

# Typology of Home Economics Styles (With a Postmodern Critique)

Self Identifying as a Home Economist

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Whether or not you consider yourself a home economist, we all have a home economics or related degree if we are in this profession. What is of significance is that we do not all have the same passion and commitment to the field or to professional associations and initiatives. Respecting this diversity is paramount if we want to appeal to the widening scope of emotions and compassion for the future of the profession. The premise of this paper is that one's home economics style influences one's outlook, predispositions to the field, and beliefs about the profession and one's role within it. More importantly, this collection of beliefs has deep implications for anyone attempting to be a leader within the profession because it confirms that, although we all do not relate to the field in the same way, we all have something valuable to contribute. This paper offers a discussion about a new typology of home economics styles. Using this new typology, home economists will be able to understand each other better and leaders will be better able to be inclusive as they respect different preferences that home economists have for identifying as a home economist.

## Typologies Explained and Justified

Although I agree that typologies are much less important than leadership theories, there is still space in our dialogue for a discussion of types. The challenge is not to succumb to trying to get along with each other while forgetting to learn together (Dorothy Mitstifer, personal communication, February 8, 2004). Including both typologies and theories in our dialogue mitigates that possibility. Furthermore, there is a place for typologies in the social sciences because there are three types of social science data: attribute data, relational data, and ideational data. The latter describes the meanings, motives, definitions, and typification of things. Typological analysis (the analysis of data to create types and styles) is an intellectual strategy for developing theoretically significant, meaningful categories of observed phenomena. The result is a collection (of types or styles) that is useful because it simplifies and codifies distinctions between complex examples of phenomena (Scott, 1991). In our case, it means different approaches to being a home economist.

Typology theorists examine individual differences in how people view, and relate to, the world. Typologies are not developmental, interactive, or cognitive in nature, meaning, respectively, that: (a) they do not assume that one has to move through the types in sequenced stages, (b) they do not deal with how two types interact with each other, and (c) they do not illuminate what people think about. But, they do capture innate individual differences in mental processing and perceptions—how people see, and relate to, the world (Brown University, 2004).

This entire paper, which presents a new typology of home economics types, is premised on the assumption that typologies are a useful tool to help home economists appreciate the challenges and opportunities inherent in relating to and leading a diverse group of practitioners. A typology is a classification system of items or people into "general types" according to shared attributes or dispositions. Creating typologies of separate categories flies in the face of seeing things in relationship to each other. But, it can also be the first step to seeing relationships and patterns. Assuming that identifying distinct, unconnected categories can eventually lead to seeing the categories in context and relationships, the idea for home economics types is offered in this paper. In order to benefit from the ideas shared in this paper, I ask that you not approach it as if you were reading a "Cosmopolitan Magazine survey," trying to find yourself. Instead, consider reading on with an open mind. Yes, you may, or may not, *feel like* you have "found yourself" in the typology, and that is what I first felt too as I was creating this idea. But, more importantly, I feel that this is a first step in getting to know each other better so that we can move into solid, respectful working relationships and so that we can learn together as a community of practice. I invite you to read the postscript, at the end of the paper, which further addresses this idea.

## **Overview of Myers-Briggs Model of Personalities**

What is relevant at this juncture of the discussion is that many typologies mirror the familiar way the Myers-Briggs (MB) typology provides a framework for understanding personality types. Since the typology of home economics types (shared in this paper) is going to be modelled on a similar approach, it is pertinent to share a brief overview of the MB typology. Applying the theory of personality types to other topics is a widespread practice, so we should be on solid ground for the moment. Also, the MB approach is elaborated to the extent that readers can appreciate this approach, but the MB types will not be part of the typology tendered in this paper.

The Myers-Briggs model of personalities is based on four preferences people hold regarding how they direct their energy, process information, make decisions, and organize their lives. The assumption is that everyone's personality includes variations of all four but that a specific collection of these will manifest itself over time, reflecting one's true preference or personality. Persons will tend to favor one style over the other, and their preferences tend to come out when they are under stress or enjoying a situation (Team Technology, 2000b).

