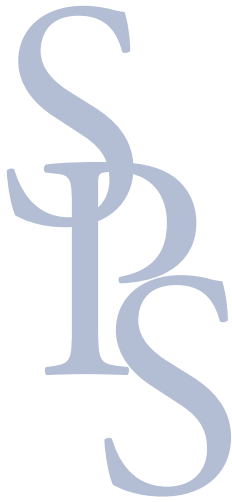


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Declining homogamy of the Austrian and German nobility in the 20th century?

A comparison with the Dutch nobility

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## **Abstract**

Has the Austrian-German nobility had the same high degree of noble homogamy during the 20th century as the Dutch nobility? Noble homogamy among the Dutch nobility was one of the two main reasons for their 'constant noble advantage' in obtaining elite positions during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Dutch on the one hand and the Austrian-German nobility on the other can be seen as two extreme cases within the European nobility. The Dutch nobility seems to have had a lower degree of noble homogamy during the 20th century than the Austrian-German nobility. However, the analysis shows that this is a consequence of the different composition of the Austrian-German nobility (higher noble titles, more nobility with feudal origins), a more modern concept of nobility among the Dutch nobility (paternal family instead of noble stock of paternal and maternal ancestors) and a successful merger of the feudal and post-feudal Dutch nobility. If one takes these compositional differences between the Austrian, German and Dutch nobility into account, then the Dutch nobility had a higher degree of noble homogamy in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, yet their homogamy declined faster during this century than that of the Austrian-German nobility.

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## **Introduction**

Studies of the elite positions held by members of Dutch noble families in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Dronkers, 2003; Schijf, Dronkers & van de Broek-George, 2004) have shown that they still have more elite positions than comparable members of high bourgeoisie families. Moreover, the likelihood of an elite position held by members of Dutch noble families has barely decreased for different generations of the nobility, also in contrast to the high bourgeoisie. This 'constant noble advantage' of the Dutch nobility in the 20<sup>th</sup> century contradicts a basic sociological assumption about modernization in western societies: high positions and professions have become increasingly more open to people with capacities based on their own achievements and less open to persons with only ascribed characteristics. With the loss of its separate legal status (*de jure* in Austria and Germany or *de facto* in the Netherlands) and its ascribed privileges, a noble title is assumed to have become of less importance in gaining an elite position in modern society. Therefore the 'constant noble advantage in access to elite positions' of the Dutch nobility undermines the modernisation theory which is still very influential within sociological thought concerning societies, especially in many stratification and welfare-state studies.

Obvious explanations of this 'constant noble advantage' (intergenerational reproduction of elites; the use of education as the modern way of reproduction by old elites; the bourgeoisie of the nobility; the aristocratisation of the bourgeoisie) were not supported by the mentioned studies. Two mechanisms explained these 'constant noble advantages': 1. Noble homogamy; 2. A move away from elite positions in the public sector. Homogamy in marriage is clearly still an important way for the Dutch nobility to maintain its distinct social position. The importance of both the noble title position of mothers and of parents-in-law are clear indications of the importance of homogamy within both nobilities, both regarding the marriage choice of the next generation and the probability of obtaining an elite position by that next generation. There were clear indications that this homogamy within the Dutch nobility is still alive, although it is decreasing (Dronkers & Schijf, 2005a). The second explanation is the Dutch nobility's move away from elite positions in the public sector towards elite positions in the business and cultural sectors (Dronkers & Schijf, 2005b).

Although there are a few indications that this 'constant noble advantage' is also true for the nobility of other European societies (de Saint-Martin, 1993 for France), the evidence is mostly scarce and restricted to the pre-1945 period (Conze, 2000 for a German exception). Moreover, one can argue that this 'constant noble advantage' of the Dutch nobility is exceptional, due to their non-feudal and bourgeoisie background and also due to the lack of revolutions, major wars and/or forced-migration, which hit the Austrian, British, French, German nobility during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, a reanalysis of the data of German engineers, jurists and economists who received a doctor's degree after 1955 (Hartmann & Kopp, 2001), showed that a noble title has a stronger positive effect on the odds of entrance into the German business elite than being from high bourgeois and middle class families (personal communication to the author).

If the Austrian-German nobility has the same 'constant noble advantage' in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as the Dutch nobility, a serious theoretical problem arises. The modernization theory states that social inequality within modern societies is increasingly based on achievements and no longer on ascribed characteristics. However, if the Austrian, Dutch and German nobility have the same 'constant noble advantage', the European nobility (represented by two alleged extreme cases) might be less affected by these modernization processes as assumed by modernization theory. An explanation of this deviation is that ascriptive characteristics like nobility can remain important in modern states, because the number of elite positions remains more or less the same, while the number of potential candidates has risen strongly,

thanks to modernization and democratization. The resulting strong competition for elite positions among the many competitors can make 'old-fashioned' characteristics, like distinct noble social and cultural capital, again relevant as an efficient and effective means for selection, while modern characteristics like education only become necessary but insufficient conditions. If this interpretation of the 'constant noble advantage' in 20th century Europe is correct, modernization theory seems only to be true for the middle classes in modern societies, but not for the extreme positions within these societies, either the elites or the underclass.

