with school-age children who choose to work find their job a satisfying experience which increases their self-esteem and adds to their marital satisfaction. According to Birnbaum's (1975) study of gifted women, this period in the life cycle provides some compensation for the difficulties these women experienced with careers earlier in their lives. The employed married women in this sample, who are in their late thirties, show significantly higher levels of self-esteem than the sample of women their age who are homemakers. In Ginzberg's (1966) study of educated women whose work involvements were not continuous or who were less committed to career development, work still provided a source of self-esteem that could not be

obtained within the home except by a very small minority of similar women.

The life satisfaction of women in this stage of development, whether they are employed or not, appears to be dependent upon their resolution of the transitional period around age thirty (Bernard, 1975; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1974). For women who already knew or who discovered their identity at that time and attained a sense of purpose in life, a positive direction and increased life satisfaction is more likely for subsequent life stages. As has been noted, many married women do not address the issue of their own identity until after the initial child-bearing years. It is not surprising, therefore, that they grow psychologically when those years of selfless preoccupation with childcare are over. A large cross-sectional survey of adults between 40 and 85 was undertaken as part of a major sociological/psychological investigation of aging called the Kansas City project. The women in this study saw themselves as most self-confident during their thirties, with a sense of having been in their prime during the latter half of that period (Univ. of Chicago Reports, 1961). In another study of women (Lehner & Gunderson, 1953) using the Draw-a-Person Test, women's self-images were found to expand during their thirties and reach a peak around forty.

Bernard (1975) notes a comparison between the independence often acquired by women in their thirties and the independence with which their husbands are struggling. According to Levinson et al. (1974), during this BOOM period, successful men become independent of the mentors who have been influencing and monitoring their earlier professional lives. In their late thirties, these men decide to direct the course of their future careers themselves by either breaking off the relationship with

their mentors completely or, rarely, transforming it into a reciprocal one. Bernard (1975) suggests that the role of mentors in the lives of men has a parallel in women's dependence on their husbands. While this dependency is somewhat different, and possibly stronger, women must free themselves from its bond before they can become their own persons. Women who do not manage to acquire this freedom by their late thirties will likely experience increasing difficulty doing so in later stages.

Single women. The greater self-confidence noted by some researchers in women in their thirties often refers to single as well as married women. In Birnbaum's (1975) study of the self-esteem of educated women between the ages of 36 and 46, for example, the percentage of single and married professional women who report their level of self-esteem as "good to very good" is similar and quite high as compared with homemakers. More single professional women than married professionals, however, report their self-esteem as "poor to average." Women who are single by choice or who at least have accepted their single status, are, perhaps, more likely to be in the "good to very good" category, whereas women who would have preferred to marry, and feel frustrated in attaining that goal, might be in the "poor to average." This inference is purely speculative, however, since there are so few studies on single women, and fewer still which distinguish between those who are voluntarily and involuntarily so. Kuhlen and Johnson (1952), for example, note that for the single female school teachers in their study, while the desire to marry ends at age 45, the desire to retire rises from age 35 on. The desire of these women to acquire a different job or a promotion is highest from 28 to 35, but the urge to remain in the same job peaks around 41. In addition to the fact that these results involve women in only one occupational field and, therefore, might not

reflect the opinions of single women in other careers, Kuhlen and Johnson also do not distinguish their subjects according to the freedom of their choice regarding their singleness.

As Sales (1978) notes, the most that can be said about research regarding this life stage for women is that there is general evidence that women, married or single, gain a better sense of their own identity at this time and specific data to suggest that involvement in work outside the home enhances self-esteem for educated women. There is, however, a paucity of data regarding the effect of work on less-educated women, the role volunteerism plays in the self-growth of educated or uneducated women, the sources of increased self-esteem, other than careers, for single women, and many other salient factors in this life stage.

Mid-life (44-47)

Married women. In contrast, though there is still a dearth of empirical data regarding the next stage in the life cycle, it is probably the period about which most research has been undertaken regarding women. According to Neugarten's (1976) extensive work in this area, the major emphasis of the midlife period is reassessment, introspection, and stock-taking. She views middle-aged people as characterized by a heightened sensitivity and by maximum capability in handling themselves and the environment. They feel an improvement in their judgment, a deeper self-understanding, a greater maturity, a better grasp of reality and a real sense of competence. Their recognition of the finiteness of time causes them to view it in a different perspective; it is no longer time since birth but time left until death. While Sales (1978) considers middle age as occurring around 44 to 47, other researchers set it at varying times, e.g., Levinson et al. (1978) in the early forties and Neugarten (1964) and Lowenthal et al. (1977) in the fifties. Regardless of

differences in the timing, however, there is a commonality in the themes which are relevant to this life stage. Major among these are the effects of the "empty nest" and the menopause on the well-being of middle-aged women.

Empty nest. Since women live longer today and end their child-bearing years sooner, it is important to review the conflicting data regarding the period of the "empty nest." According to Campbell et al.'s (1976) data based on a national sample survey, this midlife phenomenon, considered as a negative one, has an undeserved reputation. However, since marriage and children are often viewed as crucial to a woman's well-being in our society, evidence to the contrary is often ignored. Some researchers insist that the departure of the last child from the home must necessarily be a traumatic midlife event for women. Blood and Wolfe (1960), for example, note a continued decrease of marital satisfaction during this period. Rose (1955) asserts that the life satisfaction of the middle-class midlife women in his study of over 200 couples was a function of the degree to which they assume another central role to substitute for their declining one as homemaker. Bart (1971), in her study of hospitalized women between the ages of 40 and 59, reports that 63% of the women who had undergone maternal role loss were depressed. For those who were not working outside the home, the percentage rose to 69. When she considered women who had an overprotective or overinvolved relationship with their children and had experienced maternal role loss, 76% were depressed; again, for housewives in this group, the percentage rose to 82. Bart suggests, therefore, that the decrease in psychological well-being of middle-aged women as their children leave home is associated with role loss. Women who are overinvolved with their children or who are housewives are more likely to be dependent on their mother role

for self-esteem than working women or less protective mothers and, consequently, have increased cause for depression. Powell (1977) also suggests that there is a relationship between the effects of the empty nest on women and employment. In his study of forty graduates of an eastern women's college who are now in their fifties, he found that the women who were employed full-time had significantly lower psychiatric symptom scores than women not employed outside the home. Women who were employed part-time had an intermediate position regarding symptom scores and homemakers had the highest.

In Lowenthal and Chiriboga's (1972) study, however, the middle-aged women reported that they were looking forward to the empty nest regardless of whether they were or planned to be employed. In a follow-up study, which Lowenthal (1975) conducted herself because of her surprise at these results, she confirmed the original findings. Neugarten (1976) found no evidence that the postparental stage of life is a crisis, but that it is, rather, associated with a somewhat higher level of life satisfaction for women. Deutscher (1969) studied 31 postparental couples and found only three reporting that it was more difficult to get along with one another after the children left home. Glenn (1975) used data from six national surveys for his study. He reports that all the surveys show greater happiness in the postparental stage (40-59). He found no enduring negative effect on the mother's psychological well-being, but rather a moderately positive one. In Radloff's (1975) extensive study of sex differences in depression, parental status is significantly related to depression. The empty nest group had significantly lower depression scores than either the group of parents whose children are still at home or the couples who had no children.

Harkins (1978) suggests that the conflicting evidence regarding the

empty nest phenomenon is due to a number of limitations in the previous studies. She, therefore, conducted a survey of 318 women with a mean age of 49, whose youngest child was in the high school graduating classes of a five-year span, whose husband was present in the home, and who had not more than three children. Her results show that the empty nest transition has, at most, a slight, transitory effect on the psychological well-being and essentially no effect on the physical well-being of mothers. Women whose children had left home within the recent six to eighteen-month period showed significantly more positive effect than those who were pre or post empty nest and those who were "off-time" in the transition. Therefore, Harkins' results support the studies which indicate that the empty nest is not a particularly stressful period in most women's lives and not a major source of threat to her psychological or physical well-being. On the contrary, a more likely threat to the mother's psychological health seems to be caused by a child who does not become successfully independent when it is expected (Harkins, 1978; Troll, 1975).

Of the 160 women interviewed by Rubin (1979), most responded to the empty nest with relief. The 20% who are divorced found the departure of children no more traumatic than the women who are still married. While all expressed a feeling of loss, many also described themselves as dominated by a longing for freedom from mothering and a desire to claim a differentiated self. However, Rubin's results are in agreement with Bart's (1971) contention that the decrease in psychological well-being of women in midlife is associated with role loss. Her subjects saw the problems of this life transition connected with the contemplation of the next stage in their lives. They were, in a word, anxious about the future rather than nostalgic for their past mothering days. The conflicting

evidence in the studies on the empty nest, therefore, might revolve around the issue of whether one is attempting to measure the woman's unwillingness to relinquish her role of mother or her inability to view herself in any other role in the future. If one is concerned with the latter issue, which the women in Rubin's study see as most salient, it is understandable that one's results will vary if one studies employed women who already have another role in life or homemakers who ordinarily do not. It is the extent to which a woman identifies with her roles of mother and wife and evaluates herself by her performance of them that determines her vulnerability to feelings of insecurity regarding the meaning of her life when these roles are no longer relevant (Williams, 1974). As Gutmann (1980) suggests, "uncertainty" is probably a better model than "loss" to describe midlife changes.

Menopause. Neugarten (1976) speculates that the empty nest is not considered a crisis by middle-aged women because it is expected and, therefore, anticipated and rehearsed. She suggests that the menopause, the other major theme in the research on midlife women, is not traumatic for the same reason. Her studies (Neugarten, Wood, Kraines, & Loomis, 1968; Neugarten, 1976) with middle-aged, as well as younger and older women, show that the menopause is not seen as a central or distressing event in their lives and is not feared. Despite common contrary assumptions, Neugarten found health changes to be more of an age-marker for men than for women. The women in her study were more concerned with their husband's body-monitoring than they were with their own (Neugarten, 1968).

Researchers who believe in the biological determinism of female behavior, however, assume that the mind-body relationship is closer for

women than for men and that biological influences are stronger on women (Parlee, 1975). They view a woman's life cycle in terms of her reproductive role and assume the centrality of events such as child-bearing and the menopause. Deutsch (1944), for example, probably because of her emphasis on motherhood as the core of femininity, sees the psychological reactions to menopause as among the most difficult in a woman's life. From his clinical experience, Lidz (1980) asserts that the late forties and fifties are a difficult time for women because of the menopause with its accompanying vasomotor instability. Sherman (1971) reports a wide variety of reactions to this midlife phenomenon which range from fear to relief and renewed vigor.

Other researchers find primarily positive results regarding the menopause, as Neugarten does. Among these are McKinlay and Jeffries (1974) whose studies in England confirm Neugarten's theory of the non-traumatic effects of the menopause. Benedek (1959) views this period as a developmental phase in which the improvement in a woman's physical and emotional health challenges her to the reorganization of her personality. From the results of their research, Bart and Grossman (1978) note that menopause status is not a contributing factor in the self-evaluation of middle-aged women. Rather, in a reverse causation, women who have low self-esteem and life satisfaction have more difficulties with menopause. These researchers found social-economic status, attitude toward mothering, and available role alternatives the relevant factors regarding women's response to the menopause.

Shafer (1970) suggests that, though most women take the menopause in stride, about 10 to 15% have physical or emotional problems serious enough to cause them to seek medical help. The most frequent and most serious psychological problem of women in this age group is depression.

While depressive episodes are common experiences in other age groups, their incidence among midlife women has been noted extensively (Sherman, 1971). In Bart's (1971) cross-cultural study of depression in middle-aged women, she found this phenomenon caused by a lack of important roles and consequent loss of self-esteem in these women, rather than by the hormonal changes of menopause. In societies where the woman's status is enhanced with increasing age because she is valued for her wisdom, such depression does not occur. In the two cultures where the woman's status declines, as it does in the United States, because a woman's power is in her sexual attractiveness, the effects were similar to those in Western countries. She suggests elsewhere (1969) that women's status in society is, therefore, more like a ferris wheel than a pyramid, i.e., her chances for higher status after menopause are greater when her previous status has been generally subordinate, and vice versa. Becker (1963) speculates that women become depressed during this period because they have been socialized to predicate their whole reason for living on their femininity. When they lose this one justification for their lives, their whole action world collapses. Menopausal depression is, therefore, a social and cultural phenomenon, a consequence of a social role which confines women to a too narrow range of life choices or opportunities. As Chesler (1972) found in her studies on the mental health of women, the feeling of midlife women that they are now useless, old, barren, and unneeded may easily trigger a psychological depression that requires therapeutic intervention.

Depression and mental illness. The issue of depression in middle-aged women or of any mental illness in women is a complex one because of the double standard of health in our society. As Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, & Vogel, (1970) clearly illustrate in their now

famous study of mental health clinicians, ratings of a healthy adult and a healthy male are not different, but those of a healthy female and a healthy adult differ significantly. The general standard of mental health is, therefore, actually applied to men only; healthy women are perceived as significantly less healthy by adult standards. The characteristics ascribed to the healthy male and adult include competence, rationality, and assertiveness, whereas those ascribed to healthy women include dependence, submissiveness, and expressiveness. In a word, then, sex role stereotypes affect the psychological diagnoses of adult women by mental health professionals.

Additional problems related to the study of the mental health status of women in our society involve the fact that women have a more negative image of themselves than men and are also more likely to reveal their weaknesses to others (Gurin, Veroff, & Feld, 1960; Lowenthal et al., 1977). Studies on the psychological well-being of women are sometimes marred too by a lack of clarity regarding the chosen definition of mental illness as well as by not specifying distinctions between subjects according to their marital status. Gove (1972) points out, for example, that the fact that women have higher mental illness rates than men is attributable to the role of married women whose rate is noticeably higher than that of married men. His later study (Gove & Tudor, 1973) with similar results included first admissions to hospitals, psychiatric care in general hospitals or outpatient clinics, and private outpatient care. Mental illness was defined here as neurotic disorders and functional psychoses. These researchers suggest the social roles of married women in modern industrial society as the most likely explanation for their higher rate of mental illness. When single, widowed, or divorced men and women are compared with one another, women do not have higher rates.

Bernard (1971) points out that a plausible reason for the higher rate of mental illness in married women than in men is that marriage is not the same for each sex; it is not nearly as beneficial for women as for men. Bernard cites a number of studies (Bradburn & Caplovitz, 1965; Gurin et al., 1960) on marital satisfaction with conflicting results including an impressive one, because of the sample size (6,928, of which 2,480 were couples), done by Renne (1970). The results of this latter study indicate that more wives (23%) than husbands (18%) report marital dissatisfaction. More women also had recently considered divorce or separation and had at some time regretted their marriage.

Marriage in our society is apparently more important for a woman's than a man's happiness. According to Bradburn's (1969) extensive study of the psychological well-being of over 5000 subjects, most women equate marital and overall happiness while men do not. Because more is at stake for women, at least for the working-class wives in Rainwater's (1960) study, they make more concessions in marriage than their husbands make. The psychological costs of the happiness they achieve by adjusting to the demands of marriage are exhibited in their higher rate of mental illness. Gomberg and Franks (1979) point out several factors which account for the emotional problems of married women, i.e., they are restricted to a single major role and, therefore, have only one source of gratification; their major activities, childcare and housekeeping, are frustrating to many women and constitute a position of low prestige with little structure or visibility; if women work outside the home, they are often in less satisfying positions and also are under increased strain because they attempt to accomplish both the household tasks and career responsibilities. Bernard (1972b) suggests that marriage has a "dwindling" effect on women. They become less competent, have lower self-esteem, and

feel unhappier as marriage proceeds.

When attempting to determine the extent of mental illness among women, researchers include varying phenomena under this category. Barnett and Baruch (1978), for example, point out that if one includes alcoholism as a mental illness, women are not more disturbed than men, but that women have more neurotic disorders, depression, and functional psychoses. Gomberg and Franks (1979) note that men are more likely than women to have brain syndromes and personality disorders, whereas women have higher rates of functional disorders.

Suicide rates are also often used as indicators of mental illness. Cath (1980) points out that women of all ages attempt suicide more often than men, but men actually commit it more frequently. The peak for completed suicides, according to this researcher, occurs in midlife and is done primarily be seemingly successful men. In another study (Rico-Velasco & Mynko, 1973) of 907 cases of suicide over a ten-year period in two cities in the United States, the results showed married men and women having higher suicide rates than single people. The mean annual rate for men was higher than for women regardless of marital status. In a similar study in New Hampshire (Segal, 1969), however, the suicide rate for unmarried men and women was higher than for married people except in one age category for each sex. More men than women committed suicide in this twelve-year span, however, regardless of marital status. Another study (Farberow & Schneidman, 1965) found that 69% of attempted suicides in the United States are female and, conversely, 70% of completed suicides are male. These researchers also noted that housewives comprise the largest single category of both attempted and completed suicides.

Even such a brief review of recent research on depression, mental illness, and suicide, makes apparent the difficulty in formulating a

consistent theory about the psychological well-being of married women in any stage of the life cycle, including middle-age. Factors such as the double standard of health, the greater tendency of women to admit their negative characteristics, the meaning of mental illness, the distinctions between women of different marital status, and the variations in role of married women who have paying jobs and those who are homemakers combine to cloud the results of many studies. What seems relatively certain from the research, however, is that, for reasons which are probably social, married women are not as happy as their husbands and this unhappiness is manifested in their high rate of depression and attempted suicides. The two major themes for midlife married women, formerly assumed to be the causes of such depression, i.e., the empty nest and the menopause, do not, in fact, appear to be supported in the literature as traumatic events for most middle-aged women. What appears more likely is that women whose self-esteem is contingent solely on their wife and mother roles experience most depression in midlife. This feeling is due primarily to their uncertainty about discovering an alternate role to provide meaning in their lives after both the empty nest and the menopause have made obvious the loss or change in the roles that formerly gave them purpose.

Single women. For women who are still single in midlife, the research regarding menopause and psychological well-being is minimal and conflicting in its results. Bernard (1971) presents a summary of studies that show a larger proportion of married than single women reporting themselves as happy (e.g., Bradburn & Caplovitz, 1965; Gurin et al., 1960; Knupfer et al., 1966). She notes, however, that an examination of specific personality traits and surveys of mental health impairment indicate that married women are more damaged than single females. In one study

on the mental health of single people (Knupfer, Clark, & Room, 1966), for example, more married than single women are bothered by feelings of depression, do not feel happy most of the time, dislike their present jobs, and feel they are about to go to pieces. In this study, more married than single women are reported to be passive, phobic, and depressed, at least half of the married women falling into one of these three categories. Only in the menopausal decade (40-49) were there more single than married women with mental health impairment. Knupfer et al. do not speculate on the reasons for this decrease in mental health ratings in the midlife years for single women. Neither do they distinguish between the ratings of single women who are voluntarily so and those who are not. If Bart and Grossman's (1978) results are valid, i.e., that women with low self-esteem and life satisfaction have greater difficulty with the menopause, it seems likely that single women who did not freely choose their status would feel diminishing self-esteem through the years. This feeling of dissatisfaction at not having accomplished their desired goal in life might reasonably be exacerbated by the menopause, the midlife reminder that their child-bearing years are over.

Radloff's (1975) research corroborates Knupfer's results regarding the depressing effect of marriage on many women. Using data from a mental health interview survey involving almost 3,000 people, Radloff found that women who never marry and are heads of a household have the lowest depression score of any category, for men or women. However, if they are not heads of a household, they have the highest rate of mental illness. Radloff sees this distinction as being related to the amount of control the single woman feels she has over her life. Gove's (1972) research indicates that when never-married women are compared with never-married men, the men have a higher rate of mental illness. However, married

people of both sexes have lower rates of mental illness and lower suicide rates than the unmarried. In his study of sex differences in the epidemiology of mental disorders, Gove (1979) asserts that single men and women lack close interpersonal ties and are relatively isolated. Since such ties are a major source of well-being, he finds it understandable that married people are happier than singles. In the three major studies on single people published in 1976 (Adams; Bequaert; Stein), however, there is support for the contention that singleness is a situation conducive to human growth and fulfillment, that marriage is no longer seen as necessary to find emotional support, sex, or an active social life. Since the single people in these studies speak of "more friends" as one of the advantages of being single, it is unlikely that they would accept Gove's description of singles as being "relatively isolated." Single women, in particular, would reject Gove's contention since they have a greater tendency than single men to maintain close interpersonal ties (Knupfer et al., 1966).

What seems plausible from the limited amount of research done on single women in midlife is that their adjustment during this stage is dependent on a variety of factors which are only beginning to be analyzed. Central among these is their freedom in choosing their single status, their satisfaction with their occupational life, and their interpersonal relationships. Cox (1977) suggests that while the life cycle of single career women is similar to that of married men, it ordinarily differs at midlife because of the tendency for a single woman to be the family member who takes care of aging parents. This task, usually undertaken in addition to career responsibilities, undoubtedly has an effect on the single midlife women who, like other middle-aged people, is beginning to view

time differently. The presence of elderly parents makes more visible the awareness of finiteness that often characterizes this changed attitude of people in midlife. It seems likely too that single women in this life stage who are caring for elderly parents experience some of the home/career conflict that married women with paying jobs feel throughout much of their lives. However, a full understanding of the implications of all of the above factors on single middle-aged women awaits further study.

Current Trends regarding Women

In reviewing the research related to the life cycle of married and single women, one inevitably deals primarily with the factors that have been most relevant to the development or lack of it of women in the past. However, current trends can hardly be ignored since their effects are already being felt by contemporary women. As Glick (1977) points out, the woman of today spends more years in school, marries later, has fewer children, and lives longer than did her grandparents. She has her first child at about 22 and her last around 31. She has close to 13 years of married life after the marriage of her last child.

Modern women are swelling the labor force at an unprecedented rate. In 1940, the percentage of women over sixteen in the labor force was 28.9 and by 1978, it was 50% (U. S. Bureau of Census, 1978). In 1976, women constituted 40.7% of the work force (cited in Weitz, 1977). In 1960, 36% of women 25 to 34 years old were in the labor market; in 1978, 62% of this group was working for pay. In 1960, only 19% of mothers of children under age six were working; in 1978, 42% were (U. S. Bureau of Census, 1978).

The contemporary woman is also remaining single, divorcing, and single-parenting more frequently. The number of unmarried women and men living together increased by 800% in the sixties (Williams, 1974) and doubled

between 1970 (523,000) and 1978 (1,137,000) (U. S. Bureau of Census, 1978). According to Bernard (1972a), singlehood is becoming one of the intentional life-style choices in American culture. In the 1970's, 7% of women in their forties had never married. Of these, 6% were childless and 1% bore or adopted children (Glick, 1977).

One of the most noticeable trends in the 20th century is the increased rate of divorce in the United States. The ratio of divorced persons to married persons was nearly twice as high in 1978 as in 1970 (U. S. Bureau of Census, 1978). While half of all divorces occur in the first seven years of marriage, 14% of divorcing women are 45 or older (Turner, 1980). Rising divorce rates are expected to dissolve 1/3 of all first marriages, but 3/4 of women and 5/6 of men who divorce, remarry within an average of three years (Norton & Glick, 1976). Women file for divorce 3/4 of the time, often for child support purposes (cited in Gomberg and Franks, 1979), since they have more post-divorce economic adjustment than their husbands.

The effects of divorce on women are diverse. Ordinarily, it means less income and downward mobility. While most divorced women feel the lack of male companionship and fear "lonely old age," according to Rubin's (1979) subjects, few pine the marriage they left behind. The women in Radloff's (1975) study, however, showed decreased life satisfaction and increased depression after divorce. Gomberg and Franks (1979) suggest that this depression is a result of the stress and lack of mastery training experienced more strongly by the divorced woman as a result of her lower income status. Wiseman (1975) points out that because marriage is a key role for women, its dissolution reopens unresolved identity issues which might also cause depression. Though Kimmel (1974) reports that suicide is the most common cause of death for divorced

women, extensive research on the adjustment patterns and mental health of women who are divorced is only in its earliest stages.

