Has the reciprocal relationship between employment and marriage changed for men? An analysis of the life histories of men born in the Netherlands between 1930 and 1970

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The study presented here analyses the reciprocal relationship for men between employment career and union formation and examines whether this relationship changed across twentieth-century birth cohorts. Competing hypotheses about trends are described, using notions of role-specialization, spouse support, and uncertainty. The study is based on an investigation of the life histories of 2,795 men in the Netherlands who were born between the 1930s and the 1960s, and confirms earlier findings by showing that employment fosters marriage while marriage protects men from becoming unemployed. There is also a relationship between employment and cohabitation but it is weaker in both directions. However, the relationship between marriage or cohabitation and occupational mobility is less clear, suggesting that the economic benefits of marriage cannot be generalized to the occupational domain. Although it is commonly believed that the link for men between career and marriage has weakened over time, our comparison of birth cohorts shows that in fact this is not the case.

Introduction

In the past decade an increasing number of studies have examined the relationship between men's employment careers and the transition to marriage or cohabitation. First, there exists a small branch of—mostly economic—literature that focuses on the effects of marriage on men's economic position. Using American panel data, studies in this area generally show that there is an economic advantage to being married: when men's fortunes over time are followed, a significant increase in wages appears to occur after marriage (Korenman and Neumark 1991; Blackburn and Korenman 1994; Gray 1997). Second, there are demographic studies that examine how men's economic resources affect entry into marriage and cohabitation. These studies have been motivated by the belief that recent declines in marriage rates are linked to historical changes in the economic situation of young men (Oppenheimer 1988). Empirical studies generally support the view that, for men, unemployment, low earnings, and career

'immaturity' lead to delays in marrying. Evidence of this effect has been found both in the USA and in Europe, although it is somewhat less consistent in Europe (Lichter et al. 1992; Lloyd and South 1996; Oppenheimer et al. 1997; Smock and Manning 1997; Bracher and Santow 1998; Kravdal 1999; Liefbroer and Corijn 1999; Sassler and Schoen 1999; Sweeney 2002; Oppenheimer 2003; Xie et al. 2003; Sassler and Goldscheider 2004; Blossfeld et al. 2005).

Overall, a dynamic process appears to occur in which either an attractive career leads to a successful marriage that in turn promotes the career, or problems in the career lead to a postponement of marriage that leads to further delays in gaining the stability provided by employment. In this paper, the two linkages are examined simultaneously, using data from the life histories of 2,795 men in the Netherlands. We first examine how men's occupational and employment characteristics affect the chances that they will cohabit and marry (Figure 1, effect A). Second, we examine whether the transitions to cohabitation and marriage have an effect on
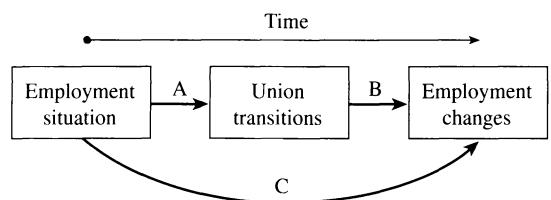
Time

Figure 1 Schematic representation of marriage–employment effects over time

the chances of leaving employment and of experiencing upward or downward occupational mobility (effect B). In establishing the latter effect, we control for the effects of earlier occupational and employment characteristics on subsequent employment transitions (effect C).

The underlying goal of the study was to examine whether the reciprocal link between men's relationship histories and employment careers changed across cohorts born between the 1930s and the 1970s. For women, several studies in the past have shown that the strength of the association between family-formation transitions and employment careers has become weaker over time. The negative effect of marriage and children on women's labour supply has decreased (e.g., De Graaf and Vermeulen 1997) and the negative effect of women's employment on marriage and childbearing has also declined (e.g., Blossfeld 1995). These changes have been interpreted as the effect of a decline in the extent to which men and women specialize in different roles when they form a union. As a result, it is also assumed—although sometimes implicitly—that the positive link between economic behaviour and marriage for men has declined too. Because most men are no longer the sole breadwinners in marriage, good employment prospects for men seem to have become less important as a requirement for entering marriage. Similarly, because role-specialization within marriage has declined, it is believed that marriage will no longer promote men's careers.

Although this interpretation is plausible and often put forward, corroborative evidence for men is still quite limited. One recent American paper identifies a decrease in the effect of employment on the likelihood of marriage for men (Sassler and Goldscheider 2004), but another study from the same country does not find that the influence of men's economic prospects on whether they marry has declined over time (Sweeney 2002). For the effect of marriage, the evidence is more consistent, although here too it comes primarily from the USA. Both Gray (1997) and Blackburn and Korenman (1994) find that the earnings advantage of

married men compared with that of unmarried men has declined over time, consistent with the general expectation.

This study adds to the literature in the following ways. First, the historical and cross-national base of the evidence is broadened. Earlier trend studies are limited to comparisons of American men in two (often closely spaced) birth cohorts (Blackburn and Korenman 1994; Gray 1997; Sweeney 2002; Sassler and Goldscheider 2004). This paper, on the other hand, compares men born in a European country in the period from the 1930s to the late 1960s, so that we look at marriage and employment behaviour over the whole period since the Second World War. Second, we focus on change in employment and occupation rather than on the wage and income changes that have often been the focus, especially in work on the benefits of marriage for men. As sociologists have traditionally argued, occupation is a fundamental criterion of social stratification (Blau and Duncan 1967; Treiman 1977), so that insights into the relationship between change in union status and occupational change provide an important addition to the available evidence. Third, we analyse life-history data, which means that discrete changes in the lives of men are considered over a long period of time. This study follows men's careers over nearly 30 years (on average), which is much longer than is possible for a typical panel study.

The Netherlands is a useful country for an examination of changes in the work–family relationship. First, demographic patterns and trends in the Netherlands are comparable with those in other Western European countries and the USA. Marriage and fertility have been postponed, divorce has increased, and cohabitation is now widely accepted. The age at marriage has followed a cyclical pattern. For men, the mean age at first marriage was 28 in 1950, reached a low of 24.6 in the early 1970s, and increased again to 29 in the 1990s (Kalmijn 1994a). About two-thirds of couples now live together before they marry and there are few cohabiting couples who remain unmarried for long (Liefbroer 1991; Manting 1996; De Graaf and Steenhof 1999). Second, the Netherlands has experienced the same trend towards more egalitarian gender roles that other countries have experienced. In particular, the increase in the number of married women working has been quite rapid, from about 10 per cent in 1950 to more than 50 per cent in the 1990s (Van der Lippe and Van Doorne-Huiskes 1995; De Graaf and Vermeulen 1997), although an important peculiarity of the Netherlands is that most women still work part-time: 70 per cent of the women who work, work

part-time (Keuzenkamp and Oudhof 2000). Finally, the Netherlands is not a special case when looking at employment patterns for men. Compared with the European Union as a whole, unemployment levels are now low, but they were quite high in the recent past and the decline in non-employment has been considered exceptional (Visser and Hemerijck 1997). The degree of uncertainty that men in the Netherlands face in the labour market—as indicated by the relative proportions of temporary and flexible workers and the number of people with a secondary job—is also fairly average (De Grip et al. 1997; Smulders and Klein Hesselink 1997).

Theory and hypotheses

In this study, two types of employment transition are considered: changing jobs and leaving employment. Job changes are classified as upward or downward moves. In addition, two types of union transition are examined: entry into cohabitation and entry into marriage.

The literature has presented several hypotheses about the relationship between work and union transitions for men. Some of these hypotheses apply to both sides of the causal chain, whereas others are specific to only one side. We review the different arguments below, and we assess what they imply for trends in the reciprocal relationship between employment and marriage.