In this paper I shall initially try to ascertain as to whether the Austrian-German nobility had the same high degree of noble homogamy during the 20th century as the Dutch nobility. Noble homogamy among the Dutch nobility was one of the two important explanations of the same 'constant noble advantage'. Therefore it could prove significant to see whether the same marriage-patterns exist among the Austrian-German nobility. On the one hand I expect that noble homogamy is higher among the Austrian-German nobility because their social and political power and status was abolished relatively late, only by the revolutions of 1918 and world-war II aftermaths (the replacement of Poland and Russia; the agrarian reforms by the communist regimes), while the Dutch nobility had already lost all political power in 1848. Moreover, the bourgeoisie background of the Dutch nobility is stronger than that of the Austrian-German nobility. However the evidence of the importance of this difference in bourgeoisie background during the 20<sup>th</sup> century is only impressionistic, because the creation of a new Austrian-German nobility (thus nobles with a bourgeoisie background) continued until 1918 without slowing-down, while the creation of a new Dutch nobility had already come to a halt after 1849 (83% of all new creation of Dutch nobilities occurred between 1815-1848, 9% between 1849-1890 and 7% between 1890-1910, Valkenburg, 1966: 65). On the other hand I expect that the noble homogamy of the Austrian-German nobles marrying after 1945 declined very evidently because they were forced to embrace the bourgeois culture and structure of the Austrian-German Republics and at the same time gave up any political and economic ambition they still might have harboured before 1945 (Malinowski, 2003). Dronkers & Schijf (2005a) showed that the noble homogamy among the Dutch nobility declined during the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century, but that this decline was stronger for those who married before World War II than for those who married after World War II. These partly contradictory expectations lead to the following hypotheses, which I will test in this paper:

1. The noble homogamy of the Austrian-German nobles is higher than that of the Dutch nobles throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
2. The noble homogamy of both the Austrian, German and Dutch nobles is less prevalent during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
3. The noble homogamy of the Austrian-German nobles is less inclined to decrease than that of the Dutch nobles as far as they are married before 1945.
4. The noble homogamy of the Austrian-German nobles decreases more rapidly than that of the Dutch nobles as far as they are married after 1945.

### **Data on Austrian, German and Dutch nobility**

This paper replicates the Dutch studies with a representative sample of 178 Austrian-German noble families. I will analyze a number of social characteristics of each member of these families, born in the 20th century, of their spouses and of their parents (level of nobility; decade in which the person was born; noble title of the spouse and of the mother of the person). These social characteristics are available in the *Genealogisches Handbuch des Adels*, edited by the German Nobility Archive, a non-public foundation, and published by a commercial publishing house (for a discussion of the recent publication procedures: Franke,

2004). I use the issue XV of the *Gräfliche Häuser* (counts), issue XII of the *Freiherrliche Häuser* (barons), issue XXVI of the *Adelige Häuser A* (simple nobility with feudal origins) and issue XXIII of the *Adelige Häuser B* (simple nobility without feudal origins). Germany here means not the territories of the current Austrian-German republics, but a combination of pre-1806 *Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation*, the 19<sup>th</sup> century *German Reich* (of which important parts (Eastern Prussia) were outside the former *Holy Empire*) and the *Austrian-Hungarian Empire and Kingdom* (again with important parts (Hungary) outside the former *Holy Empire*).

Information on the life course of all members of the Dutch nobility has been published by the *Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie*, a department within the Dutch *Royal Library* in The Hague. In compiling the various editions of the *Nederland's Adelsboek*, the *Bureau* uses all information available on the genealogies of Dutch noble families (see for the origins of the *Adelsboek* in 1903: Bruin & Schmidt 1980). I have selected a representative sample that consists of all persons born after 1899 and who belong to a family whose name starts with a letter between the letters 'G' and 'Na'. Only the genealogies of these lineages have been published in the volumes of the *Nederland's Adelsboek* that have appeared between 1993 and 2000. Because the first letter of the surname is not connected with any social characteristic, our population can be seen as a random sample of all Dutch nobles who were born after 1899.

There are a number of common characteristics of the *Genealogisches Handbuch des Adels* and the *Nederland's Adelsboek*. The German predecessors of this *Genealogisches Handbuch des Adels* (*gothaischen Taschenbücher, Hofkalende, Almanach*) inspire them both. This means that they are organized in the same way: they publish genealogies of these families, mostly starting with the oldest forefather. This also means that the German and the Dutch books give more or less the same characteristics of all family members. The Dutch and the German publications also give more or less the same general information on the families.

The two samples contain 181 Austrian-German and 113 Dutch noble families of which I selected only those who were born after 1899. I included all persons irrespective of which country they were born in, lived in or died in because a noble title (as a pre-modern characteristic) does not depend on nationality or place of birth. This might lead to some underestimation of the importance of the social and cultural capital of the nobility, because I do not exclude branches of families who emigrated a long time ago and thus have to a large extent left behind their European social network and lifestyle. In order to distinguish the sampled persons from their parents, I will call them respondents, as they are our units of analysis. I have used the same volumes again to collect information on the parents and the spouse of the respondent. By definition the data on the fathers are as complete as those of the children. The data on the mothers have nearly the same quality and comprehensiveness; although the data on spouses seems to be less complete. It is not always clear whether this is due to a lack of information on the spouse or simply to the fact that children have remained unmarried.

There are also important differences between these German and Dutch publications.

The Dutch volumes do not differentiate between the noble rank of a family and its branches. All noble Dutch families are in the same *Nederland's Adelsboek*, which lists every family -irrespective of its noble ranking - the same chance to be included in one of the issues of the *Nederland's Adelsboek*. A Dutch noble family with various branches and different noble titles will end up in the same issue. In contrast, the German books do differentiate between the noble ranking of a family and its branches. An Austrian or German noble family with various branches and different noble titles will end up in different books and issues,



depending on the ranking of the branch, the availability of space in that issue and the will of that branch to publish their family genealogy.

