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Independent Individual Decision-Makers in Household Models and the New Home Economics

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| pp 41–56 | [Cite this chapter](#)



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This is especially the case with the specifically independent individual models presented in his theory of marriage. Decision-making models assuming independent individual household members in the Becker tradition are reminiscent of models of labor markets in which firms and workers are independent decision-makers. As basis for econometric estimations, such models may be preferable to models imposing the structure of a game or a household welfare function.

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1. The term “unitary” was coined by Browning et al. ([1994](#)).
2. References to Becker’s unitary model can be found in articles on a diverse range of applications of household economics, ranging from labor supply – such as Chiappori ([1988](#)), Chiappori et al. ([2002](#)), Chau et al. ([2007](#)) – to fertility (including Tiefenthaler [1999](#); Klawon and Tiefenthaler [2001](#)), care work (e.g., Bergeron [2009](#)), child labor and school attendance – such as Emerson and Souza ([2007](#)) – and demand for pets (see Schwarz et al. [2007](#)).
3. The NHE was called “New” to distinguish applications of household economics based on economic analysis from “Home Economics”, an academic discipline that was then very popular in USA and focused on the training of high school students in practical home management skills, including sewing and

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