

MARITAL POWER, ROLE EXPECTATIONS AND MARITAL SATISFACTION

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by

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Abstract

Two aspects of marital power, authority and power in conflict-resolution situations, were examined to determine their relationship to marital satisfaction. Both marital power distribution and ideal expectations concerning marital power distribution were investigated. Couples varying in degree of marital satisfaction, from extreme marital distress to extreme marital happiness, were equated on factors known to influence marital power distribution. Specifically, couples in which the wife was a full-time homemaker, who were married a minimum of five years, and who were of middle or upper-middle class socio-economic status were studied. Correlational analyses revealed that, for both husbands and wives, marital satisfaction was related to joint authority sharing, congruence of the present authority structure to the ideal authority distribution, and congruence of present to ideally desired levels of conflict-resolution power. Contrary to expectation, for both husbands and wives, marital satisfaction was not related to the concordance of the spouses' views on authority, nor was it related to the magnitude of authority or conflict-resolution power wielded by the spouse. The ideal view of authority as joint power sharing was discussed in terms of current cultural values and implications for counseling distressed couples.

INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades, the study of family power relationships has gained increasingly in popularity. Most theorists view the family and the marital dyad as particular types of small social groups. Power is seen as a function of the social interaction rather than as a property of the individual (Rollins & Bahr, 1976). The definition of family power that is commonly accepted is "...the ability (potential or actual) of individual members to change the behavior of other family members" (Olson & Cromwell, 1975, p. 5).

Only recently has marital power come to be recognized as a construct incorporating several different yet related dimensions (Safilos-Rothschild, 1970). The three basic dimensions consist of the concepts of authority, process power and outcome power (Olson & Cromwell, 1975; Rollins & Bahr, 1976; Safilos-Rothschild, 1970). Authority refers to uncontested power, whereby one spouse is perceived as having the legitimate right to make decisions that guide the mate's behavior, at a given time and place (Wolfe, 1959). While the perception of authority is most often thought to be derived from the internationalization of cultural norms (French & Raven, 1960), a broader view recognizes the family norms as being the determiner of authority (Wolfe, 1959).

The second aspect of power, process power, is defined as the ongoing interaction between marital partners whereby one spouse attempts to change the behavior of their partner. A further

aspect of this dimension is that control attempts may be operationalized by referring to one spouse's effectiveness in changing the other's behavior (Olson & Cromwell, 1975). Interruptions that change the course of a conversation or commands that produce an immediate compliant response from the mate are termed successful process attempts.

The final power dimension frequently cited, outcome power, refer to the spouse who successfully achieves their own goals to the exclusion of the mate's goals when there is a conflict between the couple (Olson & Cromwell, 1975). Outcome power may be differentiated from a successful process attempt in that the former refers to the person who was successful in engineering the final outcome of a lengthy conflict-resolution process, while the latter refers to a compliant response to a single directive behavior.

An understanding of marital and family power theories may further explain the development and differentiation of the marital power construct.

Resource Analysis of Power: Theory and Research Theoretical Perspective

The early guiding force in the field of conjugal and family power was the resource theory of power distribution outlined by Wolfe (1959). His theory rests on certain basic assumptions. First, it is presumed that individuals continually attempt to satisfy their needs and desires as well as attain their goals. Need satisfaction and goal attainment is mainly

achieved through social interactions during which time there is a continual exchange of specific "resources". Resources are defined as valuable properties of an individual or of a group which can be made available to others for the attainment of their goals and the fulfillment of their desires (Wolfe, 1959). Examples of possible resources include personal attributes such as knowledge, skills, physical appearance, and personality characteristics. Material possessions and status characteristics derived from occupational, educational or social position are among the resources most often measured (Heer, 1963). Wolfe (1959) further assumes that a primary motive for marriage is to better satisfy some needs and to attain certain individual and common goals. Thus emphasis is placed on the resources the partners can bring to the relationship. As a positive relationship is hypothesized between resources and power, the balance of power is said to reside with the mate in possession of the greatest number or most highly prized resources (Wolfe, 1959).

According to resource theory, great variations may exist in the power distribution between husbands and wives across families, depending on the individual needs and resources possessed by each spouse. However, some commonality is believed to exist across families, at least in the same culture. This is the result of social values determining to some degree personal needs and goals and affecting the desirability of various resources. More recently it has been noted that structural blocks, psychological, legal and social combine to prevent

women from gaining access to material and status-type resources (Gillespie, 1971).

Wolfe (1959) classified the power distribution in families according to the type and degree of shared authority. Two basic types of distribution, autocratic or equalitarian, were considered possible. Autocratic relationships may be either husband-dominant or wife-dominant, wherein the majority of decision-making areas lie under the domain of the husband or wife, respectively. The two variants of equalitarian distributions are syncratic and autonomic authority relationships. A syncratic power structure exists when the bulk of the decision-making areas are under the joint control of both husband and wife. When husband and wife maintain individual, yet separate, control over an equal number of authority domains, an autonomic structure exists.

Empirical Investigations

The pioneer study of Blood & Wolfe (1960) was the most comprehensive investigation of the resource theory of power. A self-report measure of power was administered to wives requiring them to indicate the spouse usually making the final decision in eight family-related decision-making areas.

Several variables believed to be related to relative power were examined. Contrary to expectations religious affiliation, area of residence (rural or urban), and the wife's country of origin (native or foreign-born) were not related to the relative power of either spouse. However,

variables such as income, education, and occupational status resources were related to the relative power of the spouses. Specifically, for husbands, white collar as compared with blue collar occupational status, as well as higher income and/or more education were positively related to greater marital power. For wives, working as opposed to non-working status, as well as more education relative to the husband was associated with greater marital power. Racial differences in power distribution were reported with black couples more likely to be wife-dominant and less likely to be husband-dominant than white couples. In addition, Blood and Wolfe (1960) analyzed relative power distribution by relative stage of the family life cycle. Husband's power was found to increase from the honeymoon stage to the preschool stage when it began to show a continued decline. At the preschool stage, when the eldest child hasn't yet begun to attend public school, the wife is seen as being especially dependent on the husband and a drain on his resources.

Blood and Wolfe's (1960) questionnaire or a modified version thereof has been employed in several cross-cultural studies of marital power in decision-making. Although results have not been completely consistent findings, from societies possessing Western attitudes of equal status of the spouses in marriage, have generally led to similar conclusions of a positive relationship between the husband's occupational and social status and his level of marital power (Centers, Raven & Rodrigues, 1971; Kandel & Lesser, 1972; Konig, 1957;

Lamouse, 1969; Lupri, 1969; McKinley, 1964; Michel, 1967). In addition, it has been shown cross-culturally that working wives have more marital power than non-working wives (Buric & Zecevic, 1967; Heer, 1963; Kandel & Lesser, 1971; Lamouse, 1969; Lupri, 1969; Michel, 1967; Oppong, 1970; Papanek, 1969; Safilos-Rothschild, 1967; & Weller, 1968).

While the resource theory of power generated many empirical studies, critics have argued that only one aspect of power, authority, was investigated (Rollins & Bahr, 1976). The decisions constituting these types of self-report measures appear to be uncontested (Rollins & Bahr, 1976). The decision-making questionnaires have also been found to correlate with authority measures (Olson & Rabunsky, 1972). Other researchers have championed for the study of power as a more dynamic phenomena as will be described below.

Power as Conflict Management: Theories and Findings Theoretical Perspective

Sprey (1971, 1972) has been one of the theorists to argue against the static structuralized view of power as authority. The role analysis of marital power whereby one person is given the dominant role in carrying out decision-making is a "good predictor of conflict outcomes as long as spouses accept and refer to its prescriptive norms" (Sprey, 1971, p. 728).

However, Sprey (1971) notes that traditional role prescriptions are continually being undermined and replaced by an ethic of mutuality and sharing in all marital activities. Thus

the processes of negotiation and bargaining come into play in decision-making and conflict resolution. Marital and family harmony is seen as problematical with continuous controntation between family members with conflicting, but not necessarily opposing, views considered normal. Therefore, Sprey (1971, 1972) proposes that the powering process and the outcomes of such processes should be investigated, as opposed to static authority designations.

Safilos-Rothschild (1970) in her comprehensive review of the marital power literature attempts to broaden the conception of marital power, as well. She proposes that conjugal power can be measured through various means such as decision-making outcomes, the patterns of tension and conflict management and the prevailing division of labour. Even decision-making alone is not considered a simple process. During decision-making, influence attempts may be formal or informal, covert or overt, depending on the nature of the opposition for example, covert influence may be a more successful procedure to employ against a spouse in a strong authority position. Thus, she stresses, it is essential for conceptual and methodological clarity to identify the dimension of power being investigated and to utilize a measure of power appropriate to that dimension.

Rollins and Bahr (1976) propose a very complex theory of marital power in conflict management situations that attempts to link the dimensions of relative resources, relative authority, and behavioral control. During a conflict situation, husbands

and wives assess the relative strength of their own and their mate's resources and authority. The stronger their own power position is perceived, the more control attempts they will make. The mate's assessment of the power position will determine the strength of the counter-control attempts and the likelihood of success of either spouse.

No empirical studies of this complex model of power have as yet been undertaken. However, behavioral techniques for measuring power in conflict situations have been investigated.

Empirical Investigations

Observational techniques have been employed to study the phenomena of process and outcome power. These observational methods have generally been of two types. One based on the revealed differences technique requires that each spouse first make individual decisions on some hypothetical task. Then the couple is brought together and asked to reach a joint decision for the same task. This type of verbal oriented discussion technique has been the most popular observational method (Bauman & Roman, 1966; Corrales, 1975; Cromwell et al, 1975, Hadley & Jacobs, 1976; Hill, 1965; Olson & Rabunsky, 1972; Olson & Ryder, 1970; Turk & Bell, 1972).

An outcome power measure has been obtained from this technique by comparing the decision reached on the joint list with the decisions the spouse had initially indicated on the individual list, i.e. the win score. The greater the correlation

of decisions on the individual list to the joint list, the more outcome power is attributed to that spouse (Corrales, 1975; Hadley & Jacobs, 1976; Hershey & Werner, 1975; Olson & Rabunsky, 1972; Olson & Ryder, 1970; Turk & Bell, 1972).

The second most common observational task is to have the family engage in an ambiguous game-playing situation. Through trial and error and receiving feedback from the experimenter, the family attempts to discover the rules of the game. Non-verbal interaction is required and the verbal interaction is mainly in the form of directives with discussion limited, eg. SIMFAM game, (Straus, 1970; Kolb & Straus, 1974; Cromwell et al, 1975). These types of observational techniques have yielded two varieties of process power measures, those that may or may not have resulted in a change of the other's behavior and those that were successful in changing the mate's behavior. The former include number of interruptions (Hadley & Jacob, 1976; Turk & Bell, 1972) amount of time spent talking (Hadley & Jacob, 1976; Hershey & Werner, 1975; Hill, 1965; Kenkel, 1963) who managed to get the last word in (Hershey & Werner, 1975; Hill, 1965) number of directive acts (Cromwell et al, 1975; Olson & Ryder, 1970; Turk & Bell, 1972) and amount of suggestions contributed (Kenkel, 1963). The second category, successful assertion attempts, were measured by the number of directive acts that resulted in a behavior change in the person to whom the act was directed (Cromwell et al, 1975; Kolb & Straus, 1974; Straus, 1970).

