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Effects of Occupational Status Differences Between Spouses on the Wife's Labor Force Participation and Occupational Achievement: Findings from 12 European Countries

Effects of occupational status differences between spouses on the wife's employment and on her occupational achievement are studied for the countries of the European Union. The results show a tendency towards similarity in occupational status within marriages. Labor force participation of a wife is highest when her potential occupational status equals her husband's occupational status. Furthermore, the husband's occupation produces both a ceiling effect and a facilitating effect on the wife's occupational achievement. The strength of these effects differs somewhat between the countries. For a wife's participation in the labor force, these differences are related to the country's dominant religion.

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A major social development that has taken place in all Western societies in recent decades is the large increase in labor force participation of married women. The traditional family pattern, in which the husband is the breadwinner and the wife is responsible for the household and children, is commonly replaced by the dual-earner family, in which the wife often earns a substantial part of family income (Hanson & Ooms, 1991; Spitze, 1988). As a result, the old assumption of stratification theory that family status is determined by the husband's status has been questioned (Acker, 1973; Safilios-Rothschild, 1975). In fact, several studies suggest that in the United States married women obtain status through their own occupational position and that family status may be enhanced by their economic activity (Hiller & Philliber, 1986a; Rossi et al., 1974; Spitze, 1988).

The fact that working wives have social positions that are, to a certain extent, independent of their husbands' achievements enhances the possibilities of studying the way in which the opportunities of married persons are influenced by characteristics of their spouses. Husbands and wives

may enhance each other's achievements by sharing their economic, social, and cultural resources (Bernasco, 1994). But they may also restrict each other. The career of a husband with a working wife may be less successful than that of a man with the same prospects who has a housewife behind him (Stanley, Hunt, & Hunt, 1986), and the fact that husbands are still generally considered the main breadwinners (Hiller & Philliber, 1986b) may negatively affect the occupational achievements of wives.

Moreover, even if working wives derive status from their own occupations, this does not necessarily make their status fully independent of the status of their husbands. It is possible that wives adjust their positions in the labor market to the occupations of their husbands. Depending on the husband's occupational level, certain occupations may be more acceptable than others for the wife. If the wife's occupational level is too low, family status may be negatively affected (Oppenheimer, 1977). If, on the other hand, her occupational level is too high, the husband may feel that his identity as the major provider of the family is threatened (Stanley, Hunt, & Hunt, 1986).

Evidence of the effects of differences in the occupational status of husbands and wives has been found in several studies that use data on the U.S. Oppenheimer (1977, 1982) found a negative effect on the wife's labor force participation when her potential occupational status was lower than her husband's. Hornung and McCullough (1981) found that various forms of status incompatibility between husbands and wives were related to marital and life dissatisfaction. Philliber and Hiller (1983) found that when the wife's occupational achievement exceeds her husband's, the marriage is more likely to result in divorce, or the wife is more likely to change her occupation to one that is more compatible with her husband's. Statham, Vaughan, and Houseknecht (1987) found that wives who have more education than their husbands tend to underutilize their education, and Philliber and Vannoy-Hiller (1990) found that a husband's occupational level may act as a ceiling to the wife's occupational achievement.

Although there are also some studies with negative findings (e.g., Richardson, 1979), these results suggest that in the U.S. status differences between spouses may cause marital problems and may lead to compensatory reactions aimed at creating a more acceptable situation. This study focuses on two of these compensatory reactions. Wives may drop out of the labor force, or they

may accept a lower occupational position than they are capable of achieving (Philliber & Hiller, 1983). Both reactions have already been studied, mainly with data from the United States. Little is known about the situation in other countries or about differences among countries. This study attempts to find out how occupational status differences between spouses affected the wife's labor force participation and occupational achievement around 1990 in the 12 European countries that are the member states of the European Union (E.U.). We will establish whether there are these kinds of status effects in the E.U. countries and, if so, in what direction they work. Furthermore, we will test some hypotheses about differences in the strength of these effects among the countries.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

Direction of the Effects

Several theoretical perspectives have been used to make predictions about the direction of effects of occupational status differences between spouses. According to the functionalist perspective (e.g., Parsons, 1949), a wife's employment in an occupation of equal or higher status than her husband's creates status competition between the spouses. This could harm the marriage because the husband might feel that his identity as the major provider and as the person who determines the status of the family is threatened. To prevent such disruptive competition, functionalists expected wives to refrain from working or to work at an occupational level lower than that of their husbands. Because of its focus on status competition between spouses, we will call this position the *within-family-competition hypothesis*.

