

Spouses' joint purchase decisions:  
Determinants of influence tactics for muddling through the process

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Abstract

Marital purchase decision making is perceived as a process of muddling through. A spouse expressing a desire for a product causes a situation which may or may not represent a conflict between the partners. Conflicts or disagreements need to be resolved in a way that ensures the realization of one's wishes and at the same time avoids hot disputes which may escalate. In order to get their way, spouses in disagreement use tactics to persuade or convince the other to yield. This study investigates the tactics used in intimate relationships and the dependence of choice of various tactics on the type of conflict, gender of agents, relationship characteristics and personality variables.

A questionnaire on the likelihood of using 18 different influence tactics and relationship and personality variables was completed by 252 couples. It was found that choice of a specific tactic depends on all variables under investigation except personality. The likelihood to using reason was higher in probability conflicts than in value and distributional conflicts. Women reported using weak tactics more frequently than men but were not less rational than their partners. The distribution of frequencies for the reported use of 18 tactics differed significantly between happy and unhappy couples and was also different for patriarchal, egalitarian or matriarchal relationships. Moreover, it was shown that with increasing length of cohabitation spouses developed roles which govern dominance in purchase decisions.

## Introduction

### Influence tactics in joint purchase decisions

Decision making within intimate couples is an everyday activity. It represents only a part of all conversations in the partnership, and economic decisions represent a subset of all decision making. Nevertheless, as Kirchler (1989) shows, purchase decisions are an important source of conflict between spouses and, since characteristics of the relationship are reflected in economic decisions, they represent a significant field of research for the understanding of family life in general. Moreover, economic decisions represent a significant array of problems that people are confronted with throughout life (Allison, Jordan and Yeatts, 1992). This study aims to shed some light on the dynamics of joint purchase decision making by investigating tactics used by the spouses to pursue their goals by influencing the other to yield.

Sillars and Kalbflesch (1989) describe couples and family decision making by perceiving spouses as plodding through decisions in a spontaneous and incremental fashion because of strenuous demands on time, energy, and other resources. Rather than gathering information on product alternatives systematically, spouses muddle through decision situations implicitly (cf. Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963; Lindblom, 1959, 1979).

Decision making in intimate relationships can hardly be conceived of as a highly structured process. If partners do not have corresponding goals in mutual decision situations, they must try to pursue their own subjective needs and goals and at the same time deal with the other's needs and goals. When disagreements occur during decision processes, the partners have to adopt accommodative tactics to resolve their disagreements and choose a suitable alternative.

Spouses often disagree over purchase decisions of major durables and commodities (Spiro, 1983). The question is how they manage to muddle through a rather complex, unstructured and seemingly chaotic situation in which they disagree by pursuing their individual goals and simultaneously avoiding hot disputes, running the risk of negatively and persistently affecting the relationship.

Conflict or divergence of wishes and opinions can be resolved by using various influence tactics, ranging from more persuasive emotional tactics over negotiation tactics to cool reasoning. The process of intrafamily conflict management is a completely neglected area in the research of consumer behavior, and the available socio-psychological and sociological studies on influence tactics are almost exclusively non-empirical. Most research concerning influence tactics represents the authors' personal observations and reflections rather than empirically proved theories (e. g., Davis, 1973, 1976; Kirchler, 1989; Madden, 1982; Sheth, 1974). In the past, some effort has been made to list tactics which can be used in joint

decisions. Although the typologies of tactics overlap to some extent, there is considerable disagreement over classification of acts and the labels used to denominate them. In an endeavor to detect a common structure, Nelson (1988) developed a questionnaire which combines all the previous empirically-derived tactics. Her questionnaire consists of 38 statements describing tactics which were found by Clark (1979), Cody, McLaughlin and Jordan (1980), Falbo and Peplau (1980), Fitzpatrick and Winke (1979), Kipnis, Schmidt and Wilkinson (1980), Kipnis and Schmidt (1983), etc. A structural analysis of these statements led to four categories of tactics:

- (a) use of punishments, threats, authority and negative emotion;
- (b) positive emotions and subtle manipulations, such as behaviors which put the partner in a receptive mood;
- (c) withdrawal and egocentrism, and
- (d) use of persuasion and reason.

These four sets refer mainly to persuasive tactics but do not contain negotiation, coalition formation or autonomous acts to end the joint decision process as further possible acts to influence the partner. Kirchler (1989) tried to classify all acts that spouses may use to get their own way in a joint decisions situation. Based on the behaviors referred to in Howard, Blumstein and Schwarz' (1986) investigation and the above-mentioned studies, he derived a list of 18 tactics which was strongly supported by the results of interviews conducted with 35 married couples (Kirchler, 1990). Table 1 summarizes the tactics and gives some examples. Tactics based on display of emotions (positive or negative feelings), physical force (helpless or aggressive actions), offers of benefits or withdrawal of resources, insisting on one's desires or leaving the scene whenever the partner expresses his or her desires, display of overt or distorted information, and contacts with other persons (direct or indirect coalition formation) are typical persuasive tactics. Offers of trade-offs and integrative bargaining refer to negotiation tactics. Reason stands for cool argumentation, thus, is primarily a task-oriented behavior to find the best solution. Finally, tactics referred to as facts and roles do not represent tactics to convince the other but acts which end the joint decision process, leaving the partner almost no chance to intervene. All these behaviors were mentioned by the couples in Kirchler's (1990) interviews and no further acts were described which could not be integrated easily into the list of 18 classes.

[Table 1 about here](#)

#### Determinants of influence tactics

Spouses' choices of influence tactics seem to depend largely on situational, personal, and relational characteristics (e. g., Falbo and Peplau, 1980; Granbois, 1971; Howard et al., 1986; Kilmann and Thomas, 1975; Kirchler, 1990; Scanzoni, 1978; Spiro, 1983).

Kirchler (1990) found the type of conflict to be one of the most important variables affecting choices of influence tactics. Kirchler (1990; cf. Brandstätter, 1987; Brandstätter and Schuler, 1978) distinguishes between three types of purchasing tasks or conflicts:

(a) tasks giving prominence to the probability of events are labelled probability tasks or probability conflicts. This type of conflict is similar to Davis' (1976) consensus situations or Madden's (1982) purchase decisions, in which both spouses are unaware of a conflict. Such conflicts occur if, for instance, spouses agree about the utility of a product and its value but disagree about the quality of various product alternatives.

(b) Tasks giving prominence to the values of events are called value conflicts. This type of conflict resembles accommodative situations with spouses being aware of a disagreement (Davis, 1976; Madden, 1982). Such conflicts are present if, for instance, spouses disagree about ethical acceptability of a product.

(c) Tasks giving prominence to the allocation of resources among group members are called distributional tasks. This type of task also includes accommodative situations in which at least one partner is aware of a conflict. For example, spouses disagree about the allocation of common resources and discuss whether to buy a commodity useful only to one or the other. The results of Kirchler's interview study seem to indicate that in probability conflicts spouses mainly rely on reason and autonomous purchases. In value conflicts, they seem to use mainly bargaining and trade-off tactics, they either insist on their wishes or rely on indirect coalitions, that is, the spouses argue that the commodity which they want will be useful also to other family members. If the conflict represents a distributional task, the spouses often use negotiation tactics and reasoning.

