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TRADITION AND HOUSEHOLD TASKS

by

Jennifer Hogge Miller

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Home Economics and Consumer Education

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To my husband, Barry, and  
our children, Benjamin and Kimberly

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to my Major Professor, Jane McCullough, for her time, interest, and the professional touch which she contributed. Her guidance has been thorough and most pleasant.

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Jennifer Hogge Miller



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## ABSTRACT

## Tradition and Household Tasks

by

Jennifer Hogge Miller, Master of Science

Utah State University, 1979

Major Professor: Professor Jane McCullough  
Department: Home Economics and Consumer Education

The purpose of this study was to investigate how Utah husbands and wives thought household tasks should be allocated and how they actually were allocated in their own homes. The sample was 191 two-parent, two-child families residing in Iron, Washington, and Salt Lake Counties. Urban/rural residence, wife's employment status, educational level of both the husband and wife, family income, religious activity, and the husband's occupation were studied in relation to household task allocation.

Eight hypotheses were tested. Husband's religious activity and wife's employment status were found to be related to a traditional pattern of household task allocation. There was a significant difference between wives' religious activity and allocation of household tasks. Wives who were

active church members were more traditional in both attitude and behavior than wives who were not active church members.

(85 pages)

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## INTRODUCTION

### Statement of the Problem

Tradition has been defined as the transmission of knowledge, customs, and practices from one generation to another. Tradition is often a custom so long continued that it is almost considered law (Funk & Wagnall's, 1966). Tradition affects nearly every aspect of life, including how people dress, what they eat, and how they relate to each other.

Roles are regarded as explicit or implicit guides for thought, emotion, and behavior that are used to tell what the person can or cannot, should or should not, must or must not do as an occupant of a particular status (Yorburg, 1973). Men and women's roles in society and particularly within the family have been defined by tradition (Epstein, 1970). A wide variety, however, exists among societies as to their definition of what are appropriate male and female roles and which particular tasks are a part of which roles. What may be a male's task in one society may be a female's task in another (Holmstrom, 1972).

Many societies define sex roles according to a mental

image of the ideal man or woman. Thus far, according to available evidence, all societies have used sex as a determinant of the division of labor (Holmstrom, 1972). In the family, the woman's role was usually that of housekeeper, while the man's role was to be the provider.

Many explanations for the traditional division of labor have been advanced. Common explanations are based on physiological differences between males and females. One theory was that the division of labor was based on the male's edge over the female in physical strength; consequently, the males performed the strenuous task of hunting, while the females performed less strenuous tasks near the home (Tavris and Offir, 1977). The need to be mobile has also been used as an explanation for the sex division of labor. Child-bearing and rearing tasks hindered the female's mobility; therefore, tasks assigned to women were ones that were carried on in the home or the vicinity. Men's tasks were those which took them away from the home, such as hunting and herding (Murdock, 1965).

Everyone has not agreed that the traditional division of tasks was based on physiological differences. Ralph Linton, in his book The Study of Man, (1936) suggested that the allo-



cation of tasks was almost entirely determined by culture rather than biology.

Other theories are based on psychological differences between males and females. Parsons (1955) identified two types of leaders, the "instrumental leader" who leads the way in problem-solving and decision-making; and the "expressive leader" who maintains morale and controls conflicts. The husband/father was seen as specializing in the "instrumental functions"; the wife/mother was seen as specializing in the "expressive functions." Parson's theory dominated studies of the family for many years; however, his conclusions that instrumental and expressive roles are sex-typed have been sharply criticized (Nickols, 1976). Despite such criticisms, researchers continue to study the family from the perspective of traditional sex role concepts (i.e., husband/father as "bread winner"; wife/mother as "homemaker") (Bell, 1974).

Studies concerning the division of labor done during the 1960's indicated that traditional roles were still being closely followed. Men were primarily responsible for supporting the family and doing household tasks outside the house; whereas, women were responsible for tasks inside the house (Parker, 1966; Aldous, 1969).

In the United States during the 1970's changes occurred which have had many consequences for families and particularly for the traditional roles of men and women (Stafford, Backman, & Diabona, 1977). We see evidence of this in the labor market participation, education, religion, and the rapid increase in the number of one-parent households. As some aspects of traditional roles changed, particularly those outside the home, have changes also been occurring in the division of tasks within the home?

Division of labor has been a concern of the women's movement because women's responsibility within the household is seen as a major stumbling block to career equality for men and women. When women have almost exclusive responsibility for the children and the household, they have less time and energy to devote to a career than their male counterparts.

The focus of this research was to determine some factors that may affect the division of labor between men and women in household tasks. A less rigid view of the division of labor both inside and outside the home might be beneficial to members of both sexes by allowing greater flexibility for individual choice and preference in lifestyles; yet, due to tradition, it has not been popular with either social scientists or laymen (Rossi, 1971). With the family being

the basic unit in our society, it is of benefit to those involved with families to see whether or not patterns and roles in family living are changing or remaining constant.

#### The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine how Utah husbands and wives thought household tasks should be allocated and how they actually were allocated.

#### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were proposed:

1. Urban households are less traditional in their allocation of household tasks than rural households.
2. There is no difference in the allocation of household tasks between husbands and wives when the wives are employed.
3. The wife's educational level does not affect the allocation of household tasks.
4. The husband's educational level does not affect the allocation of household tasks.
5. The more the husband's education exceeds that of the wife the more traditional they are in the allocation of household tasks.

6. A family's income does not affect the allocation of household tasks.
7. Persons who are active in a church are more traditional in the allocation of household tasks than those who are not.
8. The husband's occupation does not affect the allocation of household tasks.

#### Theoretical Definitions

Allocation: the act of assigning

Education: amount of formal schooling completed

Employed: working in the labor market

Non-employed: not working in the labor market

Family: a group of two or more persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption and residing together.  
(AHEA's Washington Dateline, Sept. 11, 1978)

Full-time homemaker: a non-employed wife

Household tasks: the activities performed in individual households that result in goods and services that enable a family to function as a unit. (Walker and Woods, p. 1)

Income: the amount of money received by a family during a year

Urban: residence within a city

Rural: residence in a small town or the country

Occupation: the work one does to gain a livelihood

Traditional: adhering to customs and practices of society

Non-traditional: not adhering to customs and practices of society

### Operational Definitions

Active in a church: a check in the active or very active box on the religion questionnaire

Allocation of household tasks: how activities are assigned within the home

Education: grade school  
 partial high school  
 high school  
 some college or advanced training  
 college graduate  
 graduate school

Family: two adults and two children living in the same dwelling unit

Income: <u>urban</u>	<u>rural</u>
low-under \$1,000-\$11,999	low-under \$1,000-\$9,999
moderate-\$12,000-\$24,999	moderate-\$10,000-\$24,999
high-\$24,000 and over	high-\$24,000 and over

Occupation: professional and business  
 clerical and sales  
 skilled labor  
 manual labor

Rural: families living in Iron and Washington Counties

Urban: families living in Salt Lake County

Traditional: women assigned to indoor household tasks and men assigned to outdoor household tasks (Lopata, 1971)

Non-traditional: women not assigned exclusively to indoor household tasks and men not assigned exclusively to outdoor household tasks

NE113: North East regional research project on "An Interstate Comparison of Urban/Rural Families' Time-Use." The states participating were: Texas, Oklahoma, Utah, New York, California, Oregon, Connecticut, North Carolina, Louisiana, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Employed wife: a wife who reported having worked for pay during the week before data were collected.