Hypotheses about the effects of employment

The first and most influential argument for the positive effect of men's careers on their marriage behaviour is the male-breadwinner hypothesis (Hajnal 1965; Bernard 1976; Easterlin 1980). Because setting up and running a household costs money, men unable to fulfil the role of breadwinner will not be attractive marriage partners and fathers. It is often argued that the male-breadwinner hypothesis, which has a long history in demography, is relevant primarily under a traditional division of gender roles. When both partners work, and especially when both work full-time, women's economic resources also become important in marriage and financial responsibility can be shared. Although it would be naive to expect men's economic resources to become unimportant in influencing marriage prospects, it would be plausible to expect these resources to become less important over time.

The male-breadwinner argument also implies differences between marriage and cohabitation. It would be reasonable to expect that a man's failure to provide economically would be less of a problem for cohabitation than for marriage. Cohabiting relationships are believed to be more egalitarian than marriages and the male-breadwinner argument is therefore less applicable to cohabitation (Brines and Joyner 1999).

A second influential explanation of why men's work is important for the transition to marriage comes from the uncertainty hypothesis (Oppenheimer 1988). The basic argument is that unstable careers—as indicated by low-status jobs, non-employment, and irregular and temporary employment—signal uncertainty. This uncertainty applies not only to whether the husband will be able to provide in the future, but also to the type of life the husband will lead (Oppenheimer 1988; Oppenheimer et al. 1997). Work determines the lifestyle a person will develop, and when men have not yet settled in their career it is difficult to predict the quality of married life to come. In this way, employment uncertainty impedes assortative mating and may therefore delay marriage. An important difference between the breadwinner and the uncertainty hypotheses is that the former focuses on the financial aspects of employment whereas the latter is concerned more with the social consequences of work.

The uncertainty argument also implies differences between marriage and cohabitation. Cohabitation is often a trial stage before marriage and it may be that uncertainty about a man's position is more tolerable during the cohabiting stage than it would be for a long-term commitment to marriage. Cohabitation can therefore be used as a way for couples to reduce uncertainty, before marriage, about future career prospects. Recent American evidence does suggest that economic prospects are less important for entry into cohabitation, although it is less clear whether favourable economic prospects among men also have a positive effect on the transition from cohabitation to marriage (Liefbroer 1991; Smock and Manning 1997; Bracher and Santow 1998; Kravdal 1999; Brown 2000; Oppenheimer 2003; Sassler and McNally 2003; Xie et al. 2003).

While the male-breadwinner hypothesis suggests a decline in the effect of men's employment on marriage, this is less clear for the uncertainty hypothesis. After all, obtaining some degree of certainty about a husband's future occupational career is no less important when the tasks in married

life are divided more equally and when the wife works for pay. If both partners aspire to a career, it is important for them to know whether their occupations will make a good match in marriage (Kalmijn 1994b). Uncertainty about men's work potential will therefore not be less problematic for contemporary couples, and employment characteristics may even have become more influential for entry into marriage.

Hypotheses about the effects of cohabitation and marriage

The most influential argument for the reverse effect—the effect of marriage on men's employment history—also comes from the male-breadwinner hypothesis. The central argument is that the financial responsibility that men acquire when they marry and have children makes them invest more in their work. Men may change their attitude to work by, for example, developing a stronger work ethic, by working more hours or more efficiently, and by becoming more ambitious (Korenman and Neumark 1991; Waite 1995; Kaufman and Uhlenberg 2000). Men may also change their behaviour in other respects that are conducive to a working life—by leading a healthier life, for example (Horwitz et al. 1996; Joung et al. 1997). Being married and having children is therefore believed to make men more productive at work, and this increased productivity will have a positive effect on their occupational careers.

An important implication of the male-breadwinner hypothesis is that the positive effect of marriage on a man's career will decline (Korenman and Neumark 1991). If married women contribute substantially to the household income, men will not see themselves as the sole breadwinners. They may turn down promotion when this would require more stressful work, for example, and they may more readily take time off to study or do things other than work. There is also increasing pressure on fathers to participate in child-rearing, and this may result in a decline in the hours that men work (Kaufman and Uhlenberg 2000). Although it is unlikely that the effects of marriage and children on men's careers will become negative, one would expect the positive effects to decline over time. These arguments also suggest that the effects of marriage differ from those of cohabitation. Because the male-breadwinner role is less clearly defined in cohabiting relationships, the positive effect of cohabitation on careers should be weaker than that of marriage.

A second hypothesis is the partner-support hypothesis, which argues that marriage can have a positive effect on men's careers because men are supported in their work by their wives (Bernasco et al. 1998; Blossfeld and Drobnič 2001). A wife may provide information that is helpful to her husband's career, she may offer support and advice when the husband faces problems at work, and she may encourage the husband to invest in his career. The wife may also monitor the health behaviour of the husband and prevent him maintaining an unhealthy lifestyle. In this way too, her support may have a positive effect on his career (Waite 1995; Monden et al. 2003). Note that this argument applies to both marriage and cohabitation—in both cases men will benefit from the support of a partner.

While the male-breadwinner hypothesis suggests that men's careers will respond less strongly to marriage today than in the past, no such decline is indicated by the partner-support hypothesis. When more married women work, couples more often do similar work and this may increase the value of the information the wife can give the husband. More importantly, in dual-career couples, values emphasizing the importance of work are shared by the partners. Partners often encourage each other to be successful at work and work can become a central aspect of the couple's lifestyle. The implication is that the support and encouragement that the wife can give has become more rather than less important over time, in contrast to the implication of the male-breadwinner hypothesis.

A third hypothesis shifts the focus from the wife to the employer. The employer-discrimination hypothesis argues that even when the productivity levels of married and never-married men are similar, the careers of married men develop more rapidly because employers have a preference for married men. They may be more trusted by employers because they are perceived to be more committed to the job. One could argue that employers may effectively incorporate the male-breadwinner hypothesis into their assessment of the expectations they form about employees and job candidates. In addition, employers may think that men who have a family deserve better chances than men who are on their own. In a recession, for example, an employer may believe that laying off an employee who had young children to take care of would be to act harshly; the employer may prefer instead to make a young, unattached man redundant. Like the male-breadwinner hypothesis, the employer-discrimination hypothesis suggests a decline in the effect of marriage on men's employment histories. The post-

ponement of marriage is now a normal phenomenon and people have become more accepting of being unmarried (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau 1998).

Selectivity

In analysing the consequences of marriage for employment careers, it has been argued that the higher wages of married men are partly due to selectivity (Korenman and Neumark 1991; Loh 1996; Gray 1997). Married men can be more successful at work because they have characteristics that make them more likely to be both successful at work and married. One important source of selectivity is economic. If we find, for example, that the chance of non-employment is reduced after marriage, this finding may be due to the fact that it was a stabilization of the career that led to marriage in the first place. To address this problem, the present study controls for previous characteristics of the employment career when estimating the effects of marriage on subsequent employment transitions. More specifically, we take into account the number of previous non-employment spells and the number of previous job changes in relation to men of the same age, in the models for employment and occupational transitions.