Gender may also have an important impact on the use of influence tactics. Indeed, it is the only variable which has received major empirical attention. Since men are expected to use expert, informational, direct reward, and coercion power, whereas women are expected to use indirect forms of power such as helplessness, referent power, and personal rewards (Johnson, 1976), husbands and wives should also use different tactics to exert influence. While some authors investigating choice of power tactics in business organizations in ad hoc groups or within the family report no gender effects (e. g., Kipnis et al., 1980; Michener and Schwertfeger, 1972), others found women to use weaker and more emotional tactics than men. Spiro (1983) found more women among the group of emotional influencers than men. Emotional influencers display a profile of persons reporting high use of emotional influence and of reward and referent influence; on the other hand, they report low use of legitimate and impression management, and a moderate use of both expert and bargaining tactics. Instone, Major and Bunker (1983) found women to influence their subordinates less often than men and if they exert influence, they use fewer rewarding tactics and more coercive tactics. In contrast, Fairhurst (1985) reports women in organizations tending to use indirect and

submissive tactics, whereas men more often use assertive and direct tactics. Falbo and Peplau (1980) report women less likely than men to report bilateral and direct power tactics rather than unilateral and indirect tactics. In other words, women seem to use tactics labelled withdrawal, laissez-faire, and positive and negative affect more often than men, and are less likely to use persuasion, bargaining, persistence, talking, asking, stating importance, and telling. Qualls (1987) reports a relatively strong relationship between sex role orientation and conflict resolution in the family. Howard et al. (1986) found both sex and sex role orientation as having consistent but small effects on influence dynamics. As far as purchase decisions within the family are concerned, Kirchler (1990) found women more likely to yield than men, due to the couple's development of roles. No differences were found in the use of emotional tactics, bargaining tactics, and use of reason.

Relationship characteristics which assumingly affect choice of tactics are spouses' relative dominance and marital satisfaction (Kirchler, 1989). Howard et al. (1986) found positions of weakness to increase the use of weak tactics, such as supplication and manipulation. On the other hand, persons in powerful positions were found to use strong tactics, such as bullying and autocratic tactics. Falbo and Peplau (1980) report intimate partners as more likely to use bilateral tactics if they have relatively more power. Unilateral tactics are more likely to be used by people in egalitarian relationships. Ample evidence for the effect of power on choice of tactics stems from research in business organizations. Kipnis et al. (1980) found seven out of eight tactics types to be closely related to relative status of the target person. Their findings suggest that respondents place more reliance on rationality tactics as the status of the target increases. Assertive tactics and sanctions are used more often to influence subordinates than colleagues with the same or superior status. Tactics such as ingratiation, exchange of benefits, and upward appeal are more often used to influence colleagues at the same or at a lower status level than superiors. Kirchler (1990) found no strong relationship between dominance pattern and choice of tactics, but spouses in patriarchal relationships were reported that they were more likely to use punishment and direct coalitions and were less likely to insist on their own wishes relative to those in egalitarian relationships.

Research on marital happiness has shown marital quality as not depending on the frequency of conflict but as being significantly related to the dynamics leading to agreements (Kirchler, 1989). Happy spouses, unlike dissatisfied partners, try to avoid heated disputes by considering each other's instrumental arguments more than emotionally loaded arguments. They express affection but avoid expressions of negativity (Huston and Vangelisti, 1991). Moreover, happy spouses are more willing to yield if the other claims a strong desire for or interest in a product or commodity (Kirchler, 1988). Empirical studies on the use of tactics in happy and unhappy relationships are missing. Michener and Schwertfeger (1972) report liking to be associated with the choice of influence tactics. If an actor likes the partner, he or

she is likely to use withdrawal and demand creation. In disliking conditions, destructive tactics were more likely to be used. Partners use outcome blockage and extension of the power network, that is, they try to cut off or withhold valued outcomes received by the target or threaten to seek the desired outcomes from sources other than the target of influence. Spiro (1983) reports more happy persons within the groups of no influencers and light influencers and found more unhappy spouses in the group of heavy influencers. Kirchler (1990) found spouses in harmonious relationships as seeking to increase their influence by referring to other persons who have similar desires and in family purchase decisions point to the utility of a desired outcome for oneself as well as for other family members.

Marital relationships change in the course of time. When the honeymoon is over and spouses turn to everyday life affairs, they may also move from intense and time-consuming joint decisions towards autonomous decisions. Each spouse then decides about the items he or she feels competent in and responsible for. As a result, young couples use influence tactics more frequently than older couples, who decide autonomously or yield to the partner who decides according to his or her role. Indeed, Spiro (1983) found more older couples with almost adult children in the group of light influencers than in all other groups.

Finally, it can be argued that choice of influence tactics depends on personality characteristics such as self confidence (Brandstätter, 1992; Instone, et al., 1983; Kilmann and Thomas, 1975). A timid person is likely to be submissive in social settings and may use weak tactics in trying to persuade others. An authoritarian personality may want to influence others strongly by insisting, exerting pressure and attacking the other with unfriendly remarks. According to Brandstätter's (1987; Brandstätter and Waldhör, 1991) exchange-reinforcement theory, extrovert-unstable persons use different tactics than introvert-unstable persons. Extrovert partners seem to be concerned mainly with the relationship, whereas introverts primarily focus on the task. While extroverts may aim to persuade the other by establishing a friendly and warm relationship, introverts should be expected to use tactics instrumental to win the discussion. Extroverts should use more emotional tactics since they aim to reciprocate their partners' friendliness and unfriendliness, respectively. Introvert-unstable persons should mainly be concerned with the problem and, thus, use reason. In contrast with these arguments it can be hypothesized that personality is important in public situations but not in intimate spaces. Timid, submissive and weak persons do not need to be timid and submissive in the privacy of their homes. Differences between an outgoing person and an introvert are likely to be great in public but not in private. In fact, Kirchler (1989) found personality characteristics to be associated with behavior and feelings in public settings only. No such differences were detected in family settings (for a discussion about personality traits in personal relationships see Park and Waters, 1988). In conclusion, it is difficult to predict whether or not personality affects choice of tactics in discussions with the partner.

In sum, it should be expected that use of the 18 influence tactics listed in Table 1 depends on the type of conflict, gender, spouses' dominance pattern, marital satisfaction, length of marriage, and perhaps also on personality characteristics. To test these assumptions, a questionnaire was developed to assess the probabilities of using various tactics in joint purchase situations and distributed to a random sample of cohabiting couples.

## Method

### Participants

Overall, 252 married and/or cohabiting Austrian couples took part. The 504 participants reported having no children in 26.8 % of the cases; 26.0 % had one child, 32.4 % had two, and 14.6 % had three or more children. The average number of children reported by the participants ( $n = 1.5$ ) corresponds almost exactly to the average number of children of Austrian couples ( $n = 1.7$ ). Ages of women and men ranged from 19 to 71 years, with the average for women being 36.92 years (standard deviation = 11.38) and 39.88 years for men (standard deviation = 12.29). Average age differences between the partners (2.9 years) corresponds to average age differences of Austrian spouses at the time of their marriage (2.5 years). The years of cohabitation ranged from 1 to 43 with an average of 15.04 years (standard deviation = 10.79) according to men's responses and 14.80 (standard deviation = 10.73) according to women's reports. The educational level of the sample is higher than the Austrian average: 14.8 % of women and 28.3 % of men held a university degree; 34.3 % of the women and 20.3 % of men had a secondary school diploma, and the remaining participants had either professional training (34.8 % of women and 42.2 % of men) or had attended compulsory school (16.0 % of women and 8.8 % of men). Spouses' joint monthly income corresponded to the Austrian average income of approximately US\$ 1,400 to 1,800 in 1991 (1 US\$ = 12 AS).

### Material

#### Joint purchasing conflicts and tactics

Based on Kirchler's (1990) study, a questionnaire was developed consisting of a introductory episode and 54 statements.