The Current Trend toward the Celibate Option

As noted in the Introduction, the present study is concerned not with divorced women, but with a specific group of women who have never married, i.e., those who belong to religious communities and are committed to a celibate life-style. In reviewing the literature on celibate living, within or outside a religious community, one notes a modern trend favoring the celibate option. Radical women are proclaiming that marriage is not the "summum bonum" of life (Bernard, 1972a). They suggest that rather than being a fate worse than death, celibacy is an honorable status which might be preferable, at least temporarily, to many male/female relationships. According to these contemporary women, it is only when the idea of celibacy is completely accepted that women will be able to truly liberate themselves, particularly from the male threat of withdrawing sexual attentions. Then, primary sexuality will not be the basis of relationships. An honest, open love, affection and recognition will more easily be found in comrades who love one for oneself rather than because one is docile, cute, sexy, or ego-building. Laws (1977) notes too that the development of celibacy as a principled choice signals women's reclamation of their sexual autonomy, an autonomy that is essential for sexual agency. By choosing celibacy, a woman places herself and her feelings, rather than a man, at the center of her universe. She does not allow her sexuality to be defined by others. Rather, she claims her autonomy by not being sexually available to anyone.

Laws notes the lack of research on sexual abstinence. She suggests that this dearth is due to the fact that the women who are practicing abstinence as a principled life-style are not talking about it, since

celibacy may be an assertion of privacy in their sexual life. In addition, little is written about voluntary sexual abstinence because it has always been assumed that a woman who is not sexually active is either undesirable or repressed. Since sex has been seen as a need by contemporary society, sexual abstinence has not generally been accepted as a valid option. Such a choice implied that one was frigid, selfish, man-hating, neurotic, or homosexual. Laws suggests, however, that a woman might choose sexual abstinence for a variety of legitimate reasons including health, moral or religious reservations, or political consciousness. She notes that celibacy as a life commitment is rare, but that as an adjustment to a life situation, it is relatively common.

Studies of Celibate Women in Religious Communities

Since there is such a lack of research data on the life cycle of married and single women, it is not surprising that even fewer studies have been concerned with the rare minority of single women living in religious communities who choose celibacy as a life commitment. These women make this choice not primarily for the sexual autonomy advocated by radical modern women nor for the political consciousness or health concerns suggested by Laws (1977). Instead, they choose celibacy for a religious motivation, i.e., in order to be available to spread the Gospel message. Women religious live in community, pool their financial and other resources, and engage primarily in service occupations. Their goal is to be free to love many people, especially those in greatest need, and to make known the love of God to others. By not being sexually involved with anyone of either sex, and by also being childless, their time and energy are, ideally, more easily spent in the accomplishment of this goal. As Kimmel (1974) notes, women religious are a unique group of single

people, their life style being influenced more by their commitment to the Church and by their religious vows than it is by the mere fact that they do not marry.

Adams (1976) does not include women religious in her study of "single blessedness" because she views them as unlike most single individuals. The latter choose to live outside of the societally protected enclosure of marriage and do not have a formally recognized social identity and status. They do not have goals and a way of life that is clearly defined and interpreted and are, therefore, often deprived of social validation. Such is not the case for religious women whose life style is clearly delineated and who have a social group identity. While society may not understand or approve of this mode of living, it at least recognizes its existence.

Most of the studies that have been conducted with religious women have focused on specific topical areas. Hall (cited in Bequaert, 1976), for example, published a study at Yale using married and celibate women religious as subjects in which he wanted to determine how educated women cope with role conflict in their lives. His results reveal that married women working for pay had developed strategies to reduce conflicts between their home and work roles, the most common being to attempt to change the expectations of other persons in their lives. However, because a career is central to the lives of women religious and they are not members of nuclear families, they experienced little role conflict and, therefore, did not need to devise coping strategies.

In 1976, Moore conducted a study involving both religious women (n=69) and lay women (n=74) in an attempt to determine the relationship between ego and moral development in these two groups. She found a significant correlation between Erikson's stages of ego development and Kohlberg's

steps in moral development, which indicates that the totality of attitudes incorporated into the personality is related to how an adult approaches a moral dilemma. A positive correlation was also found between moral development and status as a lay or religious woman but when the effects of education were held constant, the correlation was negligible.

The present author conducted a preliminary study (Rufft, 1979) to the one now in progress using the case history method. Ten women between the ages of 35 and 45, who belong to two religious communities, were interviewed, each for approximately three hours. A chronology of each sister's life from age twenty to her present age was constructed. Through these life histories, speculations were made about the stages in their life cycle from age twenty to midlife. As can be seen in Appendix B, these speculations were concerned with relationship with family, mentors, religious community, lay people, priests and God. A tentative schema of the developmental stages followed by celibate women was also suggested (Appendix A).

Another exception to the general trend of studying one specific topical area in research on religious women is a survey conducted in 1967 by the Conference of Major Superiors of Women's Institutes in which 135,000 women religious participated. The purpose of this lengthy questionnaire (649 items) was to determine what changes should be made within religious communities in order that they could better respond to the needs of the Church in the modern world. It included questions about theological beliefs, the vows, the apostolate, communication and government in community, and attitudes on social issues. The complete results of this survey were, unfortunately, not published; each religious community which participated received its results as compared with national

scores. A follow-up questionnaire (CMSW, 1979/80) has recently been sent to a random sample of religious women in thirty communities in the United States. This survey of 426 questions, some the same as in the original questionnaire, is an attempt to assess the changes in the attitudes of women religious over the last twelve years. Though these questionnaires are not specifically concerned with issues of adult development, their results indicate the attitudes of many women religious of various ages on issues relevant to their lives. They represent the most extensive research involving women religious in the United States that has yet been conducted.

Summary and Research Questions

The history of the study of female adult development has, then, been a brief and sparse one. While psychoanalysts, like Freud, Jung, and Erikson, equate a woman's destiny with her anatomy, early life stage theorists, such as Buhler and Kuhlen, make no distinction between male and female development. Even much recent research on adult growth (Levinson, 1978; Vaillant, 1978) is concerned only with male subjects. No major work has yet been published which delineates the stages women travel in life, except to some extent Sanguiliano's In Her Time. There have been many studies conducted recently, however, on female psychology, on topical areas related to women, and on specific time periods in a woman's life. Of the latter research, more has been written about midlife women than any other stage in a woman's development.

Since American society is strongly biased in favor of marriage, most of the above studies include only married women in their samples. Because of this lack of research, a theory about the passages in a single woman's life cannot be formulated at present. Recent trends indicate, however, that contemporary women are remaining single, divorcing, and single-parenting more frequently than formerly and that even celibacy is beginning to be viewed as a viable option. Research on single women, whether never or formerly married, is, therefore, imperative.

The present study is concerned with a specific group of never-married females, i.e., celibate women religious. Though two large opinion surveys of women religious in the United States have been conducted in the last fifteen years, most other research on this group of women has involved small samples and very specific topical areas. No work, other than the original study by this author (Rufft, 1979), could be found which is concerned with the stages in the life cycle of these women or with the ways in which their

"passages" are similar to or different from those of other women. Because women religious are career-oriented and do not have husbands or children, one might assume that their developmental growth is most similar to that of single, working women. However, since so little research has been done on the life stages of the latter group, a comparison between their process of adult development and that of women religious is not possible at this time.

An alternate theory regarding the adult development of women religious might suggest a similarity to married women, assuming that God/Church/religious community play a role comparable to that of husband in the life of women religious. As the development of a married woman is affected by the role of wife and mother and the social structures surrounding these roles, perhaps the growth of a woman religious is similarly shaped by her role as sister and the Church/community/social structures which define her lifestyle. One notes from the previous review of the literature, for example, that in the past, many women in their early twenties did not become autonomous individuals, as men theoretically did, but remained tentative regarding their life goals as well as their identity. With marriage, traditional women accepted the identity of their spouses and were temporarily successful in living vicariously through them. They received a ring and accepted their husband's name as signs of their new identity as "wife." Research indicates that life satisfaction was high during this period for married women in the past, perhaps because they felt free of the pressure to make any further important life decisions. This scenario for women in their early twenties is, of course, changing as many women now choose a career as well as, or instead of, marriage.

Whether women who entered religious communities in the past followed the same script as women who married regarding the postponement of decisions about life goals and identity, and the subsequent acceptance of a vicarious identity has not as yet been determined by research. It seems plausible, however, that these women also allowed a force outside themselves to define them, e.g., the Church or their religious community. Their past dependence on and submission to the "superiors" of their communities might mirror the relationship many married women had with their husbands years ago. Perhaps it is more than coincidental that women religious also received a new name, a ring, and, in some communities, wore a wedding gown, when they were accepted into their religious congregation. However, in addition to their community involvement, most women religious were also pursuing a college education during their early twenties. One might speculate that their academic endeavors had some effect on the development of life goals and/or an independent identity. Research in the future might show that their tentativeness regarding these issues was challenged by further education and resolved earlier in life than was typical for traditional non-college-educated married women. Because of a lack of data, one cannot compare the pattern of women religious in their early twenties in the past regarding life satisfaction with that of married women at that time. Since fewer women are in religious communities by this age than previously, however, it seems likely that whatever script there was regarding goal and identity formation and whatever pattern of life satisfaction occurred, the script and the pattern are different today for celibate women as well as for those women who marry.

In considering the first stage in the adult development of celibate women in the light of the research already completed on married women, it

is evident that there is a need for further study regarding questions such as the following: What has been the relationship between the chronological age of celibate women and their identity formation? Specifically, did these women remain tentative regarding both life goals and identity in their early twenties, following the pattern of many married women of the past? Did women religious accept and vicariously live the identity of their religious community as their own, at least temporarily? If so, was life satisfaction high during this period of their lives as it was for newly married women in the past?

Formerly, most traditional married women became mothers in their middle to late twenties and experienced the busyness and the stress which were the concomitant effects of their new role. If a woman was also working outside the home, the number of activities which comprised her day was, obviously, even greater. According to our review of the research, because new mothers had less time for their husbands than before the birth of their babies, marital satisfaction usually dropped at this life stage for both partners.

For the woman who entered a religious community fifteen or more years ago, the mid to late twenties was the initial period of involvement in an occupation assigned by her religious "superiors." This occupation was ordinarily service-oriented and involved a traditionally acceptable female role. It was usually within the education or nursing fields and was not always the career most compatible with the individual's desires or abilities. The stress a woman religious might have experienced at this time could, then, have been the result of her assignment to an unsuitable job as well as the busyness of learning to combine community, career, and probably, academic activities. While the increase in the number and variety of tasks in a woman religious' life in her late twenties might be similar to

the busyness of a new mother, major differences in the life style of these two groups of women obviously still exist. While mothers years ago might have felt torn between the needs and desires of their husbands and those of their children, women religious ordinarily did not feel the same strain between community and occupation. They were most often living and working with the same group of women in a structured situation with alloted time periods for all activities. The level of satisfaction with community which women religious experienced in their late twenties is one of the several questions about this life stage which require additional data, i.e., Did the satisfaction of women religious with their religious communities decrease in their late twenties as the volume and variety of their activities increased? Did they experience increased stress during this period? If so, was this increase due to an unsuitable occupational assignment, the busyness of combining community and job activities, a tension between these two areas of life, or to other factors?

As noted in the literature review, traditional married women in the past entered a period of readjustment in their early thirties. By this time in life, their children had usually begun elementary school and their husbands were deeply involved in their careers. Many women who had primarily been housewives up to that point in their marriage, now became concerned with questions about their own identity as autonomous individuals, rather than merely as wives and mothers. The identity crisis which Erikson hypothesizes as occurring for men in early adulthood was, then, often experienced by married women a decade later when they finally had the leisure to consider who they were as individuals. For many married women who had not previously been working outside the home, this new concern regarding identity resulted in their looking to a career, further education, or volunteer activities as possible outlets for independent action and

sources of personal fulfillment.

Whether religious in the past experienced a period of readjustment in their early thirties similar to that described for married women is not certain. According to the initial study by this author (Rufft, 1979), the first half of the thirty decade was often a period of uncertainty for these women regarding their commitment to their religious community. This uncertainty sometimes stemmed from questions about their choice of a celibate life style, questions precipitated by their experience of relationships with men. Thus, these women religious seemed less certain in their thirties than in their twenties of the wisdom of their decision to substitute God/Church/community for a husband. Since many of them had become sisters before they were actually autonomous people, a reassessment of their major life commitment in their thirties might indicate a concern about who they are as individual women, nor merely as "sisters." In a word, their identity struggle may parallel that of married women in timing if not in motivation. It is noteworthy also, that several of the women in the initial study moved out of the teaching/nursing fields in their early thirties when they were given the opportunity to choose rather than be assigned to an occupation. Perhaps their work with children or in typically feminine service-oriented jobs like nursing affected them in ways similar to those experienced by traditional housewives who felt a need to move out of the home and into the job market in their thirties.

Since these speculations regarding women religious in their thirties are based only on one study, additional research is essential on the questions raised about this life stage. For example, did women religious in the past experience an identity crisis in their early thirties, i.e., Were they questioning who they were as individual women not just as sisters? Was this a time characterized by uncertainty regarding their choice of a

celibate life style? Did women religious move out of the teaching/ nursing fields in their early thirties because of a desire for greater personal fulfillment?

The stage of adult development preceding midlife (35-43) has been characterized for married women, according to our review of the literature, by a sense of clarity about their future life direction. By this time, many married women have either altered their life structure through divorce, entering the job market, etc., or they have become more firmly committed to it. Married women describe themselves as having greater self-esteem and more independence and self-confidence in their late thirties and early forties than during any previous stage in their lives.

The women religious interviewed in our initial study experienced a continued struggle regarding their celibate lifestyle in their late thirties, but felt that their relationship with God and with their religious community was deeper and more settled at this time than previously. Those who had not already opted out of religious life were, therefore, more committed to it than they had been and experienced a new sense of stability within it. Whether they would have described themselves as having greater self-esteem, independence and self-confidence cannot be ascertained, however, because of the lack of personality data acquired in the initial study and the dearth of other research on women religious. Regarding this life stage, then, significant questions to be studied include: Do women religious have a continued struggle with their celibate life style in their late thirties? Do women religious experience a greater feeling of stability in and commitment to their religious community at this time than they did previously? Which, if either, of these two experiences is most dominant during this period, i.e., the celibacy crisis or the stability and commitment? Do women religious feel greater self-esteem,

more independence and self-confidence in their late thirties and early forties than they did previously in their lives?

Most of the research reviewed here regarding midlife indicates that, for married women in the past, middle-age involved a continuation of their feelings of greater self-awareness and competence. At the same time, however, they began to experience their own finiteness and the limits their increasing age placed on them. Neither of the themes previously characterized as major mid-life traumas, i.e., menopause and empty nest, was actually a crisis for most women. Studies suggest that it was primarily women who completely identified with their roles of wife and mother to the exclusion of other roles, who had difficulty finding meaning in their lives during middle-age and became subject to depression.

Women religious in midlife obviously have no event parallel to that of the empty nest for married women. They probably do experience a recognition of the finiteness of time, however, since studies indicate that this recognition is typical for both single and married women at this life stage. This awareness, coupled with menopause, is likely to impress on women religious the finality of their decision to have no children. While one might speculate that the absence of progeny would be more difficult for women religious at midlife than at other ages, none of the women interviewed in the initial study experienced this lack as particularly problematic at this time. Neither did they view the menopause as a traumatic event. Perhaps the presence of more than one role in the lives of women religious makes them more similar to married women with careers than to those housewives who identify solely with their wife/mother role. If so, research should find them less prone to midlife depression than the latter group.

The present study will concern itself with questions regarding middle-age such as: Do women religious experience a new sense of the finiteness

of time when they become middle-aged? Do they anticipate or experience the menopause as a traumatic event? Do they experience their lack of children of their own as particularly difficult at mid-life? Are they more prone to depression in the middle-age years than at other times in their life?

The research questions for this study regarding women religious are based on available data about the stages in the adult development of women, primarily those who are married. Both women religious and married women will be included in our sample so that as we investigate the characteristics of the life stages of women religious, we can also assess the validity, for our sample, of the data previously reviewed on married women. We are concerned with the stages of adult development as experienced by women who are presently 36 to 50, rather than by those who are now in their twenties and early thirties. In this manner, we hope to discover the pattern of adult growth typical for women religious in the past and, in later research, compare this process with what is occurring today for younger women religious. The purpose of our research is, then, specifically to answer the research questions previously mentioned for each stage of development for women religious who are presently age 36 to 50 thus confirming or rejecting the conclusions about life stages presented in the literature review. The compilation of these questions is presented below:

Early Twenties

a) Were women religious tentative regarding life goals prior to their entrance into community?
b) Were women religious less certain of their identity in their early twenties than in their late thirties?
c) Did women religious accept and vicariously live the identity of their religious community as their own during their early twenties?

Late Twenties

a) Did the satisfaction of women religious with their religious communities decrease from the early to the late twenties?
b) Did they experience increased stress during this period?
c) Was life satisfaction lower during this period than in the early twenties?

Early Thirties

a) Did women religious in the past experience an identity crisis in their early thirties?
b) Did women religious in their thirties experience a greater struggle regarding their choice of a celibate life style than they did in their twenties?

Late Thirties

a) Is life satisfaction higher during the late thirties for women religious than it was in the previous decade?
b) Do they experience a greater feeling of stability in their commitment to their religious community at this time than they did previously?
c) Do women religious feel greater self-esteem, more independence, and increased self-confidence in their late thirties than previously?

Mid-life

a) Do women religious experience a new sense of the finiteness of time when they become middle-aged?
b) Do they anticipate or experience the menopause as a traumatic event in mid-life?
c) Do they experience their lack of children of their own as particularly difficult at mid-life?
d) Are they more prone to depression in the middle-age years than at other times in their lives?

METHOD

Sample

The participants (216) in this study include 117 women religious and 99 married women. In each of these groups, at least 31 women are between the ages of 36 to 40, 41 to 45, and 46 to 50. The sample was taken from the Catholic diocese of Pittsburgh, PA. All participants are registered members of the Catholic Church and belong to the Caucasian race. The sample of married participants was not controlled to exclude either women with or without children or those who do or do not work for pay. The women religious and the married women are, therefore, similar regarding age, geographical location, race, and religion, but not regarding educational, occupational, or parental status.

The sample of women religious was obtained by randomly selecting 60 sisters in each age level from a list of all the sisters presently in the Pittsburgh diocese who are between the ages of 36 and 50. The sample of married women was obtained by randomly selecting 60 women in each age level from a list of all the married women between the ages of 36 and 50 who are presently registered as members of two large Catholic parishes in Pittsburgh. These parishes are located in suburban areas which have a predominantly white, middle-class population. Questionnaires (Appendices C and D) were mailed to 180 women religious and 180 married women. These women were asked to answer and return the questionnaires anonymously. All returned questionnaires were used for the study (N=216), but a minimum of 30 was considered necessary for each age level for both the married women and the women religious.

Sample Bias

Before presenting the results of this survey, it is essential to point out the problems and limitations in the methodology used in this study. Paramount among these are the limitations involving the bias of the sample. Although the major purpose of this research was to discover the developmental issues and marker events which typically occurred for women religious, a sample of married women was included as a control or norm group. In choosing this sample, age, geographical location, race and religion were controlled for. All respondents are, therefore, between age 36 and 50, living in Pittsburgh, belonging to the Caucasian race and to the Catholic Church. Each of these descriptors implies some limitation in the generalizability of the data.

The geographical location in which this study was undertaken may, for example, have an effect on the results. Although the lifestyle of women religious was very structured in the past, within the last 15 years, the Second Vatican Council caused major changes in this structure by encouraging revision of the rules of religious communities. Women religious all over the United Stated previously lived very similar lifestyles; they do so still today because of their general acceptance of specific changes promoted by the Vatican Council. While the geographical location in which this survey was taken may, therefore, not necessarily make a significant difference in regard to the women religious in the sample, this same thesis cannot be postulated concerning the married sample. It is unlikely that white, Catholic married women between 36 and 50 who live in other parts of the country which are either more or less conservative would respond in similar ways. In addition, since both groups of women in this study presently live in middle or upper-middle class suburban areas, their responses are also

different from what one might expect of women of varying socioeconomic backgrounds. This limitation is particularly pertinent if one also considers the racial bias of this sample. Since most of the research about adult development has been conducted with white men and women as subjects, it is impossible to predict the changes in data which would result from including blacks or other minorities in this study. Research on other topics (e.g., Gurin, Veroff & Feld, 1960) indicates racial differences in the results, so it is likely that studies on adult development would also show variations in life stages for people of different races. The results of this study cannot, therefore, be generalized to women of minority groups.

Since the married sample in this study was chosen to match the women religious as closely as possible, they are all women who are presently registered Catholics in the diocese of Pittsburgh, PA. Because practicing Catholic women tend to have more traditional values than the general population, this sample includes few divorcees, few women who admitted to have had extra-marital affairs or abortions or to knowing that their husbands had affairs. Most of these women also had more children than the norm. Their ideas about marriage and family life were probably influenced by the teachings of the Catholic Church, including the Church dicta that marriage is an indissoluble bond and that the purpose of sexual intercourse is the procreation of children. The responses of these women to the questionnaires used in this study indicate more traditional thinking than one might expect from a sample of married women taken from the general population and are, therefore, not generalizable to other groups of non-Catholic, married women.

Another difficulty regarding the generalizability of the results concerns the question of cohort effects versus developmental issues.

According to Rosow (1978), cohorts are people about the same age who in a given period have similar experiences that may affect them the same way. A cohort effect exists when responses to the same phenomenon are similar within, but different between generations. Because this research is not longitudinal nor sequential, one cannot be certain whether the acquired data characterizes the life stages only of women who are presently 36 to 50 and who are similar to this sample regarding other variables or whether it will be typical of other women who are now ten to twenty years younger. The proportion of effect which cohort status, age, and marital status had on the results of this study cannot presently be determined. Both the Second Vatican Council and the Women's Liberation Movement, as well as other important events, occurred during the life time of the participants in this study. It is probable that the data presented here reflects the influence of these two events on the two groups of women even as it also reflects their developmental processes. Although one might accept the assumption that distinctive events impinge on a cohort fairly uniformly, i.e., that the nature of the events is constant and that cohort members have the same exposure to them, a person's position in relation to the events might cause differential impact and meaning (Rosow, 1978). The women who responded to the questionnaires for this study span fifteen years in their ages. The results on several developmental issues indicate consistency regarding their occurrence during a specific five-year period despite the fact that the Vatican Council and the Women's Liberation Movement occurred when these women were at different ages. The exact extent to which the data is confounded by these two major external occurrences and other not known and/or not discussed events cannot, therefore, be definitely determined without replications of this study with other

age groups and in future years.

Differences exist between the two groups of women who participated in this study which were not controlled for and which are also possible confounds of the results, particularly of comparisons between the two samples. Major among these are the variables of educational background and employment history. Ninety-four percent of the women religious have at least a college education, while only about 13% of married women do. All of the women religious are employed; 63% of the married women work outside the home. In addition, most of the women religious have been involved in professional careers for 15 to 30 years, while many of the married women have worked for pay only intermittently during their married lives and these jobs have primarily been in less professional fields, e.g., clerical, sales, etc. The women religious are career-oriented and many of them have been in at least two occupational fields. Thus, while the two samples of women are similar in age, race, and religion, they vary significantly regarding education and employment. The responses of the women religious on the surveys for this study are, therefore, those of women who have had more opportunity for academic pursuits and occupational advancements than have their married counterparts. It is possible that at least some of the differences between the data regarding these two groups are due to the discrepancy between their educational and employment backgrounds rather than to their status as married or celibate people.

Since 360 questionnaires were sent to prospective participants in the study (180 to women religious and 180 to married women) and only 216 were returned, there is also a possibility of bias in the type of person who responded to this survey. The fact that the response rate for women religious was higher (N=117) than that of the married women (N=99) might

be due to the higher educational level of the former group. Several women religious commented on their willingness to complete the questionnaires because of their own experience doing similar tasks in graduate school and their recognition of the importance of a high response rate. Two married women noted that their children were doing research in graduate school and that that fact motivated them to help anyone in a similar position. A few women in each group commented on the benefits they thought younger women might derive from the results of such a study and indicated that that awareness was their motivation for completing the survey. Although there are probably a number of unknown reasons why 144 people chose not to respond to the questionnaires, one reason given verbally by at least three women religious was their conviction that questions regarding topics such as sexual behavior should not be asked of them and/or that the results of such a survey should not be revealed. It seems likely, therefore, that the sample of women religious who responded to the questionnaires were biased in favor of the less traditional, less conservative notions about women religious. While it is more difficult to speculate about the married women who did not return the questionnaires, it is possible that some traditional Catholic lay women would hold the same opinion as the more conservative women religious regarding the appropriateness of collecting data regarding sensitive moral issues. If such is the case, the married women who did not answer the survey would be even more traditional than those who did. Since these speculations cannot be definitively confirmed nor disputed by our data, one can only note the possibility of a response bias in this study which skews the results toward the less traditional of Catholic views.

