

Social Group Homogamy in Marriage in Ireland

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Précis: The extent of homogamy in Irish marriages, using a relatively simple unitary indicator of status, namely social group, is examined here. Because of the limitations imposed by the data used – national statistics – some time is taken to discuss the problems involved in the classification of occupations, particularly female occupations, both in general and in Ireland. The data suggest, however, that homogamy, based on social group, does operate. The relative importance of birthplace, education, propinquity and social origin were not considered at this stage.

There is a generally held sociological position that homogamy is a very potent factor in marital choice. Individuals tend to marry those of similar education, socio-economic status, race, religion, age and culture. Many years ago Dahlberg (1941) and some time later Leslie (1967) had drawn attention to the fact that mating is not at random, but is limited to those persons with whom a given individual has some chance of coming in social contact. (See also: Bossard (1962); Davie and Reeves (1972) and Eklund (1973).) Goode (1974, p. 154) stated that people fall in love with those with whom they associate, and J. N. Spuhler (1969, p. 736) in a summary article, lists fifteen characteristics, ranging from stature, eye-colour and weight, to neurotic tendency, intelligence and years of education, that show a significant degree of correlation between husband and wife.

Goode (1964, p. 33) asserted elsewhere that fundamentally the process of mate selection functions like a market system. (See also, for instance, Trost, 1968). It is formally free, and legally any man can marry almost any woman. On the other hand, the patterns of choice show clearly that the number of

eligibles is, in fact, highly restricted. Indeed, if dating were only recreation and had nothing to do with marriage, class elements might not be as important in adolescent dating. There is also the bargaining element in mate selection and this too is associated with homogamy. Goode (1964, p. 33) gives us one example – “The untalented, homely, poor man may aspire to a bride with highly desirable qualities, but he cannot offer enough to induce either her or her family to choose him, for they can find a groom with more highly valued qualities”. A number of studies have been concerned with the hypothesis that the more homogeneous a couple are in age, class, religion, origin, education and so on, the better chance the marriage has of success, (for instance: Goode, 1965; Womble, 1966; Landis and Landis, 1968).

This paper will concern itself not with the effect on marriage of homogamy in mate selection, but with the level of operation of homogamy. However, considerable limitations are imposed by the data used – *Reports on Vital Statistics* (1961-1977), and *Census of Population of Ireland* (1961, 1966 and 1971) – as sources of information on both male and female occupations. Therefore, I intend first to discuss these limitations. Far more serious problems arise in the classification of female than of male occupations, so the classification of female occupations will be considered in more detail, both in general and in the Irish context. The paper will then look for indications of constraints on the selection of a mate by the propensity of males to marry those of similar social status, and this follows Hutchinson (1973) in his paper *Social Status in Dublin*. Finally, this paper is interested in class or status intermarriage and “social distance” in status level terms, as was Hutchinson.¹

The analytic variable – social status – is determined by means of the status ranking of occupations used in *Report on Vital Statistics* (1961-1977) and *Census of Population of Ireland* (Volume V, 1961; 1966 and 1971). Particular social group divisions will be considered as well as the more general categories of manual/non-manual.

Turning first to the problems of using national statistics as sources, the ranking of occupations in itself is unsatisfactory in that it is necessarily imperfect. In the case of males, the main problem appears to be in coding. The Central Statistics Office has advised that individual judgement is involved, so exact similarity in allocation of occupations at all times may not be achieved. They have confirmed, however, that no formal variation in classi-

1. Unfortunately no valid comparisons with Hutchinson's data can be made since Hutchinson's sample is for Dublin only; he used the Hall-Jones classification which comprises seven status categories in contrast to ten in the *Census of Population* and *Report on Vital Statistics* and he examined the status origin of the bride and groom, rather than the status category at the time of marriage (employed by both *Census* and *Vital Statistics*).

fication coding for males has occurred and assure us that it could not be argued that any changes over time were *simply* artifacts of variation in classification coding.

In the classification of female occupations, as previously mentioned, much more serious problems arise, both for this paper and in general. Taking the general problem first, Hardy (1979, p. 8) asks why, in the light of the trend towards increased occupational involvement for females, does the practice of looking only at male occupations in classification persist? The argument, she says, runs that married women receive their social identity from their husband's occupational role, single women from their father's occupational role; their own involvement in the labour force is partial, temporary and lacking in personal commitment. Hutchinson (1973, pp. 16/17), for instance, in his study of social status in Dublin, assumed brides to be dependent for their social status upon that of their fathers, since, he says, "only in recent times have women become regarded increasingly as capable of establishing independent status". Although there were exceptions to this, Hutchinson added, the general rule remains.

For those who have tried to face up to the problem of the categorisation of female occupations, the main practical difficulty is the one of relating the housewife role to occupational prestige hierarchies. The dilemma of fitting the housewife role to the occupational hierarchy is no greater, Acker (1973, p. 941) feels, than the problems presented to the current format of stratification studies by unemployed or retired men. This conclusion, however, ignores the apparent social class differences between housewives based on their husbands' occupational roles. One solution to the difficulty of including the housewife role in occupational hierarchies, says Hardy (1979, p. 13) is to identify these women in terms of their last paid job, a somewhat arbitrary procedure, but no more nor less so than comparing the occupations of fathers and sons at fixed points in their careers. Acker (1973) suggests viewing housewifery as an occupation in itself and giving it "some sort of ranking in the hierarchy of occupations" (p. 941).

A more refined categorisation of female occupations is needed, and perhaps the concept of occupational situs could prove rewarding in classification.² Morris and Murphy (1959, pp. 383-392) based their situs categories

2. Traditionally the concept of occupational situs has been used to refer to "a category of occupations which is differentiated from other categories according to any number of criteria other than, or in addition to, economic and status bestowal values . . . The occupations within situs can, of course, be ranked in terms of economic and status rewards". See E. Hopper and A. Pearse: "Relative Deprivation, Occupational Status and Occupational 'Situs': the Theoretical and Empirical Application of a Neglected Concept" in M. Warner (Ed.) *The Sociology of the Workplace: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1973, pp. 211-255.

on the degree to which various occupations jointly contribute to the fulfilment of a societal function.