The episode describes one out of six purchasing conflicts. The purchasing conflicts represented either a probability conflict, a value conflict, or an allocation problem and were already used in Kirchler's (1990) study. The six episodes, two for each conflict type, read as follows:

#### Probability conflicts:

(a) *"Imagine you and your partner want to buy a new car. Both of you will use the car and you have already decided that the car should be of medium size and not too expensive. You*



*need to choose between two alternatives, car A and car B. While you prefer car A your partner wants car B." After a short description of the product alternatives, the spouses were individually asked to imagine as vividly as possible such a conflict situation, to read the following statements, and to indicate how much they agree with them.*

*(b) "Imagine you are planning to buy new furniture for your living room. You and your partner have already reached an agreement about the amount of money you want to spend, the material and the color of the furniture. Since you lack the time to go and collect information about furniture together, each one of you goes separately. At home you and your spouse talk about two different kinds of furniture. Both alternatives fulfill the criteria you established at the outset of the purchase decision."*

Value conflicts:

*(c) "Imagine you and your spouse are planning your next vacation. While one of you would like to spend two weeks at the sea relaxing and lying in the sun, the other would rather go to the mountains. Although your preferences differ, you both want to spend the vacation together."*

*(d) "Imagine you and your spouse are discussing whether to rent an apartment in the center of the city or in the suburbs. While one of you prefers to have a garden and a quiet neighborhood, the other would like to be in the city center, close to cinemas, theaters and cafés."*

Distributional conflicts:

*(e) "Imagine you and your partner have won some money in a lottery. Each of you would like to spend the money on an item he or she has wanted for a long time (e. g., stereo, clothes). If the amount of money allowed is for one item only, how would you try to convince your partner to agree to your preferences?"*

*(f) "Imagine you have saved some money and decided to spend it now. One of you wants to buy some rather expensive stereo equipment, while the other wants jewelry."*

In a pretest, these six vignettes were presented to ten experts who, in general, classified them correctly into the three conflict categories (90 % concordant classifications).

The 54 items represent statements concerning acts to get one's way in joint purchase decisions and participants are asked to express their agreement to using these statements on 7-point-scales ranging from 1 = disagree strongly to 7 = agree strongly. The questionnaire is structured in such a way as to measure the 18 tactics in sequential order: item 1 measures spouses' agreement to their use of tactic 1, item 2 measures use of tactic 2 etc. till item 18 which assesses use of tactic 18. The next statements from item 19 to 36 and from item 37 to 54 measure the 18 tactics in the same sequential order. The following is an example of a statement aiming to assess the likelihood to use tactic 1, positive emotions: "I am charming towards my partner in order to persuade him or her". The statement reading "I try to get my

way by acting helpless" assesses use of tactic 3, helplessness. Tactic 18, reason, was assessed, among others, by the statement: "I try to convince my partner by presenting logical arguments".

The applied questionnaire was found to be a structurally and conceptually valid and reliable instrument to assess influence tactics in joint purchase situations. A confirmatory factor analysis of the questionnaire (LISREL) confirmed the 18 tactics-structure (root mean square = .068). Reliability of the 18 tactics-scales was high with Cronbach alpha ranging from .74 to .92. The complete set of items and statistical analyses are presented in detail elsewhere (Kirchler, 1993).

#### Marital quality, dominance patterns, personality and demographic characteristics

In addition, to the tactics-inventory a set of 13 items was included to assess marital quality. Six items were taken from Norton's (1988) marital satisfaction scale ("We have a good marriage", "My relationship with my partner is very stable", "Our marriage is strong", "My relationship with my partner makes me happy", "I really feel like part of a team with my partner", "Everything considered, our marriage is satisfying"). The wording of the seven added items was as follows: "How much does your partner consider your desires?", "In general, how happy are you with your partnership?", "As compared to others, how good is your partnership?", "Do you sometimes wish you had never married your partner?", "How much does your partnership fulfill your expectations?", "Do you love your partner?", "Do you have many problems with your partner?" All answers ranged from 1 indicating dissatisfaction to 7 indicating satisfaction with the partnership. Reliability of the 13 items scale amounts to  $\alpha = .94$  for the ratings of 252 husbands and to  $\alpha = .95$  for wives' ratings. Each participant's average answer to the items was calculated and treated as general satisfaction index.

The following six items were intended to assess marital power: "Compared to me, my spouse is more dominant versus submissive", "Compared to me, my spouse is stronger versus weaker", "Compared to me, my spouse is more resisting versus more ready to yield", "I decide versus my partner decides about the most important affairs in our relationship", "If we cannot reach mutual agreement in important decisions, we mostly do what I say versus what my partner says", "Generally, the power relationship between us is more or less balanced versus is inclined more to my own favor." Again, answers ranged from 1 indicating dominance of the partner to 7 indicating dominance of the respondent, that is, high values indicate high dominance of the participant. Reliability coefficients for the six items scale amounted to  $\alpha = .69$  and  $.65$  for husbands and wives reports, respectively.

Personality characteristics were measured by Brandstätter's 16 PA-test (Brandstätter, 1988) which is a short version of Schneewind, Schröder and Cattell's (1983) 16 PF-test and

consists of 32 bipolar items.

Finally, demographic characteristics were measured (sex, age, school education, length of cohabitation with the partner, number and age of children, net monthly income).

### Procedure

From March to December 1991, student collaborators approached persons randomly at their homes, in shopping centers, at evening courses and lectures in various public organizations and asked them to participate if they were married or cohabiting. Approximately 500 couples were invited to participate; half of them agreed, took one out of the six different questionnaires, filled it out individually, and sent it together with the questionnaire of the spouse anonymously to the University of Linz. In total, 82 couples had filled out a questionnaire with a probability conflict (37 couples were presented conflict (a), 45 conflict (b)), 93 had completed a questionnaire with a distributional conflict (45 conflict (c); 48 conflict (d)), and 77 were presented a value conflict (39 conflict (c); 38 conflict (d)). No statistical differences on demographic characteristics were observed between the groups who had the six different versions of the questionnaire. Completing the questionnaire took 15 to 20 minutes.

## Results

### Overview

In purchase decisions spouses are likely to use some influence tactics more than others. Reported use of a tactic varies considerably across the set of 18 tactics. An analysis of variance with 18 tactics as the independent variable (repeated factor) and agreement to use them as the dependent variable revealed a significant effect of  $F(17,8551) = 563.05$ ;  $p < .001$ . Since agreement or disagreement with the statements may be distorted by social desirability tendencies and other response bias, each participant's answers were standardized by deducting the average agreement with the 54 items from each individual response and dividing the difference by the standard deviation of the 54 items. An analysis of variance with the 18 tactics and standardized agreements confirmed the strong effect ( $F(17,8551) = 572.09$ ;  $p = .001$ ). Table 2 shows average agreement indexes to using the 18 tactics. The tactics most likely to be chosen are integrative bargaining, reason, overt information, and indirect coalitions. In contrast, punishments, helplessness, autonomous buying, negative emotions, and deciding or yielding according to roles were reported to be used relatively seldom.

Before proceeding with reports of results, it should be clarified that whenever reference to frequencies or probabilities of using or choosing various tactics is made, the participants' agreement with statements concerning their use of tactics is meant.