Instrument

The questionnaire (Appendices C and D) for this study consists of three sections: I. Demographic information; II. Ratings for the timing of developmental issues; III. Ratings for the timing and positive or negative impact of marker events in life.

Part II of the questionnaire is concerned primarily with those developmental issues which our review of the literature indicates are most salient for married women from 20 to 50. It is a self-report on the individual's experience of identity, marital and life satisfaction, stress, self-esteem, independence, etc. This section of the questionnaire consists of nineteen items for married women and twenty-one for women religious. The first nineteen items are similar except that "community" is substituted for "marriage" or "sister" for "wife" in five items on the questionnaire for women religious. The two additional items for women religious are concerned with their choice to live celibately and to have no children. From this section of the questionnaire, the mean age level at which each developmental issue was salient for married women and women religious will be obtained.

Part III of the questionnaire is an adaptation of the Life Experiences Survey by Sarason, Johnson, and Siegel (1978), an instrument developed by these psychologists for the measurement of stress related to life changes. This instrument was designed to allow for separate assessment of positive and negative life experiences as well as individualized ratings of the impact of events. The developers of the Life Experiences Survey were concerned with eliminating the shortcomings, as they saw them, of previous life stress measures, particularly those of the most widely used instrument in life stress research,

the Schedule of Recent Experiences (Holmes & Rahe, 1967). The Schedule of Recent Experiences is based on the assumption that life changes per se are stressful regardless of the desirability of the events. Both desirable and undesirable events are used in that instrument to determine the life stress score. However, evidence that psychological difficulties are related to undesirable but not desirable events (Mueller, Edwards, & Yarvis, 1977; Vinokur & Selzer, 1975) led Sarason et al. to take the desirable-undesirable dimension into account in their Life Experiences Survey.

The Life Experiences Survey, therefore, is a 47 item measure on which respondents indicate the events that they have experienced in the past year, whether they viewed each event as being positive or negative, and its perceived impact on their lives at the time of its occurrence on a seven point scale from extremely negative (-3) to extremely positive (+3). Three test-retest reliability studies were conducted with college students using the Life Experiences Survey with a five to eight week time interval. The results of these studies suggest that the Life Experiences Survey is a moderately reliable instrument especially when the negative and total change scores are considered. These results probably underestimate the reliability of the Life Experiences Survey because within the time interval between testing, the subjects are actually experiencing additional life events which may be reflected in the responses given at the time of retesting.

Normative data for the Life Experiences Survey was acquired on 345 college students. The means and standard deviations were derived separately for males and females on positive, negative, and total life change scores. The results indicate no significant difference between

males and females on any of the three measures, that the life change scores for this sample of college students was generally low, and that the positive and negative life change scores are essentially uncorrelated.

Other studies were undertaken to determine to what extent the Life Experiences Survey correlates with relevant personality indices. The results suggest that the negative and total change scores correlate significantly and positively with state and trait anxiety as measured through the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 1970) whereas the positive change scores do not. A correlation was also found between negative change and anxiety as measured by the Multiple Affect Adjective Checklist (Zuckerman & Lubin, 1965). In addition, the relationship between life change scores and social desirability as measured on a short form of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Strahan & Gerbasi, 1972) was non-significant. Scores on the Life Experiences Survey were also compared with those on the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck, 1967) for 64 college students. A significant relationship was noted between negative change scores and scores on the latter instrument. In order to evaluate whether the Life Experiences Survey was an improvement over the Schedule of Recent Experiences, studies were undertaken to determine the correlation between the Beck Depression Inventory and both of these measures. The difference between the correlations obtained with the LES negative change score and the SRE compared to the Beck measure was significant in favor of the LES.

The instrument adapted for use as Part III of our questionnaire, i.e., the LES, is, therefore, one which is normed on college students, is reasonably reliable over a five to eight week period, has been found to be significantly related to a number of stress-related dependent measures,

and appears relatively free from social desirability biases. Is is lacking, however, in normative data for adults, i.e., specifically, for the married and celibate women who will participate in the present study.

While Part III of our questionnaire is based on the Life Experiences Survey, this author has adapted that instrument so that the suggested marker events are suitable for adult women. The present version includes 21 of the items on the LES as well as 19 additional more relevant ones. The 38 events included on the questionnaire for married women parallel as closely as possible the 41 items on the questionnaire for women religious, with 16 items being similar for both groups.

Since Part III of the questionnaire is based on an instrument the reliability and validity of which has already been ascertained, questions regarding these methodological issues are less weighty than when one considers Part II. However, in order to further determine the validity of both sections of the questionnaire, a team of experts examined both the content included in the developmental issues and marker events and the type of scale used for each section. In addition, a pilot testing was completed with married women (n=10) and women religious (n=10) in order to determine ambiguities or other difficulties with the questionnaire. These were corrected and the revised questionnaire was sent to the participants in this study.

Analysis

An analysis of the data from the questionnaires consisted of determining participant characteristics (age, educational level, and current employment), the percentage of women religious and married women who experienced each developmental issue during each age period, mean ages for women religious and married women on each developmental issue, frequency data and mean ratings for marker events which occurred for at least 25% of the women religious or married women in the sample, and "co-happenings" between marker events which occurred for at least 25% of women religious and the developmental issues the results of which did not agree with previous research findings. Since the responses to the questionnaires were given in letter codes which represented a five-year span, means were determined by multiplying the midpoint of each age level by the frequency of occurrence.

Research questions about developmental issues at specific ages were evaluated according to the data from this sample of women religious and married women. T-tests were used to assess the differences between the mean responses of the two groups of women on each developmental issue. Frequency data and mean ratings for marker events were also compiled and used to formulate a sequence of life stages for the two groups of women. When the conclusions drawn from the existing literature were not confirmed by this study's results for the women religious, further analyses were completed to determine co-occurrences between marker events and the relevant developmental issues. Frequencies, t-tests, and cross-tabulations were chosen for this initial stage in the study because these analyses were most appropriate for a focus on the research questions presented on pages 65 and 66. Future additional analyses of specific aspects of the data, such as the effect of

demographic characteristics on developmental issues, will require the use of other statistics such as discriminant analyses and/or multiple regression analyses.

Using the data regarding participant characteristics, developmental issues, marker events, ratings, and "co-happenings," the resulting life stages which characterize the women religious who participated in this study are described. A comparison is then made between the results obtained here for women religious, and those acquired from the previous study by this author, the data on married women in this sample, and the results of other authors' recent research (e.g., Bart, 1978 & Cath, 1980) presented in the literature review.

The following statements are drawn from the literature review regarding developmental issues and form the basic research questions for this study.

Early Twenties

a) Women are tentative regarding life goals prior to their marriage or entrance into a religious community.
b) Women in their early twenties are less certain of their identity than they are in their late thirties.
c) Women in their early twenties accept and vicariously live the identity of their husband or their religious community as their own.

Late Twenties

a) Satisfaction with one's religious community or marriage decreases from the early to the late twenties.
b) Women experience increased stress from the early to the late twenties.
c) Life satisfaction for women decreases from the early to the late twenties.

Early Thirties

a) Women experience an identity crisis in the early thirties.
b) Women religious in their thirties experience a greater struggle regarding their choice of a celibate lifestyle than they did in their twenties.

Late Thirties

a) Life satisfaction for women is higher in the late thirties than in the previous decade.
b) Women experience a greater feeling of stability in their commitment to their religious community or their marriage in their late thirties than previously.
c) Women feel greater self-esteem, more independence, and increased self-confidence in their late thirties than previously.

Mid-life (Forties)

a) Women experience a new sense of the finiteness of time when they become middle-aged.
b) Women do not anticipate nor experience the menopause as a traumatic event.
c) Women religious do not experience their lack of children of their own as particularly difficult during mid-life.
d) Women are not more prone to depression in mid-life than at other times in their life.

Reliability and Validity Issues

Besides the methodological issues regarding the bias of the sample used in this study, there are also problems inherent in acquiring accurate data through written, anonymous surveys (Sudman & Bradburn, 1974). The pre-testing of the questionnaires resulted in revisions in the wording of a few items on the survey, e.g., adding the note to question 1 on Part II regarding goals that were not to be included in the response to that question. A more major revision involved a re-wording of the directions for both Parts II and III to clarify the scales and the spaces for additional occurrences of marker events, to encourage the participants to be honest regarding sensitive topics, and to provide for the possibility of written comments. Despite these revisions, the responses of some women indicated a lack of understanding of the directions. For example, although the instructions for Part I regarding developmental issues requested respondents to indicate the one time period when each issue was most relevant for them, some participants gave multiple responses or answered "always" for certain issues (See Tables 2-21). These responses were included in the frequency data, but could not be used in the comparative analysis of the mean scores for the two groups of women. In addition, a few women gave responses on two parts of the questionnaire which appeared contradictory to one another, but because of the anonymity of the respondent, it was impossible to acquire clarification. These responses were coded as "no response" if no written comment provided an explanation. The additional information given by some women in the form of comments on the questionnaires was sometimes helpful in coding, but was not easily quantifiable for analysis.

Because some of the items on the questionnaires involved sensitive issues, it was impossible to ascertain the willingness of participants to respond honestly regarding these topics. Both the cover letter and the instructions on the questionnaire itself encouraged honesty by reminding the participants of the anonymity of the questionnaires and by noting that many of the events which they might hesitate to acknowledge as occurring in their lives have actually happened to many people. However, it can be seen in the results that on many items, some sensitive and some not, participants chose to leave the line blank for the response rather than writing "N" for "never" if the event had not occurred in their lives. On the survey for married women, for example, while only 5% of women admitted to having abortions and 57% responded "never," 38% left the line blank. Twenty percent did not respond regarding an affair with another man and 24% regarding their husbands having had affairs. Similar ambiguities occurred on the questionnaires for women religious; 17 participants gave no answer regarding sexual involvement with another sister, and 13 regarding sexual involvement with a man. Since women in both samples also indicated no response on some questions involving non-sensitive issues, it is difficult to determine whether their lack of response on sensitive topics was related to their fear of disclosure or to the same unknown reasons that motivated them to leave other items blank. For clarity in understanding responses to sensitive as well as non-sensitive items, a distinction was made in coding the responses of "never" and blanks (no response) and the percentage for each category was included on the frequency tables for marker events (Tables 23 & 24).

Since the participants in this study were asked to recall events which occurred in their lives from age twenty to the present, the results presented here are based on retrospective data. There is no way of ascertaining the accuracy of the memories of the women who responded to the questionnaires or of determining their need either to view the present period in their lives most positively or to see the past through "rose-colored glasses." Since research on life stages must, of necessity, be acquired "after the fact," the studies reviewed in the survey of the literature are all based on retrospective data collected at varying times from the actual remembered events. An attempt was made in this study to moderate the effect of impaired remembrance as much as possible by including women of three different age levels in this sample, but the fact that the acquired data is dependent on the memories of the participants must be taken into account when evaluating the results.

An additional problem in analyzing the data from the questionnaires was the fact that there is a decreasing number of respondents for the three age levels. The number of participants who could choose either the early or the late forties as the time period most relevant for a specific developmental issue was limited to two-thirds of the original sample and those who could choose the late forties, to one-third of it. This difficulty may affect the use of the means as accurate indicators of the "average" age for the occurrence of an event. However, it should not influence the significance or non-significance of the difference in the obtained scores.

In the analysis of the data from this study, it was difficult to establish one criterion percentage upon which to base a judgment regarding the agreement or disagreement of the data with past research

on any developmental issue. There were frequently two questions referring to a single issue with the responses resulting in two frequency tables, one for "most" stress, satisfaction, etc., and one for "least." In attempting to decide the criterion percentage for "least" stress, etc., one had to take both tables into account. In addition, multiple responses, and responses of "always" or "never," could not be included when determining this criterion and had to be subtracted from the total percentage for each issue. Many of the research statements this study attempted to verify are concerned with whether there is a decrease or increase regarding a certain issue across two time periods rather than whether or not a majority of participants responded a certain way. Therefore, one criterion percentage could not satisy every research question. This researcher attempted to solve this problem by establishing 16% as an "average" percentage for each of the six age periods and describing high or low satisfaction, stress, etc., according to how the given percentage deviated from this "average." This percentage was chosen arbitrarily and took into account only "typical" responses, i.e., those in the six age categories. It did not provide a method for analyzing multiple responses, no response, or responses of "always" or "never." Implications of this manner of assigning an "average" percentage for each age level must, therefore, be acknowledged as an additional factor to be considered in evaluating the data on developmental issues.

In analyzing the results of the questionnaires, it was evident that the acquired data was more than sufficient to answer the research questions proposed for this study. For that reason, it was essential to choose which elements to focus on and which to leave for later analysis. The demographic data presented on Table 1, therefore, is limited to

frequencies and percentages regarding the educational level and current employment of the participants. Additional information collected on Part I of the questionnaire concerning number of brothers and sisters in the family, position in the family, occupation of parents, etc., will be utilized in future research on the effects of these variables on developmental issues and marker events. In analyzing the results of Parts II and III of the questionnaires, the intent of the researcher was to do so by focusing on the research questions presented on pages 65 and 66. Future work will be done on other obviously important aspects of the data not considered here. Primary among these will be a comparative analysis of the responses of the women in each of the three age groups. It seems evident from Tables 6, 10, and 14, for example, that there is an age effect on the responses on issues associated with satisfaction and stability, i.e., that they tend to view the present period of their lives most positively. The influence of this trend and others on all of the developmental issues will, therefore, be analyzed at a later time.

RESULTS

As noted in the section on participants in this study, 117 women religious and 99 married women responded to the questionnaire. The number of participants in each of the five year age categories, their present educational level, and current employment are presented in Table 1. Differences between the women religious and married women can be seen in the participants' present educational level. Ninety-four percent of the women religious have at least a college education as compared to only 13.2% of the married women. In addition, 83.7% of the women religious have a Master's Degree, while only one married woman in this sample has reached that educational level. Regarding current employment, almost 70% of the women religious who participated in this study, work as administrators in some occupational field or are employed in the field of education; none are unemployed. For the married women in the sample, about 37% do not work outside the home; of the remaining 63%, over half are in the fields of business, office work, or sales. Only two women religious are in those fields. In sum, the two samples of women differ, not only in their chosen lifestyles, but in their educational and employment backgrounds.

Tables 2 through 20 show how women religious and married women specified the time period during which each developmental issue was most relevant in their lives. These results are presented in an order corresponding to the statements (page 73) regarding developmental issues "appropriate" for each age category, in order that it can be determined

Table 1

Participant Characteristics

Characteristic	Women Religious				Married Women			
	N	%	M	SD	N	%	M	SD
Total Participants (Ages 36-50)	117	100	43.39	4.66	99	100	42.79	4.10
Age Categories								
36 - 40	40	34	38.18	1.38	36	36	38.31	1.26
41 - 45	35	30	42.97	1.56	32	32	43.09	1.42
46 - 50	42	36	48.69	1.49	31	31	47.68	1.42
Educational Level								
Elementary School	0	0			3	3.0		
High School	3	2.6			55	55.6		
Undergraduate Studies	3	2.6			15	15.2		
Associate Degree/ Prof. Cert.	1	.9			13	13.1		
B.A./B.S.	11	9.4			7	7.1		
Graduate Studies	1	.9			5	5.1		
M.A./M.S.	90	76.9			1	1.0		
Ph.D.	8	6.8			0	0.0		
Current Employment								
Teaching	44	37.6			4	4.0		
Administration	37	31.6			1	1.0		
Health Services	2	1.7			8	8.1		
Social Services/ Counseling	6	5.1			1	1.0		
Parish Work	11	9.4			0	0.0		
Work Within Religious Comm.	7	6.0			0	0.0		
Food Services	3	2.6			3	3.0		
Business/ Accounting/ Clerical	2	1.7			25	25.3		
Sales	0	0.0			11	11.1		
Student	2	1.7			2	2.0		
Other	2	1.7			7	7.1		
Not Employed Outside Home	0	0.0			37	37.4		
No Response	1	.9			0	0.0		

which issues this data supports or questions. Tables 13 and 21 include the results of only the women religious, since the two developmental issues described there are relevant only to them. As noted previously, when the results for women religious in the sample were not in accord with those of the studies reviewed earlier in this paper, they were subjected to further analysis. Table 22 presents the mean ages for women religious and married women on each of the 17 developmental issues and the *t*-tests used to compare the significance of their differences. Multiple responses, blanks, and responses of "never" or "always" were excluded from these tests.

Developmental Issues

Early Twenties

The results on the age at which participants determined life goals, other than the goal to enter a religious community or to get married and have a family, are presented in Table 2. Over 48% of the married women in this sample reported that they had made life goals by age 25, as did 34% of the women religious. The first conclusion (page 73) drawn from the review of the literature is that women in the past were tentative about making life goals until they were married, presumably because much of the direction of their lives was dependent on whom they married. In this sample, 45.5% of the married women were married at or by age 20 and 95.7% of the women religious had entered their religious community by the same age. However, only 6.1% of the former group had made goals by age 20 and only 0.9% of the latter. Since for both groups in this sample, the determination of life goals followed marriage or entrance into a community, the data is supportive of the results of other studies. As shown in Table 22, the mean age of women religious (29.56) and married women (27.27) for determining goals was significantly different, $t = 2.319$, $p < .02$.

Table 2

Percentage of Responses for Age at which Participants "Determined Goals"

Response Age	Women Religious				Married Women			
	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL
20 or below	0	0	2.4	.9	5.6	12.5	0	6.1
21 - 25	17.5	37.1	45.2	33.3	41.7	43.8	41.9	42.4
26 - 30	35	8.6	16.7	20.5	13.9	6.3	12.9	11.1
31 - 35	22.5	25.7	7.1	17.9	8.3	12.5	3.2	8.1
36 - 40	17.5	17.1	14.3	16.2	16.7	9.4	9.7	12.1
41 - 45	NA	5.7	4.8	5.2	NA	3.1	3.2	3.2
46 - 50	NA	NA	2.4	2.4	NA	NA	3.2	3.2
Multiple	2.5	0	2.4	1.7	0	0	0	0
Always	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Never	5	5.7	2.4	4.3	8.3	9.4	25.8	14.1
No Response	0	0	2.4	.9	5.6	3.1	0	3.0
N of Participants	40	35	42	117	36	32	31	99

The percentage of participants who felt least certain of their identity during each time period is presented in Table 3. According to recent studies, women are less certain of their identity in their early twenties than they are in their late thirties. They do not follow the male timing of experiencing an identity crisis in their early twenties and feeling subsequently more certain of who they are as individuals. Their development of their own identity seems to occur at least a decade later. The data for the women religious in this sample validates this research. Thirty-five percent of this group responded that they were least certain of their identity from ages 21 to 25; this is the time period that has the highest number of responses. The percentage of women religious feeling least certain of their identity decreased with each age period from 20 to 50. In addition, as seen in Table 4, only 0.9% of women religious reported being most certain of their identity in their early twenties, the lowest of all the time periods, while the percentage for the late thirties is the highest, 35.9%. The results for married women do not follow the same pattern. The age periods from 26 to 30 and 36 to 40 have the highest percentage of responses for least certain of identity. While the 36 to 40 period has an even higher percentage of married women who reported being most certain of identity, this age period does not have the highest percentage of responses nor does 21 to 25 have the lowest. In addition, the results of the t-tests reported in Table 22 for both the least and most certain of identity questions showed a significant difference between the means for these two groups of women (Least: $t = -2.195$, $p < .05$; Most: $t = 2.318$, $p < .05$). Possible causes for the discrepancy between these results for married women and the findings of recent studies are presented in the Discussion section of this paper.

Table 3

Percentage of Responses for Age at which Participants "Felt Least Certain of Identity"

Response Age	Women Religious				Married Women			
	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL
20 or below	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.2	1.0
21 - 25	37.5	40	28.6	35	19.4	6.3	22.6	16.2
26 - 30	17.5	11.4	21.4	17.1	22.2	18.8	16.1	19.2
31 - 35	25	14.3	9.5	16.2	8.3	21.9	6.5	12.1
36 - 40	10	14.3	7.1	10.3	19.4	18.8	16.1	18.2
41 - 45	NA	2.9	9.5	6.5	NA	6.3	12.9	9.5
46 - 50	NA	NA	2.4	2.4	NA	NA	0	0
Multiple	2.5	0	4.8	2.6	5.6	6.3	6.5	6.1
Always	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Never	7.5	17.1	16.7	13.7	25	18.8	12.9	19.2
No Response	0	0	0	0	0	3.1	3.2	2.0
N of Participants	40	35	42	117	36	32	31	99

Table 4

Percentage of Responses for Age at which Participants "Felt Most Certain of Identity"

Response Age	Women Religious				Married Women			
	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL
20 or below	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21 - 25	0	0	2.4	.9	11.1	18.8	0	10.1
26 - 30	10	0	2.4	4.3	11.1	0	9.7	7.1
31 - 35	30	20	7.1	18.8	13.9	21.9	9.7	15.2
36 - 40	55	31.4	21.4	35.9	55.6	28.1	3.2	30.3
41 - 45	NA	45.7	23.8	33.8	NA	18.8	32.3	25.4
46 - 50	NA	NA	33.3	33.3	NA	NA	32.3	32.3
Multiple	2.5	2.9	7.1	4.3	0	12.5	0	4.0
Always	0	0	0	0	2.8	0	3.2	2.0
Never	2.5	0	0	.9	0	0	9.7	3.0
No Response	0	0	2.4	.9	5.6	0	0	2.0
N of Participants	40	35	42	117	36	32	31	99

The extent to which the women in this sample accepted and vicariously lived the identity of their religious community or their husband as their own in their early twenties is presented in Table 5. For both groups of women, identifying with their community or husband appears to be a phenomenon which began in the early twenties for more than 26% of them and continued for a decreasing number of women into the late forties. Since less than 10% of women religious and 18% of married women in this sample reported that they never experienced their identity as being centered in their community's or their husband's, the results of this study also corroborate those described in the literature review, i.e., that vicarious identification with one's husband was typical of young married women in the past. As can be seen in Table 22, there was no significant difference between the means for the two groups of women on this developmental issue.

