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*Published in:*  
European Sociological Review

*DOI:*  
[10.1093/esr/jcm036](https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcm036)

*Publication date:*  
2008

*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication in Tilburg University Research Portal](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*  
Verbakel, C. M. C., & de Graaf, P. M. (2008). Resources of the partner: Support or restriction in the occupational career? Developments in the Netherlands between 1940 and 2003. *European Sociological Review*, 24(1), 81-95. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcm036>

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# Resources of the Partner: Support or Restriction in the Occupational Career? Developments in the Netherlands Between 1940 and 2003

Ellen Verbakel and Paul M. de Graaf

This study investigates the role of the partner in career mobility in The Netherlands from the 1940s to the present. Mobility has been defined as upward and downward moves in occupational status. First, we hypothesize that having a partner restricts the labour market career of women, whereas it supports labour market advancement of men. Second, we formulate opposing hypotheses about the effect of partners' resources; social capital notions predict positive partner effects, whereas economic theory predicts negative partner effects. Third, we propose trend hypotheses; the process of individualization makes us predict declines in partner effects, but the processes of cultural and economic modernization lead us to hypothesize a shift from negative to positive partner effects on female career mobility. We use event history analysis techniques covering the complete labour market careers of 5,068 respondents and their partners (Family Survey Dutch Population 1998–2003). We find no evidence for the idea that having a partner has an effect on career mobility of women, and we find a small positive effect on men's mobility. Labour market resources of the partner positively affect upward career moves, whereas they negatively affect downward career moves for both men and women. The data provide no evidence for historical developments in the influence of the partner on individual career mobility.

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## Introduction

Do people have better career chances if they have a partner, and does it matter what resources the partner has? This study investigates the role of the partner in career mobility over the last six decades in The Netherlands. More precisely, we examine to what

extent the relational status (singleness, non-cohabiting relationship, unmarried cohabitation, and marriage) impacts individual upward and downward mobility chances and to what extent these chances are increased or reduced by labour market resources of the partner, which we define as partner's education, occupational status, supervisory authority, working hours, and

whether or not the partner is working in the same field. Furthermore, we will investigate whether these dependencies have changed since the 1940s.

Earlier research showed that the occupations of spouses are correlated positively (Hout, 1982; Verbakel *et al.*, 2006). Such a positive association results in higher social inequality between households compared to individuals, since it means that either favourable or unfavourable social positions are accumulated in households. For a large part, the positive association between spouses' occupations is due to educational and occupational homogamy. This study will focus on another process that may influence the association between partners' labour market success: the effects that partners have on each other's occupational career during the relationship. If, on top of homogamy processes, the resources of one partner positively affect the labour market outcomes of the other partner, resources in 'favourable' households are accumulated to an even larger extent compared to the resources in 'unfavourable' households. Therefore, positive partner effects might lead to higher inequality between households than can be expected on the basis of homogamy only. Moreover, if partner effects have become more positive over time, inequality between households might have grown, while a reduction of positive partner effects or a trend towards more negative partner effects might point at declining inequality.

The idea that labour market resources of one partner might affect labour market outcomes of the other partner is not new (Bernasco *et al.*, 1998; Blossfeld and Drobic, 2001). The central argument is that partners have to arrange household issues together, and that paid labour is strongly related to the availability of time and money, the two most important needs for running a household. In order to provide the household with the necessary financial resources and time for household tasks and child care, partners have to gear their paid and unpaid labour activities. The household approach has appeared to be fruitful in cross-sectional designs on labour market participation, but has not often been applied to dynamic research on upward and downward labour market mobility. A major reason for this neglect, probably, is lack of appropriate data, which should contain detailed career information of both partners.

Hypotheses and empirical results on the influence of the partner on labour market outcomes can be found in two lines of research. The first line of research examines whether marital status has a positive or negative effect on labour market outcomes. These effects are often referred to as marriage premiums

or penalties. Generally, it is hypothesized and found that being married leads to higher wages for men (Korenman and Neumark, 1991; Waite, 1995). Higher productivity due to increased feelings of responsibility or employer favouritism are mentioned as possible reasons for the male marriage premium, next to selection and unobserved heterogeneity. Human capital theory predicts opposite effects of marriage for women. Because married women more often retreat from the labour market than single women, the former are assumed to have less human capital than the latter. Despite the well-founded theoretical arguments, the presumed marriage penalty for women has not often been found empirically (Hill, 1979; Korenman and Neumark, 1992; Waite, 1995; Waldfogel, 1997).

The second line of research does not simply look at the presence of a partner but tries to understand how the partner influences labour market outcomes. It is argued that resources of the partner may act as restrictive or supportive means for labour market outcomes, such as labour market participation or occupational status. Usually, a highly educated partner helps people in achieving good labour market positions, independently of their own educational level (Benham, 1974; Brynin and Schupp, 2000), and also partner's occupational status is sometimes found to be helpful (Bernardi, 1999; Robert and Bukodi, 2002). These positive revenues can be explained by social capital theory. From economic theory (Becker, 1981), however, one would expect negative partner effects: if one partner has a favourable labour market position, the other has no incentive to work or to work on a high level. Evidence for restrictive effects of partners' economic resources have been reported (Bernardi, 1999). For The Netherlands, Bernasco and colleagues (1998) found a negative effect of husbands' income on wives' occupational attainment, but a positive effect of husbands' education.

The hypotheses that are put forward in the two lines of literature on partner effects are not often tested in dynamic studies of career mobility. The existing literature on career mobility, or job mobility in general, predominantly studies individuals and their occupational careers without paying much attention to the partner or the partner's career as possible determinants. Instead, when analysing the probability to change jobs and the probability of upward versus downward mobility, much attention has been paid to the role of segmented industries or the dual economy (Beck *et al.*, 1978; Tolbert *et al.*, 1980; Carroll and Mayer, 1986; Mayer and Carroll, 1987), segmentation of the labour market (Blossfeld and Mayer, 1988), and moves within and between firms (Felmlee, 1982;

Valcour and Tolbert, 2003). In her overview article on job mobility and career processes, Rosenfeld (1992) notices the neglect of family issues in this line of literature, especially when it comes to male careers.