Data, models, and measures

This study makes use of data from three retrospective life-history surveys in the Netherlands: the *Netherlands Family Survey 1992–1993* (NFS92) (Ultee and Ganzeboom 1992); *Households in the Netherlands 1995* (HIN95) (Weesie and Kalmijn 1995); and the *Family Survey Dutch Population 1998* (FSDP98) (De Graaf et al. 1998). All three are random, nationally representative surveys based on face-to-face interviews with respondents at home. The surveys asked similar questions about occupational and union histories, although with differences in the details. In HIN95 and FSDP98, information was recorded for only one past cohabiting or married relationship. We therefore exclude men who had had two or more *previous* cohabiting or married relationships (42 men in HIN95 and 18 in FSDP98). All the surveys also interviewed partners (for married and cohabiting couples) and did so with more or less similar questionnaires. Although the surveys were couple-oriented, they had a sub-sample of single persons. The number of men interviewed in the three surveys

was 902 (NFS92), 1,699 (HIN95), and 1,000 (FSDP98), yielding a total sample of 3,601 men. From this sample we selected men who were aged 30 years or more at the time of the survey and who had no missing values on central variables ($N = 2,795$).

Models

In this study, the data were transformed into person-month files, and discrete-time event-history models are estimated using logistic regression on the person-month data. When different types of transitions are considered, a multinomial logistic regression model is estimated on the person-month file, which is equivalent to a competing risk model (Yamaguchi 1991). One set of models examines the effects of employment characteristics on subsequent union transitions. Another set of models examines the effects of transitions in union status on subsequent employment transitions while controlling for the effect of previous employment characteristics. Note that divorce/separation is not analysed as a transition because there were too few partings to make a cohort comparison meaningful.

In the models, only episodes between the ages of 18 and 60 are considered, to avoid problems arising from early retirement. The time dependency of the risk is taken into account differently, depending on the transition analysed. Models are estimated for the following transitions.

The transition to a first union. This is defined as entry into a first marriage or first cohabitation in a given month if the individual was single in the previous month ($N = 2,661$ events). Cohabiting relationships lasting 1 year or less are not considered as transitions because we believe that the retrospective design leads to an underreporting of such very short relationships. The risk period starts at the age of 18 and is truncated at the time of the survey if the person is still single. The time dependency of the risk is controlled by using two logged terms for age, following the specification suggested by Blossfeld and Huinink (1991). Historical changes are captured by the inclusion of birth cohorts, broken down into decades.

The transition to a first marriage or cohabitation. In this model, the transition is separated into two types of transition: marriage ($N = 1,678$

events) and cohabitation ($N = 983$ events). The type of union is ascertained at the start of the union. This model is estimated using a multinomial logit model for competing risks (Yamaguchi 1991).

The transition to marriage from a cohabiting relationship. This is defined as entry into a first marriage if the individual was cohabiting in the previous month ($N = 752$ events). The risk period is censored at the time of survey or the time of separation. The time dependency is taken into account using relationship duration and duration squared.

Job mobility. The model for job transitions distinguishes between three types of transition: entering a period of non-employment, obtaining a new job with lower occupational status (downward mobility), or obtaining a new job with more or the same occupational status (upward or lateral mobility). Note that where a job change occurs within 3 months of the end of the previous job, the end of the previous job is not considered a movement to non-employment. The reason is that rapid shifts between jobs are more likely to be voluntary periods of time off in between jobs. Also note that in this paper the term non-employment rather than unemployment is used, in order to disregard the reasons why men are not working. Non-employment includes sickness and disability.

Job mobility is measured using the International Socio-Economic Index of Occupational Status (ISEI) developed by Ganzeboom et al. (1992). ISEI is a measure of occupational attributes that convert a person's education into income, and it is generated as a weighted average of the educational levels and the income levels of the incumbents of an occupation (Ganzeboom and Treiman 1996, p. 212). All job episodes are included for each respondent and the time variable restarts at zero for each new episode. The risk period starts at the first month of a job and is truncated when the respondent is still employed in his present job or when he reaches the age of 60. The time dependency is taken into account by including two terms for the duration of the job spell—duration and duration squared.

To prevent simultaneous occurrences of transitions in union status and employment from distorting the effects, all dynamic independent variables are lagged 1 month (Yamaguchi 1991).

Independent variables: Measures of employment

We look at employment and occupation in the risk month, as well as at measures indicating the degree of stability present in the career.

Occupational status. This is the status of the current or most recent job, expressed here as an ISEI score (divided by ten). Parabolic effects were considered, but these were never statistically significant.

Employment. An indication of whether the person is currently employed.

Recent employment change. This set of variables measures employment changes. From all the month-to-month changes in the past 24 months, the number of moves out of and into employment were counted. These counts were used to create the following three dummy variables: continuously non-employed; any movement from employment to non-employment; and any movement from non-employment to employment. The second and third categories may overlap. 'Continuously employed' is the reference category. Experimenting with other time windows did not alter the results.

Recent job change. This variable indicates whether a person experienced any job change in the previous 24 months. Job changes are correlated with employment changes, because a move out of employment and back into employment also entails a job change. Nonetheless, most job changes do not involve moves into and out of employment.

Recent status change. This variable is the average month-to-month occupational status change in the previous 24 months. Positive values indicate upward or lateral status mobility; negative values indicate downward status mobility.

Independent variables: Union transition variables

Two sets of dummy variables are used, one showing and one not showing the distinction between marriage and cohabitation.

Union transitions. The following stages are distinguished: single; in union (living together, married or unmarried); divorced or separated; and remarried or living with a new partner. The dummy variables are coded in a cumulative fashion so that each stage is compared with the preceding stage. The 'single to union' variable reflects the comparison between the married or cohabiting stage and the single stage. The 'union to separation' variable reflects the comparison between the separated or divorced stage and the married or cohabiting stage. The 'separation to repartnering' variable reflects the comparison between the remarried stage and the separated or divorced stage. Remarriage includes cohabiting with a new partner after divorce or separation.

Marriage and cohabitation transitions. The following stages are distinguished: single; cohabiting; married after cohabitation; and married without prior cohabitation. Again, dummy variables are coded in a cumulative fashion. The variable 'single to cohabitation' reflects the comparison between the cohabiting and the single stage. The variable 'cohabitation to marriage' reflects the comparison between the married stage and the cohabiting stage (for those who married after cohabitation), and the variable 'single to marriage' reflects the comparison between the married stage and the single stage (for those who married without having previously cohabited). This model allows us to see whether—for couples who cohabit first—it is marriage or cohabitation that matters. In addition, we can assess whether the marriage transition has a greater effect when men marry directly rather than after cohabitation.

Control variables

Age. This is included in all models (as well as age squared if significant). Age is an important control variable because union transitions and chances of being non-employed are both highly correlated with age. In the model for employment transitions, the variable age—together with the duration of the job spell—is a control for the influence of labour-market experience.

Number of jobs held and number of non-employment spells (job mobility model). These variables are the number of jobs held by a person in his career up to the current month and the

total number of times a person became non-employed up to the current month. The measures are standardized for age, by calculating the degree to which a person's number of jobs or non-employment spells deviates from the average in his 5-year age group.

Education. This is the highest level of completed education reached at the time of interview, recoded to the approximate number of years. It should be noted that education is to some extent endogenous since men who marry early may have more difficulty in completing their education.

School enrolment. An indication of whether the person is still enrolled in school or college.

Parents' religiosity. This shows whether the father or mother attended church at least monthly when the respondent was 14–15 years of age.

Father's occupation. The occupational status (ISEI) of the father when the respondent was 14–15 years of age (divided by ten).

Children under 18. This indicates whether the person has children under the age of 18.

Birth cohort. The year of birth, by decade, starting with the 1930s and ending with the 1960s.

Unemployment rate. The level of unemployment in the given year, expressed as a percentage.

Survey. The survey that is the source of the data.

The means and standard deviations of the independent variables are shown in Table 1.

Results

Results from the event-history models for transitions in union status are presented in Table 2 (entry into a first union), Table 3 (marriage compared with cohabitation), and Table 4 (marriage after cohabitation). Results from the event-history models

for job transitions are shown in Table 5. How the effects of employment and transitions in union status differ between birth cohorts is presented in Tables 6 and 7.

