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Married Women’s Headship:  
The Relationship between Economic Power and Status in the Household

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Abstract

Household headship among married couples has usually been equated with one main economic provider of the household, almost always the husband. Despite the dramatic rise in married women’s labor force participation, the proportion of married women who are head of household remains small, 3.7 percent in 1980 rising to only 6.9 percent in 1990. This paper examines to what degree married female headship reflects headship in the traditional sense (the head is the main or only breadwinner of a married couple) versus other non-economic explanations. Using the 1980-1990 U.S. Censuses, we find strong support for a traditional explanation of headship: married women who are primary economic providers (i.e., women contributing 70 percent or more of a couple’s income) are much more likely to head the household than women in marriages where neither spouse is the main provider. However, persistent race and education effects indicate that economics is not the only factor driving married women’s headship.

Data Used: 1980 PUMS, 1990 PUMS
Introduction

The economic independence of married women in the United States has risen dramatically in the past few decades. The labor force participation rate of all married working-age women increased from 54.7 percent in 1968 to 72.8 percent in 1988 (Cancian, Danziger, and Gottschalk, 1993). Consequently, the economic status of married women relative to their husbands has also risen (Sorensen and McLanahan, 1987). The proportion of women in marriages where the husband is the primary breadwinner (i.e., he earns 70 percent or more of a couple’s total earnings) declined from 78 percent in 1963 to 46 percent in 1992 for White women and from 71 percent in 1963 to 33 percent in 1992 for Black women (Dechter and Smock, 1994). While the proportion of married women who are primary breadwinners still remains small (no more than 7 percent in 1992), more married women are in co-provider marriages than in the traditional breadwinner husband marriages of thirty years ago (Dechter and Smock, 1994). Married women are not just supplementing their husbands’ earnings but are contributing an increasing percentage of couples’ total income.

The consequences of these changes have been quite dramatic as women and men struggle to balance work and family. There is a growing literature on changing gender roles in the household with respect to housework and parenting (Brines, 1994; Hochschild, 1989; Goldscheider and Waite, 1991). What remains to be seen, however, is if the economic gains of women have affected one of the historically male statuses in the family: the head of household. Household headship as a term connoting one male breadwinner of the family has become anomalous within the reality of marriage for most married Americans (Sweet and Bumpass, 1987: 337). Given that an increasing number of women are becoming economically independent within marriage, has the link between headship and a primary male economic provider remained? This paper is the first systematic examination of household headship among married women and contributes to the growing literature on changing gender roles within marriage and the household. We ask what distinguishes married female householders from non-householders and examine to what degree household headship is linked to economic dependency, symbolic gender behaviors, or if it is simply a convention.

Headship in the U.S. Census

A recent change in the U.S. census allows us to examine the link between headship and the economic status of wives relative to their husbands. In the 1980 U.S. Census, married women could be enumerated as head of household in contrast to previous censuses where they had been automatically recoded as spouse of head. Additionally, the term “head of household” became “householder,” a neutral term indicative of a more equitable relationship among adults living together. The householder is the person “in whose name the home is owned or rented.” For married couples who
jointly own or rent their home, either spouse could be listed as the householder (Ruggles, 1991: 141). These procedural changes were the Census Bureau’s response to pressure from various feminist groups (Smith, 1992: 422) and the reality of the changing economic roles of married women.

The census measure of headship is, of course, only one aspect of status in the household and may not completely reflect differences in authority or economic power between spouses. In a 1975 Census Bureau pretest, when given a number of options for identifying the household head, 30 percent of married women said that both they and their husbands were head of household, while only 2 percent of married women identified themselves as head of household, leaving over two-thirds identifying their husbands as household head (Smith, 1992: 447). The small number of married women identifying themselves as the householder became evident in the 1980 U.S. Census, when the change in coding was first implemented: only 3.7 percent of married, spouse present women were householders. By 1990 the percentage had risen to 6.9 percent. The small proportion of married women who are head of household may indicate that most couples are just following convention by naming the husband as head. However, fewer than 10 percent of married women from the 1975 Census Bureau pretest reported that the census practice of always naming the husband as head of household did not matter (Smith, 1992).