This study's contribution to the research literature is twofold. The first contribution lies in the inclusion of the role of the partner and his or her resources in dynamic research of labour market transitions, especially on upward and downward mobility. The second contribution of this study is the application of a long-term historical perspective. In the post-war era, Western societies experienced a general shift from traditional to modern values about the sex-specific division of labour. Our data enable us to examine to what extent the role of the partner in career mobility has changed since the 1940s. We will hypothesize that the historical context serves as a condition to predict whether the partners' influence on career mobility is predominantly supportive or restrictive, especially for women.

To summarize, the first question we will answer is to what extent upward and downward job moves of men and women depend on (i) relational status, and (ii) on the labour market resources of the partner. The second question is to what extent the influence of (i) relational status, and (ii) the labour market resources of the partner has changed between 1940 and 2003. For this purpose, we make use of three editions of the Family Survey Dutch Population collected between 1998 and 2003. These data contain over one million months with detailed information on labour market careers of 5,068 individuals, their partners' labour market careers, relational and family careers, and other relevant variables.

## Theory

We present our theoretical expectations in three parts. First, we will hypothesize whether the relational status supports or restricts career opportunities. Second, we will derive hypotheses about the impact of partner's resources. Finally, we will hypothesize about historical developments in the effects of marital status and resources of a partner on career mobility. It is important to note that we focus on occupational status as the indicator of labour market success, and not on labour market supply. Although labour market supply and labour market success are closely interrelated, we think that the theoretical mechanisms of the effects of the family on supply and success are quite different. Effects on supply have to do with the time budget and gender roles, whereas effects on career

success primarily have to do with economic and social resources.

## Effects of Relational Status for Men and Women

We predict opposing hypotheses with respect to relational status for men and women. In concordance with Jessie Bernard's well-known hypothesis that men benefit from marriage, and women do not (Bernard, 1972), we hypothesize that having a partner has a positive effect on men's labour market careers, and a negative effect on women's labour market careers. Theoretically, we will not distinguish between several types of relationships, and consider the so-called marriage premium or penalty to refer to unmarried cohabiting and non-cohabiting relationships as well. Empirically, we will test whether this is the case.

The main argument why marriage has a positive effect for men is expressed in the breadwinner hypothesis (Kalmijn and Luijkx, 2005). Men with families feel a stronger financial responsibility which makes them invest more in their work. This investment makes them more productive, which is rewarded by employers with higher pays or promotions (Korenman and Neumark, 1991). A second argument for hypothesizing a marriage premium for men is based on employers' behaviour towards married and single men. Employers might discriminate against unmarried men or fathers for different reasons (Hill, 1979; Korenman and Neumark, 1991; Kalmijn and Luijkx, 2005). First, they might have a preference for married men or fathers instead of single or childless men because they believe the former will be more productive than the latter. Second, employers might act out of paternalistic beliefs: they believe that men with a family deserve better chances.

It is important to note that the marriage premium might be the result of selection processes as well: there might be factors that explain success of men on both the marriage market and the labour market (Korenman and Neumark, 1991; Kalmijn and Luijkx, 2005). After controlling for work characteristics before marriage, Kalmijn and Luijkx (2005) conclude that selection bias does not play an important role, and that it does not explain the positive effect of marriage on male labour market outcomes. The positive effect of marriage on labour market outcomes for men, the marriage premium, has consistently been found for occupational attainment (Korenman and Neumark, 1991; Waite, 1995; Kalmijn and Luijkx, 2005), but not for career mobility (Kalmijn and Luijkx, 2005).

For women, having a partner is supposed to have negative consequences for career advancement. Gender-role specialization (Becker, 1981) makes wives more attached to the home than to the labour market (Sorensen, 1983). Although values with respect to working women have become more modern, it is still the women who are primarily responsible for caring tasks in the home in most families (Van der Lippe and Van Dijk, 2001). As a result, marriage has a negative effect on female labour market careers. The result of this process is that married women have fewer opportunities to increase their human capital, which reduces their odds of career improvement even further. Career breaks are the main explanation for this lower amount of human capital (Korenman and Neumark, 1992; Waldfogel, 1997; Davies and Pierre, 2005). An additional and related factor is that opportunities for training are less likely when employment is discontinuous. Lower investment in training can also be the result of anticipation: women who expect that they will interrupt their career reason that the costs of the investments will not outweigh future benefits (Davies and Pierre, 2005). Fewer possibilities to build human capital are also argued to be related to part-time work, work below one's level, and jobs that are convenient with respect to flexible working hours (Avellar, 2003). All of these job characteristics are more common among married than single women.

Regardless of the strong theoretical expectations, most studies do not find support for a marriage penalty for female labour market success (Hill, 1979; Korenman and Neumark, 1992; Waite, 1995; Waldfogel, 1997). Waldfogel (1997) proposes some explanations for this finding. The marriage bonus for both men and women is consistent with the household production model that states that living in a household is easier than living alone, which makes household members more productive compared with singles. If this is true, it should show up in our models that people with a non-cohabiting relationship have similar mobility probabilities than singles, and that married and unmarried cohabiting people are similar in this respect too. In addition, a selection process could be going on, which implies that successful women are both more likely to get married and more likely to get a good career.

### Effects of Partner's Resources for Men and Women

Given that one has a partner, is he or she a support or a restriction for one's career outcomes? If partners

gear their activities in order to provide the household with enough income and enough time for household and caring tasks, it is very plausible that the partner's labour market resources will affect one's labour market decisions, and thus will affect transitions into higher or lower status jobs. We will put forward two opposing mechanisms: partners' labour market resources could positively or negatively affect career outcomes.