The issue arose as to whether the self-report measures of decision-making and the observational methods of structured interaction were measuring the same variable, namely, marital power. Methodological studies investigating the congruence of various marital and family power measures have generally found little congruence among the measures (Hadley & Jacob, 1976; Olson & Rabunsky, 1972; & Turk & Bell, 1972). While self-report measures generally didn't correlate with observational techniques with regard to the person holding the balance of power, correlations were found between some self-report measures, i.e. the Blood and Wolfe questionnaire and a question asking who was the boss of the household (Hadley & Jacob, 1976; Turk & Bell, 1972) and between some observational techniques, i.e. the amount of time spent conversing and the number of instusions that successfully interrupted the conversation (Hadley and Jacob, 1976).

It was concluded from the lack of correlation of these measures that the different techniques are tapping conceptually and empirically distinct dimensions of power, (Rollins & Bahr, 1976; Safilos-Rothschild, 1970). The authority structure is viewed as a means of handling decision routinely (Sprey, 1975) to prevent open conflict (Broderick, 1975). Outcome and process power are psychological processes used to deal with open conflict situations.

The methodological study of various power measures by Olson and Rabunsky (1972) deserves closer scrutiny. In this study an attempt was made to assess the validity of four

measures of power through correlation with a criterion measure of power. A sample of 35 couples, each of whom were expecting their first child, were studied. The decision in the four measures of power pertained to actual decisions the couples were expected to face with the birth of the infant. The four power measures consisted of three questionnaire and one observational technique. The three questionnaire measures included a measure of predicted power i.e. who was expected to exercise power on a given decision, an authority measure i.e. who should have the right to exercise power for a given decision, and a retrospective power measure i.e. who in fact exercised power for a given decision. This latter measure was obtained from a follow-up questionnaire some months after the child's birth. The observational measure of power was an outcome power measure, the win score from the revealed differences technique on items for which the couple initially disagreed. The criterion measure of power was obtained by comparing the decision finally taken as reported by both spouses during follow-up, with the initial preference of the husband and wife measured several months previously. When the power measures were correlated to determine their congruence, they found that none of the four experimental measures of power correlated with the criterion power measure. Authority, however, correlated with both the observational outcome power and with the retrospective measure of power (Olson & Rabunsky, 1972).

The conclusion reached by the study, that the marital power construct should be discarded as there are no valid means of

measuring marital power, appears somewhat hasty. A problem seems to exist with the criterion measure of marital power. Several months elapsed between the time the spouses specified their initial decision preference and the time when each decision was carried out. In the intervening period, the individual may have reversed their preference once or several times spontaneously, or through further further discussions with the mate or others. Thus as a result of the long intervening time period, it can not be assessed whether the spouse who indicated the initial decision preference was instrumental in having that decision carried through. The fact that the authority measure correlated with the outcome from the revealed differences technique and with the retrospective measure of power, leads one to wonder whether many of these decisions weren't perceived to lie under the domain of either one or the other spouse. Disagreements, rather than generating overt conflict, may have been resolved merely by deferring the decision to the spouse perceived as the authority in the matter.

The above methodological studies of power support Stafilos-Rothschild's (1970) idea that until more is known about how the various dimensions of power inter-relate, authority, process and outcome power measures should be kept conceptually distinct and measured individually. A further implication from this research is that process and outcome measures of power should be based on tasks that generate conflict and not on decisions that can be relegated to the authority of one or the other spouse (Rollins & Bahr, 1976).

Aside from methodological issues, a great deal of interest has been focused on the various types of authority structures and their relation to marital satisfaction. Both family sociologists and psychotherapists working with distressed married couples have long queried whether any one type of power relationship is most satisfactory. Below, the prevailing research on marital power and marital satisfaction will be discussed.

Marital Power and Marital Satisfaction

The investigation of the relation of marital power to marital satisfaction is in the infancy stage. There have been, however, a few studies considering this issue in populations of fairly well adjusted intact couples.

The study by Blood and Wolfe (1960) in addition to classifying couples by authority patterns obtained ratings on three types of marital satisfaction for the conjugal pairs. The first rating of the wife's marital satisfaction consisted of satisfaction with five aspects of family living rank ordered by the respondent as to their perceived importance. The second measure employed was wives' satisfaction with the love relationship with their husband. Thirdly, satisfaction with the husband's companionship was determined.

The relationship between type of marital satisfaction and authority pattern was calculated in two ways. When the mean satisfaction score for authority pattern was considered, the authority types that ranked from highest to lowest were the

syncratic, autonomic, husband-dominant and wife-dominant relationships. This ranking of authority patterns applied when the composite satisfaction index and when the satisfaction with the love relationship index were used as the criteria for happiness. When wives were classified as being either above or below the median on the composite index of satisfaction, or as being in the category of very satisfied with their love relationship, the syncratic, husband-dominant, autonomic, and wife-dominant groups ranked from highest to lowest in terms of percentage of women falling into those groups. The rating of satisfaction with companionship was shown to increase with the number of shared decisions (Blood & Wolfe, 1960). Thus consistent with all three indices, the syncratic pattern is related to the most satisfied wives.

A second study examining authority patterns and marital satisfaction was undertaken by Centers, Raven, and Rodrigues (1971). In their study, a larger sample of decision-making items was featured and husbands as well as wives were surveyed. The measure of marital satisfaction was a single question requiring a global judgement of happiness. Three choices were given for the response, very satisfied, fairly satisfied, or not at all satisfied.

In analyzing the types of authority patterns by percentage of very satisfied individuals, slight, but non-significant differences were found between autonomic, husband-dominant, and

syncratic marriages with the percentage of couples reporting their marriage very satisfied equaling 79%, 73%, and 70%, respectively. The only significant difference found was between the wife-dominant and other authority patterns as only 20% of individuals in wife-dominant relationships reported being very satisfied with their marriage.

Kold and Straus (1974) used a process measure to assess power and its relation to marital happiness. Families played the SIMFAM game and power was measured by the number of directive acts that resulted in an immediate compliant response from the person towards whom the act was directed. Family members were categorized into high or low power according to whether they fell above or below the median in terms of their peer group eg. each husband was compared with all husbands. Marriages with husbands rated as high power were about twice as likely to be perceived as happy as marriages with low power husbands. Marriages with low and high power wives were equally likely to be rated as happy. The measure of marital satisfaction was a single global rating by their ninth grade child on a 7 point Likert scale ranging from (1) very unhappy to (7) extremely happy. Thus for this process measure, unlike the authority measure, husband dominance is the key to marital happiness. While there has been some question as to the validity of using children to assess their parent's conjugal happiness, as the perceptions of children have been shown to differ markedly from their parents' perception (Larson, 1976), this preliminary study would seem to indicate that

measures other than authority might be relevant in determining the relationship of power to marital happiness.

A study that employed more than one type of measure to assess marital power was the investigation of power and satisfaction of couples in early marriages (Corrales, 1975). The measure^s of power consisted of the Blood and Wolfe (1960) questionnaire and a measure of outcome power. The outcome power measure was derived from the win score of a task requiring couples to rank culturally related values. From each measure a separate categorization of marriages was made into either husband- or wife-dominant or equalitarian relationships. Marital adjustment was measured indirectly through the Dimensions of Marriage Happiness Questionnaire (Orden & Bradburn, 1968) which attempts to assess the companionship, sociability, and tensions of married living. The study produced essentially nonsignificant results. No relationship was found between type of power distribution and stage of the family life cycle in the first six years of marriage. However, a trend was found such that for the authority measure, husband-dominant marriages were happier than equalitarian relationships which were rated as equally happy with wife-dominant marriages. For the outcome power measure, the tendency was for equalitarian, husband-dominant and wife dominant marriages to be ranked from highest to lowest in terms of marital happiness.

Marital satisfaction and marital power studies compared.

The fact that dissimilar findings have been obtained across studies concerning the relationship of marital satisfaction to marital power distribution is somewhat disconcerting. More than anything this serves to highlight the lack of congruence of procedures utilized to measure both marital power and marital satisfaction, a problem that plagues the area as a whole (Safilos-Rothschild, 1970).

The Blood and Wolfe (1960) questionnaire used as the authority measure in the Blood and Wolfe (1960) study and the Corrales (1975) investigation was interpreted in different ways in the two studies. Blood & Wolfe (1960) differentiated syncretic from autonomic marriages and found the former to be significantly happier than either husband-dominant or wife-dominant relationships. Corrales (1975) doesn't differentiate the two equalitarian relationships and finds a trend for the husband-dominant group to be somewhat happier than equalitarian marriages. In addition, the two studies differ in the fact that only wives' perceptions of authority and satisfaction was assessed in the Blood and Wolfe (1960) research, while both spouses opinions were sampled in the Corrales (1975) study. Lastly, different measures of marital satisfaction were employed. Particularly unfortunate was the result of the analysis by Rollins and Cannon (1974) of the composite index of marital satisfaction employed by Blood and Wolfe (1960). Rollins and Cannon (1974) demonstrated that the scoring of the scale was not based on a logically consistent procedure, nor did it produce changes in marital satisfaction

over the life cycle consistent with a valid, well-recognized marital adjustment scale (the Locke and Wallace (1959) Marital Adjustment Scale). Their conclusion concerning the invalidity of the Blood and Wolfe (1960) composite index of marital satisfaction leaves open to question the finding of different levels of marital satisfaction for differing authority patterns.

Similarly, it is difficult to compare the work of Centers et al, (1971) to the data from either the Blood and Wolfe (1960) or the Corrales (1975) research. First, it is doubtful whether the single item measuring marital satisfaction in the Centers et al (1971) study would satisfy reliability and validity requirements for a good statistical test. Second, the authority measure is based partially on items from the Blood and Wolfe (1960) questionnaire and partially on a unique set of items. When items are added that have to do with different decision-making areas, a different authority structure can be expected to emerge (Centers et al, 1971). This makes results across studies, unfortunately, incomparable and raises doubt as to the utility of this categorization schema unless all decision-making domains are tapped (Safilos-Rothschild, 1970).

The Kolb and Straus (1974) study suffers from all the difficulties that would preclude comparability, in that the procedures utilized were unique to the study. A different domain of power, process power, was measured with interactions between husband, wife and child. Power for the spouse wasn't determined relative to the partner as is the usual case, but relative to the

peer group. Lastly, marital satisfaction was judged by the adolescent child.

In all the studies reviewed both one-partner dominant and equalitarian marriages had some proportion of happy, well-adjusted couples (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Centers et al, 1971; and Corrales, 1975). In determining whether a particular power relationship will lead to marital satisfaction it might be better to consider whether it satisfies the couple's needs and lives up to their expectations. While no one has studied spouses' perceptions and expectations of marital power, a vast literature in family sociology has developed as to the importance of the individual's role congruence in expectations and performance and in the couple's expectations in determining marital satisfaction. Some of the basic premises and findings in this area will be outlined below.

