

# Division of Labor

|  | Male | Both | Female |
|--|------|------|--------|
| Hunting  | 48   | 0    | 0      |
| Metal work   | 86   | 0    | 0      |
| Stone work   | 67   | 6    | 1      |
| Mining   | 32   | 2    | 4      |
| Land Clear   | 179  | 6    | 6      |
| Large Animal   | 78   | 14   | 27     |
| Soil Prep.   | 93   | 14   | 24     |
| Crop Plant   | 62   | 33   | 46     |
| Crop Tending   | 45   | 24   | 62     |
| Burden Carry  | 30   | 46   | 70     |
| Weaving  | 24   | 6    | 58     |
| Cloth Making   | 20   | 11   | 91     |
| Dairy Product  | 4    | 0    | 24     |
| Cooking  | 2    | 2    | 170    |

From Murdock and Provost (1973) Factors in the division of labor by sex: a cross-cultural analysis

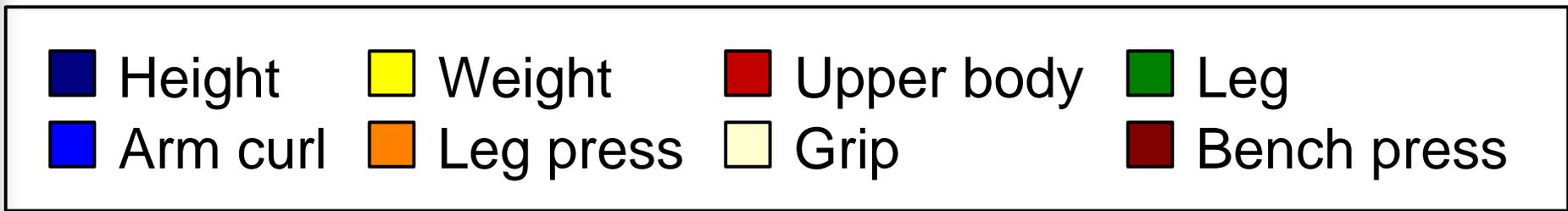
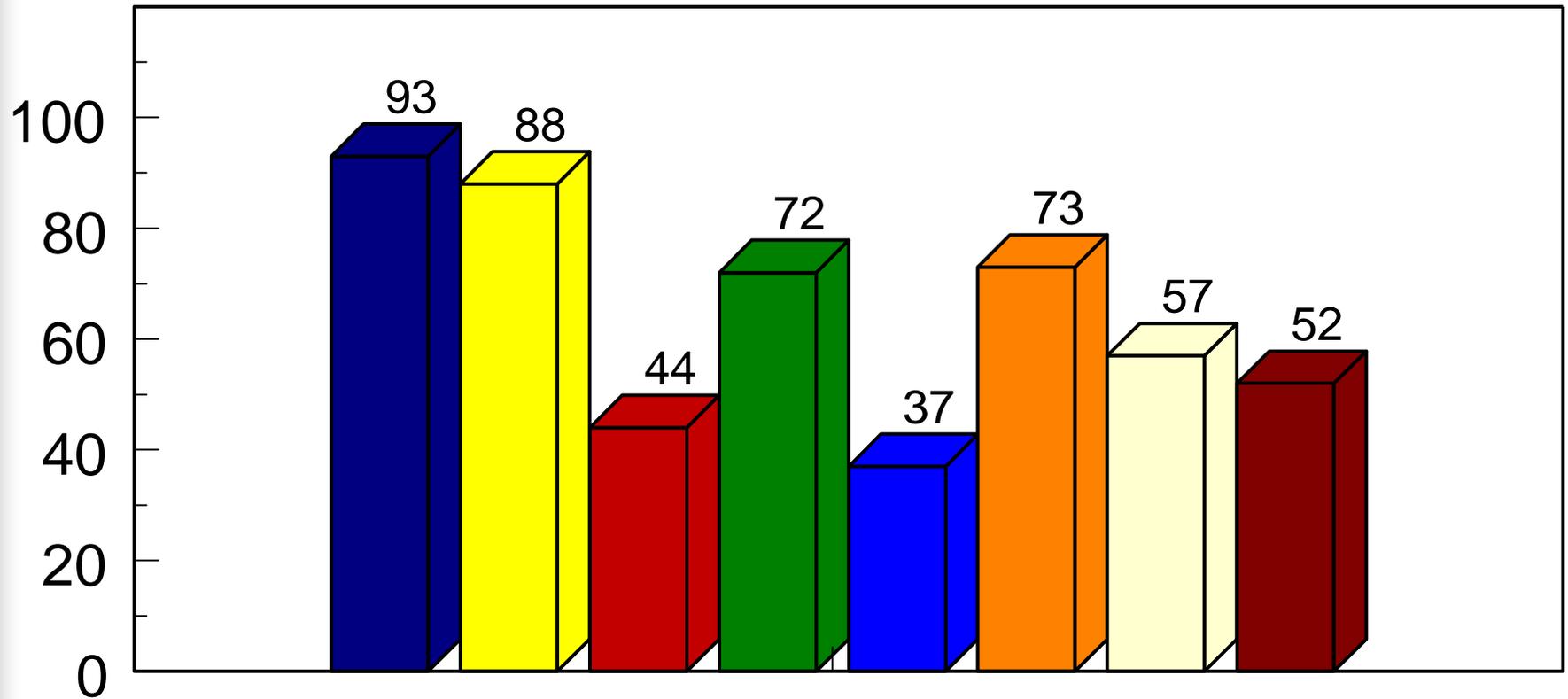


