Mexican-American Couples and Their Patterns of Dual Earning

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ABSTRACT

The prevalence, types, and characteristics associated with dual earning may differ for Mexican-American couples compared to white couples in the U.S., partly because of the majority immigrant share of Mexican Americans. Using the 2008, 2009, and 2010 Current Population Survey, we examine whether the observed differences between groups are due to racial-ethnic differences or to nativity composition. The 3,916 Mexican-American couples are less likely to be dual earning than the 30,983 white couples. These differences are largely explained by an assimilation pattern by which couples with two U.S.-born spouses are the most likely to be dual earning. Educational attainment and the presence of young children are important determinants for all couples. Among dual-earning couples, the relationship between associated factors and the type of dual-earning is quite similar for both Mexican-American and white couples once nativity is controlled.

Key words: dual-earning, Mexican, labor force participation, immigrant assimilation

Breadwinning in American families is continually evolving as socioeconomic opportunities and constraints evolve and as immigration increases the racial-ethnic diversity of families. By the end of the first decade in the 21st century, the Mexican-American population continues to be the largest ethnic group among Latinos (63%, up from 58% in 2000) (U.S. Census, 2000; 2010) and among all immigrants (29%) in the U.S. (U.S. Census, 2012a) During the 1970s and 1980s, much of the growth in the Mexican-American population was due to immigration. Starting from the 1990s, U.S. births to Mexican-American couples were a main driver of population growth (Pew Hispanic Center, 2011). As this population continues to be a considerable and increasingly settled part of American society, their breadwinning patterns within families and how they change over time may impact how different American couples may employ various economic strategies within their families.

Though research has shown that Mexican-origin immigrant couples are less likely to be dual earning than U.S.-born white couples, less is known about the associations between human capital or family characteristics and dual earning within Mexican-American families. (We use Mexican-origin in reference to immigrants who are from Mexico while we use Mexican American in reference to the Mexican population residing in the U.S. regardless of nativity.) In comparison to U.S.-born white couples, little is known about the relative contributions of each spouse among dual-earning Mexican-American couples and the characteristics associated with various types of dual-earning. Second, for those Mexican-American couples in which both spouses are U.S.-born, do their dual-earning patterns and the characteristics associated with them become similar to that of U.S.-born white couples? We might anticipate a higher rate of dual earning among Mexican-American couples because of the increased acceptance as well as necessity of wives' employment. Alternatively, Mexican-American couples may continue to be

husband sole earning due to the persistence of "culturally based attitudes of defining men's role as provider and women's role as child caretakers" (Formoso et al., 2007).

The comparison of both immigrant and U.S.-born Mexican couples to white U.S.-born couples will shed some light on whether gender-specialized roles differ across racial-ethnic groups or if immigrant composition largely explains group differences. In order to determine if differences in dual earning between Mexican-American and white couples are a reflection of the experience of immigration rather than ethnic differences, we include white immigrant couples in our analysis. Though Latinos and Asians make up the vast majority of the post-1965 immigrant population, non-Latino white immigrants comprise 20.3% of immigrants currently residing in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b). As with Latino and Asian immigrants, white immigrants are also extremely diverse in terms of socioeconomic status and countries of origin but they all share the immigration experience. If we find that white immigrant couples have similarly lower rates of dual earning, then the difference between Mexican-origin and white U.S.-born couples may be a temporary one due to differences in country-of-origin labor market expectations for women or a disruption to their labor market trajectories because of the immigration process.

In this paper, we compare the prevalence of dual earning and its associated characteristics among Mexican and white immigrant couples relative to white U.S.-born couples to determine if the increasing presence of different racial-ethnic groups introduces different patterns of dual earning to the U.S. Or are observed differences in dual-earning patterns across groups a temporary phenomenon that will no longer persist for U.S.-born children of immigrants? More specifically, our research questions are the following: First, are the factors that are associated with dual earning (as opposed to husband sole earning) among U.S.-born white couples, such as wife's human capital or presence of children, associated in the same ways for Mexican-American

couples? Second, is there evidence of dual-earning assimilation in that U.S.-born Mexican-American couples are more similar to U.S.-born white couples than their immigrant counterparts? Besides couples in which both spouses are immigrants or U.S. born, we also include mixed-nativity couples in our analyses to determine if it matters which spouse is an immigrant. Third, is there evidence of assimilation in the characteristics that are associated with different types of dual earning among Mexican-American couples (e.g., which spouse is the majority earner)?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Much of the research on earnings patterns among married Mexican-American couples is largely focused on the entrance of wives into the labor force or the kinds of occupations they have. Frequently in comparison to white U.S.-born wives and families, many researchers focus on three main contributing factors to whether, or to what extent, Mexican-American wives contribute to family earnings. First, the social and economic factors that facilitate or necessitate wives and mothers entering or remaining in the labor force are examined. Researchers find that rising human capital, increasing social acceptance of women in the labor force and higher-paying occupations, and economic structuring may have impacted Mexican-American dual earning in different ways than for U.S.-born whites. The second factor includes the gender dynamics and family characteristics that foster or hinder Mexican-American wives' entrance into the labor force and contribution to family earnings. Since many Mexican-American families are immigrant families, they may bring normative expectations around gender roles and motherhood that are different from those that are espoused in the U.S. These differences may help to explain some of the differences in dual earning patterns. Third, the differences between Mexican immigrant and

U.S.-born white couples are temporary and eventually, U.S.-born Mexican couples may assimilate to have the same dual-earning patterns as U.S.-born white couples.

Mexican-American couples are making decisions around labor force participation and earnings with the broader U.S. context. In the past 40 years, many married couples in the U.S. have transitioned to shared breadwinning and dual earning has become more normative among the middle class. Prior to this transition, minority and working class families were consistently more likely to be dual earning than middle class and white families (Bianchi, 1981). Increased female labor force participation rates (LFPRs) have contributed to the normative nature of dual earning among white couples. As married women's LFPRs rose through the 1990s (Juhn & Potter, 2006), the prevalence of dual-earner couples has increased (Raley et al., 2006).

Social and Economic Context of Dual Earning in the U.S.