This paper is interested only in brides' occupations when considering female occupations. Brides' occupations are classified on the basis of information given on the marriage register. The first problem encountered was the bunching of females in the Intermediate non-manual categories. This shows up the essentially male base on which the rankings are constructed, since this category "Intermediate non-manual" includes most of the traditionally female occupations, i.e., typists, clerks, secretaries. Because the social groups are based on male occupations, there is no great bunching of males in any particular occupation such as there is of females. The case for a better definition of social groups as far as females are concerned is hereby strengthened.

The second problem arose with regard to Skilled manual females. For brides in this category the number appeared to fall between 1972 and 1976 from 968 to 30. In 1977 it had risen again to over 300. This phenomenon can be explained only by the difficulties in categorising particular female occupations as skilled or unskilled with variations dependent on the particular coder. The latter is constrained by the poor information received from the Registrars of Marriages on which the classification is based; plus the unsatisfactory nature of the rankings themselves.

Extracting data on marriage by social group from *Reports on Vital Statistics* is also complicated by the large numbers of brides in the residual category "Not Stated". Appendix Table A gives details of the extent of the "Not Stated" categories for both brides and grooms from 1961-1977. This table shows that up to 1969 a very significant proportion of brides fell into the "Not Stated" category. However, *Vital Statistics* for 1969 notes that there was a change in classification that year which results in a transfer of approximately 2,000 females, who gave their occupations as "housekeeping duties", from the "Not Stated" category to the social group "Other non-manual workers".³ The result of this can be seen clearly in Table A — a reduction from 29.3 per cent in 1961 to 6.2 per cent in 1969. From 1970 on, the number dropped — to a mere 1.7 per cent in 1976. The CSO states that the difficulty arises because many females are not gainfully occupied immediately before marriage, therefore a social group cannot be assigned to them (1960-1968 p. xi).⁴ To reduce as far as possible the effect of the "Not Stated" on these data we have set the cut-off point at 1969, but in a number of cases it was necessary to include 1961 and 1966 data for comparison purposes.

3. Central Statistics Office: *op. cit.* 1969, p. xi.

4. *Ibid.*

The reasons for the difficulties arising in the classification of women's occupations need not concern us here. They appear to range from hidden sexist ideology to the practical problems of including females, such as the easy availability of Census and other data on occupation of male head of household, (*Census of Population*, Vol. V) and the complexity of women's role in society. The fact that there are problems about the inclusion of women is what is important to point out when considering data on women's occupations.

Having dealt with the particular social group divisions, we now turn to the more general categories of Manual and Non-manual. Problems of a different nature arise here and we will consider first the merits or otherwise of using these categories.

The classic Manual/Non-manual divide has been argued to be the most important of all class category boundaries (Lipset and Bendix, (1960), Goldthorpe (1972)). Parkin (1971, pp. 25/26) says he must conclude with Wedderburn and Craig (1969) that "... the big divide still comes between Manual workers on the one hand and Non-manual on the other". Rottman *et al.*, (1982) do not go as far as Parkin, although their focus on the distributional aspects of class structure makes that distinction between Manual and Non-manual basic to their analysis. Whelan (1980) states his belief in the continuing importance of this dichotomy.

In terms of mobility, the assumption that the transition from Manual to Non-manual work involves upward mobility is questionable. Braverman (1974, p. 435) has criticised this assumption in Western sociology:

The reflex response which causes governmental and academic social scientists automatically to accord a higher grade of skill training, prestige, and class position to any form of office work as against any and all forms of manual work is a tradition of long standing in American sociology which few have ventured to challenge.

Studies in the USSR have now shown a definite trend towards "the elimination of differences . . . between mental and manual labour" (Feldmesser, 1968, p. 368).

The continuing fragmentation of the labour process has also undermined this mobility assumption. The incursion of women into clerical occupations which "... has made it possible to lower wage rates in the clerical category . . . below those in any category of Manual labour" (Braverman, 1974, p. 353) throws even further doubt on the idea of upward mobility being necessarily associated with Non-manual work, if one includes women. If one were to take earnings as a criterion of prestige *vis-à-vis* women, the picture might be totally different. Because men are in the better paid, higher status,

clerical positions, it may sometimes still be valid to retain the distinction between Manual and Non-manual where men are concerned, since the scaling of occupations is achieved through studies of occupational prestige. Although some researchers have noted a consensus of prestige ratings over various samples both within and between countries, others have queried the resultant hierarchies because the criteria by which occupations are scaled have varied. It is not our intention here to debate the merits or demerits of occupational prestige scales. This has been done expertly elsewhere (see, for instance, Hodge *et al* 1966 and Blaikie, 1976) but we note this method of grading occupations, from which women have been almost invariably excluded.

A point that Rottman *et al.*, (1982) note on the problems of social classification *vis-à-vis* the Manual/Non-manual is that there are peculiar problems in the Irish situation concerning the implication of dividing even males into the classic divisions Manual/Non-manual. One problem is the size of the proportion of self-employed in the labour force. For instance, in 1971 it was nearly one-third of all gainfully occupied males. So Rottman *et al.*, warn that because of the wide variation in farmers' resource, in their market strength and in their position in the social relations of production, which is so different from non-farmers, particularly employee non-farmers, these differences need to be maintained in any Irish study. In certain cases, therefore, we have eliminated the social groups "Farmers, Relatives assisting, Farm managers" and "Other agricultural".

Figure 1 and Table 1 are basic data showing the differences in expected and actual marriage rates for each social group. Figure 1 displays the actual and expected male marriage rates per thousand average, for the years 1970-1972. The groups, Farmers etc., Other agricultural and Other manual have higher expected marriage rates than actual. The greatest discrepancy between expected and actual is in the Other agricultural group, which comprises farm labourers and fishermen. The population included in Figure 1 and Table 1 is of single and widowed males – the population "exposed to risk". The age effect is very considerable as shown in Column 2 Table 1. The figures in Column 3 do not contradict the theory that the lower marriage rate in Ireland was due to poverty and insecurity. The poor rewards in the agricultural sector at that time and the notoriously high rate of unemployment among unskilled men, (see, for instance, Geary and Dempsey, 1978), certainly lends credence to the speculation that the effect of poverty and insecurity will be reflected in a lower marriage rate, even taking into account the traditional unpopularity of farmers as bridegrooms.