In a bit more detail, the first preference is whether persons prefer to direct their personal energy inward through thought and emotions or outward via activity and the spoken word. The former is referred to as introvert and the latter as extrovert. The second preference, one's favored approach to processing information, involves (a) using facts and familiar terms while focusing on the present reality (called sensing because the approach involves using one's senses) or (b) finding patterns and relationships and using a larger viewpoint to imagine potentials and possibilities for the future (called Intuition). The third preference pertains to how one prefers to make decisions. This can involve either thinking things through logically and objectively or basing decisions on principles, values, and personal feelings. The fourth preference is one's preferred way to organize one's life. One can prefer to be very structured, organized, and in control (called judgement), or one can be flexible, spontaneous, and open to discovering life and what it presents (called perception) (Team Technology, 2000b).

As a simple example, I am a combination of extrovert, intuition, thinking, and perception (ENTP). This means that (a) I like to explore new ideas and challenge the status quo (e.g., the idea in this paper); (b) spot new patterns and relationships between ideas that lead to a deeper understanding of a key issue (e.g., leadership in home economics); (c) present ideas that are contradictory to the accepted conventions and, using logic, analyze the patterns I see so I can suggest underlying principles not evident to others (e.g., draw insights for home economics leadership from spirituality studies); and (d) continue to find out more about something rather than make a final decision (e.g., I do not share the results of a study in this paper; rather, I present an idea that is still evolving. I anticipate that people will self-identify and empirically examine this idea) (Team Technology, 2000a).

## **Drawing Insights from Other Typologies**

The next section of the paper will present an overview of two typologies of spiritual types as a segue to a new typology of home economics types. These two typologies were selected totally by chance. I was reading Posterski's (2002) paper while preparing a paper on home economics and spirituality. Ware's (1994) book was referred to by Posterski. After reading these two works, I saw the potential to bring insights from these two typologies to the field of home economics. It is as simple as that.

### **Posterski's (2002) Four Spiritual Types**

Drawing insights from the Myers-Briggs approach, Posterski (2002) used extensive factor analysis and cluster analysis to analyze the results of a survey of Canadians who attend church weekly or monthly. He determined that there are four spiritual styles or types: charismatic, traditional, divergent, and tolerant. Like the Myers-Briggs model, they differed on several factors: resistance or acceptance of various family forms, importance of faith in their day-to-day life, level of concern for spiritual well-being, plus several other factors. As with all typologies, Posterski illustrates the intent to categorize items or people according to common attributes or dispositions.

More insights into the nuances of the four types will follow soon, but a small example is useful. Posterski (2002)

characterizes charismatics as very resistant to non-nuclear family forms, totally convinced that religious faith is central to their day-to-day life, and very concerned about their spiritual well-being. On the other hand, divergents are very open to many family structures, least likely to say that faith plays an important role in their day-to-day life, and are not very concerned at all with their spiritual well-being. Yet, all attend church, at least weekly or monthly. What is very significant is Posterski's compelling case that spiritual leaders need to be aware of these four different styles because different styles imply different leadership initiatives. If spiritual leaders want to "reach" everyone attending their church, then leaders simply cannot assume that one approach to spiritual leadership will work anymore.

### **Ware's (1996) Four Types of Spirituality**

Ware (1994) has also conducted research on spiritual types. She suggests that there are four other types of spirituality, created from different factors than those used by Posterski (2002). Ware suggested that each of four types (head, heart, mystic, and kingdom) differ on their way of experiencing God (thought or feelings) and their way of imaging God (concretely or abstractly). She developed a four quadrant-circle Spirituality Wheel Selector as a tool to help people determine where their predominant spirituality lies, what spiritualities they are closely aligned with, and those that are foreign to them. Succinctly, those who identify with the head style learn through Bible study groups, Sunday School and traditional worship and hymns, and listening to sermons. The heart style seeks to experience God in any living moment and does this through group fellowship, evangelistic preaching and promotion of God's message, and contemporary worship that uses music and forms that reach today's culture. Mystic spirituality involves listening to God through private meditation, spiritual retreats, and renewal initiatives. They need quiet and solitude to facilitate their "spiritual journey." Finally, the Kingdom spirituality is a visionary (missionary even) expression through tireless actions that foster peace and social justice and the transformation of society, including community projects such as Habitat for Humanity and food banks.