Late Twenties

The data on level of satisfaction with one's community or one's marriage is presented in Tables 6 and 7. The literature review indicated that the satisfaction of married women with their marriages decreases from the early to the late twenties, a phenomenon frequently concurrent with the birth of children. In the present sample, slightly more married women described their marriage in the later twenties (15.2%) as more satisfying than in the early twenties (13.1%). Almost 20% reported the later twenties as the least satisfying period in their marriage, however, while only 10% ranked the early twenties that way. Over 16% of women religious saw the early twenties as their most satisfied period regarding the community and 12% saw the later twenties in a similar manner. Almost 20% of the women religious viewed their late twenties as their least satisfied period regarding community and only 8.5% reported the early twenties as least satisfying. Thus, the data on women religious and, to an extent, the data

Table 5

Percentage of Responses for Age at which Participants "Experienced Vicarious Identity"

Response Age	Women Religious				Married Women			
	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL
20 or below	0	0	0	0	2.8	0	0	1.0
21 - 25	37.5	28.6	35.7	34.2	19.4	25	35.5	26.3
26 - 30	20	17.1	16.7	17.9	27.8	21.9	19.4	23.2
31 - 35	15	11.4	9.5	12	11.1	9.4	9.7	10.1
36 - 40	12.5	2.9	11.9	9.4	8.3	12.5	3.2	8.1
41 - 45	NA	5.7	2.4	3.9	NA	3.1	3.2	3.2
46 - 50	NA	NA	2.4	2.4	NA	NA	3.2	3.2
Multiple	7.5	17.1	7.1	10.3	5.6	6.3	12.9	8.1
Always	0	0	4.8	1.7	5.6	3.1	0	3
Never	7.5	14.3	7.1	9.4	19.4	18.8	12.9	17.2
No Response	0	2.9	2.4	1.7	0	0	0	0
N of Participants	40	35	42	117	36	32	31	99

Table 6

Percentage of Responses for Age at which
Participants "Felt Most Satisfied with Community/Marriage"

Response Age	Women Religious				Married Women			
	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL
20 or below	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21 - 25	25	8.6	14.3	16.2	11.1	25	3.2	13.1
26 - 30	15	11.4	9.5	12	11.1	25	9.7	15.2
31 - 35	20	22.9	11.9	17.9	16.7	3.1	19.4	13.1
36 - 40	35	22.9	23.8	27.4	41.7	18.8	6.5	23.2
41 - 45	NA	22.9	21.4	22.1	NA	15.6	25.8	20.6
46 - 50	NA	NA	16.7	16.7	NA	NA	22.6	22.6
Multiple	2.5	11.4	2.4	5.1	8.3	6.3	0	5.1
Always	0	0	0	0	11.1	0	6.5	6.1
Never	0	0	0	0	0	6.3	6.5	4.0
No Response	2.5	0	0	.9	0	0	0	0
N of Participants	40	35	42	117	36	32	31	99

Table 7

Percentage of Responses for Age at which Participants "Felt Least Satisfied with Community/Marriage"

Response Age	Women Religious				Married Women			
	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL
20 or below	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21 - 25	12.5	8.6	4.8	8.5	13.9	6.3	9.7	10.1
26 - 30	25	22.9	11.9	19.7	11.1	21.9	25.8	19.2
31 - 35	40	17.1	19	25.6	25	12.5	12.9	17.2
36 - 40	17.5	14.3	21.4	17.9	22.2	28.1	12.9	21.2
41 - 45	NA	5.7	11.9	9.1	NA	18.8	6.5	12.7
46 - 50	NA	NA	14.3	14.3	NA	NA	3.2	3.2
Multiple	2.5	11.4	9.5	7.7	2.8	3.1	6.5	4.0
Always	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Never	2.5	17.1	7.1	8.5	25	9.4	19.4	18.2
No Response	0	2.9	0	.9	0	0	3.2	1.0
N of Participants	40	35	42	117	36	32	31	99

on married women, follow the general pattern suggested by the literature review, but since only about 28% of either group identified the early or the late twenties as the period of their greatest or least satisfaction with community, this issue does not seem particularly relevant for these age periods. There was no significant difference between the means of the two groups of women regarding most or least satisfied with religious community or marriage. Possible explanations for the apparent irrelevance of this issue for the women in this study during their twenties are given in the Discussion section.

The results on stress in the lives of the women participants are presented in Tables 8 and 9. The data for both groups of women was in accord with the research literature, that is, that stress increases for married women from early to late twenties. As seen in Table 8, the percentage of married women who reported most stress in the late twenties is more than double that of the early twenties; the percentage for women religious also increases but not as greatly. For both groups of women, the period from 21 to 25 has the lowest percentage of any period from 21 to 50 for most stress. In addition, as seen in Table 9, this same time period of the early twenties has the highest percent (33.3 & 37.4) of participants who reported least stress. There was no significant difference on this developmental issue between the mean age of its occurrence for women religious and for married women.

According to recent studies, life satisfaction decreases for married women from the early to the late twenties. The results of this study show that there was little difference in the percentage of women religious or married women who reported high life satisfaction for either the early or the late twenties (Table 10). For the women religious, the two periods within the twenties have lower percentages (6.8 and 6) on

Table 8

Percentage of Responses for Age at which Participants "Felt Most Stress in Life"

Response Age	Women Religious				Married Women			
	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL
20 or below	0	2.9	0	.9	0	0	0	0
21 - 25	12.5	11.4	4.8	9.4	13.9	6.3	3.2	8.1
26 - 30	12.5	14.3	9.5	12	19.4	25	12.9	19.2
31 - 35	45	17.1	9.5	23.9	22.2	21.9	9.7	18.2
36 - 40	20	34.3	21.4	24.8	41.7	28.1	22.6	31.3
41 - 45	NA	14.3	19	16.9	NA	9.4	22.6	15.9
46 - 50	NA	NA	21.4	21.4	NA	NA	12.9	12.9
Multiple	7.5	5.7	14.3	9.4	2.8	9.4	12.9	8.1
Always	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.2	1.0
No Response	2.5	0	0	.9	0	0	0	0
N of Participants	40	35	42	117	36	32	31	99

Table 9

Percentage of Responses for Age at which Participants "Felt Least Stress in Life"

Response Age	Women Religious				Married Women			
	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL
20 or below	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21 - 25	47.5	28.6	23.8	33.3	36.1	37.5	38.7	37.4
26 - 30	17.5	22.9	19	19.7	30.6	9.4	9.7	17.2
31 - 35	10	11.4	11.9	11.1	16.7	3.1	6.5	9.1
36 - 40	15	17.1	7.1	12.8	13.9	12.5	3.2	10.1
41 - 45	NA	14.3	21.4	18.2	NA	21.9	19.4	20.6
46 - 50	NA	NA	9.5	9.5	NA	NA	19.4	19.4
Multiple	0	2.9	7.1	3.4	0	6.3	3.2	3.0
Always	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Never	7.5	2.9	0	3.4	0	6.3	0	2.0
No Response	2.5	0	0	.9	2.8	3.1	0	2.0
N of Participants	40	35	42	117	36	32	31	99

Table 10

Percentage of Responses for Age at which Participants "Felt Most Satisfied with Life"

Response Age	Women Religious				Married Women			
	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL
20 or below	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21 - 25	7.5	5.7	7.1	6.8	13.9	12.5	16.1	14.1
26 - 30	10	2.9	4.8	6.0	11.1	18.8	9.7	13.1
31 - 35	30	17.1	4.8	17.1	16.7	6.3	6.5	10.1
36 - 40	52.5	20	21.4	31.6	50	15.6	3.2	24.2
41 - 45	NA	40	33.3	36.4	NA	40.6	19.4	30.2
46 - 50	NA	NA	26.2	26.2	NA	NA	35.5	35.5
Multiple	0	5.7	2.4	2.6	2.8	3.1	6.5	4.0
Always	0	0	0	0	5.6	0	3.2	3.0
Never	0	2.9	0	.9	0	3.1	0	1.0
No Response	0	5.7	0	1.7	0	0	0	0
N of Participants	40	35	42	117	36	32	31	99

life satisfaction than any other period. Although the percentages are somewhat higher for the early and late twenties (14.1 & 13.1) for married women, they are also lower than all other periods for that sample with the exception of the time from 31 to 35. The results of the question regarding the least satisfying time in life are shown in Table 11. There is little difference between the percentages for the two periods in the twenties. The percent of women religious in the sample who viewed the early or the late twenties as the least satisfying period in life is almost the same (17.1 & 17.9) and the percentage for married women increases only slightly for these two periods (11.1 to 17.2). Therefore, although the direction of these results regarding life satisfaction is similar to that suggested by recent studies, that is, that life satisfaction decreases from the early to the late twenties for married women, the difference in the percentages for this sample for these two periods is very slight. There was no significant difference between the means for the two groups of participants. This developmental issue was, therefore, analyzed further.

Early Thirties

The participants' responses on the issue of identity crisis are presented in Table 12. According to the available literature on this topic, women are reported to experience a questioning of their identity at least a decade later than men, that is, in their early thirties. The responses of the women religious in this study agree with that research. Twenty-seven percent of this group reported having an identity crisis in their early thirties; this percentage of responses is higher than that of any other time period. Only 18.8% of women religious reported never having experienced a crisis. The married women also had the highest percentage of responses (17.2) for this issue in their early thirties. There

Table 11

Percentage of Responses for Age at which Participants "Felt Least Satisfied with Life"

Response Age	Women Religious				Married Women			
	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL
20 or below	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.2	1.0
21 - 25	25	14.3	11.9	17.1	16.7	6.3	9.7	11.1
26 - 30	20	14.3	19	17.9	22.2	15.6	12.9	17.2
31 - 35	30	25.7	16.7	23.9	19.4	31.3	9.7	20.2
36 - 40	10	25.7	16.7	17.1	25	12.5	9.7	16.2
41 - 45	NA	2.9	9.5	6.5	NA	21.9	19.4	20.6
46 - 50	NA	NA	16.7	16.7	NA	NA	9.7	9.7
Multiple	2.5	2.9	0	1.7	5.6	0	3.2	3.0
Always	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Never	10	5.7	4.8	6.8	8.3	9.4	16.1	11.1
No Response	2.5	8.6	4.8	5.1	2.8	3.1	6.5	4.0
N of Participants	40	35	42	117	36	32	31	99

Table 12

Percentage of Responses for Age at which Participants "Experienced an Identity Crisis"

Response Age	Women Religious				Married Women			
	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL
20 or below	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21 - 25	5	5.7	4.8	5.1	11.1	0	3.2	5.1
26 - 30	20	14.3	11.9	15.4	16.7	21.9	6.5	15.2
31 - 35	42.5	20	19	27.4	22.2	12.5	16.1	17.2
36 - 40	17.5	25.7	7.1	16.2	19.4	15.6	12.9	16.2
41 - 45	NA	0	16.7	9.1	NA	12.5	19.4	15.9
46 - 50	NA	NA	7.1	7.1	NA	NA	9.7	9.7
Multiple	2.5	8.6	7.1	6.0	0	0	3.2	1.0
Always	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Never	10	25.7	21.4	18.8	27.8	37.5	29	31.3
No Response	2.5	0	4.8	2.6	2.8	0	0	1.0
N of Participants	40	35	42	117	36	32	31	99

was no significant difference (Table 22) between the mean age for the occurrence of an identity crisis for the two groups of participants. For both the women religious and the married women, this mean is in the early thirties, ages 33.7 and 34.5, respectively. Almost a third of the married women viewed themselves as never having undergone an identity crisis.

The responses of the women religious regarding their struggle to live celibately are reported in Table 13. Previous research, specifically the results of the case studies conducted by this author (Rufft, 1979), suggested that this struggle is greater for most women religious in their thirties than in their twenties. The findings of this study corroborate the former one. For the women religious in all three age groups, difficulty regarding celibacy was reported to be greater in the thirties (42.7%) than in the previous decade (14.6%). This struggle continued into the early forties for this sample. Only 16.2% of the women religious who responded reported never having struggled with their choice to live a celibate lifestyle.

Late Thirties

One previous finding regarding the late thirties was that life satisfaction for women is higher during that time than during the previous decade (26-35). The results presented in Table 10 confirm this finding. For the women religious, life satisfaction in the late thirties was reported higher by a percentage (31.6) that almost doubles that for the early thirties (17.1) and is five times greater than that of the late twenties (6). For the married women in the sample, life satisfaction in the late thirties (24.2) was reported higher by more than twice as many participants as in the early thirties (10.1) and by almost twice as many as the late twenties (13.1). In addition, a lower percentage of women in both groups

Table 13

Percentage of Responses for Age at which Participants "Struggled with Celibacy"

Response Age	Women Religious			
	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL
20 or below	2.5	0	0	.9
21 - 25	5.0	0	2.4	2.6
26 - 30	12.5	17.1	7.1	12.0
31 - 35	35	20	14.3	23.0
36 - 40	32.5	17.1	9.5	19.7
41 - 45	NA	14.3	28.6	22.1
46 - 50	NA	NA	7.1	7.1
Multiple	2.5	8.6	7.1	6.0
Always	2.5	0	0	.9
Never	5.0	22.9	21.4	16.2
No Response	2.5	0	2.4	1.7
N of Participants	40	35	42	117

reported being least satisfied in the late thirties than in the early thirties or late twenties (Table 11). There was no significant difference between the means on most or least life satisfaction for the two groups of participants (Table 22).

Another effect of being a woman in her late thirties, according to the studies reviewed earlier, is an increased feeling of stability in one's marriage or religious community. As seen in Table 14, for the two groups of women in this study, a higher percentage ranked themselves as being more stable in their commitment in the period between 35 and 40 than at any other previous age. For the women religious, the percentage for the late thirties is higher than that of any period before or after; for the married women, there is a higher percentage during the time between 46 and 50. As can be seen in Table 22, there was a significant difference between the means for the two groups of women on this issue, $\underline{t} = 2.649$, $\underline{p} < .01$. Although both groups have a higher percentage of responses in the period from 36 to 40 than in any previous period and, thus, verify prior research findings, the variance is greater for the married women who, unlike the women religious, have at least 10% of respondents reporting most stability for every age period from 21 to 50.

The late thirties is also the time when, according to prior research findings, women feel greater self-esteem, independence, and self-confidence than previously. The results for these three dimensions are presented in Tables 15, 16, and 17. The responses of the women religious verify former studies. The percentage of women religious is higher on reports of greater self-esteem, independence, and self-confidence from age 36 to 40 than at any age previously. The number of women religious who experienced greater positive feelings in all three of these

Table 14

Percentage of Responses for Age at which Participants "Felt Most Stable in Community/Marriage"

Response Age	Women Religious				Married Women			
	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL
20 or below	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21 - 25	15	2.9	4.8	7.7	8.3	34.4	16.1	19.2
26 - 30	10	2.9	4.8	6.0	16.7	21.9	9.7	16.2
31 - 35	25	17.1	16.7	19.7	16.7	6.3	6.5	10.1
36 - 40	45	25.7	16.7	29.1	44.4	18.8	9.7	25.3
41 - 45	NA	37.1	19.0	27.3	NA	9.4	16.1	12.7
46 - 50	NA	NA	23.8	23.8	NA	NA	32.3	32.3
Multiple	2.5	5.7	7.1	5.1	2.8	3.1	3.2	3.0
Always	0	0	7.1	2.6	11.1	3.1	3.2	6.1
Never	0	5.7	0	1.7	0	0	3.2	1.0
No Response	2.5	2.9	0	1.7	0	3.1	0	1.0
N of Participants	40	35	42	117	36	32	31	99

Table 15

Percentage of Responses for Age at which Participants "Liked Themselves Most"

Response Age	Women Religious				Married Women			
	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL
20 or below	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21 - 25	5.0	2.9	9.5	6.0	27.8	18.8	22.6	23.2
26 - 30	7.5	0	2.4	3.4	13.9	18.8	6.5	13.1
31 - 35	27.5	8.6	0	12.0	13.9	15.6	0	10.1
36 - 40	55.0	20.0	9.5	28.2	38.9	9.4	3.2	18.2
41 - 45	NA	42.9	31.0	36.4	NA	31.3	29.0	30.2
46 - 50	NA	NA	38.1	38.1	NA	NA	22.6	22.6
Multiple	2.5	11.4	7.1	6.8	0	0	6.5	2.0
Always	0	2.9	0	.9	2.8	0	3.2	2.0
Never	2.5	5.7	0	2.6	2.8	3.1	3.2	3.0
No Response	0	5.7	2.4	2.6	0	3.1	3.2	2.0
N of Participants	40	35	42	117	36	32	31	99

Table 16

Percentage of Responses for Age at which Participants "Felt Most Independent"

Response Age	Women Religious				Married Women			
	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL
20 or below	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21 - 25	0	0	0	0	38.9	9.4	19.4	23.2
26 - 30	0	0	0	0	11.1	3.1	6.5	7.1
31 - 35	32.5	11.4	0	14.5	8.3	18.8	9.7	12.1
36 - 40	65.0	25.7	14.3	35.0	38.9	18.8	0	20.2
41 - 45	NA	45.7	28.6	36.4	NA	43.8	22.6	33.3
46 - 50	NA	NA	45.2	45.2	NA	NA	35.5	35.5
Multiple	0	8.6	11.9	6.8	0	0	0	0
Always	2.5	5.7	0	2.6	0	0	3.2	1.0
Never	0	2.9	0	.9	2.8	6.3	3.2	4.0
No Response	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
N of Participants	40	35	42	117	36	32	31	99

Table 17

Percentage of Responses for Age at which Participants "Felt Most Self-Confident"

Response Age	Women Religious				Married Women			
	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL
20 or below	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21 - 25	2.5	0	0	.9	16.7	15.6	22.6	18.2
26 - 30	10.0	0	0	3.4	11.1	6.3	6.5	8.1
31 - 35	27.5	14.3	7.1	16.2	19.4	21.9	3.2	15.2
36 - 40	52.5	28.6	14.3	31.6	47.2	15.6	0	22.2
41 - 45	NA	48.6	33.3	40.3	NA	40.6	29.0	34.9
46 - 50	NA	NA	40.5	40.5	NA	NA	32.3	32.3
Multiple	5.0	2.9	4.8	4.3	0	0	0	0
Always	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.2	1.0
Never	2.5	2.9	0	1.7	5.6	0	0	2.0
No Response	0	2.9	0	.9	0	0	3.2	1.0
N of Participants	40	35	42	117	36	32	31	99

areas continues to increase during the forties. More married women also reported greater self-confidence between ages 36 and 40 (Table 17) than during any previous age and this increase continues into the forties. Regarding both self-esteem and independence, however, the findings for the married women do not follow this pattern. Self-esteem (Table 15) appears to be at its peak in the early forties rather than the late thirties for many of these women; the percentages for ages 21 to 25 and 46 to 50 are also higher than that of the late thirties. In a similar fashion, a higher percentage of married women reported greater feelings of independence (Table 16) in the forties and the early twenties than in the late thirties. Therefore, the results on independence, self-confidence and self-esteem portray the women religious as following the pattern described by recent studies more closely than do the married women participants. On all three of these issues, there was a significant difference between the means for the two groups of women, self-esteem ($t = 4.304$, $p < .001$), independence ($t = 4.989$, $p < .001$), and self-confidence ($t = 3.881$, $p < .001$).

Mid-Life (Forties)

One phenomenon which recent research indicates characterizes mid-life both for women and for men, is a new sense of the finiteness of time. As is seen in Table 18 for the women religious in this study, 35% already recognized this phenomenon in their late thirties, a slightly lower percent reported the discovery in their early forties (31.2), and the highest percentage (45.2) is from 45 to 50. For the married women, the percentage steadily increased from the thirties through the forties (28.3 to 34.9 to 38.7). Only 6.8% of the women religious and 14.1% of the married women described themselves as unaware of this new understanding of time in their lives. As expected with such corresponding results for

Table 18

Percentage of Responses for Age at which
Participants "Felt Most Awareness of Finiteness"

Response Age	Women Religious				Married Women			
	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL
20 or below	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21 - 25	0	0	0	0	8.3	3.1	0	4.0
26 - 30	5.0	0	2.4	2.6	8.3	0	0	3.0
31 - 35	32.5	5.7	2.4	13.7	13.9	9.4	6.5	10.1
36 - 40	50.0	40.0	16.7	35.0	58.3	18.8	3.2	28.3
41 - 45	NA	42.9	21.4	31.2	NA	40.6	29.0	34.9
46 - 50	NA	NA	45.2	45.2	NA	NA	38.7	38.7
Multiple	0	0	2.4	.9	0	0	3.2	1.0
Always	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Never	10.0	5.7	4.8	6.8	11.1	15.6	16.1	14.1
No Response	2.5	5.7	4.8	4.3	0	12.5	3.2	5.1
N of Participants	40	35	42	117	36	32	31	99

the two groups, there was no significant difference between their mean ages. Both groups support the findings of previous research on this topic.

The results from this study are also very similar to the somewhat surprising discovery of the more recent research about women, that is, that they do not anticipate the menopause as a traumatic event. In support of the work of researchers like Bernice Neugarten, it can be seen in Table 19 that 80.3% of the women religious and 75.8% of the married women reported that they never anticipated the menopause as traumatic. Of the 19 women religious and 14 married women who indicated on the Marker Events section of the questionnaire that they had already experienced natural menopause, only 3 and 4, respectively, rated it as a negative experience. No test of significance was completed on this issue since there were so few responses indicating a particular time period when the menopause was anticipated as traumatic.

As noted in the literature review, the results of studies on women by researchers such as Pauline Bart suggest that depression is not a necessary occurrence in mid-life. When it does occur during that time of life, it is usually the result of specific factors such as a lack of interests outside one's home and family or a tendency to be over-protective or over-involved with one's children. In this study, the highest percentages for depression for both groups of women (women religious, 45.3; married women, 44.4) are during the two age periods of the thirties (Table 20). There was no significant difference between the means for the two groups of women on this issue, both being 34.5 years. There is, however, a wide range of responses for the participants regarding the age at which they felt most depressed (Table 20).

Table 19

Percentage of Responses for Age at which Participants "Anticipated Menopause as Traumatic"

Response Age	Women Religious				Married Women			
	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL
20 or below	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21 - 25	0	0	0	0	0	3.1	3.2	2.0
26 - 30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
31 - 35	7.5	0	0	2.6	0	0	0	0
36 - 40	2.5	11.4	4.8	6.0	11.1	3.1	9.7	8.1
41 - 45	NA	0	0	0	NA	9.4	3.2	6.3
46 - 50	NA	NA	7.1	7.1	NA	NA	6.5	6.5
Multiple	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Always	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Never	77.5	74.3	88.1	80.3	72.2	78.1	77.4	75.8
No Response	12.5	14.3	0	8.5	16.7	6.3	0	8.1
N of Participants	40	35	42	117	36	32	31	99

Table 20

Percentage of Responses for Age at which Participants "Felt Most Depressed"

Response Age	Women Religious				Married Women			
	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL
20 or below	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21 - 25	7.5	14.3	7.1	9.4	13.9	6.3	6.5	9.1
26 - 30	20.0	8.6	14.3	14.5	22.2	15.6	6.5	15.2
31 - 35	37.5	17.1	9.5	21.4	22.2	25.0	16.1	21.2
36 - 40	22.5	34.3	16.7	23.9	22.2	21.9	25.8	23.2
41 - 45	NA	2.9	21.4	13.0	NA	18.8	22.6	20.6
46 - 50	NA	NA	16.7	16.7	NA	NA	9.7	9.7
Multiple	5.0	8.6	4.8	6.0	5.6	0	6.5	4.0
Always	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Never	5.0	14.3	7.1	8.5	11.1	9.4	6.5	9.1
No Response	2.5	0	2.4	1.7	2.8	3.1	0	2.0
N of Participants	40	35	42	117	36	32	31	99

In the previous study conducted by this author, it was noted that most of the women religious who were interviewed did not experience any increased difficulty at mid-life regarding their choice not to have children. In fact, most of those women did not view that decision as particularly difficult at any period of their lives. In the present study, as is seen in Table 21, 39.3% of the women religious reported never having experienced difficulty regarding this issue. Of those women who did consider their decision to have no children a difficult one, the highest percentage (23.1) occurs during the age period from 31 to 35. Since only 5.2% in the early forties and no one in the late forties responded that this issue was most difficult at that time, the results of this study support those of the case studies conducted earlier by this author.

