

# Educational Heterogamy and Relationship Quality: A Couple-Level Analysis

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## Background

- Women's Education
  - 1982 crossover: first time more women than men received bachelor's degrees
  - 2012 crossover: of all married couples, more wives have higher education than their husbands
  - 2014 newlyweds: 27% of women married men with less education, while only 15% of men married women with less education
- Relationship Quality
  - Perceived relationship inequity or unfairness is associated with more instability, less satisfaction and happiness in relationship

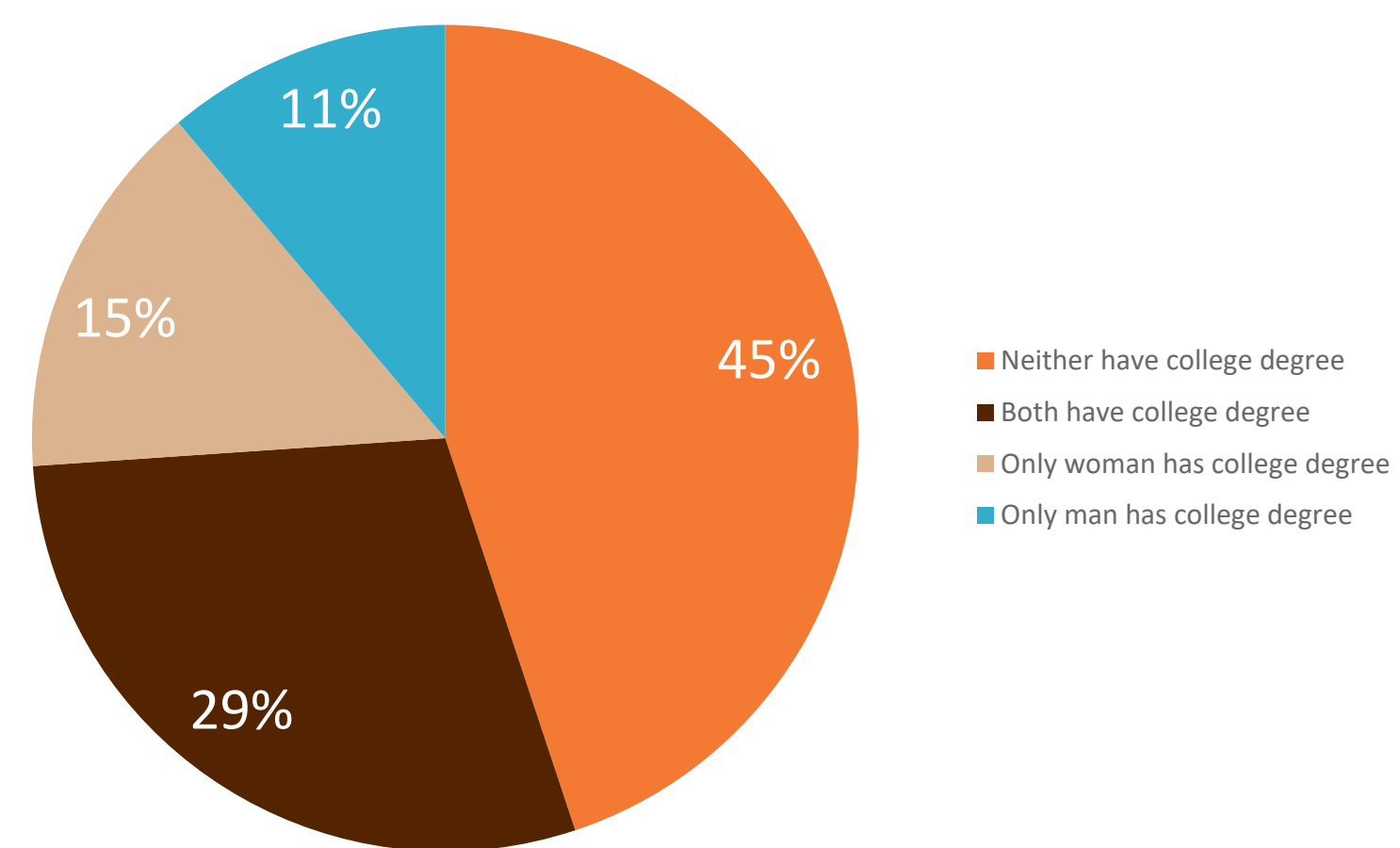
## Research Questions

1. Does relationship quality differ between marriages in which only the woman has a college degree and marriages in which only the man has a college degree?
2. At which category of educational heterogamy do couples have the highest relationship quality?
3. Does relationship quality differ by gender at different categories of educational heterogamy?

