# Factors Associated With Dual-Earner Couples' Relative Earning Patterns in 2016

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## Research Objective

- To provide a contemporary portrait of dual-earner couples' relative earning patterns and demographic factors associated with such patterns

## Background

- Dual-earning couples are currently the norm in the United States
- Three types: Equal contributor (each contributes 40-60% of the household income), man majority (60%+) contributor, woman majority contributor couples (Raley et al., 2006)
- What factors are related to these three types?

  ***Competing theoretical perspectives***
  - *Human Capital Perspective[1]*
    - Women's increased human capital and labor supply are associated with women earning more than male partner
  - *Gender Perspective/egalitarian[2]*
    - For women, childrearing is one of the major determinants of reducing time allocation in paid work, same is not true for men

## Data & Method

- 2017 March Supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS), including the ASEC
- ***Analytic sample:*** Dual-earning, different-gender couples, where both partners are employed in the previous year ($N$ = 28,624)

## Descriptive Results

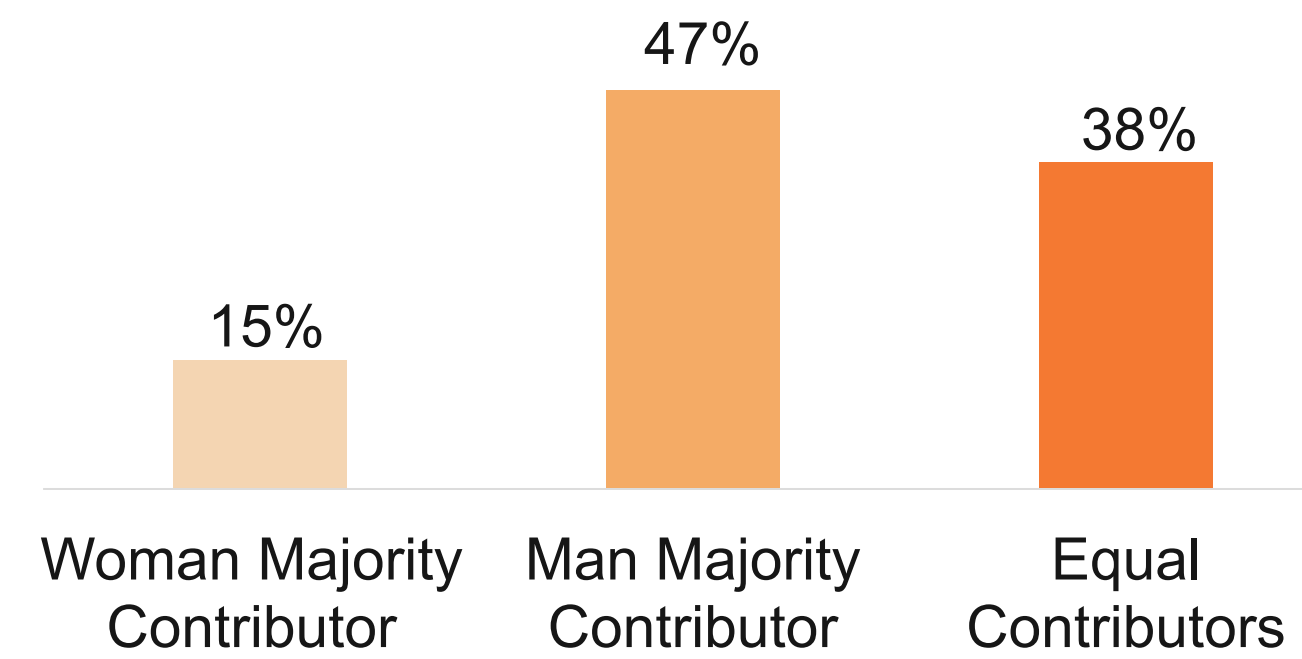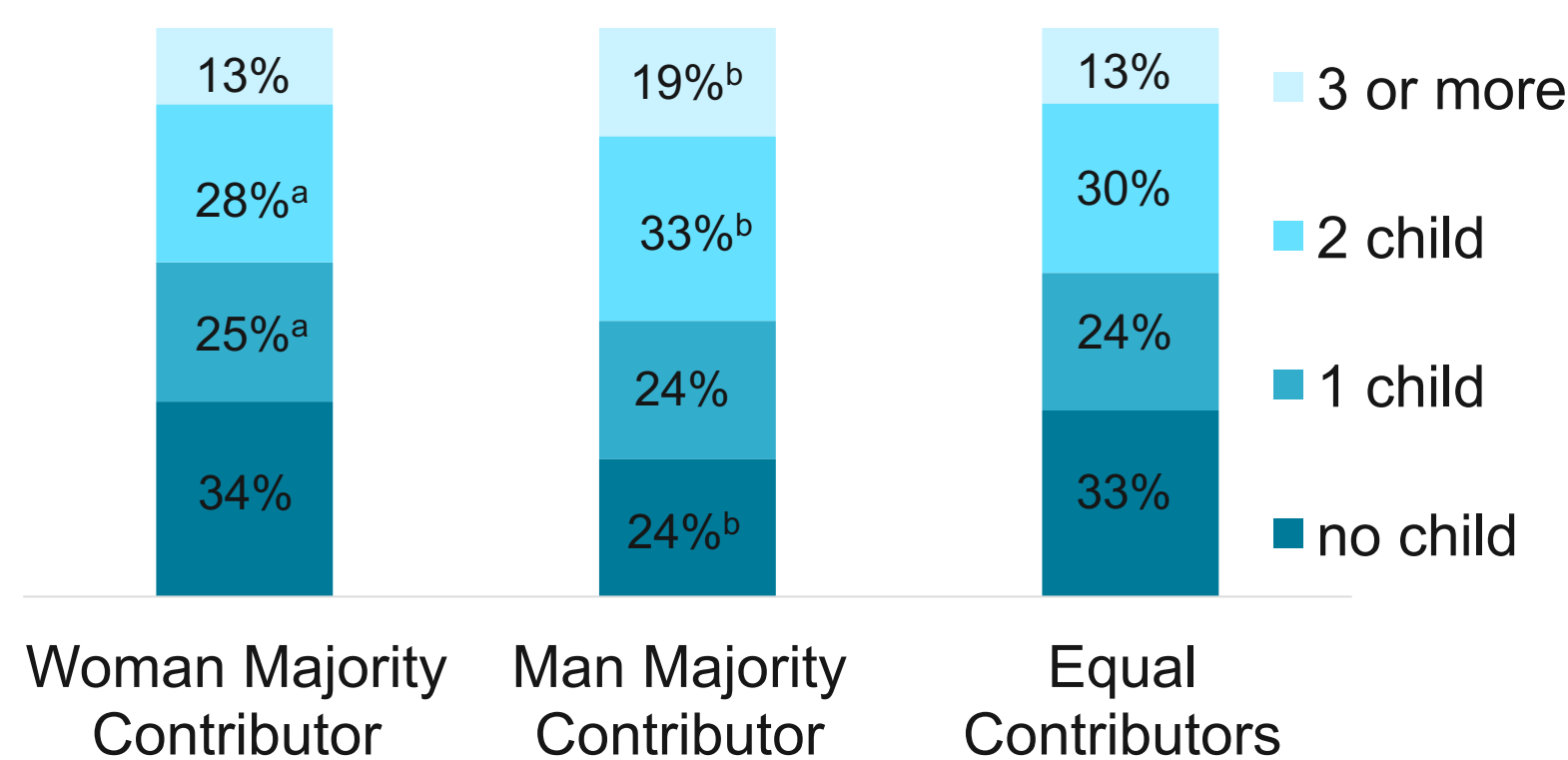Figure 1. Relative Earning Types Among Dual-Earning Couples



- Woman Majority Contributor: 15%
- Man Majority Contributor: 47%
- Equal Contributors: 38%

Figure 2. Number of Children by Relative Earning Type



| | Woman Majority Contributor | Man Majority Contributor | Equal Contributors |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 or more | 13% | 19%[b] | 13% |
| 2 child | 28%[a] | 33%[b] | 30% |
| 1 child | 25%[a] | 24% | 24% |
| no child | 34% | 24%[b] | 33% |

[a] Woman majority contributors significantly different from equal
[b] Men majority contributors significantly different from woman majority & equal