[Table 2 about here](#)

### Determinants of influence tactics

The impact of five variables displaying situational, personal, and relational characteristics on the choice of influence tactics was considered in 18 analyses of variance. These were computed with type of conflict (probability, distributional, and value conflict), marital satisfaction (dissatisfied versus satisfied), dominance structure (matriarchal or egalitarian versus patriarchal), length of cohabitation (short versus long time), and gender of the agent (within factor) as independent variables, and reported use of the respective tactics as dependent variable (standardized indexes). For this step of analysis, marital satisfaction, dominance, and length of cohabitation, all continuous variables, were dichotomized. Husbands' and wives' responses were averaged and the sample was then split at the median of each variable into two subsamples. This procedure is rather critical since correlations between husbands' and wives' ratings on marital satisfaction ( $r(252) = .58$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and dominance structure ( $r(252) = .21$ ;  $p < .01$ ) are not perfect. Nevertheless, it was only a first step towards trying to shed some light on the complex structure of main and interaction effects of independent variables. In no case did the five-way interaction effect prove significant. Only in three cases was a four-way interaction effect observed, however, these effects were significant only at the 5 % level and explained a small proportion of variance (less than 1 %). Analyses revealed significant main effects and/or two-way or three-way effects of independent variables on agreement to using all influence tactics but tactic 2 (negative emotions). It should be emphasized that length of marriage exerted an effect (main effect or in interaction with another factor) upon 15 out of the 18 tactics; gender proved important in the choice of 14 tactics, and type of task, marital satisfaction, and dominance pattern were important in the predictions of reported use of 13 tactics. These results clearly indicate that the variables considered here are important determinants of influence tactics.

For reasons of clarity and understanding, influence of gender, marital satisfaction, dominance structure and length of marriage on choice of tactics will be presented separately for each conflict type. Before doing so, it should be mentioned that choice of the following tactics depends significantly on conflict type: distorted information ( $F(2,501) = 8.22$ ;  $p < .01$ ), indirect coalitions ( $F(2,501) = 4.86$ ;  $p < .01$ ), helplessness ( $F(2,501) = 3.75$ ;  $p < .05$ ), trade-offs ( $F(2,501) = 3.64$ ;  $p < .05$ ), yielding according to roles ( $F(2,501) = 3.28$ ;  $p < .05$ ), overt information ( $F(2,501) = 3.01$ ;  $p < .05$ ), and integrative bargaining ( $F(2,501) = 2.94$ ;  $p < .05$ ).

The results presented in Figure 2 show that in probability conflicts, relative to other conflict types, such tactics as acting helpless and displaying overt information seem to be inappropriate. Rather, spouses rely on the effects of distorted information, indirect coalitions, and yielding according to role segmentation. In distributional conflicts, spouses reported using

bargaining tactics, such as trade-offs and integrative negotiation more often than in other conflicts. Value conflicts are more likely to be resolved by indirect coalitions, overt as well as distorted information, and less likely to be resolved by deciding or yielding according to roles than other conflicts.

Figure 2 about here

Influence tactics by gender and relationship characteristics

Correlations between reported use of various tactics and marital satisfaction, dominance pattern, and length of cohabitation were calculated separately for males and females. The advantage of correlations relative to analyses of variance is that indexes of satisfaction, dominance, and duration of the relationship can be considered as continuous variables and, what is more important, husbands' and wives' perceptions of their relationships can be kept separate. Moreover, t-tests with reported use of the 18 tactics as dependent variables and gender as the independent variable (within factor) were computed which show that in probability conflicts women were more likely to act helpless than men ( $t(81) = 2.86$ ;  $p < .01$ ); were more likely to offer trade-offs; ( $t(81) = 2.23$ ;  $p < .05$ ); bought autonomously less often ( $t(81) = 4.19$ ;  $p < .01$ ); and decided according to roles less often ( $t(81) = 4.07$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Table 3 shows correlation coefficients as well as average reported use of the tactics by gender.

Table 3 about here

As far as influence tactics in distributional conflicts are concerned, again, correlations between agreement to using 18 tactics and marital satisfaction, dominance pattern, and length of cohabitation were computed as well as t-tests with gender as independent variable. In distributional conflicts, women, unlike men, were more likely to report to leave the scene ( $t(92) = 2.55$ ;  $p = .01$ ), to search for integrative solutions ( $t(92) = 1.97$ ;  $p < .05$ ), and to yield according to roles ( $t(92) = 2.52$ ;  $p = .01$ ); they were less likely to report use of rewards ( $t(92) = 3.30$ ;  $p < .01$ ), to buy autonomously ( $t(92) = 3.19$ ;  $p < .01$ ), or to decide according to roles ( $t(92) = 2.45$ ;  $p < .05$ ; Table 4).

Table 4 about here

As for probability and distributional conflicts correlations between choice of tactics and relational variables were calculated and the influence of gender was investigated, also for situations representing value conflicts. Gender had a significant influence on deciding according to roles only ( $t(76) = 2.64$ ,  $p = .01$ ; Table 5).

Table 5 about here

As far as gender differences are concerned, it should be mentioned that t-tests across all conflict types showed significant effects of gender on positive and negative emotions, punishments, insisting, overt and distorted information, indirect and direct coalitions, and

yielding according to roles. The respective t-values for tactics which vary significantly with gender are the following: helplessness:  $t(251) = 3.17$ ;  $p < .01$ ; rewards:  $t(251) = 3.02$ ;  $p < .01$ ; leaving the scene:  $t(251) = 2.59$ ;  $p = .01$ ; buying autonomously:  $t(251) = 5.21$ ;  $p < .01$ ; deciding according to roles:  $t(251) = 5.36$ ;  $p < .01$ ; trade-offs:  $t(251) = 2.38$ ;  $p < .05$ ; and integrative bargaining:  $t(251) = 2.39$ ;  $p < .05$ . As Figure 1 shows, females were, in general, more likely than men to report to act helpless or to leave the scene in order to get what they want. Females also seem to offer trade-offs and search for integrative solutions more often than men do. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to report to offer rewards than women did and reported to buy or decide autonomously and according to their roles more often.

Figure 1 about here

When analyzing the effects of satisfaction on choice of tactics, without taking the type of conflict into consideration, the following results were obtained: Independent of the type of conflict and gender, happy spouses tried more often than unhappy partners to find integrative solutions (correlation between the total sample and agreement =  $r(504) = .26$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and seem to buy autonomously less often ( $r(504) = -.22$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Moreover, happy spouses reported using positive emotions ( $r(504) = .21$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and reason more often ( $r(504) = .14$ ;  $p < .01$ ), especially in distributional and value conflicts. Distorted information ( $r(504) = -.13$ ;  $p < .01$ ), punishments ( $r(504) = -.11$ ;  $p < .01$ ), negative emotions ( $r(504) = -.13$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and aggression ( $r(504) = -.14$ ;  $p < .01$ ) were avoided by happy spouses. As far as the latter tactics are concerned, the correlations become significant when calculated across all three conflict types, but they are below significance when calculated separately for each conflict type. Also, the correlation between agreement to using overt information ( $r(504) = .22$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and happiness becomes significant when the whole sample is considered. A rather complex pattern of results was obtained for coalition making tactics. Happy wives reported to avoid indirect coalitions in probability conflicts, happy husbands avoided direct coalitions in distributional conflicts and in all other situations no significant results were found. Also, tactic 10, offers of resources, is related to happiness but the pattern of results is difficult to interpret. No correlations were found between satisfaction and helplessness, insisting, leaving the scene, role segmentation and trade-offs. In short, happy spouses were found to apply positive emotional tactics, to display their individual desires more honestly, to search for integrative solutions and to avoid negative persuasive tactics, such as negative emotions, aggression, punishment and distorted information as well as autonomous decisions without the other's consent.

When taking all types of conflicts together, dominant women reported to use more integrative bargaining tactics ( $r(252) = .15$ ;  $p < .05$ ) than dominant men ( $r(252) = -.08$ ;  $p > .05$ ); more reason ( $r(252) = .11$ ;  $p > .05$  versus  $r(252) = -.10$ ;  $p > .05$  for the male sample; the

difference between the two correlations is significant at  $p < .01$ ); more overt information ( $r(252) = .14$ ;  $p < .05$  versus  $r(252) = .00$ ;  $p > .05$ ) and less punishments ( $r(252) = -.15$ ;  $p > .05$  versus  $r(252) = .04$ ;  $p > .05$ ).

