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DECISION MAKING IN TWO TYPES OF WORKING FAMILIES

by

Nancy Ann Bueche

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

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Family and Human Development

Approved:

Major Professor

Committee Member

Committee Member

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Logan, Utah

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ABSTRACT

Decision Making in Two Types of Working Families

by

Nancy Ann Bueche, Master of Science

Utah State University, 1977

Major Professor: Ramona Marotz-Baden
Department: Family and Human Development

The purpose of this study was to investigate actual decision making in two types of families in which both spouses worked and their perceptions of decision making responsibility in the ideal family. The two family types were composed of (1) Professional wives with professional husbands; and (2) nonprofessional wives with nonprofessional husbands.

Questionnaires were completed by 34 professional couples and 63 non-professional couples who resided in Flint, Michigan during the fall of 1976. Factor analyses were completed on the husbands' and wives' self reported responses to questions concerning who should make decisions in the ideal family and who actually made the decisions in their own family. Professional couples reported that in their own families the majority of the decisions were the major responsibility of the wife and they expected the ideal family's decisions to also be the major responsibility of the wife. Nonprofessional

couples reported a more egalitarian sharing of decision making in their own families and also expected an equal sharing of decision making their concept of the ideal family.

(59 pages)

Introduction

The traditional model of husband, breadwinner, and wife, homemaker is valid for only 34 out of every 100 husband-wife families (Marriage, Divorce, & the Family Newsletter, 1976). Consequently, 66% of all married women today earn money through employment outside of the home. Although there is a small increase in the percentage of women attaining higher education and highly demanding careers, for the most part, women are employed in low skilled jobs.

Employment today for the majority of married women means that they have to fulfill both their employment and household duties, unless there is a reallocation of decision making concerning household tasks among family members. For example, household chores which are traditionally performed by the wife have to be completed before or after work, neglected, or taken on by another person. In addition to resolving the allocation of duties, child care alternatives must be sought. These decisions are presumed to be influenced by the type of work and commitment that both spouses have (Garland, 1972; Poloma, 1971; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1971). As the wife's employment commitment and status becomes greater, the amount of time that she has for household tasks becomes less (Garland, 1972; Poloma, 1971; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1971).

Part of this change has been due to the emergence of new roles for women (Kephart, 1966). Historically, the American housewife has held a subordinate

position in relation to her husband. "Before the Civil War married women had many duties, few rights. They were not permitted to control their property, even when it was theirs by inheritance or dower, or to make a will. To all intents and purposes they did not own property To a married woman, her husband was her superior, her companion, her master" (Gillespie, 1971, p. 445). Thus the wife of the past had little economic or decision making status in the family.

During this past century the economic role of the woman has been increasing. The 1940 census indicated that only about 25% of all American females were gainfully employed (Nye & Hoffman, 1963). This statistic included both single and married women. Today, more than half of all married women earn money through employment. This implies that the majority of housewives are currently at least providing a supplement to the family budget and in some cases are earning most or all of the income.

Researchers have suggested that the increased economic status of the American female has changed her decision making role in the family. For instance, Blood and Wolfe (1960) indicated that husbands and wives were potential equals. Investigators who accepted this assumption have further hypothesized that the increasing divorce rate might be related to the fact that women have equal say in familial matters (Morris, 1972). On the other hand, many researchers (e.g., Gillespie, 1971; Poloma, 1971) question whether, in fact, wives are equal in decision making matters. Very little research has investigated the quality of

decision making between spouses. Furthermore, most of the investigations done have failed to distinguish between homes composed of working and nonworking wives.

If monetary contribution is related to equality, there is no reason to expect that nonemployed wives would be given an equal role in decision making with their spouse. It is only in households where the wife is employed that one might hypothesize that she would have an equal role in making decisions (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Komarovsky, 1967).

The purpose of this investigation was to provide further information about this theoretical question concerning the equality of decision making, however, the emphasis here is on two types of families where both spouses are employed.

Purpose

Due to the increased economic status of the American woman, some researchers have suggested that both partners in a marriage share equally in the decision making process. This rationale suggests that this type of relationship would be most evident in families where the wives were employed outside of the home. The present study compared two types of families in which wives work (i.e., professional families and nonprofessional families).

Methods of decision making were studied within both of these family types on two measures: (1) who they felt should make certain decisions and carry out certain tasks in the ideal family and, (2) who actually made these decisions and carried out these tasks in their own family. The first measure attempted to tap normative expectations while the second attempted to reflect reality.

Type of employment of wives and husbands may well effect decision making within the home. First, professional women have more prestigious and higher paying employment. One would expect professional wives to be more equal with their spouses in decision making matters as their income and status approached that of their husbands (Blood & Wolfe, 1960). Second, the advanced training of the career woman requires considerable commitment. As her commitment to her work approaches that of her husband there is some evidence that a shift in decision making occurs (Poloma, 1971). Thus, it was expected that

wives in professional marriages would have more of a decision making role in the family than wives in nonprofessional marriages.

Professional people are depicted as leading less conventional lives than nonprofessionals (Cuber & Haroff, 1965) and are presumed to be more egalitarian. This research compared differences between normative expectations and actual decision making among these couples to see if they in fact held more egalitarian expectations (their normative expectations) and if these expectations were translated into actual practice in their families.

Review of the Literature

Definitional Problems

At least since the advent of Women's Liberation in the 1960's decision making has become a vogue topic. Yet, while many writers talk about familial decision making, there has been little agreement upon what actually constitutes decision making. Blood and Wolfe (1960) defined it as the ability to divide up and/or share tasks around the house, maintaining that power is closely related. "Power is manifested in the ability to make decisions affecting the life of the family " (Blood & Wolfe, 1960, p. 11). On the other hand, March (1955) defined power in terms of the person who made the final decision or won the argument. March argued that power should be studied in the context of decision making, and said, "Influence is to the study of decision making what force is to the study of motion--a generic explanation of the basic observable phenomena " (1955, p. 432). Some researchers have adopted this definition (e.g., Dahl, 1957). Other investigators (e.g., Buric & Zecevic, 1967) identified decision making with "marital authority patterns." Still others who have measured decision making used additional descriptive terms such as "power structure," (e.g., Lamouse, 1969) "decision making power," or "decision authority" (e.g., Safilios-Rothschild, 1967). Each of these definitions include some aspect

of power. The problem with this is that power is another inadequately defined concept (Safilios-Rothschild, 1969; Olson & Cromwell, 1975). Furthermore, researchers have frequently used these terms (power and decision making) interchangeably (e.g., Safilios-Rothschild, 1967; Lamouse, 1969). Thus, not only have different conceptual and operational definitions been used for each term, but sometimes the same definition has been used for different terms, and even different definitions for the same terms. To date, no one has clearly or adequately defined either power or decision making.