The hypothesis that the partner's resources have a positive effect on upward career mobility is based on the general idea that partner's labour market characteristics are resources that can be used in a positive way to reach a better position. This idea is usually known as the notion of social capital (Lin *et al.*, 1981). Resourceful contacts in one's network can help reaching higher positions. In general, these contacts can give information on companies or people, or even on how to behave at a job interview. More particularly, contacts can give useful information on job openings or put in a good word. The quality of a contact's resources is generally indicated by several labour market characteristics that imply success, like high occupational status, supervisory authority, and a high educational level. A more specific way of how a contact, or in our study the partner, can help is by working in the same occupational field. A partner working in the same field can have very specific contacts or job information that can be useful if one aims at career improvement in one's field.

Stimulation can be another reason for positive partner effects. People with a favourable labour market position might transfer their positive attitude towards career advancement to their partners, and stimulate their partners to put effort in their career. The attitudes that cause this stimulating effect are partly connected to attitudes towards the sex-specific division of labour and towards working women or mothers. In a modern view, pursuing a career is a good thing for both men and women; it stimulates personal development, boosts self-respect, and it offers a rich social network. Since educational level appears to be strongly related to modern values concerning career pursuit (Alwin *et al.*, 1992), we expect partner's educational level, being one of the indicators of labour market resources, to lead to more stimulation, and therefore to a positive partner effect on labour market transitions. Both the idea of social capital and stimulation lead us to the hypothesis that partner's labour market resources have a positive effect on transitions into better labour market positions. Positive partner effects, in particular, of partner's education,

are often found in cross-sectional research (Bernasco *et al.*, 1998; Bernardi, 1999; Brynin and Schupp, 2000).

We do not only expect positive partner effects, but also negative partner effects. Someone with a successful labour market position might restrict the labour market career of the partner. If the labour market position of one's partner is favourable, there are fewer incentives to be successful (Becker, 1981; Felmler, 1982; Bernasco, 1994; Bernasco *et al.*, 1998). This economic argument leads to the hypothesis that labour market resources of the partner have a negative effect on the probability of reaching a more successful job. Negative partner effects are found in earlier research, both in attainment studies (van der Lippe and Siegers, 1994) and in career studies (van der Lippe and Siegers, 1994; Bernasco *et al.*, 1998; Bernardi, 1999).

### Historical Developments in Partner Effects

We derive a general trend hypothesis for men and women, and a more specific one for women only that will also formulate a context in which positive or negative partner effects on female careers are supposed to prevail. First, we expect that general societal changes as secularization and individualization have led to a decline in the importance of the relational status and partner's resources. The processes of secularization and individualization refer to changes in the way people live their lives; they live more individually, are less influenced by religion and social environment, and, in general, make their own decisions. This implies that also the influence of the partner should have declined.

Second, we observe that female employment has increased dramatically in the Netherlands. Until the 1970s, women left the labour market when they married, and if they did not, they stopped working when they had children (de Graaf and Vermeulen, 1997), but nowadays the majority of new mothers continue working (although often in part-time jobs). This development is the result of cultural and economic modernization processes, and we think that this may have changed the way husbands influence their wives. The cultural modernization refers to the well-known shift from traditional to modern values about the sex-specific division of labour and working women or mothers (Treas and Widmer, 2000). In a traditional view, men are supposed to build a career, while women are supposed to take care of the unpaid household and caring tasks. Modern values consider career-orientation to be suitable for both men and women. Traditional gender roles and the economic

incentive mechanism both predict negative partner effects on career mobility for women. However, when the normative restriction weakens and is replaced by liberal values that promote female careers, the balance might swing to supportive partner effects. At the same time, economic modernization has made support for the wife's career become more in men's interest: the potential contribution of the wife's career to the family's living standard has increased considerably (Oppenheimer, 1977), mainly because of the increased levels of female education (Shavit and Blossfeld, 1993). These changes lead us to predict that negative partner effects on female career mobility as expected by economic theory have decreased, and that the positive partner effects have become more important in present times.

### Data

We use three waves of the Family Survey Dutch Population: 1998, 2000, and 2003 (de Graaf *et al.*, 1998, 2000, 2003). The surveys cover the Dutch population between age 18 and 70 with an over-representation of couples. The data are based on structured face-to-face interviews and self-completion questionnaires, which were identical for primary respondents and their cohabiting or marital partners. The net response rate varies from 40.6 percent to 52.6 percent, which is very reasonable for such a survey design in The Netherlands. In total, 5,764 respondents (primary respondents and their partners) have been interviewed. Our analyses will be based on a sample of 5,086 individuals who are 20 years or older and who have ever had a job. A retrospective design has been used in which respondents were asked to reconstruct their careers in several domains, such as their occupational and demographic careers. Respondents reported beginning and ending dates, as well as additional information on the content of the job for each job he or she ever held. This set-up makes the data extremely useful for analysing partner effects on career mobility. For ex-partners, information on labour market careers is less extensive, but the existence of prior relationships themselves and, in two out of three surveys, the educational level of ex-spouses is known.

### Upward and Downward Mobility

To be able to estimate event history models (see 'Models' section), we reconstruct the data into a person-month file. People who are employed can make three possible career moves, and this is true

for each job spell they have: they can switch to a higher-status job, to a lower-status job, or to a job with the same status level. In this study, we are especially interested in the former two, upward and downward mobility, because these moves directly influence the socio-economic position of the household. We will, therefore, pay no further attention to lateral mobility. Obviously, people who are employed also have the chance of leaving the labour force. However, we consider transitions out of the labour force not as much as a dimension of career mobility, but as a dimension of labour supply, since, in most cases, labour market exit is voluntary.

We speak of upward mobility if a new job scores at least 5 points higher on the International Socio Economic Index (ISEI) for all occupations (Ganzeboom *et al.*, 1992) compared to the prior job. A decrease of 5 or more points is considered as downward mobility. In order to test the robustness of our results, we performed a sensitivity analysis in which we defined upward and downward mobility as an increase or decrease of at least 10 points. Overall, the results did not lead to different conclusions; in the 'Results' section we will discuss the differences in more detail when relevant. We record 1,897 upward moves for men (1,569 for men with partner) and 883 upward moves for women (708 for women with partner). In comparison, downward moves occur less often: 1,229 for men (1,011 for men with partner) and 651 for women (546 for women with partner).