Non-employed wife: a wife who did not report having worked for pay during the week before data were collected.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tradition

Tradition is a set pattern of doing things that pertain to all aspects of life. Each of us has roles that are outlined for us based on tradition. Whether rich or poor, black or white, male or female, tradition heavily influences our thoughts, emotions, and behavior. From these blueprints the roles of provider and housekeeper evolve (Yorburg, 1973).

Housekeeper and provider are among the well-established traditional family roles. In America women are seen in relation to their child-bearing and rearing functions, while men are seen as the governing, industrial sector of our society (Epstein, 1970). The sexual division of labor appears to be held bound by tradition and lingers into future generations even though the original purpose of the custom may no longer be present. As Hunt observed in 1901

... real value (is) attached to the following of a custom even though the custom forces upon us something in itself useless and even harmful. Danger arises, not from following the custom, but from confounding the value of the custom

with the real value of the thing which the custom concerns. The more clearly we see when value lies in custom only the more speedily shall we free ourselves from the tyranny of useless conventions and traditions. (p. 5).

Traditional familial roles have long been taken for granted (Nye, 1976). Rights and duties from these roles define the task distribution for each family member: husband, wife, parent, child, or sibling. Roles provide a basis for self-concepts as either a family member or marriage partner. Exemplifying the traditional designation of responsibility according to sex, status, or age are the terms man's work (breadwinner), woman's work (homemaker), and child's play.

Housekeeping is as old as the family itself and stems from the need to prepare and cook food, make and care for clothing, bear and rear children, and respond to concepts of order and cleanliness (Nye, 1976). Domestic workers have traditionally been the world's largest occupational group. Half the population was engaged in a single task, i.e., producing and caring for people. The huge allocation of human resources was necessary to maintain an adequate adult population in the face of war and disease. This assignment of roles according to sex was viewed as logical. What else could any group of people do if they were almost always pregnant or "on tap" to feed the children (Binstock, 1972).



### Reasons for the Division of Labor

According to available evidence, all societies have used sex as a determinant for the division of labor. However, there has been and is great variability between societies concerning what constitutes a male or female task (Holmstrom, 1972). From their culture children derive expectations about themselves, and they learn what is occupationally acceptable and what are proper family-social patterns. Depending on sex, status, and culture, specific work is encouraged, tolerated, or tabooed (Epstein, 1970). Little girls and boys quickly get the message that only women are supposed to work in certain kinds of jobs, and only men are supposed to work in other kinds of jobs. For years women's and men's roles have been stereotyped in the classroom, on television, and at home (Sandler, 1979).

Many explanations for the division of labor according to sex have been propounded. Physiological differences between males and females are the most frequent explanation. It has been suggested by many authors that because males are physically stronger than females, tasks requiring strength were allocated to the male; whereas, the female performed less strenuous tasks (Tavris & Offir, 1977).

Anthropologists have labeled gender differentiation 'the primary division of labor,' and with good reason. Gender differentiation is more ancient, more stable, and more widespread than any other type of social differentiation. It appears under all known economic and political orders. But the extent to which sex--or rather gender--constitutes a differentiating element in society varies considerably culturally and historically. (Holter, p. 331, 1972).

It cannot be disputed that 'physiological characteristics' result in a female specialization in child-bearing. However, beyond this basic fact there is a debate as to whether there are other differences in innate abilities between the sexes which dictate that men and women assume certain roles. An alternate explanation based on physiological factors was that mobility originally determined the task distribution. Child-bearing and rearing functions limited the female's mobility; consequently, the male did the hunting and herding while the female performed domestic duties (Murdock, 1965).

Another explanation for the division of labor between males and females was that men are viewed as "task" specialists, while women are viewed as "social" specialists. Parson's theory suggests that women are the "expressive" leaders (they handle emotional matters), while men are the "instrumental" leaders (they handle physical and decision-making matters). However, there have been on-going debates over this theory

for many years. Aronoff (1967) concluded that cross-cultural evidence suggested that in many societies women contribute to productive family activities as much or more than men do. This idea casts doubt on the male's "task" specialization in the family.

The passivity that is the essential characteristic of the "feminine" woman is a trait that develops in her from the earliest years. Many scholars have come to feel that it is wrong to assert that a biological datum is concerned; but rather that it is a destiny imposed upon her by her teachers and by society (Nickols, 1976). Research has generally reinforced the sex stereotypes that women are essentially nurturant/expressive/passive and men instrumental/active/aggressive. Social scientists have tended to justify these stereotypes rather than analyze their origins, their value, or effect (Nickols, 1976).

According to Lovingood and Firebaugh (1978), roles represent some specialization in task performance along traditional lines, with men responsible for tasks requiring physical strength, mathematical, business, or mechanical skills. Likewise women are generally responsible for traditional female tasks: those requiring affective or nurturing skills, large segments of time, and manipulative dexterity.

However, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, men's and women's aptitudes are more alike than different. In measuring 22 inherent aptitudes and knowledge areas, there was no sex difference in 14 areas, women excelled in 6, and men excelled in 2. Today, tradition rather than job content has led to labeling certain jobs as women's and others as men's.

The value structure of overall male superiority is a reflection of primitive orientations and values; however, social and economic conditions have changed drastically since these values were developed. Technology has reduced to almost nothing the importance of muscular strength. The result of all these changes is that the traditional sex roles and the traditional family structures may have become dysfunctional.

#### Change and the Current Division of Labor

Since the early 1900's, changes have occurred in the United States affecting what household tasks need to be done, how they are done, and, perhaps, how they are allocated amongst family members.

Of all the factors usually cited as leading to a decrease in housework, smaller families and labor saving equipment are

probably most often given. The number of children in a family has been found to be related to the amount of time devoted to household work (Walker & Woods, 1976), and today's families are smaller than at the turn of the century (Bernard, 1972). Labor saving equipment in the home has increased with time, particularly since the 1930's when 80% of urban and rural nonfarm dwellings had electricity (Vanek, 1973). Recent research shows an increase in the electrical equipment available in most homes (Braegger, 1977).

Although it is usually assumed that housework requires less time now than it did fifty years ago, research has not supported this conclusion (Vanek, 1973, Walker & Woods, 1976). Perhaps as Vanek (1973) suggests, mechanization of the household has meant that as time spent on some jobs decreased, other jobs were substituted and standards of performance were raised.