The following literature review of the decision making research is illustrative of the problem. In these studies decision making was not investigated independently of other behaviors and is confounded especially with the concepts of power and authority.

One of the first major attempts at measuring decision making was carried out by Blood and Wolfe in 1960. Their questionnaire was composed of 130 structured questions, 8 of which dealt explicitly with decision making. Structured and controlled interviews, lasting more than an hour each, were conducted with 731 urban and suburban and 178 farm wives.

Blood and Wolfe's instrument was a trial type of scale used in an exploratory study. However, it was not until 13 years later that an acceptable reliability coefficient was obtained (Bahr, 1973). Reliability refers to "the tendency of a test or measurement to produce the same results when it measures twice or more some

entity or attribute believed not to have changed in the interval between measurements; basically, the consistency in results produced by a test or other measuring instrument" (Wrightsmen & Sanforc, 1975, p. 581). Bahr administered the Blood and Wolfe eight item measure of family decision making to a sample of 258 wives and 221 husbands and found the coefficient of reproducibility to be .88 and .86 for the wives and husbands respectively, while alpha was .62. The internal consistency of Blood and Wolfe's scale was found to be substantial and it can be concluded that the items appeared to tap decision making and power. Furthermore, consistency among cross-cultural findings utilizing decision items from the scale have added additional evidence of its generalization (Bahr, 1973).

Blood and Wolfe's instrument has had a tremendous influence on the decision making research, but there were a number of problems with this scale. First, the primary responses in their study were obtained only from wives and, therefore, may contain a certain differential bias. Larsen (1974) stated this as the most apparent weakness in family research. Safilios-Rothschild (1969) agreed with Larsen and added that family research should be termed "wives' family sociology." The present study attempted to deal with this problem by having both spouses fill out a separate questionnaire.

Second, the calculation and use of an overall decision making score obtained by summing a Likert response to all items has been methodologically questioned. Safilios-Rothschild (1970) succinctly pointed out, "By doing so, all decisions are given an equal weight, the implicit assumption being that all

decisions are equally important for the reporting family member" (p. 543). The present study addressed this issue of scoring decisions on an equal basis and instead implemented a factor analysis design as recommended by Safilios-Rothschild (1969b).

Third, Safilios-Rothschild suggested that most of the decision making items asked on the Blood and Wolfe scale were multidimensional and required a greater degree of specificity. The present study addressed this issue by incorporating more specific items.

Fourth, research suggests that methods of investigation other than the interview technique may be more appropriate for studying decision making in the family. Kenkel (1961) using home interviews found that the sex of the observer greatly influenced the decision making process. Thus, when the interviewer-observer was a woman, the wives tended to state a more active and powerful role in the decision making than when a male observer was present. Furthermore, Ryder (1969) indicated there was no empirical evidence that interview data was superior to survey data. The present study utilized a self-explanatory questionnaire technique to investigate the decision making process within the family without observer contamination.

Research on Decision Making

In Blood and Wolfe's (1960) study, an aggregate balance of power (in terms of which spouse more frequently made the listed decisions) fell slightly in the husband's direction of their eight items. Total scores for the items were

weighted and converted into a ten point scale with scores of 5-10 reflecting the amount of influence exerted by the husband. A score of 4.00 was the equivalent of "husband and wife" exactly the same. Most wives clustered around the mean score of 5.09. Five percent of all wives had scores of 4.0 to 6.0 and were slightly skewed to the husbands side. Even extreme groups clustered close to the central group meaning the families were extraordinarily alike in the balance of decision making. Blood and Wolfe labeled these couples as "relatively equalitarian."

Further, the wives reported that husbands and wives were specialists who tended to complement each others' work. That is, females performed the traditional feminine tasks and males, the masculine tasks. The division of labor in the modern family was, therefore, found to coincide with the division of labor in the traditional family. These results are not consistent with the author's label of equalitarianism.

Burchinal and Bauder's (1965) investigation of decision making patterns among farm and nonfarm families agree somewhat with the conclusions of the Blood and Wolfe study. "Equalitarian decisions predominate regardless of residence, although vestiges of traditional dominance by one sex in certain respects remain" (Burchinal & Bauder, 1965, p. 525). They found, however, that the monopolization of certain roles by a particular spouse appeared to be based more on availability, greater competency or personal preference of one sex for doing a particular task. None the less, in both the Blood and Wolfe and the Burchinal and Bauder studies, results indicate that

most roles show highly sex-stereotyped behavioral patterns for the husband-wife division of labor. Once again, as did Blood and Wolfe, Burchinal and Bauder described the family as equalitarian, although in fact they report a sex stereotyped division of tasks.

Further support for a division of labor comes from Wilkening and Morrison's (1963) comparison of husband and wife responses concerning who actually made the farm and home decisions. Only 13 out of a total of 23 questions related to decision making were reported as being shared equally, the rest were the responsibility of the wife.

The three previously cited studies did not include wives who were employed outside of the home, nor did they take into account the educational or social economic status of the respondents. The researchers' general consensus was that in decision making matters the American family was "equalitarian" even though their data were inconclusive.

In a previous study Wilkening (1958) attempted to relate the wives educational status to decision making within the family. Surprisingly, no associations were found between the education of the wife and the degree of joint involvement in a large random sample of 614 farm wives. Wilkening concluded that involvement of the wife in major decisions was associated with the acceptance of middle class norms, but not with educational status.

