

“They Live in Indifference Together”: Marriage Mobility in Zeeland, The Netherlands, 1796–1922

HILDE BRAS* AND JAN KOK**

SUMMARY: This article investigates developments in and antecedents of socially mixed marriage in the rural Dutch province of Zeeland during the long nineteenth century, taking individual and family histories, community contexts, and temporal influences into account. A government report of the 1850s said of Zeeland that farmers and workers lived “in indifference together”. However, our analysis of about 163,000 marriage certificates reveals that 30 to 40 per cent of these rural inhabitants continued to marry outside their original social class. Multivariate logistic regressions show that heterogamous marriages can be explained first and foremost by the life-course experiences of grooms and brides prior to marriage. Previous transitions in their occupational careers (especially to non-rural occupations for grooms, and to service for brides), in their migration trajectories (particularly moves to urban areas), and changes in the sphere of personal relationships (entering widowhood, ageing) are crucial in understanding marriage mobility.

INTRODUCTION

In the past, what did it mean when a person found a marriage partner from another social group? Given the dominant norms in a class-ridden society, we may surmise that such a couple had followed their own hearts and flouted the wishes of their parents. An increase in marriage mobility may thus herald the spread of “romantic love” and the demise of “traditional”, “instrumental” marriage motives.¹ This interpretation of marriage mobility involves forces operating at different levels: the “micro” level (individuals and families), the “meso” level (local communities) and the “macro” level (society at large). Perhaps the couple’s own life experience – a previous marriage, for example; geographical mobility, or occupational career – had made it easier for them to resist parental and community control.

Marriage mobility may, however, have had a different meaning in

* Department of Social Cultural Studies, Free University, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

** International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

1. E. Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York, 1975).

different occupational and social groups. In some groups, such as farmers, social status and livelihood were inextricably tied to homogamy: a partner had to be found within the same group. For such groups, increasing heterogamy may point to structural changes in the economy which endangered social reproduction. Likewise, other social forces had an impact on courtship and marriage, and, eventually, on the meaning of social group differences. For instance, the spread of transport, communication, and leisure increased the number of contacts between people from different social backgrounds. Potentially even more important was the spread of secondary and higher education in improving individual resources and lessening the effect of one's social background.

Marriage mobility is an important topic of study, not just because it highlights social forces operating at the micro, meso, and macro levels, but also because it reveals their interconnectedness. On the one hand, shifting individual preferences and family strategies with regard to spouse selection result in changes at the aggregate "meso" and "macro" levels. On the other hand, local demographic changes and structural shifts in the economy change the "social landscape", forcing people to adjust their matrimonial ideals. The interplay between forces at the micro, meso, and macro levels forms the angle from which we will look at marriage mobility or "heterogamy".

The historiography of social mobility in the Netherlands has addressed overall national and regional patterns of mobility but does not provide us with a clear picture of the determinants of heterogamy. Most studies concentrate on one or several cities; very few include the countryside.² None of these studies systematically includes contextual demographic, cultural, or economic factors that affect the local marriage market. Only recently have techniques been applied that allow for the study of relative mobility. By controlling for group size, these log-linear models indicate whether society has become more open. The main conclusion is that, prior to World War II, Dutch society as a whole had not become more fluid.³

2. H. van Dijk, *Rotterdam 1810–1880. Aspecten van een stedelijke samenleving* (Schiedam, 1976); B. de Vries, *Electoraat en elite. Sociale structuur en sociale mobiliteit in Amsterdam 1850–1895* (n.p., 1986); O. Boonstra, *De waardij van eene vroege opleiding. Een onderzoek naar de implicaties van het alfabetisme op het leven van inwoners van Eindhoven en omliggende gemeenten, 1800–1920* (Wageningen, 1993); A. Janssens, *Family and Social Change: The Household as a Process in an Industrializing Community* (Cambridge, 1993); H. van Dijk, J. Visser, and E. Wolst, "Regional Differences in Social Mobility Patterns in the Netherlands between 1830 and 1940", *Journal of Social History*, 17 (1983–1984), pp. 435–452. For an overview, see O. Boonstra and K. Mandemakers, "'Ieder is het kind zijner eigene werken'. Sociale stratificatie en mobiliteit in Nederland in de achttiende en negentiende eeuw", in J. Dronkers and W.C. Ultee (eds), *Verschuivende ongelijkheid in Nederland. Sociale gelaagdheid en mobiliteit* (Assen, 1995), pp. 125–141.

3. M.H.D. van Leeuwen and I. Maas, "Groeierende openheid van de Nederlandse samenleving: een nieuw fenomeen of een lange trend? Intergenerationele, huwelijks- en carrièremobiliteit in

However, log-linear models tend to amalgamate experiences of people from all classes and widely different local contexts. In our view, it is vital to retain information on individual characteristics, as well as social position and local context, while controlling for group size in order to detect the determinants of social homogamy. A highly stimulating method using logistic regression has recently been proposed by Van de Putte in his analysis of partner choice in three nineteenth-century Flemish cities.⁴

In this article, we employ Van de Putte's method on an even larger scale, using all marriage certificates from the Dutch province of Zeeland for the period 1796–1922, covering both countryside and cities. Situated in the southwestern corner of the Netherlands, this province, consisting of islands, peninsulas, and part of the mainland, had been an important region of market-oriented agriculture and had played a significant part in industry and trade since the late Middle Ages. However, after the Spaniards conquered Antwerp at the end of the fifteenth century, the influential role of Zeeland's trade and industry dramatically declined. Economic development became characterized by a process of ruralization, making the province dependent on its commercialized agricultural sector, which specialized in the production of cash crops such as wheat, rape seed, flax, and madder, and – later in the nineteenth century – in the cultivation of potatoes, sugar beets, pulses, and onions as well.⁵ Husbandry was of little importance: few cattle were kept and almost no milk and butter were produced. Two-thirds of the population lived in the countryside, which was dotted by many small communities.⁶ In 1795, 33 per cent of the population lived in one of the cities; by 1909 this figure was actually lower – one-quarter.⁷ On every island, a small town functioned as a trading centre in agricultural produce and provided services for the farming population, linking the town populations inextricably to agriculture. The only two cities were Middelburg, the capital, which hosted the provincial government, and Vlissingen (Flushing), a port and wharf city. Even in the twentieth century both were still provincial cities; in 1953 they had no more than 20,000 inhabitants.⁸

de provincie Utrecht, 1850–1940”, *Mens en Maatschappij*, 70 (1995), pp. 321–333; *idem*, “Social Mobility in a Dutch Province, Utrecht 1850–1940”, *Journal of Social History*, 30 (1997), pp. 619–644.

4. B. Van de Putte, “Het belang van de toegeschreven positie in een moderniserend wereld. Partnerkeuze in 19^{de}-eeuwse Vlaamse steden (Leuven, Aalst en Gent)” (Ph.D., Catholic University of Leuven, 2003).

5. P. Priester, *Geschiedenis van de Zeeuwse landbouw circa 1600–1910* ('t Goy-Houten, 1998), pp. 54–55.

6. P.J. Bouman, *Geschiedenis van den Zeeuwschen landbouw in de negentiende en twintigste eeuw en van de Zeeuwse landbouwmaatschappij 1843–1943* (Wageningen, 1946), p. 143.

7. Priester, *Geschiedenis van de Zeeuwse landbouw*, pp. 54–55.

8. P.J. Meertens, “Walcheren”, in W. Banning (ed.), *Handboek Pastorale Sociologie. Deel I Zeeland, Zuid-Hollandse eilanden, Noord-Brabant en Limburg* (The Hague, 1953), p. 83.