To examine the propensity of males to marry those of similar social groups, we will look at the ratios, then seek some explanation for what is occurring in each social group and finally examine "social distance" expressed in the form of marrying into a social group above one's own. We will take

each social group in turn, in the order in which they appear in *Census of Population and Reports on Vital Statistics*. See Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Table 1: *Actual and expected marriage rates per thousand for men in each socio-economic group, annual average 1970-72, and ratios including and excluding agricultural occupations*

Socio-economic group	Marriage rate		Ratio	
	Actual	Expected	I	II
	1	2	3	4
Farmers	16.7	30.4	0.55	—
Other agricultural	11.2	33.9	0.33	—
Higher professional	65.0	48.0	1.35	1.12
Lower professional	87.8	65.8	1.33	1.11
Employers and managers	56.2	33.9	1.65	1.37
Salaried employees	84.9	52.6	1.61	1.34
Intermediate non-manual	54.3	50.6	1.07	0.89
Other non-manual	45.4	43.9	1.04	0.86
Skilled manual	68.9	46.2	1.49	1.24
Other manual	37.0	42.4	0.87	0.73
Total	40.6	40.6	1.00	1.00

Basic sources: *Census of Population 1971*, Volume V, *Vital Statistics 1970-72*.

Notes:

Col. 2: Expected rates were based on general male age-specific marriage rates, average 1970-72, applied to number of males in each socio-economic group classified by age.

Col. 3 (I): Ratio Col. 1 to Col. 2.

Col. 4 (II): Calculated as Col. 3 but confined to non-agricultural occupations. General rate was 50.5 per thousand males.

The difference between actual and expected rates is obviously overwhelmingly significant by X^2 .

The varying availability of females in each social group is an important consideration when looking at constraints on whether males marry outside their own group. (See, for instance, McFarland, 1970.) Table 2 indicates the proportion of women, unmarried and widowed, i.e., available for marriage, in each social group. These figures are necessarily of limited value to this paper since population totals can be obtained only for the Census years. We have also included males for information and comparison purposes. Another limitation, of course, is that they are not broken down by age.

Figure 1: Actual and expected male marriage rates per thousand, average 1970-72.

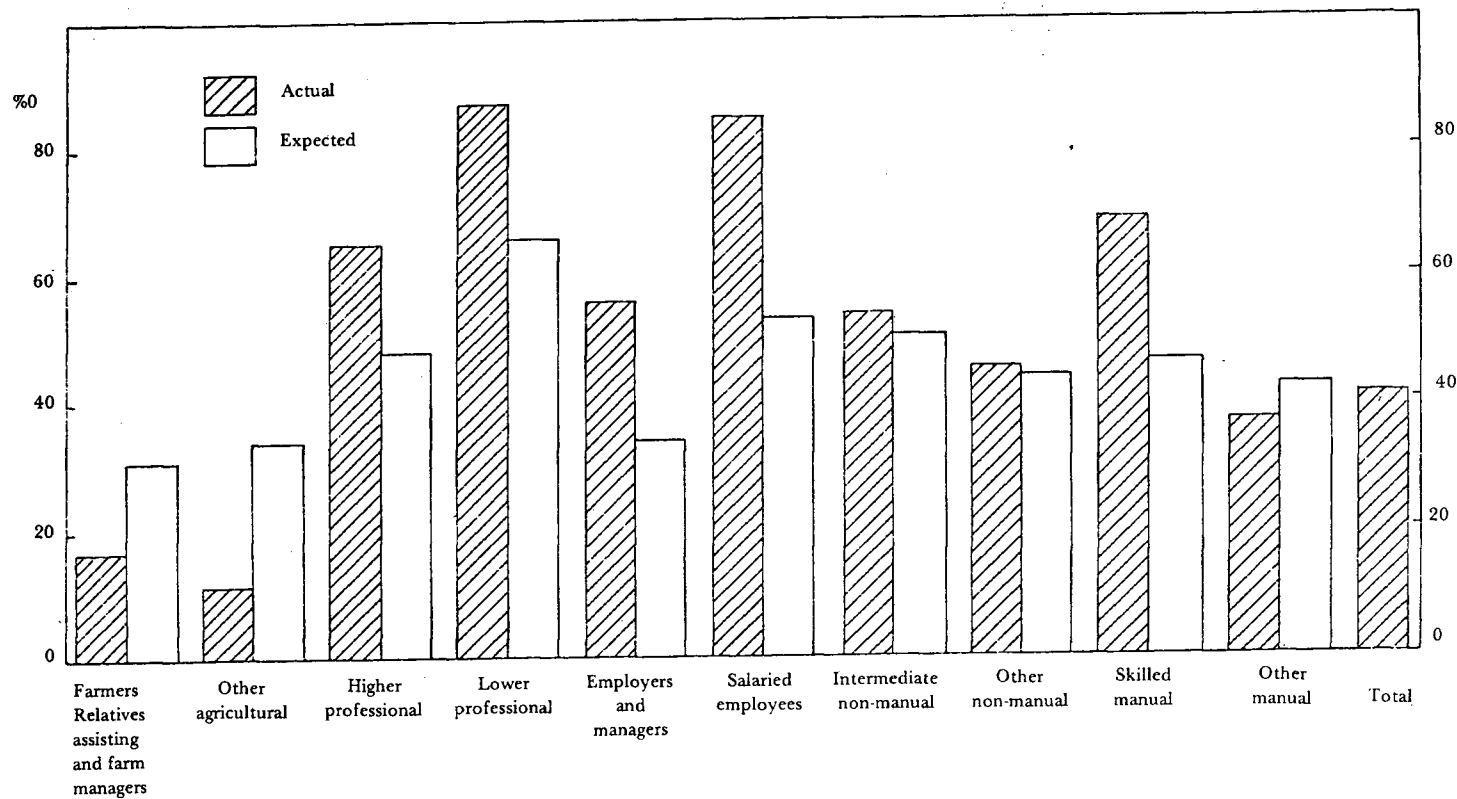


Table 2: (i) *Proportion in each social group of unmarried and widowed females aged 14 years and over whose occupations are known**
(ii) *Proportion in each social group of unmarried and widowed males aged 14 years and over whose occupations are known**