The purpose of this paper is to test several hypotheses about the household headship of married women. The main hypothesis focuses on the degree to which headship is related to income contribution, regardless of the sex of the person contributing. We also examine alternative hypotheses that focus on symbolic gender behaviors and egalitarian values. We estimate models of headship using both individual and couple characteristics and especially emphasize the characteristics of wives compared to their husbands on a number of economic, social, and demographic dimensions. U.S. census data readily allow for the comparison of individuals within the same household, although most studies drawing on these data focus on individual characteristics only.

Theoretical Background

Our hypotheses are described here and summarized in Table 1, which shows the expected direction of the effect of key variables on female headship. The first explanation of married women’s headship is based on an exchange model within marriage where income is exchanged for status in the household. Married women householders are either the “main providers” of the household (i.e., they contribute most of the couple’s total income) or command better opportunities in the labor market than their husbands (e.g., they are better educated than their husbands). This argument is essentially neutral on the matter of gender; headship is not affected by who is doing the exchanging, but rather is affected by the exchange itself (i.e., economic status alone is exchanged for status in the household). We expect that women who are the main providers will be more likely to head the household. Also, if a wife has more education than her husband
(regardless of the level of education), we expect her to be more likely to head the household, as education reflects her potential in the labor market.

While the provider hypothesis is gender-neutral, the second explanation of married women’s headship assumes household headship is a gendered position in the household and is a symbolically male status. When there is an imbalance in gender roles in the household, namely when wives are fulfilling provider roles while their husbands are not, women will compensate for this imbalance by being less likely to head the household than women in co-provider marriages. In other words, the husband is head of household in an effort to redress the imbalance in the gender “display” (see Brines, 1994). Hochschild (1989) calls this the principle of balancing: “...if men lose power over women in one way, they make up for it in another way...” (1989: 221). Of course, given this gendered definition of headship, women who are in marriages where the husband is the main provider will also be less likely to head the household than women in co-provider marriages, though support could be made in this case for either the provider hypothesis or the compensation hypothesis.

The third hypothesis of headship assumes that headship is not related to issues of economics but is more ideologically-based. In this sense, married women’s headship is positively related to progressive ideas about gender roles within and outside of marriage. We assume that progressive ideas about gender roles are gained through higher education, where people are consistently subjected to different ideas through their long education careers, are more tolerant of alternative styles of living, and are more receptive to ideas concerning the liberation of women. The literature on housework shows that highly educated men do more housework while highly educated women do less housework--suggesting that egalitarian attitudes explain some of the gender differences in housework (Goldscheider and Waite, 1991). We expect the egalitarian effect of a high education of both spouses to make married women more likely to be head of household, regardless of the symmetry of the economic relationship in the marriage. The education level of the wife alone or the relative difference in education levels between husband and wife should have no effect on headship. Thus, it is not an imbalance in economic status between spouses (monetarily or otherwise) that is behind married women’s headship but rather shared egalitarian ideas about gender and marriage--ideas held strongly enough by both spouses to spurn the custom of naming the husband as head of household.

The null hypothesis is that there is no significant relationship between the economic provider, education, or other variables and married women’s headship. Given that most married people pool their assets (Treas, 1993), we would expect to see a much higher proportion of married female heads than we actually do in 1980 and 1990 (assuming that couples who jointly own or rent their homes would list the wife half the time and the husband half the time as household head). Since this is not the case, our null hypothesis leads us to expect that the husband is listed as head of household simply by custom, not reflective of measurable economic or social differentials between spouses.
Data and Methods

We analyze data from the 1980 and 1990 U. S. Census Public Use Microdata Samples (1/1000 PUMS). All married, spouse present women were included in the sample for each year and their husbands’ information was appended to their record. Headship is measured using the basic relationship variable in the census which separately identifies both householder and spouse of householder. Although these data provide us with the opportunity to examine headship as an indicator of status in the household, census data contain neither attitudinal questions nor information about how a married couple makes decisions.

