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By-Safilios-Rothschild, Constantina

Family Sociology or Wives' Family Sociology? A Comparison of Husbands' and Wives' Answers about Decision Making in the Greek and American Culture. Report Number 4.

Merrill Palmer Inst., Detroit, Mich.; Michigan State Univ., East Lansing. Head Start Evaluation and Research Center.

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This study compared the responses of husbands and wives regarding decision-making in two cultures, Greek and American, as obtained by two different sampling techniques. The American data were obtained from 160 couples who lived in the Detroit area and who had a child under 6 years old. The Greek sample was 133 wives and 117 husbands, none of whom was a spouse of another member of the sample. These 250 adults were from Athens, Greece. The Detroit couples were asked if the husband, the wife, or both were responsible for the making of 14 specific decisions. The Greek subjects were asked whose opinion usually prevailed in eight decisional areas. Of the responses made by the Detroit couples, clear disagreement occurred between spouses in 55 percent, slight disagreement, in 21 percent, and complete agreement, in only 24 percent. In comparing the responses of the Greek participants, significant differences in perspective were discovered between the men and women. The overall findings demonstrated the unreliability of generalizing the opinions of wives, which comprised a good deal of family survey data, to the husbands. A number of methodological procedures are suggested with a view to refining the study of familial decision-making. (WD)

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Family Sociology
or
Wives' Family Sociology?*

Constantina Sefilios-Rothschild**

Robert P. Boger, Center Director, Michigan State University
in cooperation with Irving Sigel, Merrill-Palmer Institute

Sarah D. Hervey, Associate Director for Research

Marilyn W. Story, Associate Director for Evaluation

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FAMILY SOCIOLOGY OR WIVES' FAMILY SOCIOLOGY? A COMPARISON
OF HUSBANDS' and WIVES' ANSWERS ABOUT DECISION
MAKING IN THE GREEK AND AMERICAN CULTURE*

Constantina Safilios-Rothschild**

There have only been a few family studies based on responses obtained from both husbands and wives. The majority of studies have assumed - without having tested this assumption with respect to all family variables - that the two sets of responses are quite similar and, consequently, have based their conclusions and generalizations solely on the responses of the wife.¹ This tendency may be partially accounted for by the influence of earlier studies by Burgess, Cottrell, Terman and Wallin who, in studying marital "adjustment", utilized responses of both spouses and concluded that there were no significant differences between the two sexes.² What has probably been the most influential factor, however, as indicated by some investigators, is the convenience and substantial savings which can be gained by testing only the wife.³ Furthermore, it is possible that the wish to de-emphasize marital conflict and disagreement between spouses has also been responsible for this serious methodological omission.

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**Research Associate, The Merrill-Palmer Institute

Since, in the "ideal" American family, couples marry for love and remain "loving companions" throughout - sharing activities, and decisions as well as opinions and beliefs - research methods and techniques which might challenge this cherished version of married life by indicating that it does not represent the norm tend to be avoided. For example, in studies conducted by Smith⁴ and Rosen⁵ in which both husbands and wives were interviewed, even though practical considerations did not render the interviewing of husbands problematic, only the wives were asked who actually made each of the decisions while husbands were asked who, according to them, "ought" to make each decision. Scanzoni also did not seem to attach any particular value to the fact that the interviewing of both spouses "revealed variation"; and having to admit that items referring to task performance and family authority showed a high degree of disagreement, apologetically attributed this fact to the "poor questions" asked.⁶ He then concluded that the interviewing of spouses "may be useful while pretesting a schedule or questionnaire in order to pinpoint and modify items which result in consistent disagreement".⁷ Similarly, Wilkening and Morrison were discomfited by finding that about half of the spouses disagreed with the overall pattern of decision-making and tended to see this as a shortcoming which could probably be avoided by a different wording of questions "based....on conceptual revisions of the decision process...."⁸

Despite the fact that such disagreements are neither desirable nor welcome by most family sociologists, there is sufficient evidence that they do exist no matter how sophisticated the question or the technique employed. Spouses have been found to disagree about their topics of conversation, the amount of time they spend discussing, who initiates the conversation, who makes decisions,⁹ the frequency of coitus and the proportion of time the wife experiences orgasm.¹⁰

Of course, the degree of disagreement varies from variable to variable and decision-making being an index of the familiar power structure in which both spouses have important stakes is a particularly highly disputed area since motivational incentives may color perception with the desirable shades of power. Burchinal and Bauder found that the greatest disagreement between wives' and husbands' responses appears in decisions concerning family finances, changes in husband's job and changes in the wife's working status.¹¹

Wilkening and Morrison found that the percentage of agreement ranged from 36 to 77 for the different decisions, the greatest disagreement occurring for operational farm decisions and amount of money to be spent for food.¹²

Heer finally found that 15 - 30 percent of the Irish couples he interviewed disagreed as to which spouse should prevail in making important decisions.¹³

It could be that the relatively lower percentage of disagreement found in this study is due to the oversimplified and general nature of the questions being asked.

"Revealed" differences in spouses' responses usually present serious difficulties for interpretation which may also explain in part the family sociologists' reluctance to deal with such disagreements. If husbands, for example, consistently present the decision-making as husband-dominated while wives consistently present it as equalitarian, whose response can be considered to reflect "reality" and, therefore, be taken as the more "objective" and valid? The usual reaction of investigators confronted with this dual reality has been to explain it away by reducing the findings to a single "valid reality". For example, Heer thinks that the husband's assessment of influence in decision-making is more accurate than the wife's because he assumes that the wives may feel guilty when they have greater influence than their husbands while the husbands will not experience guilt under similar conditions or feel inhibited to

admit their greater influence.¹⁴ It may be true that discrepancies in the responses of spouses may tend to reflect prevailing cultural norms and values about ideal family behavior which may consistently affect the one spouse more than the other by distorting his (her) perception and judgment. However, not all spouses agree with the prescribed cultural norms and at least some may go against them. A very important research question could focus upon an investigation under a variety of cultural traditions and family ideologies of the differential extent and direction of discrepancies between culturally prescribed socially legitimized authority and exercised control as perceived by each spouse.