Year	Farmers	Other agricultural	Higher professional	Lower professional	Employers/ managers	Salaried employees	Intermediate non-manual	Other non-manual	Skilled manual	Other manual	Total
	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	
961 (i)	26.0	3.0	3.6	6.5	2.1	0.7	22.3	14.6	8.0	13.2	473,089
(ii)	35.8	11.8	2.8	1.8	1.8	1.2	11.3	6.4	12.6	14.5	516,047
966 (i)	22.9	2.4	3.8	7.0	2.3	0.8	24.4	14.4	8.5	13.4	471,858
(ii)	32.5	9.6	3.2	2.0	2.2	1.4	11.5	7.1	15.3	15.1	514,952
971 (i)	18.5	2.0	4.4	7.8	3.2	0.9	26.1	13.4	8.6	15.1	421,220
(ii)	28.9	7.8	3.5	2.7	2.9	1.5	11.4	7.9	17.6	15.9	487,675

Sources: *Census of Population of Ireland*: Vol.V 1961, Table 7; Vol.V 1966, Table 7; Vol.V 1971, Table 6.

Table 3: *Ratios of propensity to marry outside own social group – males*

<i>Social group</i>	<i>1969</i>	<i>1970</i>	<i>1971</i>	<i>1972</i>	<i>1973</i>	<i>1974</i>	<i>1975</i>	<i>1976</i>	<i>1977</i>
Farmers	12.5	17.3	15.9	14.8	15.0	23.5	23.0	18.0	19.0
Other agricultural	139.7	461.0	108.5	464.0	472.0	427.0	345.0	210.0	42.0
Higher professional	12.7	14.5	17.2	12.9	11.0	12.0	9.5	8.3	7.4
Lower professional	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.3
Employers and managers	42.3	31.2	22.1	27.6	28.7	30.1	33.3	25.4	22.7
Salaried employees	92.3	51.8	44.9	56.9	59.1	57.9	239.0*	55.3	49.0
Intermediate non-manual	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.8
Other non-manual	2.4	2.5	2.8	2.8	3.1	3.1	3.3	3.0	4.1
Skilled manual	2.1	1.9	2.1	2.2	2.5	2.8	2.9	3.1	2.8 ⁺
Other manual	1.3	1.1	1.3	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3

* Although the number of brides in this group was always small, for instance, 9 in 1974 and 8 in 1976, it fell to two in 1975, while the number of grooms remained fairly similar – hence the extreme difference in the ratios here.

+ The problems with the group of brides in Skilled manual occupations has been commented on in the text.

Table 4: *Percentage males in each social group marrying within same social group, into a higher social group and into a lower social group***

Social group	Movement	1969 per cent	1970 per cent	1971 per cent	1972 per cent	1973 per cent	1974 per cent	1975 per cent	1976 per cent	1977 per cent
Higher professional	Up	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Same	7.3	6.5	5.5	7.2	8.3	7.7	9.6	10.7	11.9
	Down	92.4	93.3	94.0	92.8	91.6	92.2	90.1	89.0	87.6
Lower professional	Up	1.0	0.6	1.3	1.2	0.9	0.6	0.7	0.5	1.6
	Same	42.4	45.7	46.4	46.0	47.8	48.0	48.4	50.1	43.8
	Down	56.1	54.0	52.0	52.2	50.9	51.0	50.5	49.2	54.4
Employers and managers	Up	21.2	23.7	21.8	21.4	21.5	21.0	24.3	22.2	21.1
	Same	2.3	3.1	4.3	3.5	3.4	3.2	2.9	3.8	4.2
	Down	75.8	73.5	73.5	74.5	74.7	75.4	72.0	73.7	73.9
Salaried employees	Up	22.0	22.5	25.1	21.6	20.8	25.8	25.0	23.1	25.8
	Same	1.1	1.9	2.2	1.7	1.7	1.7	0.4	1.8	2.0
	Down	77.0	75.1	72.4	77.1	76.9	72.2	74.4	74.9	72.0
Intermediate non-manual	Up	17.5	16.8	18.0	16.5	16.8	17.0	17.5	17.6	17.9
	Same	51.3	50.4	48.3	48.8	51.2	53.8	53.8	52.9	56.0
	Down	30.8	32.5	33.4	34.3	31.2	28.4	28.4	29.2	25.9
Other non-manual	Up	36.7	37.2	39.7	41.0	44.3	47.9	49.7	50.8	56.7
	Same	29.4	28.6	26.7	26.1	24.5	24.4	23.2	24.7	19.6
	Down	33.3	33.3	33.6	32.6	30.8	27.8	36.6	24.3	23.0
Skilled manual	Up	67.2	65.5	67.6	68.1	70.4	73.0	74.1	75.7	73.0
	Same	32.5	34.2	32.6	31.6	28.9	26.6	25.8	24.1	26.5
	Down	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other manual	Up	51.4	47.3	51.2	49.1	48.2	50.4	52.8	54.6	56.7
	Same	48.6	52.7	48.8	50.9	51.8	49.6	47.2	45.4	42.9
	Down	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Source: *Reports on Vital Statistics*, appropriate years.

+Both bridegrooms and brides in social groups "Farmers" and "Other agricultural" have been omitted from this table. Therefore, totals will not add up to 100 per cent in cases where brides are in these social groups.