Our key independent variable is a categorical variable characterizing the main income provider of a couple. This measure is based on previous work on married women’s economic independence by Dechter and Smock (1994) and Sorensen and McLanahan (1987). The measure is constructed by dummy variables as follows:

Wife is main provider if \( I_w / (I_w + I_h) > .70 \)
Husband is main provider if \( I_h / (I_w + I_h) > .70 \)
Co-provider couple if \( I_w / (I_w + I_h) < .70 \) and \( I_h / (I_w + I_h) < .70 \)

where,

\[ I_w = \text{wife’s total income} \]
\[ I_h = \text{husband’s total income} \]

We use total income instead of wages only so as not to limit our sample only to working age couples since many elderly couples are not contributing earnings but other sources of income such as pensions and social security. Additionally, we use a categorical variable to describe the economic balance between husband and wife rather than a continuous variable, such as an income gap, because we assume that it is the status of being the “main” provider that should have an influence on headship in the household rather than the incremental difference in dollars between husband and wife. An income contribution of at least 70 percent of the married couple’s total income is a reasonable cut-point to designate one spouse as the primary income provider.2

The other main independent variables are a wife’s education level and the gap in education between husband and wife. Education is viewed both in terms of opportunities in the labor market and as exposure to more progressive ideas about gender roles in marriage. As a result, we use broad education categories rather than single years of
education (e.g., less than high school, high school graduate only, some college education (less than 4 years), 4 years of college education, and some post-B.A. education).³

Other variables contrast the characteristics of one spouse with the other in order to control for unequal statuses between husband and wife. These variables contrast spouses by race, age (in single years), disability status, and residence five years ago. Residence five years ago is a partial indicator of the person in whose name the dwelling is rented, being bought, or owned, i.e., the literal census definition of household headship. In a small percentage of cases (2.6 percent in 1980 and 4 percent in 1990), one spouse was living in the current residence five years ago and the other spouse was not. This makes it more likely that the initially resident spouse is in fact the person who owns or rents the house and should be head by definition. Each model is estimated using logistic regression since the dependent variable is dichotomous and the probabilities must be bound between 0 and 1.

**Descriptive Results**

Table 2 shows the percent of married, spouse present women who are householders by individual characteristics and then by characteristics of the married couple. The overall patterns within categories are the same in 1980 and 1990 except that the differences are larger and more distinct in 1990. Results will be described using the 1990 figures except where there is a divergent pattern between 1980 and 1990.

Age shows a curvilinear effect: a higher proportion of young adult and elderly women are head of household compared to middle-age women. In 1990 this curve is weighted more towards young women while in 1980 it is weighted more towards elderly women. Thus, it is difficult to interpret age differences in married women’s headship as life course effects per se. Race and ethnic differences are quite noticeable. Black married women are almost twice as often householders than non-Hispanic White or Hispanic women. Only in 1990 are Asian and Other ethnic women (e.g., Native American women) readily distinct in terms of headship: Asian women are less often household head (5.03 percent) and Other ethnic women are more often household head (11.15 percent).

Higher education is positively related to married women’s headship although not in a linear pattern. Interestingly, in both 1980 and 1990 women who did not graduate from high school were more likely to be heads of households than high school graduates. We suspect that this variable is somewhat confounded with age and economic provider status. Women with a college degree or higher are more often head of household than women with less education (for 1990 compare 10.58 percent for women with some post-college education to 5.68 percent for women with a high school degree only). Given the power that education wields in the labor market, it is surprising that there are not larger differences between these rather broad education levels.
We find marked distinctions of headship among married women by comparing a wife’s characteristics to those of her husband. About two-fifths of women whose husbands moved in with them—a situation where the wife is more likely to be the sole owner/renter of the home—were household heads. At the same time, however, it is surprising that even in this case where the literal census definition of headship strongly suggests that a wife should be the household head, more than three-fifths still list the husband as head. Age gaps between spouses mark distinctions in married women’s headship but only at the extreme endpoints: women who are 10 or more years older than their husband have the highest level of headship (in 1990 compare 15.90 percent to 6.14 percent for women who are the same age as their husband).