An alternative explanation of discrepancies between the responses of husbands and wives may be the possibility of two "realities"; the husband's subjective reality and the wife's subjective reality; two perspectives which do not always coincide. Each spouse perceives "facts" and situations differently according to his own needs, values, attitudes and beliefs. An "objective" reality could possibly exist only in the trained observer's evaluation, if it does exist at all. The existence of disagreements, disturbing as it may be, will have to be interpreted and its implications for the type of husband-wife relationship will have to be examined. This process may lead family sociologists to a more refined assessment of the dynamics of family interaction and toward a better understanding of family behavior.

It is true, however, that practical difficulties often interfere with the simultaneous but separate interviewing of both spouses in the same family. In settings in which for some peculiar cultural reasons it is impossible to obtain the accord of both spouses, as it was the case in urban Greece, some alternative interviewing method must be developed. Since in Athens it was not problematic to interview the husband only or the wife only, a random sample of husbands and a random sample of wives were interviewed.¹⁵

Although such a sampling does not permit the matching of answers of husbands and wives married to each other, it permits the comparison of husbands' opinions, judgments and evaluations with those of (unrelated) wives so that the derived family patterns (descriptive or dynamic) are not based solely upon wives' perceptions.

The present paper will examine wives' and husbands' responses about decision-making in two cultures, the Greek and the American, obtained by two different sampling techniques.

The significance of such a cross-cultural comparison lies in the fact that the Greek and American cultures differ with regard to prevailing family ideologies as well as with regard to various aspects of family modernization and, finally, with regard to level of industrialization and societal complexity. It is important to investigate whether a prevailing equalitarian family ideology together with ideologies specifying love as the sole basis for marriage, marital harmony and complete consensus and agreement between spouses (as is the case in the American culture) has any effect upon the degree to which husbands' and wives' answers about decision-making coincide. Also to what extent the answers of husbands in general differ from the answers of wives in two cultures in different levels of technological and societal development since significant differences would tend to indicate the presence of disaccord between men and women.¹⁶

Some of the methodological problems involved in assessing the overall decision-making pattern as well as the factors affecting the degree of disagreement between spouses and the direction of this disagreement will be examined in both cultures, and some tentative hypotheses and suggestions about future methodological procedures will be formulated.

METHODOLOGY

The American data are derived from a larger Head Start Multidisciplinary Research Study conducted by three psychologists and two family sociologists of the Merrill-Palmer Research Faculty. The total Detroit sample involved 255 children and their families; in 178 cases both the husband and wife were interviewed, in 71 cases only the wife because there was no father in the family (in 4 cases he could not be located), in 5 cases only the father and in 1 case the mother and the maternal grandmother. Because of the particular focus of this paper on the comparison of husbands' and wives' answers, only the 178 cases in which both spouses were interviewed were analyzed. Of these, 18 cases had incomplete data on decision-making so that the final analysis was based on 160 couples.

A necessary requirement for all families included in this study (due to the Head Start focus) was the presence of a child under 6 years of age.¹⁷ For this reason we cannot be certain whether or not the results could be generalized to childless families (newlyweds or infecund families) or to couples at later stages of the family cycle including the post-parental stage. This sample, however, is amenable to fruitful methodological analyses such as the comparison of husbands' and wives' answers presented in this paper.

The Greek data were collected within the framework of a larger study on "Family, Social Class and Mental Illness in Urban Greece" conducted in Athens during the summer of 1964. The sample consists of 250 randomly selected Athenian couples; in 133 cases the wife was interviewed and in the remaining 117 cases only the husband. In the Detroit families, decision-making was based on fourteen decisions listed in Table 2. Each question was structured so as to give the interviewees a choice between "Husband", "Wife", or "Both".

In the Greek family decision-making was studied on the basis of eight decisions (Table 4) which were found to be the most relevant in terms of the Greek culture.¹⁸ These eight decisions were also asked in Detroit in addition to six decisions included in the earlier Detroit study by Blood and Wolfe.¹⁹ In Greece, interviewees were asked an open question as to whose opinion usually prevailed in each of the eight decisions.²⁰

Social class in Detroit was calculated on the basis of Hollingshead's Two Factor Index of Social Position²¹ and in Athens on the basis of a version of Hollingshead's Index of Social Position modified for Greece.²²

FINDINGS

The comparison of Detroit husbands' and wives' answers about decision-making shows only in 23.8 percent of the cases were these answers in complete agreement while in 76.4 percent of the cases the spouses disagreed as to who makes the decisions. Of these 76.4 percent, however, 21.3 percent disagreed only slightly and their perception of the decision-making was in the same direction; for example, the husband reported the decision-making as to wife dominated, while the wife reported it to the wife prevalent. Even if we consider that an actually serious disagreement existed only in 55.1 percent of the cases, this finding indicates that only in less than half of the cases was the wife's answer more or less sufficient for giving a total picture of the process of decision-making; in all other cases the obtained picture would be incomplete, meaningless and potentially misleading unless the husband's viewpoint was included.

Insert Table 1 about here

The examination of the perception of the overall decision-making by Detroit spouses (Table 1) shows that the husbands reported significantly more often than did their wives that the decisions were made by their wives ($\chi^2 = 21.333, p < .01$) while the Detroit wives tended to see the decision-making as equally husband-dominated or wife-dominated. However, as Tables 2 and 3 indicate, the perceived deciding agent as well as the degree of agreement or disagreement about who is the decider varies considerably from decision to decision. Thus, there are some decisions which are less disputed between the spouses, both of them more or less agreeing that they are "feminine" decisions such as childrearing,²³ purchase of furniture and household items and purchase of food, or "masculine" decisions such as purchase of life insurance, purchase of car and decision concerning the husband's job (Table 3). On the other hand, the degree of disagreement in some decisions such as the use of available money, what doctor to consult, the use of leisure time, the choice of friends and the purchase of clothes, is statistically significant.

