

HOUSEHOLD TASK PERFORMANCE CONTINUITY DURING WIDOWHOOD

by

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(ABSTRACT)

Widowhood is an experience that typically brings about many changes in the lives of surviving spouses, and the resources available for coping may be limited, particularly for elderly persons. Specific variables which influence the ability of men and women to cope with the changes brought about by widowhood have not been identified completely. No one has examined the extent to which widowed persons are able to manage resources so they can continue performing personal and household functions. It is reasonable to assume that this type of continuity is a necessary foundation for overall adjustment to widowhood.

Empirical data used in this study are from a larger project entitled "Continuity of Household Task Performance During Widowhood", supported by the AARP-Andrus Foundation. The Household Task Performance model was applied to examine gender differences in household task performance before and during widowhood and variables associated with strategy choice for maintenance of continuity of household task performance during widowhood. Respondents to the personal interviews were 173 household heads (38 males and 135 females), aged 60 to 91 years, who had been widowed 5 years or less

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and lived in Southwest Virginia. Respondents were located using public records and personal referrals.

Widowers received more help than widows. Widowers widowed for longer time periods assumed personal responsibility for fewer tasks than their more recently widowed counterparts. Women widowed for shorter periods performed more of their own tasks than women widowed for a longer time.

Both widows and widowers were maintaining continuity despite the generally lower skill level in household tasks for males. Two strategies for maintaining this continuity were identified: (1) use and/or development of the widowed person's own resources, and (2) substitution of the labor of others for the performance of household tasks. Multiple regression analysis identified 5 predictors of household task performance strategy choice: health status, household task performance resources and resource demands, household task performance skills and knowledge, normative expectations for gender role, and initial adjustment difficulty.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Problem Setting

"To be a widow is to be at risk; to be an aged widow is to be in peril" (McConnell, 1982). According to the American Association of Retired Persons (1984), the number of elderly persons living alone is growing at a rate three times higher than the elderly population in general, which is expected to increase by 42% in the 60+ age cohort and 86% in the 80+ age cohort by the year 2000 (Virginia Department for the Aging, 1985). Aging in itself entails the progression through a number of changes in the life and lifestyles of individuals. Changes in physical condition, employment, social involvement, and social status all are common in later years. Although aging has been viewed in the past as the gradual loss of all roles due to these changes leading to characterization of old age as the "roleless role" (Hiltz, 1978), a more widely accepted view now characterizes aging as a series of changes in roles. There may be a relinquishment of some or all of the social roles held in typical adulthood but there is also the assumption of new roles typical of later years (Phillips, 1957). Successful adaptation to older adulthood and widowhood implies the ability to accept the changes that commonly accompany later life.

Throughout one's life, resources and activities change and change is considered a normal occurrence across the lifespan. While some changes may require individuals to make slight adjustment and cause little upheaval; others have powerful impact and demand great effort in adjustment and adaptation. People respond to change differently, depending upon the situation at the time of the change and the resources for coping (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1975; Hill, 1965; Hultsch & Plemons, 1979).

Widowhood is an experience that typically brings about many changes in the lives of surviving spouses and the resources available for coping may be limited, particularly for elderly persons. Research has shown that people display a wide range of reactions to the changes that accompany widowhood (e.g., Berardo, 1968, 1970; Carey, 1977; Clayton, 1974; Gove, 1972a, 1972b, 1979; Parkes, Benjamin, & Fitzgerald, 1969; Parkes & Brown, 1972), with men often having much greater difficulty coping and more serious health problems in widowhood than women.

Specific variables that influence the ability to cope with the changes brought about by widowhood for men or women have not been identified completely. Factors that have been explored thus far include psychological reactions to widowhood, such as depression; sociological aspects, such as amount of social participation; and physiological indicators of adjustment, such

as morbidity (serious illness) and mortality (death) rate. No one has examined the extent to which widowed persons are able to manage resources so they can continue performing routine tasks necessary to maintaining personal and household functioning. Yet, one aspect of successful coping is reflected in the ability to manage the tasks of everyday living, such as cleaning the house, preparing meals, caring for oneself, and maintaining interaction with social-cultural, economic, and political systems outside the household (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1981).

It is reasonable to assume that this type of continuity is a necessary foundation for overall adjustment to widowhood. According to Maslow's (1954) hierarchical theory, basic needs of food and shelter must be met before other, higher order, social and emotional needs can be addressed. Maslow's theory suggests that the basic tasks of everyday living necessary for maintenance of self and organization of the household must be fulfilled before an individual can concentrate on adjusting to the social and emotional changes brought about by widowhood.

Deacon and Firebaugh (1981) defined management as the activities that are aimed at meeting "desired goals and purposes by using resources" (p. 31). It can be assumed that the goal of the widowed person is to maintain independence. Therefore, it is necessary for resources to be identified, developed, maintained, and used purposively toward that end. In concert with measures of

psychological, sociological, and physiological aspects of adjustment to widowhood, measures of the ability to maintain independent functioning in household and personal care tasks, which can be considered measures of management activities, contribute to the explanation of variance in adjustment among surviving spouses. Differences in continuity of household task performance--the observable indication of management--between widowed men and women may partially account for observed gender variations in coping with widowhood.

#### Background and Importance of the Study

Compared to other changes in life, loss of a spouse is an event that produces extremely serious effects (George, 1980). One of these effects is that widowhood may drastically necessitate changes in the roles or "patterns of action" of the surviving spouses. Coping with major role changes requires the ability to incorporate new responsibilities into the existing role structure (George, 1980; Hill, 1965).

There is a large body of research related to strategies families use to cope with crises in the early and middle stages of the life cycle, but less is known about adjustment to widowhood, particularly in the later years of life. Much of the literature that is available deals with the psycho-social adaptations of elderly widowed women but not men (Lopata, 1973; Stroebe & Stroebe, 1983). The majority of the research that has

included both widowers and widows used small samples (e.g., Elwell & Maltbie-Crannel, 1981) or examined only the psychological effects of bereavement on each group (Gove, 1972a; Stroebe & Stroebe, 1983). Few studies of the functional abilities of men or women after widowhood have been reported.

There is great need for additional investigation of the ways men, in particular, cope with widowhood because some writers have reported that men appear to adjust much less successfully than women (Helzing, Szklo, & Comstock, 1981; Stroebe & Stroebe, 1983). The reasons for this gender difference are unclear. What does appear certain is "that added emphasis is needed on the studies involving the weaker sex--the widowed male" (Helzing et al., 1981, p.808).

Why are men often less capable than women in coping with the changes brought about by widowhood? What resources do they lack that interfere with successful adaptation to this phase of life? George (1980) and Hill (1965) suggested that both the duration of the period of disorganization and the level of recovery following a crisis are affected by the implementation of new routines and performance roles as influenced by the resources the individual possesses at the time of the crisis or learns by trial and error. Possession and utilization of resources prior to the event of widowhood would provide a foundation upon which the surviving spouse could draw to ease the stress and difficulties brought

brought about by this crisis (Palmore, Cleveland, Nowlin, Ramm, & Siegler, 1979). If men experience more difficulty in adjusting to widowhood, is it because they lack a strong foundation in some of the tasks basic to the maintenance of an independent household?

Research in family time management and division of labor over the life cycle has shown that specialization of household task performance roles occurs early in the marriage and becomes increasingly well-defined over time (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Brubaker & Hennon, 1982; Lovingood & Firebaugh, 1978; Schaffer & Keith, 1981; Walker & Woods, 1976). The traditional household tasks composing the wife's role include those necessary for everyday life inside the house—cooking, cleaning, and laundry; the husband's tasks tend to require less frequent attention and are not as essential to maintenance of health and well-being—car maintenance, household repairs, yard work, and financial management (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Ericksen, Yancy, & Ericksen, 1979; Lovingood & Firebaugh, 1978; Walker & Woods, 1976). Hunter (1968) and Brubaker and Hennon (1982) found, further, that these patterned roles of husbands and wives become even more concrete in retirement. This implies that husbands, and wives as well, may be deficient in the resources necessary for performing household tasks that comprise the spouse's role set because they may never have learned these skills.

Research has shown that men do have more difficulty adjusting to the loss of their spouse than women (Helzing et al., 1981; McConnell, 1982; Stroebe & Stroebe, 1983). One measure of this lack of adjustment has been morbidity and mortality rates. In a study of English and Welsh widowers, Young and Wallis (1963) found the mortality rates of widowers during the first six months of widowhood exceeded that of a comparative group of married men by 40%. The specific reason for this increased mortality rate of widowers but not widows has not been established. Indeed, the highest suicide rate of any group is among white males between the ages of 80 and 84 years (McConnell, 1982), taking into account both active, deliberate forms as well as more passive forms, such as self-starvation, medical noncompliance, and alcohol or drug abuse. Statistics show that elderly males (age 64 years or older) commit suicide at a rate of 52.1 per 100,000, whereas their female counterparts' rate is only 9.8 per 100,000 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1982). Specific reason for this difference in mortality rates has not been established.

Remarriage rates of widows and widowers differ. The rate for widowers over 65 is seven times higher than that of widows the same age (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980a). This indicates, in part, that more men than women may find remarriage an appropriate way of coping with the deficiencies in resources necessary for necessary for maintaining an independent household. But only one in four



widowers over the age of 65 chooses to remarry (Cleveland & Gianturaco, 1976). How do the others maintain continuity of daily household task performance?

Some women may also remarry as a means of coping with resource deficits during widowhood, but the low ratio of older men to older women means that this option is not often available. Widows, too, must assume new tasks to maintain household continuity. Why, though, does it appear easier for them than for their male counterparts?

One explanation may be differences in the nature of the "opposite sex" tasks that widows, as compared to widowers, must learn. The adjustments necessary for women often require learning new skills, particularly in financial management (Lopata, 1979). Widows may view the new responsibilities positively because they extend social relations and require independent decision-making. They provide a challenge to develop individual autonomy, and success in meeting this challenge can be rewarding and can greatly enhance a widow's self-esteem. Widowers, on the other hand, must assume routine housekeeping functions that they may view as having little prestige and may, in fact, be considered "deviant" and demeaning (Arens, 1983). Being forced to perform tasks which diminish confidence and self-esteem may contribute to the increased incidence of depression

and other forms of mental illness in widowers as compared to widows (Gove, 1972a).

#### The Problem

To summarize, research suggests that performance of household tasks is typically gender-specific. With the death of one's spouse, the survivor must assume new roles to maintain an independent household or find someone else to perform the tasks of the deceased partner. This study was designed to examine the household task performance roles of older men and women for the periods prior to and after widowhood, and to determine personal and social factors that contribute to the ability and strategy of widowed persons to maintain their independence with respect to personal and household functions—household task performance continuity.

Because the population is growing older, research of this nature is valuable in directing the efforts of intervention programs to address more specifically the needs of older widowed men and women. Additionally, resources used in assistance programs for older adults may be conserved by helping them remain independent as long as possible. It is assumed that preparation for maintaining independent living in widowhood through awareness of household task competencies or deficiencies and subsequent education to increase task competency, as well as resource identification, development, and use, will positively impact the

ability of older men and women to cope with the extensive changes that occur with the event of widowhood.

#### Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this investigation were to (a) conduct a detailed examination of household task performance prior to and following widowhood, and (b) identify demographic and social factors related to variations in continuity of household task performance that accompany the maintenance of an independent household during widowhood.

One factor affecting household task performance after widowhood is the extent of a person's experience and competence in conducting various tasks before widowhood. Couples evolve diverse patterns of allocating tasks to husbands and wives, thereby individuals acquire varying levels of skill. Other influencing factors are the sources and amount of help from persons outside the household upon whom surviving spouses may depend even more in widowhood than before. Whether or not certain tasks are accomplished may be a joint function of a widowed person's capabilities and the availability of supportive social networks. Thus, the objectives of the study were (a) to identify patterns of household task performance by husbands and wives and the extent to which they depend on others outside the household prior to widowhood; (b) to determine continuities and changes in household task performance by surviving spouses and

others outside the household after widowhood; and (c) to identify significant predictors of variations in strategies used to maintain household task performance continuity during widowhood.

#### Pilot Study

The impetus for the present study stemmed from the results of a secondary data analysis (Hill, 1985). The sample for the pilot study was taken from the data base of Geerkin & Gove (1983) and consisted of 152 widowers and 149 widows with a mean age of 66.8 years. Five significant independent variables -- gender, income, initial adjustment difficulty, traditional sex role attitudes, and tasks performed by others -- from the full regression model -- age, educational attainment, traditional sex role attitudes, household responsibilities of the respondent, household responsibilities of others, household tasks not performed, time since widowed, self-perceived initial adjustment to widowhood, income, and gender--explained only 11% of the variance in functional adjustment to widowhood.

The results of this exploratory study indicated that a combination of personal characteristics and household task variables may provide important information regarding the coping abilities and the needs of widowed persons. In the present study the researcher further developed and tested the model to identify facets of these and additional related variables that contribute to explaining the variance in coping with widowhood,

understanding the impact of widowhood on everyday life, and identifying helpful intervention for widowed persons.

#### Organization of the Report

The theoretical background chapter of the report includes a review of literature as it relates to the theoretical model. This model is operationalized in Chapter 3 and a discussion of and justification for the concepts included in the model are presented. Methods of data collection are presented in Chapter 4. The sample is described in Chapter 5, and findings are presented and discussed in the following chapter. Finally, conclusions and implications of the study are found in Chapter 7.

Empirical data used in this study are from a larger project entitled "Continuity of Household Task Performance During Widowhood" (Lovingood, Blieszner, & Hill, 1987), an AARP-Andrus Foundation supported project which was jointly conducted by the Center for Gerontology, the Department of Housing, Interior Design and Resource Management and the Department of Family and Child Development at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. (A brief description of the project appears in Appendix A.)

## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL

#### Family Roles

According to Hill (1965), the family is a number of interacting members with each having an ascribed role to play within the family structure. Lopata (1971) defined roles as recurrent behavior patterns people exhibit as they interact in groups such as the family. Roles allow family members to predict behavior and form expectations. The adequacy with which family members carry out their roles directly relates to the family's success in achieving its goals — its "desired state(s) of being" (Edwards, 1970, p. 653). One major goal which can be assumed for all families is maintenance of its independence as a household unit.

Walker and Woods' (1976) study of time use in the household showed a significant difference in the amount of time spent by wives as compared with husbands over the life cycle. This is also supported by data reported by Blood and Wolfe (1960) and Keith and Schafer (1986). Young couples, prior to the birth of first child, tend to be balanced in task specialization and couples share more of the responsibility for household tasks.

The young family, after the birth of the first child, shows defined patterns of household task performance roles. Wives' roles are more likely to include shopping, food preparation, meal

planning, and home decorating (Lovingood & Firebaugh, 1978). Husbands in this stage tend to take the tasks of house repairs, insurance purchase, and car selection, purchase, and maintenance into their roles (Lovingood & Firebaugh, 1978). Involvement of the husband in household tasks decreases over the child-rearing stage (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Campbell, 1970; Farkas, 1976, Zalenski, 1987). Further, Hunter (1968) found that these patterned roles of husbands and wives become even more firm in retirement. Therefore, research has shown that marital role deliniation of wives includes a greater proportion of household tasks than does that of husbands and these roles appear to change very little, if any, over the family life cycle.

#### Widowhood and Role Changes

Compared with other changes in the life of the individual (and the family), the loss of a spouse produces the most serious effect (George, 1980). The event of widowhood may drastically change the roles (patterns of action) of the surviving spouse. Coping requires adjusting which, in turn, requires that one accept new responsibilities into the role structure (Hill, R., 1965).

Hill (1965) suggested a "roller coaster profile" for adjustment that may be applied to the crisis of widowhood. The term of disorganization and the degree of recovery following a crisis are affected by the implementation of roles that are influenced

by the resources the surviving spouse possesses at the time of widowhood or learns by trial and error.

Silverman (1982) viewed life events such as widowhood in terms of the changes they imply, not solely the crisis event itself. These changes, or transitions, occur as one moves from one situation to another, and adaptation to transitions involves learning new roles. The less well-defined the role that an individual must learn, the more difficult the transition will be. Possession of resources prior to the event of widowhood would, logically, ease the stress and difficulties brought about by the crisis (Palmore et al., 1979). Among these resources are skills and knowledge gained through household task performance during earlier family life cycle stages. Indeed, Gross, Crandall, and Knoll (1973) summarized this succinctly by saying that "the outgrowths of the retirement [and widowhood] period are outgrowths of earlier stages in the family life cycle" (p. 67).

Widowhood implies changes in role requirements for men and women. Not only must they develop skill and knowledge resources necessary for task performance and identify and tap resources outside the household (e.g., help from paid employees, family or friends, or community services agencies), but they must hold positive attitudes toward learning and performing these tasks. Attitudes as well as resources may differ between men and women as a result of past household task performance and social roles.



As Lopata stated, "the ease with which an individual accepts the need to learn a new role is inversely related to the intensity of the stigma associated with that role" (1969, p.23.)

Gove (1972a) concluded, similarly, from his study of married and widowed men and women, that gender differences in mental health of the widowed may be explained by considering that the married role of women may be less advantageous than for men because women, traditionally, hold only one major role. Men traditionally hold two roles (household head and breadwinner), both of which are considered positive and fulfilling. At widowhood, women lose whatever inequality they experience in their marital role and, therefore, widowhood may provide positive change. Men, however, often lose two positive roles and gain a less appealing role of home care-taker, leading to less fulfillment and a higher rate of mental illness.

Roles learned and held in earlier life and marriage, then, change with the event of widowhood. The effects of these role changes may lead to differences in adjustment to widowhood between men and women.

#### Gender Differences in Adjustment to Widowhood

Helzing et al. (1981) have offered the interpersonal protection theory as an explanation of widowers' coping difficulties. They propose that marriage offers a "protective screen" to each partner that provides emotional and validation support. The

loss of the spouse removes this protection. Husbands are traditionally more socially isolated outside the work environment with wives more commonly carrying the role of keeping up family social contacts (Bock & Webber, 1972). Wives are also more likely to develop supportive relationships outside the marriage, however, wives are almost exclusive confidants to most husbands (Bock & Webber, 1972). Further contributors to this lack of a social support system and to coping difficulties are the males' traditional reluctance to admit feelings and the relatively small reference group to provide support and identification for widowers (Helzing et al., 1981).

To date, one study (Vinick, 1983) addressed the ways widows and widowers allocate resources and perform tasks necessary for the survival of the household as an independent unit. In this study of 23 widowers in an urban area, the researcher found that although 61% lived alone, a primary reason for not living alone given by the others was their reliance on someone else for household aid. Of those living alone who performed their own housekeeping tasks, most were continuing a pattern established early in marriage or at the time of their wives' illness immediately preceding death. They had not adopted new strategies in widowhood. However, nearly 60% of the widowers who lived alone had some help with household tasks from someone outside the household.

To summarize, research suggests that performance of household tasks is typically gender-specific. With the death of one's spouse, the survivor who wishes to maintain an independent household must assume new roles or find someone else to perform the tasks of the deceased partner. The success with which these roles are assumed depends upon the skills with which one enters widowhood and one's perception of the social acceptability of acquiring the new role.

This study, then, was designed to examine widows' and widowers' household task performance for the periods prior to and after widowhood, and determine personal and social factors which contribute to widowed persons' choice of strategy for the maintenance of household functioning.

#### Theoretical Model

The systems approach provides a useful way of organizing concepts in the model of household task performance. A systems approach highlights interrelationships, interdependence, and interaction of components, affording the examination of individual components and the system as a whole (Gross, Crandall, & Knoll, 1973). Churchman (1968) described a system as a set of parts coordinated for the accomplishment of goals.

The family or household may be viewed as a system whose functions or goals include provisions for physical needs of its members, maintenance with outside relations, maintenance of

member morale, and the production of goods and services necessary to continued independence (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1975). Subsystems are segments of a larger system which also have distinct and coordinated sets of parts for the accomplishment of goals but which work to fulfill a functional role in the overall system. Deacon & Firebaugh (1975) viewed the family system as having two major subsystems: the personal system and the managerial system. Functions in the managerial system are to plan and implement the use of resources to meet demands resulting from family goals and values. Much family resource management research to date has investigated the components of this managerial system, focusing on the processes of planning or controlling activities of homemakers.