### Relational Status and Partner's Resources

Relational status is a time-dependent variable based on the dates the relationships between the respondent and his or her (ex-)partner started, ended, and moved to another stage. We distinguish four relational categories: singleness, non-cohabiting relationship, unmarried cohabitation, and marriage. Information on partner's resources has been added in all months that the respondent has a relationship. First of all, we consider partner's educational attainment that has been measured in years of education, varying from six years for elementary education to 20 years for a postgraduate degree. The employment status of the partner is indicated by a dummy variable (job = 0 and no job = 1). If the partner has a job, we record four specific labour market resources that are all time-dependent: (i) occupational status according to the International Socioeconomic Index (ISEI) (Ganzeboom *et al.*, 1992), (ii) whether or not the job implies supervisory authority, (iii) number of weekly working

hours, (iv) whether or not the occupational field is identical to the respondent's.

In the months that the respondent is non-employed, the occupational status has been mean-imputed (separately for men and women) and the weekly number of working hours has been set to zero. The dummy variable that indicates whether or not the partner has a job prevents this intervention to affect the results. In a limited number of cases, partner information is truly missing. For these cases, occupational status ( $N = 1.3\%$ ) and education ( $N = 5.6\%$ ) are mean-imputed and dummy variables are added that indicate whether or not the original information was missing. For supervisory authority and same occupational field, a third category comprises all missing cases. The coefficients of the dummy indicators of missing variables will not be reported in the tables.

### Individual Resources

In order to estimate partner effect models, it is necessary to control for individual characteristics that may be of importance for making transitions into jobs with higher or lower occupational status. Education has been measured in years of schooling (6–20 years) and is time constant, since people start to be at risk after having finished their education. Furthermore, we consider five occupational characteristics, which are all time dependent. The occupational status has been measured with the International Socioeconomic Index (ISEI). Work experience indicates the total number of years worked during one's career. A quadratic term has been included into the models as well. We do not consider age because it correlates strongly with work experience, especially for men. Supervisory authority is a dummy variable differentiating between no supervisory authority at all and some or much supervisory authority. Working hours express the actual number of working hours per week. The maximum number has been top-coded to 60. In order to test the influence of having a partner in the same occupational field, we distinguish six occupational fields on the individual level. This distinction is a further classification of the two-digit occupational code provided by Statistics Netherlands. Occupations can belong to the cultural field (teaching, linguistic, and social occupations), the care-taking field (medical, personal, and social care), the technical field (exact and technical occupations), the economic field (transport, communication, administrative, commercial, juridical, and managerial occupations), the agrarian field, or to another, more general field.

Missing values on individual characteristics are scarce (about 1% of the months have missing values). For cases with missing values on education, occupational status, and working hours, we impute mean scores (separately for men and women). In addition, dummy indicators for missing variables have been added to the models, but the effects will not be reported. An extra category takes care of missing values on the categorical variable supervisory authority.

The presence and age of children are expressed in four categories and vary over the life course: no children, youngest child is under age four, youngest child is four years or older and still living in the household, and children have left the parental home (empty nest). A fifth category comprises missing values. The information has been based on the date of birth of every child, date of leaving the parental home of every child (if unknown, we assume the child left home on age 18) and, in exceptional cases, date of death of the child. Children from prior relationships are assumed to leave the home of the father after divorce, whereas children are assumed to stay in the household of widowed fathers and divorced or widowed mothers.

Finally, we modelled a duration effect by four dummy variables which indicate the number of

years one is at risk of experiencing a transition: less than 2 years, 2–4 years, 5–9 years, 10 or more years. Since we deal with labour market transitions made between 1940 and 2003, we control for period by means of five dummy variables: 1940–1959, 1960–1969, 1970–1979, 1980–1989, and 1990–2003. To test whether the effects of relational status and resources of the partner have changed over time, we construct linear interaction terms between each partner characteristic and year. For this purpose year has been recoded to 0 for the first period, and to 1.5, 2.5, 3.5, and 4.7 for the four other periods. Thus, historical changes in the partner effects can be interpreted in decades. Table 1 shows descriptive values of the independent variables for males and females with and without a partner for the months in which respondents are at risk of being upwardly mobile. The descriptive values for the months in which respondents are at risk of being downwardly mobile are almost similar and, therefore, not shown.

## Models

We performed event history analyses on the person-month file (discrete time models), starting with the month after the respondent left full-time education

**Table 1** Statistics of independent variables for females and males, based on the sample of months in which age is between 20 and 55 and respondent is at risk of experiencing upward mobility

	Females						Males					
	Total <sup>a</sup>			With partner <sup>b</sup>			Total <sup>a</sup>			With partner <sup>b</sup>		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
<b>Historical period</b>												
Year 1940–1959	2,487	0.05		2,334	0.04		2,512	0.03		2,367	0.02	
Year 1960–1969	2,487	0.09		2,334	0.08		2,512	0.07		2,367	0.06	
Year 1970–1979	2,487	0.13		2,334	0.13		2,512	0.14		2,367	0.14	
Year 1980–1989	2,487	0.22		2,334	0.21		2,512	0.24		2,367	0.24	
Year 1990–2003	2,487	0.52		2,334	0.54		2,512	0.52		2,367	0.55	
<b>Duration at risk</b>												
Duration <2 years	2,487	0.27		2,334	0.25		2,512	0.20		2,367	0.16	
Duration 2–4 years	2,487	0.21		2,334	0.20		2,512	0.15		2,367	0.14	
Duration 5–9 years	2,487	0.35		2,334	0.36		2,512	0.30		2,367	0.30	
Duration ≥10 years	2,487	0.14		2,334	0.16		2,512	0.32		2,367	0.36	
Missing value duration	2,487	0.03		2,334	0.03		2,512	0.03		2,367	0.03	
<b>Children</b>												
No children in household	2,487	0.67		2,334	0.64		2,512	0.51		2,367	0.44	
Youngest child <4 years	2,487	0.12		2,334	0.13		2,512	0.22		2,367	0.26	
Youngest child ≥4 years	2,487	0.17		2,334	0.19		2,512	0.23		2,367	0.26	
Empty nest	2,487	0.04		2,334	0.04		2,512	0.04		2,367	0.04	
Missing value children	2,487	0.00		2,334	0.00		2,512	0.00		2,367	0.00	