Three problems with this study, however, restrict acceptance of their results. First, decision making was only one aspect of this study and was measured

by five questions concerning the farm and home. Thus, decision making was only tangential to this research. Second, as in most studies previously critiqued, only the wives were represented. Third, the author used education as a measure of high status. It was assumed that few farm women in this study had college educations, but educational levels were not reported.

In another study, Heer (1962) attempted to account for the differences between four groups of husbands' and wives' perceptions of the family power structure. These four groups were: (1) working class, working wife; (2) working class, housewife; (3) middle class, working wife; and (4) middle class, housewife. One question was used for the joint (husband and wife together) interview and it asked who usually won out in a disagreement concerning a major decision. It was reported that husbands were more likely than their wives to report that the wife had greater influence. On the other hand, wives more frequently reported that each spouse had the same influence. The results also suggested that working class couples with employed wives had more disagreements than couples in the other subgroups. One possible interpretation of these findings is that more working class women worked because they had to rather than wanted to, and were, thus, less deferent to their husbands as head of the household since they were sharing what has normally been defined as the man's major task, the bread winning role. The sample used for this study was drawn entirely from Roman Catholics, of Irish descent residing in the Boston areas. Because of a

possible ethnic background bias one must use caution when generalizing to the general population.

Middleton and Putney (1960) investigated the effect of race and class differences on decision making. Their sample was composed of 40 couples divided into four groups of 10 couples each. Black and white college professors represented the two professional middle class groups. The two groups of black and white working class represented skilled workers. No social class distinctions were made for the wives (i.e., social class was determined solely by husband's occupation). The total percentage of employed wives was 65%. The instrument dealt with questions concerning judgment of values rather than matters of fact and included only minor family related decisions. No crises or major decisions were included. Husbands and wives responded to the survey individually and then jointly. On initial analysis no evidence was found that race (whites or blacks) or SES (professors and skilled workers) differed as to which spouse dominates in the making of daily decisions. All groups were labeled equalitarian. A comparison of dominance in working and nonworking wives, however, was significant. Families in which the wives worked were surprisingly more patriarchal (i.e., traditional) than those in which the wife did not work.

One of Middleton and Putney's interpretations of these findings was that husbands whose wives did not work tended to leave minor decisions to the wife, whereas husbands of working wives participated in the home more and thus, were expected to play a greater role in minor family decisions.

In summary, previous research has often failed to distinguish between employed and unemployed wives, even though wives employment has been hypothesized as resulting in greater egalitarianism. In addition, much of the data from studies on decision making is difficult to generalize from because of the methodological problems of these studies. As a consequence little knowledge about decision making in the family has accumulated.

Employed Women

Based upon the Blood and Wolfe premise that wage earners do more decision making, working women should be more equal in decision making with their spouses than nonworking women. A logical extrapolation of this premise that as income and status increase, so should decision making.

Nonprofessional status employment included wives who had attained an education equivalent to the Bachelors degree or lower. Although these terms (e.g., dual-worker and nonprofessional; dual-career and professional) seem similar they are not synonymous.

No study, however, has compared familial decision making of professional or nonprofessional working women despite the increasing numbers of working women. With the exception of the effect of maternal employment on children, few studies have looked at the effects of the wife's employment on marital relationships. While the data on dual-career families cannot be generalized to all families with working wives, it is important to review this research.

Rapoport and Rapoport (1971) employed a case study method to gather data on six dual-career families in London, England. The respondents for this study had achieved prominence and were well known professionals in their country. The authors suggested that the dual-career pattern was a newly emerging type of family form. Because of its newness dual-career couples were found to suffer from overload (too little time as a result of demanding career, home, and child responsibilities). These couples had to develop alternative means of task completion. Many of their duties were performed by hired caretakers or community services. The authors suggested that husbands in many of these families shared in household, lawn, and child rearing responsibilities to the extent that their careers would allow. There was no particular pattern defined among the spouses for child rearing, house, or lawn responsibilities except that if one spouse enjoyed or was especially good at one of these tasks, he/she would be relegated to take on the responsibility.

Because of their extremely small sample size and the very prominent positions of the couples studied, few generalizations can be made. However, their research provided background information and raised a variety of questions for future research.

A second major investigation of dual-career couples was undertaken in the United States by Holmstrom (1972). The findings in this study replicated those of Rapoport and Rapoport. The dual-career couples interviewed suffered from overload, and employed home and child care help. Spouses tended to maintain

and carry out the tasks in which they were proficient. Holmstrom also interviewed six traditional couples (husband working, nonworking wife) in an effort to make the findings of the dual-career couples more visible. She concluded that the traditional wife did not receive as much help around the house from her husband as the career wife did. In addition, she concluded that the career wife had more power in her interaction with her spouse than did the traditional wife.

Finally, Poloma (1972) and Garland (1972), in studies investigating dual-career families, also found that these couples suffered from overload and methods of dealing with this strain had to be adopted.

In summary, all the studies of professional couples found that in no instance did the wife wish to be more successful than her husband and that the wife placed her family before her career. Based upon these findings it can be argued that the career wife takes on a greater amount of home and child care responsibilities than her husband. The husband in the professional family notices the need to help out and does so usually only as his career and personal expertise allow. It is most difficult to say exactly what happens in the dual worker family concerning the task allocation (or wives deference to their husbands) simply because of the lack of empirical evidence.

The literature dealing with families with both spouses gainfully employed is scanty and not conclusive. Many more studies are needed to help us understand the interaction between wives and husbands in these, the majority of United

States families. In addition, these studies need to take the type of employment of both spouses into consideration.

Rapoport and Rapoport (1971) and Holmstrom (1972) have differentiated between two types of working wives: dual-career and dual-worker. These authors designated career as a job which required a high degree of commitment beyond the typical forty hour work week and training beyond the master's degree level. Work was seen as global in nature and was defined as a job requiring any sort of commitment and training.