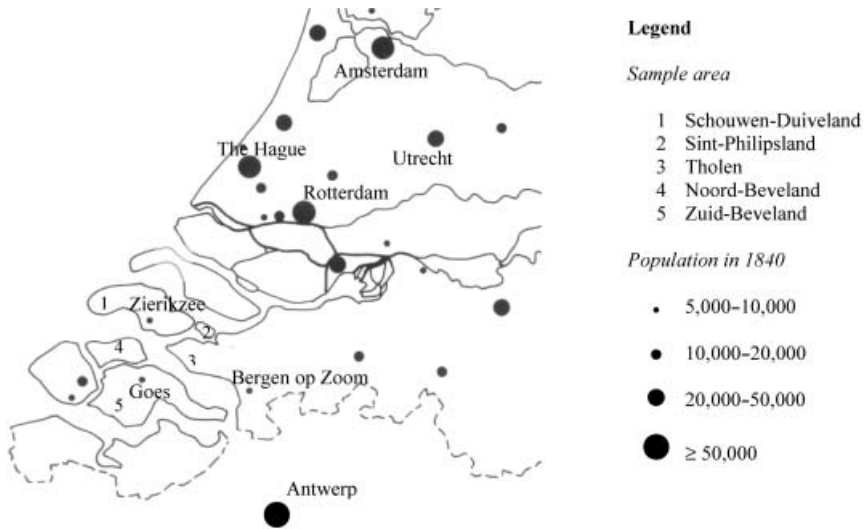


Figure 1. Zeeland islands and surrounding area (c.1840).

Source: Hans Knippenberg and Ben de Pater, *De eenwording van Nederland. Schaalvergroting en integratie sinds 1800* (Nijmegen, 1988), p. 39.

Many reports and studies on Zeeland have emphasized strong class-barrier differences. The social differentiation between the major groups in Zeeland, i.e. workers on the one hand and farmers and the middle classes on the other, appears to have been rigid, both in terms of living conditions and with regard to social-class relations. In the cities, the situation of the workers was plainly miserable. Around 1860 the physician Coronel described the apathy of the urban workers in Middelburg who waited idly in the streets every day for a temporary job as a porter. Because of malnutrition, most of them were too weak to do any heavy work.⁹ The rural labouring population lived under conditions scarcely any better. In a provincial report drawn up after the subsistence crisis of the 1840s, it was noted that two-thirds to three-quarters of workers were unemployed in winter.¹⁰

The report stressed above all the isolation and mutual indifference in which the two groups lived. “In general there is little familiar association between the residents of the countryside [...]. They live, except for the

9. S. Sr. Coronel, *Middelburg voorheen en thans. Bijdrage tot de kennis van den voormaligen en tegenwoordigen toestand van het armwezen aldaar* (Middelburg, 1859), pp. 250–251.

10. *Rapport naar aanleiding van een ingesteld onderzoek omtrent den zedelijken en materiële toestand der arbeidende en dienstbare bevolking ten plattelande, uitgebragt op de Algemeene Vergadering der Zeeuwsche Maatschappij van Landbouw te Tholen, den 7^{de} juni 1849* (Middelburg, 1849), p. 6.

mutual obligatory assistance, which is always instigated by money, in complete dependence on themselves.” According to the writers of the report, farmers paid scarcely any attention to the wellbeing of their labourers, and the labourers took no interest in their bosses either. This was clear from the indifference with which work was carried out and from the frequent changes of address of farmhands, even of those with permanent appointments.¹¹ This proletarianized and polarized social structure existed well into the twentieth century, as oral history interviews have shown. One rural labourer reminisced on the 1920s:

On Saturday nights you saw the difference very clearly. Because then you went walking. To find a girl of course. But the labourers walked in School Street and the farmers and bourgeois youngsters walked around the Market. Completely divided. A labourer’s boy with a farmer’s daughter? Oh God no, they would have poisoned you!¹²

Is the impression of strong social-class differences in Zeeland corroborated by the empirical facts on marriage mobility? Under what individual and family circumstances were the social barriers easier to cross? Was there a difference in this respect between localities, regions and time periods? Our research questions can be specified at the levels of the individual, the community, the region, and the province at large.

HYPOTHESES ON THE EFFECTS OF INDIVIDUAL, FAMILIAL, AND CONTEXTUAL CHARACTERISTICS

How did individual characteristics and family situation affect partner choice? We hypothesize that individual access to extended social networks is a crucial mechanism for heterogamy. It thus seems likely that migrants had lower chances of marrying outside their own group because they lacked access to local information channels and social gatherings that might have brought them into contact with other social groups. Was there a difference between migrants with a rural and those with an urban background? We also expect domestic servants among the brides to have been in contact with more diverse urban marriage markets, which would have heightened their chances of marrying outside their original social class. Age at marriage may also be of relevance. Did older persons have a more extended network and were they able to cross class boundaries more easily than younger people could?

Another factor is the extent of social control on courtship, by both parents and peer group. Strong social control will favour high levels of social-class homogamy. Individuals who were orphaned or half-orphaned

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21.

12. K. Slager, *Landarbeiders. Verhalen om te onthouden* (Nijmegen, 1981), p. 23.



Figure 2. Two newly-wed farm-worker couples, walking from the village hall to the farmstead, island of Walcheren (Zeeland), c.1907.
Zeeland Documentation Centre

might have experienced less parental pressure to marry into their own social class. Moreover, they could rely less on their parents' resources to help them establish themselves in their own class. Also, if the bride had already borne a child before marriage, we may surmise that social control on courtship was weak. Was this associated with inter-group marriages? One's previous relational history is of interest as well. Was it the case, as has been argued, that widowed individuals could choose their new partners more freely, perhaps because communal pressure to marry into one's own social class had decreased? Divorce, on the other hand, carried a social stigma that may have induced downward mobility at remarriage.¹³ Obviously, one's social-class background is a very important determinant in itself. Particularly those individuals originating from families that were characterized by location- and occupation-specific capital, and in which tacit knowledge was usually transferred from generation to generation (farmers, shop-owners, artisans), can be expected to have contracted homogamous marriages.

In determining the chances of inter-group marriage, the local context is equally relevant. As elsewhere, peer groups in Dutch communities tended

13. F. van Poppel, *Trouwen in Nederland. Een historisch-demografische studie van de 19^e en vroeg-20^e eeuw* (Wageningen, 1992), p. 540.

to ward off suitors from outside.¹⁴ In very small or isolated localities this may have resulted in greater heterogamy, when the preference for a local partner overruled the preference for a socially equal one. Both population size and “isolation” (indicated by relative geographical mobility) will be included in the model. A similar mechanism may occur in municipalities with religious minorities; we may surmise that people will cross either geographical or social boundaries to marry a partner with the right creed.¹⁵

Zeeland mentality and culture were marked by strongly religious beliefs and church-going practices. In the nineteenth century, about 65 per cent of Zeeland’s population was Dutch Reformed, one-quarter was Catholic and 15 per cent belonged to one of the many Orthodox-Calvinist denominations. Whatever their denomination, the Church played an important role in determining the norms and values by which most Zeelanders lived.¹⁶ During the process of confessionally based vertical pluralism (*verzuiling*) in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, many Zeeland communities, especially those of mixed religion, experienced turbulent interconfessional relations.¹⁷ In communities with large Catholic or Orthodox-Calvinist minorities and in religiously highly mixed communities, social intermarriage might have occurred more frequently as a result of a higher priority given to religiously homogamous marriages.

Local economic conditions will also have affected the process of partner selection. A rough indication is provided by migration surpluses. Clearly, municipalities with a large migration deficit fared worse than those that attracted newcomers. Moreover, communities with large migration surpluses might have stimulated heterogamy because the influx of newcomers made the atmosphere of a community more “modern” and “open” compared to places which were relatively isolated and closed-off. We include local marriage rates to see whether municipalities with depressed marriage prospects were also municipalities with less heterogamy.