 Insert Tables 2 and 3 here

Although the Greek data do not permit the matching of husbands' and wives' answers, the examination of the responses from representative samples of husbands and wives show that Athenian wives report significantly more often than do Athenian husbands a wife dominated overall power structure ($\chi^2 = 9.277, p < .01$). Athenian husbands, on the contrary, tend to perceive decision-making to be as often husband-dominated as it is wife-dominated (Table 3). The perceptions of Athenian husbands and wives differ significantly over three disputed decisions; the child-rearing decision, the decision concerning the use of available money and that concerning the relations with in-laws (Table 4).

Insert Tables 4 and 5 about here

The above data in both cultures indicate that it is not possible to conceptualize the family as consisting of the ever-converging views, perceptions, beliefs and values of both spouses. The examined data show that family research cannot rely solely on wives' answers as has been largely the practice up to now, unless we are willing to change the title of "family sociology" to "wives' family sociology", or "feminine family sociology". If, however, we are interested in studying the family as a dynamic interacting unit, we have no choice but to conceptualize this unit as consisting of many points of view, as many as there are family members. These different opinions and perceptions may coincide to a varying degree in some areas and diverge in others.

It is interesting to note that some of the perceived trends in decision-making follow the same direction in Athens and Detroit despite significant social, economic, and cultural dissimilarities. Husbands and wives in both cities agree that family size is predominantly a joint decision while the purchase of clothes for the entire family, the purchase of furniture and household items, and the rearing of children are mostly seen as wife-dominated decisions. Also, some of the observed disagreements between husbands and wives in the two countries follow the same direction. For example, in the case of the dispute as to who has "the upper hand" in the use of available money, in both countries each spouse claims more influence for himself, although the trend is somewhat stronger in Greece.

Another question that may be raised as a result of the data presented in this paper is one relating to whether or not couples who agree in their perception of the overall decision-making process are in any significant way different from couples who disagree. The Detroit study includes demographic and broad

socio-psychological data and only some information reflecting the dynamics of the husband-wife relationship such as data on the influence process and on marital satisfaction. According to the available data, only couples in Class V - the lower class - agreed more often than couples in all other classes on their perception of the overall decision-making. Possibly one could hypothesize that the degree of communication, especially verbal communication, between spouses is the explanatory intervening variable. One could hypothesize that the higher the degree of verbal communication between spouses the more the disagreement about decision-making because after too much discussion of both points of view the decision-making picture may be sufficiently blurred so as to permit some spouses to perceive that the outcome has followed the desirable direction. Thus, in the lower class in which the degree of verbal communication is low, the decision-making picture is more clear-cut and, hence, the ensuing degree of agreement between spouses high.

Furthermore, when education was examined, couples in which the husband or the wife had less than 9 years of schooling agreed that decision-making was wife-dominated. When occupation was examined, the couples in which the husband had a managerial or professional occupation agreed that wives dominated decision-making. This was also true for couples with children 6-12 years old. In all other couples with other characteristics the husbands' perception of the overall decision-making differed significantly from the wives' perception.

The fact that there is no consistent or clear pattern differentiating the agreeing from the disagreeing couples may be attributed to one of two plausible explanations; a) disagreement between the spouses' perceptions of decision-making is so widespread that there is no particular characteristic that could set them off from the small minority of couples whose perceptions completely converge.

Or, b) the phenomenon of convergence or divergence of spouses' perceptions of the decision-making reflects the dynamics of the husband-wife relationship; therefore, a number of related dynamic variables must be tapped if we want to start understanding why spouses agree or disagree in their perception of decision-making.

 Insert Table 6 about here

Besides the conclusion that the answers of both husbands and wives are necessary in order to study familiar decision-making, a number of other methodological issues can be raised about the way decision-making has been usually measured up to now.

First, in calculating the overall decision-making score, all decisions are given equal weight even though not all decisions have "objectively" the same degree of importance for the entire life of the family. Also, each spouse may accord a differential degree of importance to one rather than another decision because of a number of idiosyncratic, dynamic or symbolic reasons, or finally a decision may be valued more in one family than in another because of peculiar socio-economic or dynamic reasons. And it may be that each spouse perceives his decision-making behavior and that of his (her) spouse in terms of the importance attached to each separate decision and his need to appear dominant, equalitarian, or submissive. Thus, a spouse who wishes to be dominant may perceive that he decides the most important decisions; that is, the decisions he considers to be the most important. Also some decisions are made less frequently than others; thus, while a decision such as "what car to buy" may be made once a year or every 2-3 years, a decision such as "what food to buy" requires a daily or weekly enactment. Furthermore, some decisions are "important" and frequent, others frequent but not "important", others "important" and not

frequent, and others not "important" and not frequent. Thus, the familial power structure may not be solely determined on the basis of the number of areas of decisions that one can appropriate for himself. And the natural preference of each spouse would tend to be toward those decisions that are deemed important but do not require a frequent and time-consuming enactment. The availability of time on the part of the wife does not seem to be a decisive factor as it has been assumed by some family sociologists (as for example Blood and Wolfe did in Husbands and Wives). It seems that simply the fact that a wife is a woman is more important than the amount of time on her hands. When Table 3 was broken down by the employment status of the wives no significant difference in the decision-making pattern was observed between the working and the non-working wives.