Effects of employment on union transitions

Model I, Table 2 shows that employment has a positive effect on the chances of marriage or cohabitation. When men are employed in a given month, their odds of entering a union in the following month are increased by 89 per cent (i.e., $e^{0.634} - 1$). School enrolment has the expected negative effect on making the transition to a union.

Also examined was the possibility of an interaction between employment and school enrolment, but this interaction effect was not significant, showing that a model containing two main effects is the most parsimonious. Next to employment, no significant effect of occupational status is seen. A quadratic term did not appear to be significant either.

Model II, Table 2 separates the employment variable into different types of change variables. First, we see that continuous non-employment sharply reduces the risk of entering a union when compared with the experience of men who were continuously employed. In addition we see that having experienced a change to non-employment

Table 1 Means and ranges of independent variables used in models for the study of changes in marriage–employment effects, the Netherlands, birth cohorts 1930–70

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Time-varying
Control variables				
Duration of job spell (in months)	0	504	79	Yes
Age (in years)	18	60	33	Yes
Birth cohorts				
Birth cohort 1930s (and earlier)	0	1	0.29	No
Birth cohort 1940s	0	1	0.28	No
Birth cohort 1950s	0	1	0.26	No
Birth cohort 1960s	0	1	0.16	No
Religiosity: monthly church visit by parents during childhood	0	1	0.60	No
Father's occupational status (divided by 10)	1	9	4.33	No
Unemployment rate (per cent)	0.5	11.7	5.3	Yes
Educational level (approximate years)	6	18	11	No
School/college enrolment	0	1	0.08	Yes
Cohabitation duration (in years)	0	34.2	3.6	Yes
Children under 18	0	1	0.44	Yes
Work variables				
Occupational status (current/most recent) (divided by 10)	1	9	4.8	Yes
Currently employed	0	1	0.83	Yes
Employment change in past 24 months				
Continuously non-employed	0	1	0.10	Yes
Employed to non-employed (any)	0	1	0.08	Yes
Non-employed to employed (any)	0	1	0.08	Yes
Continuously employed	0	1	0.73	Yes
Status change (average in past 24 months)	−23	28	0.01	Yes
Job change (any in past 24 months)	0	1	0.16	Yes
Total number of non-employment spells (age adjusted)	−0.82	5.69	0.01	Yes
Total number of jobs held (age adjusted)	−3.42	10.70	0.03	Yes
Union transitions (cumulative coding)				
Single to union	0	1	0.68	Yes
Union to separation	0	1	0.03	Yes
Separation to repartnering	0	1	0.02	Yes
Single to cohabitation	0	1	0.16	Yes
Cohabitation to marriage	0	1	0.11	Yes
Single to marriage	0	1	0.53	Yes

Note: Men aged 18–60 and over 30 at survey date (N = 2,795).
Source: Netherlands Family Survey 1992–1993; Households in the Netherlands 1995; Family Survey Dutch Population 1998.

also reduces the risk of entering a union. Furthermore, recent changes in *jobs* are associated with an increased likelihood of entering a union. Men who recently changed jobs are 19 per cent more likely to enter a union than men with stable careers. The status-growth variable does not have the expected positive effect. It might have been expected that upward and lateral mobility would be associated with an increased likelihood of entering a union, but this does not appear to be the case. The two change variables suggest that men enter a union in a period of job change rather than of job stability, a finding that is not fully consistent with the uncertainty argument.

Are the effects different when a distinction is made between the types of union that a person enters? Table 3 shows the effects for marriage and cohabitation separately, as well as a test for the difference between these two effects. In line with our hypothesis, we see that the effect of employment is stronger on the odds of entering a marriage than a cohabiting relationship (Model I). The difference between these two effects is substantial and is statistically significant. In other words, non-employment is not as strong an impediment to cohabitation as it is to marriage, although the effect is still significant for cohabitation. Another interesting finding is that school enrolment does not have a significant negative effect on cohabitation, suggesting that cohabitation is not incompatible with continued schooling.

The employment change variables in Model II also reveal effects that differ according to the type of union. First, we observe that long-term non-employment has a stronger negative effect on marriage than on cohabitation. Second, a somewhat smaller difference is visible for the effect of becoming non-employed, although the direction is as expected. Third, we see that moves from non-employment to employment increase the chances of cohabitation

Table 2 Event history analysis (discrete time) of men's entry into first union, the Netherlands, birth cohorts 1930–70; logistic regression coefficients

	Model I		Model II	
	B	p-Value	B	p-Value
Control variables				
Survey 1995	0.027	0.60	0.031	0.55
Survey 1998	0.032	0.57	0.030	0.59
Log(age−17)	2.759	0.00	2.773	0.00
Log(61−age)	7.986	0.00	8.005	0.00
Birth cohorts (reference: birth cohort 1930s)				
Birth cohort 1940s	0.454	0.00	0.453	0.00
Birth cohort 1950s	0.487	0.00	0.491	0.00
Birth cohort 1960s	0.394	0.00	0.396	0.00
Religiosity: monthly church visit by parents during childhood	−0.011	0.78	−0.015	0.71
Father's occupational status (divided by 10)	−0.002	0.90	−0.002	0.91
Educational level (approximate years)	−0.000	0.96	0.001	0.91
School/college enrolment	−0.228	0.01	−0.233	0.01
Work variables				
Occupational status (current/most recent) (divided by 10)	0.008	0.61	0.002	0.89
Currently employed	0.634	0.00		
Employment change in past 24 months (reference: continuously employed)				
Continuously non-employed			−0.614	0.00
Employed to non-employed (any)			−0.409	0.00
Non-employed to employed (any)			−0.008	0.89
Status change (average in past 24 months)			0.073	0.29
Job change (any in past 24 months)			0.173	0.00
Constant	−39.249	0.00	−38.742	0.00
Chi-square	1,993.6		1,954.9	
Degrees of freedom	13		17	
Number of events	2,661		2,661	

Note: As for Table 1.
Source: As for Table 1.

Table 3 Event history analysis (discrete time) of effect of men's entry into first marriage or cohabitation, the Netherlands, birth cohorts 1930–70; multinomial logistic regression coefficients