# Theories of the Division of Labor

- Strength differences (Murdock)
- Economy of effort or entailment (White)
- Expendability (M. Ember)
- Childcare constraints (J. Brown)

# Female Size and Strength as a Percentage of Male Size and Strength

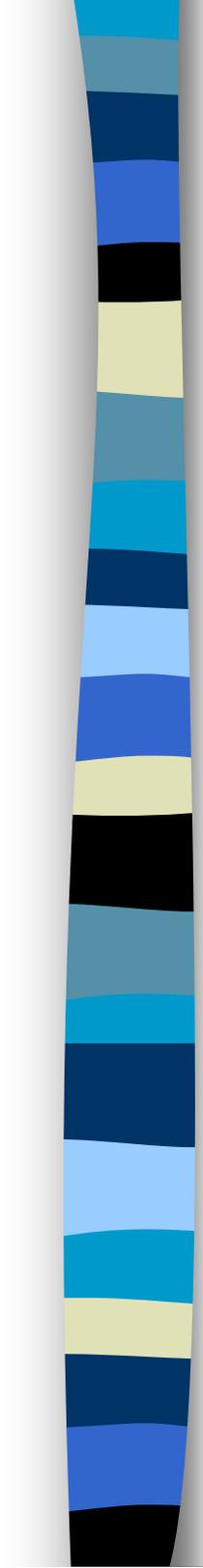
Percent





# For men and women of the same size

- ↗ a woman's upper body strength is 80% of males, and
- ↗ a woman's lower body strength is 93% of males



# Brown's Model of the Division of Labor

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It is suggested here that the degree to which women participate in subsistence activities depends upon the compatibility of the latter with simultaneous child-care responsibilities. Women are most likely to make a substantial contribution when subsistence activities have the following characteristics:

1. the participant is not obliged to be far from home;
2. the tasks are relatively monotonous and do not require rapt concentration;
3. and the work is not dangerous, can be performed in spite of interruptions, and is easily resumed once interrupted.



# Evidence in Support of Brown's Model (I): Reproductive Constraints on Economic Tasks of Preindustrial Women

- High fertility (6-8 children TFR)
- Long-term and on-demand nursing
- High levels of active care to safeguard children in a dangerous environment



# Evidence in Support of Brown's Model (II) Modern and Traditional Contrasts in Childcare

## ■ Traditional

- Fertility 6-8
- Nursing: 2-3 years
- Nursing style: on demand
- Childcare: active and close proximity