In the present studies, although there are no data concerning the differential importance attached to individual decisions by each spouse, some decisions can be "objectively" considered to have more significant consequences for the entire life of the family than others. The collected American data indicate that the husbands perceive all "important" decisions as either being made by themselves, as in the case of the type of job the husband will take (with important consequences in terms of time to be spent away from home, location of job, salary level, amount of leisure available, etc.), the purchase of life insurance, the use of available money, or the purchase of a car; - or as being made jointly - as in decisions relating to "what house or apartment to buy or rent", what doctor to consult", "family size", and "choice of friends". On the other hand, husbands perceive as wife-dominated only those decisions the enactment of which involves time consuming tasks, such as "the purchase of food", "the purchase of clothes", "the purchase of furniture and household items", "relations with in-laws", and "rearing of children".²⁴ This pattern may not be a mere coincidence but rather an indication that American husbands do not wish to take on "bothersome" decisions which are not crucial (with the exception of child-rearing

decision) and take too much of the time and energy that they prefer to dedicate to their work or leisure time activities.

Second, some of the decisions asked were much more specific than others and one could raise the issue as to whether or not a greater degree of specificity would bring about a greater degree of consensus among spouses. For example, "Who decides about the purchase of the car" is a fairly specific question, while "who decides about child-rearing" refers to a more general decision-making area involving several more specific decisions. The available evidence from Heer's data discussed earlier suggests that a smaller degree of disagreement (rather than a greater degree of disagreement as it could have been hypothesized) is obtained by asking a general question about decision making rather than specific decisions, as in the case of all the other studies examined. Also, spouses as we have seen disagree as much about specific questions.

The degree to which a complex decision-making area should be broken into specific units cannot be determined till we know the entire range of specific decisions which exist in respondents' minds and till we have factor analyzed these specific decisions so that we can be guided as to which of these specific decisions to include. When we factor analyzed the fourteen decisions asked in Detroit (separately for husbands and wives) we found an unclear factor structure due to the fact that most decisions were loading on more than one factor. This indicates multi-dimensionality within each decision and a suggested procedure would be the breaking down of each decision in its consistent dimensions. The obtained intercorrelations (Tables 7 and 8) suggest some possible lines of specification; one such example may be the separation of the financial decision involved in several decisions such as the choice of a doctor, the choice of friends, the purchase of clothes, of food, or a house. It is possible that the one spouse decides how much money can be spent on food, but the other spouse

decides what kind of food to buy, the two decisions being quite different.

Third, both the American and Greek data remind us also that one could get a completely different picture of the overall power structure - from husbands or from wives - depending on which decisions he chose to include or omit. If one would omit all the above-mentioned five decisions judged to be wife-dominated by both spouses - as was done in Blood and Wolfe's earlier study in Detroit - one would tend to get an overall equalitarian decision-making pattern or a husband-dominated one according to which spouse's answers are being assessed.

Fourth, the overall decision-making score, as it has been used up to now, has a number of shortcomings. These shortcomings are the result of two methodological omissions: a) the decisions asked and used for computing this score have not been tested for reliability or validity; and, b) the decisions have never been factor analyzed so that we do not know whether one or two factors are being given a greater importance than to the others by asking more decisions which are loading this one or two factors.

Of course, it is extremely difficult to test the construct validity of the decision-making instrument since even observation of spousal behavior under contrived experimental situations cannot be considered a totally acceptable alternative method. The reason for this questionable value of laboratory situations is the information we have from studies of influence techniques according to which it may well be the strategy of the one of the spouses to let the other have the "upper hand" in relatively unimportant (but "publicized") decisions because he (she) can thus easier win in the decisions he deems more important.²⁵ The study of influence techniques also indicates that most of the techniques used by each spouse in order to tip the power balance toward his side could not be observed in a laboratory context because they require long periods of time (weeks or months), privacy or the creation of a special psychological atmosphere.²⁶

Thus, probably the only way the decision-making instrument could be tested for validity would be through face (content) validity testing. In order to test the instrument for face validity a number of respondents should be asked during pretesting to list all the decisions that they have to make. In this way we would be at least relatively sure that the decision-making instrument is covering the entire range of familiar decisions.

At present we do not know how valid the decision-making instrument is and it may not always reflect accurately the reported direction of decision-making in the individual decisions. For example, in our data the overall decision-making score shows that Detroit wives tend to see decision-making as equally often dominated by husbands and wives. The examination of the individual decisions, however, shows (Table 2) that the Detroit wives perceive themselves as the deciders in six decisions (namely, childrearing, relations with in-laws, what doctor to consult, purchase of clothes, purchase of furniture and household items, purchase of food and use of leisure time); their husband as the decider in three decisions (purchase of life, insurance, purchase of car, husband's job); while three decisions are perceived as joint (family size, choice of friends, and choice of house or apartment); and in one case (the use of money) women see decision-making as equally shared by themselves and their husbands. This detailed picture given by Table 2 does not seem to justify the trend indicated by the overall decision-making score. This discrepancy may be due to the fact that the overall score as an arithmetical average is sensitive to extreme arithmetic deviations²⁷ or to the fact that there is not a balanced emphasis placed upon the different factors in which the decisions belong.

Taking all these points into consideration relating to the differential importance and frequency of the decisions, the need for specification of the decisions and the need to test the decision-making instrument for validity and

for containing a balanced number of decisions in each factor, the following procedures seem to be advisable when studying familial decision-making: (1) During pretesting the respondents should be asked to list all the decisions they have to make and to analyze the nature of the decision and break it down to its constituent elements. In this way we would be able to ask all the relevant decisions and to specify them in a meaningful way.

