

# Using Vignettes to Understand Intra-household Decision-Making

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# Household Decision-Making

- Questions “who decides,” “who participates in decision-making” and “who has the final say”... are used both as a measure of bargaining power and as an outcome measure.
- Typically assumes women being involved in decisions is good.
- But these approaches tell us nothing about the heterogeneity among couples or the processes of decision-making.

# Paper

- Develop a typology of why the decision-maker is chosen
- Describe who decides and why in households in rural Senegal for both a production and a consumption decision
- And then correlate these with outcomes, milk production and child HAZ score.

## Household Typology

- Dictator – one person always decides
- Contribution – person who contributes makes that decision
- Separate spheres – make decisions in particular domains
- Community norms – people do what is expected, may say they don't make a decision
- Most informed – most knowledgeable person in that domain decides

## Data

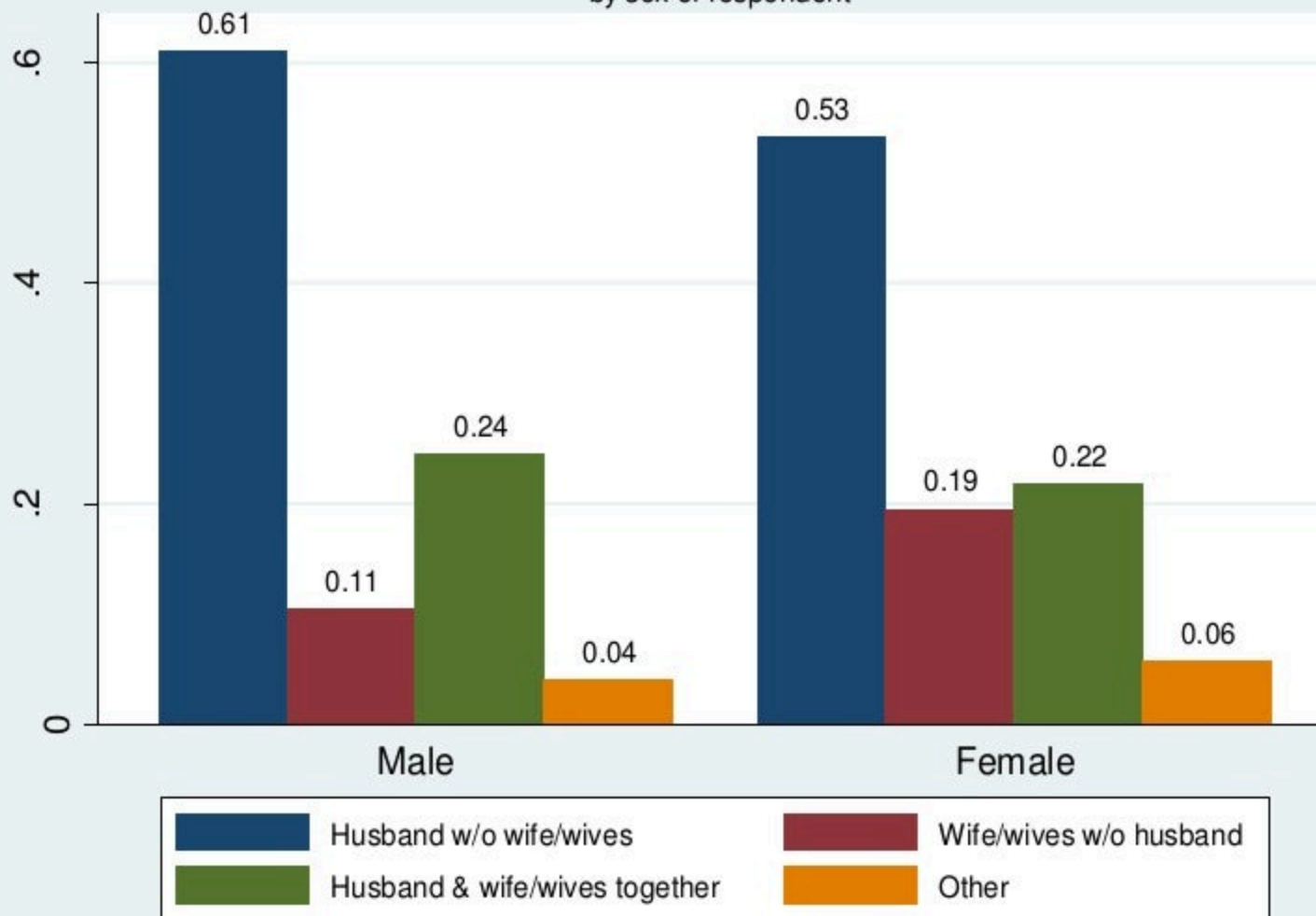
- Collected as part of an RCT on training women to increase dairy production and sales in Senegal.
- 502 households where husband and wife interviewed.



# Vignettes

- Filter question about who in their household makes decisions about:
  - The distribution of food among lactating cows
  - How to spend money from milk sales
- Then a set of five vignettes, each representing a type of household.