The distribution of dual-earner couple types is consistent with two different trends emerging more recently (Raley et al., 2006). First, Nock (2001) argued that marriages of equally dependent spouses (MEDS), in which each partner generates between 40%-59% of the family earnings, are increasing, and likely to continue increasing, with about one fifth of married couples qualifying as MEDS in 1999. Alternatively, though wives are increasingly contributing income to their marriages, husbands retain the breadwinner role and women's economic contributions remain secondary to their husbands' contributions (Moen & Sweet, 2003). Thus, among dual earning couples, husbands and wives maintain a modified breadwinner-homemaker organization of labor wherein husbands spend more hours in paid labor and wives spend less time in paid labor and more time in unpaid work. Raley et al. (2006) confirmed both earnings patterns trends and concluded that wives' education is positively associated with dual earning

and negatively associated with the presence of children, particularly when there are two or more children in the family. Nevertheless, most studies of dual earning are mainly focused on white U.S.-born couples and less is known about other racial-ethnic groups and immigrants.

The context in which U.S.-born and immigrant couples make labor force decisions is informed by broad social and economic trends, including women's current educational attainment levels and labor force participation rates. Just as women's educational attainment and labor force participation have shifted, economic restructuring has also resulted in changes in the labor market for men and women. Both immigrant men and women are affected by changes in the economy, but immigrant women often face different challenges compared to immigrant men.

Women are obtaining increasingly higher levels of education. In 2010, nearly 30% of women over age 25 had attained at least a bachelor's degree (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012b). Among men and women ages 25 to 34, a larger proportion of women (35%) have at least a bachelor's degree compared to men (27%). On the other hand, less than half of Hispanic immigrants have a high school degree (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012b). These differences in educational attainment may translate into differences between Mexican-American and white couples in which spouse provides a larger share of a couple's income.

Women's increased investment in human capital has translated into steady female labor force participation rates which have remained stable at just under 60% over the past decade (Solis & Hall, 2011). For all married women, age 16 and older, the labor force participation was 57.4% in 2010. Among married mothers, 77.2% of women with older children (ages 6 to 17) work compared to 64.2% of mothers of younger children (Solis & Hall, 2011). In general, the labor force participation of married women with children has remained stable over the past two

decades, wherein married women with children are about 13 percentage points less likely to be in the labor force compared to married women without children (Hoffman, 2009).

Beyond changes in women's education and labor force participation of mothers, the complexities of the labor market that shape American life also impact the lives of immigrants and their labor force decisions. The low-skilled, blue-collar jobs that were once abundant are no longer readily available to newcomers. Instead, contemporary immigrants face a bifurcated hourglass economy where workers are funneled into high-skill high wage jobs or low-skill low wage jobs, with very few low-skilled jobs that provide a living wage (Alba & Nee, 1997). For immigrant men, these structural factors may translate into labor force difficulties and may impede their ability to fulfill the sole breadwinner role. In turn, the difficulties faced by men in the labor market may put more pressure on their wives to adjust their labor force participation.

Immigrant Families and Work

Unlike the determinants of the LFPRs for all women, the dynamics of dual earning in terms of who works and how much does each spouse contribute economically involve choices beyond the individual. In their study of immigrants in Australia, Cobb-Clark and Connolly (2001) emphasize that migration is not a solitary undertaking and therefore, analyses that ignore the interactions between family members "may be inaccurate in their representation of the financial health and economic contributions of immigrant families" (p. 808). It is not only the direct effects of human capital as well as familial and economic circumstances, but also the interactions between these determinants of labor market outcomes that explain dual earning patterns for married couples.

Among married Mexican-origin women in the U.S., it is unclear which characteristics are associated with their LFPRs. Reimers (1985) examines the LFPRs and labor supply of married women in four broad race/ethnic groups including Latinos by nativity. She shows that the difference in the LFPRs of both foreign-born and U.S.-born Latina wives, as well as foreign-born white wives, compared to U.S.-born white wives is explained entirely by differences in measured characteristics (educational attainment and English proficiency, in particular). Reimers further supports Ortiz and Cooney's findings (1984) that traditional beliefs or Latino culture do not necessarily dictate the behavior of Latina women in the labor force. Because her study was conducted for all Latinas with data from 1976, it remains to be seen how Mexican-American women are faring now within the context of mass immigration in the last few decades.

Immigrants' labor force experiences and difficulties vary by gender which in turn impacts labor force participation rates for women and their relative economic contribution to the family. Fernández-Kelly and García (1990) and Espirtu (1997) find that immigrant women are often exploited by employers. In the workplace, women may be preferred by employers because they work for lower wages based on the assumption that women's earnings are secondary to that of men and are more suited to jobs in routine or detailed work with few or no advancement opportunities (Espiritu, 1997). Whatever the case may be, the economic needs of the family may come into direct conflict with their familial ideology. For families facing economic hardship, Fernández-Kelly and García (1990) note, "For poor men and women the issue is not so much the presence of the sexual division of labor or the persistence of patriarchal ideologies, but the difficulties of upholding either" (p. 148).

Whether they work because of choice or economic necessity, Latina women are increasingly becoming wage earners. Many case studies have aimed to disentangle immigrant

women's roles in the household from the labor force. Immigrant men may expect, and be expected, to be breadwinners and provide financial support for their wives and children. To these couples, a wife's wage-earning position may not be an indicator of immigrant women's increasing status in the home or in the labor force. Instead, it may be indicative of vulnerability and severe economic need in the family (Fernández-Kelly & García, 1990) or men's labor force difficulties in a bifurcated economy (Alba & Nee, 1997). Therefore, immigrant women's efforts to "maintain intact families" should not be misinterpreted as an acceptance of patriarchy. Instead, we might view immigrant women's behaviors as a refusal to accept the ideals of the mainstream society that may undermine their familial ideology (Pessar, 1999).

Women's LFPR is also affected by family structure, particularly the presence of children. Aiming to understand Mexican immigrant wives' LFPR, Greenlees and Saenz (1999) find that the presence of children in the household is a deterrent to Mexican wives' employment (Greenlees & Saenz, 1999) just as it is for women in the U.S. more generally (Cohen & Bianchi, 1999). Greenlees and Saenz' (1999) findings conflict with prior research arguing that the presence of children under 6 had little to no impact on the LFPR of Mexican immigrant wives (Stier & Tienda, 1992). Angoa-Pérez and Fuentes-Flores (2006) further find that the presence of children under 6 is a smaller deterrent to being in the labor force than for white women.