Table 5: Each social group grooms by occupations of brides*

	Farmers							Other agricultural					Higher professional					Lower professional					Employers and managers								
	As proportion of all grooms	Farmers	Lower professional	Intermediate non-manual per cent	Other non-manual	Skilled and other manual	Not stated	As proportion of all grooms	Other non-manual	Skilled and other manual per cent	Intermediate non-manual	Lower professional	Not stated	As proportion of all grooms	Higher professional	Lower professional	Intermediate non-manual per cent	Other non-manual	Not stated	As proportion of all grooms	Lower professional	Intermediate non-manual per cent	Other non-manual	Not stated	As proportion of all grooms	Intermediate non-manual	Lower professional	Other non-manual per cent	Employers and managers	Skilled and other manual	Not stated
1969	13.4	6.8	16.6	24.7	38.1	5.5	7.7	2.2	43.6	19.6	21.0	9.3	4.7	5.2	6.9	29.5	44.4	9.7	4.7	5.5	40.0	35.5	11.1	5.7	3.4	47.6	19.5	16.9	2.2	6.3	6.3
1970	12.2	5.1	15.9	25.7	40.5	5.6	6.8	2.3	49.3	24.4	16.0	6.7	2.7	5.3	6.1	36.1	36.9	11.3	4.9	5.4	43.9	35.5	11.4	3.4	3.6	46.9	21.8	15.3	3.0	6.8	5.2
1971	12.1	5.6	16.7	26.5	37.4	7.8	4.9	2.1	44.7	25.9	18.2	4.2	3.9	5.8	5.3	35.8	38.8	10.1	4.2	5.4	44.6	32.4	9.7	3.7	4.0	46.8	19.4	16.4	4.1	5.9	5.0
1972	12.1	6.2	17.5	29.2	31.6	12.6	1.6	2.1	39.5	28.8	22.4	6.6	1.7	5.4	7.2	31.4	42.7	8.2	0.8	5.9	45.5	33.3	7.6	1.4	4.3	47.7	20.3	13.5	3.5	11.7	1.4
1973	11.7	6.2	18.3	30.8	29.5	13.7	0.5	2.1	33.6	27.1	28.4	8.8	0.8	3.8	8.3	37.9	38.3	8.1	0.1	5.4	47.8	35.2	8.4	0.2	4.8	51.1	20.4	14.5	3.4	8.1	0.1
1974	11.1	4.1	20.0	32.6	29.3	11.9	0.2	1.9	37.3	23.6	28.8	6.9	2.1	3.5	7.7	43.4	36.1	5.7	—	5.8	48.0	37.8	7.2	0.2	4.2	56.5	19.8	10.1	3.2	8.8	0.3
1975	11.0	4.2	20.2	35.1	28.2	11.6	0.3	1.7	32.5	23.4	33.3	7.6	2.3	3.0	9.6	42.3	37.5	5.2	—	5.9	48.4	37.1	7.3	0.2	4.4	52.8	23.9	10.5	2.9	8.1	0.6
1976	11.1	5.2	20.2	34.9	25.4	12.6	0.8	2.1	32.9	22.0	33.3	9.3	2.1	3.4	10.7	42.7	33.9	6.5	—	6.3	49.9	35.3	6.9	0.4	4.4	55.9	21.6	10.4	3.8	6.9	0.2
1977	10.7	4.4	19.6	36.6	15.4	10.2	12.8	2.3	25.0	21.7	27.2	8.0	15.9	3.7	11.3	38.0	35.0	5.7	5.0	5.6	41.6	38.6	6.8	5.0	4.3	55.1	18.8	8.3	3.9	5.2	7.0

*Categories omitted had proportions too small to warrant inclusions

Farmers, Relatives Assisting and Farm Managers

The ratios of propensity to marry outside of their own group increased for Farmers (see Table 3). What must be taken into consideration, however, is that the proportion of females whose occupations are given as Farmers, etc., decreased from 26 per cent in 1961 to 18.5 per cent in 1971 (*Census of Population*). Hannan and Katsiaouni (1977) and Hannan (1979) in studies of farm families found that by 1970 only one in twenty girls born to farm families remained on the home farm. While the numbers of male farmers also declined, they remained a relatively larger group than females in the same social group and this possibly explains the rise in the tendency of farmers to marry outside their group.

As previously mentioned, there is need always to advert to differences between Farmers etc., and other social groups. In Table 4, which indicates "social distance" in status level terms of those marrying in each social group, it is not possible to treat Farmers etc., and Other agricultural in a similar fashion to the other social groups. We have, therefore, eliminated them from this table.

Turning to the intermarriage of Farmers etc., Table 5 gives the social groups of their brides from 1969 on. In 1961 the most likely social group of the Farmer's bride was also a "Farmer etc.", which perhaps can be accounted for by the large numbers of females whose occupational classification was dependent on the male head of household since they had remained at home, (*Census of Population* Vol. V 1961, p. vi). By 1969, however, a very large proportion of these females had moved into, for instance, Intermediate non-manual occupations. Of brides marrying Farmers the proportion who had Intermediate non-manual occupations increased steadily from 1969 to 1977.

Other Agricultural

Other agricultural males appear to be the least likely to marry within their own social group and Table 3 shows the ratios of their propensity to marry outside their own social group each year as being extremely high. In any case, the meagre proportion of women in Other agricultural occupations – 2 per cent in 1971 – renders any constraint on males in this social group choosing a mate from outside of the group almost non-existent, hence the high ratios of propensity to marry into groups other than their own.

The groups Farmers and Other agricultural then had falling proportions of marriageable males in their groups and also an even more sharply falling proportion of marriages in the groups. This was particularly true of the Farmers' group. The falling number of those engaged in farming has already been commented on, as has the lower than expected actual marriage rate for these two groups. We noted, however, an increase in the proportions of

Lower professional and Intermediate non-manual females marrying farmers. We do not know the social group origin of these women, so we cannot be sure that they are not the daughters of farmers who were moving into these occupations, where previously, as we mentioned above, farmers' daughters had stayed at home and been classified by male head of household (*Census of Population*, Vol. V, 1971, p. vi).