As far as length of cohabitations is concerned, analyses across the three conflict types showed that the more lasting marriage, the more likely reporting to buy autonomously ( $r(504) = .17$ ;  $p < .01$ ), to decide according to roles ( $r(504) = .24$ ;  $p < .01$ ), and to yield according to roles ( $r(504) = .30$ ;  $p < .01$ ) increase. Positive emotions ( $r(504) = -.21$ ;  $p < .01$ ), overt information ( $r(504) = -.20$ ;  $p < .01$ ), distorted information ( $r(504) = -.16$ ;  $p < .01$ ), and bargaining tactics (trades offs:  $r(504) = -.12$ ;  $p < .01$ ; integrative bargaining:  $r(504) = -.13$ ;  $p < .01$ ) were reported to be used less often by older couples than by younger ones.

#### Influence tactics and agent's personality characteristics

Personality was assessed by Brandstätter's (1988) 16 PA test which allows us to estimate Schneewind et al.'s (1983) second order factors: norm orientation; emotional stability; independence; determination; and extroversion. The interaction between emotional stability and extroversion yields a sixth factor which Brandstätter (1987) calls reinforcement orientation versus social exchange orientation. It was assumed that all second order factors as well as reinforcement-exchange orientation have an impact on choice of influence tactics. Personality had almost no impact on spouses' choice of influence tactics. Although 12 out of 108 correlation indexes (6 personality factors with 18 tactics) reached significance, the effects are small and in no case explain more than 5 % of variance. Only the second order factor, independence, was somehow related to choice of tactics. Independent persons seem to use positive emotions less often ( $r = -.14$ ;  $p < .01$ ), less overt information ( $r = -.10$ ;  $p < .05$ ), less reason ( $r = -.21$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and more aggression ( $r = .14$ ;  $p < .01$ ), punishments ( $r = .10$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and, unexpectedly, more often helplessness ( $r = .17$ ;  $p < .01$ ) to get their way. Norm-oriented persons reported using overt information ( $r = .10$ ;  $p < .05$ ) more often and less likely to yield according to roles ( $r = -.10$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Emotionally stable persons searched for integrative solutions ( $r = .10$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and were more likely to leave the scene ( $r = .13$ ;  $p < .01$ ) than unstable persons. Highly determined persons reported to use overt information ( $r = .16$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and reason ( $r = .13$ ;  $p < .01$ ). The last factor, introversion versus extroversion, was in no case related to tactics.

#### Discussion

Joint purchase decisions are conceived of as complex processes constraining spouses to plod through in a spontaneous and incremental way. In pursuing both goals, realization of one's own desires and avoidance of hot disputes with the partner, spouses reported to use a variety of influence tactics to muddle through the situation.

This study shows that integrative bargaining tactics, reason, overt display of one's own desires and wishes as well as indirect coalition making, that is, referring to the utility of a commodity for other family members, were the most agreed upon tactics out of a set of 18 influence tactics. Reports of using persuasive tactics, especially withdrawal of resources or punishments, acting helpless, displaying negative emotions, were relatively unlikely. Also, ignoring the partner by purchasing autonomously, either without asking for the other's consent before buying or by referring to one's rights to take the decision deriving from role segregation, seem to be inappropriate tactics. This result is not only true for the sample as a whole but had also been confirmed in separate analyses for the male and female subsamples and was found to be independent of the type of conflict. Moreover, a parallel study with 223 Italian couples (Zani and Kirchler, 1993) revealed an almost identical pattern of results. The present results confirm findings by White and Roufail (1989) and Steil and Weltman (1992) according to which reasoning, logic and stating one's desires are rated as preferred choice tactics, whereas manipulative and indirect tactics are ranked as tactics in the last resort.

Although the results strongly suggest that integrative bargaining, reason, overt information, and indirect coalitions were the most used tactics, a word of caution seems necessary here. Since the instrument used in this study is a questionnaire and situations to which the participants had to refer are rather intimate, responses may be biased by social desirability tendencies. Observations of spouses' behavior at home would probably show less pronounced differences in the reported use of "good" and "bad" tactics. Assuming that response bias do not vary systematically across conflict types and are not affected by relationship characteristics, however, the following results can be interpreted. The following comparisons between situations and relationship types should be valid, independent of more or less pronounced social desirability tendencies.

It was hypothesized that situational characteristics, such as the type of purchasing conflict, relationship characteristics, such as marital satisfaction, power patterns and duration of the relationship, gender of the agent, and personality affect the choice of influence tactics. This hypothesis has been confirmed. All variables but personality were related to participants' agreements to using various tactics in purchase decisions at home.

#### Type of conflict and influence tactics

Three types of conflict were distinguished which are based on disagreements concerning probabilities of outcomes, values, and allocation of resources (Brandstätter, 1987). Since probability conflicts represent no major differences between the spouses' desires but are rather difficult problems which both spouses want to resolve in an optimal way, cool reasoning should be the tactic used most. Persuasive, emotional tactics, and bargaining tactics should not be applied as often as in other conflicts (Madden, 1982; Davis, 1973). Although



the results do not clearly support this assumption, it was shown that acting helpless, offers of trade-offs and integrative bargaining were chosen less often than in other conflictual situations. This was especially true for husbands. There is also a tendency in the data showing that decisions were often based on the couples' role segmentation, that is, if probability conflicts occur, the expert spouse, or the one who has the responsibility for and control over the product at stake, decides individually, while the other yields. Again, husbands seem to be more likely than wives to report to use role segmentation tactics in such conflict situations. Reason was not chosen more often than in value and distributional conflicts. Taking into consideration that reason is an appropriate tactic in almost all situations of disagreement, a significant difference in the participants' agreements to using that tactic can be missing due to ceiling effects. It should be emphasized that in the Italian sample (Zani and Kirchler, 1993), a significant effect in the predicted direction was obtained: In probability conflicts spouses were more likely to report to use reason than in value conflicts or in disagreements concerning the allocation of resources.

Distributional conflicts request spouses' to negotiate about the allocation of resources. As far as distributional conflicts are concerned, this study clearly presents evidence that, in comparison with the other conflict types, the most frequently used tactics were trade-offs and integrative bargaining. These results are in line with previous findings (Madden, 1982; Kirchler, 1990).

In contrast with probability conflicts, disagreements on spouses' values and desires were predicted to be often resolved by persuasive tactics. This type of disagreement may easily lead to "hot" disputes and carries the risk of escalation. Cool reason may not always be possible. Spouses may then try to convince the other by emotional tactics, they are either charming or aggressive, leave the scene or insist, offer resources or punish the other by withdrawing benefits, they may display the importance of their wishes for themselves or distort information which they have about product alternatives. The results in Figure 2 do not support this assumption: no persuasive tactic, that is tactics from 1 to 12, was chosen most often in disagreements concerning values and rejected in other conflicts. However, when persuasive tactics (tactic 1 to 12), autonomous purchases (tactics 13 to 15) and negotiation tactics (tactic 16 and 17) are aggregated and the mean agreement scores are analyzed between conflict types, it can be shown that persuasive tactics were mainly applied in value conflicts (average agreement = -.03; agreement scores for probability and distributional conflicts = -.06 and -.09, respectively), negotiation tactics were most likely to be used in distributional conflicts (.67 relative to .51 and .56 in probability and value conflicts, respectively), and autonomous decisions were most likely applied in distributional (-.49) and probability conflicts (-.50 in contrast to value conflicts with agreement = -.60). An analysis of variance with conflict types and four clusters of tactics (persuasive, autonomous, negotiation, reason)

and reason more often and negative tactics such as distorted information, punishments, negative emotions and aggression less often. These results support previous findings suggesting intimacy and relationship quality to be related to polite and prosocial tactics (Baxter, 1984; Cody and McLaughlin, 1985).