Role Expectations and Marital Satisfaction

Roles can be defined as learned patterns of human conduct that are acquired by the individual and which reflect the culturally prescribed behavior pattern for a given social position (Mangus, 1957). Role expectations are the internal predispositions or attitudes regarding appropriate ways for one to act and the reciprocal acts that one anticipates others will perform in the same social situation (Mangus, 1957). Role theory further specifies that adaptive behavior in any continuing social situation eg. marriage, is dependent upon a reasonable harmony of role expectations of the social participants. Should

disparities in role expectations occur, problems in interpersonal relations might be anticipated (Mangus, 1957). Three types of role congruence are specified by Mangus (1957) as being necessary for marital harmony. Role congruence may be manifested in the degree to which perceptions of one's own role agrees with the partner's expectations for that role. the role behavior of either oneself or one's spouse conforms with the expectations held for the self or the spouse and finally, the role expectations of the spouse correspond with the role expectations held for him or herself (Mangus, 1957).

A number of studies have been conducted to determine the relationship between role congruence and marital happiness. Specifically, marital satisfaction has been positively correlated with the congruence of role behavior and role expectations of one's spouse (Burr, 1971), the congruence of role behavior and role expectations for oneself with the spouse's expectations, for oneself and one's spouse combined (Chadwick, Albrecht & Kuntz, 1976; Hawkins & Johnson, 1969), the congruence of role expectations for oneself with the spouse's expectations, although only for husbands as the target (Hurvitz, 1965; Kotlar, 1965; Luckey, 1961), the congruence of role expectations of one's spouse with their expectations of themselves (Jacobson, 1952) and lastly, the congruence of role expectations for both self and spouse, as judged by both partners (Chadwick et al, 1976) and for wives only (Stuckert, 1963).

These studies in general provide strong evidence for the

theory that discrepancies in the role expectations of the spouses and incongruities in the actual role performance versus the ideal role expectations are inversely related to marital happiness.

It is surprising that no one has attempted to measure the discrepancy between the spouse's mutual role expectations and between role expectations and performance with regard to authority patterns and outcome power. However, recently researchers such as Safillio-Rothschild (1970), Corrales (1975) and Stuart (1975) have taken the view that it is very important to know the discrepancy between the husband's and wife's perception of the family power structure, as well as their views regarding the desired distribution of power. As Corrales (1975, p. 216) notes:

"The discrepancy between perceived power structure and desired power structure may explain more of the variance in satisfaction than perceived structure alone. This inclusion may help to explain what we presently consider 'deviant cases'. For example, some couples in wife-dominant marriages are very satisfied with their relationship. Perhaps this is the structure that they desired and have actually achieved. The consistently low satisfaction scores of wife-dominant marriages could simply mean that most couples are desirous of equalitarian or husband-dominant power structures."

The issue thus becomes, not what is the authority balance most likely to be associated with marital happiness, but which authority balance has the highest probability of leading to happiness for the particular couple. Similarly, the manner

in which outcome power is determined may be successful for one couple but not another.

Stuart (1975) goes further and suggests that unhappy couples unlike their better adjusted peers have not developed dependable norms to allocate power (authority) for various decision-making areas. Thus unhappier spouses wouldn't be expected to agree with one another as to who has the authority with regard to a particular decision-making domain and thus are more likely to usurp and contest the spouse's authority for any given area. The more happily married couples are characterized by a willingness to share a greater number of decision-making areas equally or by their mutual acceptance of an unequal authority distribution.

It is the aim of the present study to examine role congruence with respect to marital power distribution and marital happiness as will be outlined below.

The Present Study

The present study investigated the relationship of two aspects of marital power, authority and outcome power, to marital satisfaction. Both nomethetic and ideographic approaches were explored. In the former approach, marital satisfaction was examined as a function of the type of marital power distribution. In the latter approach, the relationship of marital satisfaction to marital power distribution was examined as a function of the congruence of the actual to the ideal conjugal distribution.

Predictions and Empirical Questions

1. The magnitude of authority of each spouse relative to their mate was empirically analyzed to determine its relationship to marital satisfaction.
2. As proposed by Stuart (1975), the greater the discrepancy from a syncretic authority structure, the greater the marital dissatisfaction.
3. Irrespective of the currently existing authority structure, it was predicted that discrepancy from the ideal authority structure would be inversely related to marital satisfaction.
4. Marital satisfaction was hypothesized to be positively related to the similarity in the couple's role expectations concerning their ideal authority distribution.
5. The outcome power measure was empirically analyzed to determine the relationship between degree of outcome power and degree of marital satisfaction.
6. Lastly, it was proposed that marital satisfaction would be inversely related to the discrepancy between the ideal and the current level of outcome power.

METHOD

Subjects

Sixteen couples who participated in this study were parents of children enrolled in two Montreal area summer day camps. In addition four couples were obtained from marital counselling centers. These latter couples had experienced no more than two therapy sessions prior to their involvement in the present study.

The couples were initially contacted via a letter to their homes. Included in the letter was a brief description of the nature of the study (an investigation of marital decision-making), the voluntariness of participation, the sponsorship of the research, the confidentiality of the results, the time commitment involved, and the investigative procedure employed. The letter was followed up by a telephone contact to determine eligibility for the study and willingness to participate. The participation rate calculated over the entire sample of parents was 10-15%. Unfortunately, among non-participants it was not always possible to distinguish eligible from non-eligible respondents. However, it was estimated that almost half of the couples did not satisfy criteria for selection in this study (see Background Characteristics). The major reasons for ineligibility of the couples was participation of the wives in the work force on a part-time or full-time basis and the temporary or permanent absence of one of the spouses.

Background Characteristics.

Homogeneity with respect to variables related to marital power distribution was obtained by applying specific criteria to the selection of the twenty couples in this study. The variables controlled were working status of the wives, stage of the family life cycle and socio-economic status of the couple.

In the study, all the wives were full-time homemakers.

Each couple was married a minimum of 5 years, $\underline{M} = 9.8$ years, $\underline{SD} = 4.27$ years.

The socio-economic status of the couples was middle to upper-middle class. The husbands were all in white collar occupations. Hollingshead's (1957) 2-factor index of socio-economic status by education and occupation was applied to the couples. Five of the couples belonged to class I; Higher Executives of Large Concerns, Proprietors, and Major Professionals, raw score range = 11 - 15, $\underline{M} = 11.8$. Fourteen of the couples belonged to class II; Business Managers, Proprietors of Medium-Sized Businesses, and Lesser Professionals, raw score range = 18 - 31, $\underline{M} = 24.93$. One couple with a raw score of 37 belonged to class III; Administrative Personnel, Owners of Small Business and Minor Professionals.

The educational standing of the husbands was as follows; five had acquired graduate or professional degrees, six had Bachelor's degrees, six had some university, two completed high school and one had completed elementary school. The wives, in general, had less formal education than their husbands. Specifically, one had acquired a graduate degree, six had Bachelor's degrees, six had some university or cegep degrees and seven had completed high school.

Stimulus Materials

Authority and Ideal Authority Measures

The Blood and Wolfe (1960) decision-making questionnaire

constituted the measure of authority (see Appendix 1).

It has been the most popular measure of authority employed in North American and international studies (Buric & Zecevic, 1967; Hadley & Jacob, 1976; Kandel & Lesser, 1972; Lupri, 1969; Michel, 1967; Safilos-Rothschild, 1967; Turk & Bell, 1972). In addition, this scale appears to have good statistical properties in that the items approach unidimensionality forming a quasi-Guttman scale with reproducibility coefficients of 0.86 and 0.88, for husbands and wives, respectively (Bahr, 1973). Internal consistency as determined from the calculation of alpha is 0.62 which is considered moderately good (Bahr, 1973).

On this questionnaire, the individual indicates the spouse responsible for the final decision with regard to eight topics. The decisions relate to choice of car, life insurance, occupations of husband and wife, weekly food allowance, family doctor and vacation plans, eg. "who usually makes the decision about whether or not to buy some life insurance?". Responses to the items form a five point Likert scale with choices consisting of (1) husband always, (2) husband more than wife, (3) husband and wife exactly the same, (4) wife more than husband and (5) wife always.

Two scores were calculated from this questionnaire. A relative authority index, to describe the net husband or wife autocracy, was calculated by summing the scores across the eight decision-making items. The possible relative authority scores ranged from 0 - 40, with 0 representing greatest husband-

dominance and 40 representing greatest wife dominance. A score of 24 indicated perfect equality. A second score, the discrepancy from a syncratic authority relationship, identified the amount of authority jointly shared by the couple. Thus the response for each item was subtracted from the value 3 and the absolute differences totalled. The range of possible scores was 0 - 16. Zero indicated no discrepancy from a syncratic relationship (or perfect equality) and 16 represented maximum discrepancy from a syncratic authority structure. It was necessary to calculate two different scores from this questionnaire to completely describe the couple's prevailing authority structure. This is due to a limitation in the five point response scale used in this questionnaire. Specifically the summary score obtained by Blood & Wolfe (1960) and which constitutes the relative authority score in this study, is only able to indicate the autocratic husband-dominant versus wife-dominant continuum. It is unable to describe the syncratic versus non-syncratic continuum which emerges as a separate dimension, requiring a second unit of measure, the discrepancy from syncratic authority score.

The Blood and Wolfe (1960) questionnaire was adapted to form the measure of ideal authority (see Appendix 2). The same eight decision items from the Blood and Wolfe (1960) form were retained, but couples were required to respond with their ideal preferences; eg. "if you could

have your way...Ideally who should usually make the final decision about choice of car, etc.".

From this ideal authority questionnaire two scores were derived, an ideal discrepancy score and a role expectations score. The ideal discrepancy score measures the degree to which the ideal authority pattern deviates from the actual authority pattern. The response for each item on the Blood and Wolfe (1960) questionnaire was subtracted from the response on the same item from the ideal authority measure. The absolute value of the discrepancy scores were summed to indicate the amount of change desired. The possible scores ranged from 0, perfect congruence of present and ideal authority distribution, to 32, maximum discrepancy between present and ideal authority distribution.

The role expectations score measured the congruence of opinion concerning the spouses' ideal authority patterns. The responses for husbands and wife for each item on the ideal authority measure were subtracted from one another and the magnitude of the discrepancies across the eight items summed. As this score was derived mutually from the husband's and wife's responses, only one score was obtained for the couple. Possible scores ranged from 0 - 32, or no discrepancy, to maximum discrepancy between husband and wife, respectively.

Outcome Power Measure

The Inventory of Marital Conflicts, IMC, (Olson & Ryder, 1970) constituted the measure of outcome power (see

Appendix 3 for vignettes and score sheets).

The split-half reliability of the IMC is moderately high, $r = 0.41$. In addition, Olson & Ryder (1970) report that 77% of the couples felt that their spouse's behavior during the conflict resolution task was very similar to their behavior at home in resolving differences. Each discussion item was perceived by at least one spouse as being similar to problems they or couples they knew had experienced.

The IMC task consists of a series of 18 vignettes describing typical marital conflict situations. Twelve of the 18 stories are presented to the husband and wife with differences in either minor details or in the outlooks in the stories. It is these 12 vignettes that most frequently provoke conflict which the couple has to resolve.

Each spouse is handed one version of the 18 stories and is asked to complete an individual response sheet. As part of the task, the individual is asked to designate the spouse in the story responsible for the problem and indicate whether the solution presented on the answer sheet is acceptable. Then the spouses are asked to discuss together the conflict scenarios and reach a joint solution as to who was responsible for the problem and which of the two possible solutions to the conflict is most acceptable. A win score is calculated on those items for which the couple initially disagreed, by determining the spouse who's initial decision was accepted by the couple. The outcome power score was calculated as the percentage of the sum

of the individual wins over the total number of originally disagreed upon items i.e.,

$$\text{IMC win score} = \frac{\text{number of wins}}{\text{total number of original disagreements}} \times 100.$$

The spouses scores are reciprocals of one another and thus are perfectly inversely correlated eg. if the couple initially disagreed on 24 items and 6 of the items were resolved in favour of one spouse, it necessarily followed that the other 18 items were resolved in favour of the other spouse, yielding outcome power scores of 0.25 and 0.75, respectively.