Despite all predictions, housework still remains necessary and consequently must be done to some degree by someone. The question of who that someone is or should be has received increasing attention in recent years. As the number of married women in the labor force has increased (Vanek, 1973; U.S. News & World Report, 1979) has there been a reallocation of household tasks?

Division of labor in the household has been important to the women's movement because it is seen as a major stumbling block to career equality for women and men. As long as women are primarily responsible for the household and children they can never devote enough time and energy to occupational demands to compete with men who can and are encouraged to do so (Stafford, 1977). If women have added work in the labor market to their lives and there has not been a redistribution of household work, the question of equity is raised.

#### Factors Affecting the Allocation of Household Tasks

Literature concerning the division of household labor suggests that a combination of variables influences how tasks are allocated. Some factors that are thought to affect the division of household labor are reviewed here, namely, urban/rural residence, wife's employment status, educational level of husband and wife, income, husband's occupation, and religious activity.

#### Urban/Rural Residence

According to Vanek (1973) rural housewives received  $1\frac{1}{2}$

hours less help per week with household tasks from their husbands than did urban wives. She concluded that rural husbands spent more time than urban husbands commuting to and from work; consequently, urban husbands had more free time to help their wives. No other studies concerning the division of labor in the household that compared urban and rural families could be located.

#### Wife's Employment Status

When the wife becomes employed there is a change in the amount of time she can devote to the home. Three alternatives are available to fill the needs of a household when the wife enters the labor market: (1) the work can be done by the husband, children, or maid, (2) the work does not get done, or (3) the wife becomes more efficient (Bahr, 1975). In the third case, the division of labor remains the same as it was before employment.

Family and work in the labor market have often been considered as conflicting activities for women (Cain, 1966; Goldberg, 1976; Sweet, 1973). It is also assumed that the time and energy demands of raising children restrict a mother's participation in the labor force (Vanek, 1973). Some researchers have concluded that entering the labor market

affects the division of household tasks while other studies have concluded that it had no or very little effect.

There is some evidence that women's employment changes the division of labor in the home (Aldous, 1969). Studies that reported a change in the division of labor are Blood, 1963 & 1967; Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Hoffman, 1960; Lovingood, 1963; and Bahr, 1975. These studies were all based on interviews.

Evidence also exists to support the conclusion that little or no change occurs in the division of labor in the home due to the wife's employment. In the Cornell study of household worktime, the husbands' hours of employment were related to their time spent in household work, but their time spent in housework did not change when their wives were employed. The husbands' workweek was about equal to the unemployed wives' workweek. But when wives were employed full-time, their workweek was 15 hours more than the husbands' (Walker, 1975). Walker also found that in families in which the wife worked, the husband assisted with housework from one to three hours per day. The differences in the assistance family members gave the wife depended on the number of children, their ages, and the age of the wife. The husband who devoted



three hours per day to housework had a wife who devoted six hours per day.

Sanik (1979) analyzed the data gathered by Cornell University during its 1977 update of the earlier Walker study (Walker & Woods, 1976). She expected that the time husbands spent doing housework would have increased during the ten years between the two studies. The husbands' household worktime had in fact increased by 30 minutes per day, a significant difference. The homemakers' household worktime had not increased over the ten years. The most important factor related to the time that husbands spent doing housework was their own hours of employment. Sanik also reported a weak but positive relationship between homemakers' market work and spouse's household work.

A time-study project directed by Alexander Szalai was conducted in twelve countries during 1965-66. Thirty thousand people were studied. Little difference was found among countries concerning the amount of time that the husband spent doing housework when his wife was employed full-time. The wife was found to be the person with the major responsibility for the household in all countries (Szalai, 1972).

In her nine country study, Cook (1975) observed that

while the lifestyles of the women in Japan, Australia, Western Europe, and the United States stressed sharing and equal opportunity, working mothers still carried a double burden of employment and household work. Whether married women worked or not, they got little assistance with housework from their husbands. When they worked they still carried the major responsibility for the care of the home and the children.

Nickols (1976) studied how much time husbands and wives spent in productive activity, which she defined as labor market and housework. The data for the study were collected over a six year period using 1,156 families as the subjects. Such factors as wife's employment status, family size, and husband's employment characteristics were examined. In her longitudinal analysis of time spent in productivity activity, Nickols found that there was very little change over the six year period in the time allocated to housework on the part of the husband. She hypothesized that there was a relationship between the wife's employment hours and the husband's housework hours. Her results indicated, however, that the wife's labor force hours had virtually no effect upon the time the husband contributed to housework. There was a relationship between the homemaker's hours of employment and her time spent

doing housework. As time in the labor force increased, time in housework proportionately decreased.

Among families in which both the husbands and wives were employed 2,000 hours or more per year, the average time spent by the husband doing housework was 3.5 hours per week and 19 hours per week for the wives. Consequently, the wives devoted about 15.5 hours more per week to productive activity than their husbands did.

#### Educational Level of Husband and Wife

It is often observed that couples with a relatively high educational level have more egalitarian relationships in marriage than those with less education (Komarovsky, 1964). However, if sharing of housework is used as a criterion of an egalitarian relationship, then there is no indication that marriages of more highly educated people are more egalitarian than those of couples with less education (Vanek, 1973). Nye (1976) reported that wives with more education were more likely to share the provider role but were still responsible for the housekeeper role. Thus the wife shared the husband's role but he did not share her role.

Nickols (1976) indicated that husbands with higher educations allocated more time to housework than did husbands with

less education. With each increment in level of educational achievement the husbands devoted 16 minutes more time to housework per week.

### Income

Economists often point out that in this day of specialization, it is not economically wise for the husband to do housework (Vanek, 1973). The wife is usually more efficient in the use of the money, time, energy, and knowledge that are required for a household to function smoothly, and the husband is usually able to earn more money in the labor market than his wife. The conclusion often reached by economists is that the time the husband devotes to his work is usually more beneficial financially to the family than it would be if he devoted it to household tasks.

In their book Husbands and Wives, Blood and Wolfe (1960) mentioned that in families with a high income, women spent less time in household work than did lower income women. A higher income allowed greater use of paid help, commercial services, and labor saving devices but did not necessarily guarantee a more helpful husband. High income husbands did less work around the house. Everything the man did not do, his wife had to compensate for in one way or another. She

may have had maids and more labor saving devices to cut down on her housework; however, housework as a whole became increasingly more her responsibility because her husband was so absorbed in his career.

Among low income black families, Rainwater (1965) reported that the higher the per capita income the more household tasks the husband performed.

In reviewing a study of low income black and white families, Aldous (1969) indicated that lower income families had a rigid division of labor. The husband/father supplied the money for physical maintenance of the family and the wife/mother performed housekeeping and child-care functions.

Goode (1971) noted that the opinions of men who were in the moderate income bracket were more liberal than was their actual behavior as measured by their authority within the home. Their participation in housework was less than they said it ought to be. The wives concurred and said that they wanted more help from their husbands with the housework.