	Cohabitation		First marriage		Difference between cohabitation and first marriage	
	B	p-Value	B	p-Value	B	p-Value
Model I						
Control variables						
Survey 1995	0.056	0.56	−0.021	0.73	−0.077	0.50
Survey 1998	−0.127	0.22	0.075	0.25	0.202	0.10
Log(age−17)	2.118	0.00	3.160	0.00	1.042	0.00
Log(61−age)	4.359	0.00	10.207	0.00	5.848	0.00
Birth cohorts (reference birth cohort 1930s)						
Birth cohort 1940s	1.719	0.00	0.371	0.00	−1.348	0.00
Birth cohort 1950s	2.901	0.00	−0.027	0.69	−2.928	0.00
Birth cohort 1960s	3.223	0.00	−0.673	0.00	−3.896	0.00
Religiosity: monthly church visit by parents during childhood	−0.414	0.00	0.226	0.00	0.640	0.00
Father's occupational status (divided by 10)	0.038	0.07	−0.028	0.13	−0.066	0.02
Educational level (approximate years)	0.022	0.10	−0.010	0.27	−0.032	0.05
School/college enrolment	−0.199	0.10	−0.291	0.02	−0.092	0.60
Work variables						
Occupational status (current/most recent) (divided by 10)	0.024	0.34	0.003	0.87	−0.021	0.52
Currently employed	0.322	0.00	0.918	0.00	0.596	0.00
Constant	−28.267	0.00	−48.206	0.00	−19.939	0.00
Chi-square	2,999.2					
Degrees of freedom	26					
Model II						
Control variables						
Survey 1995	0.066	0.49	−0.020	0.75	−0.086	0.45
Survey 1998	−0.132	0.21	0.076	0.24	0.208	0.09
Log(age−17)	2.107	0.00	3.178	0.00	1.070	0.00
Log(61−age)	4.200	0.00	10.284	0.00	6.084	0.00
Birth cohorts (reference birth cohort 1930s)						
Birth cohort 1940s	1.718	0.00	0.369	0.00	−1.348	0.00
Birth cohort 1950s	2.900	0.00	−0.020	0.77	−2.920	0.00
Birth cohort 1960s	3.212	0.00	−0.663	0.00	−3.875	0.00
Religiosity: monthly church visit by parents during childhood	−0.419	0.00	0.222	0.00	0.642	0.00
Father's occupational status (divided by 10)	0.037	0.08	−0.026	0.16	−0.063	0.02
Educational level (approximate years)	0.020	0.14	−0.007	0.44	−0.027	0.10
School/college enrolment	−0.160	0.19	−0.328	0.01	−0.168	0.33
Work variables						
Occupational status (current/most recent) (divided by 10)	0.018	0.49	−0.003	0.88	−0.021	0.52
Employment change in past 24 months (reference continuously employed)						
Continuously non-employed	−0.280	0.01	−0.888	0.00	−0.608	0.00
Employed to non-employed (any)	−0.247	0.05	−0.573	0.00	−0.327	0.07
Non-employed to employed (any)	0.153	0.07	−0.091	0.22	−0.244	0.03
Status change (average in past 24 months)	0.049	0.66	0.087	0.31	0.038	0.79
Job change (any in past 24 months)	0.182	0.02	0.171	0.00	−0.011	0.91
Constant	−27.377	0.00	−47.641	0.00	−20.264	0.00
Chi-square	2,961.4					
Degrees of freedom	34					
Number of events	983		1,678			

Note: As for Table 1.
Source: As for Table 1.

without increasing the chances of marriage. Although the two effects are not significant, the difference between the effects is significant. This suggests that, for marriage, a longer history of employment is needed for there to be an effect, whereas for cohabitation a recent change to becoming employed can be sufficient. Finally, it is evident that the effects of job changes are significant for both types of transition. In other words, when men change jobs frequently they are more likely to enter a union, regardless of whether it is marriage or cohabitation.

Table 4 presents the results of considering the change from cohabitation to marriage. When cohabiting men are employed, their chances of marrying are 20 per cent higher than when they are non-employed, but this effect is not statistically significant. The employment change variables also do not show any significant effects. When considering these results together with those in Table 3, we conclude that stable employment is most important for the transition from being single to marriage, that it is also important, but less so, for the transition from being single to cohabitation, but that it is no longer important for the transition from cohabitation to marriage.

We conclude this section by discussing the effects of the control variables. Starting with background characteristics, we find that the parents' religiosity has no effect on union formation. It does have a very clear effect on the type of entry, however, with men from more religious backgrounds being less likely to cohabit and more likely to marry directly, as earlier studies have indicated (Liefbroer 1991; Thornton et al. 1992). It is interesting that religiosity has no effect on the transition to marriage that follows a period of cohabitation. This may be due to the fact that religious persons who cohabit before marriage constitute a special—possibly less traditional—group. The father's occupation has a positive effect on entry into cohabitation and a negative effect on marriage entry. The effect on cohabitation is significant when a one-tailed test is used, and the difference between marriage and cohabitation in the effect is significant when a two-tailed test is used. A similar conclusion applies to education: more highly educated men are not more or less likely to enter a union, but they more often cohabit than marry (significant when a one-tailed test is used). These findings confirm the view that cohabitation in the Netherlands is more accepted in the higher strata of society.

Effects of union transitions on employment

Table 5 shows an analysis of the chances of becoming non-employed and the chances of experiencing upward or downward job mobility. The effect of entry into a union, shown in Model I, is significant and negative and can be interpreted as implying that when men start living together with a partner, their chances of becoming non-employed are reduced by 39 per cent (i.e., $1 - e^{-0.487}$). The model further shows a positive effect of divorce on non-employment; this effect is significant only when considering a one-tailed test and only in Model II. When men divorce, they are more likely to become non-employed. The effect is substantial in size, however. After remarriage, the odds of becoming non-employed are reduced again, to levels comparable with the situation before the divorce. Another important finding is that the effect of having children under the age of 18 is negative and significant, showing that fatherhood also protects men from becoming non-employed, as one would expect. The effect is small, however, which suggests that the role of the union for employment is more important than the role of fatherhood. When we look at the other employment transitions—upward/lateral and downward mobility—we see no effects. The expectation that entry into a union would promote occupational mobility is not indicated by the data here.

When the effects of entry into different union transitions are separated by type of union (Model II), we see important additional results. For single men the transition to marriage has a strong and significant protective effect on employment: a 47 per cent reduction in the risk of becoming non-employed. For single men who experience the transition to cohabitation, there is only a weak and non-significant effect. More interesting is the finding that when cohabiting men marry, their chances of becoming non-employed are reduced by 25 per cent. Although the effect of marriage is weaker after cohabitation than after being single, the more noteworthy finding is that it is marriage rather than cohabitation that matters.

The equations for occupational mobility in Model II show that selected union transitions also have an effect. Cohabitation has no effect but marriage decreases the chances of experiencing upward and lateral mobility. Marriage also has a negative effect on downward mobility but this is not significant. Hence, our expectation that marriage would have a positive effect on a man's career is not substantiated.

Table 4 Event history analysis (discrete time) of effect of men's entry into marriage after cohabitation, the Netherlands, birth cohorts 1930–70; logistic regression coefficients

	Model I		Model II	
	B	*p*-Value	*B*	*p*-Value
Control variables				
Survey 1995	−0.166	0.13	−0.170	0.12
Survey 1998	−0.218	0.07	−0.221	0.07
Cohabitation duration (in years)	0.116	0.00	0.115	0.00
Cohabitation duration (in years, squared)	−0.019	0.00	−0.019	0.00
Birth cohorts (reference birth cohort 1930s)				
Birth cohort 1940s	0.310	0.26	0.312	0.26
Birth cohort 1950s	−0.160	0.54	−0.155	0.55
Birth cohort 1960s	−0.157	0.55	−0.149	0.57
Religiosity: monthly church visit by parents during childhood	0.063	0.41	0.062	0.41
Father's occupational status (divided by 10)	−0.019	0.44	−0.019	0.44
Educational level (approximate years)	−0.009	0.54	−0.008	0.60
School/college enrolment	−0.217	0.26	−0.200	0.31
Work variables				
Occupational status (current/most recent) (divided by 10)	−0.021	0.48	−0.018	0.54
Currently employed	0.183	0.20		
Employment change in past 24 months (reference continuously employed)				
Continuously non-employed			−0.231	0.19
Employed to non-employed (any)			−0.057	0.74
Non-employed to employed (any)			−0.058	0.62
Status change (average in past 24 months)			−0.018	0.88
Job change (any in past 24 months)			0.007	0.93
Constant	−3.636	0.00	−3.470	0.00
Chi-square	100.1		100.4	
Degrees of freedom	13		17	
Number of events	752		752	

Note: As for Table 1.
Source: As for Table 1.

To assess whether the effects of union transitions may be spurious, information on past employment history is added in Model III. Men who have experienced more non-employment spells in their career in the past are more likely to become non-employed in the future. However, we find no evidence for the hypothesis that the more jobs men have held in the past, the more likely it is that in the future they will become non-employed. The effects of previous job mobility are stronger on mobility than on non-employment. The model shows that the more often a man has changed jobs in the past, the more likely it is that he will experience downward mobility in the future. After controlling for the effects of past careers, however, the effect of marriage on non-employment is not reduced. Hence, there is no bias in the economic effect of marriage as a consequence of the *economic* selectivity of the entry into marriage.