### **Toward The Creation of a Home Economics Typology**

The next section will begin to explore the possible insights that can be gained from bringing these two typologies to bear on home economics.

### **Bringing Posterski's (2002) Model to Home Economics**

Table one portrays Posterski's (2002) typology applied to home economics. Using the same labels, four home economics styles are suggested: Charismatic, Traditional, Tolerant, and Divergent. Obviously, we should do our own factor analysis instead of co-opting another; but the typology does lend another perspective to our journey into the future. As is the convention with the MB model, these four types vary on several factors: (a) emotional attachment and commitment to the profession, (b) sense of inclusion and acceptance by others, (c) propensity to affiliate and identify with other types, (d) level of involvement and attendance at events, (e) likelihood to recruit people to or promote the profession, and (f) length of time one has been a home economist. I can self-identify as charismatic and can place just about every home economist I know into one of these four categories. No style is better or worse than any other.

Table 1 - *Typology of home economics types with leadership challenges and opportunities (with inspiration from Posterski's (2002) approach).*

<b>Home Economists Type</b>	<b>Leadership Opportunities</b>	<b>Leadership Challenges</b>
<p><b>Charismatic</b></p> <p>are exuberant about home economics</p> <p>are extreme in actions</p> <p>want to help others see the relevance of home economics</p> <p>walk the walk</p> <p>are open to new experiences but sustain themselves by ancient and old ways</p> <p>are zealous - jump in head first</p> <p>anticipate working as a home economist all the time, regardless of the nature of employment, volunteer work, personal life</p>	<p>bring life to the profession</p> <p>bring renewal</p> <p>bring energy</p> <p>are vital to the profession</p>	<p>can sow seeds of division by too much effusive enthusiasm</p>
<p><b>Traditional</b></p> <p>are strong in their values</p> <p>meet occasionally with other home economists</p> <p>avoid charismatic types, oppose them and aren't afraid to say so</p> <p>hold earnest and strong beliefs in home economics</p> <p>remember becoming a home economist</p> <p>will talk about home economics if asked to</p> <p>are oldest group</p>	<p>are loyal</p> <p>are dependable</p> <p>are faithful</p> <p>are solid cornerstone of profession</p> <p>give many years of life expecting little in return</p>	<p>are corner stones and hard to budge!</p> <p>resist change</p> <p>like the way things have been</p> <p>feel there is no room for them in the future</p>
<p><b>Tolerant</b></p> <p>will not get pulled into a debate about home economics</p> <p>feel it is up to each person to decide how to "be" a home economist</p> <p>are not interested in pressuring others to be home economics</p> <p>are middle aged</p> <p>don't object to other home economic types</p> <p>are moderate/modest in expressing home economics values</p> <p>are fairly open-minded</p>	<p>build bridges</p> <p>are even-handed</p> <p>are open-minded while maintaining conservative approach</p> <p>advocate for divergents (for the quiet ones)</p> <p>are inclusive and welcoming</p>	<p>tend to be co-opted away to other groups' agendas by too much bridge building</p> <p>embrace non-home economists to our detriment (give away the purview of the field) due to the need to be inclusive</p>