## Data

- 2010 Married and Cohabiting Couples Survey
  - Nationally representative
  - 2150 individuals aged 18-64
    - 752 married couples
    - 323 cohabiting couples
  - Individual- and couple-level data
- Analytic Sample
  - Couples in which woman is aged 25-52
  - 510 married couples (1020 individuals)

Figure 1. Distribution of Educational Heterogamy Categories in Sample



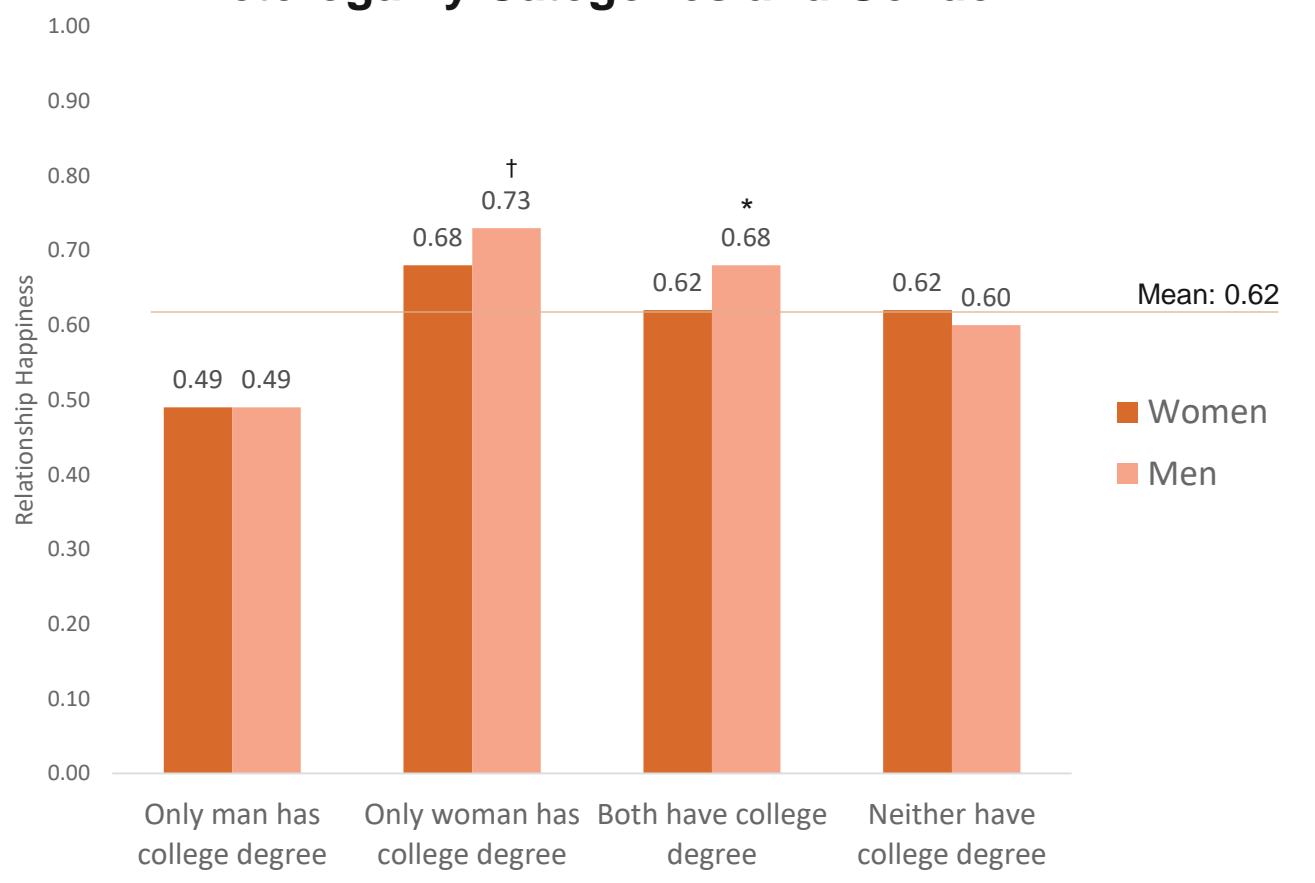
Source: 2010 Married and Cohabiting Couples Survey

## Measures and Analysis

- Dependent Variable: Relationship Quality
  - Relationship happiness ("How would you rate your relationship with your current spouse/partner?")
  - Relationship disillusionment (11-item scale)
- Independent Variable: Educational Heterogamy
- Controls
  - Individual-level
  - Couple-level
- Seemingly Unrelated Regression