Decisions Expectation Questionnaire

A questionnaire was developed by the author to assess the discrepancy couples experienced in the level of outcome power they exercised as opposed to the level of outcome power they would have like to exercise while discussing the vignettes from the IMC (see Appendix 4).

Items are worded so that individuals have to indicate the level of power they or their mate should have exercised in terms of an absolute figure or relative to the level of power perceived to have been exercised, eg. "Ideally, I would have preferred my individual choice to have become the joint decision... (1) much more often, (2) a few more times, (3) no change, (4) a few less times, or (5) much less often. While all the response alternatives form a 5 point Likert type scale, the response choices are individually tailored to suit the particular item. The IMC discrepancy score is the simple sum

of the discrepancy items for each spouse. The range of possible scores was 0 - 20, representing no discrepancy to maximum discrepancy in the amount of outcome power actually rather than ideally exercised.

Marital Satisfaction Measure

The Locke-Wallace marital adjustment scale (Lock and Wallace, 1959) was used as the measure of marital satisfaction (see Appendix 5).

This test is an overall measure of accommodation of the spouses to one another on basic issues with regard to the home life. Items measure subjective satisfaction, areas of agreement and disagreement, and interest in conjugal activities.

This scale was validated on samples of pre-judged well-adjusted and maladjusted or divorced/separated couples. The possible scores ranged from 2 - 158, representing extreme maladjustment and extremely good adjustment, respectively. In the Locke and Wallace (1959) study the norm for the well-adjusted group was 135.9, while the mean score for the maladjusted group was 71.7. The split-half reliability of this test is 0.90.

Procedure

For this study, all couples were individually tested. A brief outline of the study was presented to the couple at the start of the session. Each spouse then separately and without corroboration completed the Lock-Wallace (1959) marital adjustment scale, the Blood and Wolfe (1960) decision-making questionnaire and the modified ideal authority measure, in that

order.

The couples then interacted in the conflict-resolution task, the Inventory of Marital Conflicts, (Olson & Ryder, 1979). After each spouse completed the individual portion of this task, they were brought together and asked to reach a joint agreement for the decisions. This discussion portion of the IMC was routinely audiotaped with the couple's consent. The author was absent from the room at that time. Lastly, each spouse completed the decisions expectations questionnaire. The session ended with an explanation of the purpose of the study and of the nature of the IMC.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics on the husband and wives' performance and the correlation of the spouses' performance for the various measures are provided below. Correlational analyses were employed to test the hypotheses concerning the various power measures and their relationship to marital adjustment. Multiple regression analyses were then performed to determine the strongest predictors of marital adjustment.

Descriptive Statistics

Marital Satisfaction

The couples investigated in this study encompassed the very severely distressed to the most happily married. The range of marital adjustment scores extended beyond the norms Locke and Wallace (1959) presented for their study. In the

present study, the wives' scores on the marital adjustment test ranged from 14 - 147, $\underline{M} = 107.1$, $\underline{SD} = 41.92$. The range of scores for the husbands was 48 - 154, $\underline{M} = 105.1$, $\underline{SD} = 31.22$.

The correlation of marital adjustment scores of husbands and wives was high in the positive direction, $\underline{r} = 0.83$, $\underline{p} = 0.001$. It thus appears that the spouses' satisfaction with their marriage is highly related and most likely, mutually influenced.

Relative Authority

Examining the relative authority scores for the husbands, the range extended from 18 - 27, $\underline{M} = 22.85$, $\underline{SD} = 2.46$. The range of relative authority scores for the wives was somewhat broader than for the husbands, range = 16 - 29, $\underline{M} = 22.45$, $\underline{SD} = 3.54$. The correlation of husbands and wives perception of relative authority was moderately positive, $\underline{r} = 0.44$, $\underline{p} = 0.025$, suggesting that spouses hold similar views as to the relative authority balance in the marriage.

Discrepancy from Syncratic

The discrepancy from a syncratic authority relationship score for husbands ranged from 2 - 15, $\underline{M} = 7.1$, $\underline{SD} = 2.67$. For wives the range was somewhat narrower, 1 - 11, $\underline{M} = 6.9$, $\underline{SD} = 2.67$. A high correlation existed between the husband's and wife's score on this measure, $\underline{r} = 0.67$, $\underline{p} = 0.001$, implying that spouses' perception of the degree of authority

sharing was similar.

Discrepancy from Ideal

The husbands' range on the discrepancy from the ideal authority structure encompassed scores from 0 - 12, $\underline{M} = 3.7$, $\underline{SD} = 2.92$. The range on the wives' score for this measure was 0 - 8, $\underline{M} = 4.0$, $\underline{SD} = 2.47$. There was essentially no correlation between the husbands' and wives' score on this variable, $\underline{r} = 0.13$, $\underline{p} = 0.29$. Thus proximity to the ideal authority for one spouse is no indication of the proximity to the ideal for the other spouse.

Role Expectations

The role expectations score for the couple ranged from 1 - 9, $\underline{M} = 3.6$, $\underline{SD} = 3.41$.

Outcome Power

On the measure of outcome power, the percentage of IMC wins, the husbands' scores ranged from 0% - 83%, $\underline{M} = 49$, $\underline{SD} = 18$. The range of scores for the wives included 17% - 100%, $\underline{M} = 50$, $\underline{SD} = 18$. As noted previously, the husbands' and wives' scores for each couple was perfectly inversely correlated.

Discrepancy from the Ideal Outcome Power

The range of scores on the discrepancy on the ideal outcome power on the IMC for the husbands was 0 - 7, $\underline{M} = 3.15$, $\underline{SD} = 2.16$. For the wives the range of scores included 0 - 8, $\underline{M} = 2.95$, $\underline{SD} = 2.42$. The husbands' and wives' scores for this measure were

modestly positively correlated, $r = 0.38$, $p = 0.052$, indicating that similar levels of dissatisfaction in outcome power were experienced by both spouses in the pair.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlations

Data collected from a husband-wife pair is generally considered to be correlated and thus requires either a repeated measures analysis or separate analyses for husbands and wives (O'Leary & Turkewitz, 1978). Significant positive correlations between husbands and wives scores were found for the measures of marital adjustment, relative authority and discrepancy from a syncratic authority structure. Additionally, the measures of authority role expectations and outcome power were perfectly positively and inversely correlated, respectively. It is these considerations which necessitated separate data analyses for husbands and wives in this study.

Marital adjustment was correlated separately with each of the predictor variables; relative authority balance, discrepancy from a syncratic authority structure, discrepancy from an ideal authority structure, role expectations, outcome power, and discrepancy from the ideal outcome power level. The series of correlations performed separately for the husbands' and wives' data is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations of Marital Adjustment with the Power Indices for Husbands and Wives

Power Index	Husbands		Wives	
	$\bar{r}$	$\bar{p}$	$\bar{r}$	$\bar{p}$
Relative authority	-0.14	0.279	0.24	0.152
Discrepancy from syncretic authority	-0.57	0.005	-0.72	<0.001
Discrepancy from ideal authority	-0.57	0.005	-0.48	0.016
Role expectations	-0.11	0.323	-0.16	0.245
Outcome power	-0.13	0.291	-0.23	0.168
Discrepancy from ideal outcome power	-0.45	0.023	-0.39	0.046

Relative Authority

An empirical test of the relationship of relative authority and marital satisfaction was carried out. The data indicate that the net relative ^{authority} either in favour of the husband or wife was neither significantly positively nor significantly negatively correlated with marital satisfaction for either set of spouses; husbands, $\bar{r} = -0.14$, $\bar{p} = 0.28$; wives, $\bar{r} = 0.24$, $\bar{p} = 0.15$. Thus viewing oneself as having more or having less authority than one's mate is not a determiner of marital happiness.

Discrepancy from a Syncratic Authority Structure

It was hypothesized that the greater the discrepancy from a syncratic authority structure the greater the marital dissatisfaction experienced. This hypothesis was supported for both husbands and wives. Discrepancy from syncratic authority structure was significantly negatively related to marital satisfaction for both sets of spouses; husbands, $r = -0.57$, $p = 0.005$; wives, $r = -0.72$, $p = < 0.001$. Joint power sharing thus appears to be an important factor associated with marital satisfaction.

Discrepancy from Ideal Authority Structure

Discrepancy from the ideal authority structure was hypothesized to be inversely related to marital satisfaction. This hypothesis was supported. The discrepancy from the ideal authority relationship scores were significantly inversely related to marital satisfaction, for both the husbands, $r = -0.57$, $p = 0.005$, and for the wives, $r = -0.48$, $p = < 0.02$. Therefore, the more the authority structure approaches the individual's ideal authority balance, the greater the satisfaction with the marriage.

It is interesting that a high positive correlation was found to exist between the discrepancy from syncratic authority relationship scores and the discrepancy from ideal authority scores for both sets of spouses; husbands, $r = 0.59$, $p = 0.005$; wives, $r = 0.76$, $p = < 0.001$. It thus appears that both sets of spouses view the ideal authority structure as involving a

great deal of jointly shared authority.

Role Expectations

Similarity in the couples' expectations concerning their ideal authority structure was hypothesized to be positively related to marital satisfaction. Contrary to expectations, no significant correlation was found between the congruence in the couples' view of the ideal authority structure and the degree of marital satisfaction experienced by husbands and wives; husbands, $r = -0.11$, $p = 0.32$; wives, $r = -0.16$, $p = 0.24$. Thus whether the couple holds concordant or discordant views of the ideal authority structure bears little relation to the perceived level of marital adjustment.

Outcome Power

The outcome power variable was empirically analyzed to determine its relationship to marital satisfaction. No significant relationship was found between the level of outcome power and degree of marital satisfaction for either husbands or wives; husbands, $r = 0.13$, $p = 0.29$; wives, $r = -0.23$, $p = 0.17$. It, therefore, appears that the pattern of conflict resolution, either in favour of oneself or one's spouse, is unrelated to marital happiness.

It is interesting to note that for the IMC task, seven of the twenty couples could not arrive at a joint solution for one or more of the 36 items, $M = 0.65$, $SD = 2.24$. Inability to reach an agreement was significantly inversely related to the couple's

averaged marital satisfaction score, $\underline{r} = -0.52$, $\underline{p} = 0.01$. This implies that the couples lacking the ability to negotiate and compromise in conflict situations tend to be more dissatisfied with their marriages.

Discrepancy from Ideal Outcome Power

Differences in the actual as opposed to the ideal level of outcome power expressed on the IMC was hypothesized to be inversely related to marital satisfaction. The data for the husbands and wives support this prediction. For both sets of spouses, the discrepancy between the ideal as opposed to the actual level of outcome power exercised was significantly negatively correlated with marital satisfaction; husbands, $\underline{r} = -0.45$, $\underline{p} = 0.02$; wives, $\underline{r} = -0.39$, $\underline{p} = 0.046$. Congruence in spouses' ideal expectations and performance in resolving conflicts in their favour is therefore, related to marital satisfaction.