Interestingly, marital happiness was also found to be related to reason. It seems that especially in conflicting situations where spouses risk "hot" disputes (value and distributional problems), happiness depends on the partners' capacity and willingness to stay "cool" by arguing in a logical and reasonable way. In probability conflicts, where reason is the most obvious tactic, happy and unhappy spouses apply that tactic equally often. These results seem to confirm that happiness is not necessarily related to frequency of conflicts but to the dynamics of conflict resolution. If spouses argue in a logical and cool way when they disagree on basic value topics, then the outcome may be positive and the conflict represents a gain rather than a loss for the relationship. On the other hand, if spouses report to use tactics other than logical tactics, especially tactics which hurt the other, then the conflict leads to deterioration of the relationship (Kirchler, 1989).

If reason is a tactic which is correlated with more optimal and rational decision outcomes, namely purchases, then it can also be concluded that marital satisfaction is related to the partner's management of finances, to optimal purchases and more rational expenditures. Happiness would then affect the choice of "cool" tactics which affect decision outcomes, and furthermore, decision outcomes affect the quality of the relationship. Failures in household expenditures may, indeed, be distressing for both the husband and wife and, at least in the long run, have a negative impact on their relationship. This hypothesis remains, however, untested here (Kirchler, 1989; Weick, 1971).

### Dominance

Most studies on joint purchase decisions focus on the spouses' mutual power and influence on each other. If dominance is the most crucial variable determining decision processes, it should significantly determine spouses' choices of influence tactics. Dominant partners should insist on their opinions, buy autonomously or decide according to their roles, almost never yield, be strong and hard and never act helpless, leave the scene or need to make coalitions with others to gain power.

By simply counting the significant correlations in Tables 3, 4 and 5, it can be observed that dominance was associated with agreement to using various decisions only half as often as were marital satisfaction or length of marriage. In other words, the spouses' dominance pattern was important in conflict situations but not the most or only important relationship characteristic. The most clear-cut findings concern correlations between dominance and agreement with deciding autonomously in value conflicts; especially dominant husbands were

found to decide according to their role more likely than husbands in egalitarian or matriarchal relationships (correlation for the male sample =  $r(252) = .23$ ;  $p < .01$ ; for the female sample  $r(252) = .16$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Dominant women were found to be less willing to yield according to roles relative to submissive women ( $r(252) = -.23$ ;  $p < .01$ ; for the male sample  $r(252) = -.03$ ;  $p > .05$ ). Dominant partners are more likely to insist on their opinions than submissive partners ( $r(504) = .19$ ;  $p < .01$ ), especially dominant men in probability conflicts and dominant women in value conflicts.

Moreover, the results in Tables 3, 4, and 5 suggest that dominant women were more partner-oriented than dominant men. They reported to use "nicer" tactics more often than men. In contrast to dominant men, dominant women more often expressed their wishes honestly, were more likely to search for integrative solutions and reported to use reason in probability conflicts. In distributional conflicts, dominant women were more inclined to report to use positive emotions and to avoid withdrawing resources. Also, in value conflicts they did not punish the other by withdrawing benefits and they searched for integrative solutions more often than men did. In short, dominant women reported to use integrative bargaining tactics more than dominant men. They reported to use more reason and overt information and fewer punishments.

Altogether, the present results seem to indicate that dominant spouses are more likely to decide by themselves whereas submissive spouses yield. But while men reported to use more authoritarian tactics to get their way, dominant women reported to use more effective tactics to find a commonly accepted way to resolve the conflict at stake. These gender differences in tactic use may derive from gender differences in the meaning of power. As Steil and Weltman (1992, p. 67) assert, women "regard power in terms of their responsibility and care for others. Thus, they report to use power to foster growth and enhance the power of others (e. g., Miller, 1986). Men, on the other hand, are more likely to perceive power in terms of assertion, aggression and achievement strivings (McClelland, 1975). From this perspective, the male-associated values of dominance and aggression result in a view of power that is aimed at advancing oneself by controlling, limiting or destroying the power of others (Miller, 1986)."

#### Length of cohabitation

In the course of time, intimate relationships undergo changes. Intimate partners who are in love with each other and decide to live together may, at the beginning, be enthusiastic about managing everyday affairs together and jointly deciding about products and commodities. When disagreeing on major topics, they may be willing to put themselves in the situation of the other and, if they want to realize their individual desires, try to convince the other by using rational, integrative and emotionally warm tactics. When spouses "lose their rose

colored spectacles" and romanticism gives way to a more "economic" relationship, they may, for reasons of conflict avoidance, develop roles which regulate decision making. With increasing length of cohabitation spouses should rely more and more on roles and decide autonomously or yield to the partner who has the responsibility and control over the decision area. Although the present data are not longitudinal, they support this view. In all three types of conflict (Tables 3, 4, and 5) and for both husbands and wives, it was found that with increasing length of marriage also agreements to buy autonomously, to decide according to roles, and to yield according to roles increase. There is more "spontaneous consensus" (Scanzoni, 1978; Szinovacz, 1987) in older couples than in younger ones, where more issues seem to be negotiable. Positive emotions, overt information, distorted information, and bargaining tactics are used less often by older couples than by younger ones.

It may be interesting to point to an interaction effect between gender and duration of the relationship. While women, independent of conflict type, seem to become less aggressive over time, for the male sample the correlations between duration of relationship and agreement to behave aggressively increased. The correlation for the female sample amounted to  $r(252) = -.09$ ;  $p > .05$ ; whereas for the male sample  $r(252) = .16$ ;  $p < .01$ .

Another interesting result concerns insisting and leaving the scene, respectively. It seems that in probability conflicts older couples leave the scene more often than younger couples. The opposite is true if disagreements concern values: older couples were less likely to leave the scene than younger ones.

Correlations between agreement to using various tactics and satisfaction were in some cases inversely covariant with correlation indexes between agreement and length of marriage. Except for role segmentation, many tactics which young couples were more likely to report to use than older couples were also more likely to be used by happy spouses than by unhappy ones. In fact, the nonparametric correlation between the correlation indexes reported for marital satisfaction and for length of marriage (Tables 3, 4, and 5) amounted to  $r(108) = -.39$ ;  $p < .01$ . It looks as if time consumed marital satisfaction and spouses changed their influence tactics. Similarly to the present data, Winter, Ferreira and Bowers (1973) and Dindia (1988) report non-married couples (in the present study, that is younger couples) as using more polite, less negative and more positive tactics than married couples (older couples in the present research). Although the correlation between satisfaction and length of marriage is significant ( $r(504) = -.10$ ;  $p < .05$  for the total sample), it can not be concluded that couples change from tactics which support the relationship to tactics which lead to a deterioration of their relationship. Rather, the results seem to suggest that, once romantic love gives way to mutual trust and security, spouses cease to rely on emotional and persuasive tactics or on bargaining tactics and develop roles which allow them to save energy otherwise consumed by the dynamics of conflict resolution. Emotional tactics are detected by the partner and are thus,

effectless. If young spouses were to decide autonomously according to traditional roles, they would offend the other; if older spouses decide autonomously, often the other implicitly agrees with or accepts the other's expertise, or the other's responsibility for the decision area or power.