The necessary will and resources of an Austrian or German noble family to publish their family genealogy is a second difference between the Dutch and the German books. Publication of the family genealogy in the Dutch publications is not dependent on the will or resources of a noble family. The list of Dutch noble families is clear (thanks to still being a kingdom) and all are included by the *Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie*, even if the family would rather not cooperate. For the German books the families have to provide the information about family members and pay a contribution for the publication of the genealogy (€ 50, - per page) and for each image in the book. Also, German privacy law requires the agreement of family members with the genealogy, contrary to the Dutch situation (Franke, 2004). The necessary will and resources of Austrian or German noble families to publish their genealogy produces selectivity in the German book, which cannot exist in the Dutch publication. The selectivity can have two contradictory effects: 1. Noble families with longer noble histories and stronger aristocratic traditions will value the publication of their family genealogy more than families with shorter noble histories and weaker aristocratic traditions. As a consequence one might expect that families with feudal origins or with a higher noble rank would publish their genealogies more often than families without feudal origins or with a lower noble rank. 2. Noble families that feel more insecure about their current social standing (due to downward social mobility, a questionable noble title, new fortunes) would value the publication of their family genealogy more than families with a more secure current social standing. As a consequence one might expect that noble families without feudal origins or with a lower noble rank would publish their genealogies more often than families with a noble title with feudal origins or with a higher noble rank. I cannot establish definitively, which selectivity is stronger than the other. This inability is partly caused by the lack of a reliable list of all noble families in Austria and Germany. This lack is both caused by the abolition of noble titles by the Weimar and Austrian Republics after 1918 and the geographical indefinable borders of Austrian-German nobility, due to the capricious course of their histories. The only available list of Austrian-German noble families is the compilation of all noble family names in the first 127 issues of *Genealogisches Handbuch des Adels* (Hueck, 2002). This compilation gives all the family names and issues of the *Genealogisches Handbuch* in which a family genealogy is published. If a family has branches with different titles, then family has as many entries as different titles. Although the first issue of the *Genealogisches Handbuch des Adels* was only published in 1951, the compilation covers half a century and its selectivity would be less than the four recent issues. In the first column of table 1 (4 issues) I give the percentages of families with the various noble ranks in the four used issues of the *Genealogisches Handbuch des Adels*. In the second column of table 1 (all issues), I give the percentages of families with the various noble ranks, based on the percentages of families with the title of count, baron, simple nobility with feudal origins or simple nobility without feudal origins in Hueck (2002). The difference between the two columns illustrates that counts or simple nobility with feudal origins are overrepresented in the sample, based on these four issues. This suggests that the first selectivity effect has been dominant. In order to repair the bias caused by the selectivity of the German books I re-weigh families with different ranks with the ratio between all-issues and the four-issue percentages.<sup>1</sup> The second part of table 1 shows the individual consequences of the reweighing. The last column shows the consequence of weighing: the respondents with a baron title are now the largest minority, followed by the simple nobility without feudal origins and then at some distance the counts and simple nobility with feudal origins. Even after reweighing we cannot prove that there is no longer selectivity. It is still possible that noble families with longer

noble histories and stronger aristocratic traditions within each noble rank are overrepresented in our reweighed sample.

However, because there is no further prove of a clear bias<sup>ii</sup>, I believe that our re-weighted population can be seen as a random sample of all Austrian-German nobles who were born after 1899.

### **Homogamy among the 20<sup>th</sup> century Austrian-German nobility**

Tables 2 and 3 give the homogamy among the 20<sup>th</sup> century Austrian-German nobility, the former for the males, the latter for the females. Before discussing the results I must point out three features of the two tables.

First, given the family name of the spouse and Hueck (2002) we could make distinctions between those spouses issuing from simple nobility families with or with feudal origins.

Second, the tables give per cell the row percentage of the weighted number of respondents with the combination of noble titles of both spouses. So, according to the first row of table 2, 87% of simple noble males without feudal origins married a non-noble wife. Only 1% of all married simple nobility without feudal origins married a wife with the title of countess or higher.<sup>iii</sup>

Third, these tables refer only to married respondents.<sup>iv</sup> Given the fact that the female nobility born in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century tend to marry less than their male counterparts the number of married males is higher than married females (1970 versus 1788). The persons of the birth cohort born between 1970 and 1980 might not all be married yet, and thus the result for that cohort might be biased by the characteristics of the early-married couples.

About 73% of the 20<sup>th</sup> century born male nobility married a non-noble spouse, for the female nobility this percentage is only slightly lower (70%). The simple nobility without feudal origins marry most often a non-noble (male 87%; female 85%), while the counts are less likely to have a non-noble spouse (55%; 52%). The simple nobility with feudal origins and barons have percentages of non-noble spouses between these two extremes: resp. 74%, 65% and 73%, 68%. Another way of analyzing these differences in noble homogamy is to compute odds ratios. These odds are the ratios between the chances of marrying a non-noble spouse against marrying a noble spouse by a simple noble without feudal origins versus the comparable chances of a noble of a higher rank. The counts have higher chances of marrying a count instead of a non-noble person, compared with the chances of simple nobles without feudal origins marrying a count instead of a non-noble person. The small number of counts in the sample does not influence this conclusion. The odds-ratios reflect the level of noble homogamy within each combination of spouses with a certain noble rank.

These two tables lead to three conclusions:

1. The noble rank still plays a role in spouse selection: the higher the noble rank the higher the odds not to marry a non-noble but to have a spouse with a higher or equal noble rank. The pattern of odds ratios suggests that the noble homogamy among male simple nobility with feudal origins is higher than among male barons. Thus also in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the antic noble rank among the Austrian-German nobility has still a strong influence on partner selection (the oldest person in the samples married after 1918 and the youngest in 2001).

2. Female nobles tend to marry a noble spouse more often than their noble brothers. This tendency reflects the 'normal' pattern of 'upward' marrying by females and indicates that the

antic noble rank is still a socially relevant ranking scale, to be used by decisions on future partners, not only in the past but also by the youngest generation.

3. A clear downwards trend in noble homogamy can also be observed among the 20<sup>th</sup> century born Austrian-German nobility. 79% of the male simple nobility without feudal origins born between 1900 and 1909 married a non-noble wife against 86% of the same rank born between 1960 and 1970. However this downward trend is only significant for the male nobility, not for the female nobility.<sup>v</sup> A possible explanation of this gender difference might be the volatile German history, which has affected the noble marriage opportunities of the successive male and female generations of Austrian-German nobility differently.