## ■ Modern

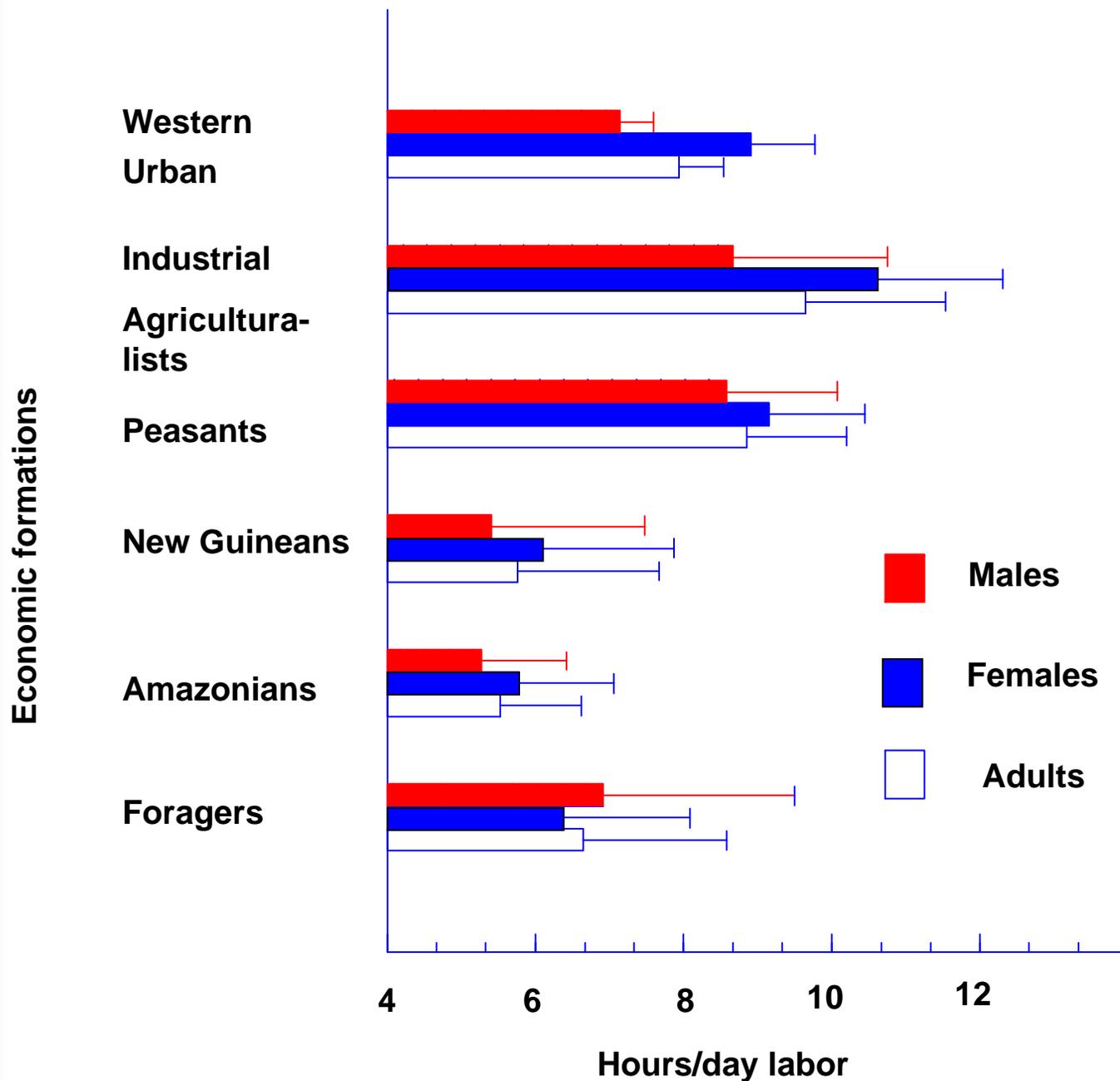
- Fertility: 2-3
- Nursing: 6 months or less
- Nursing style: scheduled
- Childcare: passive, making house safe



# Problems with sexual division theories

- The strength hypothesis cannot account for the fact that women do very strenuous activities and men do light tasks.
- Entailment theory begs the fact of why major tasks are sexually allocated in the first place.
- Expendability theory is group selectionists.
- Childcare constraints incorporates strengths of the above, accounts for more of the cross-cultural variation, and helps us understand the changes we witness today