Marker Events

The major purpose of this work was to describe the adult development of the women religious and compare it both with a sample of married women and with the results of previous research. In addition to information about the developmental issues of married and celibate women, this study also focused on marker events which occurred in their lives and the positive or negative ratings which they assigned to these events. In Tables 23 and 24, a list of marker events which occurred for at least 25% of women religious (N=30) or married women (N=25) is presented, as well as the age at which they happened, and the mean rating assigned to each event. Because of the obvious homogeniety of these ratings, standard deviations are not included on Tables 23 and 24. Although the menopause occurred for less than 25% of the women in this study, it was included as a marker event because of the frequent reference to it in past research as an important mid-life issue. Because of the smaller sample of women who

Table 21

Percentage of Responses for Age at which Participants "Felt Most Difficulty Having no Children"

Response Age	Women Religious			
	36-40	41-45	46-50	TOTAL
20 or below	0	2.9	0	.9
21 - 25	5.0	8.6	4.8	6.0
26 - 30	7.5	14.3	4.8	8.5
31 - 35	40.0	14.3	14.3	23.1
36 - 40	20.0	2.9	11.9	12.0
41 - 45	NA	5.7	4.8	5.2
46 - 50	NA	NA	0	0
Multiple	2.5	11.4	2.4	5.1
Always	0	2.9	0	.9
Never	25.0	37.1	54.8	39.3
No Response	0	0	2.4	.9
N of Participants	40	35	42	117

Table 22

Mean Ages for Developmental Issues of Religious Women and Married Women

Developmental Issue	Religious Women Mean	S D	Married Women Mean	S D	t	p
Determined Goals	29.56	6.480	27.27	6.900	2.319	.02
Least Certain of Identity	29.07	6.511	31.33	6.661	-2.195	.05
Most Certain of Identity	38.86	5.455	36.69	7.251	2.318	.05
Vicarious Identity	28.50	6.273	28.56	6.127	- .064	NS
Most Satisfied with Community/Marriage	34.59	7.448	34.73	7.664	- .122	NS
Least Satisfied with Community/Marriage	33.52	6.554	33.07	6.351	.452	NS
Most Stress	35.05	7.128	34.56	6.476	.502	NS
Least Stress	30.87	7.890	30.99	8.550	- .094	NS
Most Satisfied with Life	37.64	6.596	35.97	8.096	1.578	NS
Least Satisfied with Life	32.51	7.124	33.56	7.159	- .981	NS
Identity Crisis	33.71	5.833	34.52	6.562	- .783	NS
Most Stable in Community/Marriage	36.89	6.754	33.97	8.230	2.649	.01
Self-Esteem	38.83	6.715	34.00	8.520	4.304	.001
Independence	40.33	4.857	35.23	8.726	4.989	.001
Self-Confidence	39.61	5.523	35.74	8.179	3.881	.001
Awareness of Finiteness	39.94	5.250	39.14	6.302	.909	NS
Depression	34.53	6.864	34.49	6.621	.043	NS
N of Participants	117		99		-	-

Note: Degrees of freedom for the t tests were 214.

Table 23

Marker Events: Frequencies and Mean Ratings of Impact for Women Religious[a]

Marker Event	Rating[b]	Frequencies by Age of Occurrence									
	M	TOTAL	<21	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-50	Always	Never	No Response
Entrance	5.34	117	111	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Novitiate	4.36	117	100	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
First Vows	4.94	117	63	54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Juniorate	4.28	116	20	93	3	0	0	0	0	0	1
Final Vows	5.23	117	0	85	31	1	0	0	0	0	0
25th Jubilee	5.02	65	0	0	0	0	5	60	0	29	23
Considered Leaving - Celibacy	3.88	44	3	6	9	16	7	3	0	63	10
Considered Leaving - Not Celibacy	3.33	71	8	14	13	18	7	10	1	40	6
Rel. with Male - Not Sexual	5.36	89	6	4	22	26	19	11	1	22	6
Rel. with Male - Sexual: No Intercourse	4.9	44	7	2	6	13	9	7	0	60	13

Table 23 (Cont'd)

Marker Event	Rating[b]	Frequencies by Age of Occurrence									
	M	TOTAL	<21	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-50	Always	Never	No Response
Rel. with Women Religious - Not Sexual	5.39	105	21	26	21	25	7	3	2	8	4
Rel. with Lay Women - Not Sexual	5.2	83	8	6	16	20	22	9	2	29	5
Rel. with Women Religious - Sexual	3.82	36	1	6	11	10	3	5	0	64	17
Serious Discord	2.21	86	5	23	21	19	8	8	2	24	7
Change in Comm. Rules	5.03	117	0	14	42	34	19	6	2	0	0
Change in Trad. Habit	5.24	117	0	16	40	32	23	6	0	0	0
Lived Away from Comm.	4.98	52	0	4	12	13	16	7	0	57	8
Illness - Self	3.21	51	7	1	7	16	6	14	0	51	15
Illness - Mother	2.53	74	10	3	10	15	18	18	0	27	16
Illness - Father	2.75	72	15	7	14	17	12	7	0	23	22

Table 23 (Cont'd)

Marker Event	Rating[b]	Frequencies by Age of Occurrence									
	M	TOTAL	<21	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-50	Always	Never	No Response
Illness - Sister	2.64	32	6	6	1	4	5	10	0	53	32
Illness - Grandmother	3.28	42	17	4	9	4	5	3	0	47	28
Illness - Grandfather	3.35	31	14	6	6	3	1	1	0	47	39
Illness - Close Friend	3.1	41	1	0	5	14	8	13	0	44	32
Death of Mother	2.76	32	6	1	2	6	6	11	0	48	37
Death of Father	2.73	72	18	8	9	15	12	10	0	31	14
Death of Grandmother	3.04	76	34	10	15	9	7	1	0	19	22
Death of Grandfather	3.14	65	33	13	8	7	3	1	0	21	31
Death of Close Friend	2.8	31	5	1	4	8	3	10	0	46	40
Return to Schooling	4.88	76	20	17	9	12	14	4	0	7	34
Completion of BA/BS	4.93	112	1	31	48	24	8	0	0	4	1
Completion of MA/MS	5.25	102	0	3	22	42	26	9	0	12	3

Table 23 (Cont'd)

Marker Event	Rating[b]	Frequencies by Age of Occurrence									
	M	TOTAL	<21	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-50	Always	Never	No Response
1st Change of Residence	3.8	108	42	34	11	10	1	8	2	2	7
2nd Change of Residence	3.54	75	6	44	22	2	1	0	0	0	42
3rd Change of Residence	3.71	71	2	11	38	17	2	1	0	0	46
4th Change of Residence	4.23	62	0	6	13	29	11	3	0	0	55
5th Change of Residence	4.0	46	0	3	10	4	21	8	0	0	71
6th Change of Residence	4.19	36	0	0	6	8	4	18	0	0	81
1st Job: Assigned	4.03	116	57	58	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
1st Job: Choice	5.17	90	1	4	16	29	20	20	0	21	6
Change of Job	4.55	87	2	28	19	11	12	15	0	16	14
Change of Occ. Field	5.21	72	1	2	13	16	16	24	0	36	9
Job: Comm. Adm.	4.17	37	0	0	3	10	13	11	0	64	16
Comm. Job: Not Adm.	4.79	60	0	2	8	24	18	8	0	46	11

Table 23 (Cont'd)

Marker Event	Rating[b]	Frequencies by Age of Occurrence									
	M	TOTAL	<21	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-50	Always	Never	No Response
Closing of Institution	2.5	36	0	2	4	8	14	8	0	65	16
Friend Left Comm.	2.25	93	10	23	24	21	10	5	0	21	3
Counseling	4.81	43	0	4	7	14	9	9	0	61	13
Spiritual Crisis	3.2	84	2	10	15	29	8	20	0	25	8
Menopause (Natural)	4.0	19	0	0	0	0	2	17	0	74	24

[a] N = 117

[b] Rating scale ranged from 1 = extremely negative to 6 = extremely positive

Table 24

Marker Events: Frequencies and Mean Ratings of Impact for Married Women[a]

Marker Event	Rating[b]	Frequencies by Age of Occurrence									
	M	TOTAL	<21	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-50	Always	Never	No Response
Engagement	5.42	98	61	27	8	2	0	0	0	1	0
Marriage	5.58	99	43	45	8	2	1	0	0	0	0
1st Pregnancy	5.33	94	20	55	16	2	1	0	0	5	0
2nd Pregnancy	5.23	89	7	47	27	6	1	1	0	0	10
3rd Pregnancy	4.58	71	1	33	29	6	2	0	0	1	27
4th Pregnancy	4.14	48	0	18	21	8	1	0	0	0	51
5th Pregnancy	4.61	30	0	4	18	8	0	0	0	0	69
1st Birth/Adoption	5.55	96	18	57	16	4	1	0	0	3	0
2nd Birth/Adoption	5.46	92	5	42	37	6	2	0	0	0	7
3rd Birth/Adoption	5.2	65	0	26	29	7	3	0	0	0	34
4th Birth/Adoption	5.28	42	0	11	20	8	3	0	0	0	57
1st Miscarriage	2.27	34	5	19	7	2	0	1	0	42	23

Table 24 (Cont'd)

Marker Event	Rating[b]	Frequencies by Age of Occurrence									
	M	TOTAL	<21	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-50	Always	Never	No Response
Separated from Spouse due to Work	2.34	43	5	18	8	8	4	0	0	40	16
Serious Marital Problems	2.12	42	0	7	13	11	8	3	0	43	14
Considered Separation	2.30	34	1	2	10	8	9	4	0	51	14
25th Anniversary	5.13	33	0	0	0	0	1	32	0	39	27
Illness - Self	2.41	31	5	6	3	7	5	5	0	47	21
Illness - Mother	2.39	40	5	4	6	7	9	9	0	39	20
Illness - Father	2.75	42	2	6	9	11	9	5	0	35	22
Illness - Grandmother	1.93	39	20	3	1	8	4	3	0	34	26
Illness - Child	2.39	39	3	7	8	6	12	3	0	36	24
Death - Mother	2.12	30	7	3	5	4	6	5	0	44	25
Death - Father	2.31	39	7	5	3	10	11	3	0	39	21
Death - Grandmother	2.2	60	28	5	6	10	8	3	0	16	23
Death - Grandfather	2.36	44	27	7	2	2	6	0	0	26	29

Table 24 (Cont'd)

Marker Event	Rating[b]	Frequencies by Age of Occurrence									
	M	TOTAL	<21	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-50	Always	Never	No Response
Death - Friend	2.12	27	3	3	6	3	5	7	0	44	28
Child Left Home	3.69	43	0	0	0	1	18	24	0	38	18
Financial Problems	2.73	37	1	5	7	11	7	5	1	45	17
Building New Home	5.22	39	2	12	15	6	2	2	0	42	18
Change of Residence	4.74	75	8	21	22	13	8	3	0	13	11
Return to Work outside Home	4.88	57	0	3	9	16	13	12	4	27	15
Volunteer Work	4.91	58	0	3	18	18	13	5	1	26	15
Change of Job	5.03	28	1	6	1	3	7	10	0	43	28
Husband's Change of Job or Field	4.5	60	0	10	13	20	11	6	0	19	20
Spiritual Crisis	3.11	28	5	6	3	6	4	4	0	44	27
Menopause	4.18	14	0	0	0	0	1	13	0	49	36

[a] $N = 99$

[b] Rating scale ranged from 1 = extremely negative to 6 = extremely positive

could respond regarding events in the forties, fewer markers were reported for this decade. Therefore, in this study, events occurring in the early or late forties are considered together as mid-life occurrences.

Many of the marker events which occurred for all of the women religious in this study involved the process of incorporation into their religious community, that is, entrance, novitiate, first vows, juniorate, final vows, and first job assignment. All of these women also reported a change in their community rules and in the wearing of the traditional habit. Other events which occurred for over 85% of these women included the acquiring of a Bachelor's and a Master's Degree, at least one change of residence, and the first close relationship with another women religious. In addition, 75% of the women religious reported experiencing their first job choice, at least one job change, a relationship with a man, and a close friend leaving their community.

As seen on Table 23, several of the events which occurred for a significant number of women religious were rated between moderately and extremely positive, for example, entrance into community, final vows, change of community rules and habit, first job choice, completion of a Master's Degree, relationships with another woman religious and with a man. Three other occurrences which these women rated more than moderately positive included their first relationship with a woman who did not belong to a religious community, their Twenty-fifth Jubilee, and a change of occupational fields.

Events which occurred for over 60% of the women religious in this study which were viewed as moderately to extremely negative included serious discord in their local community, a friend leaving community, the illness of their parents and the death of a father. Other events, experienced by fewer of these women, but considered equally negative

were the closing of an institution in which they had lived or worked, the illness of a sister, and the deaths of a mother or a close friend.

As could be predicted, the marker events which occurred for almost all of the married women in this study involved the beginning of their family lives, that is, engagement, marriage, and the birth of at least two children. In addition, over 50% reported experiencing the birth of a third child, a change of residence, volunteer work or return to work for pay, their husband's change of job or career, and the death of a grandmother.

The mean rating for many of these frequently occurring events was moderately to extremely positive. Most women viewed their engagement, marriage, and the birth of their children in that way. Those who also experienced the building of a new home, a change of job or their twenty-fifth anniversary also saw these events as more than moderately positive.

The events viewed most negatively by the married women in this study included the illness or death of significant others and issues related to their marriage, such as, separation from a husband due to his job, serious marital problems, and consideration of a marital separation. Over a third of these women also experienced at least one miscarriage and serious financial problems; the mean ratings for these occurrences were also more than moderately negative. Both of the events which past research findings saw as traumatic for mid-life women, that is, the menopause and one's children leaving home, were reported by the married women in this study to be slightly to moderately positive.

Co-occurrences

Tables 25 through 28 present the results of cross-tabulations between major marker events and the two developmental issues for women religious which did not agree with recent research about married women or with this author's previous study on women religious. As noted earlier in this section, these issues are concerned with "most" and "least" life satisfaction and satisfaction with one's religious community or marriage. Tables 25 through 28 show the highest percentages of marker events which occurred for at least 25% (N=30) of women religious and which co-occurred with "most" or "least" life satisfaction or satisfaction with religious community. They also include the mean rating, positive or negative, assigned to each event by the women religious in this sample as another indicator of the association between the marker event and satisfaction. According to recent research, both of these areas of satisfaction decreased for married women in the past from the early to the late twenties. The present study did not support this finding for either sample. Therefore, the co-occurrence of marker events with these two developmental issues were analyzed in order to theorize regarding this discrepancy between the data presented here and the results of other recent studies.

The marker events on the surveys used for this study obviously represented a limited selection of occurrences in the lives of the participants. Therefore, analyzing the co-occurrence of these specific events with the two developmental issues in question enabled the researcher to make inferences about which markers were <u>not</u> correlated with particular developmental issues. The results do not imply any causality between these marker events and the developmental issues not do they obviate the possibility that other occurrences may have co-happened with

Table 25

Marker Events with N≥25% Co-occurring with "Most Satisfied with Community"

Marker Event	Rate of Occurrence N	Rate of Co-occurrence %	Rating of Marker Event
Closing of Institution	36	33.3	2.50
Fifth Change of Residence	46	30.4	4.00
Lived Away from Community	52	28.8	4.98
Fourth Change of Residence	62	25.8	4.23
First Job by Choice	90	25.6	5.17
Change of Occupational Field	72	25.0	5.21
Community Job, Not Administrative	60	25.0	4.79
25th Jubilee	65	24.6	5.02
Change in Habit	117	22.2	5.24
Relationship with Male: Sexual	44	20.5	4.90
Relationship with Sister: Non-sexual	105	19.0	5.39
Final Vows	117	18.8	5.23
Relationship with Lay Woman: Non-sexual	83	18.1	5.20

Table 26

Marker Events with N ≥ 25% Co-occurring with "Least Satisfied with Community"

Marker Event	Rate of Occurrence N	Rate of Co-occurrence %	Rating of Marker Event
Considered Leaving Community - Not Celibacy	71	38	3.33
Spiritual Crisis	84	33.3	3.20
Considered Leaving Community - Celibacy	44	31.8	3.88
Discord in Local Comm.	86	29.1	2.21
Relationship with Man Non-sexual	89	27.0	5.36
Serious Illness:Father	72	25.0	2.75
Third Change of Res.	71	22.5	3.71
Change of Habit	117	22.2	5.24
Serious Illness:Sister	32	21.8	2.64
Serious Illness:Mother	74	21.6	2.53
Serious Illness:Self	51	21.6	3.21
Change in Community Rules	117	21.4	5.03
Relationship with Lay Woman: Non-sexual	83	20.5	5.20
Serious Illness:Friend	41	19.5	3.10
Friend Left Community	93	19.4	2.25
Lived Away from Comm.	52	19.2	4.98
Death: Mother	32	18.8	2.76
Death: Father	72	18.1	2.73

Table 27

Marker Events with N ≥ 25% Co-occurring with "Most Satisfied with Life"

Marker Event	Rate of Occurrence N	Rate of Co-occurrence %	Rating of Marker Event
25th Jubilee	65	35.4	5.02
Serious Illness:Sister	32	34.4	2.64
Change of Occupational Field	72	30.6	5.21
Job in Community: Administrative	37	29.7	4.17
Fourth Change of Res.	62	27.4	4.23
Community Job: Not Administrative	60	26.7	4.79
Relationship with Lay Woman: Non-sexual	83	25.3	5.20
Serious Illness: Friend	41	24.4	3.10
Serious Illness: Self	51	23.5	3.21
Lived Away from Comm.	52	23.1	4.98
Sixth Change of Res.	36	22.2	4.19
First Job by Choice	90	22.2	5.17
Relationship with Man: Sexual	44	20.5	4.90
Death: Friend	31	19.4	2.80
Relationship with Man: Non-sexual	89	18.0	5.36

Table 28

Marker Events with N≥ 25% Co-occurring
with "Least Satisfied with Life"

Marker Event	Rate of Occurrence N	Rate of Co-occurrence %	Rating of Marker Event
Underwent Counseling	43	48.8	4.81
Second Friend Left Community	30	33.3	2.36
Change of Occupational Field	72	31.9	5.21
Considered Leaving Comm. - Not Celibacy	71	31.0	3.33
Considered Leaving Comm. - Celibacy	44	29.5	3.88
Serious Illness: Self	51	29.4	3.21
Spiritual Crisis	84	28.6	3.20
Relationship with Sister: Sexual	36	25.0	3.82
Change of Habit	117	24.8	5.24
Serious Illness:Father	72	23.6	2.75
Discord in Local Comm.	86	23.3	2.21
Death: Friend	31	22.6	2.80
Death: Grandmother	76	19.7	3.04
Completion of BA/BS	112	19.6	4.93
Death: Father	72	19.4	2.73
Serious Illness: Grandmother	42	19.0	3.28

developmental issues with greater frequency in the lives of the participants than any marker event included on the survey. The cross-tabulations were, therefore, useful for eliminating possible correlations between developmental issues and marker events rather than for establishing definite relationships between them.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to answer specific research questions about each stage of development for women religious, to formulate the sequence of life stages they follow, and to compare this sequence with that of the married women in this sample. The discussion of the results of this study will be presented chronologically according to age periods. Within each age period, three topics will be addressed: marker events and developmental issues for the women religious; comparisons between the data for this group of women and both the previous study done by this author and other research findings; and the data on married women compared with previous studies and with the women religious in this sample. The resulting stages of development for both groups of women are presented in Figures 1 and 2.

Ages 21-25 Marker Events and Developmental Issues

As is illustrated in Figure 1, the period from age 21 to 25 for many of the women religious in this sample was characterized by feelings of uncertainty about their identity, a tendency to accept the identity of the community as their own, low stress, average satisfaction with the community and less than average life satisfaction. Almost none of these women experienced an identity crisis at this time, nor were many struggling with their decision to live celibately. They did not describe themselves as having high self-esteem nor self-confidence. In spite of this, one-third of them determined life goals at this time. Although feelings of independence were not high, these women did not report that they were depressed

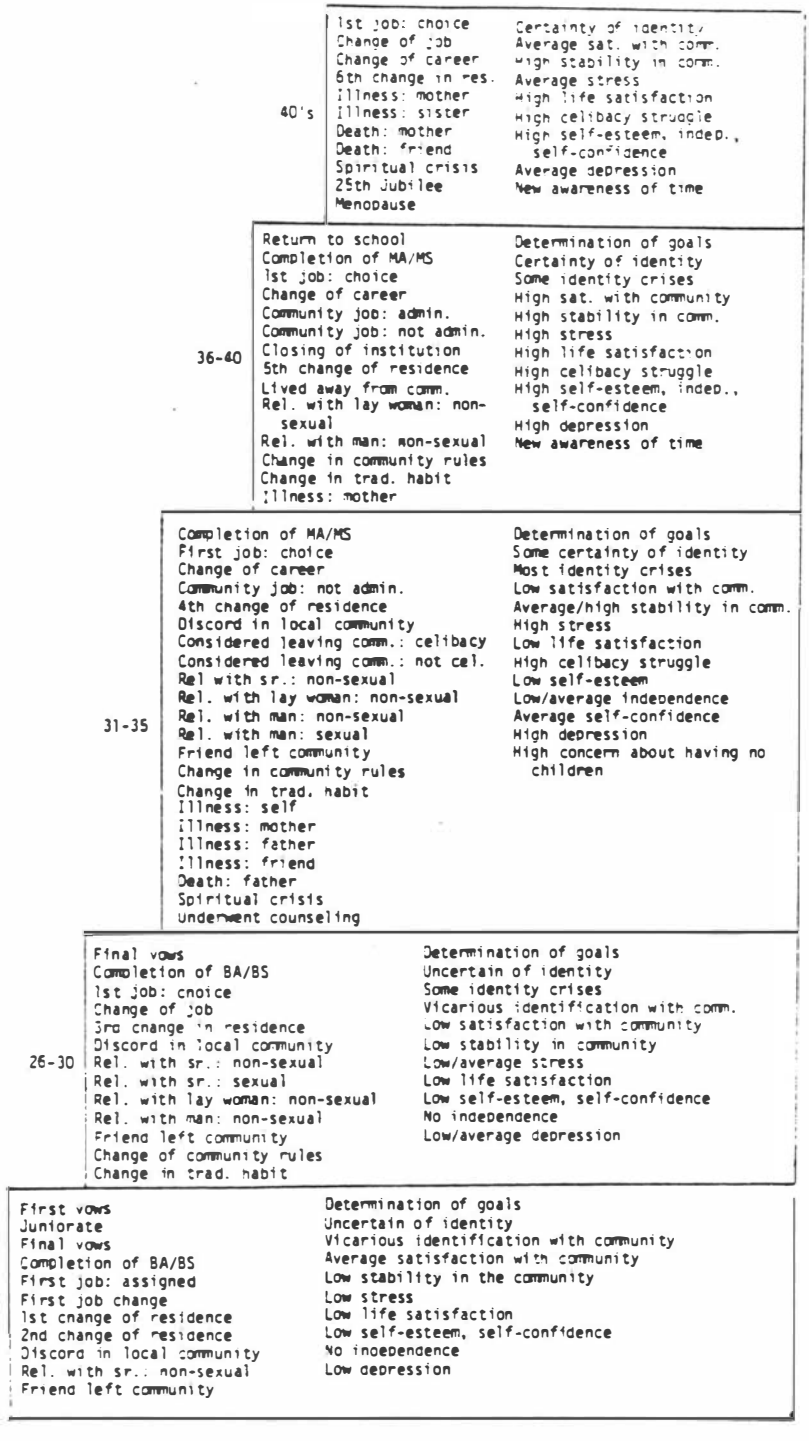

Figure 1 Stages of Development for women Religious

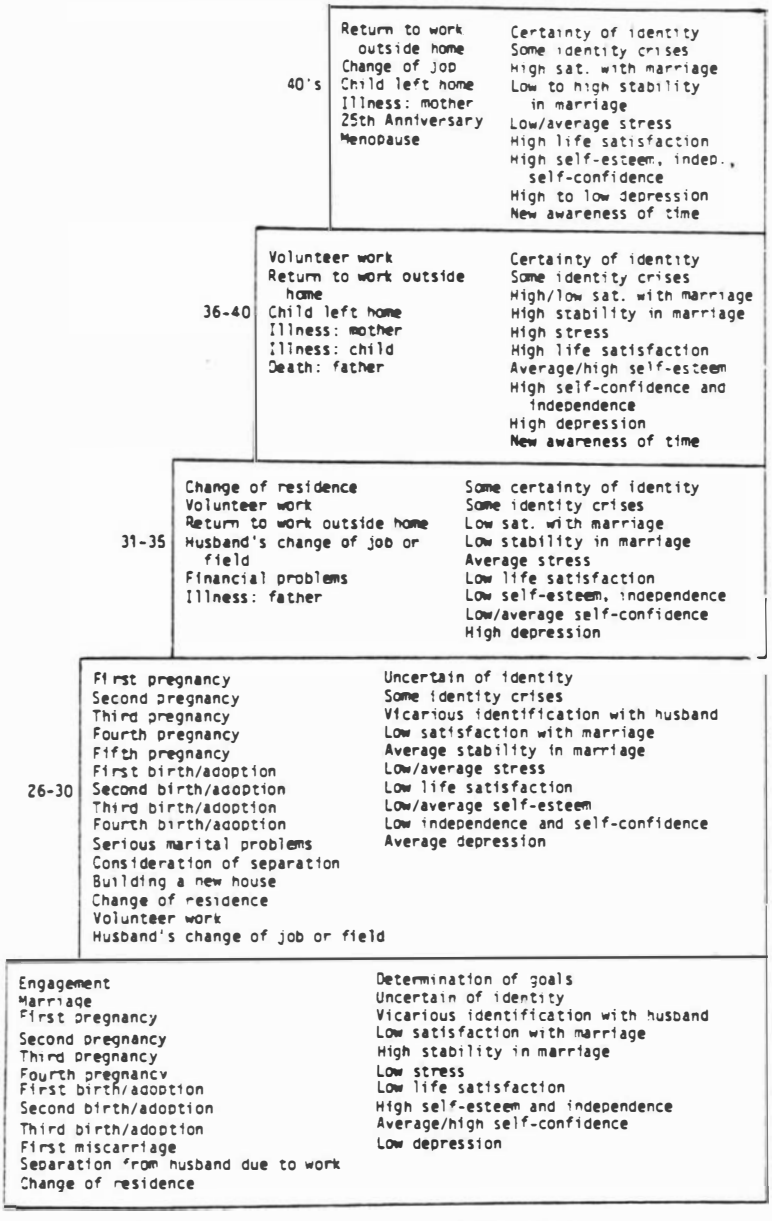

Figure 2 Stages of Development for Married Women

during this period.