<p><b>Divergent</b></p> <p>are youngest group</p> <p>could take home economics or leave it</p> <p>do not get involved in home economics events often; but, if they do, it is a large event</p> <p>wonder why they are in home economics BUT do find parts of it satisfying</p> <p>can take or leave the charismatic practitioners</p> <p>are lowest in involvement and attendance at events</p> <p>do not hold conventional beliefs of home economics (don't know what to believe)</p> <p>are nonplussed (perplexed and at a loss for what to say, do or believe - know what they don't want but do not know what they do want)</p> <p>are the future and the present</p>	<p>are vocal and truthful when present</p> <p>desire to be home economist but don't know what they want</p> <p>can be home economists when it comes down to the crunch</p>	<p>despair</p> <p>are frustrated</p> <p>have given up and abandoned home economics</p> <p>are chronic complainers with no solutions</p> <p>are very hard to please because they do not know what they want</p>
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Table one also reflects Posterski's (2002) suggestions about leadership challenges and opportunities, depending on which type is being considered. Columns one and two reflect his ideas but they also ring true for us. For example, if I were president of a home economics association and wanted to make sure I reached all of the members to ensure engagement and professional involvement, I would have to pay close attention to the pros and cons that emerge as I try to bring all four types into play. As a charismatic type myself, I would need to appreciate that too much untempered enthusiasm on my part can sow deep seeds of division among other types because I could suggest too many options, be too energetic. If I did not pay attention to the challenges of working with the more Traditional type, I could inadvertently run into a wall since they are so adverse to change and do not feel like there is any place for them in the future of the organization or profession. Conversely, the Divergents may resist my ideas because they do not know what they want; hence, they are very hard to please and attract. It is hard to reach people who are frustrated and have given up on "the cause." The Tolerants could spend so much time building bridges with other organizations to appease the tension that I created, that I could lose them all because they might be drawn away to another cause related to family well-being.

From a more positive standpoint, I can work concurrently with all four different home economics types if I build on the opportunities for leadership that present themselves because of the factors shaping each type. As a Charismatic, I am eager to bring life to the profession. Counting on the Traditionals to remain loyal to the profession, regardless of what happens, I could counter their inherent resistance to my overzealous style by engaging someone who is a Tolerant to build bridges between me and the Traditionals. At the same time, the Tolerants can be advocates for the hesitant and perplexed Divergents, who can be made to see themselves as home economists when it comes down to the crunch. Making space for variations in home economics styles opens the door of opportunity for leaders in the field trying to capture and respect everyone and their needs and contributions. As with Myers-Briggs, although each person has parts of all of them in their personality, one is usually dominant and informed by the others.

### **Bringing Ware's (1994) Model to Home Economics**

This section will share a discussion of how Ware's (1994) spirituality types can be applied to create four more home economics types. Again, it was very easy to extrapolate her ideas to home economics. The labels have been reworked to reflect titles with less of a spiritual focus: thinking, feeling, reflective, and visionary (corresponding, respectively, with head, heart, mystic, and kingdom). Just as Ware's types varied on two factors (ways of experiencing God and ways of imaging—forming mental images of—God, this model for home economics types

varies on two similar factors: (a) one's favored mode of expressing themselves and developing professionally and (b) one's favored mode of imaging themselves as home economists:

**the thinking style** reflects those who find learning in written texts or by hearing something said that stirs them. Those who favor this style like and need to read articles and books and attend inspirational speaking events. These people are intellectuals and receive nourishment from study and thought-provoking lectures. Content and the written word are very important to this style. People favoring this style love order and desire things to be logical and consistent. They also want an agreement between thoughts and beliefs, inner congruency.

**the feeling style** describes people seeking personal transformation (learning) through art, music, stories, songs, narratives, and camaraderie so that they can achieve personal renewal by being "in the moment with others." Emotional expression and deep feelings are very important for this style. They appreciate the fellowship of small groups, and they revel in what is happening around them in the present tense.

**the reflective style** refers to people who are focussed on their inner selves. They are said to be on a quest or a perpetual journey. They often do not feel that they fit into the busy, mainline movement since they tend to engage in another way of knowing—a deeper, quieter sense of knowing. They enjoy walking the labyrinth and are often meditative, contemplative, introspective, intuitive, and focussed on "being" as well as "doing." These people are concerned with enriching their life journeys and are mindful and observant as they move forward on the journey, often turning to revitalization retreats.