(2) Each investigated respondent should be first asked who makes each of the decisions and then to rank these decisions in terms of: (a) the importance he attaches to each decision; (b) in terms of the frequency with which each decision is made in his family; and finally, (c) in terms of the time consumed in carrying out the decision and the tasks related to it. This procedure would permit us to examine the reported pattern of prevalence in each decision in terms of the degree of importance attached to this decision by the interviewed spouse as well as in terms of how frequent and time-consuming each decision is perceived to be. A typology of decisions could be thus constructed and probably a sub-score could be computed for each type of decisions.

(3) The decisions asked should be factor analyzed separately for the wives and the husbands in order to assess whether or not two decisions are highly intercorrelated so that it is not necessary to ask both of them. Also it would be possible to assess which are the factors into which the decisions are grouped so that we can arrive at a balanced representation of each factor. Only in this way shall we be sure that the overall decision-making score is not biased toward one factor and that it truly reflects the overall familial power structure. This procedure would allow us a more specific and accurate analysis of decision-making and a better understanding of the familial power structure.

(4) Questions could be asked which would reveal the influence that cultural family ideologies may have upon spouses, that is, the normative standards regulating familial decision-making to which each spouse adheres. Such information would shed additional light about the degree of authority to be exercised considered by each spouse as socially legitimized. The discrepancy, then, between the degree of authority that each spouse thinks he could exercise legitimately and the degree of decision-making control he perceives himself as exercising²⁸ could be explained by the degree of influence he thinks he can exert on the other spouse or the degree of influence he is subject to - influence being an additional explanatory variable that needs to be measured. For example, Greek women may think equally as often as men that society legitimizes men to predominate in the familial decision-making; however, they may perceive themselves as predominating in the actual decision-making by significantly influencing their husbands in a variety of ways. The degree and direction of this discrepancy between perceived legitimate authority and exercised control as well as the intervening influence process would permit the assessment of the dynamics underlying the differential decision-making reported by the spouses and would increase our understanding of the nature of the husband-wife relationship.²⁹

DISCUSSION

The available data on decision-making collected through two different methods, one permitting the matching of husbands' and wives' answers and the other permitting the comparison of answers received from random samples of husbands and wives, and in two contrasting cultures such as the American and the Greek, consistently show such a considerable degree of incongruency of perceived power structure that a detailed investigation seems appropriate.

Since a considerable incongruency seems to exist both in a highly industrialized country such as the United States, where an equalitarian philosophy is said to prevail at least in the urban middle class, and in a developing country such as Greece with a prevailing patriarchal, masculine-predominance ideology, - weakening only among college educated urban men and urban women with at least a high school education - it suggests that husbands and wives have incongruous perceptions of the decision-making process regardless of the societal stage of development or cultural ideologies.

The incongruency between husbands' and wives' perceptions of decision-making may be due to one or both spouses' need to dominate the family power structure or to adhere to equalitarian norms. Thus, a spouse for whom it is very important to be predominant in the decision-making, may perceive only these cues which permit him (or her) to see himself as the most powerful member of the family. The analysis of the Greek data, for example, showed that when husbands or wives perceive that they prevail in the decision-making they are satisfied with their marriage while the opposite is true when they perceive the decision-making as rather equalitarian.

The analysis of the present data has indicated that valid and comprehensive studies of power structure in any culture ought to meet the following methodological requirements: (a) the assessment of answers obtained from both husbands and wives; (b) the inclusion of the entire range of common familial decisions as reported by the respondents and as specified by them; (c) The examination of each spouse's answers regarding the most influential decision-maker for each individual decision in the light of his evaluation of the importance accorded to the decision itself and the perceived frequency of the decision as well as of the degree of time consumed in carrying out the activities involved in it; (d) a factor analytic study of the decisions

before any kind of overall decision-making score is calculated; and (e) the examination of the discrepancy between each spouse's perceived socially legitimized authority and exercised control in the decision-making as well as of the processes that explain these discrepancies on either direction. If these methodological requirements are met in research conducted in each country the usual problems of cross-cultural comparisons (such as equivalence) may be either solved or much more manageable than today.

Finally, the analyzed data indicate that even in the case of two contrasting cultures, in terms of stage of development as well as of family ideology, some decisions are perceived by both spouses and in both cultures as being predominantly "feminine", or "masculine" or "joint". This is an important finding for family sociologists interested in developing universal generalizations and theories concerning familial power structure. Also, in finding that the decision concerning the use of available money is claimed by each spouse in two countries greatly differing in terms of societal development raises a question about the universality of "instrumental" and "expressive" roles. If the use of money is classified as an "instrumental" activity and relations with in-laws, choice of friends and use of leisure time as "expressive" activities, the American and the Greek data indicate that these decisions are claimed by each spouse as his domain of greater power. The Greek data indicate, furthermore, that the decisions concerning the choice of friends and the use of leisure time are seen by both husbands and wives as belonging more to a masculine than a feminine domain of influence. But even in a decision labeled and agreed upon as both "feminine" and "expressive" such as childrearing, both Greek and American husbands claim that they have more influence than their wives are willing to admit. These findings, by indicating that "expressive" and "instrumental" activities are not clearly and nearly distributed to men and women in the expected

correspondence - that is, men claiming control over "instrumental" activities and women claiming control over "expressive" activities - suggest that there is a need for a careful re-examination of the claimed universality of instrumental roles being played predominantly by men and expressive roles predominantly by women.³⁰ It is true that if one considers only the answers of the American wives there is a consistent tendency (the tendency being weaker in the case of the Greek wives) for them to perceive themselves as more in control of "expressive" activities and decisions and to minimize the role played by their husbands in these decisions. American men, however, do not agree and see themselves as playing a greater role in "expressive" activities and decisions than their wives would admit. Before the issue of the universality of the model of family role differentiation into "instrumental" roles for men and "expressive" roles for women is settled, both wives and husbands must be further interviewed cross-culturally about their family role definitions and their actual involvement in and control over different family activities and decisions.