By the early twenties, these women religious had already entered the community, completed the novitiate, made temporary vows and been assigned their first job. They were in the period of religious formation called the juniorate, that is, a time characterized by yearly renewal of temporary vows and continued training regarding life in a religious community. Over 70% of these women made a permanent commitment to their religious community during this time period. Other marker events which occurred in their early twenties for over 25% of them were the completion of their Bachelor's Degree, their first job assigned by the community, and their first and second change of residence. Many also experienced their first close relationship with another sister during this period, a friend leaving the community, serious discord in the community of sisters with whom they lived, and their first change of job within the same occupational field.

During the early twenties, then, this sample of women religious were living the lifestyle typical of most religious communities in the United States twenty years ago. They were in training in their community, that is, not yet considered full members. They were working full-time, usually as teachers or nurses, and going to college part-time. These young women were no longer living in a separate house with their peers, but were in different convents with sisters of varying ages. Because the rules and customs of religious communities were still very traditional, these women religious were permitted very little independence during their early twenties. They had been taught in the novitiate, and continually reminded during the juniorate period, of the importance of their acceptance of the community rules as the "Will of God." They were not encouraged to interpret these rules for themselves, but to submit their wills to their

religious superiors. Their field of academic study, place of residence, and occupational assignment were determined by these superiors. Less important decisions were also made for them, for example, their daily schedule of prayer, meals, study-time, recreation, when and with whom they could communicate, what they could wear, etc. They had no free time and little time alone. They traveled, even to the church across the street, in two's and were always in their convents by 8:00 p.m. and in bed by 10:00. In such a structured, protective environment, there was obviously little time or freedom for women religious to pursue individual goals, activities, or even relationships.

In examining Figure 1 in the light of the preceding description of the lifestyle of women religious twenty years ago, one can better understand their lack of psychological growth during their early twenties. This period was characterized by arrested development. It was a time during which there was no certainty of individual identity, but also little concern about this issue since over one-third of these women had already begun the vicarious identification with their religious community which almost 90% of them experienced during some period of their lives. Because they were protected or taken care of, these women experienced little stress or depression at this time and few were concerned about the difficulties of living a celibate lifestyle. They described themselves as relatively satisfied with the community at this time. It is understandable that they did not feel independent during this period since most of their activities were determined by their superiors or the rules of their community. They were also not completely happy with their situation, as is evidenced in their descriptions of low life satisfaction, self-confidence, and self-esteem during this period. It appears that while the women religious in this sample were able to dull themselves to issues

regarding their own identity, independence, and their choice of a celibate lifestyle, they were at the same time not feeling very good about themselves nor very self-confident. These latter feelings were not sufficiently strong, however, to cause them high stress.

One also notes that during the early twenties, 33% of the women religious in this sample determined life goals. Since so many of these women described themselves as identifying vicariously with the community and not yet certain who they were as individuals, it is difficult to understand how one-third of them made life goals at this time. Because they were not asked to list their goals on the questionnaire, there is no way of determining what they considered life goals. Since many of them made final vows during this period and began their first occupational assignment, it is possible that their goals were related to one of these issues. Cross-tabulations between developmental issues and marker events show a co-happening of 31.6% between final vows and making goals and only a 17.2% co-occurrence between first job assignment and making goals. Therefore, the former event, final vows, is more closely associated with determining goals in the early twenties than is any other marker event included in the survey. As noted in the Results, however, this co-occurrence does not imply causality.

Because of the restricted communication of women religious twenty years ago, the only relationships which could easily be established were within the community. While 27% of the women religious in this sample developed a close friendship with another sister during their early twenties, only 6% related closely with a woman outside the community and only 5% with a man. Since their world consisted almost exclusively of their religious community and their occupation, one also notes the consistency with which the important marker events for this period relate to these two areas.

Ages 21-25 Comparison with Previous Studies

In the previous study on religious conducted by this author (Rufft, 1979), the period from age 20 to 25 was described as the time when they were incorporated into the community through the novitiate and juniorate periods, completed a Bachelor's Degree, received their initial occupational assignment, and formed a mentor relationship (Appendix A). A comparison with the results of the present study on this period (Figure 1), shows the same first three events being included in the early twenties, with the exception that the majority of the women religious in this study entered their religious community before the age of twenty. The topic of mentor relationships was not included in the present study.

The data from this research corroborates one of the speculations (Appendix B) resulting from the case studies conducted earlier. Under "Relationships with Community," the suggestion that celibate women find most of their support within their own religious community agrees with the results in the present study for the early twenties. The only relationships described as existing at that time for even more than 6% of this sample were with other women religious. Twenty-seven percent of the participants had a relationship with another woman religious at this time.

As noted in the Results section, the women religious in this sample follow the developmental pattern for the early twenties described in the research statements taken from the literature review (page 73). The majority of them did not determine goals prior to their entrance into a religious community. They described themselves as uncertain regarding their identity as individuals and as vicariously living the identity of their religious community as their own.

Ages 21-25 Comparison with Married Women Respondents

A comparison of the results of the two groups of women in this study regarding developmental issues occurring in the early twenties shows that the married respondents (Figure 2) are similar to the women religious regarding their tentativeness in determining life goals before their marriage. Forty-five percent of them were married at or before age 20 and only 6.1% had made goals by that time. In addition, over 25% of these women also accepted the identity of their husband as their own during their early twenties with only 17.2% reporting that they never lived in that vicarious manner. Like the women religious in this sample, their stress was low during this period as was their tendency toward depression. Although the married women reported relatively low satisfaction with their marriage and with life in general in the early twenties, they also described themselves as feeling stable in their marriage, independent, and good about themselves.

The issue from our review of the literature (p. 73) for the early twenties on which the two groups of women in this sample differ concerns identity. According to recent research on married women, certainty regarding identity is minimal for women in their early twenties and does not increase to a great extent until the late thirties. As noted in the Results section, while the women religious follow this pattern, the married women in this study do so less completely. A slightly greater percentage of them viewed the late twenties and the late thirties as periods of less certainty about their identity than their early twenties. In addition, the period from 21 to 25 does not have the lowest percentage for most certain of identity nor the late thirties, the highest.

Possible explanations for the discrepancy between these results and those typical of recent studies on married women might be discovered

through an examination of the biographical data regarding this sample and the marker events which occurred for many of them in the early twenties. Because the sample of married women was chosen to match the group of women religious in this study as closely as possible, they are not only white and middle-class, as are most of the women used for recent research on adult development, but they are also registered in Catholic parishes in suburban areas of Pittsburgh. It is probable that, in controlling for religious affiliation, we have acquired a sample of married women who are more traditional than would be true of a random sample of all white, middle-class women in the United States. This assumption is supported by the fact that, as seen in Table 1, only 13.2% of these women have a college education, only 5% have been divorced, 11% admitted to extra-marital affairs, and 5% to abortions. Sixty-five percent have three children and 42%, four. Over 37% of these women are not employed outside the home and, of the remainder who are, the majority are in the traditional jobs for women, e.g., clerical, sales, nursing, etc. In addition, 61% of the married women in this sample were engaged before they were 20 years old and 43% were married by then. By age 25, 75% of these women had had their first baby, almost 50%, their second, and 26%, their third.

In view of the fact that this sample of married women may be more traditional than a random group not all of similar religious affiliation, their responses in a number of topical areas will not always be identical with those of other groups of women. Concerning the specific issue of certainty regarding identity, however, what is most discrepant from the expected pattern is that this sample reported greater uncertainty regarding their identity in the late twenties than in the early ones. The late twenties has the lowest percentage for most certain of identity and the

highest for least certain. It seems reasonable that with the birth of each child and the concomitant busyness the care of children involves, women would continually identify more with their role of mother. Almost half of our sample had at least four pregnancies. In addition, by age 30, 50% of these women reported experiencing vicarious identification with their husbands. The idea that their uncertainty regarding their own identity as individuals increased with their growing identification with their roles of wife and mother seems feasible, particularly for this sample in which most women had more children by their late twenties than the norm.

It is important to understand too that for traditional Catholics the role of wife and mother was the most important one a women could have. According to the Church's teachings, the primary role of a wife was to be the "help-mate" of her husband and the purpose of marriage was procreation. Acceptance of these teachings by the married women in this sample also explains how they adapted so readily to the roles for which they had been prepared and became continually more identified with them during their twenties. Although they were uncertain of their own identity at this time, they felt little stress or depression and had high self-esteem because, according to the Church, they were accomplishing the purpose for which they had been created. In the early twenties, their marital satisfaction and their satisfaction with life in general was relatively low, however, and their feeling of stability in their marriage somewhat high. It appears that many of the married women in this sample believed the traditional Church teaching that marriage lasts until death and, therefore, felt a sense of stability in their own marriage. At the same time, they were already discovering that the state of life which they had idealized since childhood was not bringing them the immediate happiness they had been led to expect.

Since it was difficult to explain the finding that 23.2% of the married women in this sample chose the early twenties as the time period during which they felt most independent, a cross-tabulation was done with the age at which this subgroup of women married and had children. The results indicate that 60% of these women married after age 20 and 64% had no or only one child by age 25. Although the data is not clear regarding how many of these women were working during their early twenties, the fact that the majority of this 23.2% were not already home-bound with two or three children, as were 47 and 26% (respectively), of this sample, provides a feasible explanation for their greater feeling of independence at that time.

Ages 26-30 Marker Events and Developmental Issues

As can be seen in Figure 1, the profile of the women religious in this sample changes in a variety of ways from the early to the late twenties. Those who had not made final vows previously, did so in this period. The majority had completed their Bachelor's Degree by this time and one-third were encountering their third change of residence in the community. For about 20% of these women, the years in the late twenties included serious discord in their local community, non-sexual relationships with men as well as with other women religious, a friend leaving the community and, for 15%, a change of job. The most noticeable marker events occurring in the late twenties for at least one-third of the women religious in this sample were changes in community rules and in the wearing of the traditional religious habit. Perhaps the former change is related to the finding that about 14% of these women developed their first close but non-sexual friendship with a woman outside their religious community at this time and chose their own occupation for the first time. Eleven percent admitted becoming sexually involved with another woman religious during this period.

Over 50% of the women religious in this sample stated that they had determined life goals by the end of their twenties. Many indicated (Figure 1) that they felt uncertain regarding their identity and experienced vicarious identification with their religious community at this time. The late twenties was characterized for most of these women by less satisfaction with and little stability in the community, a little more stress, and low life satisfaction. There is a slight increase in the percentage of women who felt most depressed during this period and feelings of self-esteem, self-confidence and independence were very low.

By their late twenties, then, this sample of women religious had made permanent commitments to their religious community and were considered full members. Their lifestyle did not change significantly because of their new status. The majority still had their activities regulated by their community rules or their "superiors." They completed their Bachelor's Degree, changed jobs and/or residences and were placed in difficult community situations according to decisions made by other people, usually without the opportunity of stating their opinions or desires. By their late twenties, many modern women had difficulty with the lack of independence and growth inherent in this lifestyle. Their increased stress and dissatisfaction with the community, as well as their low self-esteem and self-confidence, might, therefore, be expected. For one-third of these women, however, the change both in community rules and in the wearing of the traditional habit, brought about by the promulgation of the decrees of the Second Vatican Council of the Catholic Church, occurred when they were in their late twenties. Religious communities in the United States adapted to the decrees of the Vatican Council at varying speeds and with differing degrees of compliance. When this adaptation occurred, it had a significant effect on the lifestyle of individual women religious. For the first time,

they were encouraged to take responsibility for their own lives, to express their opinions regarding their choice of occupation and residence, and to participate in the election of their leaders and the formulation of their community rules. No longer were there rigid regulations concerning their daily schedules and ordinary activities. Women religious began to dress like other women, travel alone, and participate in educational, social, and political events conducted outside their religious community. In a word, they were less sheltered and protected.

Since one-third of the women religious in this sample experienced the effect of Vatican II on their community rules in their late twenties, one might expect some evidence of this change in the marker events that occurred during this time. In Figure 1, one notes the occurrence of relationships with people who were not included in the relationships of the early twenties, for example, non-sexual relationships with men and with lay women and sexual relationships with other women religious. Also mentioned here is the "first job by choice" rather than by community assignment and the change regarding wearing the traditional habit. As can be seen in Table 23, the mean ratings given to the marker events "change of community rules" and "traditional habit" are 5.03 and 5.24 respectively, which indicates that the majority of the women religious in this sample viewed these changes as positive ones.

Age 26-30 Comparison with Previous Studies

In the previous study conducted by this author, the events which occurred most frequently for the women religious interviewed were the death of a parent and the beginning of graduate work (Appendix A). A questioning of commitment to their religious community also occurred for a number of these women during this period. In Table 23, one notes that in the present study, only 1.7% of women religious experienced the death

of their mother and 7.7% the death of their father during this period. Regarding graduate work, 18.8% of the women religious in this sample completed their Master's Degree during this period and 35.9% did so in their early thirties. It is likely, therefore, that the majority of this sample were studying for this degree during their late twenties. A questioning of their commitment to religious life occurred for at least 18.8% of the women in this study who reported that they considered leaving their community during this time.

A consideration of the speculations presented in Appendix 8 from the previous study of women religious shows the present work verifying the first statement regarding relationships with lay people, that is, that these relationships increased as the rules of religious communities changed. As is shown in Table 23, the number of women religious in this sample who formed relationships with lay women increases in each age period from 21-25 to 36-40. The majority had had a change in their community rules by ages 31 to 35.

The first statement under "Relationship with the Community" in Appendix B was confirmed by the results of this study for the early twenties, but not for this period of the late twenties nor for any hereafter. This statement suggests that women religious find most of their support, that is, their closest relationships, within their religious communities. As seen in Table 23, from the period of the late twenties until the late forties, the number of non-sexual relationships established with men, reported by women religious, equals or exceeds their relationships with other women religious. This increase in relationships with men happened, of course, concurrently with the changing of community rules which made communication between women religious and the "opposite sex" a possibility.

As noted in the Results section, of the fifteen statements presented on p. 73 as the summary of the literature review on the adult development of women, there are only two statements which the data on women religious do not corroborate. These statements are two of the three developmemtal issues relevant for the period of the late twenties, i.e., satisfaction with one's community and general life satisfaction. The findings about the women religious in this sample agree with previous research on married women regarding the theory, that stress increases from the early to the late twenties. Regarding life and community/marital satisfaction, however, few participants in this study, whether religious or married, reported a significant decrease from the first half of the decade to the second, as is predicted by previous findings. For the women religious, satisfaction both with their religious community and with life in general did decrease, but only slightly.

In an attempt to determine possible explanations for the discrepancy between this data and what was expected, cross-tabulations were done between the two developmental issues regarding satisfaction and the marker events which occurred for women religious. This further analysis indicates that the events that occurred in the lives of 50% of the women religious in this sample ($N \geq 59$) which co-happened at least 25% of the time with most satisfaction with the community are: "fourth change of residence," "first job by choice," "change of occupational field," and "community job: not administration." Of these four markers, only "first job by choice" is included in Figure 1 as an event that occurred with any frequency for women religious in the late twenties. Although co-occurrence between "first job by choice" and "most satisfaction with the community" exists 25.6% of the time, the rate of co-happening in the early and late twenties is only 1.7%. Therefore, no specific marker event can be found

to provide an explanation for the results of this study regarding most satisfaction with the community.

The events that occurred for 50% of this sample which co-happened at least 25% of the time with least satisfaction with the community are: "consideration of leaving the community for reasons other than celibacy," "spiritual crisis," "discord in local community," "a non-sexual relationship with a man," and "serious illness of one's father." Of these five markers, "serious discord in local community" and "a non-sexual relationship with a man" are the only two events included in Figure 1 as particularly relevant in the twenties. Further study of the cross-tabulations shows that the co-happening of "least satisfaction with community" with "serious discord in the community" occurs only 7% of the time in the twenties and with "a non-sexual relationship with a man," only 6% of the time during that decade. Again, no co-happening of a specific marker event with the developmental issue regarding community satisfaction exists with sufficient frequency in the twenties to provide an explanation for the discrepancy between the findings of this study and the results of recent research.

An examination of co-happenings between most and least life satisfaction and marker events results in similar conclusions. The events which occurred for 50% of this sample of women religious, and co-happened at least 25% of the time with "most satisfaction with life" are: "Twenty-fifth Jubilee," "change of occupational field," "fourth change of residence," "community job: not administration," and "a non-sexual relationship with a lay woman." Of these markers, only the last is included in Figure 1 as relevant for the late twenties. The cross-tabulations for this event show that while this type of relationship co-occurs with "most satisfaction with life" 25.3% of the time, it does so only 1.7% in the

twenties. The co-happenings for 50% of this sample, 25% of the time with "least satisfaction with life" are: "change of occupational field," "consideration of leaving community for reasons other than celibacy," and "spiritual crisis." None of these events occurs with enough frequency in the twenties to be included in Figure 1 for that decade.

The co-occurrence of marker events and the two developmental issues regarding satisfaction is, therefore, too low to explain why life and community satisfaction for the women religious in this study did not decrease from the early to the late twenties as significantly as recent research indicates it does during this time period for married women. A feasible explanation for these results can be found, however, when one considers the total life situation of the women religious in this study when they were in their twenties. As noted earlier, life satisfaction was low and community satisfaction average or lower for most of these women in their early twenties. Despite the fact that they were feeling little stress, they also had little self-esteem, self-confidence or stability in the community. They were still in training and were living the very structured, protective lifestyle described earlier. Perhaps these women religious did not show a significant decrease in life satisfaction in the twenties because their satisfaction in the early part of that decade was never as high as that of the newly married women studied in much of the recent research on this period. The difference between life satisfaction in the early and late twenties for these women religious is less than 1%. Since they were dissatisfied with their lives at the beginning of this decade, there was little room for a significant decrease in the late twenties.

Regarding community satisfaction, the fact that one-third of the women in this sample experienced a completely different lifestyle in

their late twenties might explain some change in satisfaction. The data regarding the effect of a change of community rules is ambiguous, however. The mean rating for this marker event is 5.03, a ranking slightly more than moderately positive. However, a change in community rules co-happened with least satisfaction with the community for 21.4% of this sample. Of this percentage, 11% of the co-occurrence was during the twenties. It appears, therefore, that community satisfaction decreased concurrently with the change in community rules for some women and increased concurrently with it for others. What was noted regarding life satisfaction might apply here to community satisfaction, i.e., because it was not very high for this sample in the early twenties, it had little room for a significant decrease.

Age 26-30 Comparison with Married Women Respondents

As noted in the Results section, a comparison of the data of the married women with that of the women religious regarding the results of the literature review (p. 73) shows that these two groups were similar on increased stress from the early to the late twenties and slightly decreased satisfaction (marital/community and life) during that period. There was no significant difference between the means for these two groups on any of these three developmental issues.

Despite the difference in the marker events that occurred for married women and women religious during the late twenties, the stages of their development on psychological issues such as identity, self-esteem, etc., were quite similar (Figures 1 and 2). Over 50% of both groups reported that they had made life goals by the late twenties despite the fact that they were also identifying with their husband/community at that time and living through him/them in a vicarious way. Both groups were uncertain of their identity, though a higher

percentage of the married sample were uncertain at this time than in the early twenties. Both groups of women include about 15% who reported undergoing an identity crisis during this period. While the married women described themselves as feeling slightly less stable in their marriage than they were in the early twenties, the percentages in this area are still higher than those of the women religious for either period in this decade. For both groups of women, there is a slightly higher percentage of depression than in the early twenties. While few women religious in this sample felt high self-esteem, self-confidence, or independence in either period of the twenties, one notes the decrease in the relatively high percentages on these three issues from the early to the late twenties for the married sample.

The fact that the percentages for married women on marital and life satisfaction decrease less dramatically during the twenties than one might expect from the results of recent studies could be due to the same phenomenon noted earlier for women religious, that is, that their ratings on satisfaction for the early twenties are already below average. What is clear is that by the late twenties fewer married women in this sample appear happy. In addition to somewhat higher percentages on stress and depression, the number of women who reported high self-esteem, self-confidence and independence significantly decreases from the early to the late twenties. One notes in Figure 2 that "serious marital problems" and "consideration of a marital separation" are included as marker events for this period. If one considers that over one-half of the women in this sample had three, and almost one-third, four children by their late twenties, the increased feelings of stress and lack of independence are understandable. Since the tasks connected with homemaking and child-care are almost always less lucrative and often less personally satisfying

than other occupations, the decreased self-esteem and self-confidence during this period is also quite comprehensible. Even the feeling of stability in marriage was not experienced by as many of these married women in the late twenties as previously despite the teaching of the Church regarding the indissolubility of marriage. The pattern of decreasing happiness in marriage from the birth of children until they are teenagers or older is a familiar one in recent research on the adult development of women. The married women in this sample follow this pattern, at least during the decade of the twenties.

Ages 31-35 Marker Events and Developmental Issues

The period of the early thirties appears to be a time characterized by much change for the women religious who responded to the questionnaires for this study. As is shown in Figure 1, over one-fourth of these women underwent a crisis regarding their identity at this time and almost that many described greater difficulty regarding their choice of a celibate lifestyle. Although almost 40% of these women religious never had great difficulty with their decision to have no children, of those that did, the highest percentage, 23.1% occurs in this period. Life and community satisfaction were also low during this time and both stress and depression high. There was, however, a moderate increase in feelings of self-confidence, self-esteem, independence and stability in the community in the early thirties for these women. Figure 1 shows the number of marker events which occurred for many of the women in this sample and were rated as negative experiences, for example, consideration of leaving the community, both because of celibacy and for other reasons, discord in the local community, a friend leaving the community, the illness of significant others, the death of a father, and a spiritual crisis.

Almost one-third of the women religious in this sample experienced the change in community rules and religious habit described earlier during their early thirties. Perhaps as a result of these changes, there was again an increase in the kinds of relationships in which these women were involved during this period. Also related were positive occurrences regarding occupation, e.g., first job by choice, change of occupational field, a community job, not in administration. Since the mean rating for "fourth change of residence" is more positive than for any previous residence change, it is likely that the modification in community rules also allowed these women more freedom about where they lived than they had previously. In addition, over 35% of the women religious in this sample completed their Master's Degree during their early thirties, an event which they rated as very positive.

By age 35, then, over 75% of the women religious in this sample had experienced the results of the Vatican Council on their community rules. Their new lifestyle, characterized by more freedom and independence, is evident in the marker events which occurred during this time for many of them. However, the modification of community rules did not produce immediate clarity nor satisfaction in the lives of these women. As recent findings suggest about married women in their early thirties, these women too experienced identity crises, low life satisfaction, and high stress. In addition, more women struggled with their choice of a celibate lifestyle during this period than at any other time. As one might expect, relaxed restrictions and less protection made it possible for women religious to make their own decisions for the first time in their lives. Such responsibility, thrust upon a woman in her late twenties or early thirties, increased confusion and stress as well as feelings of independence and self-confidence. Since many women in this sample experienced

an identity crisis at this time and fewer of them continued to live vicariously through their community, it is clear that the period of the early thirties was one of change that affected the core of their individual identity as well as the more obvious external events of their lives.