Labor-Market Assimilation

Immigrants arriving from Mexico have lower levels of education and fewer financial resources than U.S.-born whites as well as other immigrants, especially as compared to those from Asian or European sending countries (Perlmann & Waldinger, 1997). These limited resources, in combination with potential labor force disruptions (discussed above), are often

associated with lower LFPRs and other labor market outcomes during the first few years in the U.S. after migration (Chiswick, 1978; Card, 2005). Congruent with the labor market assimilation hypothesis, with increasing duration in the receiving country (i.e., the United States), immigrants become increasingly similar to the U.S.-born in labor market outcomes, in this case, the prevalence and kind of dual earning. Though we recognize that there are other aspects of assimilation, including acculturation or "anglo conformity," we focus on assimilation as the convergence in breadwinning patterns between U.S.-born Mexican-American couples and white couples.

This immigrant labor-market assimilation hypothesis more consistently explains the differences in LFPR outcomes between immigrant and U.S.-born men, but the results vary for immigrant women (Rendall et al., 2010). Overall, Mexican immigrant women are less likely to be in the labor force compared to non-Hispanic white women, yet more likely to be in the labor force than women in Mexico. Once in the U.S. labor force, married Mexican immigrant women and men experience wage and LFPR assimilation differently. Education is a strong predictor of women's employment, but education is more useful in predicting whether or not women work within ethnic groups rather than across ethnic groups or compared to white women (Read & Cohen, 2007). In a comparison of women in Mexico and first generation and 1.5 generation Mexican women (those who immigrated as young children) in the United States, more highly educated women are more likely to be in the labor force across all groups. In fact, among those with a bachelor's degree or higher, 1.5 generation Mexican women exhibit LFPRs that are nearly as high as those for non-Hispanic white women (Angoa-Pérez & Fuentes-Flores, 2006). Yet, the relationship between educational attainment and the LFPRs may vary for Mexican women once family structure is considered, particularly if there are children in the family.

When Mexican immigrant men first enter the labor force, their annual hours in the labor force are somewhat higher compared to U.S.-born white men's whereas U.S.-born Mexican men's annual hours are lower. Mexican women exhibit a greater deficit of annual hours compared to U.S.-born white women. Though the deficit decreases with time in the U.S., it does not completely diminish. With consideration to wage rates, Mexican immigrant men achieve higher wages as their time in the United States increases. Second and higher generation Mexican men continue to receive higher wages, suggesting intergenerational wage assimilation. A similar wage assimilation pattern was not observed for Mexican women, within or across generations (Blau & Kahn, 2007). In their study of immigrant women's labor-force participation in nine European countries, Rendall et al. (2010) reported findings that are consistent with the assimilation hypothesis, though complete convergence with U.S.-born women was not always found. Traditional assimilation theory would hypothesize complete convergence with the U.S.-born, not necessarily for immigrants themselves but for subsequent generations (Park & Burgess, 1921; Warner & Srole, 1945; Gordon, 1964). It is unclear whether Mexican second-generation daughters achieve complete parity with U.S.-born white women with regard to breadwinning in the family.

Beyond individual decisions around labor force participation, Baker and Benjamin (1997) propose the family investment model to describe the economic strategies of immigrant families. According to the family investment model, upon arrival, immigrant wives work more than U.S.-born wives and immigrant husbands work less than U.S.-born husbands. Over time, as husbands acquire more skills, their labor supply rapidly increases whereas wives' labor supply decreases. The authors argue that this occurs because women initially take on menial, "dead-end" jobs in order to support their husbands. In contrast, Blau et al. (2003) found that both husbands and

wives work less than their U.S.-born counterparts upon arrival and both experience assimilation with regard to labor supply (measured by annual hours worked) and wages, eventually surpassing the labor supply of the U.S.-born. Given the current gender roles prevalent in Mexico, Blau and Kahn (2007) reexamine the family investment model with Mexican-American immigrant and U.S.-born couples. The authors' findings still do not support the family investment model. Instead, they find that immigrant husbands and wives both experience labor supply assimilation, with wives actually exhibiting more rapid assimilation (Blau & Kahn, 2007).

Like other scholars of assimilation and gender (e.g., Feliciano & Rumbaut 2005; Smith 2002), Blau and Kahn's (2007) findings about labor supply assimilation by gender suggest that women may experience a different rate of assimilation than their male counterparts. Ramakrishnan (2004) also finds that couples with only one immigrant spouse are less assimilated than couples in which both spouses are immigrants. Furthermore, his findings show that the extent of socioeconomic assimilation is contingent upon whether it is the wife or husband who is an immigrant. Therefore, it stands to reason that it may also be important to distinguish the nativity composition of couples when examining dual-earning patterns.

Another issue to consider for the assimilation process for the Mexican-origin population is that migration from Mexico to the United States is not a new phenomenon, and has remained a constant throughout the 20th century (Reichl & Waldinger, 2008). A steady flow of new immigrants from Mexico creates an environment in which even third generation or later Mexican Americans are forced to define their ethnicity according to the expectations of newer coethnics (Jiménez, 2010; Gutiérrez, 1995). This constant renewal of the first and second generations may have implications for immigrant adaptation, such as immigrants choosing to not adhere to

mainstream familial norms. Thus, decisions made by Mexican-American couples today are situated in a context that may offer or insist on different alternatives – mainstream beliefs and behaviors versus practices that are distinctively Mexican (Gutierrez, 1995) – and these often competing messages received by Mexican-American couples may impact their labor force decisions.

To summarize, though it is clear that dual earning and wife-majority providers are on the rise, dual earning dynamics among Mexican-American couples are not well understood. Human capital and fertility factors may operate differently for U.S.-born Mexicans than for the foreign-born. Furthermore, the characteristics and attitudes of U.S.-born Mexicans may be impacted by the continuous flow of foreign-born Mexicans and the norms around their LFPR. There is other evidence that U.S.-born Mexican women's LFPR mirrors that of U.S.-born white women. Findings suggest that the same factors that affect employment and earnings for U.S.-born women, such as increased educational attainment or presence of children, also encourage dual earning for Mexican-American women. Therefore, the main research questions in this study are: do the determinants that are associated with dual earning among white couples, such as wife's human capital or presence of children, impact Mexican-American families in the same way? Second, is there evidence of labor market assimilation among Mexican-American couples? Lastly, is there evidence of assimilation in the determinants that are associated with dual earning among Mexican-American couples, such as wife's human capital or presence of children?