Some people may find Rapoport and Rapoport's (1971) distinction inadequate and even possibly offensive. Their analysis of working women excludes women from the dual-career category that many would consider to have a career. For example, women that attend college for four years to become a nurse are not included under the dual-career category (although Americans generally consider nursing as a career). Therefore, rather than using Rapoport's and Rapoport's (1971) terms, two new terms are used in the present paper: professional and nonprofessional employment. Professional employment included women with Ph.D's, medical degrees, law degrees, and Masters level degrees that were considered terminal (e.g., Masters of Social Work, Masters of Business Administration, and Speech Pathologists).

Methods

Sample

Respondents for this study were selected so that both the husband and wife in the professional family type had an equal background (i.e., M.A. level degree or above). Wives whose husbands did not hold a degree equal to her own were not asked to participate in the survey. This excluded all professional wives married to nonprofessional husbands. The rule applied to couples in the nonprofessional family type was that wives whose husbands held a degree higher than the Bachelors level were not asked to participate. This excluded all nonprofessional wives married to professional husbands.

The sample consisted of both wives and their husbands who resided in Flint, Michigan (population 250,000).

Names of possible professional married wives were obtained from the following sources: (1) the Flint, Michigan phone book; (2) a professional list of names from Mott Community College Women's Center; (3) friends and relatives in the Flint area; and, (4) names of couples provided by other professional respondents (seven of these couples responded).

All subjects obtained from these lists were contacted by either phone or in person by the author of this study. Upon agreement to participate two surveys in separate envelopes were delivered by the researcher to the wives: (1) one for

their husbands and (2) another for their own completion. Spouses questionnaires were identified by identical numbers. Respondents were asked not to collaborate when completing the questionnaires and all were urged to seal their questionnaires in the envelope provided. The author then arranged with the subjects a date to pick up the completed surveys. In cases where the questionnaires were repeatedly forgotten to be filled out, a stamped, self-addressed envelope was left with the respondent.

A total of 622 questionnaires were given out and the return rate was 63%. In the dual professional family type, 68 husbands and wives completed the survey and in the dual nonprofessional type, 126 husbands and wives responded. The sample was primarily Protestant and all respondents were white. Age ranges for the dual professional type were 26-52 years while the range for the nonprofessional type was 20-61 years. The survey was conducted during September 1976.

Instrument

The questionnaire used for this study contained demographic data on each respondent as well as two modified versions of the Blood and Wolfe (1960) decision making scale. There was a total of 64 questions, 36 of which addressed the decision making issue. These 36 questions were divided in half, 18 questions were on the second page of the instrument and 18 questions on the last page of the instrument. This was done so that subjects would avoid a response set when completing the survey. The first set of decision making questions dealt with who should make the decisions in the ideal family in an attempt to tap normative

expectations and the second set dealt with who actually made the decisions in their family. These 18 questions addressed decision making on daily issues concerning budgeting, child care, and annual vacations, as well as who had the most power or control in the family.

All questionnaires were identical in nature and format and, as stated above, couples were identified by corresponding numbers at the top of each questionnaire. The questionnaire is presented in its entirety in the Appendix.

Results

Factor Analysis

A series of several factor analyses techniques were used in analyzing the responses to the modified Blood and Wolfe self-report decision making scale. Participants responded to the same set of items under two conditions. First, subjects specified what they felt was appropriate decision making responsibility in an ideal family setting. Second, they reported who actually performed these tasks or made these decisions in their own family. Responses by individuals under both self-report conditions were entered jointly into the same factor analysis to assess the relationship between individual ideal or normative expectations and actual life style realities. Furthermore, an assessment of qualitatively different profiles for sex of participant and family vocation type were completed through factor analyzing separately by marital role (husband versus wife) and family type (professional versus nonprofessional).

When factor analyses are performed on several variables which are of an independent and differing nature it is not appropriate to define them as being something unique to one general category of variables. Instead a composite of those variables which may load across different categories should be made. Therefore, such factor structures should be described but not named. However, a name

can be derived which includes all categories of variables under consideration. In most cases this is a highly unlikely possibility.

The factor analysis of these data yielded two distinct profiles for each family type, these are discussed in the following section.

Normative Expectations and Actual Decision Making

A comparison of normative and actual decision making responses for the professional husbands and wives that loaded on factor I are presented in Table I. This table provided only those loadings which were significant at $\pm .400$. This was the significance level set for this study.

The expectation of the professional husbands was that, ideally, wives should assume major responsibility for household duties, general family care, and recreational management. In addition they saw their wives actually doing many of these tasks, but not fully to what they reported as their ideal. In contrast, the professional wives' ideal expectations were that wives should perform some household duties. In their own marriages, however, they report that they do most, if not all, family related management tasks.

Table 2 contains the factor comparisons between the husbands and wives from the dual nonprofessional families. In the ideal marriage these husbands expect that wives will perform household duties and choose their own job, but that husbands will determine the friends with whom to socialize and choose their own preferred employment. In their own marriages they report that their wives

Table I
 Multimax Factor Loadings for Factor I
 Professional Family Type

Variables	Loadings	
	Husbands	Wives
Expected		
Leisure time	.61	
Grocery Shopping	.76	.40
Managing the money and bills	.68	.41
Vacations (where to go)	.61	
Wife's job	.42	
Friends to associate with	.70	
Fixes the meals	.47	.44
Husband's money usage	.57	
Actual		
Leisure time		.86
Grocery shopping	.73	.73
Evening dishes		.47
Repair work		.63
Managing the money and bills	.67	.71
Vacations		.89
Friends to associate with		.79

Table I. Continued

Variables	Loadings	
	Husbands	Wives
Number of children wanted		.82
How children are raised	.55	.70
House or apartment to live in		.81
Fixes meals	.59	.79
Wife's money usage		.55
Husband's money usage	.57	.67
Wife's job	.42	

Table 2
 Multimax Factor Loadings for Factor 2
 Nonprofessional Family Type

Variables	Loadings	
	Husbands	Wives
Expected		
Grocery Shopping		.70
Evening dishes	.63	.44
Fixes the meals	.55	.61
The husbands job	-.61	-.53
The wife's job	.73	.61
Husband's money usage		-.58
Friends to associate with	.44	
Actual		
Grocery shopping		.66
Evening dishes	.65	.62
Fixes the meals		.47
Husband's money usage		-.66
The husband's job	-.83	
The wife's job	.78	
Yard maintenance	.41	

Note. Loadings of $\pm .300$ are considered significant by convention. Due to the sample size ($N=196$) Loadings of $\pm .400$ were reported as significant for this study.

do the dishes, choose their own employment, and do most of the yard maintenance. Husbands report that they choose their own jobs. It is important to note that both husbands and wives, according to the nonprofessional husbands self reports, share a great deal of the family and household management tasks. Although slightly different items load on the factor for the nonprofessional wives responses, a similar general pattern is found to that reported by their husbands.