This study, however, examined the effects of changes in selected inputs of this system on observable outputs, completed household tasks, and assumed that because the outputs are observed, the management process (the "throughput") had occurred. The system investigated in this study was the "Household Task Performance System" developed by Lovingood and Firebaugh (1978). This model conceptualized household task performance as "recurrent patterns of action resulting from a combination of household tasks and available human resources as affected by various social-demographic characteristics" (p. 21).

### Inputs of the System

The inputs in the system are household tasks necessary for maintenance of an independent household and household members' resources available through possession or procurement.

Tasks. Steidl and Bratton (1968) defined household tasks as the "means activities toward achieving major, long range goals of homemaking" (p. 34) and stated that these tasks are essential to the maintenance of the family and achievement of its goals. Tasks can be categorized as decision-making or decision-implementing tasks (Schlater, 1967). Decision-making tasks include decisions about how the home will be decorated or furnished, meal planning, and financial budgeting. Decision-implementing tasks include doing the grocery shopping, preparing meals, doing the laundry, maintaining the car, and doing yard work.

Studies of household task allocation and time use have provided sets of tasks believed essential to the maintenance of the household (e.g. Bird, Bird, & Scruggs, 1984; Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Centers, Raven, & Rodrigues, 1971; Ericksen et al., 1979; Levinger, 1964; Lovingood & Firebaugh, 1978). Tasks necessary for the maintenance of an independent household can be viewed as a type of demand requiring attention by the family.

Resources. Resources are the "means which are available and recognized for their potential in meeting demands" (Maloch &

Deacon, 1966, p. 32). The resources available to a family include those possessed by its members and those that can be procured from outside the household. Resources can be categorized into "material" or "human" resources. Material resources include goods possessed by the family and financial income that is available for the procurement of household task performance from sources outside the household. Human resources include skills and knowledge related to household task performance possessed by household members or by persons outside the household which can be procured.

The household task performance role of individual household members emerges from a stock of resources that individuals can possess or procure. During their life together, each couple employs various amounts of their own and outside resources to develop a characteristic pattern of resource allocation in order to maintain an independently functioning household unit. The pattern is influenced by external factors that affect both the resources possessed by the individual and the resources available from outside the household. The resources needed for the performance of tasks are influenced by external factors outside the boundaries of this system.

#### External Factors Affecting Inputs

Social and personal factors may influence the inputs of the system. As family members interact with the other systems in

society outside the household, they perform additional roles that may affect the stock of human resources they have available. Family composition may affect the types of tasks that are necessary for family functioning and goal achievement. For example, young children or grandchildren in a household require more physical and non-physical care than is necessary in a family with older, teen-age children (Walker & Woods, 1976).

#### Throughput of the System

A transformation occurs in the throughput component of the system when inputs are coupled with the external factors to produce output. This transformation has been considered to be the managerial process, allowing families to use resources to attain goals (Maloch & Deacon, 1966). Throughput in this conceptual model is the process by which family members form their recurrent patterns of household task performance—their household task performance roles.

#### Output of the System

The tasks, resources, and external factors lead to household task performance role formation, the system throughput, which, in turn, leads to the output of the system, household task roles and, subsequently, maintenance of household independence.

#### Assumptions

Assumptions of the model are that:

1. A household goal is to maintain independence.

2. Members share this goal.
3. The household is a purposive system (Ackoff, 1971) and members contribute resources toward this goal.
4. Households possess or can procure necessary resources.
5. Role formation/task performance indicates management has occurred (Schlater, 1967).

#### Summary

This presentation of the theoretical model and review of supportive literature has included a discussion of family household task performance roles over the life cycle, with particular attention to the widowhood period, as related to the ability to maintain continuity of household task performance during widowhood. A gap exists in the body of knowledge of family resource management and family studies regarding the differences in adjustment to widowhood that may be affected by household roles learned and held earlier in life. Additionally, differences in the ability to generate or maintain social support relationships outside the marriage related to adjustment have not been examined nor have the effects of gender specificity of household task performance on the widowed person's ability to assume new roles to maintain an independent household during widowhood.

The individual concepts contained in the theoretical model, The Household Task Performance System, have also been explained



and justified. The application of this model to household task performance role formation and continuity of household task performance during widowhood in the empirical study will now be presented and discussed.

## CHAPTER III

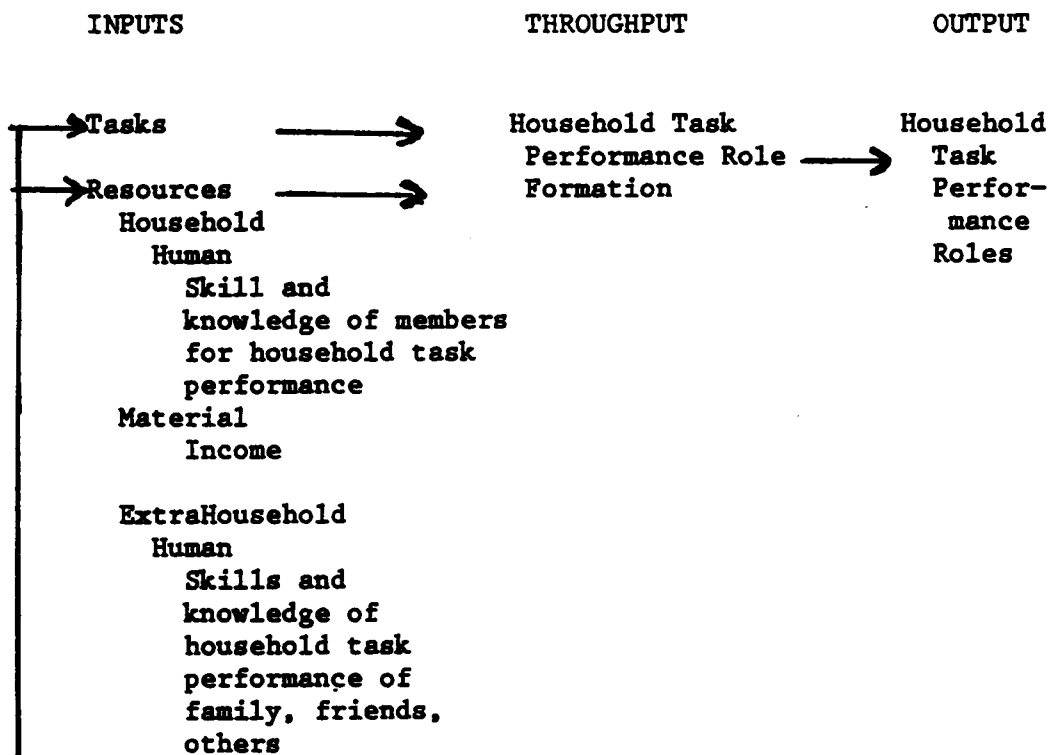
### EMPIRICAL MODEL

The empirical model for this research, "Household Task Performance System During Widowhood" (Figure 1), expands upon the results of the pilot study (P. P. Hill, 1985) by integrating concepts related to household task performance and resources available to widowed persons as they cope with the loss of their spouses. This empirical model, derived from the theoretical model of the household task performance system, provided the investigator with identification of the differences in and factors associated with variations in choice of strategy for household task performance strategy choice during widowhood.

#### Empirical Framework and Supportive Research

##### Inputs to the System

The type of household tasks necessary for the maintenance of an independent household change little from the pre-widowed to the post-widowed state. Certain tasks, such as grocery shopping, cooking, laundry, cleaning, and bill paying, remain essential to the survival of the household. The stock of resources, human or material, both possessed by the individuals in the household and available from outside the household, do, however, change at the event of widowhood. The resources of the deceased spouse, the skills and knowledge regarding the performance of household tasks, are no longer available (Lopata, 1973; Arens, 1982).



**External Factors Affecting Inputs**

1. Age
2. Education level
3. Occupation
4. Health status of household members
5. Social involvement
6. Gender
7. Household human resources and resource demands
8. Geographical area of residence
9. Knowledge of community resources
10. Dwelling maintenance responsibility
11. Employment status
12. Length of widowhood
13. Income level and regularity
14. Normative expectations for gender role
15. Adjustment difficulty

Figure 1. Household Task Performance During Widowhood

Financial resources, such as retirement benefits or earned income, may also diminish or disappear. Social relationships which may provide resources for household task performance may also cease (Halzing et.al., 1981; Bock & Weber, 1972).

At the event of widowhood, new resources must be developed or tapped by the surviving spouse. Resources must be identified and the choices for their use must be weighed. For example, should the widow learn to manage the household finances or is a reliable family member possessing these skills available to assume the task? A professional accountant could also be hired, making use of the material resources available to accomplish the task. Should a widower learn to cook for himself, purchase more expensive but easy-to-prepare convenience foods, or eat most meals away from home?

#### External Factors that Affect Inputs

Factors existing in this system's environment that affect resources include those that affect the household task performance system of any household. Age, education, and occupation of the spouses have been shown to have an impact in previous studies (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Centers et al., 1971; Komarvosky, 1967; Lovingood & Firebaugh, 1978).

These authors also found health to be an important external factor. In the household task performance system of the widowed older person, health can influence an individual's ability and

motivation toward performing tasks. Twelve to 16% of all persons 65 years or older in the U.S. say they have a physical limitation and require regular help with tasks such as cooking meals or grocery shopping (Taylor, Kagay & Leichenko, 1986). Changes in health status after widowhood may also affect the ability to perform household tasks even if the tasks were performed prior to widowhood.

Social involvement is another important factor that affects available resources. Whether through paid employment, volunteerism, or participation in community, religious, or social organizations, social involvement may provide for development of managerial skills (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1981) as well as emotional support and household task performance resources.

In addition to these external factors which were cited by researchers in the context of household task performance, a number of other variables may also affect the stock or availability of resources of the older widowed person. Many studies have shown that men appear to cope much less successfully with widowhood than women (e.g., Helzing, et al, 1981; Stroebe & Stroebe, 1983), making gender an important external factor affecting resources in the household task performance system of older widowed persons (Hill, P. P., 1985).

Household human resources and resource demands, as reflected in household size and composition (both the number and ages of

individuals sharing the household), affect the resources immediately available for household task performance. For example, the widowed person sharing his or her home with an adult child who assumes the task role of the deceased spouse may be required to learn a minimum of new skills in order to maintain continuity of task performance and independence of the household. On the other hand, an individual who lives alone in widowhood must incorporate the entire role of the deceased spouse or depend upon outside resources for assistance.

Geographical area of residence affects both the availability and the accessibility of extra-household resources (Scott & Kivett, 1980). Although public agencies may provide centralized services for an entire urban area, small communities within and outside the larger area differ in the types and amounts of private resource centers in operation. Transportation networks also differ among urban, suburban, and rural areas, limiting accessibility of resources for some individuals. Additionally, information regarding community resources which may be of help to older adults is not equally available in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

The degree of knowledge of the community resources available to an individual affects choices and the amount and types of resources for household task performance. Special transportation services or meal services provided by the community can increase

the resources of an individual in household task performance greatly. A lack of knowledge of their existence or of the individual's eligibility to make use of these services, however, limits the means available for accomplishing these tasks.

Dwelling maintenance responsibility may indicate the types of task and resource demands placed upon the individual. Maintenance responsibilities may vary depending upon the type of housing tenure, with home owners having a greater degree of responsibility for home and yard maintenance than apartment renters or condominium owners.

Employment status offers sources of both material and human resources to an individual. Whether employed part-time or full-time, the working widowed person may have access to a greater social network and greater potential for extra-household resources than the unemployed person. Through communication with fellow workers, customers, or others encountered on the job, information regarding community services, paid services, tools, or techniques for performing household tasks may be obtained. Further, co-workers may provide services, for barter or pay, that allow for the completion of necessary tasks in the household. Additionally, employment during widowhood may provide the householder with motivation for learning new tasks, such as car maintenance or laundry, that may be important to maintaining the job. It also

may provide continuity in everyday living easing emotional adjustment to widowhood (Berardo, 1970).

The ability to develop knowledge and learn new skills and to locate and tap extra-household resources also depends, in part, on the amount of time one has been widowed. The "adjustment period"—the time it takes to pass through the grieving process and move toward more normal daily functions — varies from individual to individual. Research shows, however, that men tend to recover more slowly than women (Helzing et al, 1981; Stroebe & Stroebe, 1983), taking two to four years to pass through the bereavement period (Parkes & Brown, 1972; Young & Wallis, 1963), even though initial adjustment in the first year appears easier for men than women (Carey, 1977). Length of widowhood, then, may be an important external factor affecting the resources the widowed person has for household task performance.

Income level of the household positively affects the ability to purchase services and/or appliances to facilitate household task performance (Hill, P. P., 1985; Lovingood & McCullough, 1986). In addition to the amount of income available, the regularity with which income is received affects the ability to purchase household services. Regular payments allow for short-term financial planning and reduce the amount of risk perceived in purchasing household services. In contrast, irregular income



makes planning more difficult and may cause the recipient to avoid purchasing services.

Because household task performance roles are allocated along traditional sex role lines (e.g., Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Lovingood & Firebaugh, 1978) it is assumed that normative expectations for gender role in household task performance of individuals influence the propensity to take on the tasks of the spouse and that strongly traditional expectations have a negative effect on task assimilation. Hill (1985) found these expectations to be a significant contributor to household task performance role formation. Normative expectations for gender role, then, is included as an external factor affecting resources in the model.

The response to change depends, in part, on how well people perceive themselves as capable of adjusting to change. Self-perceived initial adjustment difficulty may influence present adjustment because initial resource deficiencies that hamper adjustment may persist and because the stress of the initial difficulty may negatively affect the acquisition of new resources or skills and a positive attitude toward adjustment (Hill, P. P., 1985).

#### Throughput of the System

The throughput component of the household task performance system investigated was household task performance role formation. In this system element, processes occur by which surviving spouses and others inside and outside the household

(family, friends, agency workers, paid workers) decide upon their patterns of responsibility, or roles, in household tasks.

### Output of the System

This model conceptualizes household task performance roles as the system outputs. The formation of these roles assumes that tasks necessary for maintenance of household independence are being completed and continuity in task performance exists.

### Definition of the Variables

Definitions of the concepts used in the empirical model are presented below. Specifics regarding the corresponding instrument item number on the interview instrument and coding or scoring for each dependent and independent variable in the model are provided in the following chapter of this report and in Appendix B.

### Dependent Variable

Household task performance continuity strategy—the resource alternative chosen for the performance of household tasks necessary for maintenance of household independence in the post-widowed state.

### Independent Variables

Household task skills and knowledge — competence and understanding of the techniques and the activities involved in household task performance as gained through experience in their performance, including the categories of meal arrangements,

household cleaning, clothing care, social activities, family and self care, household repairs and maintenance, and money management.

Gender — sex of the respondent.

Income — the total annual income before taxes for the household in the past 12 months; includes earned income, return from investments, social security benefits, benefits related to jobs, armed service benefits, legal arrangements, and gifts and inheritances.

Income regularity — the frequency with which income is obtained by the household.

Health status — the self-reported condition of present health.

Social involvement — the number of hours per week of participation in social, political, religious, volunteer, or other non-employment related groups or activities.

Household human resources and resource demands — the total number of non-dependent adults minus the total number of dependent adults and/or children residing permanently in the household.

Geographical area of residence — the location of the household; urban, suburban, or rural as determined subjectively by interviewer assessment.

Knowledge of community resources -- demonstrated awareness of sources of information regarding the availability of community services and household task performance services.

Dwelling maintenance responsibility -- inside and outside maintenance responsibilities of the householder and the householder's perceived difficulty of housing maintenance.

Normative expectations for gender role -- sex role ideology as related to the performance of household tasks.

Self-perceived initial adjustment to widowhood -- the self-reported degree of emotional and functional difficulty experienced by the widowed person in the first month of widowhood.

Age -- the chronological age of the respondent measured in years.

Education level -- the highest grade in school completed by the respondent.

Occupation -- the primary vocation reported by the respondent as categorized using a socioeconomic index reflecting increasing socioeconomic status (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980b).

#### Assumptions Underlying the Model

Assumptions underlying this empirical model are that:

1. Widowers and widows are capable of and do maintain independent households.

2. Widowers and widows can accurately recall household task performance roles of themselves, their spouses, and others prior to widowhood.

### Hypotheses

The hypotheses tested in this study were based upon the empirical model. The specific hypotheses were:

1. Males and females differ in their household task performance roles prior to widowhood.

2. Males and females differ in their household task performance roles after widowhood.

3. Choice of strategy for household task performance continuity is a function of age, education, occupation, health, social involvement, household human resources and resource demands, geographical area of residence, dwelling maintenance responsibility, employment status, length of widowhood, income level, income regularity, normative expectations for gender role, initial adjustment difficulty, and/or household task performance skill and knowledge.

## CHAPTER IV

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purposes of this study were to examine the differences in household task performance by husbands and wives before and after widowhood and to identify important demographic and social factors which affect the variations in household task performance continuity strategy choice for the maintenance of an independent household during widowhood. These research questions were investigated using data collected by personal interviews with elderly widowers and widows in the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area of Roanoke, and Montgomery County, Virginia, from April through October, 1987. These data were collected under the project entitled "Continuity of Household Task Performance During Widowhood" (Lovingood, et al., 1987).

#### The Sample

In order to minimize the potential of obtaining respondents who were frail, dependent on others for care, and easily fatigued by interviewing, and in order to maximize the potential of obtaining respondents faced with similar household tasks as before widowhood, the sample consisted of widowers and widows who met the following criteria: (a) presently not married, (b) age 60 years or older and (c) living independently as defined as being master of the household and taking care of him/herself (Reechie, 1973).

The stratified sample was obtained using two methods: (1) Names of the surviving spouses of men and women aged 60 years or older at the time of death were obtained using the obituaries of the daily newspapers covering the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area of Roanoke, Virginia, and Montgomery County, Virginia. Obituaries from two categories of length of widowhood, short-term (6 months to 3 years) and long-term (3 to 5 years), were used. Names and information about the deceased men and women listed along with their spouses' names and addresses were recorded. 2) Referrals of individuals meeting the sample criteria were obtained through community sources such as church groups, senior citizen groups, and participants in the study.

Participants were contacted initially either by telephone or by letter to explain the purpose and nature of the study and to encourage participation. The initial telephone call or a follow-up call to the letter was used to establish the participant's eligibility and to arrange a time for an interview. Data were collected by a total of eight interviewers over the period of March through October, 1987.

#### Data Collection

Based upon precedents established in research on household production and household task distribution (e.g., Bird et al.,

1985; Ericksen et al., 1979; Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Lovingood & Firebaugh, 1978; Walker & Woods, 1976) data were collected using personal interview schedules. Distinct advantages to this method of data collection include personal contact which allows for explanation of the rationale for the study to encourage cooperation and promote accuracy of responses. Additionally, the control afforded by personal interviews facilitated obtaining as many complete and usable records required as possible within the constraints of time and financial resources. A total of 375 telephone contacts were made to determine eligibility and willingness to participate with a completion rate of 46%. (Table 1). A total of 173 respondents (38 males and 135 females) participated in the study.

#### Instrument Development and Pre-testing

The interview instrument used in this study assessed the variables which were assumed to describe household task performance roles prior to and following widowhood and to predict household task performance continuity strategy during widowhood, based on previous research. Validity of the instrument was determined by a review provided by family resource management and gerontology specialists. The instrument was pretested for clarity and ease of administration with a sample of five widowers and 11 widows with characteristics similar to the sample used in



Table 1.

Reasons for Refusal and Ineligibility of SampleContacts by Gender and Length of Widowhood

Reason	Males		Total	Females		Total	Sample Total
	long term	short term		long term	short term		
<b>REFUSALS</b>							
Grieving		1	1	1	2	3	4
Too busy	4	4	8	2	8	10	18
Too ill	8	5	13	13	18	31	44
Afraid			0	4	2	6	6
Misc.	2	2	4	2	1	3	7
Refused at con- firmation	3	2	5	2	3	5	10
Un- specified	15	22	31	35	41	76	113
<b>INELIGIBLES</b>							
Married	7	3	10	2		2	12
In nursing home	3	1	4	5	4	9	13
Moved out of SMSA	3		3	4	2	6	11
Not living independ- ently	3	5	8	3	3	6	14
Widowed too long						6	6

Table 1 continued.