**the visionary style** is socially action-oriented and strives to work through groups characterized by solidarity so that they can focus on justice and peace issues. They are active visionaries who are somewhat distanced from the mainstream as well and want nothing less than the transformation of society, a rectifying of the wrongs of the world. They support political action to establish justice for society and its institutions. They are very moralistic, tending to act on their moral reflection in a passionate way. They are crusaders, working tirelessly on issues. As well, they have a courageous and sturdy idealism that propels their desire to transform society for the better.

Ware (1994) suggests that there is a temptation to value one's own style more highly. Indeed, she suggests that (a) those who favor thinking can be seen as too dry, cold, academic, dogmatic, and studious, (b) those who favor feelings are often seen as being too artsy and anti-intellectual, too introverted and concerned with one's own thoughts and feelings to the point that they are dissociated from reality, (c) those who are reflective may be seen as too self-entered, too flaky, too removed from the real world, and even too eccentric (thus not credible), and (d) those who favor the visionary style are seen as too involved with the world, too single minded and focussed, too moralistic, and too idealistic.

Again, I can self-identify with categories in this typology, namely the thinking and visionary styles. I am an academic who loves reading deep, theoretical pieces and looking for patterns and relationships between disparate ideas. I am also concerned with transforming the profession (not the world, yet) by getting more people to embrace the visionary style. I can readily place people I know in each of these categories, especially when I attend a professional gathering and listen to what people enjoyed or disliked. As a simple example, I have noticed that people want many different things from a conference. These things range from expert invited speakers and conventional academic paper sessions, to group work and hands-on workshops, to small reflective groups where feelings and perceptions are shared, to down time for personal regrouping, to field trips in the local area, and to political action sessions dealing with social injustice and human welfare issues. This simple list reflects the four home economist styles: thinking, feeling, reflective, and visionary, respectively.

### **A New Typology of Home Economics Types**

Using Posterski's (2002) model, we can honor the old guard, the new guard, those who are on the edge, and those who are on the fence. Using Ward's (1994) approach, we can honor those who want to think, those who want to feel the dance, those who want to be contemplative, and those who want to change the world! Although each of these two new home economics typologies stand alone, I felt compelled to try to integrate them together so that we have a

richer conceptual starting point. To that end, the final section presents a marriage of sorts—the integration of the two home economics types developed into a new typology of home economics types.

Following both Posterski (2002) and Ware's (1994) approach, this model employs a MB type of circle-quadrant format. There are four compass points, reminiscent of Posterski's approach and a circle divided into four parts, suggestive of Ware's typology (see Figure 1). Until data can be collected to empirically verify this typology, we move ahead on faith (pun intended) to assume that it can inform our practice. As with all typologies, we can assume that all types are part of each of us. However, one type is usually evidenced most strongly. Figure Two illustrates the 16 possible types of home economists that can be proposed by using this model. The following text will elaborate on four of them, chosen because they are the one's that lined up with the first spin of the wheel in Figure One.