Higher Professional

Higher professional males show an increasing propensity to marry within their own group as shown in Table 3. However, there is a problem with this group in interpreting Table 2. The group includes clergymen, nuns, and other religious occupations, so one cannot be sure how many males and females were actually available for marriage. The number of females exceeds the number of males in this group, which must mean a high proportion of them are nuns, since the evidence is of fewer women than men involved in third-level education, the main criterion, apart from religious occupation, for membership of this group. Proportionately more women are becoming involved in third-level education⁵ so the availability of females in this group will rise, and, no doubt, the propensity of Higher professional males to marry within their own social group will continue to increase.

Higher professional grooms as a whole are a small proportion of the population of grooms (Table 5) but, as we have seen, they have a high actual marriage rate, (Table 1). They are most likely to marry Lower professional brides and almost as likely to marry Intermediate non-manual brides — the groups where there are most females.

We now refer to Table 4 to show "social distance" expressed in status level terms. For the Higher professional group, a fairly constant and very high proportion married down as might be expected from data on the availability of females in their own social group. This proportion, while staying in the region of 90 per cent, is decreasing, perhaps reflecting, as we said previously, the increasing numbers of females in third-level education.

Lower Professional

Lower professional grooms are a small, but increasing, proportion of all unmarried and widowed males (Table 2). They are extremely likely to marry within their own social group (Table 4) and, if not, to marry Intermediate non-manual brides (Table 5).

5. See: Higher Education Authority: *Accounts and Students Statistics* Dublin: Government Publications. Published annually.

There is a higher proportion of females than males classified as Lower professional (see Table 2). This occupational classification includes nurses, teachers and social workers — traditionally female dominated occupations. It is most likely that the availability of females in this group acted as a constraint on males in seeking a mate in another social group. The males in this group have the second lowest ratio of propensity to marry outside the group. They seldom marry up (see Table 4) but a fairly similar proportion of them marry down as marry within their own group. There has been a slowly increasing proportion marrying similar and an equally slowly decreasing proportion marrying down.

Employers and Managers

The group Employers and managers has a fairly high ratio of propensity to marry outside their own social group even though the proportions of males and females are fairly similar. We could perhaps speculate that the reason why there appears to be little constraint on males in this group to marry within their own social group is in the types of occupations classified as Employers and managers. Senior officials in the civil service and local authorities, directors, managers and company secretaries are more likely to be males, (*Commission on Status of Women Report*, 1972) while a higher proportion of proprietors in the retail trade, for instance, or of service workers might be females. It seems reasonable to assert that these particular men and women would not meet in circumstances conducive to choosing a marriage partner. These men seem most likely to marry Intermediate non-manual brides and then Lower professionals (Table 5).

On the "social distance" table (Table 4) the proportions marrying up, same, and down, are fairly consistent over the years with around three-quarters marrying down and slightly more than one-fifth marrying up.

Salaried Employees

Coming to Salaried employees (Table 6), again the proportion of grooms is extremely small, hardly more than three per cent of all grooms in any of the given years. They have also a high ratio of propensity to marry outside of their own social group (Table 3) and when we look at Table 2 we see that the proportion of available females is only half that of males. This group confirms the high propensity to marry outside their group on Table 4. Between one-fifth and one-quarter marry up — figures very similar to Employers and managers — and the balance marry down. Well over fifty per cent of them married Intermediate non-manual brides in 1976, the second largest proportion of brides being from the Lower professional group.

Table 6: Each social group grooms by occupation of brides*

Year	Salaried employees							Intermediate non-manual						Other non-manual						Skilled manual						Other manual							
	As proportion of all grooms	Intermediate non-manual	Lower professional	Other non- manual	Skilled and other manual	Not stated		As proportion of all grooms	Intermediate non-manual	Lower professional	Skilled and other manual	Other non- manual	Not stated		As proportion of all grooms	Intermediate non-manual	Other non- manual	Skilled and other manual	Lower professional	Not stated		As proportion of all grooms	Intermediate non-manual	Other non- manual	Lower professional	Skilled and other manual	Not stated		As proportion of all grooms	Skilled and other manual	Intermediate non-manual	Other non- manual	Not stated
per cent							per cent						per cent						per cent						per cent								
1969	3.0	50.8	19.1	14.4	5.7	8.5		16.4	48.4	15.7	11.7	17.3	5.7		8.8	28.1	27.7	31.4	6.0	5.7		26.7	35.8	20.1	7.6	31.0	4.7		14.7	45.7	17.2	28.7	5.5
1970	3.0	50.2	17.3	15.4	5.7	6.0		15.8	48.0	14.7	14.0	16.9	4.6		8.7	28.2	27.3	31.7	6.8	5.2		28.6	33.8	19.2	9.1	32.9	4.0		14.1	49.7	15.1	26.1	5.5
1971	3.3	45.1	22.1	16.6	7.7	5.1		14.1	46.1	15.4	14.6	17.3	4.5		8.6	30.3	25.4	32.0	6.4	4.0		29.6	35.0	20.0	8.8	31.4	3.4		14.3	46.1	18.3	26.6	5.1
1972	2.9	53.1	19.8	13.7	9.4	0.6		14.8	48.0	14.7	18.4	15.4	1.6		8.5	33.1	25.6	31.9	6.4	1.8		29.0	37.8	18.5	10.0	31.2	1.4		14.5	49.4	18.9	25.0	2.5
1973	2.6	52.3	18.4	14.3	10.3	0.2		16.7	51.2	15.6	16.7	14.5	0.6		7.9	36.0	24.3	30.5	7.2	1.2		28.7	41.2	18.2	10.4	28.7	0.5		16.0	50.9	20.3	23.3	1.6
1974	2.3	55.8	24.4	9.8	6.6	0.4		17.5	53.8	15.9	15.2	13.2	0.8		8.4	39.9	24.1	27.5	6.7	0.9		29.9	45.2	17.0	10.1	26.4	0.5		15.0	48.5	22.8	22.8	2.0
1975	2.3	56.1	23.3	12.1	6.2	0.2		18.8	53.3	16.4	14.4	13.7	1.0		7.9	41.3	22.9	26.3	7.5	1.4		29.3	45.0	16.6	11.3	25.6	0.9		15.2	46.3	24.4	23.8	1.9
1976	2.2	56.7	21.4	10.8	6.8	0.7		19.6	52.1	16.4	15.0	13.7	1.6		7.4	40.9	24.3	23.8	8.4	1.9		27.9	44.9	17.4	11.6	23.8	1.4		15.0	44.0	25.7	22.8	2.8
1977	2.4	55.6	21.1	8.9	4.0	4.9		18.3	51.9	14.9	12.7	11.3	7.3		8.1	41.6	17.8	21.0	9.2	9.0		29.6	41.9	14.6	10.0	24.5	7.5		12.8	39.0	25.2	17.0	13.4

*Categories omitted had proportions too small to warrant inclusion.