Reasons for Refusal and Ineligibility

of Sample Contacts by Gender and Length of Widowhood

Reason short	Males		Total	Females		Total	Sample Total
	long term	short term		long term	short term		
Never lived with spouse			1				1
Too young				3		3	3
Divorced, not widowed						1	1
Deceased	5	3	8	6	1	7	15
Un- specified	4	1	5	1	2	3	8

TOTAL COMPLETED INTERVIEWS = 173

TOTAL REFUSALS = 113

TOTAL INELIGIBLE = 83

COMPLETION RATE = 46.1%

the study. Adjustments and revisions resulting from this pretest were incorporated into the final instrument.

Variable measurement. The interview schedule used in this study assessed the variables that are assumed to predict household task performance continuity strategy during widowhood, based on research cited earlier. The variables included in the interview schedule, and the methods for their measurement are presented here. Specific details related to coding or scoring of each variable and the related instrument item(s) are included in Appendix B.

Dependent variable. A set of household tasks, derived from instruments used by Bird et al. (1984), Blood and Wolfe (1960), Centers et al. (1971), Eriksen et al. (1979), Levinger (1964), and Lovingood and Firebaugh (1978), was used. The set consisted of items judged to be necessary for maintenance of an independent household. (See Appendix C). The respondent was asked to indicate who completed each task at the time of the interview. A "continuity strategy score" was derived by summing the total number of tasks for which the respondent took personal responsibility. High scores represented the assumption of tasks into the household task performance role of the respondent. Lower scores showed the strategy of delegating or relinquishing household task performance responsibilities had been chosen.

Independent variables. Experiential learning takes place each time a task is performed. Assuming minimal decay through forgetting or other interfering factors, performance of specific household tasks prior to widowhood may be used to index skill and knowledge. The specific tasks for which the respondent was primarily responsible prior to widowhood were categorized into seven groups (meal arrangements, household cleaning, clothing care, social activities, family and self care, household repairs and maintenance, and household money management)(See Appendix C).

A household skill and knowledge score was created using a weighting of tasks within each category to derive equal point score possibilities (10 points) for each category. For example, the 5 meal-related tasks each received 2.0 points and the 8 laundry-related tasks received 1.25 points. The variable household task skill and knowledge was created by summing the overall task category scores creating a scale of 0 to 70. It measured the human resources possessed by the respondent for performing household tasks.

Age of the surviving spouse was measured as the actual age of the respondent in years as of the last birthday according to the month, date, and year of birth reported by the respondent.

Educational level was recorded as the highest grade of school completed by the respondent and coded using a scale of 1

to 8 with 1 representing some grade school completed and 8 representing a post graduate degree.

The primary occupation reported by the respondent was categorized using a scale reflecting increasing socioeconomic status, with 1 representing the lowest level and 9 representing the highest level (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1982).

Employment status was categorized using a code of 1 to 8 with "1" representing "homemaker", and "2" representing "homemaker retired from outside employment". Retired and not employed was designated as "3". Retired and employed part-time or full-time were represented by "4" and "5", respectively. Part-time employed respondents were scored "6" and the full-time employed were represented by a score of "7". Unemployed but looking for work respondents were scored "8".

Gender of the surviving spouse was coded as 1 or 2, male or female, respectively.

Three items were used to construct the 5-19 point self-perceived health status scale. A score of 5 represented "no health problems/no health disabilities" and 19 represented "great health problems/great health disabilities".

Social involvement was measured using a 0 to 20 point scale which reflected an increasing amount of time spent in social activities by the respondent (i.e., church activities, clubs,

volunteering). It was assumed that time spent in social activities indicated degree of social involvement of the respondent.

Respondents were asked to indicate their annual income from a set of six income ranges, with the lowest endpoint being less than \$5,000 and the highest endpoint being \$25,000 or more. Income regularity from the respondent's primary income source was assessed using a 6 point scale with 1 representing weekly regularity and 6 representing no regularity.

The number and ages of other household members was used to determine household task resources and resource demands. Using the assumption that non-dependent adults residing in the household can contribute resources to household task performance, a positive point was assigned for each non-dependent adult (age 18 or over) residing in the household. A negative point was scored for each child (under the age of 18) or dependent adult residing in the household, using the assumption that these household members demand more household tasks for their care than they contribute to the household. This resulted in a scale reflecting the increasing availability of human resources to meet demands in the household.

Geographical area of residence, classified as urban, suburban, or rural, as determined according to the report of the interviewer, was coded as 1, 2, or 3, respectively.

Knowledge of community resources available for assistance in household task performance was assessed using two questions regarding information sources of which the respondent was aware. A point was scored for each source specified, resulting in a scale of 0 to 2. This scale reflects an increasing degree of community resource knowledge possessed by the respondent.

Dwelling maintenance responsibility was measured using four items regarding the respondent's maintenance responsibilities and perceived degree of difficulty in maintaining the dwelling. These scores were summed to produce a "dwelling maintenance responsibility" scale of 0 to 4 with 4 representing the greatest responsibility.

Normative expectations for gender role were assessed by the scores obtained for the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence & Helmreich, 1978) (Appendix D items 14 through 28). This is a 15 item scale composed of statements which describe rights and roles women ought to have in an egalitarian society. Agreement with the statements was indicated on a 4 point scale of "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Items were scored 1 to 4 with a total score of 60 indicating the highest degree of egalitarian attitude.

The year in which respondents were widowed was recorded. From this information, two length of widowhood categories were formed with short-term widowed respondents being widowed 6 months

to 3 years and designated as "1" and long-term widowed respondents being widowed 3 to 5 years and designated as "2".

Self-perceived adjustment was assessed using two items. Respondents ranked their adjustment difficulty in the first month from "very difficult" (1) to "not difficult at all" (4). Additionally, rank respondents how hard it was to readjust life after being widowed from 1, representing "very hard" to 4, representing "not hard at all". The scores on these two items were summed to create a scale of 2 to 8 reflecting decreasing difficulty in adjustment after widowhood.

#### Administration of the Instrument

Interviews were conducted by trained interviewers in respondents' homes. The average length of the interview was approximately one hour. Individual interviewers were supervised on a weekly basis to insure inter-observer consistency in interviewing and recording. Additionally, two group meetings were conducted to reinforce training and further insure consistency and interviewer reliability. All completed records were checked for completeness and consistency.

#### Data Analysis

Data were compiled for analysis using the SAS (Statistical Analysis System) program. Descriptive statistics of means and standard deviations, as appropriate, were computed for demographic characteristics of the sample (age, gender, length of widowhood,



education level, occupation, employment status, household income level, household income regularity, health status, household task resources and resource demands, and geographical area of residence), and the other variables of social involvement, dwelling maintenance responsibility knowledge of community resources, normative expectations for gender role, and self-perceived adjustment to widowhood. Analysis of variance was used to test hypotheses 1 and 2 (to determine significant differences between genders and length of widowhood categories for all independent variables). Stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to test hypothesis 3 (to identify significant predictors of variance in the dependent variable). The following chapter provides a description of the sample used in this study. Results and discussion of other analyses are presented in Chapter 6.

## CHAPTER V

### DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

The problem in this study was to examine the household task performance roles of older men and women for the periods prior to and after widowhood and to determine personal and social factors that contribute to the strategy choices of widowed persons to maintain their independence with respect to household task performance continuity. Data were from the 1987 AARP Andrus Foundation study entitled "Continuity of Household Task Performance During Widowhood" (Lovin-good, et al. 1987). This chapter describes the sample in terms of their personal characteristics and living environments. Results of the statistical analyses used to test the empirical "Household Task Performance System During Widowhood" model are presented in the following chapter.

#### Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Data were collected from a total of 173 respondents. There were 38 males (representing 22% of the total sample) and 135 females (representing 78% of the total sample). The sample was primarily caucasian (94.7%) with the remainder being black. Table 2 provides an overview of the demographic and psychosocial characteristics of the sample.

#### Personal Characteristics

The mean age for the sample was 70.37 years with a range of 60 to 91 years. The mean age for males was approximately 7 years

Table 2.  
Demographic and Psychosocial Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Men		Women		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Gender	38	22.0	135	78.0	173	100.0
Length of Widowhood						
3 - 5 years	21	55.3	69	51.1	90	52.0
6 months - 3 years	17	44.7	66	48.9	83	48.0
Race						
White	35	92.1	125	95.4	160	94.7
Black	3	7.9	6	4.6	9	5.3
Missing	0		4			
Age, years						
60-64	1	2.7	21	15.9	22	13.0
65-69	3	8.1	33	25.0	36	21.3
70-74	4	10.8	36	27.3	40	23.7
75-79	11	29.7	17	12.9	28	16.6
80-84	12	32.4	17	12.9	29	17.2
85-89	6	16.2	7	5.3	13	7.7
>89	0		1	0.8	1	0.6
Missing	1		3		4	
Mean <sup>a</sup>		78.65		71.89		73.37
S.D.		6.48		7.14		7.52
Range		64-89		60-91		60-91
<sup>a</sup> t (167)=5.19, p<.0001						
Education						
1. 0-4 years	3	8.1	3	2.2	6	3.5
2. 5-8 years	11	29.7	18	13.3	29	16.9
3. Some high school	4	10.8	31	23.0	35	20.3
4. Completed high school	2	5.4	32	23.7	34	19.8
5. Business/trade school	3	8.1	15	11.1	18	10.5
6. 1-3 years college	3	8.1	20	14.8	23	13.4
7. 4 years college	7	18.9	9	6.7	16	9.3
8. Post graduate work	4	10.8	7	5.2	11	6.4
Missing	1				1	
mean <sup>b</sup>	4.30		4.25		4.26	
S.D.	2.44		1.75		1.91	
Range	1-8		1-8		1-8	

<sup>b</sup>t (47)=0.11, n.s.

Table 2 continued.  
Demographic and Psychosocial Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Men		Women		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Health Status Score</b>						
8-10 (poor)	3	7.9	1	0.8	4	2.4
11-13	4	10.5	16	6.1	20	11.8
14-16	10	26.3	32	24.2	42	24.7
17-19	21	55.3	83	62.9	104	61.2
Missing			3			
Mean <sup>c</sup>	15.79		16.60		16.42	
S.D.	2.97		2.26		2.45	
Range	8-19		10-19		8-19	
C <sub>t</sub> (50) = -1.57, n.s.						
<b>Occupation</b>						
Service Workers	5	13.2	13	11.4	18	11.8
Laborers	7	18.4	10	8.8	17	11.2
Operatives	6	15.8	7	6.1	13	8.6
Craftworkers	4	10.5	2	1.8	6	3.9
Clerical	1	2.6	27	26.7	28	18.4
Sales	2	5.3	6	5.3	8	5.3
Managers	3	7.9	1	0.9	4	2.6
Professionals	10	26.3	25	21.9	35	23.0
Homemakers	0		23	20.2	23	15.1
Missing			21		21	
<b>Employment Status</b>						
Homemaker	0		44	32.6	44	25.6
Homemaker and retired	0		45	33.3	45	26.2
Retired	33	89.2	28	20.7	61	35.5
Retired, work part-time	3	8.1	4	3.0	7	4.1
Retired, work full-time	1	2.7	0		1	0.6
Employed part-time	0		8	5.9	8	4.7
Employed full-time	0		6	4.4	6	3.5
Missing	1				1	

Table 2 continued.  
Demographic and Psychosocial Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Men		Women		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Income</b>						
1. Less than \$5000	2	6.3	12	10.2	14	9.3
2. \$5000-9,999	6	18.8	31	26.3	37	24.7
3. \$10,000-14,999	3	9.4	28	23.7	31	20.7
4. \$15,000-19,999	5	15.6	9	7.6	14	9.3
5. \$20,000-24,999	3	9.4	13	11.0	16	10.7
6. \$25,000 and up	13	40.6	25	21.2	38	25.3
Missing	6		17		23	
Mean <sup>d</sup>		4.25		3.47		3.63
S.D.		1.78		1.70		1.74
Range		1-6		1-6		1-6
<sup>d</sup> t (148)=2.29, p<.03						
<b>Age at First Marriage</b>						
(years)						
≤17	0		22	16.4	22	12.8
18-19	4	10.5	23	17.2	27	15.7
20-25	17	44.7	71	53.0	88	51.2
26-30	11	28.9	14	10.5	25	14.5
31-35	5	13.2	3	2.2	8	4.7
36-40	0		0		0	
41+	1	2.6	1	0.8	2	1.2
Missing	0		1		1	
<b>Number of Marriages</b>						
One	28	73.7	109	80.7	137	79.2
More than one	10	26.3	26	19.3	36	20.8
<b>Length of Most Recent Marriage</b>						
(years)						
Less than 5	1	2.7	1	0.7	2	1.2
5-10	0		4	2.9	4	2.3
11-15	0		3	2.2	3	1.7
16-20	1	2.7	1	0.7	2	1.2
21-30	0		4	2.9	4	2.3
31-40	6	16.2	19	14.1	25	14.5
41-50	13	35.1	60	44.4	73	42.4
More than 50	16	43.2	43	31.9	59	34.3
Missing	1		0		1	

Table 2 continued.  
Demographic and Psychosocial Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Men		Women		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Period of Living Away from Spouse (years)</b>						
Never	21	55.3	80	59.3	101	58.4
1	8	21.1	16	11.9	24	13.9
2	3	7.9	16	11.9	19	11.0
3	2	5.3	10	7.4	12	6.9
4-6	2	5.3	7	5.2	9	5.1
8-9	1	2.6	1	0.7	2	1.2
12-15	1	2.6	1	0.7	2	1.2
16-18	0		3	2.2	3	1.8
30	0		1	0.7	1	0.6
<b>Number of Living Children</b>						
0	8	21.1	20	14.8	28	16.2
1	9	23.7	29	21.5	38	22.0
2	14	36.8	36	26.7	50	28.9
3	3	7.9	29	21.5	32	18.5
4	2	5.3	9	6.7	11	6.4
5-6	2	5.3	8	5.9	10	5.8
7-8	0		2	1.5	2	1.2
11-14	0		2	1.5	2	1.2
<b>Live Alone</b>						
Yes	31	81.6	109	80.7	140	80.9
No	7	18.4	26	19.3	33	19.1
<b>Household Members<sup>e</sup></b>						
Children	4		16		20	60.6
Grandchildren	1		9		10	30.3
Siblings	0		5		5	15.2
Parent	0		1		1	3.0
Other Relative	1		0		1	3.0
<sup>e</sup> Total exceeds 100% because of multiple household members. Total N = 33.						
<b>Household Size and Composition</b>						
-5	1	2.6	0		1	0.6
-4	0		1	0.7	1	0.6
-3	0		1	0.7	1	0.6
-2	3	7.9	8	5.9	11	6.4
-1	1	2.6	15	11.1	16	9.2
0	33	86.8	110	81.5	143	82.7
Mean <sup>f</sup>	-0.3		-0.3		-0.3	
S.D.	1.0		0.7		0.8	
Range	-5 - 0		-4 - 0		-5 - 0	

<sup>f</sup>t(48) = -0.21, n.s.

Table 2 continued.  
Demographic and Psychosocial Characteristics of the Sample

Variable	Men		Women		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Moved After Widowhood</b>						
Yes	2	5.3	13	9.6	15	8.7
No	36	94.7	122	90.4	158	91.3
<b>Numbers of Rooms in Dwelling</b>						
2-3	0		6	4.4	6	3.5
4	3	7.9	16	11.9	19	11.0
5	12	31.6	30	22.2	42	24.3
6	9	23.7	32	23.7	41	23.7
7	6	15.8	25	18.5	31	17.9
8	7	18.4	10	7.4	17	9.8
9	1	2.6	5	3.7	6	3.5
10	0		9	6.7	9	5.2
13-18	0		2	1.5	2	1.2
<b>Satisfaction with Size of Dwelling</b>						
Less than needed	1	0.6	4	3.0	5	2.9
Just right	24	63.2	100	74.1	124	71.7
More than needed	13	34.2	31	23.0	44	25.4
Mean <sup>9</sup>	2.32		2.20		2.23	
S.D.	0.53		0.47		0.48	
Range	1 - 3		1 - 3		1 - 3	
$t(171) = 1.31, n.s.$						
<b>House Too Much to Keep Clean</b>						
Yes	6	15.8	15	11.1	21	12.1
No	32	84.2	120	88.9	152	87.9
<b>Performance of Inside Repairs</b>						
Self	34	89.5	108	80.0	142	82.1
Landlord	4	10.5	24	17.8	28	16.2
Others	0		3	2.2	3	1.7
<b>Performance of Outside Repairs</b>						
Self	32	84.2	99	73.3	131	75.7
Landlord	4	10.5	23	17.0	27	15.6
Others	2	5.3	13	9.6	15	8.7

Table 2 continued.  
Demographic and Psychosocial Characteristics of the Sample

Variable	Men		Women		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Dissatisfaction with House Appearance</b>						
Yes	3	8.1	11	8.2	14	8.2
No	34	91.9	123	91.8	157	91.8
Missing	1		1		2	
<b>Ideal Housing Situation</b>						
Live alone	25	65.8	88	65.2	113	65.3
Have paid help	7	18.4	21	15.6	28	16.2
Have live-in help	4	10.5	14	10.4	18	10.4
Move so other maintains	1	2.6	11	8.2	12	6.9
Move close to helper	0		1	0.7	1	0.6
Move in with another	1	2.6	0		1	0.6
<b>Does the Present Housing Match the Ideal</b>						
Yes	33	86.8	119	88.2	152	87.9
No	5	13.2	16	11.9	21	12.1
<b>Knows Where to Get Chore Assistance</b>						
Yes	24	64.9	76	56.3	100	58.1
No	13	35.1	59	43.7	72	41.9
Missing	1				1	



higher than that of females. However, age range was smaller for males than females, (64-89 for males versus 60-91 for females). Little difference was found in mean age between short- and long-term widowed groups with both being approximately 73 years.

Over two-thirds of the sample rated their health as good or excellent with slightly more women than men rating their health in these categories. These people were much healthier than the national average in which 30% of persons age 65 years or older assess their health as fair to poor (American Association of Retired Persons, 1987). Over half of the sample said their health did not constrain their activities at all, with more men (61%) stating this than women (53%). Men, however, appeared to have more physical problems, as the interviewers reported. Almost one-third of the men appeared to have hearing problems as opposed to 11% of the females. Almost one-quarter of the men appeared to have vision problems whereas less than 10% of the women did. Mobility appeared to be a greater problem for both groups than other health problems.

Most of the sample had received a high school education. Slightly more men (40%) than women (38%) had advanced their education beyond high school. This sample appeared better educated than their peers nationally, of whom only 10% had advanced beyond high school (American Association of Retired Persons, 1987).

Of the entire sample, only 12.9% were employed at the time of the interview (11% of the men and 13% of the women). Most (83.1%) were not working at the time they were widowed and two-thirds had not held a job in over 10 years. Almost 90% of the men classified themselves as retired whereas only 21% of the women classified themselves as such. Of those who were currently employed, 60% of the men said they were working to keep busy while an almost equal proportion of the women said they were working because of financial need.

When asked about their occupation prior to retirement, men indicated they were often craftsmen, foremen, or kindred workers. Approximately 20% of the female respondents indicated their occupation to be "homemaker". Women who worked outside the home were most often employed in clerical positions. Approximately one-quarter of the total sample indicated their occupation had been professional or technical.

Almost half of the entire sample had an annual income between \$5,000 and \$16,000 with slightly over one-third having an income of \$20,000 or more. These figures compare favorably with national averages (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1986). Half of the males had incomes of \$20,000 or more (higher than the reported national median) but half of the females had incomes between \$5,000 and \$15,000 which is comparable to the national median statistics (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1986).

Major sources of income were social security benefits, return from investments, and job-related benefits. Men had slightly more income from investments and slightly more men received social security benefits than women. More men (63%) received job-related benefits than women (42%), which was understandable since a large portion of the women had been homemakers. Income was regular for most of the sample with 93.6% receiving it monthly. More men than women felt their income was better than others their age but almost two-thirds of the women felt their income was about the same as others their age. Over three-fourths of the men said their income took care of their needs very well, but only half of the women indicated this to be true.