Just as race and ethnicity were distinct markers of married women’s headship, so too is marriage across race and ethnic lines. Women married to men from a different race or ethnic group (using the broad race and ethnic groups described above) are more often heading the household (almost 1 in 10 women in mixed race marriages do so in 1990) than women who did not outmarry. In this case, intermarriage may be indicative of not only a willingness to break with societal barriers towards mixed race marriage but also a willingness to break with traditional ideas about gender roles within marriage.

There is a linear pattern between headship and the gap between a wife’s education and that of her husband. Headship is higher for women who are much more educated than their husbands (e.g., “she has 2 or more levels” means she is a college graduate while he has a high school degree only or she has some college while he did not finish high school) than for women who have the same level of education as their husband (9.98 percent versus 6.88 percent in 1990). Money, however, is the stronger correlate of household headship. Twice as many women who are the primary providers of a couple are household heads compared to women in co-provider marriages (19.30 percent versus 9.06 percent in 1990). The gap is even larger when we look at women in marriages where their husband is the primary provider (4.44 percent of these wives are heads). These patterns in headship by couple characteristics suggest that women in non-conventional marriages are also more likely to be the “non-conventional” head of household.

The median total income of married women householders is $12,000 in 1990 compared to $7,000 for women who are not head of household. The difference is large but not as large as we might have expected given some of the descriptive findings above (for example the differences in headship by educational level). There is virtually no difference between median couples’ total income by married women’s headship (in 1990 compare $36,000 for wife-headed households to $36,264 for husband-headed households). It seems then that it is not so much the absolute amount of money that a woman contributes that influences status in the household but rather that she is the primary contributor compared to her husband.
Multivariate Results

We generate a model of headship for 1980 and 1990 based on our three hypotheses of married women’s headship. Provider type and the education gap between spouses are the main variables of interest. We also include a couple’s total income (divided by $1,000) in order to control for the general level of economic well-being. Table 3 shows a series of nested logistic models for 1980 and 1990. The first model is the baseline model and does not include the provider variables. The second model adds the provider variables, and the third model adds an interaction term between spouses having the same education level and post-college education (to test the egalitarian hypothesis).

In the baseline model, one of the strongest associations is between headship and residence five years ago. Women whose husbands moved in with them are much more likely (four times as likely in 1990) to head the household than others, controlling for all other variables. (An increase in the log odds of 1.395 -- the coefficient for residence 5 years ago in model 1 for 1990 -- is equivalent to an increase in the odds of 4.03.) However, the opposite is not true. Women who moved into their husband’s home are not less likely than other women to head the household: the coefficient is positive and not statistically significant.

However, married women’s headship is not entirely due to following census instructions or simply due to custom in light of other distinct effects in the baseline model. In both 1980 and 1990, women with a college degree or higher are more likely to head the household than women with a high school degree only, and the effect is stronger the higher the education level. A surprising exception is in 1990, where women with less than a high school education are more likely to head the household than women with a high school degree only. Yet even net of the level of a woman’s own education, if she has the same or more education than her husband she is more likely to be household head (compared to when he has one more level of education). This result supports the provider hypothesis of married women’s headship. While the effect of a spousal education gap (her education is greater than his education) was in the expected direction in 1980, the effect was not statistically significant.

We find large effects of race on married women’s headship net of education and home ownership characteristics. Black women are much more likely to head the household than non-Hispanic White women in both 1980 and 1990. In fact, the coefficient is larger than those for wife’s education and the educational gap between spouses. Only in 1990 do we see any other group becoming distinct from non-Hispanic Whites in terms of headship: Asian women are less likely than non-Hispanic White women to be head of household. Interestingly, the positive effect that being in a mixed race marriage has on married women’s headship persists in both 1980 and 1990 net of other characteristics. We interpret this positive effect of intermarriage on headship as
indicative of a willingness to break with traditional barriers of all kinds, racial and gender-based.