Intermediate Non-Manual

The lowest ratio of propensity to marry outside their own group is for Intermediate non-manual males. If we look at Table 2 again, we can see there is a high proportion of females relative to males in this particular group. The expansion of the Civil Service in 1960 with the creation of the all-female grade of Clerical Assistant, brought a large number of young females into the Intermediate non-manual category (O'Broin and Farren, 1978). These left farm and rural origins where, as pointed out previously, if they had remained, their occupations would no doubt have been classified as "Farmers", being dependent on the occupation of the male head of household (*Census of Population*, Vol. V, 1971, p. vi).

The proportion of Intermediate non-manual grooms who chose own-group brides was over 50 per cent in the years since 1972 (Table 4) as might be expected from their low ratio of propensity to marry outside their own group (Table 3). Thirty per cent married down, and a proportion of around seventeen per cent married up.

Other Non-Manual

Consulting Table 2 again it would seem that the availability of females for marriage in the group Other non-manual — there are around twice as many females as males in this group — did not act as a constraint on males marrying outside of their own social group. The heterogeneity of occupations included in this group may partially explain this phenomenon (See *Census of Population* Vol. V, 1971, Appendix C).

Other non-manual males have a proportion of over 50 per cent marrying up by 1977 while a decreasing proportion, 29 per cent in 1969 to 19 per cent in 1977, married within the same group (Table 4). The group they were most likely to marry into when marrying up was Intermediate non-manual (42 per cent in 1977), while they were most likely to marry Other manual brides when marrying down (Table 6).

Skilled Manual

To overcome the previously mentioned problem in the categorisation of the Skilled and Unskilled manual brides, both were regarded as of similar social group to Skilled manual grooms when computing the ratios of propensity of Skilled manual grooms to marry outside their own social group. As Table 3 shows, the ratios are fairly stable with a slight rise over the years.

From Table 6 we see that, between 1969 and 1977, the proportions of manual (Skilled and Unskilled) brides of Skilled manual grooms dropped from 31 per cent in 1969 to 24 per cent in 1977. On the other hand, an ever-increasing proportion were selected from Intermediate non-manual occupations — up to 42 per cent in 1977 (Table 6). On "social distance" (Table 4)

we see an increasing majority of Skilled manual men marrying up — 73 per cent in 1977. The higher actual than expected marriage rate of Skilled manual males and their propensity to marry up could possibly be explained by the way women see the male role — principally that of provider. As Lopata (1971, p. 91) remarks, the romantic love ideal of marriage receives a jolt when women are asked: "What are the roles in order of importance, of the man in the family?" Even husband-oriented women, she says, tend to respond with traditional answers — his main role is that of breadwinner or provider for the family unit. It is suggested that women will marry across the Manual/Non-manual divide since it is likely that Skilled manual men will be perceived as having a high earning capacity, however distorted this perception may be. (See Humphreys, 1966 and also Whelan, 1980.)

For this group, Skilled manual (and even in the case of Other manual below) the inadequacy of the coding of occupations of women is clearly demonstrated. To say that an electrician (Skilled manual) is marrying "up" when his bride is a shop assistant (Intermediate non-manual) hardly seems reasonable, even apart from any consideration of earnings.

Other Manual

Another social group wherein is exhibited a firm constraint to select a mate within the group is that of Other manual. Again we may note from Table 2 a rising proportion of females in this group and generally a fairly similar proportion of males, once more indicating the effect of the availability of females in one's own social group. As we have seen in Figure 1 and Table 1 the males in this group had a lower actual than expected marriage rate and their poor prospects due to unemployment and low wages must also have acted as a constraint on their obtaining a bride at all. When they did marry, however, in 1977 for instance, more than half married up. Nearly 40 per cent married Skilled or Other manual brides while around one-quarter of them married Intermediate non-manual brides and another seventeen per cent married Other non-manual brides in 1977 (Table 6).

Overall, however, where an adequate number of females is available there appears to be a general tendency in the groups towards homogamy, which limits freedom of mate selection outside one's own group even though no specific regulation may exist. As Hutchinson (1973) remarked "... the concept of romantic love as being the instigation for choosing a partner purely on the the grounds of personal choice is not consistent with actuality". Of course, if a situation occurred where perfect class endogamy was operating and males and females of similar social groups invariably married each other, the diagonal cells in the tables in *Reports on Vital Statistics* would be the only ones filled. As it is, the diagonal ratio (that is the percentage of couples in the same social group) was never greater than 24 per cent over the years

1969-1977⁶. However, because of the problems with the classification of female occupations and our lack of information on the status origin of brides, no reliable conclusions can be drawn from the low diagonal ratios on the level of operation of homogamy. For instance, Table 2 shows the bunching of females in the Intermediate non-manual category.

We now turn to the Manual/Non-manual dichotomy which probably only records the more emphatic differences in social status, and may be of less and less significance, as we pointed out earlier (see p. 283 above). Appendix Table B shows the overall proportions of brides and grooms in Manual and Non-manual occupations. We have collapsed eight categories into two, and we have eliminated Farmers and Other agricultural groups for the reasons earlier stated. We have also calculated the proportions including Other non-manual in the manual subdivision and then in the non-manual. The rationale is that whereas the Census classifies occupations, such as signalmen and level crossing keepers, waiters and waitresses, hospital porters and attendants as Non-manual (Vol. V 1971, Appendix C), any consideration of these occupations would show that they are mainly Manual with some Non-manual characteristics.