ABSTRACT

Family decision-making studies have been most often based on wives' answers only assuming that there is an almost perfect agreement between husbands' and wives' answers. An examination of Detroit and Athenian husbands' and wives' perceived decision-making patterns shows a considerable degree of divergence, such that decision-making studies can no longer rely only upon the wife's point of view. The present data also indicate that the overall decision-making score, as usually calculated, may not be always adequate or valid. A number of methodological procedures are suggested that are expected to refine considerably the study of familial decision-making.

FOOTNOTES

1. Blood and Wolfe write, for example: "...many previous studies have shown a close correlation between what husbands and wives say about their marriages..." without mentioning the studies or the areas and degree of agreement. And they later write: "...there are undoubtedly individual cases where the husband would have given a different picture from the one the wife gave us, but these differences tend to get lost in the shuffle when large numbers of cases are considered." But they do not offer any proof for this argument either. See: Robert O. Blood, Jr., and Donald M. Wolfe, Husbands and Wives, Illinois: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1960, p. 6.
2. A summary of this literature can be found in Ernest W. Burgess and Paul Wallin, Engagement and Marriage, New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1953, pp. 33-60.
3. Robert O. Blood, Jr., and Donald M. Wolfe, op. cit., p. 6; and John Scanzoni, "A Note on the Sufficiency of Wife Responses in Family Research", Pacific Sociological Review, Fall, 1965, p. 112. Scanzoni sees as a shortcoming of the interviewing of both spouses the possible reduction of sample size and, therefore, of the generalizability of results.
4. Herbert L. Smith, "Intra-Familial Decision-Making and Marital Satisfaction", paper presented at the National Council on Family Relations Meetings, San Francisco, California, August 16-19, 1967.

5. Bernard C. Rosen and Thomas Harblin, "Cross-Cultural Measurement of Control, Power, and Authority in the Husband-Wife Relationship: Methodological Considerations", paper read at the Groves Conference, Boston, April 22-24, 1968.
6. John Scanzoni, op. cit., pp. 109-115.
7. Ibid., p. 115
8. Eugene A. Wilkening and Denton E. Morrison, "A Comparison of Husband and Wife Responses Concerning Who Makes Farm and Home Decisions". Marriage and Family Living, 25, (August, 1963), p. 351.
9. Harold Feldman, Development of the Husband-Wife Relationship, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1965, pp. 116-117. See also: Bernard's discussion of different items on which spouses have been found to disagree: Jessie Bernard, The Sex Game, Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968, pp. 252-257.
10. Alfred C. Kinsey and Associates, Sexual Behavior in the Human Female, Philadelphia, Pa.: W. B. Saunders Co., 1953, pp. 127-128; and Lee Rainwater, Family Design, Marital Sexuality, Family Size, and Contraception, Aldine Publishing Co., 1965, pp. 71-72.
11. Lee G. Burchinal and Ward W. Bauder, "Decision-Making and Role Patterns Among Iowa Farm and Non-farm Families", Journal of Marriage and the Family, 27, (1965), pp. 527-528.

References

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12. Eugene A. Wilkening and Denton E. Morrison, op. cit., p. 350.
13. David M. Heer, "Husband and Wife Perception of Family Power Structure", Marriage and Family Living, 24, (1962), p. 66.
14. Ibid., p. 67.
15. Athenian husbands in all social classes do not tolerate that their wives may be interviewed after (or while) they respond to a family questionnaire since they feel that they have already given all important information and tend to interpret the wife's interview as an indication of the researcher's doubt that their own responses were adequate and valid; and, if their wife has been asked first to cooperate in the research and then the husband is approached, he flatly refuses to answer the questionnaire since he now does not consider it of any importance since his wife has been asked first. However, there are no problems if anyone wishes to interview only the husband or the wife since the husband can glorify or belittle the interview according to whether or not he or his wife has been asked to cooperate.
16. For some of the analyses of data presented in this paper a random sample of husbands and wives (regardless of whether or not they are married to each other) is sufficient (See Tables 3 and 5).
17. These children were located through three different methods: a) direct mail inquiries to parents listed in the newspapers as having children born two years ago (a sample of 40 children was thus obtained); b) 3-1/2 and 4-1/2 year-old children found in 5 Head Start Preschool classes and 7 private nurseries (100 children, that is, 100 families); and c) 117 Negro kindergarten children drawn from 5 inner city school classrooms designat^{ed} by the

Detroit Board of Education as having teachers receptive to research being conducted in their classroom.

18. Robert O. Blood, Jr., and Reuben Hill, Andree Michel and Constantina Safilios-Rothschild, "Comparative Analysis of Family Power Structure; Problems of Measurement and Interpretation", paper presented at the International Seminar for Family Sociology, Tokyo, Japan, September, 1965.
19. Robert O. Blood, Jr., and Donald M. Wolfe, op. cit.; two of the decisions used by Blood and Wolfe in Detroit, namely, those concerning vacation and money to be spent for food were not included since they were asked at a more general level as: "who decides about the use of leisure time" - which includes vacation - and "who decides how the available money will be used".
20. A Score of 5 was given to the answer "my husband" or "always my husband"; a score of 4 to the answer "my husband more (often) than I"; a score of 3 to the answer "jointly"; a score of 2 to the answer "I more (often) than my husband"; a score of 1 to the answer "I (wife)". In the American data, a score of 1 was given to the answer "wife", a score of 2 to the answer "both", and a score of 3 to the answer "husband".
21. August P. Hollingshead Two Factor Index of Social Position, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957 (mimeograph).
22. Safilios-Rothschild, Constantina, "Class Position and Success Stereotypes in Greek and American Cultures", Social Forces, 45 (1967), pp. 377-378.