Over three-quarters of the sample had been married only once. Just over half of the sample were between 20 and 25 years of age at marriage with men marrying at a slightly older age than women. Three-quarters of the sample were married for 41 years or more before widowhood. Most of the respondents were never separated for any reason from their spouse over the course of their marriage which is surprising since the mean age (73 years) and the average length of marriage for this sample would have made military service separation due to World War II a strong likelihood.

Half of the entire sample said they had one or two living children and twenty respondents indicated having no children. Regarding household task resources and resource demands, 11% said at least one child presently resided with them. Another 3.5% of the sample reported that grandchildren, siblings, parents, and others were part of the households. This represents slightly fewer respondents in the sample living with family than nationally reported (American Association of Retired Persons, 1987).

#### Living Environment

The majority of the sample appeared to be aging in place with 80.9% living alone. This was larger than the 30% reported nationally. (American Association of Retired Persons, 1987). Most (87.9%) considered their present living situation as ideal and preferred. More women than men had moved since becoming widowed (10% versus 5%) and one-third of those who chose to move did so after one year of widowhood. Most lived in detached, single family dwellings in mixed-age neighborhoods and approximately three-quarters of the sample were responsible for the general maintenance of their home. This is congruent with national statistics (American Association of Retired Persons, 1987). Over 90% of the sample lived in a suburban or urban area with more men than women living in urban rather than suburban areas. Over two-thirds said their home was just the right size for their needs and most residences had between 5 and 7 rooms. Most respondents (88%)

reported having no problems keeping their homes clean and maintaining them. According to the interviewers, women's homes were in slightly better condition than men's, although the majority of homes (97%) were in generally sound to excellent condition.

### Transportation

Almost three-quarters of the sample owned an automobile, although the proportion was higher for men (84%) than women (72%). Men reported driving more frequently than women but over 90% of the car owners said they drove several times per week or daily. Fewer women said they had access to public bus services than men (47% versus 65%) which is not surprising considering men tended to live in urban areas (having more public transportation services) whereas women tended to live in suburban areas (with more limited access to public transportation services). Further, almost all men reported having access to transportation when they needed it but just over three-quarters of the women reported this.

### Social Activities

Women spent more time in church and church-related activities than men. Neither group volunteered much, with three-quarters of the sample reporting no time spent in volunteer work. More women (75%) than men (61%), however, said they had had leadership experience in the form of office or chairmanships.

### Widowhood Adjustment

The sample was almost equally divided between two terms of widowhood: short-term (less than 3 years) and long-term (3 to 5 years). Over two-thirds said their spouse had suffered a long illness prior to death with slightly more men than women stating this. Almost two-thirds said the first month of widowhood was very difficult and over three-quarters described overall adjustment as fairly or very difficult. Those widowed longer described their adjustment to be slightly more difficult than those widowed more recently. Just over half of the total sample said that it took one year or less to adjust but one-third of the sample said they were not yet adjusted at the time of the interview. Most respondents reported that family members were most helpful at the time of widowhood.

### Knowledge of Community Resources

Overall, the respondents had knowledge of the community resources available to them. Almost all respondents said they knew where they could receive information about resources in the community but slightly less than half said they knew where household chore services could be obtained in the community.

### Normative Expectations for Gender Role

Scores on the Attitudes Toward Women Scale ranged from 31 to 53 out of a possible 60 points for the overall sample with a mean

of 38.94. Men scored slightly lower than women. The scores indicated the sample had traditional attitudes toward gender roles.

#### Summary of Sample Description

Generally, the respondents were living alone and aging in place in suburban or urban areas. They were in good health and had adequate income to meet financial needs. Most were not presently employed and not particularly socially active. They had been married only once over their lifetime and almost one-third indicated that they had not yet completely adjusted to widowhood. They were traditional in their attitudes toward gender roles.

## CHAPTER VI

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF HOUSEHOLD TASK PERFORMANCE ROLES AND PREDICTORS OF CONTINUITY STRATEGY

The household task performance roles of widowers and widows prior to and during widowhood are described in this chapter. Results of tests of significant differences and of the regression model predicting household task performance continuity strategy choice are also presented. Hypotheses which were tested are discussed in relationship to the analyses performed. Finally, a discussion of these findings concludes the chapter.

#### Household Task Performance Roles

Household task performance roles of spouses prior to widowhood and surviving spouses at the time of the interview were determined using a set of 33 household tasks covering seven areas of household chores necessary for maintenance of an independent household. The set was used twice. First, respondents were asked to indicate the degree of responsibility of each spouses and others in performing each task in the set prior to widowhood and before any serious illness. Degree of responsibility was based on a 5 point continuum with a score of "1" indicating the husband was primarily responsible, a score of "3" indicating equal sharing of responsibility between spouses, and a score of "5" indicating the wife was primarily responsible.



Next, respondents indicated if they currently performed the tasks independently or had help from others, or if someone other than they were responsible for task completion. They also indicated any tasks which were no longer applicable to the independence of the household.

#### Pre-widowhood Household Task Performance Roles

Most pre-widowhood household roles fell along traditional lines, Table 3 displays the division of labor for each task. Women were primarily responsible for the tasks involved in meal preparation, housecleaning, laundry (except dry cleaning), care of family members, maintaining contact with relatives and friends, and planning social activities (mean scores of 3.5 to 5.0). Males had primary responsibility for six tasks: planning and performing household maintenance and repairs, planning and performing auto maintenance and repairs, and planning and making financial investments (mean scores of 1.0 to 2.49) Other money management tasks of balancing the checkbook and paying bills, planning family leisure activities, participating in social and community activities, and taking garments to the dry cleaners were commonly shared in most households prior to widowhood (mean scores of 2.5 to 3.49). If, however, standard deviations are taken into consideration, more variability in task responsibility is apparent and more tasks than the means show may have been commonly shared by some

Table 3.

Household Tasks Commonly Performed Prior to Widowhood

TASK	MEAN SCORE*	STD. DEV.
WIVES (N=135)		
planned meals	4.65	0.83
made shopping list	4.53	0.96
shopped for food	3.86	1.21
cooked	4.61	0.80
cleaned up/ washed dishes	4.25	0.98
straightened the house	4.66	0.68
vacuumed	4.35	1.13
dusted	4.74	0.71
mopped floors, washed walls, etc.	4.36	1.13
scheduled weekly/ seasonly cleaning	4.57	0.94
sorted laundry	4.78	0.67
selected washer/ dryer settings	4.72	0.83
put clothes in washer	4.64	0.92
put clothes in dryer	4.62	0.94
folded clothes	4.62	0.88
put clothes away	4.66	0.84
hung clothes to day	4.59	0.91
maintained contact with relatives/ friends	3.77	0.90

(table continues)

Table 3 (continued)

Household Tasks Commonly Performed Prior to Widowhood


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arranged social/ community activities	3.54	1.02
arranged for medical/ dental appointments	4.02	1.05
took care of family members	4.30	0.81
decided what child- rearing practices were followed	3.72	0.94
HUSBANDS (N=38)		
planned/scheduled household maintenance/ repairs/yardwork	1.82	1.33
performed household maintenance/repairs/ yardwork	1.67	1.18
planned/scheduled auto maintenance/ repairs	1.67	1.18
performed auto maintenance/ repairs or saw they were done	1.29	0.84
planned investments	2.34	1.28
made investments	2.33	1.34
SHARED		
balanced checkbook	3.08	1.77
paid bills	3.12	1.64
planned fam. activities	3.24	0.97
participated in social/ community activities	3.54	1.02
took garments to dry cleaner	2.84	1.57

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Household Tasks Commonly Performed Prior to Widowhood

Scoring scale— 1=husband always  
 2=husband more often than wife  
 3=husband and wife equally  
 4=wife more often than husband  
 5=wife always

couples (grocery shopping, cooking, dish washing, vacuuming, mopping the floors, arranging medical appointments, planning and performing household repairs, making financial investments and caring for family members ).

Task performance by someone other than the husband or wife was also recorded. Help was most commonly found for these nine tasks: household cleaning, seasonal cleaning, washing, folding, and putting laundry away, hanging clothes to dry, taking clothes to the dry cleaner, performing household maintenance and repairs, and performing auto maintenance and repairs.

#### Postwidowhood Household Task Performance Roles

For the most part, household tasks necessary for the maintenance of an independent household were performed by the surviving spouse following widowhood (Table 4). Variations between task categories did exist and help with some tasks was more common than it was for other tasks.

Meal planning and preparation tasks were performed primarily by the surviving spouse. Other helpers included parents, children, siblings, friends, or neighbors each to a relatively small degree. Very few respondents reported having hired help for any of the chores. Looking at the data by gender and length of widowhood, more men in the short-term widowed category performed these tasks for themselves than those in the long-term widowed category (Table 5). In contrast, more women in the

Table 4.

Percentages of continuity strategy choice by task

TASK	PERFORMED BY			NOT APPLICABLE
	SELF	HELP		
		HIRED	OTHER*	
plan meals	85.0	3.5	9.8	1.7
make list	87.9	1.7	8.7	1.7
shop	79.2	2.3	17.3	1.2
cook	84.4	----	14.4	1.2
dishes	87.9	----	10.9	1.2
clean house	80.9	7.5	11.6	----
vacuum	65.3	19.1	15.6	----
dust	69.9	17.3	12.8	----
mop	66.5	19.1	12.1	2.3
seas. clean	71.1	11.0	10.4	7.5
sort laundry	83.2	5.8	10.4	0.6
select setting	82.7	6.9	10.4	----
wash clothes	82.7	6.9	10.4	----
dry clothes	75.1	7.5	9.3	8.1
hang dry clothes	66.5	6.4	8.0	19.1
fold clothes	81.5	8.1	10.4	----
put clothes away	85.0	5.8	8.6	0.6
cleaners	67.6	4.6	13.9	13.9
social contact	85.5	----	13.9	0.6
social particip.	82.6	----	7.5	9.9
medical appts.	90.8	0.6	7.4	1.2
exercise/leisure	89.0	1.2	4.6	6.4
plan hous.repairs	70.5	9.8	15.7	4.0
hous. repairs	42.8	22.0	31.2	4.0
plan auto repairs	60.1	2.3	11.0	26.6
auto repairs	37.8	18.0	18.0	26.2
bills	94.2	----	5.8	----
checks	86.7	0.6	8.1	4.6
plan invest.	59.0	2.3	9.2	29.5
make invest.	59.5	2.3	7.0	31.2
member care	11.6	----	1.7	86.7
member care dec.	2.9	----	1.7	95.4

\*Other=family members, friends, neighbors, community agency personnel, or anyone not employed for the purpose of performing household tasks

Note: n = 173 for all tasks except social participation and auto repairs (n = 172)

Table 5.

Percentages of post-widowhood household task performance by males  
by length of widowhood

TASK	SELF (short-term/ long-term)	OTHER* (short-term/ long-term)	N.A (short-term/ long-term)
meal planning	76.5 / 66.7	23.5 / 23.8	0.0 / 9.5
making list	82.4 / 66.7	17.7 / 23.8	0.0 / 9.5
shopping	82.4 / 57.1	17.7 / 33.3	0.0 / 9.5
cooking	76.6 / 7.1	23.5 / 33.3	0.0 / 9.5
dishes	82.4 / 61.9	17.7 / 28.6	0.0 / 9.5
cleaning house	82.4 / 57.1	17.6 / 42.7	0.0 / 0.0
vacuuming	70.6 / 47.7	29.4 / 52.4	0.0 / 0.0
dusting	70.6 / 47.7	29.4 / 52.4	0.0 / 0.0
mopping	76.5 / 52.4	23.5 / 47.6	0.0 / 0.0
seasonal cleaning	82.4 / 47.6	17.7 / 52.4	0.0 / 0.0
sorting laundry	82.4 / 47.6	17.7 / 47.6	0.0 / 4.8
selecting settings	82.4 / 52.4	17.7 / 47.6	0.0 / 0.0
washing clothes	82.4 / 57.1	17.7 / 42.9	0.0 / 0.0
drying clothes	64.7 / 47.6	17.7 / 38.1	17.7 / 14.3
folding clothes	82.4 / 57.1	17.7 / 42.9	0.0 / 0.0
putting away	88.2 / 61.9	11.8 / 38.1	0.0 / 0.0
hanging clothes	58.8 / 47.6	17.7 / 33.3	23.5 / 19.1
taking to cleaner	83.2 / 57.1	5.9 / 33.3	5.9 / 9.5
social contact	88.2 / 90.5	11.8 / 4.8	0.0 / 4.8
social activities	82.4 / 90.5	5.9 / 0.0	11.8 / 9.5
participation	70.6 / 76.2	11.7 / 9.5	17.6 / 14.3
medical appointments	94.1 / 81.0	5.9 / 14.3	0.0 / 4.8
exercise/leisure	88.2 / 90.5	5.9 / 0.0	5.9 / 9.5
plan hous.repairs	88.2 / 76.2	11.8 / 19.1	0.0 / 4.8
hous. repairs	76.5 / 42.9	23.5 / 52.4	0.0 / 4.8
plan auto repairs	94.1 / 71.4	0.0 / 0.0	5.9 / 28.6
auto repairs	70.6 / 45.0	23.5 / 30.0	5.9 / 25.0
bills	100.0 / 90.5	0.0 / 9.5	0.0 / 0.0
checks	94.1 / 71.4	5.9 / 9.5	0.0 / 19.1
plan investments	82.4 / 61.9	0.0 / 14.3	17.7 / 23.8
make investments	82.4 / 61.9	0.0 / 14.3	17.7 / 23.8
family care	5.8 / 9.5	0.0 / 0.0	94.1 / 90.5
family care dec.	5.9 / 0.0	0.0 / 0.0	94.1 / 100.0

\*other= family members, friends, neighbors, community agency personnel, or persons hired to perform household tasks

long-term category did their own food-related tasks than women in the short-term category (except for shopping which a greater percentage of the recently widowed group did for themselves), although the responses were within 10% for all tasks in this category (Table 6).

More outside help was reported in the cleaning category tasks although the majority of respondents performed these tasks themselves. A variety of helpers was also used here but a good share of the help came from hired workers, particularly for the tasks of vacuuming, dusting, mopping, and seasonal cleaning. Mopping and seasonal cleaning were also considered "not applicable" or no longer necessary by 2.3% and 7.5 % of the sample, respectively (Table 4). As with the food-related tasks, more men in the short-term widowed group performed these cleaning tasks for themselves than those who were widowed longer. More of the long-term widowed women did their own cleaning, vacuuming, and dusting than those more recently widowed. In fact, twice the percentage of the long-term group did their own vacuuming as compared with their more recently widowed counterparts. More recently widowed women did their own mopping and heavier cleaning than the respondents widowed for a longer time (Tables 5 and 6).

Table 6.

Percentages of post-widowhood household task performance by  
females by length of widowhood

TASK	SELF (short-term/ long-term)	OTHER* (short-term/ long-term)	N.A. (short-term/ long-term)
meal planning	87.9 / 89.9	10.6 / 10.1	1.5 / 0.0
shopping list	90.9 / 92.8	9.1 / 5.8	0.0 / 1.5
shopping	86.4 / 78.3	13.6 / 21.7	0.0 / 0.0
cooking	86.4 / 92.8	13.6 / 7.3	0.0 / 0.0
dishes	90.9 / 94.2	9.1 / 5.8	0.0 / 0.0
house cleaning	84.9 / 84.9	15.2 / 15.2	0.0 / 0.0
vacuuming	39.7 / 65.2	30.0 / 34.8	0.0 / 0.0
dusting	72.7 / 73.9	27.3 / 26.1	0.0 / 0.0
mopping	69.7 / 65.2	25.8 / 33.3	4.6 / 1.5
seasonal cleaning	75.8 / 71.0	22.7 / 29.0	1.5 / 0.0
sorting laundry	86.4 / 91.3	13.7 / 8.7	0.0 / 0.0
selecting settings	84.9 / 89.9	15.2 / 10.1	0.0 / 0.0
washing clothes	83.3 / 89.9	16.7 / 10.1	0.0 / 0.0
drying clothes	80.3 / 81.2	16.7 / 10.1	3.0 / 8.7
folding clothes	83.3 / 87.0	16.7 / 13.0	0.0 / 0.0
putting away	87.9 / 88.4	12.1 / 10.1	0.0 / 1.5
hanging	71.2 / 69.6	13.6 / 8.7	15.6 / 21.7
taking to cleaner	69.7 / 63.8	13.6 / 21.7	16.7 / 14.5
social contact	95.5 / 94.2	4.6 / 5.8	0.0 / 0.0
social activities	83.3 / 87.0	7.58 / 4.4	9.1 / 8.6
participation	81.8 / 88.2	9.1 / 4.4	9.1 / 7.4
medical appointment	93.9 / 89.9	4.6 / 10.1	1.5 / 0.0
exercise/leisure	92.4 / 85.5	4.6 / 5.8	3.0 / 8.7
plan hous. repairs	62.1 / 72.5	30.3 / 26.1	7.6 / 1.5
house repairs	39.4 / 37.7	53.0 / 60.9	7.6 / 1.5
plan auto repairs	59.1 / 49.3	15.2 / 18.9	25.8 / 31.9
auto repairs	36.4 / 29.0	37.9 / 39.1	25.8 / 31.9
bills	97.0 / 91.3	3.0 / 8.7	0.0 / 0.0
checks	92.4 / 84.1	3.0 / 14.5	4.6 / 1.5
plan investments	65.2 / 46.4	7.6 / 17.4	27.3 / 36.2
make investments	65.2 / 47.8	6.1 / 13.0	28.8 / 39.1
family care	7.6 / 17.4	3.0 / 7.5	89.4 / 81.2
family decisions	1.5 / 4.4	3.0 / 1.5	95.5 / 94.2

\*other= family members, friends, neighbors, community agency  
personnel or persons hired to perform household tasks



In the area of laundry, again, most tasks were part of the role of the surviving spouse. Help, when received, was more common from family members, friends, or neighbors, than from hired help in this area. Although only one respondent found sorting clothes or putting clothes away tasks that were no longer applicable, drying clothes, hanging clothes to dry, and taking clothes to the dry cleaner were found no longer necessary by slightly larger percentages (Table 4). Men widowed longer tended to perform fewer of these laundry tasks than men widowed more recently (Table 5). Women widowed longer, however, did these tasks for themselves more often than the short-term widowed female respondents except for hanging clothes to dry or taking clothes to the cleaners. Recently widowed women did these tasks themselves more often than their longer-term widowed peers (Table 6).

Some respondents also received help with social/leisure activity planning and/or participation, but most performed these tasks by themselves. Family and friends provided help more than hired workers when help was provided. A small number of respondents indicated that maintaining social contact, planning leisure activities, and participating in social events were no longer applicable to maintaining their household independence (Table 4). Length of widowhood seemed to have an effect on both

genders for these social tasks with those widowed for a longer time doing more for themselves than those more recently widowed (Tables 5 and 6).

More household repairs were planned and performed by others than by the respondent with the help more commonly being received from family and friends or neighbors rather than from hired help (Table 4). The more recently widowed respondents in both gender categories planned and performed more household repair tasks than those widowed for longer time periods (Tables 5 and 6).

Planning and performing auto repairs was reported as no longer necessary by approximately one-quarter of the sample, reflecting the lack of ownership of an automobile by approximately the same percentage of the sample (Table 4). A greater percentage of both men and women in the long-term widowed category attended to family member care themselves than those in the short-term widowhood category.