## Results

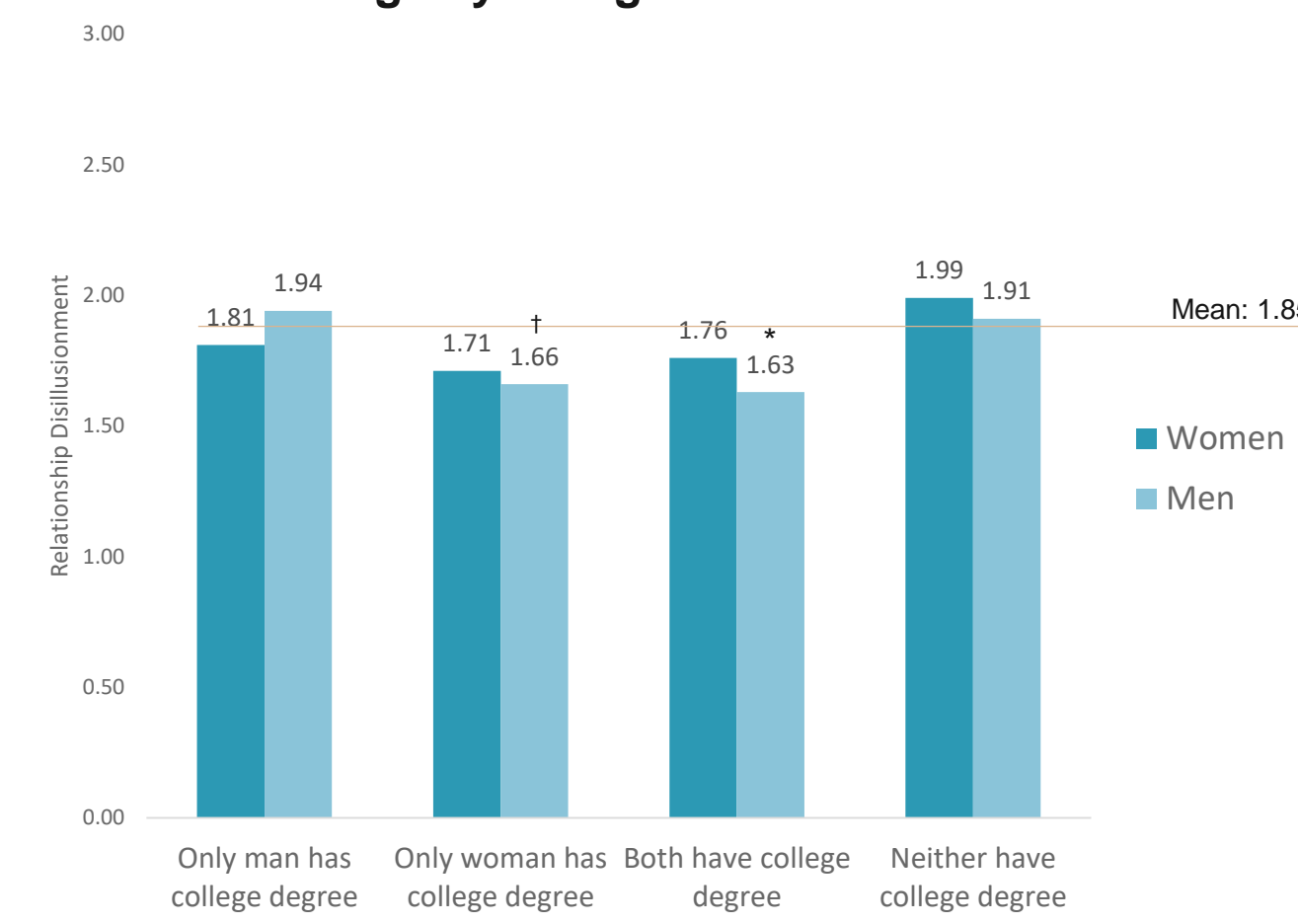
Figure 2. Relationship Happiness by Educational Heterogamy Categories and Gender



†p<.10. \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

Source: 2010 Married and Cohabiting Couples Survey

Figure 3. Relationship Disillusionment by Educational Heterogamy Categories and Gender



†p<.10. \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

Source: 2010 Married and Cohabiting Couples Survey

## Conclusions and Future Directions

- Among married women in this sample, educational heterogamy is not associated with relationship quality.
- Husbands are happier and less disillusioned in their relationship when their wife has a college degree.
- Future: analyze possible confounding variables more closely (e.g. income), examine by race/ethnicity, social class