Age 31-35 Comparison with Previous Studies

In the outline of developmental stages for celibate women (Appendix A) which resulted from the previous study by this author, the time period between age 31 and 35 includes "first chosen occupation," "completion of Master's Degree," "celibacy crisis," and "a close relationship with a priest." This period was also characterized by a continued questioning of their commitment to their religious community. As is seen in Figure 1, the results of this study regarding marker events during this period corroborate those of the former one. In the sample of women religious surveyed here, more report having acquired their first job by their own choice, completed their Master's Degree and considered leaving their community for reasons related to celibacy during this period than in any other. The present research did not make a distinction between relationships with priests and with other men, but, as Table 23 shows, more women religious in this sample experienced both non-sexual and sexual relationships with men during this period than at any time before or after. Since many of the men with whom women religious frequently work or associate are priests, it is likely that a large percentage of the male/female relationships reported in our study include priests, but this assumption cannot be confirmed by our data.

The present study also verifies a number of the conclusions (Appendix B) from the case interviews conducted earlier by this author. Under the topic, "Relationship with Family," for example, the statement that women

religious usually find it more difficult in their thirties not be married than they did in their twenties is corroborated by the present findings. More women religious in this study considered leaving their religious community for reasons related to celibacy and more described themselves as struggling with celibacy during their early thirties than at any other period. Under "Relationship with Community," there is included a statement that most celibate women seriously consider leaving their religious community in their late twenties or early thirties. The present study indicated that 21% of the women religious in this sample considered leaving their community for reasons related to celibacy and 26% for other reasons during these two periods. These percentages do not constitute a majority of the women in this sample, particularly since an individual woman might be included in both percentages. However, the late twenties and early thirties are the periods with the highest percentages of women considering leaving their community, with the exception of the period from 21-25 which ranks second highest for women considering leaving for reasons other than celibacy.

Under the heading "Relationship with Lay People and Priests," the second conclusion states that women religious usually experience a close relationship with a priest some time in their early thirties. As noted earlier, no distinction was made in the present study between priests and other men, but the percentage of women in this sample who had either non-sexual or sexual relationships with men is highest during this period.

Concerning the topic, "Occupation-Job Changes," the earlier conclusion was that many women religious first change occupations at the request of their religious community some time in their early thirties. According to the present study, 11% of the women religious changed occupational fields for the first time in their late twenties and 13% in the early

thirties. The present data does not specify, however, whether this change was at the request of the community or by personal choice. Since over 40% of the women in this sample indicated that they had chosen their own job for the first time by the early thirties, it is probable that their occupational changes at this time were also their own choice rather than community assignments. Under the heading "Educational Preparation," the earlier study concluded that most women religious have completed a Master's Degree by their early thirties. In the present study, 57% of the women religious in this sample had done so by that time.

The statements from the review of the literature (p. 73) which are relevant to the early thirties for women religious concern an identity crisis and a struggle with the choice to live celibately. As mentioned in the Results section, 27.4% of the women religious in this sample reported an identity crisis in their early thirties and only 18.8% said they did not experience that phenomenon at some time in their lives. Regarding this topic, therefore, these women follow the pattern described in the literature review for married women, i.e., feeling uncertain of their identity in the twenties and experiencing an identity crisis in the early thirties or later. On the second topic, the struggle with celibacy, the data from the women religious in the present study agrees with the conclusions of the previous work by this author that this struggle is evident for more women in their early thirties than in their twenties.

Ages 31-35 Comparison with Married Women Respondents

As can be seen in Figure 2, the early thirties differ from the previous decade for the married women respondents in that they are not dominated by marker events related to pregnancies and births. In fact, none of the most frequently reported events are related to children. More women in this sample returned to work outside the home, did volunteer work, and

experienced financial problems in their early thirties than at any other time. Several also experienced the effects of their husband's change of job or occupation, their father's illness, and a change of residence.

A comparison of the status of the developmental issues occurring in the early thirties for the two groups of women respondents shows much similarity. As can be seen in Figure 2, like the women religious in this sample, the married women also experienced low life and marital satisfaction and increased stress and depression during this period. Few in either group reported high self-esteem, independence or self-confidence. The percentage of married women who felt stable regarding their marriage is lower for the early thirties than during any other time, whereas, for women religious, the number who reported feelings of stability within their community is greater at this time than during the preceding decade. On the issue noted in the literature review (p. 73) as most relevant for the early thirties, the occurrence of an identity crisis, 17.2% of the married women reported experiencing this phenomenon during that period. This percentage is not as high as that of the women religious for this period and is also not significantly higher than the percentage for a number of other periods. The results presented on Table 12 show an average number of married women reporting an identity crisis in each period from 26-30 to 41-45. It appears that these women came to a questioning of their identity as individuals at different times in their lives, although it is not clear from the data what precipitated this crisis. In addition, as noted earlier, almost one-third of this group reported never having experienced an identity crisis.

Since no hypothesis was immediately apparent as a possible explanation for the lack of the occurrence of an identity crisis for 31 women in this sample, a cross-tabulation was done between those who answered

"never" regarding an identity crisis and both their biographical data and their responses on other developmental issues. It was noted that 63% of these women presently work outside the home and 91% have done so at some time during their marriage. In addition, cross-tabulations show that, of the women who reported having no identity crisis, over 50% described themselves as never being uncertain of their identity and 42% reported never having lived vicariously through their husbands. It appears, therefore, that about a third of the married respondents in this sample are women the majority of whom have always felt certain of their identity as individuals and never totally identified themselves with their roles of wife and mother. Perhaps because most of them presently work outside the home or have done so for a number of years during their marriage, these women were able to discover who they were as individuals at an early age and have maintained that awareness without becoming entrapped in their new roles and without experiencing any crisis concerning their identity.

The results of the questionnaires from the married women in this sample seem to follow the pattern noted in our literature review of continually decreasing satisfaction with marriage from the early periods when children are born until the late thirties or forties. The period of the early thirties was particularly negative for the sample of married respondents in the present study. Many felt unstable in their marriage, less satisfied both with marriage and with life in general, and more stressful and depressed. Despite the fact that they were immersed in the most socially accepted roles for women, those of wife and mother, these married women reported lower self-esteem, self-confidence, and independence than they had in their early twenties. Since over 62% of these women had three children by age 35 and almost 40% had four by that time,

their increased stress, lack of independence, etc., is understandable.

When one considers this scenario, one might also expect a high rate of separations, divorces, and extra-marital affairs among these women. However, in this sample, although one-third of the women considered separation from their husbands, only 13% reported separating temporarily, 5% obtained a divorce, and 11% admitted having had affairs. Since these married women are all registered Catholics, it is probable that their results are skewed in the direction of the traditional Church view of marriage as an indissoluble bond. Thus, despite the fact that they felt dissatisfied with their marriage and were unstable in it, few preferred the options of divorce or extra-marital affairs with the accompanying stigmas these have among Catholics. One-third of these women chose volunteer work or returning to the job market instead, perhaps because these choices are more likely to be seen as acceptable alternatives to marital dissatisfaction and/or full-time homemaking.

Ages 36-40 Marker Events and Developmental Issues

The women religious in this sample described themselves in more positive terms in the late thirties than in any previous time. Many reported certainty about their identity, greater feelings of self-esteem, self-confidence, and independence, and more stability in and satisfaction with their religious community. However, although more in this sample described themselves as generally satisfied with life, there was a higher percentage reporting feelings of depression and stress than in any other period. Almost 20% still viewed themselves as struggling with their decision to live a celibate lifestyle and 35% experienced a new awareness of the finiteness of their own lives.

Several of the marker events which occurred frequently during the late thirties for these women are associated with their occupations, e.g.,

"first job by choice," "change of occupational field," "community jobs in administration and other fields," and the "closing of an institution" with which they were associated. Twelve percent of these women religious returned to school, 13% lived away from the community, and 22% completed a Master's Degree during this period. All except 5% of those who had not already experienced the change in community rules and religious garb promoted by the Vatican Council did so in their late thirties. Over 50% of these women had already changed their place of residence four times and 18%, five times by the age of forty. More reported non-sexual relationships with lay women and with men than with other women religious during this period.

Since 95% of the women religious in this sample note modifications in their community rules by this period in their lives, one can assume that the majority of them were experiencing a less restricted lifestyle at this time, and that some women had been doing so for five to ten years. Marker events mentioned earlier for this period, such as relationships with lay women and with men, living away from the community, etc., attest to a life characterized by more freedom and independence than the traditional lifestyle of women religious 25 or more years ago. What initially appears contradictory in these results for the late thirties, however, is the fact that a high percentage of women reported stress, depression, and struggle regarding celibacy and, at the same time, described themselves as feeling self-confident and independent, satisfied with the community and with life in general, certain of their identity, and stable in their religious community.

As mentioned in the discussion of the results regarding the early thirties for these women, the increased independence promoted by the changes in community rules caused greater satisfaction and feelings of

self-confidence in women religious, but it also created new problems for them. Greater responsibilities and more decisions meant new tensions and added stress. Dressing like other women, sometimes living outside community, and relating closely with people of both sexes, for example, all place religious women in many situations in which their decision to live celibately is questioned by others and sometimes becomes less certain for themselves. In the older mode of religious life, women religious were protected from such situations by rules that kept them at home or, at least, distinctly dressed and always accompanied. It seems reasonable, therefore, that while the women religious in this sample felt better about themselves as individuals in their late thirties, they also were enduring the tensions inherent in living and working in modern society without the protection of their community rules or the support of a husband and family. Since all of the women religious in this study are involved in a career and the majority are highly educated, the high percentage of stress and/or depression during this period might also be associated with the rapid pace and need for competency in their occupational lives as well as with their own personal struggle to balance individual, community, and career needs.

Age 36-40 Comparison with Previous Studies

On the developmental sequence for women religious formulated from the previous study by this author (Appendix A), the period of time between 36 and 45 is considered one stage. The events included there which are relevant to the present study are: "second chosen occupation," "continued struggle with celibacy," and "stable relationship with the community." The importance of the latter two issues is confirmed by the results of the present study regarding women religious in their late thirties. Twenty percent of this sample reported experiencing the former phenomenon, and

30% the latter, most strongly during this period. Regarding the issue of "second chosen occupation," about which there is also a statement in Appendix B under the heading "Occupation-Job Changes," the data in the present study does not distinguish change of jobs or occupational fields according to whether they were assigned by the community or individually chosen except for the first job in each category. Fifty-nine percent of the women religious in this sample had chosen at least one job themselves by age forty; 61% had also changed jobs and 48%, occupational fields, by that time. It is possible, therefore, that many of these women who changed jobs or occupational fields by age forty did so twice of their own choice, but this assumption cannot be verified by the information obtained in the present study.

On p. 73, the statements from the literature review which are important in the late thirties relate to increased life satisfaction, stability, self-esteem, self-confidence and independence. According to recent research findings, the late thirties is the period when life becomes more positive for the married women studied. By this time, the children of these women are teenagers or older and the dissatisfaction with marriage which the rearing of children often brings begins to dissipate. Marital satisfaction and life satisfaction rise and positive feelings about themselves increase. There is, of course, the possibility that in the course of the years these women have separated from or divorced their husbands, but when this disruption does not occur, research indicates that the late thirties often bring a greater feeling of stability in marriage.

The women religious in the present study follow the same pattern as these married women regarding the issues relevant to the late thirties. Over 31% of them reported that the late thirties is the period when they were most satisfied with life (Table 10), a percentage higher than that

for any preceding period. Almost 30% described these years as the time when they felt most stable in their community (Table 11); the percentage is higher than that for any period before or after. Feelings of increased self-esteem and independence in the late thirties were reported by over twice as many women as in any preceding period (Tables 15 and 16). A significantly larger group in this sample also described themselves as more self-confident in their late thirties than any time previously (Table 17). Therefore, the results of the women religious in this sample agree with recent research on married women on the three issues presented in the summary of the literature (p. 73) regarding the late thirties.

Age 36-40 Comparison with Married Women Respondents

Figure 2 presents the marker events and developmental issues important in the late thirties for the married women in this sample. One notes that this is the first period which includes the marker event of a child leaving home, the illness of a mother and a child, and the death of a father. The two events regarding work included in the early thirties are repeated here, that is, returning to work outside the home and doing volunteer work. The developmental issues include higher percentages who reported increased certainty regarding identity, greater self-esteem, independence, and self-confidence, more stability in marriage and greater life satisfaction. Many of these women also described themselves, however, as having increased stress and depression as well as a new awareness of their own finiteness. An almost equal number, over 21%, rated the late thirties as the "most" and the "least" satisfying regarding their marriage.

It appears that the late thirties were more positive than the early ones for many of the married women in this sample since there is a higher percentage of responses on increased stability, self-esteem, etc., during this period. The fact that many still reported high stress and depression

and some, low marital satisfaction, however, illustrates that all aspects of life had not yet improved for the majority of them. Since the children of these women would probably be teenagers at this time, much of the stress and depression, and even the marital dissatisfaction, may be associated with the difficulties inherent in parenting adolescents. In agreement with most recent research on married women and the empty nest, the women in this sample rated a child leaving home as a slightly positive event rather than the trauma earlier studies would have predicted.

As can be seen through a comparison of Figures 1 and 2, the developmental issues relevant for the two groups of women in this study are quite similar. In considering the three issues for this period from the review of the literature (p. 73), one notes that higher percentages for both groups of respondents reported having more life satisfaction in the late thirties than in any previous period (Table 10). Table 14 also shows higher percentages in both samples who described themselves as more stable in their commitment during the late thirties than at any time previously. Therefore, the data from this study for both groups of women verifies the first two statements regarding the late thirties, i.e., that life satisfaction for women is higher at this time than in the previous decade and that women experience a greater feeling of stability in their commitment than previously. There was, however, a significant difference between the means of women religious and married women on the issue of stability. The difference is probably caused by the high percentage of married women who reported having felt most stable in their marriage in their early twenties. Because this sample of married women is comprised of only registered Catholics, their early feelings of stability are understandable in view of the Church's teaching on the indissolubility of matrimony. In addition, since marriage was considered the traditionally acceptable

path to success for women, a sense of having reached an important goal could also increase feelings of stability. By contrast, women religious could not feel stable in their community in their early twenties because they were still in training and not yet considered full members of their congregation.

The third statement from the literature review (p. 73) which this study is testing concerns increased self-esteem, self-confidence, and independence in the late thirties. As was pointed out in the Results section, the women religious in this sample have higher percentages on these three issues (Tables 15, 16, 17) during the late thirties than any time previously and the percentage who reported greater positive feelings continues to increase during the forties. The married women in this study follow a similar pattern, although with higher percentages in the twenties, regarding self-confidence. On the issues of independence and self-esteem, a greater percentage reported feeling more positive about themselves and more independent during the early twenties and the forties than during the late thirties. Although the percentage for the late thirties is higher than for the preceding decade, it is not higher than the first years of marriage. Because of this variation in the pattern for the married women in this study, a significant difference was noted between the means on these three issues for the two groups of women (Table 22).

A plausible explanation for the discrepancy between the data on married women and what was expected from our review of the literature on these three issues can again be found in a recognition of the bias in the sample of married women included in this study. The high percentages noted on self-esteem and self-confidence in the early twenties, which affect the mean scores on these issues, could be due to the fact that these women are traditional Catholics. They, therefore, probably felt great fulfillment in

the early days of their marriage, both because they had achieved the societally approved goal for women, as well as the purpose for which they were created, according to the teachings of the Catholic Church. Since the high percentage of women who reported most independence during the early twenties is less explainable by an examination of this sample, a cross-tabulation, reported on earlier, shows that these women married later and had fewer children by age 25 than did the majority of the sample.

It is understandable why women religious, unlike the married women in this sample, felt little self-confidence, self-esteem, and independence in their early twenties, when one remembers their lifestyle at that time. The combination of strict community rules and the fact that these women religious were in training during this time mediated against feelings of independence. Since part of the training to be a woman religious included increasing the "humility" of the candidate, feelings of self-esteem and self-confidence were considered pride and were purged with a number of effective community practices. The life situations for the two groups of women in this study were, therefore, very different in their early twenties. It is this difference that accounts for the higher percentages for married women on the issues of self-esteem, self-confidence, and independence during this period. Thus, while both groups in this study exhibit higher percentages on these three issues in their late thirties than in the previous decade, the distinction between their lifestyles in the twenties causes a significant difference in their mean scores.

Ages 41-50 Marker Events and Developmental Issues

An examination of Figure 1 shows some similarity between the status of developmental issues during the late thirties and the forties for the

women religious in this sample. There is a continuation in the latter decade of the certainty regarding identity, high life satisfaction, self-esteem, self-confidence and independence that characterizes the late thirties. The awareness of finiteness which was recognized by 35% of these women in their late thirties is discovered by all but 6.8% by age fifty. There are in mid-life, fewer women reporting high stress and depression and only three anticipating the menopause as traumatic. Although there is a continued struggle regarding celibacy in the forties, feelings of stability in the community are high and satisfaction with it at least average.

An important positive marker event in mid-life for over 50% of the women religious respondents was their Twenty-fifth Jubilee in their community. Three other events for this period, as seen in Figure 1, are associated with occupations, i.e., first job by choice, change of job, and change of occupational field. Four are concerned with illness and death. Despite the fact that natural menopause was experienced by only 16% of the women religious in this sample, it was included in Figure 1 because it is one of the two life events most frequently associated with mid-life women in past research. The other event associated with married women in mid-life is the empty nest. Although women religious have no children and, therefore, do not experience this phenomenon, one of the research questions regarding this period to be answered by this study is whether the women religious in this sample had more difficulty during mid-life than earlier with their choice to have no children.

For the women religious who responded to this study, mid-life appears to be a satisfying period. These women continue to have positive feelings about themselves and their lives, despite negative events like the illness and death of people close to them. They change jobs, careers, and residences,

by their own choice. They celebrate twenty-five years of commitment to God in their religious community and, even those who endure a spiritual crisis, view it as only slightly negative. They do not fear the menopause as traumatic nor do they experience difficulty because they have no children. In addition, although they recognize the finiteness of time in their lives, they feel less stress and less depression. The data regarding these women seems to demonstrate Neugarten's (1976) theory that middle-aged people are characterized by a better grasp of reality, a real sense of competence and a maximum capability in handling themselves and their environment.

Ages 41-50 Comparison with Previous Studies

The developmental sequence (Appendix A) formulated by this author from the previous study on women religious concludes with the age period from 36 to 45. Comparisons have already been made for the late thirties between that study and the results of the present one. There are, however, two conclusions of the former work (Appendix B) which this study addresses. Under the heading, "Relationship with Family," there is a statement that most women religious do not consider their decision to have no children a great sacrifice and, those who do, experience that difficulty for only a few years and at different times from one another. As Table 21 shows, almost 40% of the women religious in this study reported never having difficulty regarding their choice to have no children. Of those who did, the largest percentage, 23.1% occurs in the period from 31 to 35. Only 5.2% of these women religious experienced that difficulty in mid-life.

The second conclusion in Appendix B which relates to the present study is under the title, "Physical Health." It states that women religious do not fear menopause or old age. No data from this study is concerned with

the latter issue, but Table 19 presents results regarding menopause. This table shows only 7.1% of the women religious in mid-life anticipating menopause as a traumatic event; only 8.6% anticipated it negatively during any other period. In addition, the women religious who already experienced a natural menopause rated it as a slightly positive event.

The first statement from the summary of the literature (p. 73) on the mid-life period concerns the new sense of time which Neugarten and others suggest characterizes middle-age people. Their perspective changes so that it is no longer "time since birth," but "time left until death." As Table 18 shows, 35% of the women religious recognized this new awareness in their late thirties and an additional 36% in mid-life. The data on the women religious in this sample, therefore, corroborates recent research on this issue.

The second research statement regarding menopause states that women do not anticipate nor experience it as a traumatic event. In comparing the results of the data from this study with that of the previous study done on women religious by this author, it was noted that 80.3% of this sample of women religious never anticipated the menopause as traumatic and that those who reported having already experienced it, considered it slightly positive. Again, the data supports the more recent research on mid-life.

The next research statement regarding the reaction of women religious to having no children of their own, has also been discussed in the comparison of the results of this study with the previous one. It was noted there that only 5.2% of the women religious respondents had difficulty during mid-life regarding their choice to have no children and almost 40% never had a problem with this decision.

The last issue from the review of the literature on mid-life is concerned with depression. It was previously thought that women were more depressed during mid-life than at any other life stage and that their depression was related to the menopause and the empty nest. More recent research by Bart and others indicates, however, that women who have additional roles besides those of wife and mother and are not over-involved or over-protective of their children are not necessarily depressed at this time of life. Since Neugarten and others have discovered that both the empty nest and the menopause often have positive effects on mid-life women, the myth that depression is an ordinary co-occurrence with mid-life is fading. As can be seen in Table 20, fewer women religious in this study experience depression in mid-life than in the early or late thirties. There is, therefore, no indication from the data that they are more prone to depression during their middle-age years than at other times.

Ages 41-50 Comparison with Married Women Respondents

A major mid-life event for the married women in this study is their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary which they rank as moderately to extremely positive. During this time, they also experience their children leaving home, a change of jobs, and, for some, a return to the work world. Although only 14% of this sample have already experienced menopause, this event is included in Figure 2 because of its obvious association with mid-life for women.

The period of mid-life, particularly the years from 46 to 50, appears to be a positive time for the married women in this sample. Many reported the same high life satisfaction, certainty regarding their identity, self-esteem, self-confidence, and independence noted in the late thirties. By the late forties, however, there is less stress and depression and fewer

people dissatisfied with their marriage than was seen in the thirties. Since most of the children of these women would now be in their late teens or early twenties, and some already gone from home, one of the major sources of stress in marriage has been removed by mid-life.

In comparing the results of the data on this group of married women with the data on the women religious in this sample, one notes many similarities regarding mid-life issues. On the statement from the literature review (p. 73), for example, the responses of the married women also confirm previous research findings. Regarding the new sense of the finiteness of time in their lives, 28.3% of this group experienced this phenomenon in the late thirties and almost 35% in mid-life. Only 14.1% reported not yet recognizing that new perspective on time. Over 75% of married women in this study also reported that they never anticipated the menopause as a traumatic event and, those who already experienced the menopause, rated it as a little more than slightly positive. Regarding the other issue frequently associated with mid-life, the empty nest, the women in this sample who have had a child leave home also rated it as a positive event. It is not certain from the data, however, how many of the married women respondents have already experienced all their children leaving home. Regarding the research statement about depression in mid-life, one notes in Table 20 that fewer married women in this sample were depressed during mid-life than in the thirties. It is apparent, therefore, that the two issues formerly associated with mid-life depression for married women, i.e., the menopause and the empty nest, are not viewed negatively by the married women in this sample and do not cause them increased depression in their forties. On all four issues included in the summary of the literature on mid-life, then, both groups of women support the findings of recent research. It is clear too that for

the women religious and the married women in this study, mid-life is a time of increased satisfaction and a new awareness of the finiteness of their own lives. The sense of heightened competency in handling their world which Neugarten attributes to middle-aged people appears to exist in this sample of women.

Summary

The results of this study demonstrate that the stages of development for one sample of women religious follow a pattern similar to what was suggested by this author's previous work, as well as the pattern described in the literature as typical for married women who are presently middle-aged. The women religious respondents proceed from tentativeness regarding identity and goals and the vicarious living through community which typifies their early twenties, to the increased stress and low satisfaction of the late twenties, the identity and celibacy crises of the early thirties, to the increased satisfaction, stability, independence and self-confidence of the late thirties and the new sense of time and lack of concern regarding both the menopause and having no children which characterizes their middle-age years. Only on the issues of decreased satisfaction with the community and with life in general in the late twenties does this sample of women religious deviate from the pattern of married women in previous research. They do so because, during their early twenties, they did not exhibit the very high levels of satisfaction typical of newly married women in recent studies.

The married women included in the present study also follow the predicted sequence of development, with the exception that during their early twenties, they felt greater stability in marriage, greater self-esteem, self-confidence, and independence, but lower marital and general life satisfaction than what would be expected according to the results of other

studies. In addition, the early twenties was not the period they chose as the time they felt the least certain of their identity. Therefore, except for the fact that the married women in this sample had different initial reactions to married life than was predicted, their developmental pattern is not unlike that of the women religious nor of the married women who participated in the other research studies reviewed earlier.