Table 3 contains a comparison of husband and wife responses on factor 2 from professional families. Of interest are the loadings regarding who gives in during conflict and who has the most power or control in the couples' family. The professional husbands ideal expectations were that husbands should give in during conflict in the family. However, these husbands reported that they actually had the most power and control in their families. The other loadings for these husbands were similar to those on factor 1 which were that the wives would perform household duties, choose their own jobs, and determine the friends to socialize with while they would ultimately choose their own employment.

In contrast to their husbands, in the ideal family the professional wives expected that in the ideal marriage wives would give in if a conflict situation arises. In actuality they reported that they did give in during times of conflict.

Responses from husbands and wives in nonprofessional families are presented in Table 4. The husbands responses for this factor are again much the same as in factor 1, except for the response of power and control in their families. These data suggest that nonprofessional husbands expect that husbands should have and

Table 3
 Multimax Factor Loadings for Factor 2
 Professional Family Type

Variables	Loadings	
	Husbands	Wives
Expected		
Evening dishes	.74	.68
Number of children wanted	-.58	
Gives in during conflict	-.56	.74
Manages money, bills		.42
Job wife takes		.56
Fixes meals		.52
Friends to associate with		.67
Actual		
Evening dishes	.74	.68
Job the husband takes		.69
Gives in during conflict		.69
Repair work	-.55	
Vacations	-.88	
House or apartment to live in	-.79	
Most control and power	-.60	

Note. Loadings of + .300 are considered significant by convention. Due to the sample size (N=196) Loadings of + .400 were reported as significant for this study.

Table 4
 Multimax Factor Loadings for Factor 2
 Nonprofessional Family Type

Variables	Loadings	
	Husbands	Wives
Expected		
Evening dishes	.45	-.54
Repair work	-.68	.49
Vacations		.69
Job husband takes		-.50
Yard maintenance		.42
Grocery shopping	.73	
House, apartment to live in	-.42	
Most power	-.61	
Actual		
Evening dishes		-.45
Repair work	-.57	.53
Gives in during conflict		.49
Grocery shopping	.66	
Most power	-.46	

Note. Loadings of + .300 are considered significant by convention. Due to the sample size (N=196) loadings of + .400 were reported as significant for this study.

ultimately report that they have the most power and control in their families.

In corroboration of this finding, their wives reported that when a conflict situation evolved, they gave in first.

Professional Versus Nonprofessional Wives and Actual Decision Making

A comparison of professional and nonprofessional wives responses on who actually made the decision or performed the tasks asked about in the questionnaire in their family are presented in Table 5. In factor 1 significant loadings for the nonprofessional wives centered around the tasks of meal planning, preparation, and clean up. Loadings for the professional wives indicate that they make most of the decisions and carry out most of the tasks. Out of a possible 18 loadings, these wives loaded significantly on 13.

In factor 2, Table 6, it is interesting to note both significant loadings for the item which asked who usually gave in when a conflict situation arose. Also in this factor nonprofessional wives report that they do the home repair work and their husbands do the evening dishes, while professional wives again report they do the evening dishes and say they decide the job the husband will take.

Perceived Distribution of Decision Making by Professional and Nonprofessional Husbands and Wives

A comparison of professional and nonprofessional husbands and wives on actual decision making responses can be found by referring to the Tables 1 and 2. In factor 1 significant loadings for the professional wives suggest that they do most

Table 5
Professional and Nonprofessional Wives
and Actual Decision Making

Variables	Factor I Loadings	
	Professional Wives	Nonprofessional Wives
Grocery shopping	.73	.66
Evening dishes	.47	.62
Fixes the meals	.79	.47
Leisure time	.86	
Repair work	.63	
Managing money and bills	.71	
Vacations	.89	
Friends to associate with	.79	
Number of children wanted	.82	
How children are raised	.70	
House or apartment to live in	.81	
Wife's money usage	.55	
Husband's money usage	.67	

Table 6
Professional and Nonprofessional Wives
and Actual Decision Making

Variables	Factor 2 Loadings	
	Professional Wives	Nonprofessional Wives
Evening dishes	-.68	.45
Repair work		-.53
Gives in during conflict	-.59	-.49
Job the husband takes	-.69	

of the family related management tasks while their husbands report that wives do some of the household maintenance tasks and manage the money and bills. The nonprofessional husbands report that they choose their own job and that their wives do the dishes, their wives choose their own employment and also do a major portion of the yard maintenance. The nonprofessional wives report that they manage meal preparation tasks while they reported that the husbands decided on their own money usage.

In factor 2, Tables 3 and 4 the significant loadings for the nonprofessional husbands suggest they do repair work and have the most power and control in the family. Wives in this family type feel that they give in first during times of conflict, and that they do the repair work. However, they say that their husbands do the evening dishes. The significant loadings on factor 2 for professional wives suggest they give in first during times of conflict, do the dishes, and also decide on their husband's job. Husbands report they decide on the couples' lifestyle, do the repair work, and have the most power and control in the family, while their wives do the evening dishes.