23. Although both spouses generally agree that childrearing is a "feminine" decision, a significantly larger number of husbands than of wives say that it is joint while a significant larger number of wives than of husbands perceive it as wife-dominated (Table 2).
24. Of course it is conceivable that one spouse makes the decision and the other enacts it; for example, the husband decides that clothes must be purchased as well as what amount of money may be spent for these clothes, but the wife has to go out and buy them. Even in this situation, the wife could exercise some control over the price, quality and quantity of clothes bought, but the main decision of whether or not to buy clothes is unquestionably the husband's decision. This type of possible separation between decision-making and enactment of the decision may be only possible in overall authoritarian families supported by wide-spread masculine dominance ideologies.
25. Constantina Safilios-Rothschild, "A Comparative Study of Influenced Techniques Used by Detroit and Athenian Wives", unpublished paper.
26. Ibid.
27. In two cases in which the wives perceived the decision as husband-dominated (purchase of car and job husband should take) they minimized their own role (even as taking part in joint decision-making). On the other hand, when husbands perceive their wives as dominating in other decisions (Such as purchase of food and purchase of clothes) they never minimize their own role.

28. Rosen and Harblin stressed the importance of normative data (although one-sided since they were collected only from the husbands) and presented indices for the assessment of the discrepancy between legitimized authority and exercised control. See Bernard C. Rosen and Thomas Harblin, op.cit.
29. The author is presently undertaking a study of the Detroit family and is following these procedures in studying family power structure.
30. See Zelditch's comparative study based on ethnographic reports from primitive societies (Morris Zelditch, Jr., "Role Differentiation in the Nuclear Family: A Comparative Study", in Talcott Parsons and Robert F. Bales, Family Socialization and Interaction Process, Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1955, pp. 307-351).

TABLE 1

REPORTED OVERALL DIFFERENCES IN DECISION-MAKING BY DETROIT
HUSBANDS AND WIVES

RESPONDENT	Decision-Making											
	Wife		Prevalent				Equalitarian		Husband		Husband	
	Dominated		Prevalent		Equalitarian		Prevalent		Dominated			
	No	Per Cent	No	Per Cent	No	Per Cent	No	Per Cent	No	Per Cent		
Husbands	49	30.6	46	28.8	40	25.0	17	10.6	8	5.0		
Wives	22	13.8	40	25.0	38	23.8	31	19.4	29	18.1		

TABLE 2

REPORTED DIFFERENCES IN DECISION-MAKING BY MATCHED DETROIT
HUSBANDS AND WIVES

AREAS OF DECISION- MAKING	AGREE	One-Step DIFFERENCE*	Two-Step DIFFERENCE**	Index of DISCORDANCE***
Rearing of children	95	50	15	.50
Use of available money	79	43	38	.74
Relations with in-laws	52	75	33	.88
What Doctor to Consult	58	80	21	.77
Use of leisure time	62	74	23	.75
Purchase of life insurance	66	66	27	.75
Family size	66	71	18	.69
Choice of Friends	52	82	25	.83
Purchase of clothes	81	51	28	.67
Purchase of car	91	54	12	.49
Purchase of furniture and household items	89	60	11	.51
Job husband should take	137	18	3	.15
Purchase of Food	103	40	17	.46
What House or Apartment to buy or to rent	64	82	14	.69

*In this category a couple was classified if the one spouse said the decision was made by both while the other said it was made by husband or wife.

**In this category a couple was classified if the one spouse said that the decision was made by one spouse while the other spouse designated the other spouse as the decision-maker.

***The index of discordance was calculated by assigning a score of "zero" to those who agree, a score of 1 to those who differ by one step and a score of 2 to those who differ by two steps and by calculating the mean discordance for each decision.

TABLE 3

REPORTED DIFFERENCES IN DECISION-MAKING BY DETROIT HUSBANDS AND WIVES

AREAS OF DECISION-MAKING	DECISION MADE-BY								
	Wife			Both			Husband		
	Respondent Wife	Respondent Husband	Discre- pancy	Respondent Wife	Respondent Husband	Discre- pancy	Respondent Wife	Respondent Husband	Discre- pancy
Rearing of children	117	95*	13.7	32*	48*	-10.0	11	17	-3.7
Use of available money	69*	50*	11.8	29	26*	1.8	62*	84*	-13.7
Relations with in-laws	79	64	9.4	52	55	-1.9	29	41	-7.5
What doctor to consult	76*	51*	22.6	46*	70*	-10.9	17	38	-11.7
Use of leisure time	66*	44*	13.8	56	62	-3.8	37*	53*	-10.0
Purchase of life insurance	32	22	6.3	41	49	-5.0	86	88	-1.2
Family size	64	44	12.9	72	81	-5.8	19	30	-7.1
Choice of friends	47*	32*	9.5	75	79	-2.5	37*	48*	-6.9
Purchase of clothes	117*	91*	16.2	30	37	-4.3	13*	32*	-11.9
Purchase of car	7	11	-2.5	34	38	-2.5	116	108	5.1
Purchase of furniture and house items	96	94	1.2	45	49	-2.5	19	17	1.3
Job husband should take	2	2	0.0	11	9	1.3	145	147	-1.2
Purchase of food	111	110	0.6	29	21	5.0	20	29	-5.6
What house or apartment to buy or to rent	39	47	-5.0	80	72	5.0	41	41	0.0

*The asterisk indicates that the answers given by husbands and wives are significantly different as tested by the chi-square.