The second model adds in the economic provider variables. What is immediately apparent is that whoever assumes the status of primary economic provider is more likely to assume the status of householder. This strong positive effect of provider status on married women’s headship is evident in both 1980 and 1990. A married women in 1990 who is the main income provider in the marriage is 2.5 times as likely to head the household compared to a married women in a co-provider marriage (the log odds increase by .897). In turn, women whose husbands are the main income providers are half as likely to head the household (the log odds decrease by .678). These results also refute the compensation hypothesis since the positive effect of income on headship remains even when the wife is the primary economic provider.

A couple’s total level of economic well-being (measured in $1,000 increments) had little bearing on status in the household. While the addition of the economic variables lessens the effects of education, race, and residence five years ago, all effects remained statistically significant as in the baseline model. For both 1980 and 1990, the second model, with the provider variables and a control for level of income, significantly improves the fit of the model, based on a comparison of chi-square statistics.

The third model adds an interaction term for same level of education by post-college education and improves the fit of the model for 1990 but not for 1980. This model provides mixed support for the egalitarian hypothesis of married women’s headship. In 1990 women with post-college education were much more likely to head the household when they and their husbands shared that same level of education. (The interaction term is positive and significant.) This effect is net of the economic provider variable and demonstrates that an exchange of money for status in the household is not the only explanation of married women’s headship: a shared high education level (which we associate with more progressive ideas about women’s roles within marriage) is important as well. There was no support for the egalitarian hypothesis in 1980.

Conclusion

Married women’s headship is strongly linked to relative economic power in the household. Even with a control for the “literal” census definition of headship, whoever is the primary economic provider in a marriage (regardless of gender) is much more likely to be household head compared to adults in co-provider marriages. The compensation hypothesis for household headship can be solidly rejected as there was no evidence that married women compensate for economic and educational asymmetry in gender roles by refusing headship status. There was some support for the egalitarian hypothesis of headship (for 1990 only). The combined effects on headship of being a highly-educated woman married to a highly-educated man were stronger than the additive effects alone of
a woman’s own high level of education or the fact that there were similar levels of education between spouses. In short, the large and statistically significant effects of the economic provider variables, education, and race and ethnicity on headship persist in the multivariate models in both 1980 and 1990 and demonstrate that married women’s headship is not a meaningless status.

Men still retain household headship status to a large degree among married couples, yet the proportion claiming headship has been decreasing since 1980. The fact that we do not see an equal proportion of men and women claiming household headship among married couples, even among women who are the main economic providers in the marriage, suggests that custom still plays some role. However, our results indicate that as married women become increasingly economically independent within marriage and enter into more egalitarian marriages, household headship will become a more gender-neutral status of the ‘provider of the household’ and a much less ascribed status of the ‘man of the household.’
Endnotes

1. The formal instruction on the 1980 census form reads: “Start this column with the household member (or one of the members) in whose name the home is owned or rented. If there is no such person, start in this column with any adult household member.” The instruction further reads that if there is no such person, list any adult household member who is not a roomer, boarder, or paid employee (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1982: 21). The 1990 instruction is identical to 1980 except that it adds the purchase of the house to the initial list of conditions (i.e., “...in whose name the home is owned, being bought, or rented.”).

2. In 1990, about 5 percent of all married, spouse present women were contributing 70 percent or more of the couple’s total income. Dropping the lower boundary for identifying the main provider to contributions of 55 percent of the couple’s total income increases the proportion of “wife main providers” to 10 percent of married, spouse present women. We ran the multivariate models with this more expansive definition of who is a main provider and the coefficients changed neither in direction nor in statistical significance.