DATA AND METHOD

Data

The data used in the analysis are pooled data from the 2008, 2009, and 2010 Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) supplements of the Current Population Survey (CPS), referred to as 2009 CPS throughout this paper. The pooled data have the benefit of analyzing smaller population groups which may not be sufficiently represented in a single-year sample. The CPS is a nationally representative sample of the civilian noninstitutional population. The ASEC was chosen for this project for two reasons. First, the ASEC provides comprehensive data about respondents' work experience, employment status, and earnings. Second, a sample of about 4,500 Hispanic households is added to the ASEC supplement, providing a larger sample of those of Mexican Americans for analysis. The CPS interviews households for two consecutive four-month periods across two years (e.g., months February-May, months 1-4, in year *t* and those same months, months 5-8, in year $t + 1$). To avoid including re-interviewed respondents from the 2008 and 2009 ASEC, we included only respondents who were interviewed in months 1-4 of the 2009 and 2010 ASEC supplements.

The sample consists of Mexican-American marital couples and white marital couples. Respondents remain in the sample if they report a marital status of "married – civilian spouse present" or "married – armed forces spouse present"; in total, there are 79,766 married couples. Mexican-American couples were defined as both spouses identifying as Mexican, regardless of nativity. After applying an age restriction of 25 to 54 for both spouses and dropping couples where neither spouse works nor earns wages as well as wife as sole-provider couples, the sample size reduced from 5,783 to 3,916 Mexican-American marital couples in the sample. The sample size of white couples decreased from 54,047 to 30,983. Black respondents are not included in the sample because black-white wage inequality and unemployment differentials among men may diminish observed differences between white and Mexican-American couples. The unweighted

counts and weighted percentage distribution of marital couples in each earnings group are listed in Table 1.

The inclusion of only married couples, but not cohabiting couples, introduces selection bias. As of 2002, about half of all women had ever cohabited (Chandra et al., 2005). Though cohabitation is on prevalent, dual earning dynamics within cohabiting relationships may differ from those in marital relationships. Women in cohabiting couples are more likely to control a couple's shared finances or to maintain a separate, individually-controlled financial account compared to married women (Kenney, 2006; Heimdal & Houseknecht, 2003). Furthermore, Mexican-American women are less likely to cohabit before marriage compared to white women (Lansdale et al., 2010; Wildsmith et al., 2006).

That we only include Mexican-American couples in which both partners identify as Mexican introduces another selection bias issue. Research has also shown that the most assimilated Mexican Americans may no longer self-identify as ethnically Mexican in survey data (Duncan & Trejo 2008, 2011). Therefore, we may be systematically missing the most socioeconomically successful or assimilated Mexican Americans. In other words, we may be underestimating dual earning for Mexican-American couples. Finally, we only included those couples in which both spouses identify as being Mexican American. This is noteworthy because Mexican-American spouses in intermarried marriages may be more assimilated or have different patterns of breadwinning.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

Dependent Variables

Dual-earning status is a dummy variable coded to equal "1" for couples in which both the husband and wife are employed and wage-earning. Individual earnings are total person's

earnings, including wages from earnings and salary, self-employment, and farm self-employment. In order to be coded as dual-income couples, both spouses must report earnings *and* employment to avoid including non-wage income. In analyses of dual earning couples only, the dual earning variable includes three categories to represent the three earnings groups: husband as the primary earner, husband and wife as equal earners, and wife as the primary earner. In congruence with prior research (Raley et al., 2006) dual-income couples will be measured according to Nock's (2001) definition of MEDS: partners will be considered the primary earner when they provide 60% or more of the couple's combined earnings and will be considered the secondary earner if they provide 40% or less of the couple's combined earnings. Although wives as sole provider are a growing, albeit small, population (Fry & Cohn, 2010), they are still a very small group and therefore, will not analyzed here.

Independent Variables

Wife's age and husband's age are continuous variables ranging from ages 25 to 54. Wife's educational attainment is measured with a series of dummy variables across four categories: less than high school diploma, high school diploma, some college, and bachelor's degree or higher. Spouses' relative education is represented with three dummy variables: both spouses have equal educational attainment, the husband has a higher educational attainment, and the wife has a higher educational attainment. Spouses' relative education is coded based on the educational attainment dummy variables capturing wives' educational attainment. Family structure variables are coded in the following ways: 1) the number of children and presence of children under six are coded into a series of dummy variables. The dummy variables represent one child, two children, and three or more children, and 2) a dummy variable indicating whether a couple has one or more children under age six.

Couple's labor supply is represented with two dummy variables which control for husbands' or wives' less than full-time, year-round labor supply. Husband's and wife's employment status will be assessed by respondents' reports of usual hours worked per week last year and number of weeks worked last year (included paid vacation and sick leave). A respondent was defined as working full-time, year-round if they worked 1,750 annual hours or more (based off of a 35 hours per week times 50 weeks per year threshold). The 35 hours per week and 50 weeks per year threshold for full-time employment is consistent with the Bureau of Labor Statistics. A person's wage rate is calculated by dividing their total earnings for that year by annual number of hours worked per year.

To control for nativity, a series dummy variables controlling for couples in which both spouses are foreign born, husband only is foreign born, and wife only is foreign born are included in all models. In pooled models, a dummy variable indicating that a couple is Mexican-American (coded to 1) versus white is included. Finally, to account for possible differences in the economic and labor market context from year to year, we control for the year in which a respondent was surveyed in all models.

Analysis Plan

First, a series of logistic regression models are used to predict whether a couple is dual earning rather than in a husband sole-provider arrangement. We first estimate stratified models to determine if the determinants of dual earning are similar for Mexican-American couples. We then re-estimate the same model using a pooled sample with a Mexican dummy variable to test for differences between Mexican-American and white couples. Logistic regression predicts the outcome of a dichotomous dependent variable, which is coded 1 for those couples who are in dual-earner arrangements. The reference groups in the models predicting dual earning are

husband sole-earner couples (with wife sole-earner couples dropped), wives with a high school education, couples with equal educational attainment, couples with no children, and couples in which both spouses are U.S.-born. To test for differences in the determinants of dual earning between Mexican-American and white couples, we pooled Mexican-American and white couples and estimated a full set of interactions (all covariates interacted with the Mexican dummy variable).