Another way of addressing the issue of selectivity is to consider only men who have ever married or cohabited. Some of the selection characteristics mentioned in the literature refer to characteristics that primarily affect the chances of ever marrying (e.g., physical disabilities, personal disorders, commitment problems, sexual preferences). If the never-married are excluded from the model, we believe that another part of the selection bias can be ruled out. If the model is estimated for this subset, it can be seen that the effect on non-employment of the transition to marriage is scarcely reduced at all (not reported in the table), suggesting that selection bias does not play a very important role.

We conclude this section by considering the effects of the control variables. The age pattern of non-employment is U-shaped, a result consistent with that found by other studies (e.g., De Graaf and Ultee 1991; Burgess et al. 2003). The effects of age on the chances of upward/lateral and downward mobility are generally negative, showing that most of the movement in a career happens at an early age. Educational attainment has a positive effect on upward and lateral mobility and a negative

Table 5 Event history analysis (discrete time) of effects of marriage on men's job and employment mobility, the Netherlands, birth cohorts 1930–70; multinomial logistic regression coefficients

	Downward mobility		Upward/lateral mobility		Non-employment	
	B	*p*-Value	*B*	*p*-Value	*B*	*p*-Value
	Model I					
Control variables						
Survey 1995	−0.075	0.25	−0.059	0.11	0.131	0.06
Survey 1998	0.229	0.00	0.051	0.18	0.046	0.54
Duration of job spell (in months)	−0.108	0.00	−0.133	0.00	−0.092	0.00
Duration of job spell (in months, squared)	0.195	0.00	0.218	0.00	0.202	0.00
Age–18 (/10)	−0.599	0.00	−0.106	0.16	−1.752	0.00
Age–18 (/10, squared)	0.032	0.37	−0.056	0.01	0.503	0.00
Unemployment rate (per cent)	−0.001	0.92	−0.004	0.36	0.055	0.00
Religiosity: monthly church visit by parents during childhood	−0.066	0.19	0.055	0.06	−0.030	0.58
Father's occupational status (divided by 10)	0.003	0.85	0.048	0.00	0.058	0.00
Educational level (approximate years)	−0.055	0.00	0.071	0.00	0.014	0.18
School/college enrolment	−0.485	0.01	−0.145	0.12	0.168	0.26
Children under 18	−0.115	0.09	−0.015	0.70	−0.169	0.04
Work variables						
Occupational status (current/most recent) (divided by 10)	0.367	0.00	−0.196	0.00	−0.102	0.00
Union transitions						
Single to union	−0.004	0.96	−0.059	0.16	−0.487	0.00
Union to separation	−0.062	0.82	0.128	0.40	0.419	0.12
Separation to repartnering	0.437	0.16	0.077	0.67	−0.525	0.12
Constant	−6.122	0.00	−4.191	0.00	−4.885	0.00
Chi-square	4,509.7					
Degrees of freedom	48					
	Model II					
Control variables						
Survey 1995	−0.086	0.19	−0.066	0.07	0.123	0.08
Survey 1998	0.223	0.00	0.046	0.22	0.045	0.55
Duration of job spell (in months)	−0.107	0.00	−0.132	0.00	−0.090	0.00
Duration of job spell (in months, squared)	0.190	0.00	0.216	0.00	0.199	0.00
Age–18 (/10)	−0.609	0.00	−0.113	0.14	−1.739	0.00
Age–18 (/10, squared)	0.041	0.26	−0.050	0.02	0.509	0.00
Unemployment rate (per cent)	−0.005	0.53	−0.008	0.12	0.051	0.00
Religiosity: monthly church visit by parents during childhood	−0.050	0.33	0.069	0.02	−0.013	0.81
Father's occupational status (divided by 10)	0.000	0.98	0.046	0.00	0.055	0.01
Educational level (approximate years)	−0.057	0.00	0.070	0.00	0.012	0.23
School/college enrolment	−0.477	0.01	−0.140	0.13	0.177	0.24
Children under 18	−0.064	0.36	0.019	0.65	−0.099	0.24
Work variables						
Occupational status (current/most recent) (divided by 10)	0.368	0.00	−0.196	0.00	−0.102	0.00
Union transitions						
Single to cohabitation	0.176	0.09	0.060	0.34	−0.196	0.11
Cohabitation to marriage	−0.118	0.32	−0.059	0.41	−0.294	0.06
Single to marriage	−0.097	0.23	−0.127	0.01	−0.637	0.00
Union to separation	−0.054	0.84	0.125	0.41	0.456	0.10
Separation to repartnering	0.427	0.17	0.072	0.69	−0.539	0.11
Constant	−6.081	0.00	−4.162	0.00	−4.863	0.00
Chi-square	4,539.4	54				
Degrees of freedom	54					

Table 5 (*Continued*)

	Downward mobility		Upward/lateral mobility		Non-employment	
	B	p-Value	B	p-Value	B	p-Value
	Model III					
Control variables						
Survey 1995	−0.086	0.19	−0.064	0.08	0.103	0.14
Survey 1998	0.218	0.00	0.043	0.26	0.049	0.51
Duration of job spell (in months)	−0.093	0.00	−0.129	0.00	−0.080	0.00
Duration of job spell (in months, squared)	0.173	0.01	0.212	0.00	0.189	0.00
Age–18 (/10)	−0.641	0.00	−0.111	0.15	−1.861	0.00
Age–18 (/10, squared)	0.039	0.29	−0.053	0.02	0.535	0.00
Unemployment rate (per cent)	−0.006	0.47	−0.008	0.11	0.051	0.00
Religiosity: monthly church visit by parents during childhood	−0.050	0.33	0.068	0.02	−0.010	0.86
Father's occupational status (divided by 10)	0.000	0.98	0.045	0.00	0.062	0.00
Educational level (approximate years)	−0.056	0.00	0.069	0.00	0.015	0.14
School/college enrolment	−0.470	0.01	−0.134	0.15	0.161	0.28
Children under 18	−0.068	0.34	0.018	0.67	−0.107	0.20
Work variables						
Occupational status (current/most recent) (divided by 10)	0.369	0.00	−0.197	0.00	−0.093	0.00
Total number of non-employment spells (age adjusted)	−0.005	0.92	−0.061	0.04	0.330	0.00
Total number of jobs held (age adjusted)	0.054	0.01	0.019	0.10	−0.004	0.87
Union transitions						
Single to cohabitation	0.169	0.11	0.058	0.35	−0.191	0.12
Cohabitation to marriage	−0.122	0.31	−0.062	0.38	−0.286	0.06
Single to marriage	−0.101	0.21	−0.131	0.01	−0.612	0.00
Union to separation	−0.041	0.88	0.133	0.38	0.430	0.12
Separation to repartnering	0.405	0.19	0.061	0.74	−0.569	0.09
Constant	−6.128	0.00	−4.163	0.00	−4.929	0.00
Chi-square	4,596.7					
Degrees of freedom	60					
Number of events	1,660		4,936		1,412	

Note: As for Table 1.
Source: As for Table 1.

effect on downward mobility. Occupational status has a negative effect on upward and lateral mobility and a positive effect on downward mobility, probably as a result of bottom and ceiling effects. It is also evident that men in high-status jobs are less likely to become non-employed. Most of the results just discussed are consistent with those found by earlier work on career mobility (Blossfeld et al. 2005).