An alternative theoretical position is taken by Oppenheimer (1977, 1982), who focuses on the position of the family as a basic unit within the stratification system of society concerned with status maintenance and enhancement. According to Oppenheimer, the occupational positions of wives are important because family status is influenced by the social position of each member of the family. If the wife works in an occupation that is lower than the occupation of her husband, this may reflect negatively on the status of the family and, thus, on all of its members. On the other hand, if she works in a higher position than her husband, her work may enhance family status. Because of the significance of the wife's occupational status for family status, Oppenheimer ex-

pects married women to drop out of the labor force when their potential occupational status is lower than their husbands' occupational status. Because the central focus of this theory is on the competition for status among families, we call this hypothesis the *among-families-competition hypothesis.*

Finally, the research of several authors predicts that spouses prefer to work in occupations with the same or almost the same occupational status. According to Simpson and England (1981), marriages are enhanced when the roles of spouses are similar because the spouses have similar interests, because they can understand each other's problems more easily, and because they share responsibility for the family livelihood. Second, from the perspective of stratification theory, a tendency towards occupational homogamy or similarity between spouses has been predicted by Hout (1982). Hout assumes that the same status boundaries that restrict the possibility that sons will reach a higher occupational position than their fathers also limit the possibility that spouses will work in different occupational groups. Finally, Hornung and McCullough (1981), using an extended version of status consistency theory, expect that differences between the occupational statuses of husbands and wives will lead to marital dissatisfaction and stress. We will call the prediction that spouses prefer to work at the same or nearly the same occupational levels the *status-similarity hypothesis.*

In the next sections, we will derive from these hypotheses several testable predictions about the effects of occupational status differences between spouses on the wife's employment and on her occupational achievement.

Wife's Employment

One possible reaction to occupational status differences between spouses is for the wife to drop out of the labor force. Oppenheimer (1977, p. 392) argues that "a socially acceptable solution to this problem for the wife, but not the husband, is to quit work." Proponents of the other two theoretical positions described above probably would agree. But differences of opinion can be expected about *which* kind of occupational status difference would lead to such a reaction. The within-family-competition hypothesis predicts that wives drop out of the labor force when their (potential) occupational status is the same or higher than their husbands' occupational status. The among-

families-competition hypothesis predicts this will happen to wives with potential occupations lower than their husbands' occupations, and the status-similarity hypothesis predicts that both wives with higher and wives with lower potential occupations than their husbands' occupations will drop out of the labor force.

Oppenheimer (1977, 1982) has conducted empirical research to test these hypotheses for the United States. In her 1977 study, she presented a table from the 1970 U.S. census with information on all wives who had jobs at some time during the 10 years preceding the census. For each combination of husbands' and wives' occupations, this table showed the percentage of wives still working at the date of the census. With this table, Oppenheimer demonstrated that the probability of participation is higher for a wife who is able to obtain a higher occupation, even if this occupation is at the same or a higher level than her husband's occupation (Oppenheimer, 1977, p. 402). In her later study, she also found that the probability of participation is lower for wives whose educational levels are low compared to their husbands' occupations (Oppenheimer, 1982, pp. 279–286). These results show that, for the U.S., the within-family-competition hypothesis must be rejected. With regard to the other hypotheses, the findings are mostly in line with Oppenheimer's own position.

In our analysis of the wife's labor force participation, we will replicate Oppenheimer's work using European data and more sophisticated methods than she did. Moreover, we will study differences in the strength of the effects among the E.U. countries.

Wife's Occupational Achievement

According to the within-family-competition hypothesis and the status-similarity hypothesis, marital problems may arise and compensatory reactions may take place when the occupational status of wives is higher than the occupational status of their husbands. The within-family-competition hypothesis predicts such problems and reactions even for spouses working at the same occupational levels. In these situations, dropping out of the labor force is not the only compensatory reaction possible for wives. An alternative and less costly reaction is downward mobility to an occupational position of the same or lower status than the occupation of the husband. Because in this situation the husband's occupational status forms an upper

limit to the wife's occupational achievement, Philliber and Vannoy-Hiller (1990) call this a *ceiling effect* of the husband's occupation on the wife's achievement.

To test for the existence of this ceiling effect, Philliber and Vannoy-Hiller regressed the wife's occupational achievement on her educational level, her husband's occupational status, the interaction between education and husband's occupational status, and some background variables. The wife's achievement was higher for more highly educated wives and for wives married to husbands working in higher occupations. The interaction effect was significantly positive, indicating that a higher occupational status of the husband results in stronger effects of the wife's education on her achievement. Moreover, the additive and interaction effects of the husband's occupation on the wife's achievement are stronger for spouses with traditional role expectations and strong gender-role identities.

According to Philliber and Vannoy-Hiller (1990), the husband's occupation may act as a ceiling to the wife's achievement. But their findings also are open to another interpretation. The positive effects of the husband's occupational status on the wife's achievement and on the relationship between her education and her achievement may also be caused by the fact that husbands in higher positions are better able to facilitate their wives' achievement. The economic, intellectual, and social resources of married persons can, to a certain extent, also be used by their spouses (Bernasco, 1994). As a result, the returns to education of wives married to husbands with more resources may be higher than those of other wives.