Figure One

Typology of Home Economics Styles

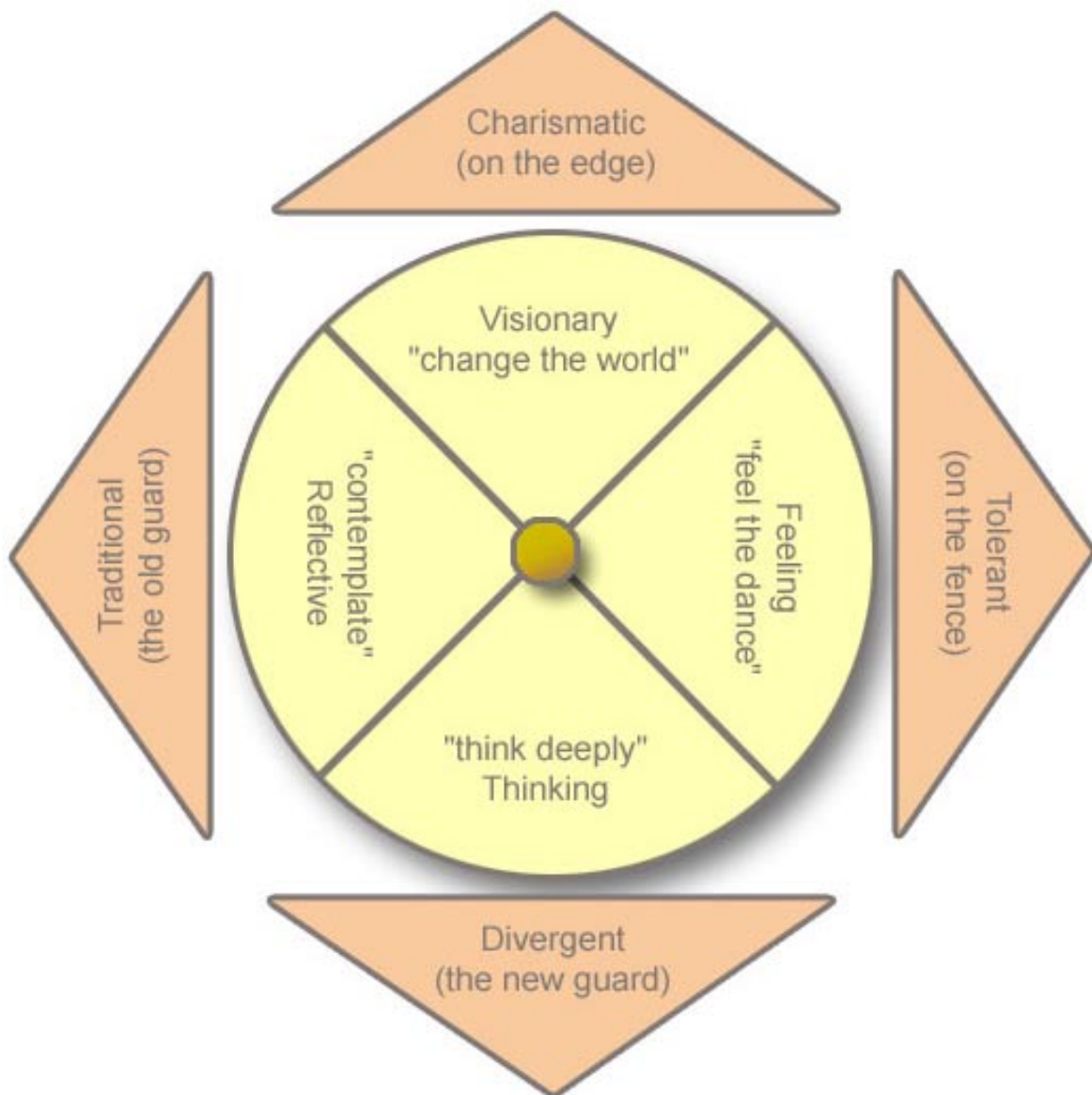


Figure Two

Identity of the 16 Home Economics Types (those highlighted are described in the paper)

Charismatic Visionary	Charismatic Thinking	Charismatic Feeling	Charismatic Reflective
Traditional Visionary	Traditional Thinking	Traditional Feeling	Traditional Reflective
Tolerant Visionary	Tolerant Thinking	Tolerant Feeling	Tolerant Reflective
Divergent Visionary	Divergent Thinking	Divergent Feeling	Divergent Reflective