Cohort changes

Tables 6 and 7 show estimates of selected models for different birth cohorts for the purpose of assessing if and how effects have changed over time. The guiding hypothesis is that the reciprocal link between careers

and transitions in union status has become smaller over time, although the additional arguments presented at the outset suggest that effects may persist even in the modern era. Four birth cohorts are considered: men born in the 1930s ($N = 516$), the 1940s ($N = 640$), the 1950s ($N = 863$), and the 1960s ($N = 776$).

To model changes, we estimate selected models from the previous tables and include a categorical interaction effect between cohort and the central independent variables of interest (e.g., employment, marriage). The interaction effects of cohort and the other independent variables are included where these are significant. The significance of the interaction term for the control variables was assessed using a linear term, but where the interaction effect is significant, it is included and presented in a

categorical fashion. The implied effects for the four cohorts are shown in Table 6 (for the effect of employment on marriage) and Table 7 (for the effect of marriage on employment). Graphic representations are shown in Figures 2 and 3. In addition, we test whether the coefficients for the four cohorts can be described by a linear trend, using a linear interaction term with cohort. If there is no linear trend in the effects across cohorts, it is still possible that a change occurred at some point in the previous decades. To assess this, we also test whether the changes in the effects between subsequent cohorts are significant. This yields a more liberal analysis of trends. The right-hand panels of Tables 6 and 7 present the differences between adjacent cohorts as well as the corresponding p-values that test the significance of the change. The last column in Tables 6 and 7 is the linear-trend coefficient and the corresponding p-value.

When we look at the effect of employment on entering a union, we see a decline in the effect (Table 6). The effect of employment in the first two cohorts is $b = 0.786$ and 0.726, which in both cases is stronger than in the last two cohorts ($b = 0.553$ and 0.595). The linear-trend term is not significant. When the first two cohorts are contrasted with the last two, the change is marginally significant with a one-tailed test ($p = 0.08$). The effects of employment on the two competing risks—cohabitation and marriage—show

no evidence of a decline (Table 6). The downward trend in the effect of employment on marriage is not significant at all, and there is even an increase in the effect of employment on cohabitation. This increase is significant ($p = 0.01$) and occurs in all adjacent comparisons. Note that the effect on cohabitation in the first cohort is based on few cohabiting cases, but the trend is also significant when focusing only on the most recent three cohorts.

These findings have two important implications. First, the modest decline in the effect of employment on union formation in general is due to the increase in the proportion of cohabiting relationships among first unions. Since the effect of employment is weaker on entry into cohabitation than into marriage, the observed downward tendency in the effect of employment is compositional in nature. Second, cohabiting relationships become more like marriage once they become a more established form of union. This trend has had a dampening influence on the decline in the effects of employment on union transitions in general.

To assess whether there have been changes in the consequences of unions and marriages for employment careers, we estimate two parsimonious models: a model showing only the effect of entry into a union (as in Model I, Table 5) and a model showing only the effect of the transition to marriage. The data are truncated at divorce, and other cohort interactions

Table 6 Effects of employment on men's union transitions by birth cohort and differences in effects between cohorts, the Netherlands, birth cohorts 1930–70; logistic regression coefficients

	Coefficients per cohort				Differences in coefficients between cohorts			
	Birth cohort 1930s	Birth cohort 1940s	Birth cohort 1950s	Birth cohort 1960s	Difference between birth cohorts 1940s and 1930s	Difference between birth cohorts 1950s and 1940s	Difference between birth cohorts 1960s and 1950s	Linear trend
Effect of employment on the transition to a first union	0.786	0.726	0.553	0.595	−0.059 (0.79)	−0.173 (0.30)	0.042 (0.78)	−0.070 (0.24)
Effect of employment on the transition to a first cohabitation	−1.019	−0.022	0.244	0.530	0.997 (0.10)	0.266 (0.38)	0.286 (0.12)	0.344 (0.01)
Effect of employment on the transition to a first marriage	0.891	0.922	0.913	0.799	0.032 (0.90)	−0.010 (0.97)	−0.113 (0.68)	−0.021 (0.59)
N per cohort	516	640	863	776				

Note: As for Table 1; p-values for cohort differences in parentheses; linear trend is average change per decade; effects controlled for variables in Table 2.
Source: As for Table 1.

Table 7 Effects of any union transition and marriage on men's employment transitions, by birth cohort, and differences in effects between cohorts, the Netherlands, birth cohorts 1930–70; logistic regression coefficients

	Coefficients per cohort				Differences in coefficients between cohorts			
	Birth cohort 1930s	Birth cohort 1940s	Birth cohort 1950s	Birth cohort 1960s	Difference between birth cohorts 1940s and 1930s	Difference between birth cohorts 1950s and 1940s	Difference between birth cohorts 1960s and 1950s	Linear trend
Effect of union transition on employment exit	−0.400	−0.631	−0.404	−0.723	−0.230 (0.41)	0.226 (0.33)	−0.319 (0.14)	−0.073 (0.38)
Effect of union transition on downward mobility	−0.035	0.086	−0.053	−0.025	0.121 (0.58)	−0.139 (0.47)	0.028 (0.88)	−0.015 (0.82)
Effect of union transition on upward/lateral mobility	−0.247	−0.114	0.003	−0.022	0.133 (0.29)	0.117 (0.30)	−0.025 (0.81)	0.075 (0.05)
Effect of marriage transition on employment exit	−0.420	−0.623	−0.477	−0.801	−0.203 (0.45)	0.146 (0.51)	−0.324 (0.16)	−0.088 (0.30)
Effect of marriage transition on downward mobility	−0.075	0.081	−0.271	−0.007	0.156 (0.47)	−0.352 (0.05)	0.264 (0.13)	−0.023 (0.73)
Effect of marriage transition on upward/lateral mobility	−0.259	−0.095	−0.079	−0.046	0.163 (0.18)	0.016 (0.88)	0.033 (0.75)	0.061 (0.10)
N per cohort	516	640	863	776				

Note: As for Table 1; p-values for cohort differences in parentheses; linear trend is average change per decade; effects controlled for variables in Table 5.
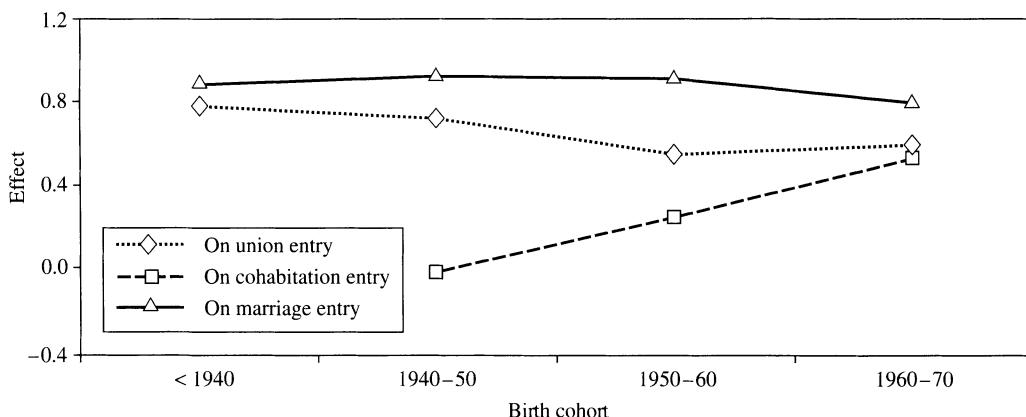*Source*: As for Table 1.

are included where they are significant. The results in Table 7 do not support the hypothesis of a declining link between men's marriage and employment behaviour. The effects of entry into a union on exits from employment fluctuate but do not reveal any clear trend, nor are there significant changes between any pair of adjacent cohorts. The same finding is observed when we look at the effect only of marriage on employment. Hence, we conclude that there is no decline in the positive effects of marriage and cohabitation on employment. The effects on different types of job mobility do not change either, but these effects were modest or non-significant to begin with.