(continued)

Table 1 Continued

	Females						Males					
	<i>N</i>	Total <sup>a</sup> Mean	SD	With partner <sup>b</sup> <i>N</i>	Mean	SD	<i>N</i>	Total <sup>a</sup> Mean	SD	With partner <sup>b</sup> <i>N</i>	Mean	SD
<b>Individual resources</b>												
Education in years (6–20) <sup>c</sup>	2,479	11.78	2.97	2,326	11.75	2.96	2,503	12.06	3.22	2,359	12.07	3.20
Occupational status (10–85) <sup>c</sup>	2,487	46.69	13.63	2,334	46.78	13.74	2,512	47.67	13.68	2,367	48.12	13.75
Work experience (0–36) <sup>c</sup>	2,487	7.52	5.13	2,334	8.12	5.56	2,512	11.71	6.22	2,367	12.99	6.64
Work experience square (0–1268) <sup>c</sup>	2,487	103.34	129.85	2,334	113.93	145.21	2,512	221.24	183.21	2,367	252.71	206.69
Supervising	2,487	0.15		2,334	0.15		2,512	0.35		2,367	0.38	
Not supervising	2,487	0.85		2,334	0.85		2,512	0.65		2,367	0.62	
Missing value supervising	2,487	0.00		2,334	0.00		2,512	0.00		2,367	0.00	
Working hours (3–60) <sup>c</sup>	2,486	32.62	9.28	2,333	31.98	9.37	2,510	41.21	6.47	2,365	41.21	6.46
Occ field: cultural	2,487	0.13		2,334	0.13		2,512	0.09		2,367	0.09	
Occ field: caregiving	2,487	0.28		2,334	0.28		2,512	0.04		2,367	0.04	
Occ field: technical	2,487	0.07		2,334	0.07		2,512	0.33		2,367	0.33	
Occ field: economic	2,487	0.45		2,334	0.45		2,512	0.46		2,367	0.46	
Occ field: agrarian	2,487	0.01		2,334	0.01		2,512	0.03		2,367	0.03	
Occ field: other	2,487	0.06		2,334	0.06		2,512	0.05		2,367	0.05	
<b>Relational status</b>												
Single	2,486	0.15					2,512	0.15				
Non-cohabiting relationship	2,486	0.22		2,334	0.28		2,512	0.14		2,367	0.18	
Unmarried cohabitation	2,486	0.15		2,334	0.18		2,512	0.12		2,367	0.15	
Marriage	2,486	0.47		2,334	0.54		2,512	0.58		2,367	0.67	
<b>Partner's resources</b>												
Partner education (6–20) <sup>c</sup>				2,186	12.20	3.17				2,262	11.50	3.00
Partner job				2,334	0.79					2,367	0.53	
Partner no job				2,334	0.13					2,367	0.39	
Missing value partner job				2,334	0.08					2,367	0.08	
Partner occupational status (10–88) <sup>c,d</sup>				2,003	48.29	14.56				2,014	46.76	13.88
Partner supervising <sup>d</sup>				2,016	0.34					2,025	0.15	
Partner not supervising <sup>d</sup>				2,016	0.63					2,025	0.82	
Missing value partner supervising <sup>d</sup>				2,016	0.03					2,025	0.03	
Partner working hours (3–60) <sup>c,d</sup>				1,973	41.28	6.71				1,989	31.89	9.56
Partner in same field <sup>d</sup>				2,016	0.33					2,025	0.33	
Partner not in same field <sup>d</sup>				2,016	0.66					2,025	0.65	
Missing value same field <sup>d</sup>				2,016	0.01					2,025	0.02	
<i>N respondents</i>	2,487			2,334			2,512			2,367		
<i>N months</i>	364,943			310,437			619,468			544,646		
<i>N events</i>	883			708			1,897			1,569		

<sup>a</sup> Average of all months.

<sup>b</sup> Average of the months in which man/woman has a partner.

<sup>c</sup> Only from non-missing observations.

<sup>d</sup> Average of the months in which man/woman has a working partner.

Source: Family Survey Dutch Population 1998, 2000, 2003.

for the first time. We focused on career mobility which means that the months in which a respondent was not working are not included in the analysis. In addition, if the respondent has an ISEI score of 86 or higher, he or she cannot be upwardly mobile according to our definition of upward mobility (maximum ISEI score is 90). Similarly, a person cannot be downwardly mobile if his or her ISEI score is below 15 (minimum ISEI score is 10). Therefore, the risk sets are limited to the individuals who are working and for whom it is possible to be mobile. Since we have partly opposing hypotheses for men and women, we do separate analyses. Only months in which the respondent is between 20 and 55 years of age are considered, because we want to focus on the central part of the labour market career, not on (early) retirement processes. We lagged all time-dependent variables one month in order to be sure that they represent the situation before the transition took place.

Logistic regression models were used to analyse the probability of making an upward move and the probability of making a downward move. Note that after an event the respondents are immediately at risk for a new event (repeated events). The analyses consist of three steps. First, we test the impact of relational status, next to the influence of individual and control variables. Second, we select months in which the respondent has a partner (that is a non-cohabiting, cohabiting, or married partner) to test the importance of the resources of the partner. Finally, we include linear interaction terms between relational status and year to the first model, and linear interaction terms between partner's resources and year to the second model to test whether the role of the partner has changed over time.