Finally, the demographic and social aspects of the marriage market need to be discussed. Unfortunately, the censuses do not provide enough information on marital status by age. We cannot therefore include the sex ratios for nubile adolescents. However, we can measure the impact of the social composition of the marriage market by controlling for the relative

14. J.L. de Jager, *Volksgebruiken in Nederland. Een nieuwe kijk op tradities* (Utrecht [etc.] 1981), p. 45.

15. E. Beekink, A. Liefbroer, and F. van Poppel, “Changes in Choice of Spouse as an Indicator of a Society in a State of Transition: Woerden, 1830–1930”, *Historical Social Research*, 23 (1998), pp. 231–253.

16. Bouman, *Geschiedenis van den Zeeuwischen landbouw*, p. 293.

17. M. Wintle, *Zeeland and the Churches: Religion and Society in the Province of Zeeland (Netherlands) in the Nineteenth Century* (Middelburg, 1988), pp. 145–153.

“supply” of fathers-in-law from particular social groups (see also the section on the multivariate analysis of marriage mobility).

In terms of systems of land-use, religion, and social differentiation, there were distinct regions within Zeeland, possibly resulting in regional intermarriage patterns.¹⁸ The most southern region of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen belonged geographically to the mainland. It became part of France in 1795 and remained more strongly oriented towards Belgium than the islands did. The region was characterized by wheat-growing and large-scale farms.¹⁹ Its eastern part (Oost-Zeeuws-Vlaanderen) was predominantly Catholic, while the western part (West-Zeeuws-Vlaanderen) contained communities with both substantial Catholic and Protestant populations. Walcheren was the most urbanized island, but its farms were relatively small-scale and sober, while more cattle-keeping and pastureland were found here than on the other islands. Most communities in Walcheren were Dutch Reformed or Orthodox Calvinist.²⁰

Zuid-Beveland was one of the regions with the largest and most efficient farms in Zeeland.²¹ In the beginning of the twentieth century, when population growth in other Zeeland regions stagnated, Zuid-Beveland was able to retain its population and even attract newcomers because of the diversification of its agricultural economy, with fruit-growing, fishing, and oyster-growing, and the development of trade and transportation hubs.²² The southern part (“the pocket”) contained a number of Catholic enclaves which increased in population over the nineteenth century. Furthermore, many communities also had substantial Orthodox-Calvinist minorities, and these were the site of religious conflict during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Noord-Beveland had even larger farms, with a number of them over 40 hectares. On this island the “farm aristocracy” wielded a lot of power, and the social difference between workers and farmers was very pronounced.²³ In comparison, Schouwen-Duiveland had more small- and medium-sized farms (especially in Duiveland). It was a typical area of out-migration: from the last quarter of the nineteenth century agricultural workers left in order to find work in one of the Dutch cities. However, in this region many workers were also able to start their own small farms when wages rose after the agricultural depression. As a consequence, the social distance between farmers and workers became less pronounced.²⁴ Finally, Tholen

18. J.'t Gilde *et al.*, *Zeeland met Goeree-Overflakkee* (The Hague, 1993), p. 32.

19. Bouman, *Geschiedenis van den Zeeuwschen landbouw*, p. 255.

20. Meertens, “Walcheren”, p. 76.

21. B. Breek, “Noord- en Zuid-Beveland”, in Banning, *Handboek Pastorale Sociologie*, p. 47.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 63.

24. H. Cramer, J.M.T. Hefting, and M.G. Westerhof, “Schouwen-Duiveland”, in Banning, *Handboek Pastorale Sociologie*, pp. 123, 125.

and Sint-Philipsland, the most northerly islands, which bordered on the Catholic province of Noord-Brabant, were marked by religious (Calvinist) orthodoxy. Farm size was relatively small, and the owner and his family were used to working in the fields themselves.²⁵

In regions such as Tholen and Sint-Philipsland, Schouwen-Duiveland, and Walcheren, with smaller-sized farms and less social distance between farmers and workers, more heterogamy can be expected than in regions such as Noord-Beveland and Zuid-Beveland, where farms were bigger and social contrasts larger. Finally, in Zeeland, countryside and cities were separate worlds, particularly for the rural working classes. Farm workers who were born in the vicinity of Zeeland's cities in the beginning of the twentieth century declared that they hardly visited them.²⁶ These two cities allow us to test the hypothesis that urban life stimulates heterogamy through decreased social and parental control and a less traditional approach to human relations.²⁷

Finally, our analysis of the temporal trends in social heterogamy will reveal influences at the level of the province. Over the period 1796–1922, ups and downs in the national and provincial economy influenced the likelihood of marriage mobility among cohorts of Zeelanders differently. The late 1840s were marked by a subsistence crisis, affecting the social situation of the poorest agricultural workers. The 1850s were relatively neutral years, while the 1860s and early 1870s were among the most prosperous years of the century. These “Champagne years” were followed by an agricultural depression between 1878 and 1895. A report from 1908 on the social and economic situation of the agricultural workers in Schouwen-Duiveland stated that “in the bad agricultural years, few marriages were contracted”.²⁸ “For fear of poverty several men at an age above thirty years are still unmarried.”²⁹

During difficult economic periods marriages were postponed or not contracted at all. In addition, some people may have been forced to marry outside their original social group. The international agricultural depression of the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the ensuing mechanization and rationalization of farming practices led to a decline in employment opportunities in agriculture.³⁰ As a consequence, many

25. R.C. van Putten, “Tholen en St.-Philipsland”, in Banning, *Handboek Pastorale Sociologie*, pp. 93–94.

26. J. Zwemer, *Een zekel om geit-eten te snieën. De geschiedenis van de landarbeiders op Walcheren 1900–1940* (Middelburg, 1987), p. 10.

27. Van de Putte, “Het belang van de toegeschreven positie”, pp. 25–30.

28. “Verslag betreffende den toestand der landarbeiders in Zeeland”, in *Verslagen betreffende den oeconomische toestand der landarbeiders in Nederland. II. Utrecht-Limburg* (The Hague, 1908), p. 252.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 255.

30. J.L. van Zanden, *De economische ontwikkeling van de Nederlandse landbouw in de negentiende eeuw, 1800–1914. A.A.G. Bijdragen 25* (Wageningen, 1985), pp. 69–70.

workers migrated to the cities and to the United States. On the other hand, the wages of those agricultural workers who remained rose, and more workers were able to hire or buy a small plot of land to be cultivated for their own use. Increased opportunities for education and work and easier opportunities to meet potential partners, due to public and private transport, will have stimulated greater openness and marriage mobility among the youngest marriage cohorts.

STRATIFICATION AND MOBILITY IN ZEELAND

Our analysis is based on data derived from an index of marriage certificates recently prepared for genealogical purposes.³¹ The index covers 163,715 certificates of marriage from the province of Zeeland for the period 1811–1922. The beginning of this period coincides with the start of civil registration, inaugurated by the Code Napoleon. In fact, the southern Zeeland region of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen had already been occupied by the French in 1795. Data are therefore available for this region from as early as 1796. The end of the period was dictated by privacy regulations. Unlike most other indexes, the Zeeland one is particularly rich in additional information on brides and grooms. Their occupations as well as those of their parents are given; there is information on the ages of bride and groom, their birthplaces, their previous marriages, and any premarital children born to the couple.

The municipality of marriage was the official place of residence of at least one of the spouses. However, we are primarily interested in the locality or area where the choice of partner had actually taken place. To what extent is the municipality of marriage helpful in this respect? An analysis of all marriage certificates in the database of the Historical Sample of the Netherlands shows that, between 1831 and 1922, 90.8 per cent of Zeeland brides actually resided in the place where they married (N = 946); for grooms this figure was lower, but still 72.7 per cent.³² The difference was caused by the tendency of migrant women to return to their parents some time before the intended marriage and to marry in that locality. We therefore miss information on the place where they had found their husbands and to which they probably returned after marrying.³³ However,

31. The Zeeuws Archief in Middelburg granted special access to the marriage certificates database from the Civil Records of Zeeland 1796/1811–1922 for this research. The data were input by volunteers in the period 1997–2001. We would like to thank Leo Hollestelle for his kind advice.