The role of the moderate income husband in household tasks, like that of the working wife in the occupational sphere, is likely to be considered a helping role rather than a role based on equality of responsibility and privilege (Adams, 1975).

### Occupation

Aldous (1969), after reviewing the literature, concluded that the characteristics of the job that a man holds in the occupational structure can have profound affects on his marital and parental role performance. First there is the matter of how compatible his job is with family life. If the occupation is of extreme interest to the man, it may compete with or even replace the family as his top priority. Occupations that engage the man's attention at the expense of his family are jobs that require long hours, working night shifts, irregular hours, and uncertainty that the job will continue. These factors can limit the husband's participation in household tasks. Husbands accustomed to having decision making responsibilities in the office may continue to do so at home. Laborers and service workers, according to Aldous (1969), are least involved in family tasks or decisions.

Holmstrom (1972) studied 20 couples where both the husband and wife were actively pursuing a profession. She found that the wives were not completely responsible for performing all the household tasks themselves but that some specialization had occurred. The wife was most likely to cook dinner and do the grocery shopping, while the husband usually emptied the garbage and trash, did the repair work and the heavy yard

work. Tasks most likely to be shared equally were cooking breakfast and washing dishes. Financial tasks were randomly allocated. The major reasons given for the pattern of household task allocation were availability, skill, interest, and enjoyment. As one husband put it, "I help because there is no other way of running the menage without a 24 hour a day household staff " (Holmstrom, 1972, p. 59).

#### Religious Preference and Activity

Only two studies were found that had dealt with one's religious preference and activity as related to the allocation of household tasks. According to Nye (1976), religious preference was unrelated to the allocation of household tasks, but religious activity was related to the allocation of household tasks. Men and women who never attended church were more likely to be traditional in the allocation of household tasks than those who attended church more frequently. Among men, the more active they were in a religion the less traditional they were in the allocation of household tasks. Among women, it is only those who never attend church who were more traditional in the allocation of household tasks.

Blood and Wolfe (1960) expected Catholics to be very traditional in the divisions of household labor because

Catholic teachings at that time placed special emphasis on prescribed roles for men and women. They concluded that devout Catholics were not more traditional but less so than inactive Catholics. Religion has seldom been studied in relation to household task performance even though many religions do prescribe roles for men and women.

### Summary

The traditional division of labor in the home has been for men to perform outdoor tasks and home repairs, with all other household tasks being the major responsibility of women. The literature on the division of labor in the home indicates that there is disagreement concerning the amount of change that has occurred in this traditional arrangement. Studies have investigated the effects of urban/rural location, wife's employment status, husband's income, education of both the husband and wife, number and ages of children, and stage of family life cycle on the division of labor in the home.

Studies reporting no change in the household division of labor often predicted that increased participation by husbands in the home was not likely to occur either extensively or rapidly. Findings often indicated that although husbands and



wives shared in making and implementing some task decisions, they tended to specialize in performing certain tasks; i.e., they differentiated roles.

Other studies suggested that the division of labor in the home is changing. According to Nye (1976), employment of the wife positively influences her husband's sharing of her role. Similar results were reported by Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Hoffman, 1960; Lovingood, 1963; Aldous, 1969; Bahr, 1975; Lovingood and Firebaugh, 1978. Some observers of family life also believe that there has been a "blurring" of marital roles (Winick, 1986; Williamson & Seward, 1970). In their view, the family has become an equalitarian institution.

It was the intent of this study to examine how some factors influence Utah Husbands' and wives' thinking about the division of labor within their homes and how household tasks actually are allocated in their families.

## METHODS OF PROCEDURE

Study Design

This study was part of a time-study research project done by Utah State University along with ten other states, including New York, California, Oregon, Connecticut, North Carolina, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin. Each state utilized the same research design; however, some states added questions to the interview schedule. Information on meal patterns, demographic data, assignment of household tasks, religious activity, and personality characteristics was also gathered. Pretests of the instruments were conducted by Cornell University as field interviews to test the validity of both the format and the interviewing procedures. For the purpose of this study, questions regarding demographic data, religious activity, and assignment of household tasks were analyzed.

Sample

The sample was selected from three Utah counties. The rural sample was drawn from Iron and Washington Counties, and the urban/suburban sample was drawn from Salt Lake County.

The 210 families were randomly selected from lists of two-parent, two-child families. After being selected, the families were contacted by telephone to determine whether they were indeed a two-parent, two-child family and if they would be willing to participate in the study. Only 191 of the 210 families were included in this particular research. Nineteen families had incomplete data and could not be used. About half of the families lived in the urban area and the other half lived in the rural areas. The husbands and wives are the subjects for this research project.

#### Instruments

The time use data for the Utah State University time-study project were collected on two time use charts, each covering a 24 hour period. The homemakers recorded the family's activities according to 10 minute time intervals. The time records were not used in this study. The data for this study were collected at the same time on three separate questionnaires: a religion form, a household task allocation form, and a demographic form. The religion form was used to measure religious preference and the degree of religious activity. The household task allocation form had questions concerning who "should" do what tasks in the family and who

actually does them. The third form was used to gather demographic data such as: occupation, income, education, and the wife's employment status.

#### Administration of the Instruments

Professional interviewers were hired through Wasatch Opinion Research Corporation to administer the questionnaires. Interviewers were familiar with the interview schedule and procedure before beginning the survey as they had been trained using a video tape which was developed by researchers at Cornell University. Interviewers telephoned the families to determine whether they fit the sample and if they would participate in the study. Arrangements were then made for the first appointment in which the interviewers explained the instruments and helped the homemakers complete a diary of yesterday's time use and left the remaining forms for the family to complete. The homemaker filled in both her husband's and her own demographic data; however, on the religion form and the household task assignment form each spouse was to fill in his or her own forms. During the second visit questions were answered concerning the instruments and the time use charts and the information questionnaires were reviewed for completeness.

### Scoring of Responses

Scores for traditional attitudes and behavior were computed for each individual based on twenty-one household task allocation questions.

The first question asked whether the person believed that there are some household tasks that naturally or logically belong to the husband or to the wife. A point was given for a yes answer. An additional point was given for each response of wife or wife and children for questions #2, #3, #4, and #8, because these questions were about tasks which traditionally belong to women. If the respondents answered husband or husband and children for questions #5, #6, and #7, they received one point for each response, because these questions were ones to which men are traditionally assigned. The total possible score for the first eight questions was eight, which indicated a traditional attitude toward the allocation of household tasks, and a score of zero indicated a non-traditional attitude.

The remaining thirteen questions measured how traditional the respondents actually were in the allocation of household tasks in their families. The respondents were asked if household tasks in their family were assigned primarily according to (1) tradition or (2) who is there when it needs

to be done. One point was given for each response indicating tradition as the basis for task distribution. The last question was an open-end question asking how it was decided who would do which household tasks in their families. One point was given if the written response stated or inferred tradition as the basis for the decision. A total of thirteen points was possible which indicated a traditional pattern of performing household tasks.