## Results

Before we turn to the results on the influence of the partner, we will briefly discuss the results of individual resources on the probability to be upwardly and downwardly mobile. Table 2 (on females) and Table 3 (on males) show no unexpected results, and the patterns appear to be rather similar for women and men. Educational attainment increases the odds of being upwardly mobile, and decreases the likelihood of downward mobility. Occupational status has a negative effect on upward mobility and a positive effect on downward mobility, which indicates ceiling and floor effects. Work experience and, only for men, holding a job with supervisory authority lower the

probability of any transition, irrespective of the direction of the move. Females who work many hours a week are more likely to get a higher status job, whereas working hours do not affect male careers. We will not discuss the differences between occupational fields in detail since we only included this information in the model to be able to test the partner effect of working in the same field.

Not unexpectedly, children in the household restrict women's careers by reducing their odds of being upwardly mobile. Interestingly, children in school-going age lower the odds for women of making a downward move, but one should keep in mind that these effects refer to the highly selective group of women who are employed while having a young child (cf. Kalmijn and Luijkx, 2006). Children hardly affect mobility chances of men.

### Relational Status and Partner's Resources

We will now consider whether someone with a partner has better career chances than someone without a partner. Based on existing literature on labour market success (usually wages), we hypothesized that having a partner stimulates the labour market career of men, whereas it restricts the labour market career of women. Our results, as shown in Table 2, do not support this hypothesis as far as women are concerned: having a partner does not significantly affect female upward or downward mobility. Note, however, that part of the restrictive effect of family formation is expressed by the effects of children. If the presence of children would be excluded from the model, the negative effect of marriage on female upward mobility becomes stronger and significant (from  $-0.195$  to  $-0.299$ ). If we focus on women with a partner, we find that marriage has different consequences for women than other forms of relationships. Married women are less likely to make an upward move than non-cohabiting and unmarried cohabiting women, but at the same time, married women are also better protected against downward moves. Perhaps, non-cohabiting and unmarried cohabiting women are more mobile in general. It is clear, however, that when speaking of the presence of a partner, one should distinguish between different kinds of relationships, and that relationship types that involve household formation do not oppose to non-household formation types. This refutes the household production model that assumes that people living in a household are more productive than singles.

Our results provide some evidence for the marriage premium that has been hypothesized for men

**Table 2** Logistic regression coefficients on females' probability of upward and downward mobility

Females	Upward mobility				Downward mobility			
	All respondents		With partner		All respondents		With partner	
	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>b</i>	SE
Intercept	-5.293**	0.385	-5.827**	0.570	-8.103**	0.425	-7.576**	0.592
Year 1940–1959	0		0		0		0	
Year 1960–1969	0.093	0.237	0.353	0.340	0.471	0.303	0.452	0.375
Year 1970–1979	0.109	0.226	0.321	0.327	0.490	0.294	0.417	0.363
Year 1980–1989	-0.154	0.222	0.029	0.325	0.589*	0.287	0.464	0.357
Year 1990–2003	0.459*	0.220	0.567	0.323	1.068**	0.286	0.961**	0.356
Duration < 2years	0		0		0		0	
Duration 2–4 years	-0.025	0.103	-0.047	0.115	-0.042	0.122	-0.112	0.136
Duration 5–9 years	-0.031	0.109	-0.099	0.120	0.045	0.131	-0.026	0.141
Duration ≥10 years	-0.294	0.165	-0.338	0.178	-0.129	0.199	-0.260	0.210
<b>Children</b>								
No children	0		0		0		0	
Youngest child <4 years	-0.445**	0.139	-0.477**	0.146	-0.220	0.151	-0.154	0.156
Youngest child ≥4 years	-0.278*	0.129	-0.266	0.137	-0.508**	0.159	-0.432**	0.167
Empty nest	-0.910**	0.277	-0.910**	0.302	-0.619*	0.276	-0.528	0.290
<b>Individual resources</b>								
Education	0.164**	0.015	0.177**	0.019	-0.051**	0.018	-0.060**	0.021
Occupational status	-0.067**	0.004	-0.071**	0.004	0.035**	0.004	0.037**	0.004
Work experience	-0.047*	0.019	-0.043*	0.021	-0.086**	0.024	-0.085**	0.026
Work experience square	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001*	0.001	0.002*	0.001
Supervising	-0.124	0.095	-0.167	0.107	-0.097	0.108	-0.096	0.119
Working hours	0.016**	0.004	0.018**	0.004	0.007	0.005	0.008	0.005
Occ field: cultural	0		0		0		0	
Occ field: caregiving	-0.444*	0.182	-0.621**	0.200	-0.193	0.164	-0.237	0.179
Occ field: technical	-0.227	0.222	-0.360	0.250	0.678**	0.189	0.660**	0.209
Occ field: economic	0.487**	0.155	0.425*	0.170	0.484**	0.126	0.441**	0.141
Occ field: agrarian	-0.712*	0.293	-0.795*	0.333	0.749	0.524	0.920	0.527
Occ field: other	0.107	0.210	0.163	0.228	0.535*	0.247	0.445	0.266
<b>Relational status</b>								
Single	0		NA		0		NA	
Non-cohabiting relationship	0.034	0.107	0.256*	0.114	0.190	0.129	0.341**	0.129
Unmarried cohabitation	0.054	0.114	0.264*	0.110	0.217	0.136	0.388**	0.124
Marriage	-0.195	0.109	0		-0.136	0.131	0	
<b>Partner's resources</b>								
Partner education			0.021	0.016			0.000	0.018
Partner no job			0.547	0.817			-1.618**	0.579
Partner occupational status			0.007*	0.003			-0.005	0.004
Partner supervising			0.057	0.093			-0.042	0.108
Partner working hours			-0.009	0.006			-0.006	0.007
Partner in same field			-0.023	0.103			-0.177	0.108
<i>N</i> respondents	2,487		2,334		2,493		2,340	
<i>N</i> respondent-months	364,943		310,437		363,537		309,346	
<i>N</i> events	883		708		651		546	

Source: Family Survey Dutch Population 1998, 2000, 2003.

\*\* $P < 0.01$ ; \* $P < 0.05$ ; NA = Not applicable.