### **A Dutch-German comparison**

In this section we focus on the Dutch-German comparison on the odds to marry a noble spouse or not. We introduce the distinction between old and new nobility for all noble ranks. For Austrian-German nobility this means the old ‘*uradel*’ distinction (nobility of feudal origins) between counts, barons and simple nobility<sup>vi</sup>; for the Dutch nobility this is indicated by the typology ‘oude adel’ (old nobility) of families.<sup>vii</sup> Table 4 gives the comparable characteristics of our two samples. The percentage of nobles with feudal origins is higher in the Austrian-German sample, but a part of this difference might be partly caused by the possible selectivity in the sources for our Austrian-German sample. However, the lower percentage of feudal origins of the Dutch nobility is also real. It reflects the low level of feudality in the western and northern parts of the Netherlands during the medieval period (periphery of Roman Empire; dominance of free farmers and cities) and the preference of the feudal nobility for the Southern Netherlands (the current Belgium) after the successful rebellion of the Northern Netherlands against their Habsburg overlord in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Nierop, 1993). The percentage of simple nobility is higher for the Dutch nobility, while the percentages of barons and counts are higher for the Austrian-German sample. Also this difference can be partly explained by the selectivity in our Austrian-German sample. Yet the stronger bourgeoisie tradition in the Netherlands can also explain this difference: less value given by Dutchmen to upgrading their noble title, and less willingness of the Dutch King to upgrading noble titles. The percentage of noble spouses is also lower in the Dutch sample, while the spouse with a higher noble rank is higher in the Austrian-German sample. The same holds for the percentage of noble mothers: it is higher in the Austrian-German sample than in the Dutch one.

Table 5 gives a more detailed picture of the relationship between the noble ranks of couples in the Austrian-German and Dutch samples. Austrian-German homogamy is higher than the Dutch homogamy. Because the level of marrying outside the nobility is most similar for the Austrian-German and Dutch simple nobility (82%, 89%), the higher noble homogamy of the Austrian-German nobility means that the rank of the noble title is more important for the prediction of the noble title of their spouses than for the Dutch nobility themselves. This is especially true for the Austrian-German counts: their level of noble homogamy is much higher than that of the Dutch counts. Not only do they marry less non-nobles (54%, 76%), but they also marry a spouse with the same or a higher noble rank (21%, 5%) more often.

However, this result can be misleading for various reasons. The Austrian-German and Dutch nobility differ in other characteristics as we have seen in table 4. The percentages of barons and counts are higher in the Austrian-German nobility than in the Dutch nobility and this offers a better opportunity structure for the Austrian-German nobility to marry a noble spouse. The odds-ratios of table 5 are not sensitive to these differences. These odds are the ratios between the chances of marrying a non-noble spouse against marrying a noble spouse

by a simple noble versus the comparable chances of a noble of a higher rank. Thus a Dutch baron has 56% more chances of marrying a spouse with a baronial rank compared to the chances of a Dutch simple noble marrying a spouse with that same rank. These odds-ratios are comparable between the two samples, despite the different numbers in their margins. Notably the odds ratios of Austrian-German barons and counts marrying a person with the same noble title are substantially higher (2.78; 14.76) than the odds of Dutch barons and counts of marrying a person with the same noble title (1.33; 11.19). Yet the Austrian-German nobility more often has feudal origins than the Dutch nobility and that traditional background might explain their higher homogamy. We will test these two possible explanations of a higher Austrian-German noble homogamy (more feudal nobility with stronger homogamy; a better opportunity structure because of more nobility of higher ranks) with logistic regression.

Table 6 shows the results of various logistic regressions with which we try to predict whether an Austrian-German or Dutch noble marries a noble or non-noble spouse. Model 1 is more or less equivalent to a combined table 5. It shows that an Austrian-German noble has twice as high a chance of marrying a noble spouse than a Dutch noble, also taking into account the noble rank of the respondent. It also shows that a count is 3 times more likely to marry a noble spouse than a simple noble (the reference group), while barons have twice as much a chance of marrying a noble spouse. In model 2 the birth-cohort is added to the equation. It shows that each younger birth-cohort marries a noble spouse less often and that thus the noble homogamy is slowly eroding. Adding birth-cohort does not change the odds of country and noble rank. In model 3 we add the feudal origins of the title to the equation. Coming from a noble family with feudal origins increases the chance of marrying a noble spouse by 50%, irrespective of their own noble rank. Including this feudal origin decreases the effect of noble rank on marrying a noble spouse somewhat, but does not make the rank irrelevant for the odds on marrying a noble spouse. In model 4 we add gender to the equation. The well-known result that male nobles tend to marry downwards more, while female nobles often marry upwards is again confirmed by the results. Males have 20% more chances of marrying a non-noble than a noble spouse, while females have 20% more chances of marrying a noble spouse than a non-noble.

Model 5 also includes all significant interactions between the independent variables and is the best description of noble homogamy among the Austrian-German and Dutch nobility. The noble homogamy among the Dutch nobility born between 1900 and 1910 was, contrary to our hypothesis, higher (nearly 40% more chance to marry a noble spouse), but only if we take into account the higher importance of feudal origins for the Austrian-German nobility when marrying a noble spouse (with counts being an exception). Among both nobilities the noble homogamy decreased in each birth-cohort, but among the Austrian-German nobility this decline in noble homogamy is less steep than among the Dutch nobility. As a consequence the noble homogamy in the youngest birth-cohort is smaller for the Dutch nobility than for the Austrian or German. Feudal origin of nobility has only a significant positive effect for the noble homogamy among Austrian-German nobility, while it has no effect on that of the Dutch nobility. This feudal origin, however, has less of an effect on the chances of counts marrying a noble spouse. A possible explanation of the latter might be that the higher noble rank of counts is a sufficient indicator of their aristocratic culture, while the feudal origins for the lower ranked nobility is a better indication of that aristocratic culture and thus the importance of a noble spouse. There is no significant interaction between feudal origins and birth-cohort. This means that the feudal origin of the nobility of a family has the same effect for the older and younger birth-cohorts. There is also no significant interaction between birth-cohort and noble title. Thus the relevance of the rank of a noble title has not