Multiple Regression Analyses

To ascertain the combination of variables accounting for the greatest variance in the marital satisfaction score, the multiple regression, forward-inclusion, method was applied to the data. This is a procedure in which the independent variable with the greatest correlation to the dependent variable is included firstly into the regression equation. The other independent variables are subsequently added one by one according to their relative contribution to the total regression

equation. Separate regressions were computed for the husbands and wives. The predictor variables entered into the regressions comprised; relative authority, discrepancy from syncratic authority, discrepancy from ideal authority, role expectations, outcome power and discrepancy from ideal outcome power.

Husbands

The results of the multiple regression for the husbands' data is outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Forward-Inclusion Multiple Regression of all Power Indices with Marital Adjustment for Husbands

Power Index	Simple r	Multiple r	β (Beta)	F	p
Discrepancy from ideal authority	-0.57	0.57	-0.19	0.54	>0.05
Discrepancy from syncratic authority	-0.57	0.64	-0.41	3.06	>0.05
Discrepancy from ideal outcome power	-0.45	0.65	-0.40	2.10	>0.05
Role expectations	-0.11	0.70	-0.33	1.84	>0.05

Note: Total variance of regression equation = 48.76%, $F(4,15) = 3.57$, $p < 0.05$.

The variables best predicting marital satisfaction for the husbands comprise discrepancy from ideal authority, discrepancy from syncratic authority, discrepancy from ideal outcome power and role expectations; $F(4,15) = 3.57$, $p = < 0.05$. Together these variables accounted for 48.76% of the variance in the marital satisfaction scores.

Discrepancy from the ideal authority structure is the single best predictor of marital satisfaction accounting for 32.28% of the variance of the marital satisfaction scores. However, in combination with ^{the} three other predictors, its importance in the regression equation diminishes considerably. It assumes the lowest beta weight and the lowest F value of all the variables in the equation, $\beta = 0.19$, $F(1,15) = 0.54$, $p = > 0.05$. Discrepancy from the ideal authority structure thus appears to be redundant with the three other dependent variables. This is seen in a second forward-inclusion multiple regression with dependent variables discrepancy from syncratic authority structure, discrepancy from ideal outcome power and congruence of role expectations (see Table 3).

Table 3. Forward-Inclusion Multiple Regression of Discrepancy from Syncratic Authority, Discrepancy from Ideal Outcome Power, and Role Expectations, with Marital Adjustment for Husbands

Power Index	Simple r	Multiple r	β (Beta)	F	p
Discrepancy from syncratic authority	-0.57	0.57	-0.50	6.46	< 0.01
Discrepancy from ideal outcome power	-0.45	0.63	-0.50	4.34	< 0.05
Role expectations	-0.11	0.68	0.36	2.37	> 0.05

Note: Total variance of regression equation = 46.93%,
 $F(3,16) = 4.72$, $p = < 0.05$.



The percentage of variance accounted for by these three predictors is only slightly less than when the four predictors are included, 46.93% versus 48.76%, respectively. The most parsimonious combination of variables predicting marital satisfaction for the husbands then becomes discrepancy from a syncratic authority structure, discrepancy from the ideal outcome power and congruence of role expectations; $\beta = -0.50$, $\beta = -0.50$ and $\beta = 0.36$, respectively, $F(3,16) = 4.72$, $p = < 0.05$. Greater syncretism in the authority structure, combined with less discrepancy from ideal outcome power and greater congruence in the couple's authority expectations best predicts marital satisfaction for the husbands.

Wives

The results of the multiple regression analysis for the wives' data is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Forward-Inclusion Multiple Regression of all Power Indices with Marital Adjustment for Wives

Power Index	Single r	Multiple r	β (Beta)	F	p
Discrepancy from syncratic authority	-0.72	0.72	-0.95	14.20	<0.01
Role expectations	-0.16	0.76	-0.27	2.76	>0.05
Discrepancy from ideal authority	-0.48	0.77	-0.27	1.16	>0.05

Note: Total variance of regression equation = 60.05%,
 $F(3,16) = 8.02$, $p = < 0.01$.

The combination of variables best predicting marital satisfaction for the wives included discrepancy from syncretic authority, role expectations and discrepancy from ideal authority structure, $F(3,16) = 8.02$, $p = < 0.01$. This combination of factors accounted for 60.05% of the total variance of the marital satisfaction scores.

The single strongest predictor of marital satisfaction was discrepancy from a syncretic authority structure which alone accounted for 51.95% of the variance of the marital satisfaction scores. Its beta weight in the equation was -0.95 as compared with $\beta = -0.27$ for congruence of role expectations and $\beta = -0.27$ for discrepancy from ideal authority, indicating its high relative importance in relation to the other two variables in predicting marital satisfaction. The additional variance accounted for by role expectations and discrepancy from ideal authority over and above discrepancy from syncretic authority relationship, 8.1%, was minimal, emphasizing that little additional information is gained by an assessment of the two other variables. Thus for the wives the most parsimonious indicator of marital satisfaction is a high degree of syncretism in the marital authority relationship.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed at investigating two basic issues. The relationship of authority and outcome power to marital satisfaction was examined. In addition, the congruence of the

actual to the ideal power structure as it related to marital happiness was explored.

Regarding the relationship of marital satisfaction to the current marital power structure, marital satisfaction was unrelated to the husband-dominant versus wife-dominant continuum. In other words, for both authority and outcome power, marital satisfaction was unrelated to whether the husband or wife held the balance of power. Marital satisfaction, however, was related to the syncratic versus non-syncratic authority continuum. Specifically, the less discrepancy from a syncratic authority structure, the greater the marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives.

Examining couples' ideal expectations, it was found that both husbands and wives were happier with their marriage when the authority and outcome power level approximated their ideal. Contrary to predictions, congruence of the spouses' ideal authority patterns was unrelated to their marital happiness.

It appears that knowing the couple's existing authority structure as well as their views on the ideal power balance is valuable in assessing their marital happiness.

The couples in this study appeared to have adhered to the more recent cultural norm of equality in marriage. This was manifested in their desire for and satisfaction in a jointly shared authority structure. Patriceptric and matriceptric authority and outcome power balances were unrelated to marital satisfaction. These findings are somewhat different from the

results of previous studies which have typically found wife-dominant relationships to be much less happy from the equally satisfactory syncratic, autonomic and husband-dominant relationships (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Centers et al, 1971; Corrales, 1975).

The discrepancies in the findings of this study to previous investigations lie in the types of couples studied and in the measurement of authority. Only one of the forty spouses in this study described her authority relationship as being so matri-centric it classified as wife-dominant under the Blood & Wolfe (1960) categorization schema. Had more spouses reported their marriages to be wife-dominant according to Blood and Wolfe's (1960) criteria, it is possible that the typical inverse relationship of wife-dominance and marital satisfaction may have emerged in this study as well. In the present investigation, both the relative authority dimension and the syncratic authority dimension were based more closely on the raw data and thus were more discriminating measures than the Blood and Wolfe (1960) four-fold categorization schema used in previous research. The use of the more discriminating measures of authority, plus the equating of couples on extraneous variables related to power distribution, may have been decisive in being able to identify the syncratic, non-syncratic dimension as critical and specifically, joint power sharing as the authority structure most conducive^{to} conjugal happiness. It may be desirable for future studies on authority patterns to abandon the very gross Blood and Wolfe (1960) classification schema in favour

of measures based more directly on the raw data.

While deviations from the ideal outcome power and ideal authority patterns were inversely related to marital happiness, it is difficult to know why congruence of the spouses' ideal authority roles was unrelated to conjugal satisfaction. A possible explanation for this finding may be that achieving a perfect fit between the ideal preferences of both spouses may be an impossible task for any marriage. Instead, success of the marriage may hinge on the achievement of a compromise acceptable to both partners, one that is not too far removed from the individual ideals.

It was originally proposed that any authority balance, if it approximated the individual's ideal, would be associated with conjugal happiness. While this hypothesis was supported, interestingly enough, those couples reporting discrepancies from their ideal authority distribution also reported discrepancies from a joint power sharing arrangement. Thus it appears that for couples in this study a more ideal authority arrangement refers to more jointly shared authority.

Joint power sharing may promote marital harmony by necessitating compromise and agreement prior to undertaking major decisions. It may also lessen each person's responsibility for any decision. In this respect it may be a realistic ideal for all couples. Alternatively, since joint authority sharing involves more conflict resolution than

non-shared authority arrangements (Sprey, 1971), it is also possible that only the most harmonious couples can achieve a syncretic structure. These couples will have developed good problem solving and negotiation skills to handle differences of opinion. The present study with its correlational design is ill-prepared to argue for either side of this cause and effect issue. At the present time, it is difficult to say whether ^{the} adoption of a satisfactory power sharing arrangement increased the likelihood of a happy marriage for these couples or whether compatibility in other aspects of the marital relationship led to the establishment of a mutually satisfactory power sharing arrangement. Support for the latter belief comes from studies of marital communication. In these studies, distressed as opposed to happy couples reported a greater number of conflict episodes and unresolved problems (Birchler & Webb, 1977) and evidenced more negative and fewer positive problem-solving behaviors (Billings, 1979 & Vincent, Weiss & Birchler, 1975).

With the conflict-resolution task of the present study the more unhappy couples solved fewer problems and were more dissatisfied with the level of control they achieved in resolving problems than the more happy couples. However, marital satisfaction was not associated with resolving conflicts in one's favour. This implies that as well as learning bargaining skills, distressed couples would benefit by adopting conciliatory attitudes, favouring compromise, not absolute control, when resolving differences.

Husbands versus Wives

Although the major findings and implications of the present research are identical for both husbands and wives, differences emerged in the power indices that best predict marital adjustment for the spouses. Conjugal happiness for the husbands was related to high authority syncretism, combined with little discrepancy from the ideal outcome power and high congruence in the couple's authority expectations. The most parsimonious predictor of high marital adjustment for the wives was a high degree of syncretism in the authority structure. These differences lead to some interesting inferences as to the way power is viewed by husbands and wives.

For both spouses, discrepancy from a syncretic authority structure emerged as the factor most linked to marital harmony. However, only for the husbands did two other factors, discrepancy from the ideal outcome power and congruence of role expectations contribute independently and substantively to marital happiness. The implication stemming from this finding is that husbands, unlike wives, perceive power in a conflict situation as separate from authority and as an important component of the total power structure. When conflict is minimized, as in the satisfaction with outcome power and in the concordance of the spouses' ideal attitudes to authority, marital happiness for the husbands is maximized. Wives, on the other hand, do not appear to distinguish conflict-

resolution power from authority. It is likely that for wives to establish and maintain total or joint authority, in all or some areas, may involve conflict with their spouses. This may especially be true for a homemaker sample of wives who are traditionally more husband-dependent. Indirect support for this argument comes from the finding that husbands tend to make orchestration or major rule-setting decisions, while wives tend to make administrative, instrumentation level decisions (Levin, 1976). When orchestration level decisions were shared, a trend was found for both husbands and wives to be satisfied with their relationships (Levin, 1976). Thus it may be of primary importance for wives to obtain orchestration level authority.