Next, separately for the universes of white dual earners and Mexican-American dual earners, multinomial logistic regression models are used to predict the characteristics associated with dual-earning by analyzing the following comparisons: 1) equal providers versus husband majority provider, and 2) wife majority provider versus husband primary providers. In both comparisons, the reference group is couples in which husband is the majority provider. Unlike binary logistic regression, the multinomial logistic regression allows for comparisons between more than two groups. In these models, the reference groups again are wives with a high school education, couples with equal educational attainment, couples with no children, and couples in which both spouses are U.S.-born. Last, we pooled Mexican-American and white couples and used multinomial logistic regression, with a dummy variable indicating whether a couple is of Mexican-American, to test for differences in equal providing and wife majority providing between Mexican-American and white couples.

RESULTS

Table 1 reports the sample count for white and Mexican-American couples by earnings patterns. Nearly half of all Mexican-American couples are husband sole earning (45%) compared to only 21% of white couples. Among the various types of Mexican-American couples, those

that are both foreign born are the most likely to be husband sole earning (54%) and Mexican-American couples that are both U.S.-born are almost identical to that of U.S.-born whites (24% and 20%, respectively). Among dual earning couples, despite the apparently similar distribution across earnings types for both Mexicans and whites, chi-square tests reveal that the distributions are significantly different.

[insert Table 1 about here]

We compare the differences in wage and earnings across the various categories of Mexican-American and white couples (see appendix Table A). White spouses have higher wage rates across all categories than Mexicans. More specifically, the ratio of wives' wage rate to that of their husbands is also higher among whites than Mexicans across all earnings categories. Mean and median earnings are also consistently higher for white couples but the ratios are similar for dual-earning couples. Finally, Mexican-American and white wives in dual-earning couples have similar annual employment hours. The higher earnings for white husbands are partially explained by the higher number of annual hours worked.

In Table 2, we present the multivariate results of the relationship between various characteristics of spouses and family structure and the likelihood of being a dual-earning couple. We first present the models separately for Mexican-Americans and whites. Models 1 and 2 show couples in which wives have less than a high school education are significantly less likely to be dual earning. For Mexican-American wives, those with some college are 1.34 times as likely to be dual earning compared to wives with a high school degree. For white wives, any education beyond high school is significantly associated with dual earning. Beyond wives' education, relative education between spouses is not significant for Mexican-American couples but is significantly associated with dual earning among white couples. White couples in which

husbands are more educated than their wives are less likely to be dual earning (.88 times as likely); the opposite holds true for those couples in which wives have more education (1.61 times as likely). Whereas the number of children does not impact dual earning among Mexican couples, as the number of children in white families increases, the likelihood of dual earning decreases. Yet, the presence of a child under the age of 6 is associated with a reduced likelihood of dual earning among both white and Mexican-American couples. Finally, the relationship between nativity and dual earning is similar for Mexicans and whites in that couples with at least one immigrant spouse are less likely to be dual earning. Among Mexican-American couples, those with an immigrant wife is the least likely to be dual earning. Furthermore, couples in which both spouses are foreign born are the least likely to be dual earning.

Model 3 in Table 2 presents the likelihood that a couple is dual earning for all Mexican-American and white couples in a pooled sample. Despite the fact that a larger share of Mexican-American couples are husband sole earning, net of demographic and human capital controls, Mexican-American couples are not significantly less likely than white couples to be dual earning. Nonetheless, the p-values from a fully interacted model (all covariates interacted with the Mexican dummy variable) are presented in the last column of Table 2. The p-values represent the probability that the estimated difference in magnitudes of each coefficient in the pooled model differs between Mexican-American and white couples. For example, the difference in the effect of a wife having less than a high school degree is statistically significant at $p < .001$. The effect of wives' age, the effect of a wife being better educated than her husband, the presence of two or more children, and couples in which only the wife is foreign born are significantly different between Mexican-American and white couples.

[insert Table 2 about here]

The percent distributions of all Mexican-American and white couples' demographic and human capital characteristics are presented in Table 3. The compositional differences in these characteristics are important when interpreting the model results. Forty-seven percent of all Mexican-American wives have less than a high school education compared to only 3% for whites. Conversely, Mexican-American wives (9%) are less likely to have a bachelor's degree compared to white wives (42%). Mexican-American couples are more likely to have 2 or more children (total of 63%) whereas white couples are the most likely to have no children (33%). Both Mexican-American husbands and wives are less likely to work full-time compared to white spouses. Finally, the vast majority of Mexican-American couples consist of two foreign-born spouses (63% compared to only 3% of white couples).

[insert Table 3 about here]

Table 4 presents the odds ratios for multinomial logistic regression models among only dual-earning couples to examine how the characteristics associated with dual earning vary across the types of dual-earning couples. Two sets of contrasts are displayed: 1) equal providers versus husband majority providers, and 2) wife majority providers versus husband majority providers. The contrasts are presented separately for dual-earning Mexican-American couples and white couples.

[insert Table 4 about here]

Among Mexican-American couples, husband's age is associated with equal or wife-majority providing, though the magnitude of the effect is small. Wife's education is not significantly associated with dual earning except among wife-majority providers; Mexican-

American wives with at least a college degree are 1.98 times as likely to be the majority provider. Spouses' relative education is significantly associated with dual earning among Mexican-American couples; husbands who are better educated than their wives are less likely to be in equal- or wife-majority providing situations. Wives who are better educated than their husbands are more likely to be in equal- or wife-majority providing situations. Mexican-American couples with two or more children are less likely to be equal providers, yet the number of children is not significantly associated with whether wives are majority providers. Husbands who work less than full-time are more likely to be in equal- or wife-majority providing partnerships whereas wives who work less than full-time are less likely to be in these partnerships.