Each person received two scores (1) how they thought household tasks should be allocated and (2) how they actually were allocated.

#### Analysis

The t-test was used to test the differences between the means for hypotheses #1, #2, and #7. Hypotheses #3, #4, and #6 were analyzed by correlation. Hypotheses #5 and #8 were tested using an analysis of variance test.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This research was designed to study how a sample of Utah husbands and wives thought household tasks should be allocated and how they actually were allocated in their families. Task allocation was defined as either traditional or non-traditional according to existing sex-role expectations in the United States. Allocation of household tasks was studied with respect to the variables of urban/rural residence, wife's employment status, educational level of husband and wife, difference in educational level between husband and wife, family income, degree of religious activity, and the husband's occupation.

### Description of Sample

The subjects for this research were 191 two-parent, two-child families. Ninety-seven families residing in Iron and Washington Counties were classified as rural and ninety-four families residing in Salt Lake County were designated as urban. The data were collected from May 1977 to August 1978.

Wife's Age

The wives' ages ranged from 21 to 57 years, with the mode being the 26 to 30 category. Table 1 summarizes the ages of the wives.

Table 1  
Ages of Wives

Age	Urban	Rural	Total	Percentage
21-25	14	28	42	22.0
26-30	32	29	61	32.0
31-35	18	14	32	16.5
36-40	14	9	23	12.0
41-45	6	7	13	6.8
46-50	66	6	12	6.3
51-55	1	2	3	1.6
56-60	1	0	1	.5
Missing	2	2	4	2.0
Total	94	97	191	99.9%*

\*Percentages are rounded off.

Wife's Education

The wives in the sample indicated their education according to the years of formal schooling completed. Table 2, divided into urban and rural groups, shows the educational levels of the 191 wives. The mode for both groups was high school graduation.



Table 2  
Educational Level of Wives

Highest level of education	Urban	Rural	Total	Percentage
Grade school	3	4	7	3.7
High school	39	34	73	38.2
Partial college	19	18	37	19.4
2 year college	16	17	33	17.3
B.S.	16	22	38	19.8
Graduate level	1	2	3	1.6
Total	94	97	191	100%

#### Wife's Employment Status

Of the 191 wives sampled, 54% were not employed in the labor market while 46% of the wives were employed either part-time or full-time. In 1977, in the state of Utah, Sargent (1978) reported that 55% of the women ages 21 to 53 were not employed and 46% were employed either part-time or full-time. Table 3 compares the occupations of the women in this study's sample with all employed women in the state of Utah.

Table 3  
Employed Wife's Occupation

Occupation	Urban	Rural	Total	Sample	Women in Utah labor force
Professional and Managerial	6	12	18	20.5	22
Clerical and Sales	22	24	46	52.0	45
Skilled labor	3	1	4	4.5	13
Unskilled labor	9	11	20	23.0	20
Total	40	47	88	100%	100%

#### Husband's Age

The husbands' ages ranged from 22 to 57 years, with the mode being the 26 to 30 year category, the same as the modal category for wives. Table 4 summarizes the ages of the husbands.

Table 4  
Ages of Husbands

Age	Urban	Rural	Total	Percentage
21-25	9	15	24	12.6
26-30	21	29	50	26.2
31-35	27	15	42	22.0
36-40	13	12	25	13.1
41-45	10	11	21	11.0
46-50	7	7	14	7.3
51-55	2	2	4	2.0
56-60	2	2	4	2.0
Missing	3	4	7	3.7
Total	94	97	191	99.9%*

\*Percentages are rounded off.

#### Husband's Education

In the sample studied, the husband's education was determined by the years of formal schooling completed. Table 5 shows the educational levels of the 191 husbands.

Table 5  
Educational Level of Husbands

Highest level of education	Urban	Rural	Total	Percentage
Grade school	3	4	7	3.7
High school	25	22	47	24.6
Partial college	8	11	19	9.9
2 year college	19	23	42	22.0
B.S.	24	21	45	23.5
M.S.	11	9	20	10.4
Graduate or pro- fessional training	4	7	11	5.7
Total	94	97	191	99.8%*

\*Percentages are rounded off.

#### Husband's Occupation

The occupations listed by the husbands were grouped into four categories. About half were employed in professional and managerial occupations and a fourth were in skilled labor jobs.

Table 6  
Occupation of Husband

Occupation	Urban	Rural	Total	Percentage
Professional and managerial	51	45	96	50.5
Clerical and sales	24	6	30	15.7
Skilled labor	17	34	51	26.8
Unskilled labor	2	12	14	7.0
Total	94	97	191	100%

#### Family Income

The family incomes of the respondents ranged from under \$1,000 to \$50,000 and over, with the mode being the \$15,000 to \$19,999 category. Four families were below the poverty line and five families were at or above \$50,000. The rural families had lower average incomes than the urban families. (See Table 7.)

Table 7  
Family Income

Income	Urban	Rural	Total	Percentage
Under \$1,000	0	1	1	.5
\$3,000-\$3,999	1	1	2	1.0
\$4,000-\$4,999	0	1	1	.5
\$6,000-\$7,499	1	6	7	3.6
\$7,500-\$9,999	1	15	16	8.4
\$10,000-\$11,999	7	13	20	10.5
\$12,000-\$14,999	13	19	32	16.7
\$15,000-\$19,999	30	13	43	22.5
\$20,000-\$24,999	15	13	28	14.7
\$25,000-\$49,999	21	9	30	15.7
\$50,000 and over	3	2	5	2.6
Not given	2	4	6	3.2
Total	94	97	191	99.9%*

\*Percentages are rounded off.

According to the 1975 Income Estimate, the average per capita incomes were \$3,500 for Iron County, \$3,373 for Washington County, and \$4,780 for Salt Lake County. All families in our study were four person families. When the per capita incomes were times by four, the average estimated family incomes were \$14,000 for Iron County, \$13,500 for Washington County, and \$19,000 for Salt Lake County. (Population Estimates and Projections, 1979). The incomes of the families in the research project were similar to those estimated by the Bureau of the Census.

### Religious Activity

The respondents who checked active or very active in their religious affiliation on the questionnaire were classified as active. Of the total 382 subjects, approximately two-thirds reported being an active member of a church. Persons indicating no religion or that they were inactive in the church that they did belong to were classified as not active. More of the rural respondents than the urban respondents considered themselves to be active church members. (See Table 8.)

Table 8  
Religious Activity

Activity	Urban	Rural	Total	Percentage
Active	114	144	258	67.5
Not active	74	50	124	32.5
Total	188	194	382	100%

In comparing husbands' and wives' religious activity by their urban/rural residence, more wives than husbands considered themselves to be active in their church. (See Table 9.)