### Personality

Personality had little impact on spouses' choices of influence tactics. However, it would be too hasty to conclude that personality has no impact on the choice of influence tactics in conflicts. In fact, self-confidence is associated with the reported use of various tactics in the work place (Kipnis et al., 1980). It seems, however, that personality offers little in the explanation of choice of influence tactics in intimate relationships. The present data support the view that in close relationships, personality factors lose importance or their importance is overshadowed by relationship characteristics. For instance, it sounds plausible that an emotionally unstable and timid person behaves in a timid way in public situations but not at home. Similarly, an emotionally unstable, extrovert, independent, norm-oriented, or self-confident person may be inclined to report to use certain influence tactics in conflict situations with people in public situations. At home, when arguing against the partner's opinion, these personal predispositions may lose or change their importance and give way to what the spouses have created together, their relationship with its special qualities.

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Table 1: Influence tactics and examples

Tactic content	Tactic label	Definition and examples
Emotion	1. Positive emotion 2. Negative emotion	Manipulation, humor, seductive behavior Threats, violence, cynicism, ridicule
Physical force	3. Helplessness 4. Aggression	Acting helpless or ill, crying Constraints, hurt, aggression, violence
Resources	5. Rewards 6. Punishments	Offering services and other resources Withdrawing resources, e. g., financial support
Presence	7. Insisting 8. Leaving the scene	Insist, discussing until the other yields, exhaust the other Resigning, yielding, talking about other topics, leaving the scene
Information	9. Overt information 10. Distorted information	Talking openly about one's interest, claiming need for a product Lying, presenting distorted information
Persons	11. Indirect coalition 12. Direct coalition	Reminding the other of children's needs, referring to neighbors Talking in presence of others
Fact	13. Buying autonomously	Buying without the other's consent
Role	14. Deciding according to roles 15. Yielding according to roles	Reminding the other of role segregation within the relationship, reminding the other of family norms Yielding because the other is responsible for the products at stake
Bargaining	16. Trade-offs 17. Integrative bargaining	Offers of trade-offs, bookkeeping, reminding the other of past favors Searching for an optimal solution which satisfies both partners
Reason	18. Reason	Talking in an emotionally neutral way about product alternatives, logical argumentation

Table 2: Reported use of influence tactics (absolute and standardized agreement indexes and standard deviations in parentheses)

Tactic label	Agreement indexes (n =504)	
	absolute values	standardized values
1. Positive emotion	3.43 (1.41)	.11 ( .58)
2. Negative emotion	2.18 (1.07)	-.56 ( .41)
3. Helplessness	1.96 (1.10)	-.67 ( .48)
4. Aggression	2.70 (1.31)	-.27 ( .57)
5. Rewards	2.98 (1.32)	-.12 ( .52)
6. Punishments	1.73 ( .89)	-.79 ( .42)
7. Insisting	3.02 (1.40)	-.11 ( .57)
8. Leaving the scene	3.74 (1.35)	.28 ( .57)
9. Overt information	4.92 (1.24)	.91 ( .55)
10. Distorted information	3.10 (1.24)	-.06 ( .48)
11. Indirect coalition	4.26 (1.32)	.55 ( .56)
12. Direct coalition	3.18 (1.67)	-.02 ( .72)
13. Buying autonomously	2.14 (1.27)	-.55 ( .59)
14. Deciding according to roles	2.18 (1.32)	-.53 ( .66)
15. Yielding according to roles	2.24 (1.30)	-.50 ( .65)
16. Trades-offs	2.98 (1.40)	-.13 ( .56)
17. Integrative bargaining	5.59 (1.07)	1.29 ( .70)
18. Reason	5.41 (1.10)	1.18 ( .55)

Table 3: Reported use of influence tactics in probability conflicts (average standardized agreement indexes by gender and correlations between agreement and relationship characteristics)

Tactic label	standardized							
	average agreement		r satisfaction		r dominance		r length of marriage	
	male	female	male	female	male	female	male	female
1. Positive emotion	.06	.10	.07	.20	-.03	-.19	-.14	-.20
2. Negative emotion	-.50	-.57	-.09	-.09	-.02	-.02	-.19	-.06
3. Helplessness	-.84 <sup>a</sup>	-.63 <sup>b</sup>	.05	.19	-.12	.03	-.17	-.08
4. Aggression	-.32	-.24	-.19	-.14	-.09	-.14	.02	-.08
5. Rewards	-.17	-.23	.01	<u>.22</u>	-.06	-.07	.12	.05
6. Punishments	-.81	-.84	-.02	-.07	-.06	.11	.06	.02
7. Insisting	-.03	-.01	-.06	.07	<u>.34</u>	.18	.04	-.10
8. Leaving the scene	.22	.37	-.11	.10	.05	-.06	.21	<u>.24</u>
9. Overt Information	.79	.87	.14	<u>.26</u>	-.03	<u>.25</u>	<u>-.25</u>	-.07
10. Distorted information	.03	.01	-.17	-.10	-.10	-.04	-.05	-.03
11. Indirect coalition	.65	.57	.08	<u>-.28</u>	-.10	-.03	.11	<u>.24</u>
12. Direct coalition	-.03	.12	.09	.00	.04	-.19	.02	.05
13. Buying autonomously	-.42 <sup>a</sup>	-.76 <sup>b</sup>	<u>-.28</u>	<u>-.25</u>	-.03	.11	.12	.05
14. Deciding according to roles	-.26 <sup>a</sup>	-.68 <sup>b</sup>	.06	-.15	<u>.28</u>	<u>.24</u>	.04	.11
15. Yielding according to roles	-.48	-.42	.04	-.11	-.07	-.19	<u>.30</u>	.20
16. Trade-offs	-.30 <sup>a</sup>	-.12 <sup>b</sup>	-.07	.09	.02	-.04	.02	<u>-.26</u>
17. Integrative bargaining	1.12	1.31	<u>.23</u>	.10	-.12	.09	<u>-.24</u>	-.17
18. Reason	1.28	1.14	.09	-.07	-.08	.13	-.13	.01

Note. N = 82 men and 82 women. Means with different superscripts are significantly different;  $p < .05$ . Underlined values are statistically significant; for  $|r| > .20$  significance =  $p < .05$ ; for  $|r| > .28 = p < .01$ .

Table 4: Reported use influence tactics in distributional conflicts (average standardized agreement indexes by gender and correlations between agreement and relationship characteristics)

Tactic label	standardized							
	average agreement		r satisfaction		r dominance		r length of marriage	
	male	female	male	female	male	female	male	female
1. Positive emotion	.15	.10	<u>.24</u>	<u>.33</u>	-.07	<u>.21</u>	<u>-.24</u>	-.18
2. Negative emotion	-.55	-.60	-.08	-.16	.14	.05	.00	.12
3. Helplessness	-.64	-.56	.00	.04	.02	-.16	-.03	.07
4. Aggression	-.30	-.32	-.14	-.16	.18	.07	.20	-.06
5. Rewards	.01 <sup>a</sup>	-.21 <sup>b</sup>	.06	.00	-.10	-.15	.03	.15
6. Punishments	-.72 <sup>a</sup>	-.81 <sup>b</sup>	-.18	<u>-.42</u>	.13	<u>-.28</u>	.17	.07
7. Insisting	-.20	-.15	-.03	-.11	.08	.17	-.03	-.09
8. Leaving the scene	.14 <sup>a</sup>	.33 <sup>b</sup>	-.08	-.03	-.04	-.00	-.18	.02
9. Overt Information	.91	.99	.09	.14	-.07	.13	<u>-.29</u>	<u>-.25</u>
10. Distorted information	-.16	-.18	-.14	<u>-.26</u>	.07	-.16	-.19	-.17
11. Indirect coalition	.46	.46	.12	.10	-.17	.08	-.16	-.19
12. Direct coalition	-.12	-.06	-.20	.16	-.01	-.08	.17	.03
13. Buying autonomously	-.38 <sup>a</sup>	-.64 <sup>b</sup>	<u>-.21</u>	-.17	.02	.05	.17	.18
14. Deciding according to roles	-.43 <sup>a</sup>	-.61 <sup>b</sup>	-.05	-.06	.20	.07	<u>.40</u>	<u>.26</u>
15. Yielding according to roles	-.56 <sup>a</sup>	-.37 <sup>b</sup>	.01	-.12	-.04	<u>-.32</u>	<u>.33</u>	<u>.38</u>
16. Trade-offs	-.10	.00	-.07	-.15	-.01	-.18	-.17	-.03
17. Integrative bargaining	1.29 <sup>a</sup>	1.46 <sup>b</sup>	<u>.31</u>	<u>.36</u>	-.07	.20	-.06	-.14
18. Reason	1.21	1.17	<u>.25</u>	.10	-.19	.16	-.17	-.09

Note. N = 93 men and 93 women. Means with different superscripts are significantly different;  $p < .05$ . Underlined values are statistically significant; for  $|r| > .20$  significance =  $p < .05$ ; for  $|r| > .27 = p < .01$ .