Production: Who contributes to decisions concerning distribution of food among lactating cows?  
by sex of respondent

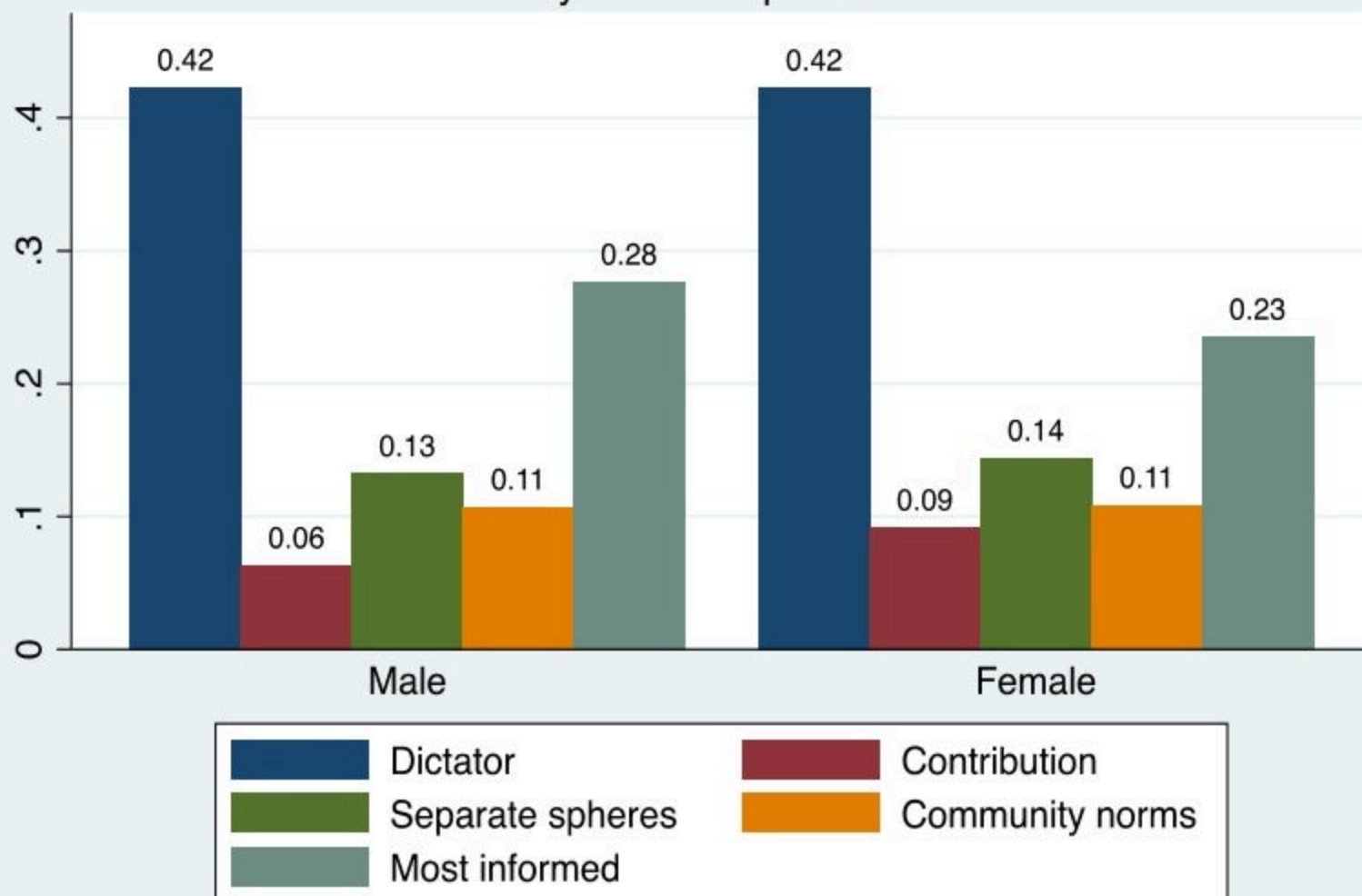


## Vignette examples

- Abdou and Mariama are married. Abdou decides how to allocate the concentrated food among the lactating cows because he makes all decisions for the family.
- Mousa and Bineta are married. Mousa decides how to allocate the concentrated food among the lactating cows because he makes these decisions while Bineta makes other decisions for the family.”



## Production: Which couple do you most resemble? by sex of respondent



## How do these types correlate with outcomes?

- Production outcome: mean milk output per COW
- Consumption outcome: HAZ of children

## Who decides?

- HAZ score higher when decide together than when wife decides alone
- No differences for milk output

## Household type and outcomes

- Milk output is worse when dictator or social norms (most informed is the base)
- HAZ not correlated with household type
- (Controlling for who decides)

## Interaction of who decides and household type

- Mean milk production:
  - Lower when norms is the household type, regardless of who decides
  - Also lower when wife is dictator
- HAZ score:
  - Higher when husband decides without wife and norms
- (Omitted is other decides and most informed)



## Conclusions

- We also consider the answer to questions about whether the best decision was made for the household and for the respondent.
- The household type does provide additional information.
- Households deciding based on social norms do worse in production outcomes.



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