Discussion

Interpretation of the Findings

The hypothesis that professional wives had more of a decision making role in the family than nonprofessional wives was supported. Wives in the professional families reported that they did most of the decision making and carried out most of the household tasks. The nonprofessional wives shared quite a few tasks with their husbands. The professional wives also reported doing 13 decision making tasks out of a total possible of 18, while the nonprofessional wives reported that they carried out only three of the decision making tasks. Professional wives, therefore, do more decision making in the family matters tapped by the questions asked than nonprofessional wives.

Although the hypothesis was supported, one cannot conclude from the present data that professional wives are more equal with their spouses than nonprofessional wives. From the items used in this study, it is evident that the professional wives see themselves as doing most of the decision making tasks without input from their spouses. The nonprofessional couples reported sharing decision making tasks and felt that only a few select duties were consistently the responsibility of one spouse. The results show that, from the actual 18 decision making questions asked, the professional wives felt they did the major portion of decision making in their family, in most of the areas represented on the scale. These wives reported making decisions regarding traditional feminine

household tasks as well as managing the couple's income, their life style, and repair and maintenance work. In contrast, nonprofessional wives reported decision making only in the area of meal planning, preparation and clean up.

Professional people are often depicted as leading less conventional lives than nonprofessionals and are presumed to be more egalitarian. For example, Poloma (1972), Garland (1972), and Rapoport and Rapoport (1971) suggest that dual-career couples share household management duties between spouses more often than traditional families as a result of both spouses having demanding careers. These studies labeled the dual-career couples as a new type of family form because they found alternate ways (other than the traditional) to make decisions on household and family matters. These alternate ways included both spouses sharing the major household duties of hiring other people to do these tasks as well as shifts in decision making styles. The professional couples in this sample, however, did not report that they were egalitarian. An analysis of the responses of professional wives indicated that they felt that they did most of the decision making. On the other hand, their expectations of wives in ideal marriages were to manage the family finances and to do meal preparation tasks. The discrepancy between their expectations for the ideal marriage and what they actually did in their own marriages was greater than the discrepancy between ideal and actual reported by their husbands, but in the opposite direction.

Professional husbands expected wives in ideal marriages to be responsible for a major portion of the decision making. However, these husbands report

that in their own marriage their wives did not do as much decision making as they had expected.

These data are in accord with that reported by Marotz (1972). In this study, middle class responses of husbands to a similar modification of the Blood and Wolfe scale tapping expectations for the ideal marriage, indicated that they expected their wives to make the majority of the decisions and perform most of the household managerial tasks. Their wives expectations were for sharing the majority of the tasks, indicating different and potentially conflicting views on decision making. This study, however, was not of dual-career couples, although there were no differences when employment of wife was used as a control variable.

These data support Hilberman et. al.'s (1975) thesis that the normative expectations for the man are that he will be the family breadwinner. He resolves familial-career conflict by choosing the professional role, leaving the major household managerial and familial responsibilities for the wife.

Data supporting this thesis and the assumption that married employed women, even in a demanding profession, are expected to perform maternal, spousal and household managerial roles are reported by Marotz-Baden and Crossman's (1977) study of married female and male physicians.

Angrist, Lave, and Mickelson (1976) also found more sharing of household work by husbands whose wives were clerical workers than those whose wives were professionals.

If shared decision making is equated with equality the data reported in this research suggest that nonprofessional couples are more egalitarian than professional couples. Not only did the nonprofessional couples hold more egalitarian views or expectations, they, in fact, reported more shared decision making in their own marriages. However, the nonprofessional couples were not truly egalitarian. Wives reported making decisions in mostly traditional feminine areas such as meal planning, shopping, and dishes. Nonprofessional husbands reported making the major decisions concerning their job, how their money would be spent, repair work, and choosing the family's home. These husbands also felt they exercised the most power and control in their families.

One interpretation of these findings is that undoubtedly more of the professional women choose to work, whereas probably more of the nonprofessional women were working because of financial necessity. If such is the case, these husbands, because their wives are sharing in their roles as breadwinners, may feel more obligated to help around the house. In addition they probably work fewer hours than the professional and therefore, would have more discretionary time and energy to help their wives. Professions demand more than an 8 hour commitment. Therefore, professional husbands may not be willing to take time off from their careers to help their wives in what they consider traditionally to be her responsibilities (e.g., the home maintenance and child rearing).

Garland (1972) states that the dual-career husbands were glad their wives had a career because it kept them busy and "out of their hair" thus freeing the

husband to devote more of his energy to his own demanding career. Perhaps more should be said concerning this issue. While the professional wives have a career keeping them out of their husband's hair, it seems that they also are making most of the major decisions for the couple's lifestyle. Since these husbands' careers were reported as very demanding, it seemed to their advantage to have professional wives capable of taking on demanding careers as well as caring for major and minor familial decisions.

These findings, however, are not consistent with Blood and Wolfe (1960) or Poloma (1972) who found that women gain equality with paying employment and higher educations. The professional women reported in this research had not gained equality in decision making by having a career and salary similar to their husbands. Based upon comparisons of the two family types thus far, one could not conclude that the professional wives were more equal with their spouses than the nonprofessional wives. The results suggest that nonprofessional couples share in decision making more than the professional couples. If decision making equality is being gained by women, it may not be due to economic status or to the type of employment since these results indicate that a major portion of decision making and household tasks are done by the professional wives.

Another explanation for the present research data could be related to conflict. Conflict over who does what and how often may arise because feelings color objectivity (Ephron, 1977). If a person feels overworked, he may think that he works harder than his spouse does or that nobody is helping. Conversely,

if a person feels he is slacking off, he might credit his mate and underrate himself. The heavy career demands placed upon men in the professional family type often does not leave free time with which to be involved in household decision making. If a feeling of not doing enough decision making exists, these husbands might give a major portion of credit to their spouses. On the other hand, professional wives also have heavy career demands in addition to household maintenance. Therefore, these professional wives might justifiably feel overworked and report that they do most decision making tasks in their family.

Based upon this research, economic status or professional career is not suggestive of a more equal decision making basis with a spouse even though type of career training, and salary may be equal. If decision making equality is not gained by these two variables, one must examine other situations leading to an increased equality.