Next, we examine the characteristics of types of dual earning among white couples. Husbands' age is significantly associated with equal earning but not with wife-majority providing; as with Mexican-American couples, the magnitude of this effect is small. Couples in which wives have at least a bachelor's degree are more likely to be equal providing; those with at least some college are more likely to be wife majority providers. Couples in which husbands are better educated than their wives are significantly less likely to be equal or wife-majority providing. The opposite relationship holds for wives who are better educated than their husbands. Couples with two or more children are less likely to be equal- providing whereas the presence of any children is associated with a reduced likelihood of wife majority earning. Yet, couples with a child under six are more likely to be equal- or wife-majority providing. Labor supply affects dual earning patterns. Couples in which husbands are employed less than full-time are more likely to be equal- or wife-majority providing whereas couples in which wives are employed less than full-time are less likely to be in these configurations. Finally, couples in

which only the husband is foreign born are more likely than couples with two U.S.-born spouses to be equal providers.

In order to analyze differences between Mexican-American and white couples, we replicate the multinomial logistic regression model presented in Table 4 with Mexican-American and white couples in the a pooled sample. The results are displayed in Table 5. Mexican-American couples are more likely to be equal providers than husband-majority providers compared to white couples, but the magnitude of the coefficient is small. Husbands' age is significantly related to whether a couple is equal providing; again, the magnitude of the coefficient is small. Couples in which wives have at least a bachelor's degree are more likely to be equal providers, and wives with at least some college are more likely to be the majority provider. Couples in which wives are better educated than their husbands are more likely to be equal providing. Couples with two or more children are less likely to be equal providing, yet those with a child under 6 are more likely to be equal earning. Husbands' and wives' labor supply is significantly related to equal earning. Finally, couples in which husbands are foreign born are more likely to be equal providing couples than husband majority providing couples.

[insert Table 5 about here]

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This paper examined the characteristics of dual earning among U.S.-born white couples, explained by Raley et al. (2006) and how these characteristics apply to Mexican-American couples. First, we found that Mexican-American couples are much less likely to be dual earning compared to white couples. The examination of human capital revealed the following findings: Mexican-American wives have substantially less education than white wives, and wives' lower

levels of education are significantly related to a lower prevalence of dual earning for Mexican-American couples. This was expected, as scholars have shown that more highly educated Mexican-origin women are more likely to be in the labor force (Angoa-Pérez & Fuentes-Flores, 2006).Furthermore, educational attainment was a stronger predictor of differentiation between dual-earning groups for white couples than Mexican-American couples; this confirms other studies that show education is a significant predictor of the LFPR within ethnic groups (Read & Cohen, 2007).

The characteristics of family structure are considered by examining the relationship between the number of children in the family as well as the presence of children under the age of six. For Mexican-American couples, the number of children is not significantly associated with dual earning, though it is for white couples. This is particularly noteworthy because Mexican Americans are much more likely to have two or more children in the family. As Damaske (2011) argues, the relationship between the number of children and mothers' LFPR may differ along the lines of economic necessity. She asserts that an increase in the number of children does not necessarily keep working class women in the labor force because of the needed income. Rather, she finds that working class mothers may have to exit the labor force because they have fewer resources to remain in the labor force (Damaske, 2011).

Contrary to both Greenlees and Saenz (1999) and Stier and Tienda (1992), the presence of a child under six does decrease the likelihood that a Mexican-American couple will be dual earning. When differentiating between types of dual-earning couples, the presence of a child under age six was not significantly related to differences in dual earning groups for Mexican-American couples. Interestingly, for whites, the addition of family structure variables actually increases the relationship between wives' higher educational attainment and dual earning.

Furthermore, the presence of a child under age six was significantly related to differences in dual earning groups. That only the presence of a child under six reduced dual-earning among Mexican-American couples suggests that the factors that push mothers to work are not the same for Mexican-American women as for white women.

Lastly, we examined the characteristics of couples in which either or both spouses are foreign born compared to two U.S.-born spouses. First, once nativity is controlled, the difference in dual earning between Mexican-American and white couples are no longer significant. Nonetheless, nativity patterns suggest an assimilation pattern by which couples with two U.S.-born spouses are the most likely to be dual earning. U.S.-born wives with an immigrant husband are more likely to be dual earning than immigrant wives with a U.S.-born husband for Mexican-American couples. This finding is consistent with the literature on gender and mixed nativity couples and their economic assimilation.

Furthermore, multinomial results suggest that the characteristics of dual earning among Mexican-American couples are not all that different from those of white couples once nativity is controlled. This suggests that the characteristics that determine dual earning among Mexican-American couples are less well understood than those that determine dual earning for whites. Overall, the significance of various characteristics associated with dual earning (compared to husband sole earning) is quite different for Mexican-American couples compared to white couples. Yet, among dual-earning couples, the significance of characteristics associated with types of dual earning is more consistent between Mexican-American and white couples.

The analyses presented here, though inspired by the work of Raley et al. (2006), add to the literature in three ways. First, we examine the characteristics and types of dual earning among Mexican-American couples. Second, in order to more effectively capture dual-earning

dynamics for Mexican-American couples, the effect of nativity is also included in the analyses. Third, we include white immigrants in our analyses in order to better determine if the differences between Mexican-American and white couples is more of a function of racial-ethnic differences or their nativity composition.

The research presented in this paper is not without limitations. Because we cannot trace the same couples over time with the CPS, it is unknown if the earning patterns of the couples captured in the cross-sectional analyses are indicative of their long-term breadwinning arrangements. In addition, we cannot make explicit assumptions about assimilation processes with cross-sectional data. Finally, this research does not include cohabiting couples as discussed above in detail. This may bias our view of female providers because women often contribute a higher percentage of earnings in cohabiting partnerships than in marriage (Casper & Bianchi, 2002).

The concepts and findings of this paper can be expanded in future research in several ways. With a larger sample of Mexican-American couples, the relationship between duration of U.S. residence and dual earning can be examined to determine whether Mexican immigrant couples become more like U.S.-born white couples over time. Relatedly, the age at arrival of each spouse can be included in the analyses to gauge whether an American education and socialization will increase dual earning among the 1.5 generation of Mexicans. This is particularly important because research has shown the importance of place of education in labor market outcomes for immigrants (Zeng & Xie, 2004).