#### Household Task Skill and Knowledge

The specific tasks for which each respondent was primarily responsible prior to widowhood were grouped into seven categories: meal arrangements, household cleaning, clothing care, social activities, family and self care, household and auto repairs and maintenance, and money management. Tasks in each category were weighted, producing seven categories of tasks reflecting equal importance in maintaining an independent household, regardless of

the number of tasks in each category. (For example, each of the five meal-related tasks received 2 points and each of the laundry-related tasks received 1.25 points.) This study was based upon the assumption that all types of household tasks are equally crucial for maintaining independent living. Respondents were given a weighted score for each task they indicated they had always performed or had performed more than their spouse prior to widowhood. Mean scores and standard deviations for each task category for males and females are presented in Table 7. Mean scores for all task categories except household/auto maintenance and repairs and money management were higher for females than for males, reflecting the expected generally greater experience women have in performing household tasks and, therefore, greater skill and knowledge levels upon entering widowhood. By summing the scores for each category, an overall household task skill and knowledge score (0-70) was determined. For males, the mean for this score was 33.00; for females the mean score was 52.08, showing an overall greater skill and knowledge of household task performance by the females in the sample than the males.

#### Tests of Significant Differences

An analysis of variance was used to determine significant differences between genders and length of widowhood categories for various demographic and other factors. Six of the 14 variables showed significant differences at the .05 level.

Table 7.

Household task skill and knowledge by task category and gender

TASK	MEN		WOMEN	
	mean*	std dev	mean*	std dev
meals	2.47	2.52	9.38	1.65
cleaning	1.68	2.73	8.37	2.82
clothing care	2.07	2.42	8.50	2.20
social activity	5.78	3.61	9.32	1.81
family/ self care	5.46	2.46	8.78	1.98
household/ auto maint. and repairs	8.36	2.48	1.89	2.79
money management	7.17	3.25	5.85	3.82
Total**	33.00	10.49	52.08	7.97

\*range of scores is for 0-10 indicating increasing level of skill and knowledge per task category

\*\*range of scores is 0-70 indicating increasing level of skill and knowledge for household task performance

Mean ages of men and women were significantly different. Male respondents were older than female respondents. (Table 8). No significant difference was found in age between length of widowhood categories however, and no difference due to interaction was found.

Significant differences between genders were also found for occupation. The mean score on the occupation scale was higher for women than men. (Table 8). Since 20% of the female respondents indicated their occupation to be "homemaker", the mean occupation score for all females may be skewed. Occupation did not prove to be significantly different between length of widowhood categories.

Gender also proved important when employment status was examined. A significant difference was found between employment status scores with the male mean score being 3.14 and the female score being 2.40. (Table 8). This indicated that significantly more men described their employment status as retired and not employed or holding some form of employment. Women described themselves more commonly as homemakers or homemakers now retired from outside employment. Again, no significant differences between length of widowhood categories regarding employment status were found.

Significant differences existed between males and females regarding their incomes. As reported earlier, men's mean income

Table 8.

Analysis of Variance for Gender X Widowhood Group on Selected Variables

VARIABLE	MEAN males/ females	GENDER (G)	WIDOWHOOD GROUP (WG)	G X WG	WITHIN
<b>Age</b>					
	78.65/71.89				
df		1	1	1	165
MS		1267.57	29.16	95.79	49.01
F		25.86*	0.59	1.95	
<b>Education</b>					
	4.30/ 4.25				
df		1	1	1	168
MS		0.16	6.86	2.08	3.67
F		0.04	1.87	0.57	
<b>Occupation</b>					
	5.53/ 5.23				
df		1	1	1	148
MS		40.90	3.90	0.00	7.70
F		5.33*	0.51	0.00	
<b>Employment Status</b>					
	3.14/ 2.40				
df		1	1	1	168
MS		16.03	7.33	1.07	1.98
F		8.03*	3.69	0.54	
<b>Income Level</b>					
	4.25/ 3.47				
df		1	1	1	146
MS		16.50	2.10	0.91	2.98
F		5.64*	0.71	0.30	
<b>Income Regularity</b>					
	3.0/ 3.0				
df		1	1	1	169
MS		0.02	0.04	0.04	0.15
F		0.01	0.28	0.28	
<b>Health</b>					
	15.79/16.60				
df		1	1	1	166
MS		16.88	15.32	4.73	5.89
F		2.86	2.60	0.80	

(table continues)

Table 8 (continued).

Analysis of Variance for Gender X Widowhood  
Group on Selected Variables

<b>Household Task Resources and Resource Demands</b>				
	-0.32/-0.28			
df	1	1	1	169
MS	0.11	1.10	2.64	0.55
F	0.20	2.00	4.80*	
<b>Dwelling Maintenance Responsibility</b>				
	2.32/ 2.59			
df	1	1	1	169
MS	2.24	0.47	0.01	0.84
F	2.65	0.56	0.01	
<b>Area of Residence</b>				
	2.37/ 2.27			
df	1	1	1	165
MS	0.31	0.22	0.00	0.35
F	0.89	0.64	0.01	
<b>Knowledge of Community Resources</b>				
	1.55/ 1.55			
df	1	1	1	169
MS	0.00	0.01	0.12	0.28
F	0.00	0.05	0.42	
<b>Normative Expectations for Gender Role</b>				
	38.80/39.08			
df	1	1	1	139
MS	0.25	31.27	17.54	13.73
F	0.02	2.28	1.28	
<b>Initial Adjustment Difficulty</b>				
	3.38/3.21			
df	1	1	1	129
MS	0.68	0.93	1.32	2.02
F	0.34	0.46	0.65	

(table continues)

Table 8 (continued).

Analysis of Variance for Gender X Widowhood  
Group on Selected Variables

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<b>Social</b>					
<b>Involvement</b>					
	5.07/4.91				
df	1	1	1	164	
MS	1.61	1.42	0.47	7.19	
F	0.22	0.20	0.07		
<b>Household</b>					
<b>Task Per-</b>					
<b>formance</b>					
<b>Skill and</b>					
<b>Knowledge</b>					
	14.84/34.78				
df	1	1	1	169	
MS	11558.39	115.66	4.39	110.60	
F	104.51*	1.05	0.04		

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\* p &gt; .05



fell between \$15,000 and \$19,999 (scored 4.25) whereas their female counterparts' income averaged between \$10,000 and \$14,999 (scored 3.45) (Table 8). Again, length of widowhood was not shown to make a significant difference in income for these respondents.

A significant difference was found between mean household task performance skill and knowledge scores for men and women. The mean skill score for men was 33.00 and for women 52.08 on a scale of 0-70. (Table 8). No difference was found between length of widowhood categories nor was there a significant interaction between length of widowhood and gender.

The interaction between gender and length of widowhood was found to make a significant difference in household task resources and resource demands. (Table 8). Significant differences were not found to exist between the main effects of gender or length of widowhood.

The results of these analyses showed no differences between respondents widowed for a short-term or long-term in their age, education, occupation, health, social involvement, household task resources and resource demands, geographical area of residence, dwelling maintenance responsibility, employment status, income level, income regularity, normative expectations for gender role, initial adjustment difficulty, or household task performance skill and knowledge.

Regarding differences between genders for selected variables, no difference were found for education, health, social involvement, household task resources and resource demands geographical area of residence, dwelling maintenance responsibility, income regularity, normative expectations for gender role, initial adjustment difficulty, or knowledge of community resources.

Finally, no differences were found to exist as a result of the interaction between gender and length of widowhood for age, education, occupation, health, social involvement, geographical area of residence dwelling maintenance responsibility, employment status, income level, income regularity, normative expectations for gender role, initial adjustment difficulty, or household task performance skill and knowledge.

Overall, results of these analyses showed that the widowers differed from the widows in age, occupation, employment status, income, and household task performance skill and knowledge. The interaction between respondents' gender and length of widowhood were related to differences in household task resources and resource demands. No significant differences were found between respondents of different length of widowhood periods for any of the variables tested.

## Examination of Hypotheses

Hypotheses 1 and 2

A repeated measures analysis of variance with pre- and post-widowhood task performance scores as the dependent variable was used to test the hypotheses that (1) significant differences exist between males and females in their household task performance roles prior to widowhood and (2) significant differences exist between males and females in their household task performance roles after widowhood. The pre-widowhood score was determined by summing the number of tasks for which a respondent had taken the majority of responsibility prior to widowhood. (For each task, males scoring 1 or 2 and females scoring 4 or 5 on the task inventory received one point.) The range of scores was 0-33. Respondents received 1 point for each task they completed without help following widowhood, resulting in a post-widowhood task performance score of 0-33. Significant differences in these scores would determine if gender or length of widowhood or the interaction between them accounted for differences in the number of tasks surviving spouses incorporated into their household task performance role during widowhood. Least-squares means are reported in Table 9.

Results of this analysis are presented in Table 10. First, there was a significant main effect for gender. Marital status differentially affected household task performance scores when each respondent's scores were averaged across the two marital status

Table 9.

Least-squares Means for Repeated Measures Analysis  
of Variance of Gender and Widowhood Group on Pre- and Post-  
Widowhood Task Scores

SOURCE	LSMEANS
Gender	
Male	16.30
Female	23.14
Widowhood Group	
Short-term	19.00
Long-term	20.48
Gender X Widowhood Group	
Male Short-term	14.98
Male Long-term	17.62
Female Short-term	22.94
Female Long-term	23.33
Marital Status	
Pre-widowhood	12.29
Post-widowhood	27.14
Gender X Marital Status	
Male Pre-widowhood	6.31
Male Post-widowhood	26.29
Female Pre-widowhood	18.28
Female Post-widowhood	27.99
Widowhood Group X Marital Status	
Short-term Pre-widowhood	11.96
Short-term Post-widowhood	25.95
Long-term Pre-widowhood	12.63
Long-term Post-widowhood	28.33
Gender X Widowhood Group X	
Marital Status	
Male Short-term Pre-widowhood	5.90
Male Short-term Post-widowhood	24.05
Male Long-term Pre-widowhood	6.71
Male Long-term Post-widowhood	28.53
Female Short-term Pre-widowhood	18.02
Female Short-term Post-widowhood	27.86
Female Long-term Pre-widowhood	18.55
Female Long-term Post-widowhood	28.12

Table 10.

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance of Gender and Length  
of Widowhood on Pre- and Post-Widowhood Task Scores

SOURCE	SS	df	MS	F
<b>Between</b>				
Gender (G)	2749.61	1	2749.61	71.77*
Widowhood Group (WG)	134.86	1	134.86	3.52
G X WG	74.05	1	74.05	1.93
Subjects Within Groups	6436.71	168	38.31	1.67*
<b>Within</b>				
Marital Status (MS)	12956.09	1	12956.09	565.27*
G X MS	1551.60	1	1551.60	67.70*
WG X MS	42.87	1	42.87	1.87

periods. Although a similar difference existed between respondents widowed for shorter versus longer time periods, this difference was not significant at the .05 level. No significant interaction was found between gender and length of widowhood in this analysis.

A significant difference existed between pre- and post-widowhood household task scores within each respondent. Respondents incorporated a significant number of tasks into their household task performance role after becoming widowed. There was a significant main marital status effect showing that the number of tasks done before increased following widowhood.

The interaction between gender and marital status also was significant. In widowhood, men added more tasks to their pre-widowhood role than women did. The interactions between length of widowhood and marital status, and between gender, length of widowhood and marital status were not significant. Thus, the differences resulting from gender, length of widowhood and marital status appear to be primarily due to the main effects of gender and marital status and the interaction between these two variables.

Based upon this analysis, the following statements can be made: (1) The mean household task skill scores were significantly different between genders and marital status, with a significant gender by marital status interaction. (2) The mean scores broken down by length of widowhood did not differ

significantly, nor were there significant interactions between gender and length of widowhood, pre- versus post-widowhood task performance and length of widowhood, or the three-way interaction among these variables.

### Hypothesis 3

Multiple regression was used to test the hypothesis that strategy for household task performance continuity is a function of gender, age, education, occupation, health, social involvement, household task resources and resource demands, geographical area of residence, length of widowhood, knowledge of community resources, dwelling maintenance responsibility, employment status, income level, income regularity, normative expectations for gender role, initial adjustment difficulty, and household task performance skill and knowledge. A "strategy" variable was constructed using household task performance of respondents (scored 1) and others (scored 0) for each task on the post-widowhood task list. The score range was 0-33 with "0" representing help from others for all tasks and "33" representing all tasks performed by the respondent themselves. Values between 0 and 33 reflected an increasing personal responsibility for tasks. This strategy variable was used as the dependent variable in the regression analysis.

A stepwise multiple regression was performed (Table 11). Of the 17 independent variables, 6 made a significant contribution to

Table 11.

Significant Predictors of Strategy Choice for Household  
Task Performance Continuity

PREDICTOR	b VALUE	F STATISTIC	PROB > F
Health	1.004	27.02	0.0273
Household Task Performance Skills and Knowledge	0.129	15.65	0.0002
Household Task Resources and Resource Demands	3.765	16.04	0.0002
Normative Expectations for Gender Role	-0.358	5.74	0.0192
Initial Adjustment Difficulty	-0.834	5.39	0.0231
Knowledge of Community Resources	-2.143	5.08	0.0273

$$R^2 = 0.54$$



the variance in continuity strategy choice ( $p < .05$ ). These were (in order of importance): health, household task performance skill and knowledge, household task resources and resource demands, normative expectations for gender role, initial adjustment difficulty, and knowledge of community resources. Since strong correlations between these variables did not exist (see Table 12), this model was accepted. The model predicted 54% of the variance in continuity strategy choice. Because 6 of the independent variables included in the full model were significant predictors of continuity strategy, the last hypothesis, Hypothesis 3, was only partially rejected.

#### Discussion of Findings

##### Household Task Performance Roles

Pre-widowhood roles. As expected, household task performance roles of spouses prior to widowhood fell along traditional, gender-specific lines. Women were commonly responsible for food-related tasks, cleaning, laundry, care of family members, and family social activities. Men's responsibilities usually included household and auto maintenance and repairs and financial investment management. These findings were consistent with those of Blood and Wolfe (1960), Erickson et al. (1979), Lovingood and Firebaugh (1978), and Walker and Woods (1976). Planning for family leisure activities and other financial management tasks was most often shared but the standard deviations showed few other tasks may have



been more commonly done jointly than the means show (e.g., some food-related tasks, some cleaning tasks, some family member care, household repairs, and investment management). These findings are also consistent with those of Lovingood and Firebaugh (1978). Household task performance help was not common. When used, help was used for heavier cleaning, laundry, household repairs, and auto maintenance and repairs.

Household task performance skill and knowledge. Skill and knowledge for the performance of household tasks was assessed using the pre-widowhood household task list. The level of skill and knowledge possessed by the respondent was based upon the number of tasks for which he or she had commonly taken primary responsibility. As expected, women's skill and knowledge was greater in all categories of household tasks except for household maintenance and repairs, auto maintenance and repairs, and financial management. This concurs with the findings of Albrecht, Bahr and Chadwick (1979), Blood and Wolfe (1960), Hunter (1968), Keith and Schafer (1986) Lovingood and Firebaugh (1978), and Walker and Woods (1976).

Post-widowhood roles. Continuity of household task performance during widowhood appeared to be maintained by the great majority of respondents in this study. Based upon the descriptive analysis, most tasks listed were being performed. Considering the criteria upon which the sample used in this study

was based, this is not surprising. Eligibility to participate in the study depended upon the respondent being living independently as master of the household. Respondents would have needed to be healthy enough to maintain control of their household. It would be reasonable to assume that the majority of tasks necessary for maintenance of an independent household were being performed and continuity was being maintained.

The strategy used for maintenance of continuity, however, could and did vary. While the majority of respondents assumed most tasks left by their spouse into their own household task performance role, they did receive help for some tasks. They used both paid and non-paid help.

Hired help was more commonly used for tasks involved in household cleaning and household and auto repairs than for other tasks. Household cleaning tasks may have been physically difficult for some respondents causing them to seek outside help. Further, hired help for these kinds of chores is usually easy to find and relatively inexpensive making paid help accessible. Household and auto repairs are also often heavy, physically demanding tasks. They also often require a measure of skill and knowledge or tools not commonly possessed by the respondents or their family or friends. Therefore, it is not surprising that the findings show hired help was used for these tasks.

Help from family and friends was also common for housecleaning tasks and household and auto repairs. In addition to these, however, non-paid help was used for the food-related tasks of shopping, cooking, and dishwashing and for many laundry-related tasks. It is possible that some widowers and widows requiring help with these additional tasks may have required more help in general, making paid help more expensive. Therefore, family or friends may have taken greater household task performance responsibility. It is also possible that family or friends "took" responsibility for more tasks in some households, offering more help than would have been provided if someone was hired to assist the widowed spouse. This may also account for the non-paid help reported in maintaining social contacts. Respondents may have, for one reason or another, relinquished responsibilities to others who wanted to assume them.

Some very interesting findings resulted from the descriptive analysis of the respondents according to their length of widowhood. Men widowed for a shorter period of time tended to do more tasks for themselves, in general, than men widowed for a longer time. This was reversed when female responses were examined. This may support the findings of other researchers who suggested that women may have a more difficult time coping with widowhood initially whereas men appear to be coping well at first and then experience difficulty later (Parkes & Brown, 1972). More

recently widowed women may also have been younger and employed outside the home and may have chosen to hire help for household task.

Women widowed for a shorter time tended to receive help (when help was received) for more day-to-day tasks whereas they reported doing more of the "heavier" or less frequently required tasks (heavy cleaning, household repairs, hanging clothes out to dry) and more tasks which took them outside their homes (taking clothes to the dry cleaner and doing grocery shopping). It is possible that the former set of tasks was required infrequently enough that, in reality, the tasks had not been necessary yet even though the respondent would not classify them as "no longer necessary". Help may have been received for the day-to-day tasks because the widow may have found it difficult to keep up with them during her initial bereavement. Further, members of the social network commonly maintained by the wife during marriage (Bock & Webber, 1972) would have remained, making help available. The latter tasks may have contributed to the widow's positive mental attitude because they allowed her to leave the solitude of the home and get out among other people, therefore, she may have chosen to perform those for herself. More day-to-day tasks were performed by longer-term widowed women, possibly indicating that they had begun to cope and could resume the tasks

they had done prior to widowhood as well as assume some of their husband's tasks.

Men widowed for a shorter time did perform more day-to-day tasks for themselves than their counterparts who were widowed for a long time. It is possible that the social support system maintained by their wives was not easily accessible (Bock & Webber, 1972) making assistance less available. Further, as Helzing et al. (1981) suggested, these men may have been reluctant to admit their feelings and needs and to ask for help. Men widowed for longer periods of time did get more help (when help was used) for the day-to-day tasks, indicating that a need for task help was present or that they were more willing to admit the need and seek help. The good health status of the sample suggests that a lack of desire or skill to perform these tasks may have made help necessary. This suggestion is supported by Arens (1982) who said that the tasks that widowers must assume may be viewed as lacking prestige and, therefore, provide little motivation to be learned or assumed.

Both men and women who were widowed for longer time periods arranged and participated in more social activities for themselves than their more recently widowed counterparts. This could be because they had made the adjustment from social life as a "couple" to social life as a "single" person and, therefore, had established more social bonds and more activities. It may

also reflect a greater interest and participation in social activities, indicating a greater degree of overall adjustment to widowhood. More men than women in both length of widowhood categories reported that social tasks were no longer applicable to their lives. This was particularly true for participation in activities. This, too, may reflect a lesser degree of adjustment for men than women over time (Parkes & Brown, 1972) or, a general social withdrawal regardless of the state of widowhood.

#### Gender and Length of Widowhood Related to Selected Variables

Men and women were significantly different in several ways. The significant difference between mean ages of gender groups (78.6 years men; 71.9 years women) could be considered surprising given that women tend to outlive men. It should have been more likely that the mean age for women in the sample was greater than that of men. However, considering the fact that women in this cohort married at an earlier age than men, as reported by the sample interviewed, and that men tend to die at an earlier age, it does follow that the women in the sample were significantly younger than the men.

Occupation was found to be significantly different between the two genders, but strong conclusions can not be drawn. The occupation scale's ability to reflect an increasing level of socioeconomic status is questionable because "homemaker" was designated as "9", the highest score. It can be argued



that the occupation of homemaker does not reflect the highest level of socioeconomic status. Indeed, some would argue that a homemaker's status should fall at a lower (if not the lowest) point on the scale. Others have suggested that work done in the home should receive more status and is worth more than it is currently afforded economically. Therefore, the occupation scale used in this research may not be a valid measure of increasing socioeconomic status. Although there was a difference between the genders for occupation, because a large proportion of women designated their occupation to be homemaker, differences in socioeconomic status reflected by this measure may not be significant.