dwindled away during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Noble rank has an unchanged effect on noble homogamy: the higher the noble rank, the higher the chance of marrying a noble spouse. Interestingly there are no significant interactions of noble rank with country. Thus the relevance of the rank of a noble is equal in both nobilities. Male nobles marry a noble spouse less often while females do more often. Interestingly there are no significant interactions of gender with birth-cohort or country. This means that the differences between the male and female nobility in marrying a noble spouse is the same for the older and younger birth-cohorts, but also for the Austrian-German and the Dutch nobility. This unchanged gender difference in noble homogamy for both nobilities shows that the relevance of a noble title has not dwindled away during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and has the same relevance in the Austrian-German and Dutch nobility.

To some extent, the results of model 5 might be consequences of the past, especially the homogamy of the parents. Therefore in model 6 I add the noble title of the mother to the equation and the significant interactions of mothers' noble title with the other independent variables.<sup>viii</sup> The parameters show that the mother's noble title has a positive effect: if the mother has a noble title then the odds of marrying a noble spouse are 160% higher. This positive effect of mother's noble title does not dwindle away during the 20<sup>th</sup> century: there is no significant interaction between a noble mother and birth-cohort. The effect of the mother's noble title on marrying a noble spouse is stronger among the Austrian-German nobility than among the Dutch nobility. Adding the mother's noble title decreases the effect of being of feudal Austrian-German nobility somehow, but its effect on marrying a noble spouse remains significant. It strongly decreases the effect of being a count on marrying a noble spouse, but also it remains significant. The odds of a Dutch noble marrying a noble spouse increase further with the addition of the mothers' noble title. One could say that the only deviating features of the Dutch nobility are the weaker effects of feudal origin and parental homogamy; otherwise the Dutch nobility are more exclusive in their marriage pattern than the Austrian-German nobility. The latter is fully contrary to our hypothesis. Moreover, Dutch noble homogamy is declining faster than the homogamy among the Austrian-German nobility and this is also contrary to our hypothesis.

In order to test whether the results of table 6 might be biased by neglecting the rank of the noble spouse, we analyze the same group but with the noble rank of the spouse as a dependent variable and the non-noble spouse as a reference category. Table 7 shows the odds of marrying a spouse with a specific noble rank instead of marrying a non-noble spouse. In order to make the results of table 6 and 7 comparable we use the same variables as in model 5 of table 6. The results make it clear that the noble rank of the spouse makes a difference. The odds of marrying a simple noble instead of a non-noble spouse by a baron are more or less equal to those of a simple noble, but they are 80% higher for a baron marrying a baron instead of a non-noble spouse compared to those of a simple noble. More generally: the higher the ranks of a noble, the higher the odds of marrying a spouse with a higher noble rank instead of a non-noble spouse. This is especially true for the odds of counts marrying counts instead of non-nobles. Feudal origins of the nobility increase the odds of marrying a simple noble instead of a non-noble spouse by 50% for the Dutch nobility, but for the Austrian-German nobility the feudal origin of the nobility is far stronger (120%=50% + 70%). For marrying a baron instead of a non-noble spouse the feudal origin is insignificant for the Dutch nobility, while the feudal origin increases the odds by 110% on the Austrian-German nobility marrying a baron instead of a non-noble spouse. The same holds for marrying a count instead of a non-noble spouse: feudal origin does not change the odds for the Dutch nobility, but for the Austrian-German nobility it increases the odds by 200%. The positive effects of feudal

origins of the nobility on marrying a noble spouse are not so substantial for the counts (both for marrying a simple noble or a count) and for barons (for marrying a count). The results suggest that the positive effect of feudal origins on the odds of marrying a spouse with a higher noble rank is strongest for the lowest nobility (simple nobility) while it is weaker for the higher ranks. But despite these interesting points the overall result of table 7 is equal to that of table 6.

## **Discussion**

The main concept behind the research question of this paper is that the 20<sup>th</sup> century Dutch nobility might be exceptional compared with the 20<sup>th</sup> century European nobility and especially with the Austrian-German nobility. This assumed exceptional position of the Dutch nobility (non-feudal and bourgeoisie background) should be reflected in a lower noble homogamy, which the Austrian-German nobility will regain after the World War II (due to major wars and/or forced-migration). However this idea and the four hypotheses based on it are not supported by the results. Contrary to our expectations the Dutch nobility had a higher noble homogamy in older birth cohorts than the Austrian-German nobility. On the other hand there is a steeper decline in noble homogamy among the Dutch nobility for the younger birth cohorts. This is only true if we control the feudal origin of the noble title and its higher importance for the Austrian-German nobility. The higher homogamy of the Dutch nobility compared to that of the Austrian-German nobility becomes even more pronounced if we take parental homogamy into account. Parental noble homogamy promotes noble homogamy both for the Dutch and the Austrian or German nobility, but does more so for the latter.