More broadly, we may not have captured all Mexican Americans in our sample. Research has also shown that the most assimilated Mexican Americans may no longer self-identify as ethnically Mexican in survey data (Duncan & Trejo, 2008; 2011). Therefore, we may be

systematically missing the most socioeconomically successful or assimilated Mexican Americans. In other words, we may be underestimating dual earning for Mexican-American couples. Finally, we only included those couples in which both spouses identify as being Mexican American. This is noteworthy because Mexican-American spouses in intermarried marriages may be more assimilated or have different patterns of breadwinning.

Though there is still much research needed for the Mexican-American population and other ethnic groups in the U.S., the findings in this paper contribute to how Mexican-American families navigate breadwinning and these dual earning patterns also impact the gender dynamics within these families. Although the entrance of Mexican immigrant women into the labor force may indicate economic necessity for the family, regular wage work can have positive implications for gendered relations despite employers' assumptions. Immigrant women may gain independence as a result of wage employment. First, women gain greater access to social and economic resources once they leave the home (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Pessar, 1995b). These economic resources can include access to institutions of public and private assistance, which can ultimately aid a family's transition in the United States and support an ideology of family progress (Hirsch, 2003). Second, women's contribution to the family earnings may grant them more control over the household budget and may also increase their bargaining power with regard to household tasks (Espiritu, 1997; Lamphere et al., 1993; Pessar, 1995a). Finally, by entering paid employment, traditional patriarchal arrangements may be undermined (Kibria, 1993) as women have more access to resources outside of the home than they may otherwise have had (Hirsch, 2003).

As Mexican Americans continue to be an important part of American society in the 21st century, we find that there are some substantive differences in the economic strategies employed

within these families. First, Mexican-American married couples are more likely to have husbands as sole breadwinners. Nevertheless, couples with two U.S.-born spouses are just as likely to be dual earning as white American couples. Second, human capital and the presence of children work differently for the Mexican-American population. Third, the characteristics associated with different types of dual earning are consistent across groups. These findings remind us that the prevalence of dual earning and its determinants varies across families along the lines of ethnicity, class, and immigrant status. Studies that consider and document the various ways in which different families employ economic strategies contribute to our understanding of the complexities of the American family.

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Table 1. Unweighted Sample Count and Weighted Percentage Distribution of Mexican and White Married Couples

	Mexican Couples									
	All		Both Foreign Born		Husband Foreign Born		Wife Foreign Born		Both U.S. Born	
Sole Earner Couples[a]										
Husband Sole Earner	1,748	45%	1,339	54%	117	34%	104	45%	188	24%
Among Dual-Earner Couples[b]										
Husband Primary Earner	1,117	51%	659	55%	99	43%	62	50%	297	48%
Equal Earners	820	38%	438	37%	98	42%	50	37%	234	39%
Wife Primary Earner	231	11%	107	9%	33	14%	17	12%	74	13%
Total *n*	3,916		2,543		347		233		793	
	White Couples									
	All		Both Foreign Born		Husband Foreign Born		Wife Foreign Born		Both U.S. Born	
Sole Earner Couples[a]										
Husband Sole Earner	6,510	21%	320	38%	145	29%	133	27%	5,912	20%
Among Dual-Earner Couples[b]										
Husband Primary Earner	13,298	54%	276	53%	172	48%	205	56%	12,645	54%
Equal Earners	8,232	34%	173	33%	141	39%	105	29%	7,813	34%
Wife Primary Earner	2,943	12%	75	14%	48	13%	55	15%	2,765	12%
Total *n*	30,983		844		506		498		29,135	

Note: Source: 2008-2010 Current Population Survey (Annual Social and Economic Supplement); White couples are non-Hispanic

[a]The likelihood of being dual earning is significantly different for Mexican and white couples, t=-28.55

[b]The distribution of dual earning types is significantly different for Mexican and white couples, χ^2=14.94

Table 2. Logistic Regression Odds Ratios Representing the Likelihood That a Couple is Dual Earning versus Husband Sole Earning

	Mexicans		Whites		Pooled				p value Mexicans vs. Whites	
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4			
Mexican	--		--		1.21	***	1.02		--	
Wife's Age	1.02	*	0.98	***	0.99	**	0.99	***	0.000	***
Husband's Age	0.99		1.00		0.99	*	1.00		0.382	
Wife's Education (ref=high school diploma)										
Less than High School	0.69	***	0.43	***	0.53	***	0.61	***	0.000	***
Some College	1.34	*	1.25	***	1.28	***	1.26	***	0.578	
Bachelor's Degree or More	1.26		1.42	***	1.42	***	1.42	***	0.413	
Couple's Relative Education (ref=equal education)										
Husband Better Educated	0.93		0.88	**	0.88	***	0.86	***	0.574	
Wife Better Educated	0.99		1.61	***	1.50	***	1.48	***	0.000	***
Number of Children (ref=no children)										
One	0.97		0.90	*	0.89	**	0.91	*	0.576	
Two	0.95		0.69	***	0.70	***	0.72	***	0.008	**
Three or more	0.88		0.38	***	0.43	***	0.43	***	0.000	***
Child under age 6	0.53	***	0.49	***	0.51	***	0.51	***	0.391	
Nativity (ref=both native born)										
Both Foreign Born	0.36	***	0.44	***	--		0.43	***	0.154	
Wife Foreign Born	0.46	***	0.67	***	--		0.61	***	0.048	*
Husband Foreign Born	0.70	*	0.62	***	--		0.66	***	0.508	
Year										
2008	0.84	*	1.01		0.99		0.99		0.037	*
2010	0.88		0.91	*	0.91	**	0.91		0.788	
n	3,916		30,983		34,899		34,899			
-2 Log Likelihood	4962.51		29854.99		35235.40		35005.28			

Note: Source: 2008-2010 Current Population Survey (Annual Social and Economic Supplement); White couples are non-Hispanic

[a]O.R. = Odds Ratio

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 3. Percent Distribution of Mexican and White Couples' Demographic and Human Capital Characteristics

	Mexican Couples	White Couples
Wife's Education[a]		
Less than High School	47	3
High School Degree	28	25
Some College	16	30
Bachelor's Degree or More	9	42
	100%	100%
Couple's Relative Education[a]		
Husband Better Educated	17	18
Wife Better Educated	22	24
Equal Education	61	58
	100%	100%
Number of Children[a]		
0	17	33
1	21	24
2	31	28
3+	32	14
	100%	100%
Child under 6[b]	44	30
Labor Supply[b,c]		
Husband less than Full-time	16	9
Wife less than Full-time	36	34
Nativity[a]		
Both Foreign Born	63	3
Husband Foreign Born	9	2
Wife Foreign Born	6	2
Both U.S. Born	21	93
	100%	100%
Total *n*	3,916	30,983