3. In the 1980 census, education is measured by a combination of two variables, one noting the highest grade attended and the other noting whether the respondent finished the grade. In 1990 one variable records whether the respondent received a degree from high school, college, or graduate school. We code finishing four years of college in 1980 as equivalent to a bachelor’s degree in 1990.

4. We did not have any a priori expectations of race or ethnic differences in married women’s headship. Yet this result is somewhat surprising given studies that find Black women are more traditional in their attitudes towards gender roles within marriage (Bulcroft and Bulcroft, 1991) and that Black men are more traditional in their views of women’s roles in the family (Blee and Tickamyer, 1995).

5. There is some support for this link between intermarriage and less traditional attitudes towards marriage in that people who moved away from their community of birth are more likely to intermarry (Tucker and Mitchell-Kernan, 1990).
References


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Effect on Women's Headship</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provider hypothesis:</strong></td>
<td>Provider type:</td>
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<tr>
<td>The adult who earns most of a</td>
<td>Wife main provider</td>
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<td>couple's income is the household</td>
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<td>head. Headship is defined</td>
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<td>economically and not by gender.</td>
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<td><strong>Compensation hypothesis:</strong></td>
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<td>Wife main provider</td>
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<td>&quot;gender traditional&quot; behaviors</td>
<td>Husband main provider</td>
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<td>to make up for the economic</td>
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<td>asymmetry in their marriage.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Household headship is defined in</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>gender terms as specifically a</td>
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<td>husband's position in the</td>
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<td>household.</td>
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<td>Education:</td>
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<td><strong>Egalitarian hypothesis:</strong></td>
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<td>toward gender roles in marriage.</td>
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<td>than an economic relationship.</td>
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Table 2. (continued) The Proportion of Married Women Who Are Head of Household by Selected Characteristics:
U.S., 1980-90

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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1990</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Percent head</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Education gap</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>She has 2 levels or more</td>
<td>5.14</td>
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<tr>
<td>She has 1 level more</td>
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<tr>
<td>Same education level</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>10,910</td>
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<tr>
<td>He has 1 level more</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>4,909</td>
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<tr>
<td>He has 2 levels or more</td>
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<td><strong>Disability differences</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Neither spouse disabled</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>20,080</td>
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<td>She is disabled, he is not</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>1,275</td>
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<td>He is disabled, she is not</td>
<td>3.71</td>
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<td>Both are disabled</td>
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<td>She is the primary provider (70% +)</td>
<td>10.42</td>
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<td>2.48</td>
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<td>Co-provider couple</td>
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<th>Median income</th>
<th>Total n</th>
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<td>Total income of wife, wife head</td>
<td>$5,338</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
<td>3,558</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total income of wife, wife not head</td>
<td>$2,505</td>
<td>23,707</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>49,647</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total income of husband, wife head</td>
<td>$12,505</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>$20,544</td>
<td>3,558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total income of husband, wife not head</td>
<td>$15,630</td>
<td>23,707</td>
<td>$26,000</td>
<td>49,647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total income of married couple, wife head</td>
<td>$19,705</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>$36,000</td>
<td>3,558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total income of married couple, wife not head</td>
<td>$20,310</td>
<td>23,707</td>
<td>$36,264</td>
<td>49,647</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[\text{a} 1980 \text{ includes only those randomly selected cases with information on the } \text{"residence 5 years ago" question.}\]