There are three possible explanations for the higher importance of feudal origins of the noble title for the Austrian-German nobility. The first is the difference in opportunity structure: there are less Dutch nobles with feudal origins than Austrian-German nobles with feudal origins. This can be explained by the peripheral position of the Northern Netherlands in the Holy Roman Empire, by the dominance of free farmers and cities in the Western and Northern provinces of the Northern Netherlands and by the flight to the Southern Netherlands of the catholic feudal nobility during the ‘rebellion against the legal overlord/independence war for freedom and religion’ (1572-1648). The second explanation is that high nobility (which has in most cases a noble title with feudal origins) is nearly absent in the Netherlands as a reference group for lower nobility. Only the royal family, which was small during the major part of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century and which lacked cadet branches, has titles higher than count.<sup>ix</sup> Some branches of a few Dutch families have higher noble ranks outside the Netherlands (for instance *Bentinck* in England and in Germany), but these foreign noble ranks have no relevance in the Dutch context.<sup>x</sup> The third explanation is the political and economic dominance of the bourgeoisie in Dutch cities since 1590. Between 1590 and 1795 the Dutch Republic did not confer noble titles on their bourgeois elites (contrary to the other *Ancien Régime* republic Venetia). Thanks to the nobilisation policy in the post-Napoleonic Kingdom of the Netherlands, the members of these dominant bourgeoisie families received a simple noble title after 1815. The core of the Dutch nobility is therefore more post-feudal. Given the insignificance of the feudal origin for the homogamy of the Dutch nobility and the continuing noble advantage compared to the Dutch patricians, one could argue that the ‘bourgeoisisation of the Dutch nobility’ is not a correct description. The Dutch nobility is only different from the European nobility through its loss of distinction between nobility with and without a feudal origin; and a loss of feudal distinction within nobility is not the same as bourgeoisisation of the nobility.

There are several possible explanations for the stronger effect of parental noble homogamy on the odds of having a noble spouse among the Austrian-German nobility, but

some seem incorrect. The higher percentage of Austrian-German parents who are both noble is not a good reason for explaining the stronger effect of parental homogamy (confusion of differences in the margins with the strength of a relation). A lower level of obedience to parents by the Dutch nobles also seems incorrect, because until at least the late '60's the Netherlands was not the liberal society some foreigners and most Dutch believe it always was. Dutch family law and social security systems are still family-oriented, not very different from that of Germany. A better explanation can be derived from Godsey (2004). He suggests a change in the concept of nobility at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, resulting from the ideologies of romanticism and nationalism. Until that moment nobility was defined by the virtue and the purity of the noble stock of both paternal and maternal ancestors. The noble quartering (at least four, but preferably 12 or 16 noble ancestors) was essential for admission to core institutions of the noble estate (knightly order, admission to the imperial court). Within the new romantic and nationalistic concept of nobility the paternal family and its ancient nobility (*uradel*) became the main indicator of nobility (the best of the nation-state) and the noble status of the maternal side became less essential. This new concept of nobility became more dominant in the Netherlands and Protestant northern Germany, while in the Catholic Austrian-Hungarian Empire the old concept of the purity of the noble stock on both paternal and maternal sides remained more salient until its collapse in 1918. Noble homogamy within the old concept is far more important than in the new nationalistic concept. Because the Austrian-German sample contains both nobility from protestant Germany and the catholic Austrian-Hungarian Empire<sup>xi</sup>, parental homogamy should have a larger effect than in the Dutch sample.

After control for these differences between the Austrian-German sample and the Dutch sample (feudal origin; parental homogamy) Dutch homogamy is higher than the homogamy among the Austrian-German nobility, especially in the older birth cohorts. As a possible explanation I can only suggest that the Netherlands is a small conservative society with flexible adaptation to the necessities of modernity, without real changes in fundamental political and cultural structures at the top strata (see for instance Bruin (1986) of the degree of elite changes during the last 'revolutionary' period in the Netherlands, 1780-1848). The oft-mentioned bourgeois character of Dutch society (and nobility) often acts only as stopgap and ritual to hide the persistent inequality of the higher strata of Dutch society. The results of Schijf, Dronkers & Broeke-George (2004) on the continuing noble advantage compared to the Dutch patricians, but also Weenink's (2005) result that Dutch independent *gymnasiums* (grammar schools) were socially as selective as the English *public schools* and more selective than the French *classes préparatoires* give some plausibility to this explanation. There are other indications of the stronger social closure of the Dutch nobility: the Dutch departments of the German knightly order, the Johanniter order (both protestant) and the order of Malta (catholic) are the latest to open their ranks to non-noble members, and they did this far later than the departments of these orders in Germany, England or Italy.

The last unexpected result is the smaller decline of homogamy in the Austrian-German nobility. This is also fully contradictory to the hypothesis. A possible explanation is the bias towards traditional families included in the *Genealogisches Handbuch des Adels*, the consequence of which might be the costs for those families regarding the publication of their genealogy. However I can not find proof of this bias. Another explanation might be that the culture and social network of the noble title was the only remaining 'capital' for substantial parts of the Austrian-German nobility to recover from the economic and political upheavals from 1914-1918, the inflation of the *Reichsmark*, 1939-1945 and the flight to West-Europe after 1945, because the financial capital and the political power were lost. This importance of the cultural and social capital of the noble title recovering the social position in the Austrian

and German republics slowed down the decline in noble homogamy. The Dutch nobility, just like Dutch society, had suffered less from the military, political and economical upheavals of the 20<sup>th</sup> century than the Austrian and German nobility and society.

The analysis shows that the Dutch nobility is not an extreme case among the European nobility: their noble homogamy does not deviate enough to claim an outsiders-role any longer. As a consequence the earlier found results on the 'constant noble advantage' of the Dutch nobility cannot be dismissed as local exceptions, but might also exist for the other less documented and thus less well analysed 20<sup>th</sup> century nobility in other European societies. My next step is the more direct proof of this 'constant noble advantage' among the 20<sup>th</sup> century Austrian-German nobility than the indication with the data of Hartmann & Kropp (2001).