32. On this database, see K. Mandemakers, “Historical Sample of the Netherlands”, in P. Kelly Hall, R. McCaa, and G. Thorvaldsen (eds), *Handbook of International Historical Microdata for Population Research* (Minneapolis, MN, 2000), pp. 149–178.

33. We have controlled for this effect as much as possible by including whether the bride had been a domestic servant before her marriage. Since domestic servants were the quintessential

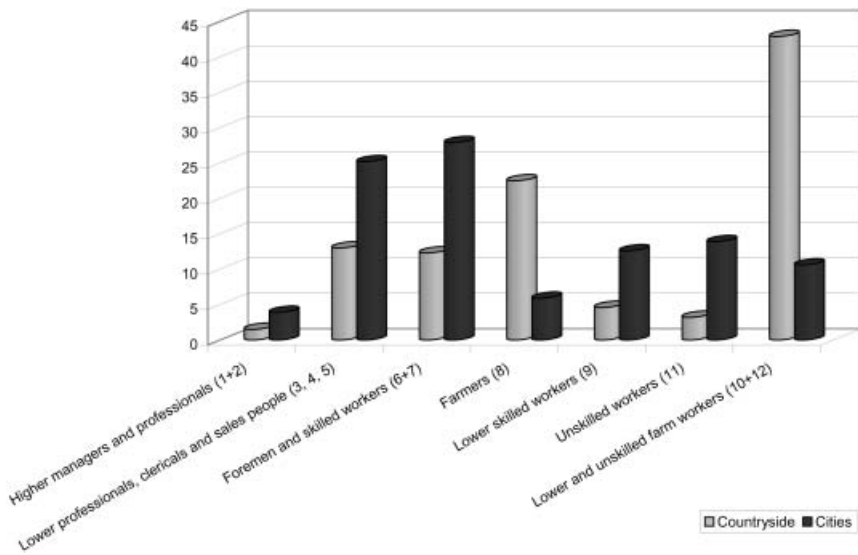


Figure 3. Social stratification in Zeeland province (by occupation of grooms’ fathers), 1796–1922.

we feel that, on the whole, we can use the place of marriage as a proxy for the place of courtship.

In Figure 3 we take an initial look at the social landscape of Zeeland, using the HISCLASS classification by skill level.³⁴ For the countryside, Figure 3 presents a skewed picture: farm workers and farmers dominated the social landscape, while other groups of workers – clerical and sales people and managers – were relatively rare. In the cities, the occupational structure was more diversified; this was reflected by the large presence of managers of all types, and of skilled workers.

A first look at absolute levels of heterogamy over time (Figure 4 overleaf) shows few conspicuous developments. This reflects the stability of the social structure in Zeeland; throughout the period it remained a rural province with hardly any industrialization. Heterogamy was higher in the cities (Middelburg and Vlissingen) than in the countryside: almost 70 per cent of the fathers-in-law of urban grooms were in a group different from that of the grooms’ fathers; the corresponding figure for rural grooms was about 45 to 50 per cent.

On closer inspection, however, we do find some interesting trends in

migratory female group, this variable is a proxy indicating, *inter alia*, those couples who might have met elsewhere, i.e. not in the locality of marriage.

34. M.H.D. van Leeuwen and I. Maas, “HISCLASS”, paper presented at the 5th European Social Science History Conference (Berlin, 24–27 March 2004); I. Maas and M.H.D. van Leeuwen, “SPSS recode job from HISCO into HISCLASS”, May 2004.

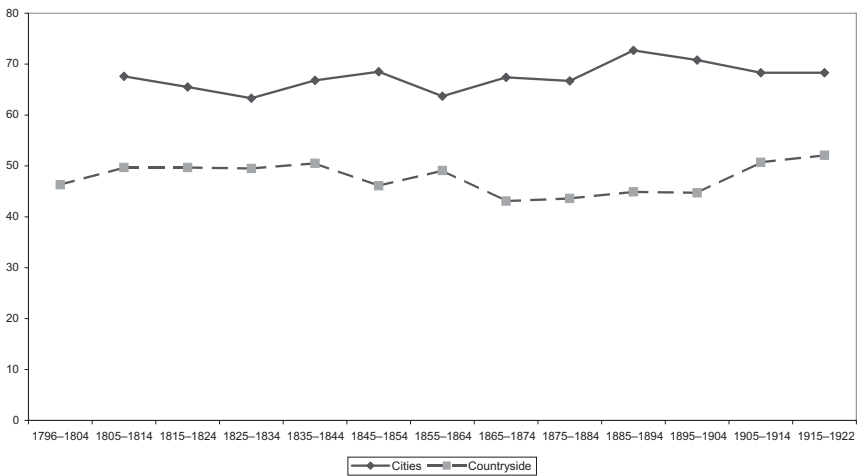


Figure 4. Development in heterogamy in Zeeland province, 1796–1922.

heterogamy. In the cities, we see a modest rise during the period 1885–1894. This coincides with high levels of urban and interurban geographical mobility.³⁵ In the countryside, on the other hand, the entire period 1865–1904 seems to have been characterized by lower levels of heterogamy than the first half of the nineteenth century. Only after 1905 do we find a clear increase. How do we explain this? Zeeland had been hit hard by the agrarian depression of the 1880s, which stimulated the mass emigration of agrarian labourers to the Americas. Perhaps the changes we are observing reflect the decline in the “supply” of farm workers, which caused the number of mixed marriages to increase and thus “forced” increased heterogamy among agricultural labourers. Or had Zeeland society as a whole become more “open”? Was this “openness” also the reason for the higher urban mobility rates? In our multivariate analysis we will try to answer these questions.

Before we move on to this analysis, we will take a brief look at actual mobility rates (Table 1). The highest levels of immobility, or homogamy, are found among farm workers (70.1 per cent) and farmers (60.8 per cent). In the countryside, it was virtually only through intermarriage between children of farmers and farm workers that mobility could be brought about. However, in Zeeland these groups were divided by strong class barriers. Still, many ties must have existed, if only because sons of impoverished farmers ended up as farm workers. Farm workers’ daughters

35. J. Kok, “Choices and Constraints in the Migration of Families: The Central Netherlands, 1850–1940”, *The History of the Family: An International Quarterly*, 9 (2004), pp. 137–158, p. 144.

Table 1. *Marriage mobility in Zeeland province, 1796–1922: percentage distribution of social group of fathers-in-law by social group of fathers*

HISCLASS fathers	HISCLASS fathers-in-law							Total number
	1+2	3, 4, 5	6+7	8	9	11	10+12	
Higher managers and professionals (1+2)	30.8	32.3	13.7	14.3	3.8	1.2	4.0	826
Lower professionals, clerical and sales people (3, 4, 5)	3.7	29.9	17.8	12.8	7.6	5.7	22.4	7,041
Foremen and skilled workers (6+7)	1.4	20.3	24.9	16.3	8.8	6.6	21.7	6,559
Farmers (8)	1.2	8.5	8.4	60.8	2.9	1.8	16.5	10,126
Lower skilled workers (9)	1.4	19.4	21.2	11.5	9.9	8.1	28.4	2,659
Unskilled workers (11)	0.4	15.4	15.5	6.6	7.2	22.9	31.9	2,291
Lower and unskilled farm workers (10+12)	0.1	7.6	6.6	8.6	3.3	1.4	70.1	18,046
Total number	793	6,796	5,970	10,259	2,458	2,422	18,850	47,548

Source: Marriage certificates from the civil records of Zeeland 1796/1811–1922.

tended to work as servants in the households of farmers.³⁶ These manifold ties ensured that intermarriage was not entirely absent: 16.5 per cent of farmers' sons married a farm worker's daughter and 8.6 per cent of farm workers' sons married a farmer's daughter.