### **Charismatic/Visionary home economist**

The Charismatic/Visionary home economist would be someone who is a blend of being on the edge and wanting to change the world. These people bring life to the profession through their exuberance and their desire to help others see the relevancy of home economics. Their vital energy and their ability to renew others' energies correlate with the stamina needed for social causes. They can perceive home economics as "a cause" and vision into the future about what it could look like. They value solidarity, take moral positions, and do things based on principle. They are prepared to work tirelessly for any cause they choose and cannot see themselves as anything else but a home economist. They are sustained by the history of the profession and yet remain open to new experiences and ideas within the profession. This helps them be a visionary for the future because vision entails seeing links between the past, present, and future. Sometimes their excessive enthusiasm can sow divisions in the field. But, their distance from the mainstream shields them from this division, allowing them to persevere and crusade for the profession. Their courage and idealism contribute to their penchant for extreme actions but all is for the cause.

### **Tolerant/Feeling Home Economist**

This would be someone who is sitting on the professional fence while seeking personal transformation. These people feel it is up to each individual to determine how she understands what it means to *be* a home economist. Emotional expression and deep feelings are very central to this type as is their penchant to build bridges between other types of home economists and between other aligned groups. They appreciate the fellowship of small groups where deep feelings can be expressed more freely. From a tolerant style, they are open-minded, welcoming, and inclusive and can be advocates for the divergent types who could take home economics or leave it. Camaraderie is very important to this type—meaning they are sociable and friendly. One of the pitfalls of this combination of inclusiveness and sitting on the fence is that there is a potential for them to be co-opted away to related causes or, with best intentions, they are inclined to bring non-home economists into their embrace to the point that they contribute to giving away the purview of the field. These people tend to be modest when it comes to expressing home economics values, and this modesty could very well be why they are perched on the fence in a vulnerable position vis-a-vis remaining within the home economics circle. They could fall either way.

### **Divergent/Thinking Home Economist**

This would be someone who is in the new guard of the profession and seeking intellectual stimulation that stirs and inspires them to action. They need lectures and the written word and get this from attending large events, like conferences. They love things to be orderly and consistent and tend to complain when this is missing in their lives.

Ironically, they do not know why they are complaining. They are very hard to please because they do not know what they want. When they do find contentment from reading new material that stirs them, they are hard pressed to follow through and find that feeling again. The thinking part needs congruence between their thoughts and beliefs but this tends to be absent because the divergent in them does not know what they believe. The result can be frustration and despair that is very unfortunate because this type tends to be the current generation, the new guard. If this generation is lacking hope, a connection with the future, then the profession is in trouble. They seek order and inspiration but turn away from their chosen profession that can meet those needs.

### **Traditional/Reflective Home Economist**

This would be someone who is in the old guard of the profession and seeking personal transformation through reflection about their roles in the mainline movement. At this stage of their professional career, this type holds earnest and strong beliefs about home economics. They tend to see themselves at a stage of their career when they are on a personal quest and journey. Their home economics values are strong and they do not need to meet regularly to reinforce these values, although they do enjoy meeting with other like-minded people. They are the solid cornerstone of the profession, made stronger by turning inward. Ironically, even though they are seen as the cornerstone, they do not feel part of the mainstream. They have given many years of their life to the profession and now see it is time to take care of themselves. They resist change in the profession but seek inner growth. They can remember the day they knew they were a home economist and remain mindful of the impact of that day on their lives. They are trying to find balance in their relationship with the profession and their relationship with themselves. Finding this balance is difficult because they tend to feel there is no room for them anymore in the future of the profession and yet their identity is entangled with being a member of the profession; hence the need for reflection.

Although mathematics tells us that there are 16 possible home economists types, just sharing these four serves to illustrate the power of this typology. It was assumed that we all do not have the same passion and commitment to the field or to professional associations and initiatives. Respecting this diversity is paramount if we want to appeal to the widening scope of emotions and compassion for the future of the profession. It was also assumed that we can begin to understand this aspect of our profession by borrowing from other typologies and that it is necessary that these ideas be quantified to provide more rigor to the typology. In the meantime, it appears that we are well on the way to finding a way to honor the old guard, the new guard, those who are on the edge, those who are on the fence, those who want to think, those who want to feel the dance, those who want to be contemplative, and those who want to change the world!