**Table 3** Logistic regression coefficients on males' probability of upward and downward mobility

Males	Upward mobility				Downward mobility			
	All respondents		With partner		All respondents		With partner	
	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>b</i>	SE
Intercept	-4.663**	0.286	-5.253**	0.373	-7.757**	0.315	-7.857**	0.426
Year 1940–1959	0		0		0		0	
Year 1960–1969	0.120	0.139	0.109	0.180	0.251	0.183	0.177	0.231
Year 1970–1979	0.169	0.133	0.144	0.174	0.370*	0.176	0.272	0.223
Year 1980–1989	0.128	0.131	0.082	0.173	0.415*	0.173	0.286	0.222
Year 1990–2003	0.368**	0.129	0.321	0.173	0.716**	0.172	0.658**	0.222
Duration <2 years	0		0		0		0	
Duration 2–4 years	0.039	0.079	0.107	0.092	0.070	0.100	0.065	0.118
Duration 5–9 years	0.049	0.079	0.069	0.090	0.015	0.103	0.000	0.115
Duration ≥10 years	-0.035	0.107	-0.037	0.115	-0.043	0.138	-0.131	0.148
<b>Children</b>								
No children	0		0		0		0	
Youngest child <4 years	0.015	0.075	0.006	0.081	0.053	0.092	0.072	0.099
Youngest child ≥4 years	0.210*	0.092	0.188	0.099	-0.101	0.117	-0.079	0.126
Empty nest	-0.126	0.204	-0.233	0.225	0.210	0.205	0.192	0.220
<b>Individual characteristics</b>								
Education	0.139**	0.009	0.131**	0.011	-0.086**	0.011	-0.091**	0.013
Occupational status	-0.061**	0.002	-0.060**	0.003	0.046**	0.002	0.050**	0.003
Work experience	-0.083**	0.013	-0.073**	0.014	-0.079**	0.017	-0.068**	0.018
Work experience square	0.001*	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000
Supervising	-0.158**	0.055	-0.108	0.058	-0.196**	0.064	-0.189**	0.069
Working hours	0.002	0.003	0.002	0.004	0.003	0.004	0.001	0.004
Occ field: cultural	0		0		0		0	
Occ field: caregiving	-0.159	0.181	-0.028	0.194	-0.181	0.205	-0.320	0.236
Occ field: technical	-0.045	0.147	0.026	0.158	0.580**	0.129	0.554**	0.141
Occ field: economic	0.529**	0.138	0.564**	0.147	0.743**	0.118	0.717**	0.129
Occ field: agrarian	-0.263	0.186	-0.209	0.204	0.250	0.286	0.433	0.309
Occ field: other	0.619**	0.159	0.732**	0.172	0.816**	0.181	0.792**	0.211
<b>Relational status</b>								
Single	0		NA		0		NA	
Non-cohabiting relationship	0.097	0.077	0.022	0.083	0.009	0.095	0.276**	0.102
Unmarried cohabitation	0.209*	0.091	0.126	0.088	-0.126	0.113	0.094	0.109
Marriage	0.101	0.083	0		-0.264**	0.100	0	
<b>Partner's resources</b>								
Partner education			0.014	0.011			-0.021	0.014
Partner no job			-0.075	0.437			-1.076*	0.470
Partner occupational status			0.007**	0.003			0.000	0.003
Partner supervising			-0.066	0.099			0.026	0.115
Partner working hours			0.004	0.003			0.003	0.004
Partner in same field			-0.041	0.083			-0.010	0.096
<i>N respondents</i>	2,512		2,367		2,530		2,385	
<i>N respondent-months</i>	619,468		544,646		623,626		548,511	
<i>N events</i>	1,897		1,569		1,229		1,011	

Source: Family Survey Dutch Population 1998, 2000, 2003.

\*\* $P < 0.01$ ; \*  $P < 0.05$ ; NA = Not applicable.

**Table 4** Trends in partner effects on females' and males' probability of upward and downward mobility

	Females				Males			
	Upward mobility <sup>a</sup>		Downward mobility <sup>a</sup>		Upward mobility <sup>a</sup>		Downward mobility <sup>a</sup>	
	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>b</i>	SE
<b>Panel A</b>								
Single	0		0		0		0	
Non-cohabiting relationship	-0.179	0.271	0.085	0.334	0.040	0.182	0.283	0.230
*Year (0-4.7)	0.064	0.074	0.031	0.092	0.017	0.052	-0.087	0.066
Unmarried cohabitation	0.020	0.523	0.759	0.574	0.268	0.365	1.039*	0.411
*Year (0-4.7)	0.008	0.124	-0.129	0.139	-0.022	0.089	-0.294**	0.103
Marriage	0.064	0.313	-0.005	0.385	0.332	0.178	-0.172	0.234
*Year (0-4.7)	-0.065	0.081	-0.034	0.101	-0.069	0.049	-0.030	0.062
<b>Panel B</b>								
Partner education	0.010	0.044	-0.073	0.050	0.010	0.030	-0.096**	0.036
*Year (0-4.7)	0.003	0.011	0.020	0.012	0.001	0.008	0.021*	0.010
Partner no job	0.632	0.898	-1.697*	0.733	-0.171	0.467	-1.094*	0.509
*Year (0-4.7)	-0.023	0.093	0.023	0.113	0.027	0.046	0.006	0.057
Partner occupational status	0.011	0.011	-0.016	0.012	0.007	0.008	-0.009	0.010
*Year (0-4.7)	-0.001	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.000	0.002	0.002	0.002
Partner supervising	-0.064	0.361	0.564	0.384	0.086	0.374	0.113	0.432
*Year (0-4.7)	0.030	0.086	-0.153	0.093	-0.037	0.092	-0.023	0.105
Partner working hours	-0.006	0.009	-0.006	0.010	0.005	0.005	0.004	0.006
*Year (0-4.7)	-0.001	0.002	0.000	0.002	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.001
Partner in same field	-0.004	0.337	-0.261	0.362	-0.048	0.239	0.036	0.259
*Year (0-4.7)	-0.005	0.081	0.021	0.088	0.002	0.060	-0.012	0.065

<sup>a</sup>The interaction terms in panel A are additive to the full model on all respondents as shown in Tables 2 and 3; the interaction terms in panel B have been added separately to the full model on respondents with partner as shown in Table 2 and 3.