Table 9  
 Husbands' and Wives' Religious Activity by  
 Urban/Rural Residence

Activity	Urban husbands	Rural husbands	Urban wives	Rural wives	Total
Active	50	68	64	76	258
Not active	44	29	30	21	124

### Hypotheses

#### Tradition Scores

Two scores were computed for each subject, an attitude score, and a behavior score. These are referred to in the results as the subject's tradition scores. Attitude scores were based on eight questions regarding who they thought should do certain household tasks. A score of 0 would indicate a non-traditional attitude while a score of 8 would indicate a very traditional attitude about how tasks should be allocated. The scores for the homemakers ranged from 0 to 8, with a mean of 6.23 and a standard deviation of 2.41. The husbands' scores ranged from 0 to 8 also, with a mean of 6.13 and a standard deviation of 2.44.

Behavior scores were based on thirteen questions about



who actually did selected household tasks. A score of 0 would indicate that household tasks were not allocated on the basis of tradition, and a score of 13 would indicate that tasks were allocated almost completely along traditional lines. The scores for the homemakers ranged from 0 to 13, with a mean of 9.36 and a standard deviation of 3.25. The husbands' scores also ranged from 0 to 13, with a mean of 9.13 and a standard deviation of 3.73.

Table 10  
Husbands' and Wives' Tradition Scores-Attitude

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	$\bar{X}$	S.D.
Husbands	14	3	5	7	13	7	21	45	76	6.13	2.44
Wives	14	2	4	9	10	9	13	51	79	6.23	2.41

Table 11  
Husbands' and Wives Tradition Scores-Behavior

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Husbands	5	2	5	7	6	10	9	13	12	14	19	24	30	35
Wives	4	2	4	4	2	11	7	10	15	18	32	22	34	26
Husbands $\bar{X}$	9.13		S.D.		3.73									
Wives $\bar{X}$	9.36		S.D.		3.25									

Hypothesis 1 Urban/Rural Residence  
and Household Task Allocation

Hypothesis one stated that urban households would be less traditional in their allocation of household tasks than rural households. The t-test was used to test for significance. The hypothesis was rejected. As shown in Tables 12 through 15, eight tests were run and none were significant. Both the attitude and behavior scores of the respondents with regard to household task allocation were not significantly different.

Table 12  
 Husbands' Tradition Scores by  
 Urban/Rural Residence

Residence	Number of cases	Attitude mean	Behavior mean
Rural	97	6.28	9.47
Urban	94	5.99	8.68
Total	191	2-tail prob. .413	2-tail prob. .127

Table 13  
Wives' Tradition Scores by  
Urban/Rural Residence

Residence	Number of cases	Attitude mean	Behavior mean
Rural	97	6.48	9.71
Urban	94	5.98	8.96
Total	191	2-tail prob. .146	2-tail prob. .104

Table 14  
Comparison of Rural Husbands' and  
Wives' Tradition Scores

Group	Number of cases	Attitude mean	Behavior mean
Husbands	97	6.28	9.47
Wives	97	6.48	9.71
	2-tail prob.	.540	2-tail prob. .615

Table 15  
 Comparison of Urban Husbands' and  
 Wives' Tradition Scores

Group	Number of cases	Attitude mean	Behavior mean
Husbands	94	5.99	8.68
Wives	94	5.98	8.96
	2-tail prob.	.977	2-tail prob. .588

The rural husbands and wives had higher tradition scores than urban husbands and wives, although the difference was not significant. In comparison, the husbands and wives were in agreement in both attitude and behavior concerning household task allocation. (See Tables 14 and 15.) The result which came the closest to being significant was the comparison between the behavior score of the urban and rural wives.

Only a small percentage (less than 5%) of the rural sample were farm families, with the majority of the rural sample being non-farm families. Szalai (1972) observed that the dramatic difference in time-use seems to occur between agrarian life and small town life, not between life in a small town and a large metropolis. Blood and Wolfe (1960) found that farm families were significantly more traditional

in household task allocation than city families. One might expect farm husbands to do more around the house because they do not have to leave home to go to work; however, farm wives not only do most of the housework themselves but they do much of the farm work also (Blood & Wolfe, 1960). Thus it becomes more of an occupational factor rather than a residence factor which affects the allocation of household tasks according to Blood and Wolfe (1960).

It is often assumed that urban households are more egalitarian because urban life is more industrialized and changes in traditional patterns are more readily accepted than they are by rural residents. This assumption was not supported by our respondents.

#### Hypothesis 2 Wife's Employment Status and Household Task Allocation

It was hypothesized that there would be no difference in the allocation of household tasks between husbands and wives when the wives were employed and when they were not. The t-test was used to test for significance. Of the eight tests on this hypothesis, one proved to be significant. There was a significant difference in how traditional the husband's attitude was when his wife was employed and when she was not. The husbands of non-employed wives were more traditional in

their attitude. Although the mean behavior score of the husbands of non-employed wives was higher than the mean score of husbands of employed wives, the difference was not significant. (See Tables 16 through 19.)

Table 16  
Husbands' Tradition Scores by Wife's  
Employment Status

Employment status	Number of cases	Attitude mean	Behavior mean
Employed	66	5.50	8.67
Non-employed	125	6.46	9.30
Total	191	2-tail prob. .015	2-tail prob. .260

Table 17  
Wives' Tradition Scores by Wife's  
Employment Status

Employment status	Number of cases	Attitude mean	Behavior mean
Employed	66	5.75	9.05
Non-employed	125	6.49	9.49
Total	191	2-tail prob. .065	2-tail prob. .375

Table 18  
 Comparison of Husbands' and Wives' Tradition Scores  
 by Wife's Employment Status (Employed)

Group	Number of cases	Attitude mean	Behavior mean
Husbands	66	5.50	8.67
Wives	66	5.75	9.05
Total	132	2-tail prob. .547	2-tail prob. .417

Table 19  
 Comparison of Husbands' and Wives' Tradition Scores  
 by Wife's Employment Status (Non-employed)

Group	Number of cases	Attitude mean	Behavior mean
Husbands	125	6.48	9.30
Wives	125	6.49	9.49
Total	250	2-tail prob. .819	2-tail prob. .911

One might expect that the wife's employment in the labor market would relate to the division of labor in the home because she would have less time and energy to do housework. However,

according to the findings of this study, no significant differences in household task allocation could be found. Wives still performed the majority of the housework even when they were employed outside the home.

Previous time-use studies (Walker, 1975; Szalai, 1972; Nickols, 1976) support these findings. Robinson (1977) noted that when husbands performed housework, wives felt that there was a role infringement and that they would rather do the housework themselves. Another reason that the allocation of household tasks remains highly traditional when the wife is employed might be that the busier the wife is, the more efficient she becomes and thus she accomplishes more work, or work of a different standard than before.

#### Hypothesis 3 Wife's Educational Level and Household Task Allocation

It was hypothesized that the wife's educational level would not affect the allocation of household tasks. This hypothesis was tested using analysis of variance. The hypothesis was accepted. There were no significant differences in tradition scores when husbands and wives were grouped by the wife's level of education.