\[\text{b All percentages are weighted in 1990 using the person weight included in the PUMS file.}\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She lived in HH 5 years ago, he did not</td>
<td>1.962 **</td>
<td>1.910 **</td>
<td>1.911 **</td>
<td>1.395 **</td>
<td>1.355 **</td>
<td>1.360 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He lived in HH 5 years ago, she did not</td>
<td>0.312</td>
<td>0.280</td>
<td>0.277</td>
<td>0.073</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>0.059</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neither/both lived in HH 5 years ago</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.072</td>
<td>0.082</td>
<td>0.256 **</td>
<td>0.252 **</td>
<td>0.259 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school only</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college education</td>
<td>-0.077</td>
<td>-0.124</td>
<td>-0.139</td>
<td>0.159 **</td>
<td>0.125 **</td>
<td>0.118 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years college</td>
<td>0.532 **</td>
<td>0.417 **</td>
<td>0.396 **</td>
<td>0.327</td>
<td>0.240 **</td>
<td>0.232 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some post-college education</td>
<td>0.961 **</td>
<td>0.775 **</td>
<td>0.596 **</td>
<td>0.591</td>
<td>0.416 **</td>
<td>0.254 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education gap</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She has 2 or more levels of education</td>
<td>0.315</td>
<td>0.170</td>
<td>0.254</td>
<td>0.333 **</td>
<td>0.111</td>
<td>0.168 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She has 1 more level</td>
<td>0.188</td>
<td>0.090</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>0.308 **</td>
<td>0.177 **</td>
<td>0.195 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same education</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>-0.057</td>
<td>-0.073</td>
<td>0.119 *</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>0.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He has 1 more level</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He has 2 or more levels of education</td>
<td>0.175</td>
<td>0.184</td>
<td>0.183</td>
<td>-0.068</td>
<td>-0.035</td>
<td>-0.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic, white</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>0.700 **</td>
<td>0.543 **</td>
<td>0.545 **</td>
<td>0.600 **</td>
<td>0.476 **</td>
<td>0.474 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>-0.009</td>
<td>-0.026</td>
<td>-0.028</td>
<td>-0.101</td>
<td>-0.094</td>
<td>-0.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>-0.332</td>
<td>-0.399</td>
<td>-0.402</td>
<td>-0.418 **</td>
<td>-0.452 **</td>
<td>-0.461 **</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-0.436</td>
<td>-0.510</td>
<td>-0.514</td>
<td>0.295</td>
<td>0.295</td>
<td>0.291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed race/ethnic couple</td>
<td>0.625 **</td>
<td>0.584 **</td>
<td>0.583 **</td>
<td>0.379</td>
<td>0.363</td>
<td>0.364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a mixed race/ethnic couple</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age less than 25 years</td>
<td>0.166</td>
<td>0.119</td>
<td>0.122</td>
<td>0.485 **</td>
<td>0.514 **</td>
<td>0.513 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 25 to 34 years</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>0.380 **</td>
<td>0.385 **</td>
<td>0.387 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 35 to 44 years</td>
<td>-0.156</td>
<td>-0.145</td>
<td>-0.144</td>
<td>0.167 **</td>
<td>0.172 **</td>
<td>0.172 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 45 to 54 years</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 55 to 64 years</td>
<td>0.275</td>
<td>0.275</td>
<td>0.277</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>0.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 65 to 74 years</td>
<td>0.532 **</td>
<td>0.472 **</td>
<td>0.472 **</td>
<td>-0.011</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>0.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 75 years and older</td>
<td>0.497</td>
<td>0.443</td>
<td>0.444</td>
<td>0.223</td>
<td>0.222</td>
<td>0.220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age gap between wife and husband (Her age - his age)</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She is disabled, he is not</td>
<td>0.150</td>
<td>0.237</td>
<td>0.238</td>
<td>0.185 *</td>
<td>0.259 **</td>
<td>0.258 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He is disabled, she is not</td>
<td>-0.047</td>
<td>-0.186</td>
<td>-0.188</td>
<td>0.118</td>
<td>-0.044</td>
<td>-0.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both are disabled/ neither is disabled</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She is main provider</td>
<td>0.670 **</td>
<td>0.670 **</td>
<td>0.897 **</td>
<td>0.900 **</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He is main provider</td>
<td>-0.718 **</td>
<td>-0.718 **</td>
<td>-0.678 **</td>
<td>-0.678 **</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-provider couple</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple's total income / 1000</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same education * post-college education</td>
<td>0.305</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1980 and 1990 1/1000 Public Use Microdata Samples
* .01 < = p < .05     ** p < .01
a 1990 models weighted by: (mean of the person weight) / (person weight)