Table 5: Reported use influence tactics in value conflicts (average standardized agreement indexes by gender and correlations between agreement and relationship characteristics)

Tactic label	standardized							
	average agreement		r satisfaction		r dominance		r length of marriage	
	male	female	male	female	male	female	male	female
1. Positive emotion	.10	.13	<u>.27</u>	<u>.24</u>	.06	-.00	<u>-.30</u>	-.13
2. Negative emotion	-.57	-.54	<u>-.23</u>	-.16	.17	-.17	-.03	.02
3. Helplessness	-.74	-.62	-.17	-.06	-.01	-.15	-.01	-.07
4. Aggression	-.31	-.17	-.07	-.14	-.10	-.03	<u>.26</u>	-.12
5. Rewards	-.01	-.12	.19	-.05	-.17	-.16	.03	-.04
6. Punishments	-.83	-.76	-.03	-.05	.04	<u>-.23</u>	.12	.18
7. Insisting	-.12	-.10	-.17	-.10	.02	<u>.37</u>	-.07	<u>-.25</u>
8. Leaving the scene	.30	.33	-.16	.02	-.07	.08	-.06	-.11
9. Overt Information	.93	.97	<u>.26</u>	<u>.48</u>	.11	.04	-.15	-.09
10. Distorted information	-.02	.01	-.00	-.08	-.11	-.17	<u>-.39</u>	-.12
11. Indirect coalition	.61	.63	-.13	.05	-.21	-.01	.07	.07
12. Direct coalition	.01	.02	-.07	-.19	-.20	-.08	-.22	.09
13. Buying autonomously	-.52	-.67	-.18	<u>-.26</u>	<u>.26</u>	.21	<u>.26</u>	.19
14. Deciding according to roles	-.52 <sup>a</sup>	-.76 <sup>b</sup>	-.19	-.15	<u>.27</u>	.18	<u>.37</u>	<u>.34</u>
15. Yielding according to roles	-.61	-.61	.11	-.14	.06	-.18	.22	<u>.41</u>
16. Trade-offs	-.15	-.11	-.04	-.06	-.04	-.08	-.13	<u>-.24</u>
17. Integrative bargaining	1.25	1.27	<u>.31</u>	<u>.29</u>	-.08	.19	-.12	-.09
18. Reason	1.20	1.09	<u>.23</u>	<u>.27</u>	.03	.03	.18	.03

Note. N = 77 men and 77 women. Means with different superscripts are significantly different;  $p < .05$ . Underlined values are statistically significant; for  $|r| > .22$  significance =  $p < .05$ ; for  $|r| > .29 = p < .01$ .

Figure 1: Standardized indexes of reported use of tactics by gender

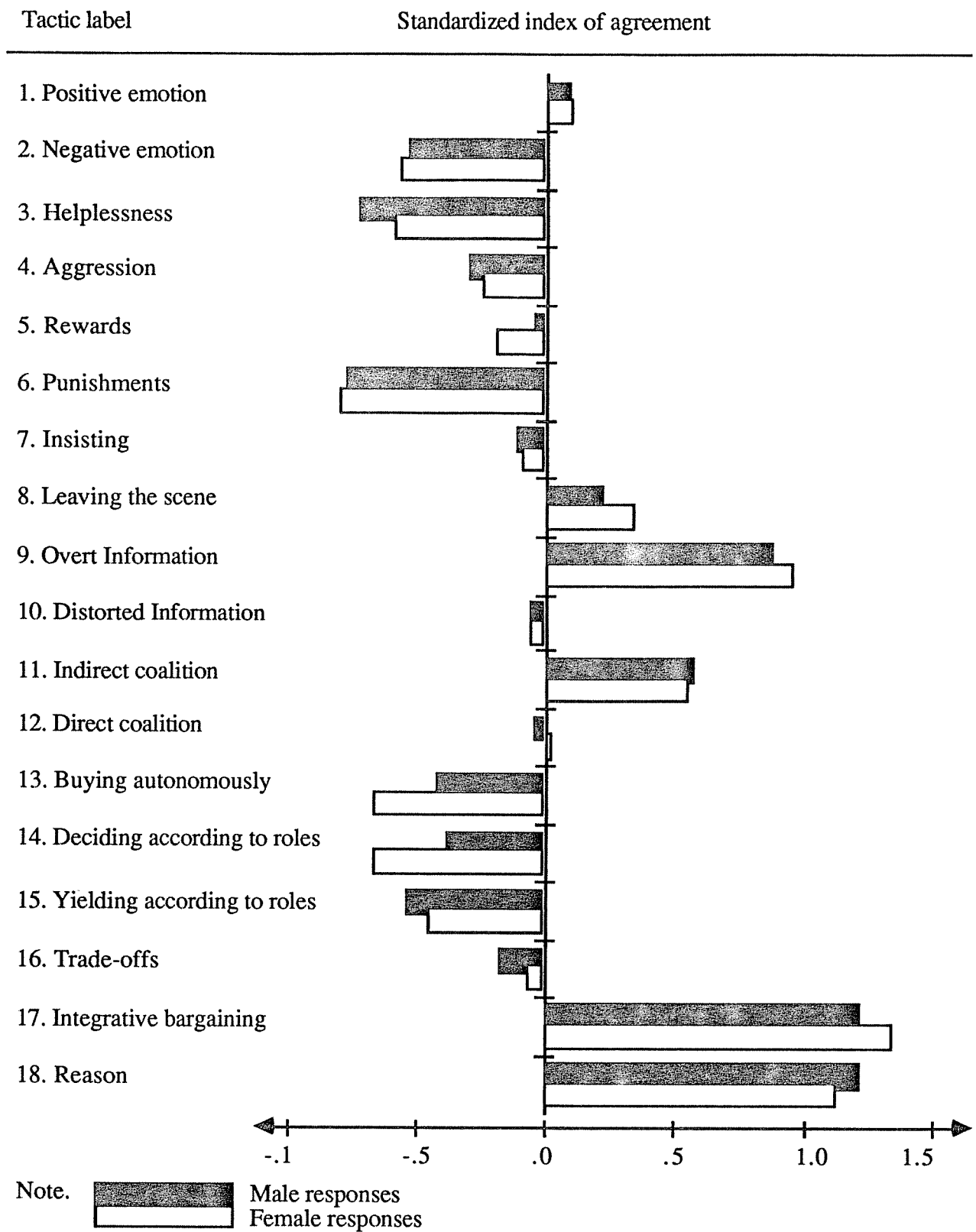


Figure 2: Standardized indexes of reported use of tactics by conflict type (Asterisks indicate significant differences)