Table 20  
Husbands' Tradition Scores by  
Wife's Educational Level

Highest level of education	Number of cases	Attitude mean	Behavior mean
Grade school	7	5.86	8.86
High school	73	6.16	8.92
Partial college	37	6.65	9.76
2 year college	33	6.36	9.27
B.S.	38	5.66	8.63
Graduate level	3	3.33	9.00
Total	191	F. prob. .1856	F. prob. .8264

Table 21  
Wives' Tradition Scores by  
Wife's Educational Level

Highest level of education	Number of cases	Attitude mean	Behavior mean
Grade school	7	5.43	7.71
High school	73	6.27	9.21
Partial college	37	7.11	9.97
2 year college	33	6.12	9.40
B.S.	38	5.74	9.24
Graduate level	3	4.00	9.33
Total	191	F. prob. .0718	F. prob. .6390

The subjects, both husbands and wives, reported a large difference between attitude and behavior when the wife had a graduate level education, with attitude being considerably less traditional than behavior. However, as there were just three cases, the results should be viewed cautiously. Subjects with a grade school education appeared to be less traditional than the other educational levels.

Komarovsky (1967) observed that couples with a relatively high educational level have more egalitarian relationships in marriage than those with less education. A different view was offered by Vanek (1973) who said that if sharing housework is used as a criterion of an egalitarian relationship, then there is no indication that marriages of more highly educated people are more egalitarian than those of couples with less education. Nye (1976) agreed with Vanek and reported that wives with more education were more likely to share the provider role but were still responsible for the housekeeper role. Thus the wife shared the husband's role but he did not share her role.

Hypothesis 4 Husband's Educational Level and Household Task Allocation

It was hypothesized that the husband's educational level

would not affect the allocation of household tasks. This hypothesis was also tested using analysis of variance. Like hypothesis 3, which compared the wife's educational level, this hypothesis was accepted. There were no significant differences in tradition scores, attitude, or behavior, when respondents were grouped according to the educational level of the husband.

It was assumed that educational level would not affect the husband's attitude or behavior concerning the allocation of household tasks, as some previous studies (Nye, 1976; Vanek, 1973) had reported that there was no relationship between the two variables. Nickols (1976), however, indicated that husbands with higher educations allocated more time to housework than did husbands with less education. With each increment in level of educational achievement the husbands devoted 16 minutes more time to household tasks per week. According to the current study's definition of traditional, the more housework the husband performed, the less traditional he was considered to be. (See Tables 22 and 23.)

Table 22  
Wives' Tradition Scores by  
Husband's Educational Level

Highest level of education	Number of cases	Attitude mean	Behavior mean
Grade school	7	6.43	7.14
High school	47	6.36	9.51
Partial college	19	5.68	9.74
2 year college	42	6.74	9.52
B.S.	45	5.93	9.22
M.S.	20	6.15	9.15
Beyond M.S.	11	6.00	9.34
Total	191	F. prob. .6998	F. prob. .6815

Table 23  
Husbands' Tradition Scores by  
Husband's Educational Level

Highest level of education	Number of cases	Attitude mean	Behavior mean
Grade school	7	6.29	7.14
High school	47	6.25	8.79
Partial college	19	6.00	9.21
2 year college	42	6.71	9.59
B.S.	45	5.84	9.40
M.S.	20	5.45	8.60
Beyond M.S.	11	6.00	9.00
Total	191	F. prob. .5683	F. prob. .6855

There were no definite trends, as seen in Tables 22 and 23. Husbands with a grade school education reported the least traditional behavior scores as did wives of this group of husbands. The most traditional attitude scores were those of the husband and wife when the husband had two years of college.

Hypothesis 5 Difference of Education Between  
Husband and Wife and Household Task Allocation

It was hypothesized that the more the husband's education exceeded that of the wife's, the more traditional they would be in the allocation of household tasks. This hypothesis was tested using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation. The hypothesis was not supported. The correlation coefficients were very low. No studies were found which had compared the educational differences between the husband and wife and household task allocation. Table 24 shows the findings.

Table 24  
 Husbands' and Wives' Tradition Scores and  
 Differences in Level of Education

	Husbands' attitude	Husbands' behavior	Wives' attitude	Wives' behavior
Correlation coefficient	.0221	.0485	.0872	.0735
Level of significance	.381	.252	.129	.156

Hypothesis 6 Family Income  
 and Household Task Allocation

It was hypothesized that a family's income would not affect the allocation of household tasks. Analysis of variance was used to test for significance. The hypothesis was accepted. No relationship between income and allocation of household tasks was found.

Aldous (1969) reported that it was the lower income families which were more traditional in household task allocation, while Blood and Wolfe (1960) indicated that higher income families were more traditional in the allocation of household tasks. They assumed that a high income was an indication that the husband was absorbed in his career and did not have the time to participate in housework. Yet another study (Rainwater, 1965) stated that the higher the

income the less traditional the allocation of household tasks was in the home.

The assumption was made that inasmuch as increased education usually results in increased income ( $r = .2297$ , with a .001 level of significance in this study) that income like education would not affect the allocation of household tasks. Tables 25 and 26 summarize the results.

Table 25  
Husbands' Tradition Scores by Family Income

Income group	Number of cases	Attitude mean	Behavior mean
Low	44	6.52	9.39
Medium	112	6.05	9.06
High	35	5.88	8.77
Total	191	F. prob. .4478	F. prob. .7488

Table 26  
Wives' Tradition Scores by Family Income

Income group	Number of cases	Attitude mean	Behavior mean
Low	44	6.75	10.20
Medium	112	6.16	9.13
High	35	5.82	8.34
Total	191	F. prob. .2119	F. prob. .1168

There was a definite trend in the data. The low income group was the most traditional, the medium income group was less traditional, and the high income group was the least traditional. The trend was the same for husbands and wives.

Hypothesis 7 Religious Activity and Household Task Allocation

It was hypothesized that persons who were active in a religion would be more traditional in the allocation of household tasks than those who were not active in a religion. The t-test was used to test for significance. The hypothesis was accepted. Persons who were active in a religion were indeed significantly more traditional in household task allocation than those who were not, as shown in Tables 27 and 28.



Table 27

## Husbands' Tradition Scores by Religious Activity

Activity	Number of cases	Attitude mean	Behavior mean
Active	118	6.49	9.67
Not active	73	5.55	8.14
Total	191	2-tail prob. .013	2-tail prob. .006

Table 28

## Wives' Tradition Scores by Religious Activity

Activity	Number of cases	Attitude mean	Behavior mean
Active	140	6.66	9.72
Not active	51	5.10	8.29
Total	191	2-tail prob. .000	2-tail prob. .012

These results were contrary to the findings of Blood and Wolfe (1960) and Nye (1976) who stated that persons who were not active in a religion were more traditional than those who were active. The researchers had predicted that people who were active church members would be more traditional because

of religious teachings, but ~~they were~~ not. Their predictions are in line with the results of the current study.