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Table 1: Percentages of Austrian-German noble families with various noble titles in the four used issues and in all issues of the *Genealogisches Handbuch des Adels* and the un-weighed and weighed respondents

	Families		Respondents	
	4 issues	All issues	Un-weighed	Weighed
Count	29%	18%	23%	16%
Baron	24%	33%	27%	42%
Simple nobility with feudal origin	19%	7%	32%	13%
Simple nobility without feudal origin	29%	39%	19%	29%
Total number	181	181	7991	7014

Table 2: Noble homogamy of male Austrian-German nobility (weighted) in percentages and odd-ratios (non-noble spouse and simple nobility without feudal origins as reference-categories), total and per birth-cohort

Wife						
Male Respondent	Non-noble	Simple without feudal origin	Simple with feudal origin	Baron	Count or higher	Total
Simple nobility without feudal origin	87% (1.00)	5% (1.00)	3% (1.00)	4% (1.00)	1% (1.00)	399= 100%
Simple nobility with feudal origin	74% (1.00)	7% (1.57)	10% (4.67)**	6% (1.71)	3% (3.02)*	653= 100%
Baron	73% (1.00)	8% (1.72)*	4% (2.07)*	8% (2.48)**	6% (5.95)**	525= 100%
Count	55% (1.00)	8% (2.36)**	3% (1.92)	12% (4.70)**	22% (27.50)**	393= 100%
Total	1432=73%	138=7%	110=6%	145=7%	145=7%	1970
Born 1900-1909 (N=312)						
Simple without	79%	9%	7%	6%	0%	71
Simple with	72%	5%	17%	6%	2%	109
Baron	70%	11%	7%	6%	6%	70
Count	47%	7%	3%	16%	27%	62
Born 1910-1919 (N=243)						
Simple without	79%	9%	2%	8%	2%	53
Simple with	72%	3%	11%	7%	8%	92
Baron	67%	4%	3%	12%	10%	58
Count	63%	10%	3%	10%	15%	40
Born 1920-1929 (N=277)						
Simple without	91%	5%	0%	9%	2%	58
Simple with	76%	6%	10%	5%	4%	78
Baron	68%	5%	6%	14%	6%	85
Count	45%	5%	4%	13%	34%	56
Born 1930-1939 (N=260)						
Simple without	89%	0%	2%	6%	4%	52
Simple with	71%	11%	8%	6%	5%	89
Baron	81%	7%	4%	5%	3%	74
Count	60%	4%	4%	11%	20%	45
Born 1940-1949 (N=230)						
Simple without	94%	4%	0%	2%	0%	52
Simple with	79%	9%	6%	6%	1%	70
Baron	80%	9%	0%	5%	7%	59
Count	55%	10%	6%	6%	16%	49
Born 1950-1959 (N=224)						
Simple without	93%	2%	2%	2%	0%	43
Simple with	78%	7%	4%	6%	1%	71
Baron	72%	7%	3%	12%	7%	61
Count	61%	10%	2%	10%	16%	49
Born 1960-1969 (N=238)						
Simple without	86%	7%	2%	2%	2%	44
Simple with	79%	6%	10%	4%	1%	81
Baron	82%	6%	3%	5%	5%	67
Count	61%	7%	2%	5%	20%	46
Born 1970-1980 (N=186)						
Simple without	89%	4%	4%	4%	0%	26
Simple with origin	68%	8%	11%	10%	3%	63
Baron	65%	10%	8%	8%	10%	51
Count	57%	11%	0%	11%	22%	46

\*\* p&lt;.01; \* .01&lt;p&lt;.05

Table 3: Noble homogamy of female Austrian-German nobility (weighed) total and per birth-cohort in percentages and odd-ratios (non-noble spouse and simple nobility without feudal origins as reference)

Husband						
Female Respondent	No-noble	Simple without feudal origin	Simple with feudal origin	Baron	Count or higher	Total
Simple nobility without feudal origin	85% (1.00)	7% (1.00)	4% (1.00)	3% (1.00)	2% (1.00)	339= 100%
Simple nobility with feudal origin	73% (1.00)	10% (1.86)*	10% (3.19)**	4% (1.36)	4% (2.13)	610= 100%
Baron	68% (1.00)	9% (1.77)*	5% (1.83)	11% (4.23)**	6% (3.87)**	498= 100%
Count	52% (1.00)	9% (2.15)*	8% (3.53)**	11% (5.78)**	21% (16.54)**	341 100%
Total	1244=70%	160=9%	123=7%	128=7%	133=7%	1788
Born 1900-1909 (N=222)						
Simple without	73%	16%	3%	6%	3%	37
Simple with	65%	14%	15%	6%	1%	88
Baron	70%	17%	0%	9%	4%	54
Count	63%	9%	9%	5%	14%	43
Born 1910-1919 (N=226)						
Simple without	85%	8%	5%	3%	0%	40
Simple with	65%	13%	14%	3%	6%	80
Baron	68%	11%	6%	7%	9%	71
Count	40%	9%	6%	17%	29%	35
Born 1920-1929 (N=217)						
Simple without	85%	5%	3%	5%	3%	40
Simple with	72%	10%	7%	7%	5%	74
Baron	66%	9%	7%	15%	3%	59
Count	66%	9%	7%	9%	11%	44
Born 1930-1939 (N=260)						
Simple without	88%	3%	5%	2%	2%	59
Simple with	82%	8%	7%	1%	2%	87
Baron	70%	9%	8%	12%	8%	67
Count	53%	9%	6%	9%	23%	47
Born 1940-1949 (N=236)						
Simple without	88%	2%	4%	4%	2%	48
Simple with	78%	7%	9%	4%	1%	69
Baron	66%	5%	6%	6%	8%	80
Count	51%	5%	8%	8%	28%	39
Born 1950-1959 (N=247)						
Simple without	87%	6%	2%	2%	4%	54
Simple with	75%	9%	5%	4%	7%	81
Baron	66%	6%	6%	4%	6%	65
Count	45%	4%	4%	15%	32%	47
Born 1960-1969 (N=235)						
Simple without	90%	5%	3%	3%	0%	40
Simple with	68%	13%	9%	5%	4%	75
Baron	72%	7%	0%	16%	5%	58
Count	42%	8%	13%	19%	18%	62
Born 1970-1980 (N=145)						
Simple without	71%	14%	5%	5%	5%	21
Simple with	77%	9%	13%	0%	2%	56
Baron	66%	7%	9%	9%	9%	44
Count	58%	21%	4%	8%	8%	24