Due to the present research findings, one might also question whether or not employed wives do less decision making than nonemployed women. Future research should explore this possibility. If, in fact, there is more sharing of decision making among employed women, it can only be tested in a comparison with nonemployed women. Furthermore, studies should include comparisons of different types of employed couples. The present research only studies two types of families (i.e., professional and nonprofessional). There are a number of different types of families where both spouses are employed. Research is needed comparing families where the husband is a professional and the wife nonprofessional

as well as families where the wife is professional and has a nonprofessional husband.

Limitations of the Study

Various problems have to be addressed when dealing with research on professional women. The first, and most obvious, is the lack of females with a professional career. "Statistics show that less than 5 women in 1,000 are found in the professions and only 2 in 100 women are in administrative or managerial jobs" (Mitchell, 1972, p. 97). To obtain a random sample of significant size would have been extremely costly and time consuming. Another problem encountered in this research was the lack of time that professional (both male and female) respondents had to give to fill in the survey. Many subjects declined to answer the survey simply because of too little time in their hectic schedules. Role overload is cited as one of the major concerns of dual-career couples (Garland, 1972; Poloma, 1972; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1971).

Another problem with this research dealt with inadequate testing measures, faulty and nondistinct definitions of terms used interchangeably by other researchers, and a general lack of consensus concerning what decision making actually is, independent of power or control. Also the decision items used were representative but did not cover all areas of decision making and therefore only reflect a portion of actual household familial tasks and decision making that goes on.

The modified version of the Blood and Wolfe (1960) measure has been widely criticized (e.g. Safilios-Rothschild, 1970). Despite the shortcomings of the Blood and Wolfe study it has been acclaimed as a major contribution to science and has also widely been used (e.g. Buric & Zecevic, 1967; Marotz, 1972; Safilios-Rothschild, 1967; 1969b) even though it lacked reliability and validity. At the present time it is a difficult task to describe decision making in the American family without dealing with the concept of power. This issue has been previously addressed at length in the literature review of this study. Furthermore, comparison of findings whether national or cross cultural may be neither meaningful nor valid (Safilios-Rothschild, 1970). Therefore, a critical need of future research decision making and/or power research is to operationally conceptualize adequate definitions of the terms and develop new measures which are both valid and reliable.

Nevertheless, the findings of the study are consistent with several other studies, suggesting that not only must we clearly conceptualize and more adequately measure decision making and power, but that the kind of family combination of wife-husband employment or nonemployment need to be taken into account as well as the effects of normative expectations.

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Appendix

AREA _____ I.D. # _____

Please answer the following questions by checking the appropriate answer.

1. Sex

1. _____ male
2. _____ female

2. How long have you lived in the present area?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. _____ less than one year | 5. _____ 16-20 years |
| 2. _____ 1-5 years | 6. _____ 21-25 years |
| 3. _____ 6-10 years | 7. _____ 26-30 years |
| 4. _____ 11-15 years | 8. _____ 31 years and over |

3. How long have you been married?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. _____ less than one year | 5. _____ 16-20 years |
| 2. _____ 1-5 years | 6. _____ 21-25 years |
| 3. _____ 6-10 years | 7. _____ 26-30 years |
| 4. _____ 11-15 years | 8. _____ 31 years and over |

4. Please check the number corresponding to the HIGHEST LEVEL of education you have completed.

1. _____ Some grade school
2. _____ Completed grade school
3. _____ Some high school
4. _____ Completed high school
5. _____ Completed high school and also had other training but not college (such as technical training, business school, beauty school, etc.)
6. _____ Some college
7. _____ Completed college (BA, BS)
8. _____ Some graduate work
9. _____ Completed MA, MA, or equivalent
10. _____ Completed Ph.D., MD, or equivalent

5. What is your current religious denomination or preference?

1. _____ Roman Catholic
2. _____ Latter-Day Saints
3. _____ Protestant
4. _____ Jewish
5. _____ Other (Please specify) _____

6. How active are you in your religious participation?

1. _____ Very active
2. _____ Active
3. _____ Somewhat active
4. _____ Seldom active
5. _____ Not currently active

*This study analyzed information from page 47 and page 53 only.

The following are questions about who you think **SHOULD** make decisions in the following areas in the ideal marriage. Please check the appropriate box for each question.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Husband Always	Husband Usually	Both The Same	Wife Usually	Wife Always	Someone Else (Please specify)
7. How you are going to spend your leisure time together?						
8. Who does the grocery shopping?						
9. Who does the evening dishes?						
10. Who repairs things around the house?						
11. Who keeps track of the money and the bills?						
12. Where to go on vacations?						
13. What job the husband should take?						
14. What job the wife should take?						
15. Which friends to associate with the most?						
16. About the number of children wanted?						
17. About how the children are raised?						
18. What house or apartment to live in?						
19. Who fixes family meals?						
20. How the wife's money is used?						
21. How the husband's money is used?						
22. Who does the yard maintenance?						
23. Who should usually give in when a conflict occurs?						
24. Who do you think should have the most power or control in your family?						

25. What was your total family income before taxes for the past year considering all sources such as rents, profits, wages, interest, and so on?

1. _____ \$0 - 9,999	6. _____ \$30,000 - 34,999
2. _____ \$10,000 - 14,999	7. _____ \$35,000 - 39,999
3. _____ \$15,000 - 19,999	8. _____ \$40,000 - 44,999
4. _____ \$20,000 - 24,999	9. _____ \$45,000 and over
5. _____ \$25,000 - 29,999	

26. How much of that was the income from your spouse?

1. _____ \$0 - 2,999	6. _____ \$15,000 - 17,999
2. _____ \$3,000 - 5,999	7. _____ \$18,000 - 20,999
3. _____ \$6,000 - 8,999	8. _____ \$21,000 - 23,999
4. _____ \$9,000 - 11,999	9. _____ \$24,000 and over
5. _____ \$12,000 - 14,999	

27. How much was your income?

1. _____ \$0 - 5,999	6. _____ \$15,000 - 17,999
2. _____ \$3,000 - 5,999	7. _____ \$18,000 - 20,999
3. _____ \$6,000 - 8,999	8. _____ \$21,000 - 23,999
4. _____ \$9,000 - 11,999	9. _____ \$24,000 and over
5. _____ \$12,000 - 14,999	

28. What is your occupation? (Please be very specific) _____
-

29. Do you work for yourself or someone else?

1. _____ For someone else
2. _____ For myself
3. _____ Part time for someone else
4. _____ Part time for self

30. How many hours on the average do you usually work per week in your employment?

1. _____ 30-34 hours	4. _____ 45-49 hours	7. _____ 60-64 hours
2. _____ 35-39 hours	5. _____ 50-54 hours	8. _____ 65-70 hours
3. _____ 40-44 hours	6. _____ 55-59 hours	9. _____ over 70 hrs.