Hypothesis 8 Husband's Occupation  
and Household Task Allocation

It was hypothesized that the husband's occupation would not affect the allocation of household tasks. To test this hypothesis the husband's occupations were divided into four groups: professional and managerial, clerical and sales, skilled labor, and unskilled labor. Analysis of variance was used to test for significance. As shown in Tables 29 and 30, the hypothesis was supported. No significant relationship between occupation and attitude or behavior was found.

Table 29

Husbands' Tradition Scores by Husband's Occupation

Occupation	Number of cases	Attitude mean	Behavior mean
Professional and Managerial	96	5.79	8.92
Clerical and Sales	29	6.52	9.52
Skilled labor	52	6.31	9.08
Unskilled labor	14	7.00	9.36
Total	191	F. prob. .1972	F. prob. .8716

Table 30  
Wives' Tradition Scores by Husband's Occupation

Occupation	Number of cases	Attitude mean	Behavior mean
Professional and Managerial	96	5.98	9.22
Clerical and Sales	29	6.72	9.24
Skilled labor	52	6.13	9.19
Unskilled labor	14	7.48	10.92
Total	191	F. prob. .1187	F. prob. .2944

The husbands in professional and managerial occupations had the least traditional attitude and behavior scores. Their wives had the least traditional attitude scores while the wives of skilled laborers had the least traditional behavior scores. Aldous (1969) reported that the characteristics of a man's job can have profound effects on his performance within the home. No significant differences were found among the respondents studied.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

This study investigated how a sample of Utah husbands and wives thought household tasks should be allocated and how they actually were allocated in their homes. Eight hypotheses regarding the relationships between urban/rural residence, wife's employment status, education of husband and wife, difference in educational level of husband and wife, family income, degree of religious activity, husband's occupation, and household task distribution were tested.

Data were collected as part of the NE113 research project, An Interstate Comparison of Urban/Rural Families' Time Use. The data were collected over a one year period to take seasonal variation into account. The sample was drawn from two-parent, two-child families residing in Iron, Washington, and Salt Lake Counties. Of the 210 families who participated in the time-use research, 191 families were used for this study.

To measure how traditional a person was in both attitude and behavior, tradition scores were computed by totalling responses to twenty-one household task allocation questions.

High scores represented a traditional household task allocation pattern and low scores a non-traditional pattern. The statistical tests used for data analysis were the t-test, ANOVA, and Spearman's Rank Order Correlation.

#### Wives

In both attitude and behavior wives who classified themselves as active in a religion were significantly more traditional in the allocation of household tasks than wives who were not active in a religion. There were no significant differences found among the wives studied in either attitude or behavior toward household task allocation and urban/rural residence, wife's employment status, educational level of husband and wife, difference in educational level between husband and wife, family income, and husband's occupation.

#### Husbands

For the husbands there was a significant difference in the allocation of household tasks when the respondents were grouped by degree of religious activity and by the wife's employment status. Husbands who classified themselves as active in a religion were more traditional in the allocation

of household tasks than husbands who were not active in a religion. This was true for both attitude and behavior.

The attitude scores of husbands of employed wives were less traditional than the scores of husbands whose wives were full-time homemakers. However, there was no significant difference in behavior scores between the two groups.

Urban/rural residence, educational level of husband and wife, difference in educational level between husband and wife, family income, and husband's occupation were not related to the attitude toward or behavior of husbands in the allocation of household tasks.

### Conclusions

In conclusion, it appears that the respondents studied were quite traditional in how they thought household tasks should be allocated and how they actually were allocated in their families. The mean tradition scores for husbands and wives in both attitude and behavior were above the mid-point on the scales used to measure tradition. Religious activity and the wife's employment status were related to household task allocation. No earlier research could be located which had attempted to assess attitudes of Utah husbands and wives towards the allocation of household tasks or how they actually are allocated. No conclusions can be drawn as to whether any

changes in traditional roles within the family have resulted from changing employment patterns and the increased interest of the American public in sex roles.

### Limitations

1. Both attitude and behavior were measured by data collected using a questionnaire. The data might not be an accurate reflection of the subject's real attitude and actual behavior.

2. Only two-parent, two-child families were used in this study. The results may have been different if there had been many children in the home or no children at all.

3. The ages of the children were not controlled in the analysis. Families with small children may have allocated household tasks differently than families with older children.

4. The sample contained few female respondents who worked full-time. Results may have been different if there had been enough wives who were employed full-time to have analyzed them separately.

5. Each respondent was to complete his or her own questionnaires. As this was not done under the surveillance of the interviewer there was no guarantee that this procedure was carried out. It appeared from studying the

questionnaires that the vast majority of the subjects had followed instructions and completed the questionnaires independently.

6. Question three on page two of the household task allocation questionnaire needed further clarification to insure proper interpretation of the question and an accurate response.

#### Recommendations

It is recommended that further research be done concerning what factors affect household task allocation. Why the traditional division of labor still persists and is extremely resistant to change is an unanswered question. More research is needed in order to learn what affects change in the division of labor in the home.



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APPENDIX

## DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

HOMEMAKER ADULT 11

1. What was the highest grade in school you completed? (IF DEGREE MENTIONED NOTE)
2. Last week were you employed? FOR EACH EMPLOYED ASK:
4. What kind of work did you do? (IF MORE THAN ONE JOB, ASK FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FIRST OR PRIMARY JOB)
5. What kind of industry or business were you employed in?
6. How many hours did you work for pay last week?
7. What is the usual number of hours you work for pay a week?
10. Which category on this card represents the total income before taxes for your household in the past twelve months? This includes wages and salaries, net income from business or farm, pensions, dividends, interest, rent, Social Security payments, and any other money received by members of your household?

BLOCK OUT ONE LETTER ONLY

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N DK

## CHURCH PARTICIPATION

Household Code \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you belong to a church:  yes

no

2. If yes, which church do you belong to?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. About how active are you?  Inactive or not very active

Active

Very active



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Number \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you think there are some household tasks that naturally or logically belong to the husband or to the wife?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what are these?

Wife	Husband
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. a. In the ideal family who prepares the food?  
b. In the ideal family who washes the dishes?  
c. In the ideal family who does the shopping?  
d. In the ideal family who cleans the house?  
e. In the ideal family who does the home maintenance?  
f. In the ideal family who cares for the yard?  
g. In the ideal family who cares for the car?  
h. In the ideal family who takes care of the pets?  
i. In the ideal family who takes care of the clothing?

- j. In the ideal family who is responsible for the physical care of the household members?
- k. In the ideal family who is responsible for the nonphysical care of the household members?
3. Are household tasks in your family assigned primarily according to:

	Tradition	Who is there when it needs to be done
a. Food preparation		
b. Dishwashing		
c. Shopping		
d. House cleaning		
e. Maintenance of home		
f. Maintenance of yard		
g. Maintenance of car		
h. Care of pets		
i. Care of clothing		
j. Construction of clothing		
k. Physical care of household members		
l. Nonphysical care of household members		

4. In your family how was it decided who would do which household tasks?