In conclusion, it is important to note that the findings of this study are based on the investigation of forty persons, twenty husbands and twenty wives. These fairly small sample sizes influence the interpretations of the findings in two ways. Firstly, the correlations found were of a relatively large order, indicating strong and therefore, meaningful relationships between marital satisfaction and the respective marital power measures for this particular group of couples. On the other hand, with a relatively small sample size, it is difficult to determine whether the sample tested is representative of a demographically similar group of couples in the population at large. It is, therefore, with caution that the major findings of this study, namely that joint power sharing

is ideally viewed and is in fact the power arrangement most conducive to marital happiness, can be generalized to populations of white, middle to upper-middle class, educated couples. Unfortunately little can be said concerning couples with different socio-economic, vocational, educational and racial backgrounds with regard to the findings of this study, as these variables are known to influence marital power distribution. Future studies are required to determine whether the ideal of a syncretic authority relationship is applicable to couples of a wide variety of demographic backgrounds.

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APPENDIX 1

Decision-Making Questionnaire

Instructions: Please circle the number corresponding to the most appropriate response.

In every family somebody has to decide such things as where the family will live and so on. Many couples talk such things over first, but the final decision often has to be made by the husband or the wife.

1. Who usually makes the final decision about whether or not to buy some life insurance?

husband always	husband more than wife	husband and wife exactly the same	wife more than husband	wife always
1	2	3	4	5

2. Who usually makes the final decision about what car to buy?

husband always	husband more than wife	husband and wife exactly the same	wife more than husband	wife always
1	2	3	4	5

3. Who usually makes the final decision about what house or apartment to take?

husband always	husband more than wife	husband and wife exactly the same	wife more than husband	wife always
1	2	3	4	5

4. Who usually makes the final decision about what job the husband should take?

husband always	husband more than wife	husband and wife exactly the same	wife more than husband	wife always
1	2	3	4	5

5. Who usually makes the final decision about whether or not the wife should go to work or quit work?

husband always	husband more than wife	husband and wife exactly the same	wife more than husband	wife always
1	2	3	4	5

6. Who usually makes the final decision about how much money your family can afford to spend per week on food?

husband always	husband more than wife	husband and wife exactly the same	wife more than husband	wife always
1	2	3	4	5

7. Who usually makes the final decision about what doctor to have when someone is sick?

husband always	husband more than wife	husband and wife exactly the same	wife more than husband	wife always
1	2	3	4	5

8. Who usually makes the final decision about where to go on vacation?

husband always	husband more than wife	husband and wife exactly the same	wife more than husband	wife always
1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX 2

Ideal Decision-Making Questionnaire

Instructions: Please circle the number corresponding to the most appropriate response.

In every family somebody has to decide such things as where the family will live and so on. Many couples talk such things over first, but the final decision often has to be made by the husband or wife. If you could have your way...

1. Ideally, who should usually make the final decision about whether or not to buy some life insurance?

husband always	husband more than wife	husband and wife exactly the same	wife more than husband	wife always
1	2	3	4	5

2. Ideally, who should make the final decision about what car to get?

husband always	husband more than wife	husband and wife exactly the same	wife more than husband	wife always
1	2	3	4	5

3. Ideally, who should usually make the final decision about what house or apartment to take?

husband always	husband more than wife	husband and wife exactly the same	wife more than husband	wife always
1	2	3	4	5

4. Ideally, who should usually make the final decision about what job the husband should take?

husband always	husband more than wife	husband and wife exactly the same	wife more than husband	wife always
1	2	3	4	5

5. Ideally, who should usually make the final decision about whether or not the wife should go to work or quit work?

husband always	husband more than wife	husband and wife exactly the same	wife more than husband	wife always
1	2	3	4	5

6. Ideally, who should usually make the final decision about how much money your family could afford to spend per week on food?

husband always	husband more than wife	husband and wife exactly the same	wife more than husband	wife always
1	2	3	4	5

7. Ideally, who should usually make the final decision about what doctor to have when someone is sick?

husband always	husband more than wife	husband and wife exactly the same	wife more than husband	wife always
1	2	3	4	5

8. Ideally, who should usually make the final decision about where to go on vacation:

husband always	husband more than wife	husband and wife exactly the same	wife more than husband	wife always
1	2	3	4	5

Bob and Frank are good friends. Janis, Bob's wife, likes Frank but becoming increasingly annoyed with his unannounced and excessively long visits to their apartment, especially at mealtimes. She has suggested to Bob that he ask Frank to please phone before visiting, but her husband feels this would be insulting to his friend. Janis suggests that she might ask Frank to please phone before visiting, but this only makes her husband angry. After accusing his wife of interfering with his friendship, he refuses to discuss the matter further.

Cora doesn't really enjoy sexual relations. When she was first married she would avoid love making by telling her husband it was painful. More recently she has pretended to be tired when her husband has approached her. Now she has resorted to retiring earlier than her husband. Cora believes sex is an unpleasant subject and one does not discuss unless absolutely necessary, and she becomes furious when Jack insists they should talk about this problem.

When Don finally gets home from work he takes off his jacket, tie and shoes, and makes himself comfortable with a can of beer. After dinner Don has a little more energy, so he goes back and puts away the various articles of clothing he has taken off. One day Francine tells Don he is sloppy and lazy and demands that he not leave clothes lying around, even for a short period of time. Two days later, Don forgets to do as his wife had demanded, and she angrily repeats her complaint. An argument develops.

Nina has been looking for a pair of shoes to wear with her favorite dress. Upon finding a pair of shoes on sale, Nina just cannot resist and purchases them. Later that evening she shows her new purchase to Peter. He remembers that she already has many pairs of shoes and asks about the necessity of such a purchase at this time. Nina becomes outraged and accuses him of being cheap and inconsiderate.

Mark and Elaine have both been working since their marriage in order to live at a level which they feel to be comfortable. Occasionally, Elaine becomes depressed because she wants to have a child but knows that on Mark's salary alone this would be extremely difficult. Elaine's emotions get the best of her and she accuses Mark of not being aggressive enough, implying that he is an inadequate provider. Mark was advised not to go to college because of scholastic difficulties and has done as well as could reasonably be expected, but his wife continually compares him unfavorably to his college-educated friends. Mark's self-esteem is injured and an argument begins.

A conflict has arisen between Jack and Colleen following a party with friends. During the party, Jack talked to another woman, resulting in his wife becoming very angry. Following the party, Colleen angrily accuses Jack of intentionally ignoring her for the entire evening and becomes argumentative.

7. Betty and Phil have been having marital difficulties for the past year. One of the problems has been Betty's extravagance. Now Betty insists on immediately seeking costly professional counseling. Phil points out that there simply is no money to pay for such an expensive venture until they can cut down their expenses some place else. Betty will not hear of waiting until money is available, and many arguments arise in the weeks to come.

8. Jim routinely arrives home from work at 5:00 PM and enjoys his dinner soon after his arrival. Susan has been a full-time housewife since the birth of their first child one year ago but still leaves her domestic chores undone. Jim has asked Susan if she would have the house clean and dinner prepared when he returns home. Upon arriving home, Jim again finds the ironing board with a pile of clothes in the living room, a dining table that has not been set, and his wife sitting on the sofa reading a magazine. Upon viewing the situation Jim appears discouraged, whereupon Susan accuses him of always finding fault with her and angrily storms into the kitchen.

9. It's Friday evening and the Carter family have a dinner engagement, which had been made the previous week. Frank comes home a half hour early so he can be sure to be ready on time. He showers, shaves and is dressed and ready to leave on time. But when it is time to go, Mary is still in the bathroom combing her hair and putting on makeup. Since Mary almost always makes them late this way, Frank becomes upset. Mary retorts that she isn't very concerned about being late since they always get where they are going sooner or later.

10. Linda and Steve plan to take a weekend trip by car. While Linda is driving Steve to work on Friday morning, Steve hears a "pinging" noise and realizes that the spark plugs should be changed along with other minor adjustments. Since they plan to leave Friday evening and Steve has to work, he has to ask his wife to take the car to the garage. Linda complains about the other preparations she says she has to make for them and their two children but says she will have time to take the car to the garage, and agrees to do so. Later on the trip, Steve hears the "pinging" noise and realizes the spark plugs have not been changed. It turns out that Linda took the car to the garage but did not bother to mention the spark plugs. Linda says that if Steve doesn't like the way she does things he can do them himself. Steve points out that he was unable to take the car to the garage and that when she agrees to do something she should do it.

11. When Charlotte and Richard were living with Charlotte's family, a lot of ill will developed between Richard and his in-laws. Charlotte told her parents just about everything that happened, and when Richard told her to stop, his mother-in-law said she was hurt and told Charlotte to keep Richard in his place. Richard and Charlotte now have their own home, but the situation continues. Richard will rarely visit his in-laws, but whenever he is not around Charlotte is on the phone with her mother, passing on information and receiving advice. When Richard tells Charlotte again that she should stop telling things to her mother, Charlotte becomes enraged.

ght Larry promises Judy that he will throw the garbage out
ey finish dinner. Invariably, Larry forgets and leaves the
without doing what he has promised. Judy has felt that the
ng to do is to throw the garbage away by herself and has
ing this later in the evening. When he notices this, Larry
s angry with Judy, stating that this is his job. As Larry
es to follow his old habits, Judy begins to do the chore
only to be angrily criticized by her husband.

les that Bob and Nancy attend, Nancy spends most of her
th the men present and obviously enjoys being with them.
very concerned and has tried to tell Nancy that her behavior
orted as flirtatious and could lead to a romantic involve-
ith another man. Nancy denies this, but Bob knows from
experience that this type of thing does frequently happen
s that she is being inconsiderate of his feelings by not giving
behavior.

erry comes home from work in the evening he is tired and
relax over a pleasant meal. After dinner he prefers to be
ith his wife. However, Betty does not understand Jerry's
gness to go out after a hard day's work, and she is after
go out partying in the evenings. She tells Jerry he is a lazy
ing.

ad Diane have been married for three years. Dick likes his
l is anxious to get ahead. For the past year he has been
rily spending a great deal of extra time at his work. Diane
eately accused Dick of caring more about his job than he
r her. Dick explains that his career is important to both of
ad that it is necessary for him to work additional hours if he
to get promoted. Diane refuses to listen to Dick's
tions and unreasonably demands that he substantially cut
is hours of over-time work.

16. Tom is very concerned about his wife's smoking habits. Betty is a very heavy smoker and has a severe cough. Although Tom used to be a heavy smoker himself, he has now quit completely, so he is convinced that Betty could at least cut down. He has told her in detail about the health hazards involved in smoking and he has asked her to stop or at least cut down, if not for herself then because of her love for him. Betty's usual reaction has been to get sarcastic. She says she is trying but doesn't change. As a result there has been a series of arguments.

17. Chuck is a football fan who likes to watch the pro games on Sunday afternoons. His wife Betty is upset at this, so she plans a series of activities for them together on Sundays and tells him he will have to give up the football games. Chuck feels that this is an unreasonable demand. He points out that he works all week and should be entitled to a couple of hours of relaxation watching TV on Sunday. He reminds her that she watches many hours of soap operas during the week when he is at work. Chuck also reminds Betty that the other wives they know do not get so upset just because their husbands watch football. Betty, however, continues to be annoyed and insists that he stop watching games.

18. John has been out of college for three years and is able to provide a modest but adequate income for himself and his wife, Jean. They have been planning a vacation, which Jean has been enthusiastically anticipating. John has always been a stereo enthusiast and presently feels that he wants to improve his stereo by buying new speakers. If John proceeds with his plan, the vacation they have planned would be impossible. John states that he is the breadwinner in the family and deserves a luxury. He insists that as the man in the family, he should make the decision.