Differences in employment status between genders were also significant. More men were presently employed or reported being presently retired from outside employment. More women designated their employment status as either "homemaker" or "homemaker retired from outside employment". It is possible that women retired from full-time employment consider themselves to be homemakers at present but retired men, while holding the same household task performance role, consider themselves to be simply retired. Differences between these two groups, then, might not be significant if both men and women retired to homemaking categorized themselves in the same way.

Widowers and widows reported significantly different levels of income. This may be related to both occupation and employment

status differences. With more men reporting their status as retired or retired and employed, it can be assumed that retirement benefits contribute to their incomes. More women reported being homemakers or retired homemakers, affording the possibility that these women had lower retirement benefits or none at all.

Household task skill and knowledge was also found to be significantly different between males and females. This was expected based upon the research findings of Blood and Wolfe (1960), Ericksen et al. (1979), Lovingood and Firebaugh (1978), and Walker and Woods (1976) who found that over the course of marriage, wives took responsibility for more of the tasks necessary for maintenance of an independent household than husbands. With this experience, wives gain the personal resources of skill and knowledge for the performance of many household tasks whereas, husbands' skill resources are more limited. These resources, however extensive, are then available for household task performance continuity during widowhood.

The household human resources and resource demands variable was not significantly different between genders or length of widowhood categories but did result in an interaction between gender and length of widowhood category. All four gender and length of widowhood category groups had negative scores for household size and composition, indicating that for those households with multiple

members, there were more dependent adults or children living in the household than independent, resource-contributing adults. Possibly this reflects a more current trend toward adult children and their families returning to their parents' home to live. Grandchildren would then demand, rather than contribute, slightly more resources, resulting in a slightly negative household task resources and resource demands score. If this does contribute to the interaction effect between gender and length of widowhood, further investigation would be needed to clarify more precisely where these groups differ.

#### Differences in Task Performance Before and After Widowhood

As expected, men and women differed significantly in the number of household tasks they, themselves, assumed during widowhood. Traditionally, women would be responsible for a greater percentage of the tasks prior to widowhood and, therefore, would need to assume a smaller number of these tasks than their male counterparts after widowhood. This analysis showed that, indeed, this was true for the sample studied.

The descriptive analysis showed some differences between length of widowhood categories and the number of tasks performed after widowhood. Men widowed for a shorter period of time seemed to be performing more tasks for themselves than those in the longer time period. Women, on the other hand, tended to take responsibility for more tasks if widowed for a longer period of

time. However, no significant difference in task performance between before and after widowhood was found when the two length of widowhood categories were examined. It is possible that because the two gender groups demonstrated opposite patterns of household task performance between the two length of widowhood categories the effect of length of widowhood for the sample as a whole was "cancelled out". Since there was no significant interaction effect between gender and length of widowhood categories, it is not possible to specify that this nullification occurred.

Each respondent had changed significantly in the number of tasks he or she had performed from before to after widowhood. Based upon the literature, this was an unexpected finding for the males in the sample. Because the tasks that were left by the wife could be considered less prestigious and, therefore, provide less motivation for men to learn during widowhood, assumption of many of the wife's tasks into the household task performance role of the husband was unanticipated (Arens, 1983; Gove, 1972a).

This finding was also unanticipated because males had scored so low on the household task skill and knowledge scale. This meant that they entered widowhood with an apparent deficit in the resources necessary for performing these tasks for themselves and would be required to develop these resources if they chose to perform the tasks themselves. This apparently was not as great

an obstacle as suggested by the literature (George, 1980; Hill, R., 1965; Palmore, et al., 1979) However, because the descriptive analysis had shown that most respondents were performing these tasks for themselves during widowhood (indeed, they were performing significantly more tasks after widowhood than before), finding significant differences in the number of tasks performed by the males in this sample before and after widowhood was not surprising. It is possible, however, based upon the descriptive analysis, that the assumption of tasks into the personal household task performance role is temporary for men. Since many of these tasks are necessary for day-to-day personal and household maintenance, widowers may have found the performance of these tasks essential. Additionally, this, as previously discussed, could be a symptom of the slower, more difficult adjustment men experience (Parkes & Brown, 1972). They may have been able to cope with the day-to-day management of their households initially but, as time progresses, the tasks may become more difficult. It is possible that, given the selection criterion for widowhood of 5 years or less, this phenomenon was not apparent in this sample.

It was somewhat surprising that females performed significantly more tasks after widowhood than before. Females had had primary responsibility for a such a large number of tasks before widowhood that it was not anticipated that further task assumption following widowhood would be significant. Based upon

the descriptive analysis, virtually all tasks left by the husband that remained applicable to managing the household were assumed by the widows. This may be because the tasks that were left by their spouse at widowhood were money management or management of household or auto repairs, as Lopata (1979) had also found. These tasks, then, may have been viewed as autonomy-building and, therefore, the widow was motivated to take the responsibility for these tasks herself.

#### Predictors of the Strategy for Household Task Performance Continuity

As stated earlier, the great majority of respondents were maintaining household task performance continuity during widowhood. The strategy for maintaining this continuity differed somewhat, with some respondents assuming the tasks previously performed by their spouse and others obtaining help from family, friends, neighbors, community agencies, or paid help. Therefore, two strategies for maintaining continuity were identified in this sample. In order to identify the factors that predict the choice of one of these strategies for household task performance, a multiple regression analysis was performed using 17 variables. The list of factors found to be significant was shorter than expected and many of the factors anticipated to be strong predictors were not important.

Health status was the most important predictor of performing tasks for oneself. This is quite logical, because poor health

could prevent the widowed person from physically performing tasks. Being in good health, as many of the respondents were, also might have limited the amount of help offered by family or friends as well as limited the amount of help accepted by the respondents who, based upon the sample criterion of living independently, apparently valued their ability to manage their households for themselves.

Household task performance skill and knowledge also was a strong predictor of continuity strategy choice. Greater skill resources did, indeed, allow for more tasks to be assumed into the personal task performance role of the widowed person. This agrees with the suggestions of George (1980), Hill (1965), and Palmore et al. (1979) who said that possession of resources (skills) prior to widowhood would ease the difficulties brought about during widowhood. Again, greater autonomy and independence through personal performance of household tasks was more easily achieved with possession of task skill and knowledge.

Household task performance resources and demands differ among households. The more resources available via household members, the greater the ability for the household to meet demands. The more dependent children or adults residing in the household, the more resources are needed to meet demands. The households of the respondents investigated had slightly more dependent individuals in residence than adults able to

contribute resources. Interestingly enough, however, the presence of independent, resource supplying adults in the household predicted respondents would perform more tasks for themselves. It is possible that the dependent individuals living in the household were children of an adult also residing there. The adult may have worked outside the home, leaving household tasks to be performed by the widower or widow. This would account for greater household task resource demands predicting more tasks being personally assumed by the respondent.

The respondents had traditional expectations for gender role based upon the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence & Helmreich, 1978) on which higher scores reflects an increasing degree of egalitarian attitude. Normative expectations for gender role was a significant predictor of household task performance by widowers and widows but the more traditional, non-egalitarian attitude possessed, the more tasks were performed by the respondent, themselves. This was a very interesting and unexpected finding and contrary to the findings of P.P. Hill (1985). One explanation could be that women with a traditional attitude would not find personal performance of most household tasks incongruent with their attitude. The small number of "male-specific" tasks left to them at widowhood may have provided a strong positive challenge with an attractive enough dividend to over-ride the conflict with their traditional attitude. Men with traditional attitudes may have



found it possible to attend to task requirements initially, as the descriptive analysis showed, but may have found this attitude to be a greater obstacle over time, as reflected in the personal performance of fewer tasks by male respondents in the longer length of widowhood category.

P. P. Hill (1985) suggested that initial adjustment difficulty may negatively affect the acquisition of new resources or skills and a positive attitude toward adjustment. The findings of this study support this idea, showing that less self-perceived initial adjustment difficulty predicted the assumption of more tasks into the household task performance role of widowers and widows themselves.

Respondents possessing less knowledge about where to locate community assistance were found to be more likely to perform tasks for themselves. This finding was expected because with less knowledge of the resources for household task performance in the community, more personal resources would be tapped. Those respondents who were aware of outside resources available to them appeared to make more use of these or other outside resources, such as family or friends.

Whereas it is interesting and important to examine the variables that were significant predictors of continuity strategy, it is also important to consider those that were included in the

full model but did were not found to make significant contribution to strategy choice variance. These variables were age, education, occupation, social involvement, geographical area of residence, knowledge of community resources, dwelling maintenance responsibility, length of widowhood, employment status, income, income regularity, and gender. Explanation for the lack of significance of these variables is difficult to determine. While in the pilot study P. P. Hill (1985) found gender and income to be significant predictors of functional adjustment, a variable similar to continuity, their predictive power regarding continuity strategy choice may not be as great. The absence of other variables in the prediction model may also be due to their lack of contribution to the variance in strategy choice.

The model generated by the stepwise regression procedure did account for 54% of the variance in choice of strategy for household task performance continuity which makes it a strong model of prediction. It is possible that if the strategy variable were expanded by using a different sample having a greater span of length of widowhood or containing more strategy choices, more variables would have been found to make significant contributions and greater variance explanation could be achieved.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A summary of the purposes, methodology, and findings of the study is presented in this chapter followed by conclusions and implications. Finally, recommendations for future research are suggested.

#### Summary

The purposes of this study were to (a) conduct a detailed examination of household task performance prior to and following widowhood, and (b) identify social and demographic factors related to variations in continuity of household task performance that accompany the maintenance of an independent household during widowhood. Specific objectives of the study were (a) to identify patterns of household task performance by husbands and wives and the extent to which they depend on others outside the household prior to widowhood; (b) to determine continuities and changes in household task performance by surviving spouses and others outside the household after widowhood; and (c) to identify significant predictors of variations in strategies used to maintain household task performance continuity during widowhood.

Empirical data used in this study were obtained from a larger project entitled "Continuity of Household Task Performance During Widowhood" (Lovingood, et al., 1987), an AARP-Andrus Foundation supported project which was jointly conducted by the Center for

Gerontology, the Department of Housing, Interior Design and Resource Management, and the Department of Family and Child Development at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

The empirical model for this study was derived from the theoretical model of the household task performance system and integrated concepts related to household task performance and resources available to widowers and widows as they cope with the loss of their spouse. The model expanded upon the results of a pilot study.

The sample consisted of widows and widowers who were age 60 years or older, living independently, not married at the time of the interview, and widowed between 6 months and 5 years. The sample was obtained using two methods: (a) Names of the surviving spouses of men and women age 60 years or older at the time of death were obtained from the obituaries of the daily newspapers covering the Roanoke Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area and Montgomery County, Virginia. Men and women widowed 6 months to 5 years were selected. (b) Referrals of qualified individuals were obtained through community sources and other participants in the study. Personal interviews averaging one hour in length were conducted between March and October, 1987 with a total of 38 males and 135 females from two length of widowhood categories (6 months to 3 years and 3 to 5 years).

The interview instrument was developed and pretested for the study. Household task performance roles of each spouse prior to widowhood were assessed using retrospective reports of the surviving spouses regarding a set of household tasks derived from previous research and judged to be necessary for maintenance of an independent household. Respondents were asked to indicate the degree of responsibility shared between spouses and others for each task prior to any debilitating illness and prior to widowhood. The same items were presented a second time so respondents could indicate who completed each task at the time of the interview. Using these data, household task performance continuity was operationalized as the difference between the number of tasks completed prior to widowhood and the number of tasks completed after widowhood. In addition to the task sets, questions regarding demographic and social characteristics were included in the instrument.

Generally, respondents were found to be quite independent and maintaining continuity of household task performance autonomously. Most lived alone and were aging in place in suburban or urban areas, were in good health and had incomes adequate for their needs. Additionally, most were not employed at the time of the interview, were moderately active socially, and had only one marriage in their life. Approximately one-third indicated not being fully adjusted to widowhood.

Respondents held traditional attitudes as demonstrated both on their scores on the gender role expectations measure used and in the pre-widowhood household task performance roles they described.

Differences between genders and length of widowhood categories for 15 factors (age, education level, household task performance skills and knowledge, occupation, health status, social involvement, gender, household task resources and resource demands, geographical area of residence, knowledge of community resources, dwelling maintenance responsibilities, employment status, income level and regularity, normative expectations for gender roles, and adjustment difficulty) were determined using analysis of variance. Men and women differed significantly on six factors ( $p < .05$ ).

Men in the sample were significantly older than women. Occupations were found to be significantly different between the two genders, however confident conclusions based on this analysis were not possible due to the occupational scale used. It appeared that the large number of females categorized as "homemakers" would explain this difference. Men and women also differed significantly in employment status with more women designating their status as "homemaker" or "homemaker retired from outside employment" while men tended to categorize themselves as "retired" or "employed". Men also reported greater income levels than women. As expected, household

task skill and knowledge scores differed significantly with females having over twice as high a score as males.

No significant differences were found between length of widowhood categories for any variables tested. An interaction effect between gender and length of widowhood was found to be significant for household human resources and resource demands. All groups tested had slightly more dependent household members than independent members, however, implications of this to the interaction effect could not be determined.

No significant differences were found between genders or length of widowhood categories or for the interactions between gender and length of widowhood category for education level, health status, social involvement, geographical area of residence, knowledge of community resources, dwelling maintenance responsibilities, income regularity, normative expectations for gender role, or adjustment difficulty.

Men characteristically were less skilled or knowledgeable than women about most household tasks except for financial management and household/auto repairs or maintenance tasks. In general, women performed more tasks overall in the household than men before widowhood. At the time of the interview, most respondents were performing most tasks for themselves. Help, when received, came from hired help and from family, friends, neighbors, and community agencies. Women tended to perform more

tasks than men during widowhood. The recently widowed women tended to perform more tasks for themselves than did their longer-term counterparts, but recently widowed men did more of their own tasks than those widowed for a longer period.

The differences between pre- and post-widowhood household task performance scores between males and females and between short-term and long-term widowed respondents were also tested using a repeated measures analysis of variance. Both groups performed significantly more tasks for themselves following widowhood than had been in their roles prior to widowhood. There was also a significant difference found in the number of tasks performed before and after widowhood within each respondent's scores. No significant interaction effects were found between gender and length of widowhood or among gender, length of widowhood, and time period.

Since most respondents were maintaining household task performance continuity during widowhood, continuity strategies were examined. Two strategies were prominent: assumption of the deceased spouse's tasks into the household task performance role of the widowed respondent, and the use of outside help, paid or non-paid, for the performance of various tasks. A multiple regression analysis was used to determine significant predictors of choice of continuity strategy. The full model consisted of 17 independent variables and the dependent variable was constructed by summing the



number of tasks in the post-widowhood household task set for which the respondent took responsibility. This created a scale reflecting increasing personal responsibility for household task performance.

Six variables explained 54% of the variance in choice of continuity strategy: health status ( $F=27.02$ ), household task resources and resource demands ( $F=16.04$ ), normative expectations for gender role ( $F=5.74$ ), adjustment difficulty ( $F=5.39$ ), and knowledge of community resources ( $F= 5.08$ ). Factors not found to make a significant contribution to variance were age, education, occupation, social involvement, knowledge of community resources, geographical area of residence, dwelling maintenance responsibility, employment status, income, income regularity, length of widowhood, and gender.

#### Conclusions

On the basis of this study, the following conclusions about household task performance continuity during widowhood are justified:

1. More household task performance skill and knowledge is possessed at widowhood by older women than older men and the possession of this skill contributes to the ability of widowed persons to adopt the household tasks left by the deceased spouse into their household task performance role.
2. Older widowed men and women differ in the amount of household tasks they, themselves, assume during widow-

hood. Women add fewer tasks to their role during widowhood than men.

3. Older widowed persons do not differ in the number of household tasks they assume into their household task performance roles during widowhood regardless of the length of time they have been widowed.
4. Household task performance continuity is maintained by older men and women that have been widowed for either short or long periods of time.
5. Different strategies are employed by older men and women for maintaining household task performance continuity during widowhood. Men tend to receive more outside help with task performance than women.
6. The factors that best predict the adoption of household tasks into the task performance role of surviving spouses during widowhood are:
  - (a) good health status
  - (b) high household task performance skill and knowledge
  - (c) greater task demands by dependent household members than task resources available from non-dependent adult members
  - (d) traditional gender role expectations
  - (e) little initial adjustment difficulty

7. The factors that do not strongly predict choice of strategy for household task performance continuity during widowhood include:

- (a) age
- (b) education
- (c) occupation
- (d) social involvement
- (e) knowledge of community resources
- (f) geographical area of residence
- (g) dwelling maintenance responsibility
- (h) employment status
- (i) income level
- (j) income regularity
- (k) length of widowhood
- (l) gender

#### Implications

Are older widowed persons, particularly widowers, in peril as the literature cited early in this report suggested? Although the respondents who participated in this study did not appear to be at immediate risk, the results imply that their future, especially for the men, may require attention. The majority of participants in this study took personal responsibility for the performance of most household tasks necessary for maintenance of an independent household, but a greater percentage of men particularly those in the

longer-term widowed category, employed more assistance in household task performance than women. Skill and knowledge in household task performance does affect the amount of help older widowed persons use to maintain continuity. Men enter widowhood with considerably less skill and knowledge regarding tasks than women in most task categories. Although this deficit does not appear to have an immediate effect, over time it appears to lead to a greater dependence on others.

Therefore, a need exists for spouses to gain skill and knowledge about household task performance in order to preserve their autonomy and independence. Education in these skills would be helpful at the time of widowhood, but bereavement and the changes that accompany it may inhibit the widower's or widow's desire and ability to learn these necessary skills. It would be more effective for family resource management specialists to provide educational programming regarding this type of skill development before widowhood. This type of preparation for independent living would also benefit couples facing debilitating illness and/or the admission of one spouse to an extended care facility.

Further, it seems apparent that education for independent living for all age groups would benefit our society, particularly in light of our aging population. Preparing individuals, regardless of their age or marital status, for management of their own households would benefit single individuals, dual-

career families, and single-parent families, as well as older widowed men and women, by increasing the personal resources they possess to perform the household tasks necessary for the maintenance of an independent household. This implies that the effects of the family resource management material taught at all educational levels may be even more far-reaching and important than previously considered.

Because a great deal of help came from the social support network (family, friends, neighbors) of the widowed person, consideration of the consequences of the loss of this network to the widower or widow is important. The mobility of our society implies that social networks readily change and the support they provide can be lost. What alternatives do widowed persons have available in the community to assist in this event? A number of respondents indicated considerable difficulty in finding help in the community for relatively small but skill-requiring or physically-demanding tasks such as yard work or household repairs. A network of people with various talents who would like to offer services on a volunteer, barter, or for-pay basis would be a great asset to this population. Such a network could be generated through local Cooperative Extension offices, A.A.R.P. chapters, or Area Associations on Aging, thereby providing those with skill resources to use them and those requiring these resources to find them.

Finally, knowledge of the community resources available to assist with household tasks was low in the sample studied here. The family resource management specialist could make greater use of more diverse media types to disseminate this information. Greater publicity of available programs through a larger variety of media, such as television, neighborhood newspapers, church publications, and organization newsletters, would allow more community resource information to reach those who need it. Community support groups for the widowed do exist, however, according to the director of a group in the their participants tend to be younger men and women. Support groups geared to older widowed men and women would also be of assistance in providing information regarding household task performance and location of community services. An important opportunity for family resource management specialists to collaborate with social workers and health professionals exists here. Additionally, these organizations could offer a reference group, particularly important for men who tend to lack the support and identification such a group could provide. This may be particularly helpful to men widowed for longer periods of time since it appears they may have more difficulty than women over time.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

Analysis of data from a matched pairs sample of men and women from the sample, based on demographic and social characteristics, would serve to strengthen this study. Although the sample would

loose size, the ability to more directly compare respondents based upon gender may uncover more significant differences between them as well as identify more predictors of choice of continuity strategy.