\*\* p<.01; \* .01<p<.05

Table 4: Characteristics of Austrian-German (weighed) and Dutch married nobility born after 1899

	Dutch	Austrian-German
Male	51%	53%
Simple nobility	62%	44%
Baron	34%	42%
Count	5%	14%
Noble spouse	13%	27%
Spouse simple nobility	8%	13%
Spouse baron	4%	8%
Spouse count or higher	1%	7%
Nobility with feudal origin	30%	57%
Noble mother	23%	46%

Table 5: Noble homogamy of Austrian-German (weighed) and Dutch married nobility born after 1899, in percentages and odds-ratios in parentheses (non-noble spouse and simple nobility as reference)

Spouse	Simple nobility	Baron	Count
Dutch			
Spouse without noble title	89% (1.00)	83% (1.00)	76%(1.00)
Spouse simple nobility	7%(1.00)	10% (1.56)	13% (2.28)
Spouse baron	4% (1.00)	5% (1.33)	7% (2.07)
Spouse count or higher	1% (1.00)	2% (4.20)	5% (11.19)
Austrian-German			
Spouse without noble title	82% (1.00)	71% (1.00)	54% (1.00)
Spouse simple nobility	12% (1.00)	13% (1.29)	13% (1.72)
Spouse baron	4% (1.00)	10% (2.78)	12% (4.45)
Spouse count or higher	2% (1.00)	6% (3.32)	21% (14.76)

Table 6: The effects (odds) of noble rank and other characteristics of Austrian-German (weighted) and Dutch married nobility born after 1899 on marrying a noble spouse, including all significant interactions (logistic regression)

Independent variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Austrian-German	2.0**	2.1**	1.9**	2.0**	.64**	.43**
Simple nobility (ref.)	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Baron	1.8**	1.8**	1.5**	1.5**	1.6**	1.4*
Count	3.6**	3.7**	3.1**	3.1**	5.4**	2.8**
Birth cohort		.92**	.92**	.92**	.78**	.81**
Feudal origin			1.5**	1.5**	1.1	.95
Male				.79**	.78**	.79**
Austrian-German* Birth cohort					1.2**	1.2**
Austrian-German* Feudal origin					2.0**	1.5**
Baron* Feudal origin					.82	.99
Count* Feudal origin					.43**	.65
Noble mother						2.6**
Austrian/German*noble mother						2.4**
Log-likelihood	- 5426	-5400	-5377	-5364	-5304	4833
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	.08	.09	.10	.10	.12	.23

Note: \*\* p<.01; \* p<.05.

Table 7: The odds of marrying simple noble, baron or count, against marrying a non-noble, and the effects of noble rank and other characteristics of Austrian-German (weighted) and Dutch married nobility born after 1899, based on model 5 of table 7 (multinomial regression)

Independent variables	Simple nobility	Baron	Count or higher
Austrian-German	.58*	.62	1.3
Simple nobility (ref.)	1.0	1.0	1.0
Baron	1.1	1.8**	4.5**
Count	3.4**	3.2**	25.6**
Birth cohort	.76**	.81**	.83
Feudal nobility	1.5*	.63	1.0
Male	.78**	.75*	.84
Austrian/German* Birth cohort	1.3**	1.2**	1.2
Austrian/German* Feudal origin	1.7*	2.1**	3.0*
Baron* Feudal origin	.81	1.2	.46*
Count* Feudal origin	.27**	1.3	.31**
Log-likelihood	-1433		
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	.13		

Note: \*\* p<.01; \* p<.05.

## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> Count (18/29), baron (33/24), simple nobility with feudal origin (7/19), simple nobility without feudal origin (39/29).

<sup>ii</sup> For instance a family with relatively recent nobility and without any pretensions like the *von Amsberg* (the husband of the current Dutch queen) is also included in the *Handbuch*, already before a member of this family married that queen. Also nearly all family names of the noble spouses were available in Huecke's list of families names in the first 127 issues of the *Handbuch*. Both examples suggest that the *Handbuch* is a reasonable representation for the current Austrian-German nobility.

<sup>iii</sup> We added for all analyses in this paper the nobles with higher titles than count (duke, arch-duke, prince) to the count-category. Foreign noble titles are coded as noble titles of the corresponding category.

<sup>iv</sup> Including non-married couples with recognized children.

<sup>v</sup> Multinomial regressions with the noble title of the spouse as a dependent variable and respondents' own noble rank and respondents' birth year as independent variables gave only a significant negative parameter at the birth year of the male respondent. The interaction between birth year and noble rank of the spouse (indicating a decline of the importance of noble rank for homogamy) became neither for the males nor for the females significant in these multinomial regressions.

<sup>vi</sup> 32% of our sample of Austrian-German simple nobility belongs to a family with a European feudal origin, 78% of the barons and 71% of the counts.

<sup>vii</sup> 6% of our sample of Dutch simple nobility belongs to a family with European feudal origin, 69% of the barons and 73% of the counts.

<sup>viii</sup> Other possible interactions which are not shown in table 6 have not become significant by the addition of mothers' noble title.

<sup>ix</sup> Only in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was the possibility of a marriage between a prince of the house of Oranje-Nassau and a Dutch countess (feudal origin). But his father king Willem III forbade it. The two surviving female descendents of that king married German princes (feudal origin). The current queen (great-granddaughter of that king) married a German simple noble (non-feudal origin). The crown prince and brothers (thus sons of the German simple nobility) married non-noble spouses. Given our results the noble homogamy level of the generation of the crown-prince fits into that of children of simple nobility (no-feudal origin).

<sup>x</sup> There are also two English families (*Wellington, Clancarty*) with high Dutch noble ranks (Prince, Marquis), due to their role in 1815, but they are also irrelevant in Dutch society.

<sup>xi</sup> However it is difficult to distinguish the Austrian-German families in a Northern-German part and in an Austrian and Southern-German part, because many families have various branches that live in various parts of Germany and Austria.