INVENTORY OF MARITAL CONFLICTS (IMC)
Case Descriptions: Wives' Form

-63-

and Frank are good friends. Janis, Bob's wife, likes Frank but is becoming increasingly annoyed with his unannounced and overly long visits to their apartment, usually at mealtimes. She suggested to Bob that he ask Frank to please phone before, but her husband feels this would be insulting to his friend. Janis suggests that she might ask Frank to please phone before, but this only makes her husband angry. After accusing him of interfering with his friendship, he refuses to discuss the matter further.

Jack doesn't really enjoy sexual relations. When she was first married, she would avoid love making by telling her husband it was late. More recently she has pretended to be tired when her husband has approached her. Now she has resorted to retiring earlier than her husband. Cora believes sex is an unpleasant subject and does not discuss unless absolutely necessary, and she is very furious when Jack insists they should talk about this matter.

Don finally arrives home from work he immediately sits down and makes himself comfortable with a can of beer and puts his jacket, tie and shoes on the furniture and/or floor, and they stay until some time after dinner. After putting up with his sloppiness for a while, Francine asks Don to stop tossing his clothes around the apartment, even if he does eventually pick them up. Two days later, Don repeats his usual performance as if Francine had said nothing. When she mentions it again, an argument develops.

Linda has been shopping around carefully for some time to find a pair of shoes she can afford that will go with her favorite dress. She finally finds a satisfactory pair of shoes and is happy to discover they are on sale. She purchases the shoes and takes them home to show her husband, Peter. He does not care whether or not they are satisfactory. He doubts that they are necessary at all and does not understand their importance to her or how much trouble she has gone to in order to save money.

Mark and Elaine have both been working since their marriage in order to live at a level which they feel to be comfortable. Financially, Elaine becomes depressed because she wants to have a better life but knows that on Mark's salary alone this would be very difficult. Elaine's emotions get the best of her, and she accuses Mark of not being aggressive enough, implying that he is an inadequate provider. Mark was advised not to go to college because of economic difficulties and has done as well as could reasonably be expected, but his wife continually compares him unfavorably to college-educated friends. Mark's self esteem is injured and an argument begins.

A conflict has arisen between Jack and Colleen following a party with friends. During the party, Jack becomes involved with another woman and ignores his wife. Colleen feels hurt and attempts to express her feelings of being neglected but feels like she is not understood.

7. Betty and Phil have been having marital difficulties for the past year. Betty is no longer reassured by having her husband minimize her unhappiness and wants to seek professional counseling. Phil, on the other hand, insists on holding off indefinitely before spending money on counseling. He says she is far too extravagant. In the weeks to come, many arguments arise because of their differing opinions.

8. Jim routinely arrives home from work at 5:00 PM and enjoys his dinner soon after his arrival. Susan has been a full-time housewife since the birth of their first child one year ago but still leaves her domestic chores undone. Jim has asked Susan if she would have the house clean and dinner prepared when he returns home. Upon arriving home, Jim again finds the ironing board with a pile of clothes in the living room, a dining table that has not been set, and his wife sitting on the sofa reading a magazine. Upon viewing the situation Jim appears discouraged, whereupon Susan accuses him of always finding fault with her and angrily storms into the kitchen.

9. It's Friday evening, and the Carter family has a dinner engagement, which had been made the previous week. Frank surprises his wife by getting home from work a half hour early and uses the bathroom continuously until it is almost time to leave. Since it takes Mary more than the few minutes Frank has left her to wash, comb her hair, and put on her makeup, it becomes obvious that they will be late for their appointment. Frank raises his voice and accuses her of always making them late. Mary tries to calm Frank down by saying that being a little late is not all that serious, but Frank just becomes more enraged and an argument develops.

10. Linda and Steve plan to take a weekend trip by car. While Linda is driving Steve to work on Friday morning, Steve decides that the spark plugs need changing and that other minor adjustments should be made. He tells his wife to get the work done in time for them to leave that evening. Linda also has all the other preparations to manage for them and their two children but she manages to get the car to the garage and asks for a tuneup. On the trip, Steve hears a "pinging" noise, discovers that the spark plugs are the same ones he had been using, and blames his wife for the spark plugs not being changed. Linda feels that if he is going to be so picky about how things are going to be done, he should assume some responsibility for doing them himself. Steve tells her he was too busy.

11. When Charlotte and Richard were living with Charlotte's family, a lot of ill will developed between Richard and his in-laws. Richard told his wife to stop talking so much with members of her family. When Charlotte's mother found out how Richard felt, she was hurt and said she thought Richard was out of place to make such a demand. Richard and Charlotte now have their own home but the situation continues. Richard will rarely visit his in-laws, so Charlotte's only regular contact with them is by phone. Charlotte usually speaks only to her mother and only phones her mother when her husband is not around, but Richard is still not satisfied. Richard insists that Charlotte stop speaking with her mother.

each night Larry promises Judy that he will throw the garbage out after they finish dinner. Invariably, Larry forgets and leaves the kitchen without doing what he has promised. Judy has felt that the best thing to do is to throw the garbage away by herself and has been doing this later in the evening. When he notices this, Larry comes angry with Judy, stating that this is his job. As Larry continues to follow his old habits, Judy begins to do the chore herself, only to be angrily criticized by her husband.

At parties Nancy prefers the company of men to the other women and spends much of the evening with them because she finds them intellectually stimulating and shares many of their interest. Nancy finds at parties that the women's conversations are limited to housekeeping, children, etc. Nancy is upset by Bob's accusations that her behavior may lead to involvement in an affair or, at the very least, misinterpretation of her behavior by other people, which would cause gossip. She is deeply hurt by his lack of trust since she is a devoted wife and would not consider an involvement with another man.

Jerry regularly comes home from work, eats, and sits down in front of the television screen for the entire evening. Betty is cooped up in the house all day and feels that she will go crazy if she can't get out and have some sort of contact with other human beings. Jerry refuses to go out and so there is a disagreement between Betty and Jerry.

Dick and Diane have been married for three years. Dick likes his job and is anxious to get ahead. For the past year he has been voluntarily spending a great deal of time at his work. Diane feels that their marital relationship is deteriorating due to the lack of time they are able to spend together. She attempts to explain to Dick that financial success will be meaningless if their marriage is destroyed in the process. Dick coolly tells his wife that her response is so immature that it is pointless to discuss the subject further.

16. Tom claims to be worried about Betty's health because she smokes so much and has a cough. He gives her endless detailed lectures about health hazards and is always demanding that she stop or cut down. Betty realizes that she smokes too much and is trying to cut down, but Tom's continued badgering is no help. Tom apparently feels that because he stopped smoking without any difficulty, everybody else should quit too and should have no trouble doing so. He seems unable to understand that it is difficult for her to change her smoking habits and he says that if she really loved him she would quit. Betty has tried to control herself and not get angry at Tom's continuous comments, but Tom goes right on lecturing to her and eventually there are a series of arguments.
17. Chuck is an ardent sport fan who spends every Sunday afternoon glued to the television screen watching football. His wife Betty is getting tired of being left by herself every Sunday, so she asks him to give up this part of his football watching and plans some Sunday activities for them together. Chuck not only refuses to give up any football, but he launches into a whole series of arguments to defend himself. He tells Betty that no one else's wife is as unreasonable as she is. He accuses her of spending her time watching soap operas while he is at work. He also tells her that since he works hard he should be able to watch football games if he wishes. Betty is upset by his attitude but continues to want him to spend Sunday with her.
18. John has been out of college for three years and is able to provide a modest but adequate income for himself and his wife, Jean. They have been planning a vacation, which Jean has been enthusiastically anticipating. John has always been a stereo enthusiast and presently feels that he wants to improve his stereo by buying new speakers. If John proceeds with his plan, the vacation they have planned would be impossible. John states that he is the breadwinner in the family and deserves a luxury. He insists that as the man in the family, he should make the decision.

COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE STUDY - 65-
INVENTORY OF MARITAL CONFLICTS (IMC)
Husband's Form
ANSWER SHEET

NAME

DATE

COUPLE NO

SEX:

☐ MALE

☐ FEMALE

INSTRUCTIONS: Please read each case description and answer questions a, b, c and d for each case.
Check the appropriate box in each column and do not leave any questions unanswered.

Item No.	(a)		(b)		(c)		(d)
	Who is primarily responsible for the problem?		Have you had a similar problem?		Have you known other couples who have similar problems?		
	Check One		Check One		Check One		
	HUSBAND	WIFE	YES	NO	YES	NO	
1							Should Bob ask Frank to phone before visiting? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2							Is Cora being reasonable in refusing to discuss their sexual problems? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3							Should Don be able to relax this way before dinner? ☐ Yes ☐ No
4							Is it reasonable for Peter to question the necessity of Nina's purchase? ☐ Yes ☐ No
5							Is Elaine justified in accusing Mark of being an inadequate provider? ☐ Yes ☐ No
6							Should Jack be permitted to talk to another woman at a party without Collen becoming upset? ☐ Yes ☐ No
7							Is Phil justified in worrying about starting counseling without being able to afford it? ☐ Yes ☐ No
8							Should Susan be reading a magazine when her household duties are not completed and dinner is not prepared? ☐ Yes ☐ No
9							Should Mary make a greater effort to be ready on time? ☐ Yes ☐ No
10							Should Linda thoroughly carry out her responsibilities once she has accepted them? ☐ Yes ☐ No
11							Is Richard justified in becoming upset with Charlotte discussing matters with her mother? ☐ Yes ☐ No
12							Is Larry neglecting his responsibilities by not carrying out the garbage? ☐ Yes ☐ No
13							Should Nancy realize that her behavior can be interpreted by other men as flirtatious and could unintentionally lead to further involvements? ☐ Yes ☐ No
14							After working hard all day should Jerry be allowed to spend a quiet evening at home with his wife? ☐ Yes ☐ No
15							Should Dick continue to devote the time that he knows is necessary to obtain advancement in his career? ☐ Yes ☐ No
16							Should Tom feel he has the right to concern himself with his wife's health? ☐ Yes ☐ No
17							Should Chuck be able to watch football on Sunday afternoon? ☐ Yes ☐ No
18							Is it John's prerogative to decide how the family money will be spent? ☐ Yes ☐ No

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ANSWERED ALL THE QUESTIONS AND HAVE CHECKED ONE ANSWER IN EACH COLUMN.
When you have completed this answer sheet, return this and the case descriptions to the research assistant in the lobby before completing the other material.

COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE STUDY
INVENTORY OF MARITAL CONFLICTS (IMC)

Wives' Form
ANSWER SHEET

NAME

DATE

COUPLE NO.

SEX:

☐ Male

☐ Female

INSTRUCTIONS: Please read each case description and answer questions a, b, c and d for each case.
(Check the appropriate box in each column and do not leave any questions unanswered.)