The stages of development regarding identity, satisfaction, stress, etc., are, then, very similar for the two groups of women in this sample despite their very diverse educational backgrounds and employment histories, as well as the different marker events which typically occurred in their lives. Although the Vatican Council took place during different periods in the lives of the women religious in this sample and effected a significant change in their lifestyle, the results of their responses follow the developmental pattern predicted for married women by recent studies. Despite the fact that the sample of married women is somewhat biased because of the Church affiliation of its members, their results were also predictable except for the period of the early twenties.

What this similarity in the findings of the two groups of women in this study might suggest is that the adult development of women is not determined primarily by the occurrence and timing of specific marker events in their lives. The sequence they follow appears to be a process which is more age than event-related. It is, perhaps, more dependent on the manner in which they have been socialized regarding acceptable attitudes and roles for women than it is on their choice of a celibate or non-celibate lifestyle. Thus, the fact that these women lived in the era during which both the Women's Liberation Movement and the Second Vatican Council occurred might be more important than whether they were married or not. In a word, cohort effects and age appear to have more influence on

one's developmental process than the specific marker events which occur in each individual's life. For example, because all the women in this sample are between 36 and 50, they were raised in an era that encouraged them to wait until they were married to decide who they were and what goals they would have in life. If they accepted the belief that their lives would be determined to a large extent by someone else, they remained tentative regarding their identity until that someone came along in the form of a husband or a religious community. When that person or persons were found, they proceeded to identity themselves with him/them and live in a vicarious manner. It is primarily this lack of their own developed identity that caused the women in this sample the traumas of the early thirties. Whether they had identified themselves with the roles of wife and mother or with the role of "Sister," the result was an identity crisis in the early thirties with accompanying difficulties regarding their commitment to their husband or their celibate lifestyle. The resolution of this crisis and the concomitant increased feelings of self-esteem, independence, etc., brought about greater life satisfaction for both groups of women in mid-life. During their middle-age years, neither group of women exhibits concern regarding the menopause, the lack of their own children, or their children leaving home. Neither experiences increased depression despite their new recognition of the finiteness of their own lives.

Rosow (1978) notes that a cohort reflects the interplay of objective life conditions and socialization. The adult development of this cohort of women seems, therefore, to be a result of the interaction of the attitudes, stereotypes, and expectations existing in the milieu in which they became adults. The effect of the Women's Movement on contemporary American society has already increased the awareness of many people

regarding sexist attitudes and antiquated stereotypes. If the questionnaires from this study were sent to women presently 20 to 35 years old, perhaps their psychological development would reflect this new awareness and the continuing sequence of their life stages differ from those of the women in this sample because of their greater understanding. Until further research is completed with younger women, one can at least hope.

Implications for Future Research

Because the two questionnaires used in this study are lengthy (Appendices C and D), the amount of data generated from them is quite extensive. The results included in this paper are those obtained through the initial study of frequency data and cross-tabulations between developmental issues and marker events for women religious respondents. Additional work is still to be completed on this data, e.g., a comparative analysis of the responses of the women in each of the three age groups, a more detailed study of the co-occurrence of developmental issues and marker events for both groups of women, an analysis of the correlation between specific biographical information and developmental issues. Questions which can be answered for this sample by further analysis of this data include the following: How is age of marriage/entrance into a community and number of children correlated with specific developmental issues? Do the responses of the women in this sample whose mothers worked outside the home differ from those who had mothers who were full-time homemakers? How did position in the family affect the developmental process of the women in this study? What is the difference regarding mid-life issues between the women in this sample who work outside the home and those who do not? What is the difference in ratings of marker events occurring "on" and "off-time?"

While there is much data yet to be analyzed from the present study, it is also clear that additional research is essential regarding the life stages of women. Since so little work has been done on the adult development of women religious, further research in this area is especially needed. The administration of the questionnaires used in this study to younger women religious and married women would significantly

increase our understanding of the effect of one's milieu and the socialization process on an individual's future psychological development. The basis for the present research was the hypothesized developmental sequence resulting from the case studies of women religious conducted previously by this author. An appropriate follow-up study might be to again use the case history method with a specific group of respondents to the questionnaires used in this study, e.g., the married women with more than three children, the women religious who considered leaving their community, the married women who considered separation or divorce, etc. Since the advantages of the case study method are different from those of the survey approach, in such a follow-up study, one could capitalize on the combined data acquired in two different ways from the same group of women. However, no matter which method is used for further study on the adult development of women, especially those in religious communities, the results can only increase our knowledge of a group of women about whom few facts are known and many myths and stereotypes accepted and perpetuated.

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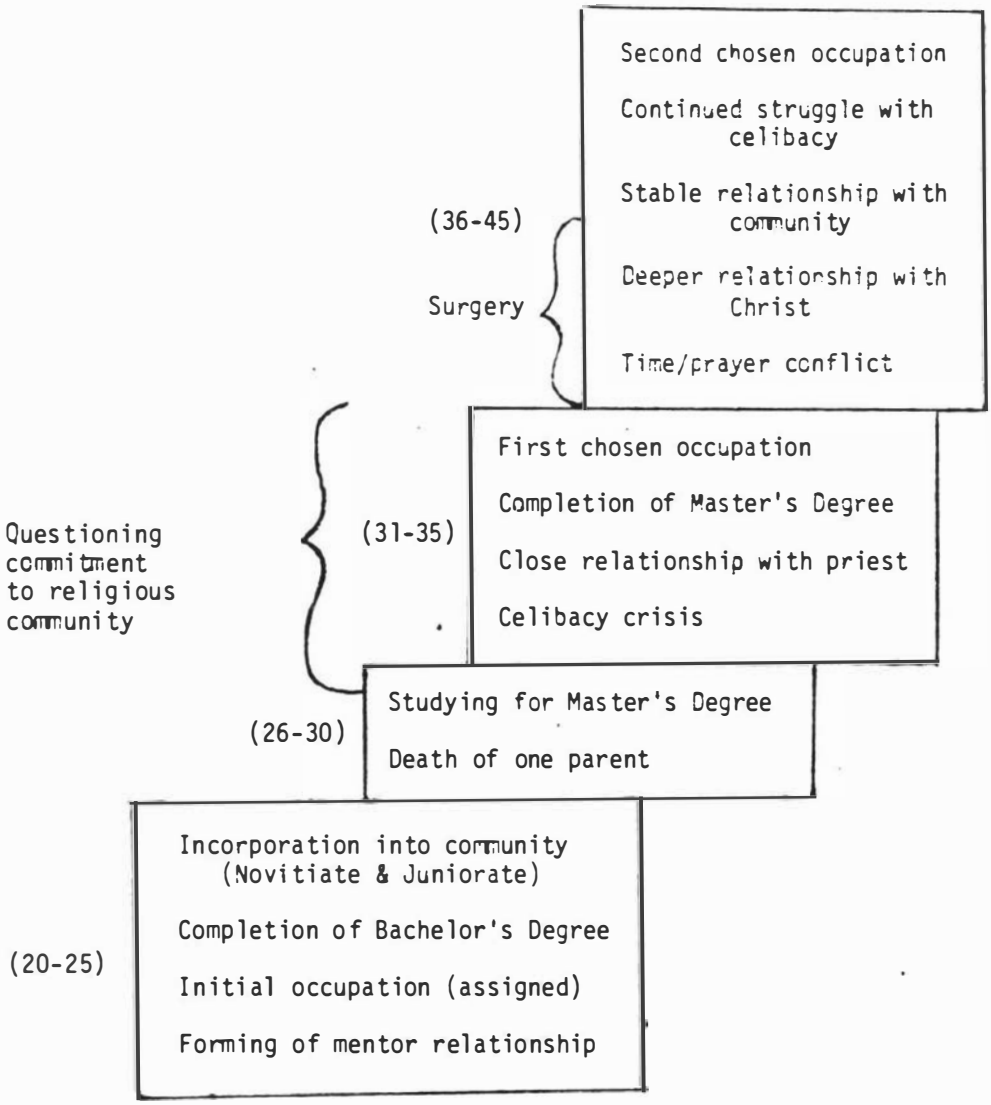
APPENDIX A

DEVELOPMENTAL SEQUENCE FOR CELIBATE WOMEN



APPENDIX B

SPECULATIONS ON THE STAGES OF ADULT DEVELOPMENT FOR CELIBATE WOMEN RESULTING FROM TEN CASE STUDIES

Relationship with Family

The death of a parent is a turning point in the life of most celibate women, i.e., it causes them to re-evaluate their life orientation.

Celibate women usually find it more difficult not to be married in their thirties than in their twenties.

Few celibate women consider their decision not to have children of their own as a great sacrifice.

Celibate women who consider their lack of children a great sacrifice experience that lack at different times from one another, but usually find it a hardship for a period of only a few years.

Relationship with Mentors

Most celibate women have mentors within their religious communities who act as role models in living a celibate life style.

Relationships with role models for living a celibate life style are usually established by the time the younger woman is 25 years-old.

Role models in living a celibate life style are usually fifteen to twenty years older than the young people for whom they are mentors.

The mentor relationships of celibate women with younger women in their religious communities are usually lasting relationships, but they change toward increased mutuality when the younger religious woman is in her mid-thirties.

Most celibate women do not have mentors in the occupational sphere of their lives.

Relationship with Community

Celibate women usually find most of their support, i.e., their closest friendships, within their religious communities.

Celibate women usually experience a major crisis in at least one close relationship with another sister by their mid-thirties.

Most celibate women seriously consider leaving their religious communities sometime during their late twenties or early thirties.

Relationship with Christ

Celibate women experience a deeper, more personal relationship with Christ in their late thirties and early forties than they did in their early twenties.

Celibate women today are experiencing the revival of older aspects of spirituality, e.g., Mary, the rosary, community prayer, etc., with new meaning attached to them.

A major area of concern for celibate women today is the conflict between time for prayer and time for apostolic activities.

Celibate women in their thirties and forties often experience a desire for external direction in their attempts to develop a deeper spiritual life.

Relationship with Lay People and Priests

Relationships between celibate women and lay people of both sexes have increased as the rules against such involvements were changed by religious communities.

Celibate women usually experience a close relationship with a priest sometime in their early thirties.

The closeness of the relationships of celibate women in their early thirties with priests usually results in a crisis, followed by continually decreasing contact, if the sister remains in the celibate life style.

Physical Health

Many celibate women have undergone some type of surgery by the age of forty.

Many celibate women have had at least one serious illness requiring hospitalization but not surgery by the age of forty-two.

Most celibate women do not fear menopause or old age.

Personality

Most celibate women view themselves as assertive people.

Loneliness

The celibate woman's experiences of greatest loneliness are dependent more on community circumstances than on age.

Occupation - Job Changes

Many celibate women first change occupations at the request of their religious community sometime in their early thirties.

Many celibate women change occupations by their own choice twice by the time they are forty.

Job Satisfaction

Most celibate women who change occupations in their thirties, at their own request, do so because of broadening interests rather than a lack of satisfaction in their former occupations.

Educational Preparation

Celibate women usually acquire some educational preparation for their second careers.

Most celibate women have completed a Master's Degree by the time they are in their early thirties.

Future Concerns

The concerns of celibate women regarding the future are usually occupational ones.

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MARRIED WOMEN

I BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Date of birth _____ _____
   month year
2. City of birth _____
3. Number of sisters in your family _____
4. Number of brothers in your family _____
5. Your position in the family (oldest, second, etc.) _____
6. Occupation held by mother most of her life _____
7. Occupation held by father most of his life _____
8. Age at the time of your marriage _____
9. Husband's age at the time of your marriage _____
10. If you have been divorced and remarried, your age at the time of your second marriage ____
11. Your second husband's age at the time of your marriage to him _____
12. Describe the highest educational level you attained prior to your first marriage

    _____
13. Describe the highest educational level you have attained up to the present time

    _____
14. Number of children you have: Females _____ Males _____
15. Your age at the birth of each child _____
16. Have you ever belonged to a religious community, i.e., been a Sister? Yes _____ No _____
17. If you have worked for pay at any time since you were age 20, write below all your full and part-time occupations since then. Behind each one, write the years during which you held each job:

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

II DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES

After each item below, indicate the age period in your life, after age 20, during which yo most experienced the described feeling, attitude, etc. Use the following letter scale to so:

A	B	C	D	E	F	N
(21-25)	(26-30)	(31-35)	(36-40)	(41-45)	(46-50)	(Never)

If you have any comments you would like to make about any of the statements on this page, please do so at the end of the questionnaire.

	Age
1. I determined goals for my life (in addition to wanting to get married and have a family).	____
2. I felt least certain of my own identity as an individual.	____
3. I felt my identity was centered in my husband's, i.e., I thought of myself primarily as his wife.	____
4. I experienced an identity crisis, i.e., a period when I questioned who I am as an individual person.	____
5. I felt most certain of my own identity as an individual.	____
6. I felt most satisfied with my marriage.	____
7. I felt least satisfied with my marriage.	____
8. I felt most stable in my commitment to my marriage.	____
9. I felt most stress in my life.	____
10. I felt least stress in my life.	____
11. I felt most satisfied with my life.	____
12. The second most satisfying period of my life.	____
13. I felt least satisfied with my life.	____
14. I liked myself the most.	____
15. I felt most self-confident.	____
16. I felt most independent.	____
17. I felt most depressed.	____
18. I felt a greater awareness of the finiteness of time in my life, i.e., that my life is not endless.	____
19. I anticipated menopause as a traumatic event.	____

III MARKER EVENTS

After each item below, indicate the age period in your life at which each of these experiences occurred. Use the following letter scale to do so:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	N
(20-younger)	(21-25)	(26-30)	(31-35)	(36-40)	(41-45)	(46-50)	(Never)

After you have indicated the age period for the event, rate the extent to which you viewed the event as having a positive or negative impact on your life at the time it occurred. Use the following number scale to do so:

-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
extremely negative			no effect			extremely positive

Many of the events below may have occurred several times in your life. If there are not enough printed lines for a specific event, please make as many additional lines as you need. If you have any comments you would like to make about any of these events, please do so at the end of the questionnaire.

Some of the items in this section are concerned with rather sensitive issues, events that have occurred in many of our lives, but which we sometimes hesitate to discuss with other people. Please answer these items honestly without fear, knowing that your confidentiality will be maintained since your questionnaire will be sent to me anonymously.

	Age	Rating
1. Engagement to be married	____	____
2. Marriage	____	____
3. Pregnancy	____	____
4. Birth or adoption of a child	____	____
5. Abortion	____	____

III MARKER EVENTS (Cont'd)

Scales:

Age: A (20-younger) B (21-25) C (26-30) D (31-35) E (36-40) F (41-45) G (46-50) N (Never)

Rating: -3 extremely negative; -2; -1; 0 no effect; +1; +2; +3 extremely positive

	Age	Rating
6. Miscarriage	____	____
7. Separation from spouse (due to work, travel, etc.)	____	____
8. Serious marital problems	____	____
9. Serious consideration of separation or divorce	____	____
10. Separation from spouse (due to conflict)	____	____
11. Divorce	____	____
12. Marital reconciliation with spouse (after separation or divorce)	____	____
13. Twenty-fifth wedding anniversary	____	____
14. Sexual involvement with a male other than your husband	____	____
15. Husband's sexual involvement with another woman	____	____
16. Serious illness or injury of self	____	____
spouse	____	____
mother	____	____
father	____	____

III MARKER EVENTS (Cont'd)

Scales:

Age: A (20-younger) B (21-25) C (26-30) D (31-35) E (36-40) F (41-45) G (46-50) N (Never)

Rating: -3 extremely negative, -2, -1, 0 no effect, +1, +2, +3 extremely positive

	Age	Rating
16. Serious illness or injury of sister	___	___
brother	___	___
grandmother	___	___
grandfather	___	___
your child	___	___
close friend	___	___
other	___	___
17. Death of spouse	___	___
mother	___	___
father	___	___
sister	___	___
brother	___	___
grandmother	___	___
grandfather	___	___
your child	___	___
close friend	___	___
other	___	___
18. Daughter or son leaving home (due to college, marriage, etc.)	___	___

III MARKER EVENTS (Cont'd)

Scales:

Age: A (20-younger) B (21-25) C (26-30) D (31-35) E (36-40) F (41-45) G (46-50) N (Never)

Rating: -3 extremely negative -2 -1 0 no effect +1 +2 +3 extremely positive

	Age	Rating
19. Daughter or son leaving home (due to conflict)	____	____
20. Major financial problems	____	____
21. Building a new home	____	____
22. Change of residence	____	____
23. Return to formal schooling - self	____	____
husband	____	____
24. Completion of Bachelor's Degree - self	____	____
husband	____	____
Master's Degree - self	____	____
husband	____	____
Doctorate - self	____	____
husband	____	____
25. Return to work for pay outside the home	____	____
26. Doing volunteer work outside the home	____	____
27. Change of job within the same field	____	____
28. Change of occupational field	____	____

III MARKER EVENTS (Cont'd)

Scales:

Age: A (20-younger) B (21-25) C (26-30) D (31-35) E (36-40) F (41-45) G (46-50) N (Never)

Rating: -3 extremely negative; -2; -1; 0 no effect; +1; +2; +3 extremely positive

	Age	Rating
29. Husband's change of job or of occupational field	____	____
30. Loss of job - self	____	____
husband	____	____
31. Fired from job - self	____	____
husband	____	____
32. Retirement - self	____	____
husband	____	____
33. Menopause - natural	____	____
surgical	____	____
34. Spiritual crisis	____	____
35. Underwent counseling	____	____
36. Was in a psychiatric unit or institution	____	____
37. Alcohol or drug abuse - self	____	____
husband	____	____
38. Attempted suicide - self	____	____
husband	____	____
39. Other events (specify)	____	____

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR WOMEN RELIGIOUS

I BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Date of birth _____ _____
   month year
2. City of birth _____
3. Number of sisters in your family _____
4. Number of brothers in your family _____
5. Your position in the family (oldest, second, etc.) _____
6. Occupation held by mother most of her life _____
7. Occupation held by father most of his life _____
8. Age at which you entered a religious community _____
9. Age at which you made your first vows _____
10. Age at which you made your final vows _____
11. Describe the highest educational level you attained prior to entering religious life

    _____
12. Describe the highest educational level you have attained up to the present time

    _____
13. Have you ever been married? _____ Yes _____ No
14. List below the occupations you have had since age twenty, indicating after each one the years during which you held each job:

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

II DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES

After each item below, indicate the age period in your life, after age 20, during which you most experienced the described feeling, attitude, etc. Use the following letter scale to do so:

A	B	C	D	E	F	N
(21-25)	(26-30)	(31-35)	(36-40)	(41-45)	(46-50)	(Never)

If you have any comments you would like to make about any of the statements on this page, please do so at the end of the questionnaire.

	Age
1. I determined goals for my life (in addition to wanting to become a sister).	____
2. I felt least certain of my own identity as an individual.	____
3. I felt my identity was centered in my community's, i.e., I thought of myself primarily as a Sister of _ _____.	____
4. I experienced an identity crisis, i.e., a period when I questioned who I am as an individual person.	____
5. I felt most certain of my own identity as an individual.	____
6. I felt most satisfied with my community.	____
7. I felt least satisfied with my community.	____
8. I felt most stable in my commitment to my community.	____
9. I felt most stress in my life.	____
10. I felt least stress in my life.	____
11. I felt most satisfied with my life.	____
12. The second most satisfying period of my life.	____
13. I felt least satisfied with my life.	____
14. I liked myself the most.	____
15. I felt most self-confident.	____
16. I felt most independent.	____
17. I felt most depressed.	____
18. I felt a greater awareness of the finiteness of time in my life, i.e., that my life is not endless.	____
19. I anticipated menopause as a traumatic event.	____
20. I felt the most struggle regarding my choice to live celibately.	____
21. I had most difficulty with my choice to have no children of my own.	____

III MARKER EVENTS

After each item below, indicate the age period in your life at which each of these experiences occurred. Use the following letter scale to do so:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
(20-younger)	(21-25)	(26-30)	(31-35)	(36-40)	(41-45)	(46-50)	(Never)

After you have indicated the age period for the event, rate the extent to which you viewed the event as having a positive or negative impact on your life at the time it occurred. Use the following number scale to do so:

-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
extremely negative			no effect			extremely positive

Many of the events below may have occurred several times in your life. If there are not enough printed lines for a specific event, please make as many additional lines as you need. If you have any comments you would like to make about any of these events, please do so at the end of the questionnaire.

Some of the items in this section are concerned with rather sensitive issues, events that have occurred in many of our lives, but which we sometimes hesitate to discuss with other people. Please answer these items honestly without fear, knowing that your confidentiality will be maintained since your questionnaire will be sent to me anonymously.

	Age	Rating
1. Entrance into religious community	___	___
2. Novitiate	___	___
3. First Vows	___	___
4. Juniorate	___	___
5. Final Vows	___	___
6. Twenty-fifth Jubilee	___	___
7. Serious consideration of leaving religious community due to problems with celibacy	___	___
8. Serious consideration of leaving religious community due to reasons other than celibacy	___	___
9. Left religious community	___	___
10. Returned to religious community	___	___
11. Established close relationship with a male (no physical/sexual involvement)	___	___

III MARKER EVENTS (Cont'd)

Scales:

Age: A (20-younger) B (21-25) C (26-30) D (31-35) E (36-40) F (41-45) G (46-50) H (Never)

Rating: -3 extremely negative -2 -1 0 no effect +1 +2 +3 extremely positive

	Age	Rating
12. Established close relationship with a male (physical/sexual involvement, but not intercourse)	___	___
13. Established close relationship with a male (physical/sexual involvement including intercourse)	___	___
14. Established close relationship with another woman (no physical/sexual involvement) within the community	___	___
outside the community	___	___
15. Established close relationship with another woman (with physical/sexual involvement) within the community	___	___
outside the community	___	___
16. Serious discord in your local community	___	___
17. Change in rules and directives of religious community	___	___
18. Change to modified habit or secular dress	___	___

III MARKER EVENTS (Cont'd)

Scales:

Age: A (20-younger) B (21-25) C (26-30) D (31-35) E (36-40) F (41-45) G (46-50) H (Never)

Rating: -3 extremely negative; -2; -1; 0 no effect; +1; +2; +3 extremely positive

	Age	Rating
19. Lived away from the community (alone, with another community, etc.)	___	___
20. Serious illness or injury of self	___	___
mother	___	___
father	___	___
sister	___	___
brother	___	___
grandmother	___	___
grandfather	___	___
close friend	___	___
other	___	___
21. Death of mother	___	___
father	___	___
sister	___	___
brother	___	___
grandmother	___	___
grandfather	___	___
close friend	___	___
other	___	___
22. Return to formal schooling	___	___
23. Completion of Bachelor's Degree	___	___
Master's Degree	___	___
Doctorate	___	___

III MARKER EVENTS (Cont'd)

Scales:

Age: A (20-younger) B (21-25) C (26-30) D (31-35) E (36-40) F (41-45) G (46-50) H (Never)

Rating: -3 extremely negative; -2; -1; 0 no effect; +1; +2; +3 extremely positive

	Age	Rating
24. Change of residence	___	___
25. First job after entrance into the community assigned by superiors	___	___
26. First job after entrance into the community assumed by personal choice	___	___
27. Change of job within the same field	___	___
28. Change of occupational fields	___	___
29. Loss of job (institution closed, budget cut, etc.)	___	___
30. Fired from job	___	___
31. Retirement	___	___
32. Elected or appointed to community administration	___	___

III MARITAL EVENTS (Cont'd)

Scales

Age: A (20-younger) B (21-25) C (26-30) D (31-35) E (36-40) F (41-45) G (46-50) N (Never)

Rating: -3 extremely negative -2 -1 0 no effect +1 +2 +3 extremely positive

	Age	Rating
33. Elected or appointed to community job other than administration	___	___
34. Closing of an institution in which you were working/living	___	___
35. Close friend left religious community	___	___
36. Underwent counseling	___	___
37. Was in a psychiatric unit or institution	___	___
38. Spiritual crisis	___	___
39. Menopause - natural	___	___
surgical	___	___
40. Alcohol or drug abuse	___	___
41. Attempted suicide	___	___
42. Other events (specify)	___	___

VITA