31. How many hours on the average does your spouse work per week in his/her employment?

1. _____ 30-34 hours	4. _____ 45-49 hours	7. _____ 60-64 hours
2. _____ 35-39 hours	5. _____ 50-54 hours	8. _____ 65-70 hours
3. _____ 40-44 hours	6. _____ 55-59 hours	9. _____ over 70 hrs.

32. Does your spouse work for himself/herself or someone else?

1. Someone else
2. Himself or herself
3. Part time for someone else
4. Part time for self

33. How many hours per week do you spend on child care? (Please skip if you have no children.)
- | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. _____ 0-5 hours | 4. _____ 16-20 hours | 7. _____ 31-34 hours |
| 2. _____ 6-10 hours | 5. _____ 21-25 hours | 8. _____ 35-39 hours |
| 3. _____ 11-15 hours | 6. _____ 26-30 hours | 9. _____ 41-45 hours |
34. How many hours per week do you spend on housework and home and yard maintenance?
- | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. _____ 0-5 hours | 4. _____ 16-20 hours | 7. _____ 31-34 hours |
| 2. _____ 6-10 hours | 5. _____ 21-25 hours | 8. _____ 35-39 hours |
| 3. _____ 11-15 hours | 6. _____ 26-30 hours | |
35. How many hours per week do you spend in leisure activities? (not including sleep)
- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. _____ 0-5 hours | 4. _____ 16-20 hours |
| 2. _____ 6-10 hours | 5. _____ 21-25 hours |
| 3. _____ 11-15 hours | 6. _____ 26-30 hours |
36. What is your birth order in your family?
- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. _____ 1st born | 4. _____ 4th born | 7. _____ 7th born |
| 2. _____ 2nd born | 5. _____ 5th born | 8. _____ 8th born |
| 3. _____ 3rd born | 6. _____ 7th born | 9. _____ Other |
- (Please specify)
37. Were you an only child?
- | |
|--------------|
| 1. _____ Yes |
| 2. _____ No |
38. Were you the last born? 38b. If so, state the age difference between you and the next to last sibling _____
- | |
|--------------|
| 1. _____ Yes |
| 2. _____ No |
39. How many sisters did you have?
- | | | |
|---------------|----------------|------------------------|
| 1. _____ none | 4. _____ three | 7. _____ six |
| 2. _____ one | 5. _____ four | 8. _____ seven |
| 3. _____ two | 6. _____ five | 9. _____ eight or more |
40. How many brothers did you have?
- | | | |
|---------------|----------------|------------------------|
| 1. _____ none | 4. _____ three | 7. _____ six |
| 2. _____ one | 5. _____ four | 8. _____ seven |
| 3. _____ two | 6. _____ five | 9. _____ eight or more |
41. In your family which parent/parents worked outside the home?
- | |
|----------------------|
| 1. _____ Father only |
| 2. _____ Mother only |
| 3. _____ Both |

42. What was your age at your last birthday? _____

43. In the box below please check the ages of all your children. (You may have more than one check.)

Male	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18 and over
------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	-------------

Female	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18 and over
--------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	-------------

44. Taking everything in your marriage together, would you say that you are:
1. _____ very satisfied.
 2. _____ fairly satisfied, or
 3. _____ not at all satisfied?
45. Which of the following statements best describes how much you like your work?
1. _____ Dislike your work a great deal
 2. _____ Dislike your work somewhat
 3. _____ Dislike your work a little
 4. _____ Like your work a little
 5. _____ Like your work somewhat
 6. _____ Like your work extremely well
46. In general, when your wife/husband has asked you to do something and you did it, which of the reasons listed below was the most likely reason? Please check the most appropriate statement.
- _____ 1. Because if you did so, then he/she would do or say something nice for you in return.
 - _____ 2. Because if you did not do so, then he/she might do or say something which would be unpleasant for you in return.
 - _____ 3. Because he/she knew what was best in this case, and so you did what he/she asked you to do.
 - _____ 4. Because you felt that he/she had a right to ask you to do this and you felt obliged to do as he/she asked.
 - _____ 5. Because you felt that you were both part of the same family and should see eye-to-eye on these matters.

Below is a list of family situations. Please check the box which indicates who ACTUALLY DOES make the decision or performs the job.

	1 Husband Always	2 Husband Usually	3 Both The Same	4 Wife Usually	5 Wife Always	6 Someone Else (Please Specify)
47. How you spend your leisure time together?						
48. Who does the grocery shopping?						
49. Who does the evening dishes?						
50. Who repairs things around the house?						
51. Who keeps track of the money and bills?						
52. Who decides on where to go on vacations?						
53. What job the wife takes?						
54. What job the husband takes?						
55. Which friends to associate with the most?						
56. How many children you wanted to have?						
57. About how the children are raised?						
58. What house or apartment to live in?						
59. Who fixes the family meals?						
60. How the wife's money is used?						
61. How the husband's money is used?						
62. Who does yard maintenance?						
63. Who usually gives in when conflict occurs?						
64. Who really has the most control or power in your family?						

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION. IF YOU WOULD LIKE A COPY OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY, PLEASE WRITE ME GIVING YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS. COPIES SHOULD BE AVAILABLE BY DECEMBER.