For the farmers themselves, homogamy was clearly related to their marriage strategies. For their children, Zeeland farmers actively sought partners who, with their inheritance either in cash or land, could counteract the divisive effect of equal inheritance. This is not to say that the farmers arranged the marriages of their children. For a month during the quiet winter period, older children would "go for a walk", that is, they left for short stays in the households of befriended or related farmers in roughly the same wealth position.³⁷ Although farm workers might have more actively sought to better their social position, marriage markets for farmers, farm workers, and the local middle class were highly segmented and the social barriers between them were rather closed. A former farm worker vividly painted the situation in the first few decades of the twentieth century as follows: "As an eighteen-year-old boy on the dance floor, you shouldn't try to dance with a shop owner's girl. That was not done. No, they didn't have anything either, those local shop owners, but we were only farm workers."³⁸ In reality therefore, homogamy was the norm – also for farm workers. Finally, small social groups, such as skilled workers and urban lower-skilled workers, tended to mingle more freely with adjacent classes. However, to interpret this mobility we need to take the relative group sizes into account.

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF MARRIAGE MOBILITY

Overall model (1796–1922)

We study marriage mobility by comparing the social groups of fathers of brides and grooms. Only fathers and fathers-in-law whose occupations were mentioned are included, which means that we select only those marriages where both fathers were still alive and neither retired nor unemployed. We take grooms as our point of departure, because we need to control for their own occupational mobility. Clearly, a groom who was himself (intergenerationally) mobile would have entered a new social environment that made him a likely candidate for a heterogamous marriage. Controlling for grooms' own mobility will allow us to observe more closely the degree to which class barriers were permeable.

36. H. Bras, *Zeeuwse meiden. Dienen in de levensloop van vrouwen* (Amsterdam, 2002).

37. This description pertains to the Zeeland region of West-Zeeuws-Vlaanderen in the early nineteenth century. See P. Van Cruyningen, *Behoudend maar buigzaam. Boeren in West-Zeeuws-Vlaanderen 1650–1850* (Wageningen, 2000).

38. Slager, *Landarbeiders*, p. 96.

In choosing their partners, people are subject to a number of influences. One is their preference for a partner from an appropriate social class. Other preferences include age, religion, and geographical origin. To isolate the social-class aspect, we need to control for all the other types of homogamy, but we can do so only for geographical origin and age.³⁹ The variable “endogamous marriage” controls for the preference for choosing a partner with the same birthplace. Similarly, the variable “same-age” marriage controls for age homogamy, and is defined as a marriage where the ages of the bride and groom differ by less than two years.

The larger one’s own social group, the lower the chances of heterogamy. In order to control for “group size”, that is for the “supply” of fathers-in-law, we have calculated the relative presence of the social groups of fathers-in-law within regional marriage markets for ten-yearly periods. This procedure is feasible because our database contains all marriages in the province. In Zeeland, marriage markets were bounded, since the province consists of various islands and an isolated area in the south.⁴⁰ For example, for sons of farm workers marrying in the Zeeuws-Vlaanderen region in the period 1785–1894 the variable “group size” is 48.6. This means that in the marriage certificates of this period and in this region 48.6 per cent of brides’ fathers were described as farm workers.

Table 2 overleaf presents a logistic regression for the whole Zeeland dataset (1796–1922). In this method, the probability (p) of the dependent variable – in this case contracting a heterogamous marriage – being a yes or no is calculated in terms of *odds*, that is the probability of a “yes” divided by the probability of a “no” ($p/(1-p)$). The regression coefficients of the independent variables are the natural logarithms of the odds. By exponentiating them, we obtain *odds ratios*. These indicate the increase in the odds of the dependent variable being a yes resulting from an increase of one unit in the independent variable.⁴¹ Table 2 shows that the inter-generational mobility of the groom himself was a very important factor: the odds ratio of marrying a woman from a different social group increased 154 per cent if the groom himself was already mobile. Similarly, group size is a critical factor. An increase of 1 per cent in the relative supply of fathers-in-law in the same group as one’s own father decreased the odds ratios of marrying in a *different* group by 3.7 per cent. Both geographical and age homogamy were closely associated with social homogamy: partners of the same age (i.e. whose ages differed by no more than two years) and from the same birthplace tended to be from the same social group as well. Apart from these more or less expected results, we also found a host of other interesting effects.

39. Van de Putte, “Het belang van de toegeschreven positie”, pp. 153–162.

40. See also J. Kok, “‘Vrijt daar je zijt’; huwelijk en partnerkeuze in Zeeland tussen 1830 en 1950”, *Zeeland*, 7 (1998), pp. 131–143.

41. S. Menard, *Applied Logistic Regression Analysis* (Thousand Oaks, CA [etc.], 1995).

Table 2. *Logistic regression of heterogamy of grooms (difference between social position of father and father-in-law), Zeeland 1796–1922 (odds ratios) (main model)*

	Odds ratio of contracting a heterogamous marriage
Age of groom	1.002
Age of bride	1.005
Groom is widower (first marriage=ref.)	1.040
Groom is divorced	1.216
Bride is widow (first marriage=ref.)	0.978
Bride is divorced	2.693
Groom's mother is deceased (still alive=ref.)	0.985
Bride's mother is deceased (still alive=ref.)	1.131***
Child legitimated	1.104
Endogamous marriage (exogamous=ref.)	0.832***
Groom is a rural migrant (born in the place of marriage=ref.)	0.896**
Groom is an urban migrant	0.851**
Bride is a rural migrant (born in the place of marriage=ref.)	0.931*
Bride is an urban migrant	1.223*
Older-husband marriage (same age=ref.)	1.072**
Older-wife marriage	1.093*
Group size (relative supply of father-in law's social group)	0.963***
Father higher manager/professional (HISCLASS 1&2)(HISCLASS 3,4&5 Lower managers and professionals, clerical and sales=ref.)	0.548***
Father foreman or skilled worker (HISCLASS 6&7)	1.624***
Father farmer or fisherman (HISCLASS 8)	0.343***
Father lower skilled worker (HISCLASS 9)	1.733***
Father unskilled worker (HISCLASS 11)	1.548***
Father lower or unskilled farm worker (HISCLASS 10&12)	0.658***
Groom intergenerationally mobile (not mobile=ref.)	2.541***
Bride is a (former) domestic servant	1.160***
1796–1804 (1815–1824=ref.)	0.974
1805–1814	1.147
1825–1834	1.088
1835–1844	1.154
1845–1854	1.006
1855–1864	1.000
1865–1874	0.875
1875–1884	0.901
1885–1895	1.082
1895–1904	1.039
1905–1914	1.170*
1915–1922	1.221**
Middelburg (Zuid-Beveland=ref.)	0.927
Vlissingen	0.847**
Noord-Beveland	0.776***

Table 2. *Continued*

	Odds ratio of contracting a heterogamous marriage
Schouwen-Duiveland	0.905**
Tholen	1.080
Walcheren	0.944
Oost-Zeeuws-Vlaanderen	0.901**
West-Zeeuws-Vlaanderen	0.748***
Constant	2.398***
N	46,889
Model Chi-square	11821,157
Nagelkerke R square	0,297

Source: Marriage certificates from the civil records of Zeeland 1796/1811–1922.

Note: * significance level $p < 0.05$; ** significance level $p < 0.01$; *** significance level $p < 0.001$.