## Multivariate Results

**Table 1: Relative Risk Ratios from the Multinomial Logistic Regression Models Contrasting the Three Relative Earning Couple Types among Dual Earners**

| | Equal Contributors (ref.) vs. Man Majority Contributor | | | | Equal Contributor (ref.) vs. Woman Majority Contributor | | | | Man Majority Contributor (ref.) vs. Woman Majority Contributor | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | rrr | SE | | | rrr | SE | | | rrr | SE | | |
| *Women's Education* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Less than HS | 1.05 | 0.08 | | | 0.78 | 0.11 | | | 0.75 | 0.10 | * | |
| Some college | 1.04 | 0.06 | | | 1.21 | 0.10 | * | | 1.17 | 0.09 | | |
| Associates degree | 1.06 | 0.06 | | | 1.38 | 0.12 | *** | | 1.30 | 0.11 | *** | |
| College degree | 0.81 | 0.04 | *** | | 1.39 | 0.10 | *** | | 1.72 | 0.12 | *** | |
| Postgraduate degree | 0.58 | 0.03 | *** | | 1.63 | 0.12 | *** | | 2.80 | 0.21 | *** | |
| *Relative Education* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Woman more educated | 0.63 | 0.04 | *** | | 1.52 | 0.10 | *** | | 2.40 | 0.16 | *** | |
| Man more educated | 1.91 | 0.17 | *** | | 0.67 | 0.11 | * | | 0.35 | 0.06 | *** | |
| *Number of Children* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| One | 1.24 | 0.06 | *** | | 1.00 | 0.06 | | | 0.80 | 0.05 | *** | |
| Two | 1.35 | 0.06 | *** | | 0.94 | 0.06 | | | 0.69 | 0.04 | *** | |
| Three or more | 1.78 | 0.09 | *** | | 1.07 | 0.08 | | | 0.60 | 0.04 | *** | |
| *Presence of Preschool Children* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| One or more | 1.08 | 0.04 | | | 1.04 | 0.04 | | | 0.96 | 0.06 | | |
| *Couple Union Type* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cohabiting | 0.90 | 0.05 | * | | 1.37 | 0.09 | *** | | 1.53 | 0.10 | *** | |
| *Age* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 35-44 years | 1.10 | 0.05 | * | | 1.09 | 0.06 | | | 0.99 | 0.06 | | |
| 45-54 years | 1.41 | 0.07 | *** | | 1.37 | 0.09 | *** | | 0.97 | 0.06 | | |
| *Couple Relative Age* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Men > 5 years | 1.19 | 0.06 | *** | | 0.77 | 0.05 | *** | | 0.65 | 0.04 | *** | |
| *Race-ethnicity* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Both Black | 0.56 | 0.04 | *** | | 1.12 | 0.09 | | | 1.98 | 0.16 | *** | |
| Both Hispanic | 0.83 | 0.04 | *** | | 0.89 | 0.07 | | | 1.07 | 0.08 | | |
| Both Asian | 0.90 | 0.06 | | | 0.74 | 0.07 | *** | | 0.82 | 0.08 | * | |
| Other/interracial | 0.84 | 0.04 | *** | | 1.16 | 0.07 | ** | | 1.39 | 0.08 | *** | |
| *Paid work hours* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Men < full-time | 0.55 | 0.02 | *** | | 1.40 | 0.06 | *** | | 2.54 | 0.11 | *** | |

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, grey shading indicates similar findings when comparing for equal and woman majority contributors to man majority contributors. The data are weighted.

- The **number of children** is associated with the relative risk of being in the **man majority contributor couple**

- **Couples more likely to be <u>equal providing</u> & <u>women providing the majority</u> relative to** men providing the majority when:
  - women have higher levels of education[1]
  - women are more educated than their male partners[1]
  - there are fewer or no dependent children in the household[2]
  - couple's are cohabiting[2]
  - the male partner < 5 years older[1]
  - couple's are black & interracial[2]
  - Men work less than full-time[1]

## Conclusion

- There is support for both *human capital[1]* and *gender/egalitarian[2]* perspectives
- Number of children is a distinguishing factor when comparing the relative risk of being in each of the relative earning types
  - # of children <u>does not</u> predict whether a couple is equal vs. woman majority contributing, # of children <u>does</u> predict men providing majority
- Man provides the majority couples have significantly more children (2 or more) than both equal and woman providing the majority
- Couples that have no children are significantly more common in equal and women providing the majority