Item No.	(a) Who is primarily responsible for the problem?		(b) Have you had a similar problem?		(c) Have you known other couples who have similar problems?		(d)
	Check One		Check One		Check One		
	HUSBAND	WIFE	YES	NO	YES	NO	
1							Should Bob ask Frank to phone before visiting? ☐ Y ☐ N
2							Is Cora being reasonable in refusing to discuss their sexual problems? ☐ Y ☐ N
3							Should Don be more considerate of Francine by not scattering his clothes around? ☐ Y ☐ N
4							Should Peter try to understand Nina's well-planned purchase of these particular shoes? ☐ Y ☐ N
5							Is Elaine justified in accusing Mark of being an inadequate provider? ☐ Y ☐ N
6							Should Jack be more attentive to his wife at parties? ☐ Y ☐ N
7							Is Betty justified in feeling that their marriage is more important than any financial considerations? ☐ Y ☐ N
8							Should Susan be reading a magazine when her household duties are not completed and dinner is not prepared? ☐ Y ☐ N
9							Should John have a greater understanding of why she is late? ☐ Y ☐ N
10							Is Steve being unreasonable in blaming his wife for the work not getting done? ☐ Y ☐ N
11							Should Charlotte be able to speak freely with her mother? ☐ Y ☐ N
12							Is Larry neglecting his responsibilities by not carrying out the garbage? ☐ Y ☐ N
13							Should Bob trust his wife and not be upset that she is enjoying the company of other men? ☐ Y ☐ N
14							Should Jerry understand and respond to Betty's boredom by going out in the evening? ☐ Y ☐ N
15							Should Dick spend more time with his wife? ☐ Y ☐ N
16							Should Tom leave Betty alone and quit pressuring her? ☐ Y ☐ N
17							Should Chuck spend more time on Sundays with his wife? ☐ Y ☐ N
18							Is it John's prerogative to decide how the family money will be spent? ☐ Y ☐ N

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ANSWERED ALL THE QUESTIONS AND HAVE CHECKED ONE ANSWER IN EACH COLUMN.
When you have completed this answer sheet, return this and the case descriptions to the research assistant in the lobby before completing the other material

INVENTORY OF MARITAL CONFLICT (IMC)

JOINT DISCUSSION

-67-

NAME _____

DATE _____

COUPLE NO. _____

DISCUSSION: _____

START _____

FINISH _____

INSTRUCTIONS: It is very important that for EACH case you decide which spouse, either the husband or wife, is primarily responsible for the problem. You should make ONE response for both PART A and PART B. Do not leave any questions unanswered. Complete each case before going on to the next item

Case	PART A		PART B
	Who is primarily responsible for the problem?		Which of the following would be a better way to resolve the conflict?
	Check One		
	Husband	Wife	Check Only One
1. Conflict over frequent visits by husband's friend and wife's annoyance.			☐ Should Bob ask Frank to phone before visiting? OR ☐ Should Janis stop interfering in her husband's friendship?
2. Conflict regarding satisfaction during sexual relations.			☐ Is Cora being reasonable in refusing to discuss the problem of sex? OR ☐ Is Jack justified in suggesting they discuss the problem of sex?
3. Conflict concerning husband's distributing his shirt, tie, jacket and shoes around the apartment when he gets home from work.			☐ Should Don be able to relax this way before dinner? OR ☐ Should Don be more considerate of Francine by not scattering his clothes around?
4. Conflict about wife's purchase of a pair of shoes to wear with new dress.			☐ Is it reasonable for Peter to question the necessity of Nina's purchase? OR ☐ Should Peter try to understand Nina's well-planned purchase of these particular shoes?
5. Conflict between Mark and Elaine stemming from their desire to have a child but recognizing the financial burden.			☐ Is Elaine justified in accusing Mark of being an inadequate provider? OR ☐ Should Elaine be more understanding concerning Mark's ability and achievements?
6. Conflict caused by wife feeling ignored by husband while at a party.			☐ Should Jack be permitted to talk to another woman at a party without Colleen becoming upset? OR ☐ Should Jack be more attentive to his wife at parties?
7. Conflict over when to seek professional help for the marital difficulties between Betty and Phil.			☐ Is Phil justified in worrying about starting counseling without being able to afford it? OR ☐ Is Betty justified in feeling that their marriage is more important than any financial considerations?
8. Conflict concerning wife's inability to have house clean and dinner ready upon husband's arrival.			☐ Should Susan be reading a magazine when her household duties are not completed and dinner is not prepared? OR ☐ Should Susan try to be a better housekeeper?
9. Conflict over wife's lateness for dinner engagement.			☐ Should Mary make a greater effort to be ready on time? OR ☐ Should John have a greater understanding of why she is late?
10. Conflict over car breakdown while taking a short weekend trip.			☐ Should Linda thoroughly carry out her responsibilities once she has accepted them? OR ☐ Is Steve being unreasonable in blaming his wife for the work not getting done?

Case	PART A		PART B
	Who is primarily responsible for the problem?		Which of the following would be a better way to resolve the conflict? Check Only One
	Check One		
	Husband	Wife	
11. Conflict over wife's conversations with her mother.			☐ Is Richard justified in becoming upset with Charlotte discussing matters with her mother? OR ☐ Should Charlotte be able to speak freely with her mother?
12. Conflict about the responsibility for throwing the garbage away.			☐ Is Larry neglecting his responsibility by not carrying out the garbage? OR ☐ Is Judy expecting too much by asking her husband to carry out the garbage?
13. Conflict over wife's conversations with men at parties.			☐ Should Nancy realize that her behavior can be interpreted by other men as flirtatious and could unintentionally lead to further involvements OR ☐ Should Bob trust his wife and not be upset that she is enjoying the company of other men?
14. Conflict regarding evening entertainment.			☐ After working hard all day should Jerry be allowed to spend a quiet evening at home with his wife? OR ☐ Should Jerry understand and respond to Betty's boredom by going out in the evening?
15. Conflict over husband spending time at the office.			☐ Should Dick continue to devote the time that he knows is necessary to obtain advancement in his career? OR ☐ Should Dick spend more time with his wife?
16. Conflict over wife's smoking.			☐ Should Tom feel he has the right to concern himself with his wife's health? OR ☐ Should Tom leave Betty alone and quit pressuring her?
17. Conflict over TV football games.			☐ Should Chuck be able to watch football on Sunday afternoons? OR ☐ Should Chuck spend more time on Sundays with his wife?
18. Conflict of vacation vs. stereo speakers.			☐ Is it John's prerogative to decide how the family money will be spent? OR ☐ Should financial expenditures be a joint decision?

PLEASE TAKE A MINUTE TO RECHECK YOUR ANSWERS ON EACH QUESTION.
YOU SHOULD HAVE ONE CHECK FOR PART A AND ONE CHECK FOR PART B.
AFTER RECHECKING YOUR RESPONSES, RETURN THIS FORM TO A RESEARCH
ASSISTANT IN THE LOBBY.

APPENDIX 4

Decisions Questionnaire

Instructions: Please circle the number corresponding to the most appropriate response.

During the previous phase of the experiment, you and your spouse read over 18 case histories and made individual decisions as to whether (a) the husband or wife was responsible for the problem and (b) which of the two alternative solutions to the problem was the best one. Then you and your spouse discussed the case histories together and reached a final, joint decision on whether the husband or wife was responsible and the best of the solutions to the problem. Some of the time your individual choice might have become the joint decision and other times your spouse's individual choice might have become the joint decision.

1. Were you satisfied with the number of times your individual choice became the joint decision?

yes, very satisfied	yes, somewhat satisfied	unsure	no, some- what dis- satisfied	no, very dissatis- fied
1	2	3	4	5
(score- 0 ing)	1	1	3	4

2. Ideally, I would have preferred my individual choice to have become the joint decision...

much more often	a few more times	no change	a few less times	much less often
1	2	3	4	5
(score- 2 ing)	1	0	1	2

3. The joint decision arrived at by my spouse and I was originally the individual choice of...

husband almost always	husband more than wife	husband and wife a- bout equal	wife more than husband	wife almost always
1	2	3	4	5

(no score calculated for this item)

4. Ideally, my individual choice should have become the joint decision for...

almost all the stories	most of the stor- ies	about 50% of of the stor- ies	for a minority of the stories	very few of the stories
---------------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------------------	--	-------------------------------

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

(Scores for items 4 & 9 were calculated by examining the response divergence from item 3, eg. if the wife responds to items 3, 4 & 9, by circling responses 2, 2 & 4, she would receive a score of 2 for item 4 and a score of 2 for item 5.)

5. On the average, were you satisfied with the amount of discussion time you and your spouse gave to each history?

yes, very satisfied	yes, somewhat satisfied	unsure	no, somewhat dissatisfied	no, very dissatis- fied
------------------------	----------------------------	--------	------------------------------	-------------------------------

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

(filler item no score)

6. Were you satisfied with the amount of exploration of each other's viewpoints for the case histories?

yes, very satisfied	yes, somewhat satisfied	unsure	no, somewhat dissatisfied	no, very dissatis- fied
------------------------	----------------------------	--------	------------------------------	-------------------------------

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

(filler item no score)

7. Were you satisfied with the number of times your spouse's individual choice became the joint decision?

yes, very satisfied	yes, somewhat satisfied	unsure	no, somewhat dissatisfied	no, very dissatisfied
------------------------	----------------------------	--------	------------------------------	--------------------------

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

(scoring)

0	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---

8. Ideally, I would have preferred my spouse's individual choice to have become the joint decision...

much more often	a few more times	no change	a few less times	much less often
--------------------	---------------------	-----------	---------------------	--------------------

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

(scoring)

2	1	0	1	2
---	---	---	---	---

9. Ideally, my spouse's individual choice should have become the joint decision for...

almost all the stories	most of the stor- ies	about 50% of the stories	for a min- ority of the stories	very few of the stories
---------------------------	-----------------------------	--------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-------------------------------

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Couple No.

1. Check the dot on the scale line below which best describes the degree of happiness, everything considered, of your present marriage. The middle point, "happy" represents the degree of happiness which most people get from marriage, and the scale gradually ranges on one side to those few who are very unhappy in marriage, and on the other, to those few who experience extreme joy or felicity in marriage.

Very Unhappy Happy Perfectly Happy

State the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your mate on the following items. Please check each column.

	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occa- sion- ally Dis- agree	Frequ- ently Dis- agree	Almost Always Dis- agree	Always Dis- agree
2. Handling family finances	.	.	.	.	.	.
3. Matters of recreation	.	.	.	.	.	.
4. Demonstrations of affection	.	.	.	.	.	.
5. Friends	.	.	.	.	.	.
6. Sex relations	.	.	.	.	.	.

	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occa- sionally Dis- agree	Frequ- ently Dis- agree	Almost Always Dis- agree	Always Dis- agree
7. Conventionality (right, good, or proper conduct)	.	.	.	.	.	.
8. Philosophy of life	.	.	.	.	.	.
9. Ways of dealing with inlaws	.	.	.	.	.	.

Please check the appropriate answer.

10. When disagreements arise, they usually result in: husband giving in _____, wife giving in _____, agreement by mutual give and take _____.
11. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together? All of them _____, some of them _____, very few of them _____, none of them _____.
12. In leisure time do you generally prefer: to be "on the go" _____, to stay at home _____? Does your mate prefer to be "on the go" _____, to stay at home _____?
13. Do you ever wish you had not married? Frequently _____, occasionally _____, rarely _____, never _____.
14. If you had your life to live over, do you think you would: marry the same person _____, marry a different person _____, not marry at all _____.
15. Do you confide in your mate: almost never _____, rarely _____, in most things _____, in everything _____.

Please take a minute and check over your answers. Make sure that you have left no blanks. Thank you.