Note: Source: 2008-2010 Current Population Survey (Annual Social and Economic Supplement); White couples are non-Hispanic

[a] The distribution of the demographic and human capital characteristics are different between Mexican and White couples, χ^2 significant at $p < .05$

[b] Mexican and White couples are significantly different, t significant at $p < .05$

[c] Among dual-earning couples only, husband and wife less than full-time are not mutually exclusive categories

Table 4. Odds Ratios for a Multinomial Logistic Regression Comparing Dual-Earner Couples, Separately for Mexicans and Whites

	Equal Providers vs. Husband Provides Majority (ref.)				Wife Provides Majority vs. Husband Provides Majority (ref.)			
	Mexicans		Whites		Mexicans		Whites	
Wife's Age	1.00		1.00		1.04		1.01	*
Husband's Age	0.97	*	0.99	**	0.93	***	0.99	
Wife's Education (ref=high school diploma)								
Less than High School	1.22		0.81		1.20		0.75	
Some College	1.00		0.95		1.12		1.18	*
Bachelor's Degree	1.24		1.29	***	1.98	*	2.08	***
Couple's Relative Education (ref=equal education)								
Husband Better Educated	0.52	***	0.71	***	0.47	**	0.63	***
Wife Better Educated	1.59	**	1.56	***	1.97	**	2.10	***
Number of Children (ref=no children)								
One	0.80		0.93		1.18		0.88	*
Two	0.70	*	0.86	***	0.67		0.78	***
Three or more	0.61	**	0.69	***	0.68		0.61	***
Child under 6	1.10		1.17	***	1.03		1.23	**
Couple's Labor Supply								
Husband less than Full-time	2.33	***	2.62	***	18.29	***	17.91	***
Wife less than Full-time	0.15	***	0.13	***	0.09	***	0.09	***
Nativity								
Both Foreign Born	1.07		1.07		0.66		1.25	
Husband Foreign Born	1.51		0.84		1.65		1.21	
Wife Foreign Born	1.32		1.40	**	1.03		1.09	
Year								
2008	0.83		0.97		0.80		1.01	
2010	1.05		1.08		0.87		1.09	
n	2168		24473		2168		24473	
-2 Log Likelihood	3440.72		38945.07		3440.72		38945.07	

Note: Source: 2008-2010 Current Population Survey (Annual Social and Economic Supplement); White couples are non-Hispanic

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 5. Odds Ratios for a Multinomial Logistic Regression Comparing Dual-Earner Couples: Mexicans and Whites

	Equal Providers vs. Husband Provides Majority		Wife Provides Majority vs. Husband Provides Majority	
Mexican	0.95	*	0.99	
Wife's Age	1.00		1.02	*
Husband's Age	0.99	**	0.99	*
Wife's Education (ref=high school diploma)				
Less than High School	0.96		0.86	
Some College	0.95		1.19	*
Bachelor's Degree	1.28	***	2.08	***
Couple's Relative Education (ref=equal education)				
Husband Better Educated	0.68	***	0.61	***
Wife Better Educated	1.56	***	2.07	***
Number of Children (ref=no children)				
One	0.92		0.90	
Two	0.85	***	0.77	***
Three or more	0.69	***	0.62	***
Child under 6	1.17	***	1.21	**
Couple's Labor Supply				
Husband less than Full-time	2.58	***	17.83	***
Wife less than Full-time	0.13	***	0.09	***
Nativity				
Both Foreign Born	1.09		0.99	
Husband Foreign Born	0.98		1.35	
Wife Foreign Born	1.37	**	1.15	
Year				
2008	0.96		1.00	
2010	1.07		1.07	
n	26,641			
-2 Log Likelihood	42434.974			

Note: White couples are non-Hispanic; Source: 2008-2010 Current Population Survey (ASEC)

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Appendix A. Means and Ratios of Mexican and non-Hispanic White Husbands' (H) and Wives' (W) Wage Rates, Mean and Median Annual Earnings and Mean Annual Employment Hours

	Mexican Couples						White Couples					
	All Couples	H. Sole Earner	All Dual	Husband Majority	Equal	Wife Majority	All Couples	H. Sole Provider	All Dual	Husband Majority	Equal	Wife Majority
W's wage rate	7.6	--	13.9	11.7	14.7	21.4	18.1	--	23.1	18.0	25.1	38.4
H's wage rate	19.1	17.7	20.3	25.9	15.0	12.6	33.2	42.8	30.6	38.4	23.8	16.4
Ratio of W/H wage rate	0.40	--	0.68	0.45	0.98	1.70	0.54	--	0.75	0.47	1.05	2.34
W's Mean annual earnings	12,613	--	23,056	15,040	27,986	43,954	30,180	--	38,425	23,159	48,473	74,825
H's Mean annual earnings	36,121	35,347	36,761	45,755	29,909	18,002	71,399	87,999	66,872	86,188	51,248	28,665
Ratio of W/H M earnings	0.35	--	0.63	0.33	0.94	2.44	0.42	--	0.57	0.27	0.95	2.61
W's Median annual earnings	4,585	--	18,500	13,000	25,000	35,000	24,000	--	31,000	20,000	42,000	58,000
H's Median annual earnings	29,120	27,000	30,000	38,000	26,000	15,000	54,000	60,000	52,000	68,000	45,000	25,000
Ratio of W/H Mdn earnings	0.16	--	0.62	0.34	0.96	2.33	0.44	--	0.60	0.29	0.93	2.32
W's annual employment hours	936	--	1,708	1,454	1,962	2,027	1,397	--	1,773	1,495	2,066	2,139
H's annual employment hours	2,052	2,059	2,046	2,150	2,044	1,557	2,270	2,080	2,252	2,367	2,229	1,835
Ratio of W/H empl. hours	0.46	--	0.83	0.68	0.96	1.30	0.62	--	0.79	0.63	0.93	1.17

Note: Source: 2008-2010 March Current Population Survey (ASEC)