# *Labor time allocation in basic economic formations*

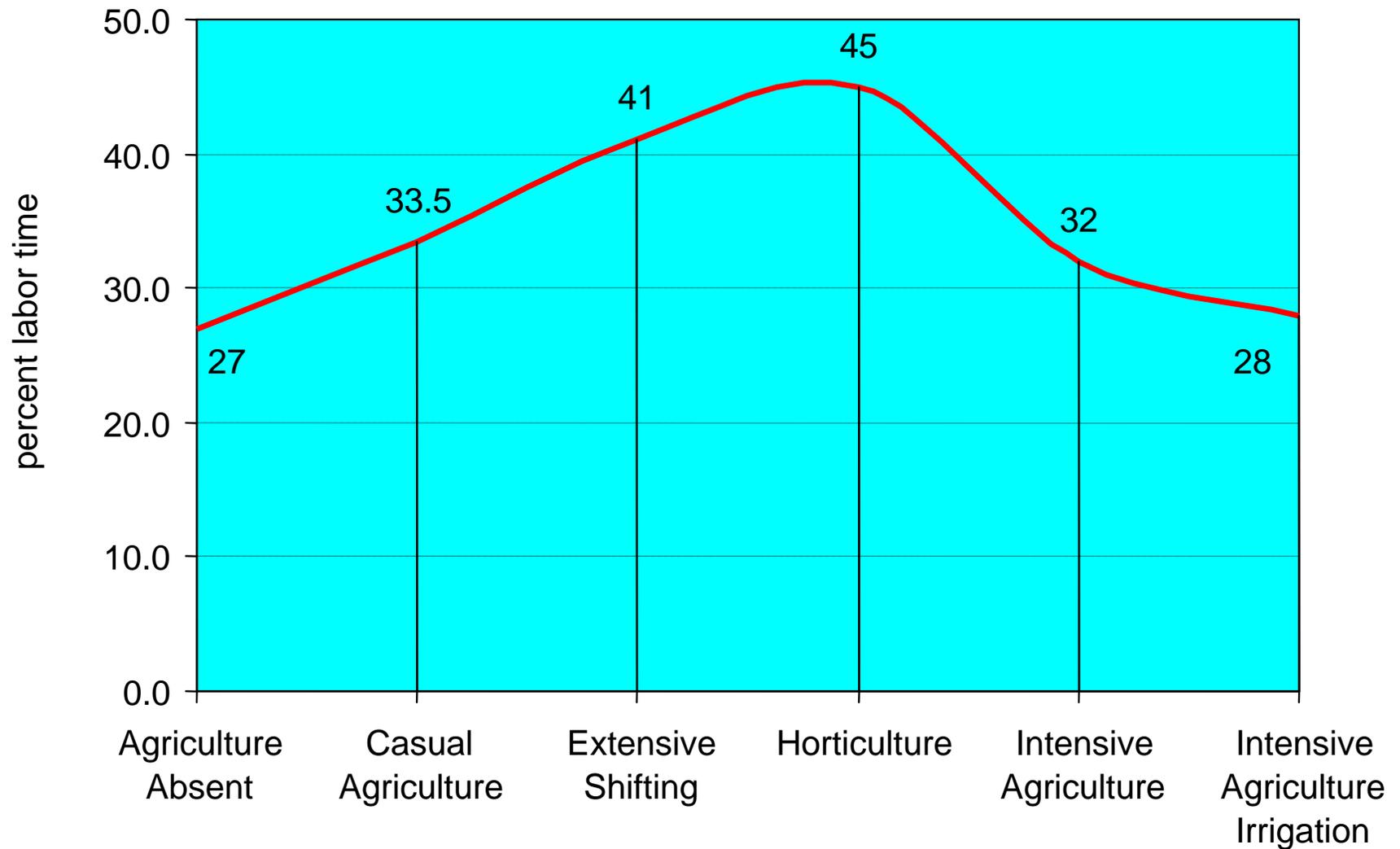




# Some generalizations from Labor time allocation in various economic formations

- Women work more than men in all economic formations except for foragers (i.e., hunter-gatherers)
- Female work is underestimated in the preceding figure because child care is not included
- Foragers, horticulturalists, and simple agriculturalists are more leisured than industrial peoples