Overall, parental control on partner choice seems to have been ineffective in stimulating homogamy. At least, we found no increase in heterogamy with an increase in age at marriage; nor did we find more heterogamy among second marriages. The odds of heterogamy increased if the bride’s mother was deceased. Was this related to diminished parental control? Or were girls from the middle classes simply less effective in maintaining their social position if their mother had died? This question can be answered in the next section where we look at heterogamy models per social group.

Migration had the effect of increasing the odds of marriage mobility, but only among urbanward-migrating women. For migrant men and for migrant women with a rural provenance, the odds of heterogamy were lower than for local residents. The social group differences were very strong and confirm the impression we gained from Table 1: the higher managers, farmers, and farm workers tended towards homogamy. The odds ratios of farmers’ sons marrying heterogamously were thus 66 per cent lower than the reference group of the sons of lower managers and professionals. Interestingly, the odds of heterogamy increased (by 16 per cent) when the marriage certificate listed the occupation of the bride as “domestic servant”. This may indicate that the experience of working in middle- or upper-class households had broadened the marriage horizon for servants.

We find no evidence of a linear increase in relative marriage mobility throughout the nineteenth century that would be consistent with the notion that “individualization” or “romantic love” was spreading. A significant rise in heterogamy is visible only from 1905 onwards. Can this

be explained by a rise in “romantic love”, in the sense of individual choice freed from community and parental control in towns and cities? For one thing, Zeeland’s cities, once we control for occupational structure, were certainly not places of fluid class boundaries. In Vlissingen and Middelburg the odds ratios were lower than in the region of Zuid-Beveland. Even lower ratios were found in Noord-Beveland and Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, and particularly in the west of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. These regional differences are more or less in line with the descriptions of the social divide between local farmers’ “aristocracies” and the mass of propertyless workers. This divide was more pronounced in certain regions than in others.

Community contexts (1855–1922)

In what way did aspects of the community in which the marriage was contracted influence the groom’s odds of intermarriage? Was it easier to marry someone from another social group in localities with many in-migrants? And in what way did the over-representation of certain religious groups in a community – especially during the process of confessionally based vertical pluralism – affect opportunities for heterogamy?

In Table 3 we estimate what were the effects on the groom’s odds of contracting a heterogamous marriage of the population size, marriage rate, net migration rate, relative geographical mobility, and the relative proportion of Orthodox Protestants and Catholics residing in the marriage locality. The population size has been included for every municipality for each ten-year period. The local marriage rate gives the average yearly number of marriages per 1,000 of the population. Net migration is calculated as the net migration deficit for the municipality per ten-year period per 1,000 of the population. Relative geographical mobility totals in-migration and out-migration per ten-year period per 1,000 inhabitants. Finally, the proportion of Orthodox Protestants has been calculated by grouping the secessionist Orthodox churches in Zeeland. The variables were derived from the censuses, our set of marriage certificates, and the Historical Database of Dutch Municipalities.⁴² However, information at community level is available only for the second half of the nineteenth century and the first few decades of the twentieth century. We therefore compare a model without context variables (model 1) and a full contextual model (model 2) only for this period. Here, we discuss simply the effects of the added community-level variables.

Table 3 (model 2) shows that the odds of grooms who married in either hamlets (less than 1,000 inhabitants) or larger villages and small towns

42. For a description, see E. Beekink, O. Boonstra, T. Engelen, and H. Knippenberg (eds), *Nederland in verandering. Maatschappelijke ontwikkelingen in kaart gebracht* (Amsterdam, 2003).

Table 3. *Logistic regression of heterogamy: the influence of community context during the period 1855–1922*

Covariates	Model 1: main model for period 1855–1922	Model 2 including municipal-level variables
Age of groom	1.002	1.002
Age of bride	1.002	1.001
Groom is widower (first marriage=ref.)	0.990	0.995
Groom is divorced	1.549	1.648
Bride is widow (first marriage=ref.)	0.981	0.989
Bride is divorced	2.670	2.812
Groom’s mother is deceased (still alive=ref.)	0.994	0.981
Bride’s mother is deceased (still alive=ref.)	1.107***	1.094**
Child legitimated	1.071	1.044
Geographically endogamous marriage (exogamous=ref.)	0.838***	0.834***
Groom is a rural migrant (born in the place of marriage=ref.)	0.873***	0.867***
Groom is an urban migrant	0.847*	0.833**
Bride is a rural migrant (born in the place of marriage=ref.)	0.924*	0.905**
Bride is an urban migrant	1.183	1.147
Older-husband marriage (same age=ref.)	1.082**	1.077**
Older-wife marriage	1.123*	1.124*
Group size (relative supply of father-in law’s social group)	0.962***	0.962***
Father higher manager/professional (HISCLASS 1&2) (HISCLASS 3,4&5 Lower managers and professionals, clerical and sales=ref.)	0.658***	0.653***
Father foreman or skilled worker HISCLASS 6&7)	1.578***	1.585***
Father farmer or fisherman (HISCLASS 8)	0.343***	0.350***
Father lower skilled worker (HISCLASS 9)	1.871***	1.886***
Father unskilled worker (HISCLASS 11)	1.441***	1.425***
Father lower or unskilled farm worker (HISCLASS 10&12)	0.646***	0.647***
Groom intergenerationally mobile (not mobile=ref.)	2.576***	2.550***
Bride is a (former) domestic servant 1865–1874 (1855–1864=ref.)	1.161***	1.177***
1875–1884	0.876*	0.872*
1885–1894	0.902	0.875*
1895–1904	1.091	1.038
1905–1914	1.044	0.998
1915–1922	1.176**	1.145*
Middelburg (Zuid-Beveland=ref.)	1.227***	1.212**
Vlissingen	0.931	0.823*
Noord-Beveland	0.843**	0.712**
	0.765***	0.834*

(Continued overleaf)

Table 3. *Continued*

Covariates	Model 1: main model for period 1855–1922	Model 2 including municipal-level variables
Schouwen-Duiveland	0.887**	0.909*
Tholen	1.067	1.141*
Walcheren	0.991	1.052
Oost-Zeeuws-Vlaanderen	0.890**	0.789***
West-Zeeuws-Vlaanderen	0.740**	0.702***
Population <1000 (1000–5000=ref)		0.839**
5000–20000		0.863**
>=20000		0.832
Marriage rate 0–5 (5–7=ref)		1.398
7–10		1.069*
>=10.		0.954
Unknown		1.271
Net migration –36 until –15 (–15 until –5=ref.)		0.970
–5 until 5		0.953
5 until 15		1.168*
15 until 53		1.159
Unknown		0.442*
Relative mobility 0–50 (50–100=ref.)		0.886
100–150		0.980
150–200		1.006
200–315		1.029
% Orthodox-reformed 12–18 (0–12=ref.)		1.071
18–23		1.032
23–32		0.962
>=32		0.957
% Catholic 10–20 (0–10=ref.)		1.018
20–60		1.121*
60–95		1.220**
95–100		1.340***
More than 10% orthodox-reformed and more than 10% Catholic		1.019
Constant	2.664***	3.153***
N	38,439	38,439
Model Chi-square (df)	10154.769 (39)	10265.225 (64)
Nagelkerke R Square	0.310	0.312

Source: Marriage certificates from the civil records of Zeeland 1796/1811–1922.

Note: * significance level $p < 0.05$; ** significance level $p < 0.01$; *** significance level $p < 0.001$.

(between 5,000 and 20,000 residents) contracting a heterogamous marriage decreased compared with the corresponding odds for grooms marrying in small rural villages (population between 1,000 and 5,000). Hamlets were unlikely to have much intermarriage anyway since they housed only farm workers and farmers. Why people in larger villages and small towns were



Figure 5. Farmer (right) and female farm workers (left) in the onion harvest on the island of Tholen (Zeeland), c.1932.
Zeeland Documentation Centre

less likely to marry heterogamously than those in small rural villages is hard to explain. Places with high marriage rates seem to have stimulated social intermarriage,⁴³ as did communities with high net migration rates (communities in which many new migrants settled). The same can be said for places with high relative geographical mobility, although the estimates are not significant. Perhaps the atmosphere of such “migratory” communities (as starting or stopping places for ferries and carriages to Holland, and as garrison towns) made it easier for individuals to cross social barriers.