This study identified two strategies employed by older widowers and widows for the maintenance of household task performance continuity during widowhood: assimilation of tasks left by the deceased spouse into the widowed person's household task performance role and the acquisition of help from family, friends, or paid workers to perform tasks left by the deceased spouse. Other strategies are likely to exist, such as eliminating certain tasks from the task set. Increasing the sample size and/or diversity may provide more variance in continuity strategy choice and allow more predictors of each choice to be identified.

Expansion of the model to include more prediction factors also would be useful. Inclusion of psycho-social measures, such as morale, loneliness, and locus of control, may provide further information about predictors of choice of continuity strategy choice.

Further investigations into the factors which predict older persons' abilities to maintain household task performance continuity during widowhood are necessary. In this investigation respondents were maintaining continuity well through the employment of different strategies. It is possible that the

inclusion of a greater variety of individuals in the sample would provide more variance in the degree of continuity being maintained allowing for analysis of the factors that predict continuity of household task performance during widowhood. The addition of respondents widowed less than 6 months and longer than 5 years may provide this increased variance. Additionally, with the inclusion of a greater spread in length of widowhood, more conclusive information regarding the effect of length of widowhood on gender differences in adjustment difficulty may be obtained.

Further, a retrospective investigation of widowed persons who no longer maintain their households independently would allow for greater understanding of the effects household task performance skill and knowledge as well as other factors had on this loss. Predictors of the inability to maintain continuity could thus be indentified and intervention programming developed to assist individuals found to be at risk.

It would also be helpful to tap into a larger longitudinal study of aging to be collect data regarding household task performance roles of husbands and wives before retirement, and during retirement, as well as at and after widowhood. This would eliminate inaccuracies caused by retrospective data collection and provide for more information about the changes



couples and families encounter and the adaptations they make during older adulthood.

Finally, continued interdisciplinary research efforts, combining investigators from family resource management, gerontology, sociology and medical fields, would be valuable. Aging and widowhood have far-reaching and complex effects on individuals and society as a whole. Through concerted efforts of a variety of researchers, a more comprehensive understanding of these effects could be attained.

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**APPENDIX A**

CONTINUITY OF HOUSEHOLD TASK PERFORMANCE  
DURING WIDOWHOOD

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of a study conducted through the  
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## ABSTRACT

This study was designed to increase the understanding of how older persons maintain their independence in widowhood by examining their performance of household tasks, comparing responsibilities before and after widowhood. Specifically, the study focused on differences in household task performance according to gender and length of widowhood, and according to whether the tasks were performed by the respondent or others. Participants were 38 men and 135 women from the Roanoke, Virginia SMSA, aged 60 years or older, widowed less than five years, residing in the community as heads of their own household, and enjoying good health. Interviews were conducted between April and October 1987 by professional interviewers and lasted one to two hours.

Participants held traditional views of the proper role of women in society, and expressed those views in household task behavior that was segregated according to gender role. Most of the household tasks can be classified as "female" within such a traditional role conception, and most of them were performed by the female spouse in these widowers' and widows' households prior to the event of widowhood. The women entered widowhood with a much stronger resource in terms of knowledge and skills necessary to maintain continuity.

The men in the sample appeared to be maintaining their independence with much higher levels of help from others than was the

case for the women. This was especially true for the longer-term widowers, who relied extensively on assistance with meal arrangements, household cleaning, and caring for clothes--the most "female" of all the tasks. The majority of the widows performed most of the tasks themselves, although there was an increase in the proportion of widows who used help from others, especially agency or hired help, following widowhood.

It appears that both the widowers and widows achieved continuity of household task performance from before to after widowhood, but used different strategies to do so. The men turned to outside helpers to replace the contribution of their deceased wives in running the household; the women continued to do the work they had always done and got help with the "masculine" tasks of financial management and care of house and automobile. This strategy makes the men particularly vulnerable to the potential of having to give up independent living, depending on the strength or fragility of their outside support systems.

The combination of household task knowledge and skill (high), gender (female), health status (good), and location of residence (nonurban) accounted for 67% of the variance in the regression model. Thus, knowledge and skill are of paramount importance for continuity of household tasks performance, and by extension, for maintenance of independent living. Participants who had had total or partial responsibility for sets of tasks prior to widowhood had

gained sufficient resources in those domains to be able to continue performing the tasks personally after widowhood.

More intensive analysis is needed to increase the understanding of relationships in the model. However, it is evident that a number of widowed persons, especially men, need help in learning to manage household tasks if they wish to maintain independence. Agencies that provide household assistance to older adults should adopt an educational stance and attempt to help clients increase their self-reliance. The goal should be to maximize independent functioning of clients in the context of short-term assistance whenever possible.

**APPENDIX B**

Instrument item and scoring for dependent and independent variables.

VARIABLE	ITEM NUMBER(S)	SCORING METHOD
<u>Dependent Variable</u>		
Housheold Task Performance Continuity Strategy	90-188	Tasks completed by respondent after widowhood (0-33)
<u>Independent Variables</u>		
Household Task Skill and Knowledge	57-89	Score of 7 task categories of pre-widowhood tasks completed by respondent (0-70)
Age	320	Years
Education	321	1 - 8 (1 = some elem. school; 8 = post-grad. degree)
Occupation	258	1 = 8 (1 = lower SES; 8 = higher SES)
Gender	Id. Code	Male = 1 Female = 2
Employment Status	257	1 - 3 (1 = no outside employ.; 3 = full-time outside employ.)



Income Level	245	1 - 6 (1 = low)
Income Regularity	254	1 - 6 (1 = weekly; 6 = irregular)
Length of Widowhood	Id. Code	84 = long-term 86 = short-term
Health Status	265	1 - 4 (1 = poor; 4 = excellent)
Social Involvement	314-318	0 - 20 (0 = none; 20 = involved)
Household Human Resources and Resource Demands	6	+1 = each non-dependent adult -1 = each child/dependent adult
Geographical area of Residence	335	1 = urban 2 = suburban 3 = rural
Knowledge of	307-308	+1 for each resource identified (0-2 scale - 0 = least knowl.; 2 = most knowl.)
Dwelling Maintenance Responsibility	7	+1 for maintenance inside
	8	+1 for maintenance outside
	9	+1 = size right
	10	+1 = can keep clean (0-4 scale - 0 = least resp./difficulty; 4 = most resp./difficulty)

Normative Expectations for Gender Role	14-28	1 - 60 (60 = most egalitarian expectations)
Self-Perceived Adjustment Difficulty	212	1 - 4 (1 = very difficulty; 4 = not difficult at all)
	214	1 - 4 (1 = very hard; 4 = not hard at all) (2 - 8 scale - 2 = very difficult; 8 = not diff. at all)

**APPENDIX C**

Household tasks necessary for the maintenance of an  
independent household

MEAL ARRANGEMENTS

plans meals  
makes shopping list  
shops for food  
cooks  
cleans up/washes dishes

SELF CARE

arranges medical/dental  
appointments (for  
family)  
plans for exercise,  
rest, and leisure  
activities

CLEANING

straightens the house  
vacuums  
dusts  
mops floors  
does other cleaning  
schedules weekly/seasonal  
cleaning

HOUSEHOLD REPAIRS AND  
MAINTENANCE

plans/schedules  
household maintenance  
repairs and yard  
work  
performs household  
maintenance/repairs/  
yardwork or sees  
they get done  
plans/schedules auto  
maintenance/repairs  
performs auto  
maintenance/repairs

LAUNDRY

sorts laundry into loads  
selects washer/dryer  
settings  
puts clothes in washer  
puts clothes in dryer  
hangs clothes to dry  
folds clothes  
puts clothes away  
takes clothes to cleaners

MONEY MANAGEMENT

pays bills  
balances checkbook  
plans investments  
makes investments

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

maintains contact with  
relatives/friends  
arranges social/community  
activities  
participates in social/  
community activities

FAMILY MEMBER CARE

takes care of children  
or others who need  
care  
decides what care and  
childrearing practices  
are followed

**APPENDIX D**

Time begin \_\_\_\_\_

Time end \_\_\_\_\_

ID No. \_\_\_\_\_

### Interview Schedule

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me about your life before your (wife/husband) died and since you have been widowed.

The interview is strictly confidential. The answers you provide will be pooled with many others. Your name will never be connected with the information you provide so please feel free to answer each question as honestly as you can. You don't have to answer a question if you don't want to, and you can stop the interview at any time if you wish to do so. You may ask me questions along the way if there is something you don't understand.

Do you have questions right now?

I expect this may be difficult for you -- just thinking about some of these things may bring back some tender memories. You may feel like crying, and I want you to know that it is alright if you do. Even if I get teary-eyed myself, please feel free to express your feelings. Maybe talking or even crying will be helpful to you.

1. Have you been married more than one time? 1. Yes 2. No

2. How old were you when you got married [for the first time?]

- 1) 17 years or under
- 2) 18-19
- 3) 20-25
- 4) 26-30
- 5) 31-35
- 6) 36-40
- 7) 41 or over

3. [After your first marriage] was there any time when you were living on your own without a [HUSBAND/WIFE] present [e.g., DIVORCED, WIDOWED, SEPARATED] OUT OF TOWN JOB, DUE TO ARMED SERVICE DUTY [IF YES] How many years altogether?

\_\_\_\_\_ (years) [CODE 99 IF NEVER] [CODE 01 IF LESS THAN OR EQUAL TO 1 YEAR]

4. How many years had you been married prior to [THE MOST RECENT] widowhood?

- 1) less than 5 years
- 2) 5-10 years
- 3) 11-15 years
- 4) 16-20 years
- 5) 21-30 years
- 6) 31-40 years
- 7) 41-50 years
- 8) Over 50 years

5. How many living children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Who lives with you? [READ ALL CATEGORIES]

		[MALE = 1, FEMALE = 2]
		[RECORD SEX AND AGE: EX.- 1-51, 2-32]
1. No	2. <u>Yes</u>	
—	—	Live alone [GO TO 6]
—	—	Children _____
—	—	Grandchildren _____
—	—	Parents _____
—	—	Brothers and Sisters _____
—	—	Other relatives _____
—	—	Friends _____
—	—	Non-related paid helper(s) _____
—	—	Others (Specify) _____

## HOUSING RESPONSIBILITIES AND SATISFACTION

7. Who is responsible for maintaining and repairing the inside of your home?
- 1) self [OR OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS]
  - 2) landlord
  - 3) other [WHO] \_\_\_\_\_
8. Who is responsible for maintaining and repairing the outside and surrounding area (yard, sidewalk, flowers, trees) of your home?
- 1) self [OR OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS]
  - 2) landlord
  - 3) other [WHO] \_\_\_\_\_
9. Does the size of this residence suit your needs? Is it
- 1) less than you need
  - 2) just the right size to meet your needs
  - 3) more than you need
10. Do you feel you have too much living space in your home to keep it clean and maintained?
- 1) yes
  - 2) no
11. How many rooms of living space do you have not counting bathroom and halls?  
 \_\_\_\_ [RECORD TWO DIGITS]
12. Now about keeping this home repaired, maintained, cleaned, and all the tasks involved in running the household. I will read some statements and would like you to tell me which one you would choose if you could have an ideal situation.
- [INDICATE IF RESPONSE IS RESPONDENT'S PRESENT SITUATION. 1. NO 2. YES
- 1) live here by myself \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) stay here and pay someone to help me take care of the house \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3) stay here and have someone move in who could help me take care of the house \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4) move to a place where maintenance and repairs are handled by someone else \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5) move closer to people who could help me take care of the house \_\_\_\_\_
  - 6) move in with someone else \_\_\_\_\_
13. Sometimes people don't invite friends into their home because they aren't satisfied with the way it looks. Have you ever felt this way about your home since you have been widowed?
- 1) No
  - 2) Yes



Now I would like to read some statements to you. Please look at this card.  
 [HAND RESPONDENT CARD A] I'd like you to tell me your personal opinion about each statement (not the feelings that you think people in general may have) by telling me if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement I read. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. Your feelings are what we are interested in knowing.

	SD	D	A	SA
14. Swearing and using obscene language are more offensive in the speech of a woman than a man.	1	2	3	4
15. If both the husband and the wife are working outside the home, they should share equally in routine household chores, such as washing dishes and doing the laundry	1	2	3	4
16. It is insulting to women to have to obey their husbands as part of their marriage vows.	1	2	3	4
17. A woman should be as free as a man to propose marriage.	1	2	3	4
18. Women should be less concerned with "women's rights" and more concerned with being good wives and mothers.	1	2	3	4
19. Women should be able to work as equals with men in all businesses and professions.	1	2	3	4
20. A woman should not be able to go exactly the same places or to have quite the same freedom of action as a man.	1	2	3	4
21. It is ridiculous for a woman to run a locomotive and for a man to darn socks.	1	2	3	4
22. The decisions about what is best for a community should be largely in the hands of men.	1	2	3	4
23. Women should be given equal opportunity with men for apprenticeship in various trades, such as carpentry and electrical work.	1	2	3	4
24. Women earning as much income as their dates should share expenses equally when they go out together.	1	2	3	4
25. Sons in the family should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters.	1	2	3	4
26. In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in making decisions about raising children.	1	2	3	4

	SD	D	A	SA
27. Freedom and equality in society are more important for women than being womanly.	1	2	3	4
28. There are many jobs in which men should be given preference over women in being hired	1	2	3	4

#### H. SOCIAL PROVISIONS SCALE

Now let's talk about your family, friends, neighbors, and so on. I'll read some statements and you look at the card and tell me which answer tells how you feel.

	SD	D	A	SA
29. There are people I can depend on to help me if I really need it	1	2	3	4
30. I feel that I do not have close personal relationships with other people	1	2	3	4
31. There is no one I can turn to for guidance in times of stress	1	2	3	4
32. There are people who depend on me for help	1	2	3	4
33. There are people who enjoy the same social activities as I do	1	2	3	4
34. Other people do not view me as competent	1	2	3	4
35. I feel personally responsible for the personal well-being of another person	1	2	3	4
36. I feel part of a group of people who share my attitudes and beliefs	1	2	3	4
37. I do not think other people respect my skills and abilities	1	2	3	4
38. If something went wrong, no one would come to my assistance	1	2	3	4
39. I have close relationships that provide me with a sense of emotional security and well-being	1	2	3	4
40. There is someone I could talk to about important decisions in my life	1	2	3	4
41. I have relationships where my competence and skills are recognized	1	2	3	4
42. There is no one who shares my interests and concerns	1	2	3	4

	SD	D	A	SA
43. There is no one who really relies on me for their well-being	1	2	3	4
44. There is a trustworthy person I could turn to for advice if I were having problems	1	2	3	4
45. I feel a strong emotional bond with at least one other person	1	2	3	4
46. There is no one I can depend on for aid if I really need it	1	2	3	4
47. There is no one I can feel comfortable talking about problems with	1	2	3	4
48. There are people who admire my talents and abilities	1	2	3	4
49. I feel a lack of intimacy with another person	1	2	3	4
50. There is no one who likes to do the things I do	1	2	3	4
51. No one needs me to care for them	1	2	3	4
52. There are people I can count on in an emergency	1	2	3	4
53. Approximately how far from your home is the home of the person most likely to help you in an emergency? Is it				
1. within your neighborhood				
2. within the same community/town				
3. in another community/town				
4. in another state				
5. no one would help				
54. How often do you visit or talk on the phone with your relatives and friends? [VISIT MEANS AT YOUR HOME OR THEIRS]				
1. less than once a year				
2. about once a year				
3. several times a year				
4. about once a month				
5. several times a month				
6. about once a week				
7. several times a week				
8. daily				
55. About visiting and talking with family and friends, in general, would you like:				
1. much less contact				
2. less contact				
3. do you like it as it is				
4. more contact				
5. much more contact				

56. In general, how satisfied are you with your family and friend relationships? Are you

1. not at all satisfied
2. not too satisfied
3. somewhat satisfied
4. very satisfied

## HOUSEHOLD TASK PERFORMANCE PRE-WIDOWHOOD

Let's talk about who did the household chores before your [HUSBAND/WIFE] became seriously ill, before you were widowed. Look at this card and tell me who usually did these things. [HAND RESPONDENT CARD B]

## CARD B:

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 00 = no one                   | 10 = father or mother [includes in-laws]  |
| 01 = husband always           | 20 = son or daughter [includes in-laws]   |
| 02 = husband more than wife   | 30 = brother or sister [includes in-laws] |
| 03 = husband and wife equally | 40 = other relative                       |
| 04 = wife more than husband   | 50 = friend                               |
| 05 = wife always              | 60 = neighbor (not really a friend)       |
|                               | 70 = agency person or hired help          |
|                               | 99 = NA                                   |

First, regarding meal arrangements, who

57. planned meals \_\_\_\_\_  
 58. made shopping list \_\_\_\_\_  
 59. shopped for food \_\_\_\_\_  
 60. cooked \_\_\_\_\_  
 61. cleaned up/washed dishes \_\_\_\_\_

Now, as far as household cleaning goes, who

62. straightened the house  
     --put things away \_\_\_\_\_  
 63. vacuumed \_\_\_\_\_  
 64. dusted \_\_\_\_\_  
 65. mopped floors, wash walls, etc. \_\_\_\_\_  
 66. scheduled weekly/seasonal cleaning (i.e., wash walls, windows) \_\_\_\_\_

Thinking about caring for clothes, who

67. sorted laundry into loads \_\_\_\_\_  
 68. selected washer/dryer settings \_\_\_\_\_  
 69. put clothes in washer \_\_\_\_\_  
 70. put clothes in dryer \_\_\_\_\_  
 71. folded clothes \_\_\_\_\_  
 72. put clothes away \_\_\_\_\_  
 73. hung clothes to dry \_\_\_\_\_  
 74. took clothes to cleaners \_\_\_\_\_

How about social activities. Who

75. maintained contact with relatives/friends \_\_\_\_\_  
 76. arranged social/community activities \_\_\_\_\_  
 77. participated in social/community activities \_\_\_\_\_

Regarding family and self care, who

78. arranged for medical/dental appointments for the family \_\_\_\_\_  
 79. planned for exercise, rest, leisure activities for the family \_\_\_\_\_

Now, about household repairs and maintenance, who

80. planned/scheduled household maintenance/repairs, yard work \_\_\_\_\_  
 81. performed household maintenance/repairs and yardwork or saw they were done \_\_\_\_\_  
 82. planned/scheduled auto maintenance/repairs \_\_\_\_\_  
 83. performed auto maintenance/repairs or saw they were done \_\_\_\_\_

In the area of household money management, who

84. paid bills \_\_\_\_\_  
 85. balanced the check-book \_\_\_\_\_  
 86. planned investments \_\_\_\_\_  
 87. made investments \_\_\_\_\_

How about family member care. Who

88. took care of children or others who needed care \_\_\_\_\_  
 89. decided what care and childrearing practices were followed \_\_\_\_\_

## HOUSEHOLD TASKS NOW

Let's talk about the way things are now. Who performs these tasks at present?  
[HAND RESPONDENT CARD C]

## CARD C:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 01 = me                                   | 60 = neighbor (not really a friend) or boarder |
| 10 = father or mother [includes in-laws]  | 70 = agency person or hired help               |
| 20 = son or daughter [includes in-laws]   | 99 = NA  |
| 30 = brother or sister [includes in-laws] |  |
| 40 = other relative                       |  |
| 50 = friend                               |  |

[IF HELP IS BEING RECEIVED ASK:]

[IF RECEIVING HELP OR NOT ASK:]

How satisfied are you with the help you are getting?

Do you feel you need help?