Discussion and conclusions

The analysis presented here both confirms earlier, well-established findings and makes a further contribution to the literature. In line with previous studies in the USA and Europe (e.g., Smock and Manning 1997; Sassler and Schoen 1999; Oppenheimer 2003; Blossfeld et al. 2005), we find that men's employment is an important condition for the entry into marriage. Less familiar is our finding that marriage also protects men from becoming non-employed, so that the relationship between employment and marriage is reciprocal. It is important to emphasize that the study controls for previous transitions in the employment career when assessing the effect of marriage. This takes into account an important source of selectivity in the reciprocal process. It should be noted, however, that there can be additional, unmeasured variables that are common to both aspects of the life course.

The distinction between marriage and cohabitation provides additional insights into the work–family link. While there is a strong reciprocal link between marriage and employment, this link is less clear for cohabitation: the entry into cohabitation is less sensitive to employment status than the entry

Figure 2 Effects of employment on the hazard of different types of union formation, the Netherlands, birth cohorts 1930–70
Source: As for Table 1
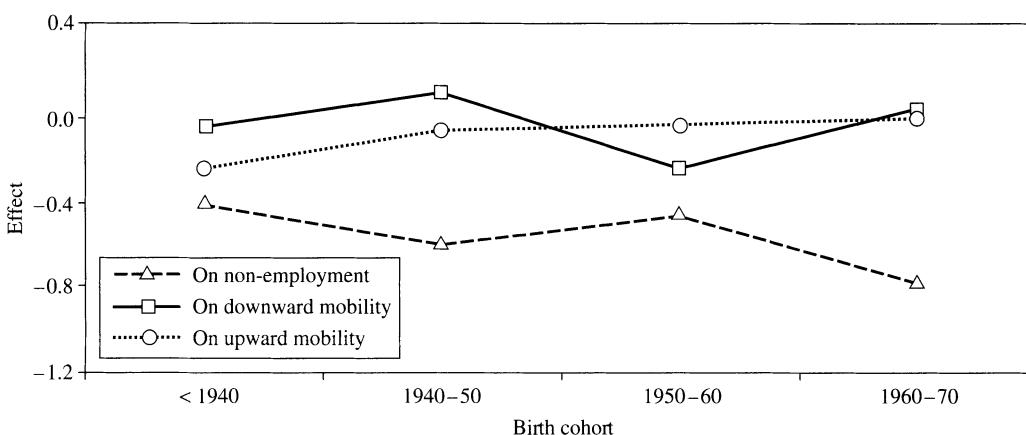
Figure 3 Effects of marriage on the hazard of non-employment and occupational mobility, the Netherlands, birth cohorts 1930–70
Source: As for Table 1

into marriage. In part these findings mirror those of earlier studies that find that men's economic characteristics are more important for the entry into marriage than for the entry into cohabitation (Bracher and Santow 1998; Oppenheimer 2003; Xie et al. 2003; Sassler and Goldscheider 2004). We emphasize however that, though employment effects are weaker on entry into cohabitation, they are still strong and statistically significant.

A new finding is that the protective effects of a relationship for employment are stronger for marriage than for cohabitation, a finding that can be interpreted in terms of the male-breadwinner hypothesis and that has already been suggested by Waite (1995). Men may feel less responsible for the economic well-being of the household if they are in a more egalitarian and less permanent relationship. The spouse-support hypothesis receives less support

in this case, since one would expect men to benefit from the partner's support in a cohabiting relationship also.

Although the general results are consistent with our hypotheses, we also find some unforeseen patterns. First, most of the effects presented here relate to employment and have less to do with occupational mobility. The expectation was that upward and lateral mobility would increase the chances of marrying and that marriage would further promote the career by fostering upward and lateral mobility and shielding men from downward mobility. We do not find such effects. These negative findings are in contrast to previous (American) research, which has demonstrated the beneficial effects of marriage on wages. The present study suggests that such benefits do not generalize to the occupational domain.

Our study shows that there are few status gains after marriage, but this does not mean that job mobility is unrelated to marriage. On the contrary, the evidence shown here indicates that job changes (in either direction) contribute to the chances of entering a union and that the transition from being single to being married decreases the risks of upward and lateral mobility (and, to a lesser extent, the risk of downward mobility). These findings are more in line with the idea of marriage as a *stabilizing* factor in men's careers than with the idea that marriage promotes men's careers. Moreover, the finding that marriage (and cohabitation) occurs in a period of job change is not fully consistent with the uncertainty argument, because it could be said that occupational instability signals uncertainty. Perhaps one could still argue that the end of a period of career instability is the time at which men and women gain certainty. This alternative interpretation is plausible, given the finding that job mobility— although high before marriage—is reduced after marriage.

The most important new result presented here is that we find no evidence of trends in the effects. The findings do not at all suggest that the link between men's entry into marriage and their employment careers has weakened. This conclusion is in line with some American studies (Sweeney 2002) but is in contrast with other American studies that find that the connection between men's economic status and marriage has weakened over time (Sassler and Goldscheider 2004). It should be noted, however, that both American trend studies were based on a comparison of only two birth cohorts (5-year cohorts for Sweeney and 10-year cohorts for Sassler and Goldscheider). We do find a weak and non-significant decline in the effect of employment on entry into a union, but this is due to the growing number of cohabiting relationships in the total number of unions. Moreover, cohabiting relationships—while initially less sensitive toward employment than marriage—have become more like marriage: the effect of employment on entry into cohabitation has grown significantly.

How can the absence of a clear downward trend be interpreted theoretically? A commonly used argument suggests that the link between work and family life has weakened for both men and women owing to the decline in the extent to which men and women specialize in different roles when they form a union. Against this argument, we have described hypotheses suggesting that the link may have become even stronger over time. For example, the partner-support hypothesis argues that the encour-

agement and support of the partner have become even more valuable now that so many married and cohabiting women are working themselves. Similarly, the uncertainty hypothesis argues that the rise in the number of dual-earner couples has made men's work an even more important ingredient for the future lifestyles of couples. Since these hypotheses predict opposite trends, the null-result we have found means either that none of the hypotheses are valid, or that different forces have been working against each other. The most important conclusion is that the work–family link for men has remained strong in a period of rapidly changing gender roles.

We end with some suggestions for further study. The partner-support hypothesis can also be tested by including measures of the characteristics of the wife in the model. This requires comparisons within the group of married or cohabiting men rather than, as in this study, between unmarried and married or cohabiting men. Extensive comparisons within couples have been made in earlier work and have yielded positive evidence for the important role of the spouse (e.g., Gray 1997; Bernasco et al. 1998; Blossfeld and Drobnič 2001). How the effects of spouse characteristics have changed over time has so far not been studied systematically. This could provide another piece of evidence on the question of whether the link between work and the family has changed for men.

Finally, we mention an important caveat. There is a lack of good data on type of non-employment. When men leave the labour market, they can be officially unemployed, they can be outside the labour market (e.g., unwilling to work), and they can be sick or disabled (i.e., unable to work). We do not know if the effect of marriage on exits from employment is primarily an effect on unemployment, or whether it also applies to other types of non-employment (e.g., sickness). For some theoretical arguments, this distinction is more relevant than for others. For example, the support of a partner may lead not only to a lower chance of becoming unemployed, but also to better health. Employer discrimination, on the other hand, will primarily affect the chances of married men's employment and not their chances of becoming disabled.

Notes

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