The strongest determinant of heterogamy at community level was the proportion of Catholics.⁴⁴ The higher the proportion of Catholics, the larger the odds of the groom marrying outside his social group. Although Zeeland’s Catholics were a minority, comprising just one-quarter of the population, they were well catered for by the dioceses of Breda and Haarlem. They had more religious personnel than either the predominant Dutch Reformed or Calvinist Orthodox groups. Catholic priests probably encouraged religiously homogamous marriages quite effectively, even when they were at the expense of socially mixed weddings.⁴⁵

43. The effect of marriage rates is not, however, linear.

44. To avoid ecological fallacies, it would, of course, be preferable to also include individual-level indicators of the economic position of farmers and workers, and of the individual religious denominations.

45. Wintle, *Zeeland and the Churches*, pp. 70, 100.

MARRIAGE MOBILITY OF SPECIFIC SOCIAL GROUPS

So far, we have addressed the issue of intermarriage for all social groups together. However, the mechanisms for explaining whether and why individuals married outside their own group, and whether this was considered profitable or detrimental behaviour, varied across groups, depending on the respective economic and social resources at hand. Moreover, certain determinants could have had a particular effect on the odds of marriage mobility in one social group and not in another. Third, mapping out group-specific determinants also allows us to disentangle which social groups accounted for the most important general effects as observed in Table 2, for instance the increasing openness in the first two decades of the twentieth century. In Table 4, we investigate possible differences in the determinants of marriage mobility for the two most important groups in Zeeland's occupational hierarchy: farm workers and farmers. Together these groups comprised about 60 per cent of Zeeland's population. As we saw earlier, agricultural workers and farmers were also the most immobile social groups: 70 per cent of all farm workers and 60 per cent of all farmers married a bride originating from their own background.

To find out what then determined a mobile marriage in these major groups, and whether the determinants of a heterogamous marriage differed between them, we proceeded as follows. We first estimated a base model for farm workers and farmers together (results not reported). In order to detect whether class-specific differences played a role, we introduced in this model interaction terms which were constructed by multiplying the independent variables with a dummy for membership of the group of farm workers. In order to be parsimonious, we retained a model with only the significant interaction terms. Introducing these significant interactions improved the fit of the model from a Model Chi-Square (df) of 2477.867 (40) for the base model, to a Model Chi-Square (df) 3784.071 (55) for the model including interactions. In Table 4 we present the estimated coefficients for farm workers (column 2) and farmers (column 3).⁴⁶

Before we start interpreting the results, it is important to stress the basic difference in what heterogamy actually meant for members of the two groups. If we assume that farm workers were at the bottom of the social hierarchy, heterogamy effectively meant upward mobility. For the sons of farming families, heterogamy could mean a change of social status either for better or worse. Most importantly, for farmers, homogamy – not heterogamy – was the ideal.

In both groups, the odds of marriage mobility for the groom were affected

46. For those variables for which an interaction term was significant, coefficients have been calculated for both groups separately: for farm workers, by multiplying the coefficients of the main effect and the interaction term; for farmers, by reporting the main effect.

by the couple's former life experiences. First, the odds of heterogamy increased with age. In a province where the rural population generally married quite early, marriages which were contracted at a later age were more prone to mobility. This might have been due to a weakening of parental control over partner choice as youngsters aged. But one can also imagine that the longer boys waited before marrying, the more time they would have had to get ahead in life by accumulating a working capital or raising the level of their income, which might have allowed them to attract women from a higher social group. This argument could have applied particularly to farm workers. For the son of a farmer, late marriage might also have indicated that he was in a difficult financial position: perhaps he had to wait until his father retired, or his older brothers and sisters had been settled, before he had enough money to be able to marry a farmer's daughter. Such a situation could have easily led to him marrying outside his own class.

When grooms married women older than themselves, they married heterogamously more often. Perhaps older women from the middle classes were forced to marry down because of their age. The relational biographies of the groom and bride prior to the marriage mattered as well. Especially among farm workers, widowed grooms who remarried had higher odds of marrying outside their original occupational group. Widowed workers might have been attractive partners on the marriage market because they had already been successful in securing a living. Labourers who legitimated a child on marriage married heterogamously less often, while farmers, on the other hand, had increased odds of intermarriage. This might be explained by the fact that, whether living in concubinage with the "legitimizing" husband or not, the large majority of single mothers had a proletarian background.⁴⁷

What exactly the groom and bride had "done" prior to their marriage in terms of migration and work experience determined the odds of intermarriage in important ways. If a farm worker were a rural migrant (i.e. if he had migrated to the place of marriage from a rural community), his odds of marrying upward decreased. Marrying a bride who had migrated from a village also reduced the odds of a heterogamous marriage. Conversely, if his bride had migrated from a city, the odds of the farm worker marrying outside his social group (i.e. marrying upward) increased by no less than 640 per cent. But marrying a former servant decreased the odds of farm workers becoming socially mobile through marriage by one-third. In Zeeland, domestic servants mostly originated from families of unskilled agricultural workers.⁴⁸ Thus, marrying a domestic servant often meant a homogamous marriage.

47. J. Kok, *Langs verboden wegen. De achtergronden van buitenechtelijke geboorten in Noord-Holland 1812–1914* (Hilversum, 1991), pp. 100 ff.

48. H. Bras, "Social Change, The Institution of Service and Youth: The Case of Service in the Lives of Rural-Born Dutch Women, 1840–1940", *Continuity and Change*, 19 (2004), pp. 241–264, 247.

Table 4. *Logistic regression of marriage mobility of farm workers and farmers*

Covariates	Farm workers (HISCLASS 10 & 12)	Farmers (HISCLASS 8)
Age of groom	1.015***	1.015***
Age of bride	1.002	1.002
<i>Groom is widower</i> (first marriage=ref.)	3.015***	1.687***
Groom is divorced	2.861	2.861
Bride is widow (first marriage=ref.)	0.961	0.961
Bride is divorced	1.852	1.852
<i>Groom's mother is deceased</i> (still alive=ref.)	0.900**	1.087
<i>Bride's mother is deceased</i> (still alive=ref.)	1.301**	1.086
<i>Child legitimated</i>	0.744***	2.818***
<i>Geographically endogamous marriage</i> (exogamous=ref.)	0.830*	1.015
<i>Groom is a rural migrant</i> (born in the place of marriage=ref.)	0.996*	0.837**
Groom is an urban migrant	1.135	1.135
<i>Bride is a rural migrant</i> (born in the place of marriage=ref.)	0.755**	0.957
<i>Bride is an urban migrant</i>	7.402***	2.039**
Older-husband marriage (same age=ref.)	1.057	1.057
Older-wife marriage	1.127*	1.127*
Group size (relative supply of father-in law's social group)	0.966***	0.966***
Father farm worker (father farmer=ref.)	3.624***	0
Groom intergenerationally mobile (not mobile=ref.)	3.097***	3.097***
Bride is a (former) domestic servant	0.638***	3.624***
1796–1804 (1815–1824=ref.)	0.852	0.852
1805–1814	1.092	1.092
1825–1834	1.054	1.054
1835–1844	1.218	1.218
1845–1854	0.993	0.993
1855–1864	0.995	0.995
1865–1874	0.872	0.872
1875–1884	0.784*	0.784*
1885–1894	0.969	0.969
1895–1904	0.904	0.904
1905–1914	0.860***	1.578***
1915–1922	0.779***	1.905***
Middelburg (Zuid-Beveland=ref.)	1.015	1.015
Vlissingen	1.132	1.132
Noord-Beveland	0.850**	0.562***
<i>Schouwen-Duiveland</i>	0.745***	1.588***
<i>Tholen</i>	0.932**	1.249**
Walcheren	0.998	0.998
Oost-Zeeuws-Vlaanderen	0.950	0.950

(Continued)

Covariates	Farm workers (HISCLASS 10 & 12)	Farmers (HISCLASS 8)
West-Zeeuws-Vlaanderen	<i>0.612***</i>	<i>0.989</i>
Constant		0.319***
N		27,862
Model Chi-square (df)		3784.071
Nagelkerke R Square		0.176

Source: Marriage certificates from the civil records of Zeeland 1796/1811–1922.