1 = no  
2 = yes

1=not at all satisfied  
2=not too satisfied  
3=somewhat satisfied  
4=very satisfied

Regarding meals, who

- |                             |       |            |            |
|-----------------------------|-------|------------|------------|
| 90. plans meals             | _____ | 123. _____ | 124. _____ |
| 91. makes shopping list     | _____ | 125. _____ | 125. _____ |
| 92. shops for food          | _____ | 127. _____ | 128. _____ |
| 93. cooks                   | _____ | 129. _____ | 130. _____ |
| 94. cleans up/washes dishes | _____ | 131. _____ | 132. _____ |

How about cleaning. Who

- |   |       |            |            |
|---|-------|------------|------------|
| 95. straightens the house--puts things away                           | _____ | 133. _____ | 134. _____ |
| 96. vacuums   | _____ | 135. _____ | 136. _____ |
| 97. dusts   | _____ | 137. _____ | 138. _____ |
| 98. mops floors   | _____ | 139. _____ | 140. _____ |
| 99. does other cleaning tasks   | _____ | 141. _____ | 142. _____ |
| 100. schedules weekly/seasonal cleaning (i.e., washes walls, windows) | _____ | 143. _____ | 144. _____ |

In the area of laundry, who

- |                                    |       |            |            |
|------------------------------------|-------|------------|------------|
| 101. sorts laundry into loads      | _____ | 145. _____ | 146. _____ |
| 102. selects washer/dryer settings | _____ | 147. _____ | 148. _____ |

103. puts clothes in washer	___	149. ___	150. ___
104. puts clothes in dryer	___	151. ___	152. ___
105. hangs clothes to dry	___	153. ___	154. ___
106. folds clothes	___	155. ___	156. ___
107. puts clothes away	___	157. ___	158. ___
108. takes clothes to cleaners	___	159. ___	160. ___

Regarding social activities now, who

109. maintains contact with relatives/friends	___	161. ___	162. ___
110. arranges social/community activities	___	163. ___	164. ___
111. participates in social/community activities	___	165. ___	166. ___

In the area of self care, who

112. arranges medical/dental appointments	___	167. ___	168. ___
113. plans for exercise, rest, and leisure activities	___	169. ___	170. ___

How about household repairs and maintenance, who

114. plans/schedules household maintenance/repairs and yardwork	___	171. ___	172. ___
115. performs household maintenance/repairs/yardwork or sees they are done	___	173. ___	174. ___
116. plans/schedules auto maintenance/repairs	___	175. ___	176. ___
117. performs auto maintenance/repairs or sees they are done	___	177. ___	178. ___

In the area of money management, who

118. pays bills	___	179. ___	180. ___
119. balances the checkbook	___	181. ___	182. ___
120. plans investments	___	183. ___	184. ___
121. makes investments	___	185. ___	186. ___

Lastly, regarding family member care. Who

122. takes care of children or others who need care	___	187. ___	188. ___
---	-----	----------	----------

123. decides what care and  
 childrearing practices  
 are followed \_\_\_\_\_ 189. \_\_\_\_\_ 190. \_\_\_\_\_

191. On an average weekday, how many hours do you usually spend doing work  
 around the house (preparing meals, cleaning, laundry, grocery shopping)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ HOURS [ENTER 9 FOR 9 OR MORE]

Do you think housework

	NO	YES
192. is never finished	1	2
193. is boring	1	2
194. requires a great deal of skill	1	2
195. requires a lot of concentration	1	2
196. is appreciated by others	1	2
197. could be done by almost anyone	1	2
198. gives a real sense of accomplishment	1	2
199. is important	1	2
200. is frustrating because it doesn't allow you to make good use of your abilities	1	2

201. Of all the tasks you do around the house, which is your favorite?

\_\_\_\_\_

a) Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

202. Which task is the most difficult for you? \_\_\_\_\_

a) What makes it difficult? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b) What would make it easier [PROBE: i.e., help learning how to do it,  
 physical help with it] \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

203. Was your husband/wife ill for a long time  
 before he/she died? 1. No 2. Yes



[IF HUSBAND/WIFE NOT ILL PRIOR TO DEATH, CIRCLE "1" FOR EACH -- GO TO 211]

Thinking back to the time just before your (husband/wife) died; from the following list of household tasks, tell me which of them you performed while your (husband/wife) was ill which you normally did not perform earlier in your marriage.

	NO	YES
204. cooking, shopping, planning meals	1	2
205. cleaning	1	2
206. laundry	1	2
207. taking care of the money and bills	1	2
208. doing household repairs or arranging for them to be done	1	2
209. taking care of the car or other vehicle(s)	1	2
210. taking care of the yard	1	2

#### ADJUSTMENT TO WIDOWHOOD

Any time a change takes place in a household, such as widowhood, normal day-to-day life is disrupted and people can feel disorganized for a while.

211. Did you experience this after you were widowed? 1. Yes 2. No  
[IF NO, GO TO 216]
212. In general, would you describe your first month or so of widowhood as:
1. very difficult
  2. fairly difficult
  3. not too difficult
  4. not difficult at all
213. Do you feel you have gotten your life back to normal with things under control?
1. Yes
  2. No
214. How hard a time did you have readjusting your life after being widowed? Was it
1. very hard
  2. fairly hard
  3. not too hard
  4. not hard at all
215. How long did it take you to get your life back in order?
1. 6 months or less
  2. 7 - 12 months
  3. 1 1/2 - 2 years
  4. 2 1/2 - 3 years
  5. not yet adjusted

I want to ask about some things in your everyday life now. Please tell me if you've experienced any changes compared to just before you became widowed.

	LESS	NO CHANGE	MORE
216. Do you see your friends more often than before, less often, or is there no change in how often you see them?	1	2	3
217. Do you see your relatives more often, less often, or is there no change?	1	2	3
218. Do you spend more time doing the things you really enjoy, less time, or no change.	1	2	3
219. Do you find it more difficult to run your daily affairs than before widowhood, less difficult, or about the same?	1	2	3
220. Do you have a greater sense of freedom now, less freedom, or no change?	1	2	3
221. Have you become more trustful of other people since widowhood, less trustful, or no change?	1	2	3
222. Do you have more self-confidence now, less self-confidence, or is there no change in your feeling of self-confidence?	1	2	3

How do you feel your situation is now compared to just before you were widowed. Are your

	WORSE OFF	ABOUT THE SAME	BETTER OFF
223. financial conditions	1	2	3
224. living conditions	1	2	3
225. social opportunities	1	2	3

226. How helpful were other people after you were widowed? Would you say

1. not at all helpful
2. not too helpful
3. fairly helpful
4. very helpful

227. Who was the most helpful to you in your first month or so of widowhood? Was it family members, friends and neighbors, club members, or someone else?

1. family member(s) [SPECIFY] \_\_\_\_\_
2. friend/neighbor
3. social organization member(s) [SPECIFY ORGANIZATION] \_\_\_\_\_
4. other [SPECIFY] \_\_\_\_\_

228. When you became widowed, did you have any children living at home?

1. no
2. yes

229. After you became widowed, did you move to a new place of residence?

1. no
2. yes - How soon after widowhood did you move? \_\_\_\_\_ (mo)  
[ENTER NUMBER OF MONTHS IN TWO DIGITS]

230. Since you became widowed, are your friends

1. mostly those you had before widowhood
2. mostly new friends
3. a combination of old and new friends

#### MANAGEMENT

Every day we make many decisions about how we run our households. You may not realize the number of decisions you making during the day. For example, families often set long-term goals for themselves, such as having all of the children receive a good education. You may plan your day, either the night before when you go to bed or in the morning when you drink your coffee, so that you can get everything in you would like to do. People often may weigh choices they have for getting a job done. For example, a woman may choose to make a cake for a bake sale using a box mix rather than from scratch because it takes less time and effort. A man may take his car to the car wash after the snow because, even though it costs money, it takes less effort and is faster than washing the car himself. Managing your household may also involve thinking about how a decision you make today may affect what you have to work with in the future. For example, someone may choose to buy cheaper brands of certain foods because they know they will need to buy medicine soon. They also may use past experiences when making decisions today—they may remember that it is best to shop for sheets and towels in the winter during the "white sales" to save money that can be used for other essentials or even a vacation.

The following statements have to do with how often you think about getting the most from your time, money and energy—how often you think about the choices you have when making every day decisions about your household. Look at this card and tell me how often you do each of the following. [HAND RESPONDENT CARD D]

- CARD D
- 1 = Never
  - 2 = Occasionally
  - 3 = Frequently
  - 4 = Constantly

How often do you

	N	O	F	C
231. Decide upon the things you want to get or accomplish.	1	2	3	4
232. Make a definite decision about things.	1	2	3	4
233. Balance use of energy, time, money, and help from others to get the greatest benefit.	1	2	3	4
234. Develop plans that can be used over and over for doing certain things.	1	2	3	4

	N	O	F	C
235. Decide how to put your time to best use.	1	2	3	4
236. Consider the influence of one decision on other decisions that will have to be made.	1	2	3	4
237. Develop plans for doing or getting what is wanted.	1	2	3	4
238. Use results from previous experiences when making decisions and planning.	1	2	3	4
239. Take action on plans that have been made.	1	2	3	4
240. Get work done in a reasonable amount of time.	1	2	3	4
241. Balance what is wanted now with what is wanted in the future.	1	2	3	4
242. Talk with other family members about goals and the plans for accomplishing them.	1	2	3	4
243. How satisfied are you with your use of time? Are you				
1. completely dissatisfied				
2. somewhat dissatisfied				
3. neutral (about equally dissatisfied and satisfied)				
4. somewhat satisfied				
5. completely satisfied				
244. Why do you think you feel this way? [RECORD VERBATIM]				

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#### INCOME LEVEL AND REGULARITY/FINANCIAL SECURITY

[HAND CARD E]

245. Look at this card and tell me which letter comes closest to your household income before taxes last year. Just tell me the letter, not the amount.

- CARD E
- a) less than 5,000
  - b) 5,000 - 9,999
  - c) 10,000 - 14,999
  - d) 15,000 - 19,999
  - e) 20,000 - 24,999
  - f) 25,000 or more

I'll read a list of sources of income. Please tell me which applied to you during the past year. Did you have any

	NO	YES
246. earned income	1	2
247. return from investments	1	2
248. social security	1	2
249. benefits related to jobs	1	2
250. armed service benefits	1	2
251. legal arrangements	1	2

	NO	YES
252. gifts and inheritances	1	2
253. Did you have any sources of income that I didn't mention? [SPECIFY] _____	1	2

254. How often do you receive income from your "main source"?

1. weekly
2. every 2 weeks
3. monthly
4. every 3 months (quarterly)
5. less frequently than every 3 months
6. my main income does not come regularly

255. Please tell me how well you think you (and your family) are doing now financially as compared to other people your age--better, about the same, or worse?

1. Worse
2. About the same
3. Better

256. How well does the amount of money you have take care of your needs--very well, fairly well, or poorly?

1. Poorly
2. Fairly well
3. Very well

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

257. Which one of these categories best describes your employment status? Are you:

258. What kind of work have you done most of your life? [STATE SPECIFIC OCCUPATION]

259. Were you working at the time you became widowed?  
 1. Yes  
 2. No

260. How long has it been since you held a job?  
 1. up to 6 mos.  
 2. 6 mos. to 1 yr  
 3. 2-3 years  
 4. 4-5 years  
 5. 6-10 years  
 6. over 10 years

261. Are you working primarily for  
 1. financial need  
 2. social contacts  
 3. to keep busy  
 4. Other [SPECIFY]

262. Do you wish you had a job now?  
 1. Yes  
 2. No

Homemaker who never or rarely worked outside the home	1					
Homemaker who is retired from paid employment	2					
Retired and not employed	3					
Retired but employed part time	4					
Retired but employed full time	5					
Employed part time	6					
Employed full time	7					
Unemployed and seeking work	8					

263. Did your husband/wife ever work?

- 1. No
- 2. Yes

264. What kind of work did he/she do? (State the Specific Occupation in Detail)

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**HEALTH STATUS**

265. How would you rate your overall health at the present time—excellent, good, fair or poor?

1. Poor
2. Fair
3. Good
4. Excellent

266. How much does your health stand in the way of your doing the things you want to do—not at all, a little (some), or a great deal?

1. A great deal
2. A little (some)
3. Not at all

## SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

Now how about these questions:

- |   |                  |              |
|---|------------------|--------------|
| 267. Do little things bother you more this year?                        | 1. Yes           | 2. No        |
| 268. Do you sometimes worry so much that you can't sleep?               | 1. Yes           | 2. No        |
| 269. Are you afraid of a lot of things?                                 | 1. Yes           | 2. No        |
| 270. Do you take things hard?   | 1. Yes           | 2. No        |
| 271. Do you get mad more than you used to?                              | 1. Yes           | 2. No        |
| 272. Do you get upset easily?   | 1. Yes           | 2. No        |
| 273. Do things keep getting worse as you get older?                     | 1. Yes           | 2. No        |
| 274. Do you have as much pep as you did last year?                      | 1. No            | 2. Yes       |
| 275. As you get older are you less useful?                              | 1. Yes           | 2. No        |
| 276. Are you as happy now as when you were younger?                     | 1. No            | 2. Yes       |
| 277. As you get older are things better than you thought they would be? | 1. No            | 2. Yes       |
| 278. Do you have a lot to be sad about?                                 | 1. Yes           | 2. No        |
| 279. Is life hard for you much of the time?                             | 1. Yes           | 2. No        |
| 280. Do you see enough of your friends and relatives?                   | 1. No            | 2. Yes       |
| 281. Do you sometimes feel that life isn't worth living?                | 1. Yes           | 2. No        |
| 282. How much do you feel lonely?                                       | 1. a lot         | 2. not much  |
| 283. Are you satisfied with your life today?                            | 1. not satisfied | 2. satisfied |

## LONELINESS

Look at this card and tell me how often you feel this way. [HAND CARD F]

- CARD F.
1. Never
  2. Rarely
  3. Sometimes
  4. Often

- |  | <u>N</u> | <u>R</u> | <u>S</u> | <u>O</u> |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 284. I feel in tune with the people around me. | 1        | 2        | 3        | 4        |
| 285. No one really knows me well.              | 1        | 2        | 3        | 4        |
| 286. I can find companionship when I want it.  | 1        | 2        | 3        | 4        |
| 287. People are around me but not with me.     | 1        | 2        | 3        | 4        |



## [HAND RESPONDENT CARD G]

How strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements.

	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree		
288. I have little control over the things that happen to me.	1	2	3	4	5
289. There is really no way I can solve some of the problems I have.	1	2	3	4	5
290. There is little I can do to change many of the important things in my life.	1	2	3	4	5
291. What happens to me in the future depends mostly on me.	1	2	3	4	5
292. I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems of life.	1	2	3	4	5
293. Sometimes I feel that I'm being pushed around in life.	1	2	3	4	5
294. I can do just about anything I really set my mind to.	1	2	3	4	5

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Let's talk about some of the community services you may have used before you were widowed. These services may have been provided through your church, through a senior citizens organization or through a community service organization such as the Department of Social Services or the Cooperative Extension Service. I will read you a list of services. Please tell me which ones you used before you were widowed. [THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE PROFESSION SERVICES]

	No	Yes
295. home nurse services	1	2
296. money management services	1	2
297. legal aid services	1	2
298. household chore or homemaker services	1	2
299. meal services (either delivered here or provided in a community building)	1	2
300. information and referral services	1	2

Now, from the same list, please tell me if you use any of these services now.

	No	Yes
301. home nurse services	1	2
302. money management service	1	2
303. legal aid services	1	2
304. household chore or homemaker services	1	2
305. meal services (either delivered here or provided in a community building)	1	2
306. information or referral services	1	2

307. If you need help, where could you receive information about available services in your community?
1. family
  2. friend/neighbor
  3. agency [SPECIFY] \_\_\_\_\_
  4. other [SPECIFY] \_\_\_\_\_
308. Do you know where you could receive help regularly with routine household chores if you needed it?
1. No [GO TO 310]
  2. Yes
309. Where could you get this service
1. family
  2. friend/neighbor
  3. agency
  4. other [SPECIFY] \_\_\_\_\_
310. Do you own a car or other vehicle?
1. No [GO TO 312]
  2. Yes
311. How often do you drive. Is it:
1. less than once a year
  2. about once a year
  3. several times a year
  4. once a month
  5. several times a month
  6. once a week
  7. several times a week
  8. daily
312. Can you take a bus if you need to go somewhere in the community?
1. No
  2. Yes
313. Do you feel you need transportation more often than it is available to you?
1. No
  2. Yes

I will read you a list of activities. Tell me about how many hours a week you usually spend in each activity from the choices on this card. [HAND RESPONDENT CARD H]

- CARD H
0. None
  1. 1-2 hours/week
  2. 3-5 hours/week
  3. 6-8 hours/week
  4. 9-10 hours/week
  5. more than 10 hours/week

314. attending church services	0	1	2	3	4	5
315. doing volunteer work	0	1	2	3	4	5
316. attending meetings of clubs and organizations	0	1	2	3	4	5
317. socializing with friends, relatives, neighbors, and others	0	1	2	3	4	5

318. In your church, club, or volunteer activities, how many times have you been in charge of a committee or project or been an officer?

1. Never
2. A few
3. A lot

Now I'd like to ask you a few questions about yourself and your background.

319. Where were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

320. When was that? \_\_\_\_\_  
                                     Month                                    Day                                    Year

321. How far did you go in school?

1. 0-4 years
2. 5-8 years
3. High school incomplete
4. High school completed
5. Post high school business or trade school
6. 1-3 years college
7. 4 years college completed
8. Postgraduate degree

**CHANGE**

Now, two final questions.

322. If you could change one thing about your life right now, what would it be?

323. What advice would you give to young couples today about who should make certain decisions and do certain jobs around the house?

CLOSING PROTOCOL

Well, Mr/Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_, that concludes our interview. I realize that this interview may have been difficult for you. I hope that talking together has been helpful for you. I'm sure the information you have given will be helpful to others who face the same situation you have.

Thank you for participating and for your help.

Here is a list of community agencies and services which you may find helpful (point out any that may appear particularly pertinent).

The information will be useful for understanding the situations faced by elderly widowed persons and for planning needed community service programs and services.

For further information call Dr. Rebecca Lovingood or Dr. Rosemary Blieszner or write them at the Center for Gerontology at Virginia Tech (hand thank-you card)

Thank you again.

[NOTE: IF MENTAL HEALTH/BEREAVEMENT COUNSELING APPEARS INDICATED, ASK IF THE RESPONDENT WOULD LIKE TO TALK WITH SOMEONE FURTHER WHO UNDERSTANDS HOW DIFFICULT A TIME THIS IS. IF YES, TELL THEM WE WILL HAVE SOMEONE FROM FAMILY SERVICES IN ROANOKE CONTACT THEM OR, IF POSSIBLE, HELP THEM MAKE THE CALL. CONTACT THE PROJECT MANAGER OR PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR IMMEDIATELY.]

## TO BE COMPLETED BY THE INTERVIEWER IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE INTERVIEW

324. In general, was the respondent's attitudes toward the interview

1. sad, depressed, tearful
2. hostile, angry
3. indifferent and bored
4. cooperative, but not particularly eager
5. friendly and eager

325. Was the respondent's understanding of the questions, in general

1. poor
2. fair
3. good

[INDICATE ANY PARTICULAR SECTIONS OR ITEMS WHICH WERE PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT]

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326. In general, the residence appeared

1. unkept
2. unclean but somewhat tidy
3. somewhat clean and tidy
4. very clean and tidy

327. Is the respondent's housing unit part of a housing complex or apartment building that is mostly or entirely for senior citizens (65 years or older)?

1. yes, only senior citizens live there
2. yes, mostly senior citizens live there
3. no, mixed apartment or neighborhood
4. can't tell for sure, seems to be mostly seniors
5. can't tell for sure, seems to be mixed housing

328. Type of structure in which Respondent lives:

1. Detached single family house
2. Detached two or three family house
3. Rowhouse or townhouse
4. Apartment house (4 or more units)
5. Apartment complex (2 or more apartment buildings)
6. Other (SPECIFY): \_\_\_\_\_

329. Condition of housing unit or apartment building:

1. Dilapidated, very substandard
2. Deteriorating
3. Generally sound
4. Excellent condition

330. Respondent's race

1. White
2. Black
3. Other [SPECIFY] \_\_\_\_\_

Physical disabilities apparent during interview:

1. Not at all
2. Slight
3. Moderate
4. Marked

331. Hard of hearing \_\_\_\_\_

332. Impaired vision \_\_\_\_\_

333. Difficulty moving  
around \_\_\_\_\_

334. During the interview were any other people present? 1. NO 2. YES

335. Area of residence

1. Rural
2. Suburban
3. Urban

336. Interviewer Code \_\_\_\_\_

VITA



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