### **Postscript - Moving Beyond the Categories**

The intent of the paper was not to present a ground breaking innovation or to push the boundaries of our thinking about ourselves. A work of that nature would have been in the postmodern tradition of stretching, dismantling, or dissolving our existing thinking about home economists. Instead, this paper, grounded in modernist thinking, shares the creation of styles of home economists so we can visualize ourselves in practice. The styles are not intended to be timeless and are not intended to exist only in concept. The typology presented can be seen as a collection of archetypes, the first formation of types or styles from which other varieties can arise. It is a systematic ordering of things. This creation of types was intentional but is provided as JUST ONE way to think about us a group of professionals. The categories are not absolute. I do not intend my ideas to be an expression of finality, implying no opportunities for change. The categories are put out there to influence our thinking about ourselves.

I was told by a reviewer that I was complicit in creating essentialist categories of home economists. My philosophy encyclopaedia tells me that essentialism is the practice of categorizing a group of people by a few fixed characteristics while not allowing for change or variation in the group. This is also part of modernist thinking. When someone says *essential* in this context, they mean that it is essential that a person have all of the traits to fit into a style or type, and if they did not, they are apart from those who do - causing fragmentation and marginalization. Ironically, my intent was just the opposite: to create a sense of community amongst us by helping us appreciate that there can be unity in our diverse styles. Another reviewer suggested that these neat little slots could be interpreted in a negative way because people who have not thought deeply about what it means to be a home economist would not be able to find themselves in the typology. My counterpoint is that if this idea makes people start to think about

how they see themselves “being” a home economist, instead of just “doing the work with no reflection,” then we have moved ahead as a profession.

I am not naive enough to ignore the possibility that imposing a modernist typology on home economists could cause some damage to our thinking. One stream of postmodern thought (deconstructivism) holds that none of us has the same interpretation of the reality of being a home economist because all of us have different experiences, attitudes, and values (McGregor, 2003). So, how can I say that we fit into these neat categories if none of us see our home economics reality the same way? Yet, I could identify with the categories as I developed this typology. It resonated with me and, this resonance, this comfort level of being able to read a description of how I see myself as a home economist, can be a trap. It has the potential of closing our minds to diversity and to anyone who lives on the margin of home economics (cannot find a category that works for them). Furthermore, postmodern thinkers would argue that putting us all into different slots prevents us from being in relation to each other. But, as I noted at the beginning of this paper, I feel it can also be the first step to seeing relationships and patterns. I assumed that, by identifying distinct, unconnected categories, we can eventually see the categories in context and relationships.

Despite all of my counterpoints, if this imposed ordering of home economists does not sit well with you yet, I am encouraged. It means you are may well be on the way to embracing the new science of quantum physics that enables us to say that, in spite of its obvious partitions and boundaries, the world, in actuality, is a seamless and inseparable whole—*unbroken wholeness*. From this stance, we can feel more comfortable beginning with categories of home economists because we also know that home economists can be seen as a seamless, inseparable whole that is unbreakable. The quantum notion of wholeness is a fundamentally new kind of togetherness, a sense of working hand-in-hand in such a way that our wholeness is not diminished by being separated by space or time (Wheatley, 1999).

Quantum physics also lets us appreciate that everything is connected. As we each engage in relationships with other home economists, this is made easier now that we have a clearer idea of how we differ on our understanding of what it means to be a home economist. We can know that each single act of associating with another home economist is connected, invisibly, to another set of interacting home economists. “We work where we are, with the system we know, the one we can get our arms around” (Wheatley, 1999, p. 44). We can say that we are all acting independently; yet, we are having a collective impact on the profession. From this perspective, perceiving us as fitting into separate categories is not so daunting because we can also perceive us as a part of an unbroken whole. Also, we can seize on any moments of opposition or resistance to the development of categories of home economists and create productive spaces that allow for, and affirm, our differences (Stevens, 2002).

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