Note: * significance level $p < 0.05$; **significance level $p < 0.01$; ***significance level $p < 0.001$.

Significant differential effects in italics (see text for explanation of method).

For the group of farmers, rural migration decreased the odds of intermarriage too, which meant that rural migration allowed farmers’ sons to remain in their class. Farmers’ sons who married migratory brides of urban descent had 104 per cent higher odds of intermarriage than those who married a woman born in the place where they married. Likewise, a farmer’s son who married a former domestic servant had 262 per cent higher odds of marrying heterogamously. As we have already noted, servants were mostly the daughters of agricultural workers; a farmer’s son marrying a maid thus resulted in downward mobility. To sum up: the bride’s migration and work experience is essential in understanding heterogamy in rural Zeeland.

Apart from the relational, migration, and work histories of individuals, their parental backgrounds also mattered in explaining marriage mobility. The odds of farm workers marrying upward were augmented when they married a bride whose mother was already deceased. As suggested earlier, middle-class women were thus less effective in securing their social position if their mother had died. Both the absence of the social capital of the mother and the possible pressure related to the introduction of a stepmother into the broken household may have limited opportunities for an advantageous marriage. We can explain in the same vein our finding that if a worker’s mother had already died, his odds of marrying upward decreased. In contrast, the presence or death of the parents of bride and groom did not significantly affect the odds of heterogamy among farmers.

Finally, macro-structural characteristics made a difference as well. During the agricultural depression (1878–1895) the marriage mobility of both farmers and farm workers decreased. In depressed economic times opportunities for intermingling diminished. Contrasting with the generally increasing social fluidity since the turn of the twentieth century (illustrated in Table 2) were the decreasing odds of heterogamy among agricultural workers in the 1910s. On the other hand, the odds of heterogamy among farmers increased significantly in the first two decades

of the twentieth century. Because of the restructuring of Zeeland's agriculture after the agricultural depression it became increasingly difficult for farmers to survive, and many of them had to switch to other occupations. Moreover, with the increase in education, farmers' children were able to choose other livelihoods outside farming. The general increase in the "openness of society" observed in the first few decades of the twentieth century (Table 2) can thus largely be accounted for by the rise in heterogamy among farmers.

There were also regional differences. In Noord-Beveland and the western part of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, regions with large farms and rigidly polarized social structures, both farm workers and farmers married more often in their own class. On the islands of Schouwen-Duiveland and Tholen, however, the odds of intermarriage among farm workers and farmers diverged. In these areas farm workers were less likely to intermarry, while the farmers on these islands were increasingly forced to leave their occupation on marriage. As noted earlier, the farms on these particular islands were relatively modest; the smaller potential inheritance for grooms might have made it difficult for them to remain in farming, and they might increasingly have been forced to marry a woman from another social group.

CONCLUSION

In this article, we have investigated developments in and determinants of socially mixed marriage in a Dutch province (Zeeland) during the long nineteenth century by taking into account forces at the level of previous individual and family histories, characteristics of communities, and temporal influences and trends at the macro level of society. We have focused particularly on how these forces interacted within different social groups, in particular within the groups of agricultural workers and farmers, as they were the most important social classes in the rural social hierarchy of Zeeland. In the Zeeland countryside farmers and workers lived "in indifference together", as a report from the 1850s put it. Aside from work, these groups seem to have had little contact and few ties. The social barrier between them showed up in their high levels of homogamy: 70 per cent of all farm workers and 60 per cent of all farmers married into their own social group.

For farmers, homogamous marriage was the ideal, as they strived to hand down their farms and land to the next generation. Conversely, while Zeeland's workers might not have actively avoided socially mixed marriage, they often had so few social and financial resources that they were severely hampered in ascending the social ladder. From the perspective of nineteenth-century social reporters, workers had become "apathetic" and "indifferent" as a consequence. In fact, the indifference

and isolation observed by social reporters was due to contradictory ideals with regard to life in general, and marriage in particular. However, the picture was not as grim and static as that painted by contemporaries. Our evidence shows that mutual ties leading to intermarriage were not entirely absent: 30 to 40 per cent of these rural residents married outside their original social class. About 17 per cent of farmers' sons actually married the daughter of a worker, while 8 per cent of workers' sons married the daughter of a farmer. Uncovering the antecedents of these "deviant" mixed marriages is instructive as they explain how social group differences worked in the nineteenth century.

Of course, general social and economic changes and trends influenced the process of intermarriage in rural Zeeland, both for workers' and farmers' sons. In economically depressed times, opportunities for workers to find a bride from a higher social group decreased, while for farmers regional agricultural schemes and acreage influenced the extent to which they could re-establish themselves as farmers. At the beginning of the twentieth century, possibly as a consequence of a differential increase in education, the odds of heterogamy among workers generally decreased while those among farmers increased. However, as our analyses showed, socially mobile marriages were caused first and foremost by the shape of the previous individual and family histories of the groom and bride.

For the sons of farmers, the options with regard to occupation and place of residence during their youth were crucial in this respect. Obviously, farmers' sons who chose an occupation other than their fathers' often married into another social class. But marrying a bride who had herself worked in another occupation, especially as a domestic servant, also resulted in a heterogamous marriage. The bride's urban descent too meant that often the ideal of social reproduction was not reached. One's previous relational history played a significant role in a similar way: having legitimated a child, being a widower, or being elderly hampered one's prospects of joining the farming class. In a social-group context where homogamy was very strong and actively strived for, the personal histories of the groom and bride were thus important factors in explaining whether they could achieve this ideal. Those who "had" to marry heterogamously were tainted by certain deviations in their own or their family's previous life course which made them less desirable partners in the farmers' marriage market.

In the case of agricultural workers who might have strived, more or less consciously, for social ascendance, previous life histories were just as important, although the meaning of both mixed marriage and the life leading to it was often the reverse of that of his age peers from farm families. If a farm worker wanted to escape his social class, it was advantageous for his bride to have spent her youth in an urban environment if he married relatively late or was already widowed. In

contrast to farmers, in the case of farm workers the previous migration and familial careers of the groom – and especially his bride – increased his odds of escaping his lot. It is hard to say of course whether previous choices with regard to occupation, geographical mobility, and personal relations were the cause or consequence of one's initial social position. The fact is that these individual characteristics were inextricably linked through the life course, leading to an accumulation of disadvantage or advantage later in life, in this case specifically in relation to marriage outside one's original social group.

In the literature on social stratification and mobility, an overwhelming degree of attention has been devoted to the structural and temporal causes of mobility and heterogamy, often to such an extent that the mechanisms by which heterogamy, or for that matter homogamy, came about remain hidden or are only very generally explained. By laying bare differences in determinants between social groups and by offering group-specific explanations, we have shown the importance of forces at the level of individual and family life courses in shaping a phenomenon such as socially mobile marriage. This is not to say that general trends and macro-structural forces did not play a role. They “trickled down”, however, through specific social groups to families with specific histories, to influence specific individual lives.