1. This discrepancy indicates whether more wives than husbands perceived that particular spouse (or both) as being the decision maker. (when the discrepancy is positive) or more husbands than wives did so (when the discrepancy is negative). When the ranked discrepancies resulting from this table were correlated with the ranked index of discordance presented in Table 2, the Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient was .47, p.05

TABLE 4

REPORTED OVERALL DIFFERENCES IN DECISION-MAKING BY ATHENIAN
HUSBANDS AND WIVES

RESPONDENT	DECISION-MAKING									
	Wife Dominated		Prevalent		Equalitarian		Prevalent		Dominated	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Husbands	7	6.0	33	28.4	31	26.7	30	25.9	15	12.9
Wives	18	13.6	53	40.2	25	18.9	31	23.5	5	3.8

TABLE 5

REPORTED DIFFERENCES IN DECISION-MAKING BY ATHENIAN
HUSBANDS AND WIVES

AREAS OF DECISION-MAKING	DECISION MADE BY					
	Wife		Both		Husband	
	Respondent Wife	Respondent Husband	Respondent Wife	Respondent Husband	Respondent Wife	Respondent Husband
Rearing of children	81*	45*'	27	26	9*	28*
Use of available money	56*	16*	37	41	38*	59*
Relations with in-laws	39*	15*	34*	40*	23	22
Use of leisure time	17'	11	56	57	51	43
Family size	21	9	71	69	28	21
Choice of friends	12	3	56	46	53	54
Purchase of furniture and household items	60	57	51	41	18	16
Purchase of family clothes	72	57	44	43	10	13

TABLE 6

DIFFERENCES IN THE PERCEPTION OF DETROIT HUSBANDS AND WIVES OF THE OVERALL DECISION-
MAKING BY SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF HUSBANDS AND/OR WIVES

OVERALL DECISION MAKING	RESPONDENT						Statistical testing of difference
	Husband			Wife			
	Decision Made By						
	Husband	Wife	Both	Husband	Wife	Both	
1. Husband's education	7	24	13	17	14	13	$x^2 = 6.798^*$
College educated							
10-12 grades	11	50	15	32	28	16	$x^2 = 16.494^*$
9 or less grades	7	21	12	11	20	9	not signif- icant ¹
2. Wife's education	8	29	13	21	18	11	$x^2 = 8.576^*$
College educated	14	51	21	32	35	19	$x^2 = 10.122^{**}$
10-12 grades							not signif- icant ¹
9 or less grades	3	15	6	7	9	8	
3. Educational difference							
H = W	13	56	13	32	35	15	$x^2 = 11.410^{**}$
H W	5	16	10	12	7	12	$x^2 = 6.586^*$
H W	7	23	17	16	20	11	$x^2 = 4.790$
4. Social Class							
I + II + III	4	23	11	13	14	11	$x^2 = 7.218^*$
IV + V	21	72	29	27	48	47	$x^2 = 9.814^{**}$
5. Husband's occupation							
Professionals and Managerial	3	18	9	10	13	7	$x^2 = 4.826$
Sales & Clerical	2	12	3	9	4	8	$K_D = 8, N=17$
Blue Collar	20	65	28	44	45	24	$x^2 = 12.944^{**}$
6. Wife's working status							
Working	9	43	14	26	28	12	$x^2 = 11.582^{**}$
Housewives	13	46	21	28	32	20	$x^2 = 8.024^*$
7. Stage of family cycle							
Children under 6	25	85	36	55	55	36	$x^2 = 17.678^{**}$
Children 6-12	0	10	4	5	7	2	$K_D = 5, N=14$
8. Marital satisfaction							
Satisfied	15	58	27	33	32	17	$x^2 = 16.073^{**}$
Dissatisfied	10	36	12	23	29	21	$x^2 = 7.883^*$

*Denotes that the statistical test is significant at the .05 probability level.

**Denotes that the statistical test is significant at the .01 probability level.

¹These distributions were so similar that it was not necessary to test their difference.

^K_D is a Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

TABLE 7

INTERCORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE DECISIONS ASKED FROM DETROIT HUSBANDS

DECISIONS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	-	.045	.088	.073	-.015	.059	-.002	-.059	.046	.005	.209**	-.084	.241**	.110
2			.005	.162*	.073	.366**	.043	.162*	.157	.204**	.153	.226**	.257**	.196*
3				.088	.087	.150	.104	.164**	.078	.144	.095	-.026	.049	.047
4					.053	.200*	.072	.017	.132	.146	.135	-.031	.026	.171*
5						.249**	.071	.199**	.165*	.133	.087	-.024	.002	.070
6							-.021	.092	.149	.234**	.097	.288**	.152	.172*
7								.021	.027	-.010	.119	-.012	-.082	.007
8									.048	.107	.115	-.038	.006	.131
9										.107	.163*	.053	.143	.101
10											-.116	.162*	.029	.118
11												-.042	.285**	.177*
12													-.064	.135
13														.151
14														

1. Decisions have been ranged in the same order as in Table 3.

*These correlations are significant at .05 level of probability.

**These correlations are significant at .01 level of probability.

TABLE 8

INTERCORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE DECISIONS ASKED FROM THE DETROIT WIVES

DECISIONS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	-	.199*	.042	.044	.130	.086	.212**	.002	.050	-.060	-.003	-.148	.223**	-.005
2		-	-.068	.168*	.063	.169*	.119	.130	.245*	.130	.051	-.128	.201**	.142
3			-	.047	.046	.064	.003	-.026	.031	.060	.045	-.046	.081	.066
4				-	.062	.040	.108	.039	.189*	.063	.263**	-.037	.045	.034
5					-	.020	.073	-.046	.017	.100	.084	-.068	.190*	.107
6						-	-.017	.075	.015	.247**	.016	-.076	.038	.004
7							-	.020	.054	.120	.023	.003	.141	.086
8								-	.073	.082	.063	-.054	-.086	.087
9									-	.124	.155	-.263*	.191*	.080
10										-	.044	.116	-.035	.005
11											-	.136	.057	.296**
12												-	.120	.022
13													-	.166*
14														-

1. Decisions have been ranged in the same order as in Table 3

*These correlations are significant at .05 level of probability.

**These correlations are significant at .01 level of probability.