# Relationship between type of agriculture and percent of women's work time allocated to agriculture



Source: C. Ember, *American Anthropologist*, 75:5 (1973)

# Hadza Hunter-Gatherers

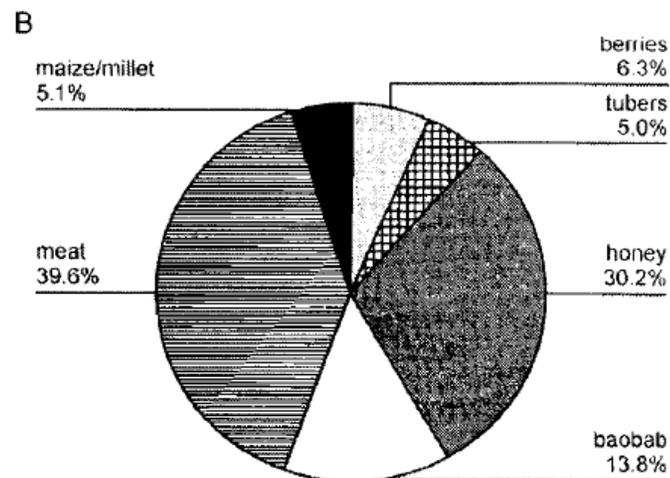
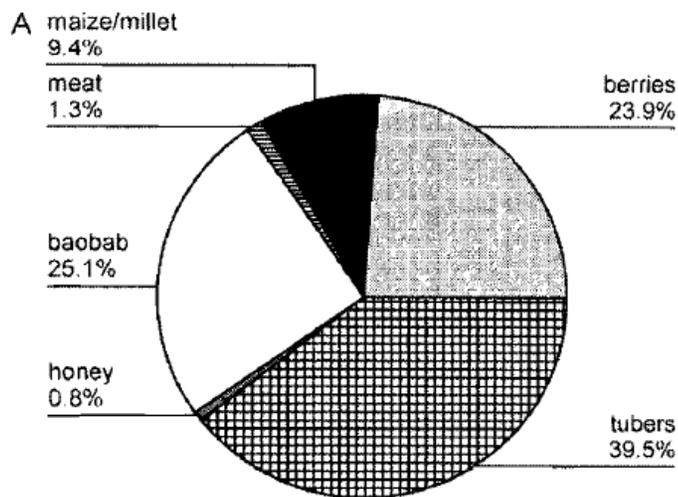


It is commonly argued that among foragers men hunt and women gather. This is an oversimplification. The following tables and figures from the Hadza show that women sometimes hunt opportunistically and men do considerable gathering. Nevertheless, men predominate in hunting and women in gathering.



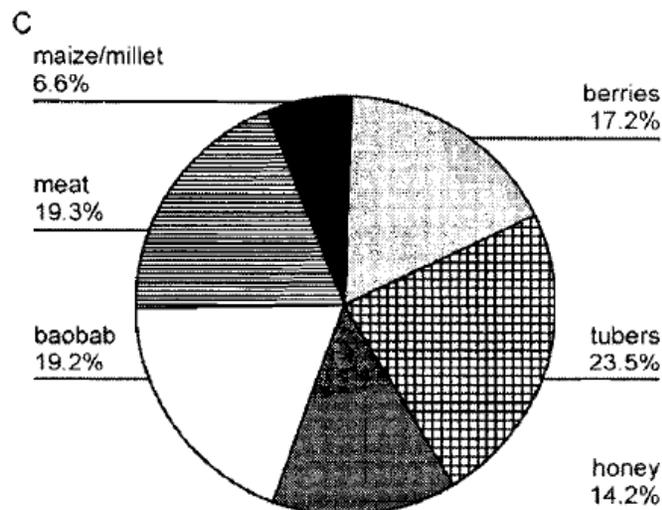
# A note on man the hunter & woman the gatherer

Women



Men

Men & Women



# Burden Carrying and Strength?



Serbia



Ireland