Source: Family Survey Dutch Population 1998, 2000, 2003.

\*\* $P < 0.01$ ; \* $P < 0.05$ .

(Table 3). With respect to upward mobility, only cohabiting men have significantly higher chances than single men, although the effects for married and unmarried (non-)cohabiting men do not differ significantly. When it comes to downward mobility, it is the married men who have significantly lower odds than single men, but married men do not differ from unmarried cohabiting men in this respect. There seems to be a dividing line between single men and men who are in a non-cohabiting relationship on the one hand, and unmarried cohabiting and married men on the other hand. This implies that the idea of a marriage premium is not only valid for married men, but for all men who formed a household with their partner.

The next step in our analysis answers the question to what extent resources of the partner support or restrict upward and downward career moves, given that one is not single. For both men and women, there is a positive effect of partner's occupational status on

upward mobility ( $b = 0.007$ ). A man or woman whose partner has the highest occupational level has a 73 percent higher odds of being upwardly mobile than a man or woman whose partner has the lowest occupational level ( $\exp^{(78 * 0.007)}$ ). For women, this effect is non-significant when upward mobility is defined as an increase of 10 or more ISEI-points, probably, because of lack of power. The effects of spouses' education are not significant. Obviously, the effects of partner's occupational status and education are related, and partly pick up the same underlying process. In a model without partner's occupational status, the effect of partner's education becomes stronger, and even reaches the level of significance when female upward mobility is concerned (0.035,  $P < 0.05$  for females, 0.020 for males). If we leave out partner's education, the positive effect of partner's occupational status on upward mobility chances increases slightly (0.009,  $P < 0.01$  for females,

0.008,  $P < 0.01$  for males). We conclude that human capital of the partner has a positive effect on upward mobility.

The results further show a restrictive partner effect on downward mobility: men and women who have a non-employed partner are less likely to be downwardly mobile than men and women whose partner has a job. In other words, an employed partner induces higher odds of getting a lower status job than an unemployed partner. This result is in line with the economic idea of negative partner effects: a successful partner reduces the incentive to be successful on the labour market. We conclude that supportive and restrictive mechanisms are at work, respectively, on upward and downward mobility.

## Historical Developments

Table 4 shows to what extent the effects of relationship status and partner's resources have changed over time. Surprisingly, no trends are found at all when partner effects on female occupational mobility are concerned. Despite major societal changes such as individualization, emancipation, cultural, and economic modernization in the 20th century, and the massive entry of women into the labour market, nothing changed in the way women's career mobility chances are influenced by their relational status and the resources of their partners. Almost the same conclusion is true for men, although the influence of partner's education on downward mobility has changed significantly. A highly educated partner used to prevent men from downward mobility, but at the turn of the century this supportive effect has disappeared. In other words, men benefit less from a resourceful partner nowadays than they did in the past.

## Conclusion

In this study, we investigated to what extent relational status affects the probability of upward and downward mobility, to what extent the labour market resources of the partner (if a partner is present) matter in this respect, and whether the role of the partner has changed over time, investigating the extensive period from 1940 to 2003. We performed event-history analyses on the Family Survey Dutch Population 1998, 2000, and 2003.

The theoretical answer on the first question has been based on ideas about marriage premiums and penalties. Marriage, or more in general having a partner, is supposed to be beneficial for labour market success of

men, whereas it is believed to restrict labour market success of women. Proof for this idea comes predominantly from cross-sectional research. In a dynamic study on male career mobility by Kalmijn and Luijkx (2005), marriage appeared to have no influence. For females, the evidence on marriage penalties is scarce. We found support for a marriage premium for men (although the effects were not very strong), but have to refute the hypothesis on a marriage penalty for women. In addition, males do not benefit occupationally from marriage only, but also from unmarried cohabitation. Compared to cohabitation or non-cohabiting relationships, marriage can also prevent women from downward mobility, so marriage does not always imply a penalty.

Besides the importance of having of a partner, we were interested in the role partners' resources play. We found a positive influence of the resources of the partner on upward mobility, and a negative influence of partner's employment status on downward mobility, for men as well as women. In other words, both support and restriction mechanisms play a role; the former when it comes to upward mobility, the latter when it comes to downward mobility. Surprisingly, these mechanisms have not changed significantly over time. Despite major societal changes that have had huge impact on the family and work spheres, the role of the partner on career decisions has not changed. The one exception we found is that a highly educated partner used to prevent men from downward mobility, while this is not the case anymore.

We argued that partner effects are one explanation for inequality between households. Obviously, occupational or educational homogamy determines to a considerable extent whether a household consists of two individuals with favourable or two individuals with unfavourable social positions. Given homogamy, inequality would be larger if spouses positively affect each others' careers during their relationship, but would be tempered if a successful career of one partner would lead to a less successful career of the other partner. Since we found proof for both mechanisms, the net effect of partner influences during the relationship on inequality between households might be zero (depending on the relative strength of the two mechanisms, which is difficult to assess).

Besides our increased insight into the origin of inequality between households, we believe we have made a first step in filling a gap in existing literature on career mobility. Although the role of the family seems to be smaller than the role of individual human capital, we learned that having a resourceful partner

stimulates upward mobility both for men and for women. It would be interesting to find out which mechanisms explain these positive effects spouses have on each other's upward moves. We think that social capital arguments and shared ambitions offer the most plausible explanations, but since we have no direct measures of social capital we cannot test this explanation in this article. Furthermore, we think it is interesting to extend the scope of research on partner effects by not only focusing on career mobility, but also on other aspects of the labour market career, such as labour market supply.

## Acknowledgements

An earlier version of this article was presented at the International Sociological Association World Congress, Durban, South Africa, 24 July 2006.

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Manuscript received: December 2006