Turning to intermarriage, Table 7 details homogeneous and heterogeneous marriages by Manual and Non-manual classification of the grooms. Hutchinson (1973, p. 2) observes that as with social mobility generally, one of the chief barriers to class intermarriage was that presented by the boundary separating Manual from Non-manual, although he notes that this boundary is by no means insuperable. This observation is borne out by our figures, where we see that the proportion in the category Homogeneous Manual (i.e., Manual marrying Manual) is falling, while the proportion in Heterogeneous Manual (i.e., Manual marrying Non-manual) is rising. Again whether one includes "Other non-manual" or not, the percentages rise from (a) 19.1 and (b) 26.4 respectively in 1969 to (a) 26.9 and (b) 29.6 in 1977. The implication of this is, of course, that over the years the males become more likely to cross from the Manual to the Non-manual categories to marry and their choice of partner is more likely to agree. Since the marriage market is not a static phenomenon and there are more males than females in and entering Manual occupations, while more females than males are in and entering Non-manual occupations, it follows that the balance dictates that one marries what is available or not at all.

We have not considered the relative importance of birthplace, education, propinquity, and social origin in determining the incidence or operation of

6. It will be appreciated that the size of the diagonal ratio, as of the individual diagonal percentages, is heavily dependent on the number of social groups used.

Table 7: *Homogeneous and heterogeneous marriages by manual non-manual categories of grooms*†*

Year	(a) "Other non-manual" included in manual		(b) "Other non-manual" included in non-manual	
	Homogeneous manual	Heterogeneous manual	Homogeneous non-manual	Heterogeneous non-manual
	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent
1969	(a) 32.3	19.1	25.6	8.3
	(b) 16.4	26.4	37.1	6.0
1970	(a) 32.6	19.4	25.0	8.4
	(b) 17.4	25.8	36.2	6.1
1971	(a) 31.0	20.9	24.9	8.4
	(b) 16.8	27.1	35.4	6.2
1972	(a) 30.8	21.3	24.8	8.7
	(b) 16.5	27.0	34.7	7.3
1973	(a) 30.0	22.5	25.1	8.4
	(b) 16.6	28.1	34.8	6.5
1974	(a) 28.4	25.0	26.2	7.3
	(b) 15.4	29.6	35.9	6.0
1975	(a) 27.2	25.0	27.4	7.6
	(b) 14.8	29.9	36.7	5.7
1976	(a) 25.7	24.7	28.1	8.1
	(b) 13.5	29.4	37.9	5.8
1977	(a) 24.9	26.9	29.2	7.1
	(b) 13.9	29.6	39.2	5.4

*Source: *Report on Vital Statistics: 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975.*

†Farmers and Other agricultural occupations have been omitted from this table.

homogamy. Also we do not know in what terms people in Ireland might define homogeneity and heterogeneity. We have tried, however, to demonstrate to what extent a relatively simple unitary indicator of status, namely social group, shows the operation of homogamy in choosing a marriage partner, and how far people when choosing marriage partners are prepared to ignore the Manual/Non-manual divide. The desire for marriage seems to surmount these obstacles and when partners in one's own group are not available, men will marry women from other groups. However, does the often considerable extent to which men choose women from similar groups indicate that some social regulation is operating or that people of similar social groups intuitively prefer each other as marriage partners? We do not

know, and extensive studies would be needed to separate the relative importance of the variables. We have shown that, on the basis of the classifications employed by the Central Statistics Office, using the variable of social group, males are more likely to choose homogeneous brides if they are available, but, if not, they will marry outside their group — most groups having a higher actual than expected marriage rate for the years studied.

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Appendix Table A: *Proportion of marriages registered where occupation of groom or bride is "not stated"**

<i>Occupation "not-stated"</i>	1961	1966	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Grooms	1.2	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.7	2.3
Brides	29.3	19.2	6.2	5.4	4.8	2.0	0.9	1.0	1.3	1.7	9.7
Total	30.5	19.9	7.0	6.3	5.7	2.7	1.3	1.4	1.9	2.4	12.0

*Source: *Report on Vital Statistics*Appendix Table B: *Proportion of grooms and brides in manual and non-manual occupations: (a) Other non-manual group included in manual; (b) Other non-manual group included in non-manual***

	1961	1966	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Grooms manual	(a) 45.6 (b) 37.0	(a) 49.7 (b) 39.5	(a) 50.6 (b) 41.7	(a) 52.1 (b) 43.1	(a) 52.9 (b) 44.3	(a) 52.3 (b) 43.8	(a) 52.8 (b) 44.8	(a) 53.5 (b) 45.1	(a) 54.4 (b) 46.5	(a) 50.7 (b) 43.2	(a) 51.7 (b) 43.4
Grooms non-manual	(a) 32.1 (b) 40.8	(a) 31.7 (b) 41.9	(a) 33.7 (b) 42.6	(a) 33.4 (b) 42.3	(a) 32.8 (b) 41.6	(a) 33.5 (b) 42.0	(a) 33.4 (b) 41.3	(a) 33.4 (b) 41.9	(a) 34.6 (b) 42.5	(a) 36.1 (b) 43.6	(a) 35.0 (b) 43.3
Brides manual	(a) 45.0 (b) 28.2	(a) 44.6 (b) 27.3	(a) 47.9 (b) 23.2	(a) 48.7 (b) 24.8	(a) 47.7 (b) 24.4	(a) 46.5 (b) 26.0	(a) 44.8 (b) 25.2	(a) 41.6 (b) 23.2	(a) 40.5 (b) 22.3	(a) 39.4 (b) 21.3	(a) 35.9 (b) 20.8
Brides non-manual	(a) 49.4 (b) 66.1	(a) 51.9 (b) 69.2	(a) 50.8 (b) 75.5	(a) 50.4 (b) 74.3	(a) 51.3 (b) 74.6	(a) 52.4 (b) 72.9	(a) 54.3 (b) 73.8	(a) 57.9 (b) 76.2	(a) 58.9 (b) 77.1	(a) 59.8 (b) 77.9	(a) 63.1 (b) 78.2

*Source: *Report on Vital Statistics*.

**Farmers and Other agricultural have been omitted.