In our analysis, we want to find out to what extent the relationship between the occupational achievements of spouses is the result of a ceiling effect and to what extent it is the result of a facilitating effect. In other words, we would like to find out whether a wife married to a husband with a certain occupational level achieves more (or less) than she would have achieved if she had not been married to that husband. To do so, we will compare the occupational achievements of married women with the achievements of single women who have the same values on the background characteristics used in this study. Because the ceiling effect is strongest for wives of husbands with low occupations, the *ceiling hypothesis* predicts that the achievements of these wives will be lower than the achievements of compara-

ble single women (for whom no ceiling effect exists). Furthermore, because the facilitating effect is strongest for the wives of husbands with high occupations, the *facilitating hypothesis* predicts that the achievements of these wives will be higher than the achievements of single women (for whom no facilitating effect exists). In our analysis, we will test whether these predictions hold.

Differences Among Countries

To explain differences in status effects among countries, we use hypotheses that are developed in stratification research to explain differences in openness. *Openness* refers to the strength of the barriers that exist among groups in societies. If the barriers in a society are weak, the social structure of that society is open. If, on the other hand, these barriers are strong, the social structure is closed.

Stratification sociologists have long accepted that social openness is reflected both in the degree of intergenerational mobility and in the degree of assortative marriage in societies (e.g., Lipset & Bendix, 1959). More recently, Hout (1982) suggested that it could also be reflected in the degree to which spouses tend to work in different occupational groups. In open societies, the barriers between occupational groups may be weaker than in closed societies. If this is true, in open societies, occupational status differences between spouses may cause fewer marital troubles, and hence, the reactions of spouses to occupational status differences may be weaker than in closed societies.

To explain differences in openness among countries, stratification sociologists have used hypotheses about differences in economic development, in social inequality, and in political systems. Modernization theory (Kerr et al., 1960; Treiman, 1970) predicts that processes that go together with industrialization (like urbanization, increased geographic mobility, increased mass communication, and increased heterogeneity of societies) will decrease the barriers to both intergenerational mobility (Treiman, 1970) and to intermarriage (Ultee & Luijkx, 1990). Inequality is expected to lead to social closure because in highly stratified societies, people in better social positions are expected to protect these positions more strongly against outsiders than in less stratified societies. In societies with much inequality, people in higher positions have more advantages because of their positions than in societies with little inequality (Kelley, Robison, & Klein, 1981).

Moreover, the risk that these people run if they lose their positions is also higher: The larger the difference between high and low in a society, the further one can fall (Tyree, Semyonov, & Hodge, 1979). With regard to political factors, social-democratic and state-socialist governments are expected to promote openness because of their attempts to decrease inequality (e.g., Heath, 1981). Recently, a cultural factor, namely dominant religion, has also been used to explain differences in openness among countries (Smits, Ultee, & Lammers, 1994). Because Catholics have been found to be more traditional than Protestants in family matters (e.g., Castles, 1994; Greeley, 1989), Smits et al. (1994) expected them to be more conservative with regard to partner choice, too. This expectation was supported by finding that Catholic countries show more educational assortative marriage than Protestant countries.

In this study, we will test whether the differences in status effects among the E.U. countries are related to differences in degree of modernization, in social inequality, in the political system, and in dominant religion.

METHOD

Data

The data used in this study stem from the so-called Eurobarometers (EB), which have been conducted in the countries of the European Union twice a year since 1974 (European Communities Commission, 1988–1991; Reif & Inglehart, 1991). For each EB, a random national sample is drawn, consisting of about 1,000 respondents for most of the countries. For Luxemburg and Northern Ireland, the sample size is about 300 respondents. We combined the data from EB30 through EB35, which cover the period from fall, 1988 until spring, 1991. Data for East Germany were available only in EB34 and EB35. Because separate samples were available for East Germany and Northern Ireland, these regions were treated as separate countries.

For the analysis of the wife's labor force participation, we selected married women, aged 21–60, who are either employed, looking for work, or working in the household, and who are married to an employed husband. For the analysis of the wife's occupational achievement, we added to the selection single female household heads who have never been married. This analysis includes only women who are employed. Women

who are farmers or business owners or whose husbands are farmers or business owners are excluded from our analyses because of the ambiguity of the women's labor force status—whether they consider themselves housewives or farmer/business owners—and because the position of unpaid family workers may differ among the countries. In both analyses, couples that are living together unmarried are considered married.

Techniques and Measurement

To assess whether occupational status differences between spouses influence the wife's labor force participation (WLP), characteristics of working wives (and their families) are compared with characteristics of nonworking wives (and their families). To do so, logistic regression models are estimated with the wife's labor force participation as the dependent variable. This variable is coded 1 for women who are in the labor force (working or looking for work) and 0 for women who are not in the labor force.

In the analysis of the effect of the husband's occupation (compared to single women) on the wife's occupational achievement (WOA), the dependent variable is the occupational level of the wife. To obtain a variable that is ordered from low to high according to occupational status, we recoded the original occupational classification that was used in the Eurobarometers into five categories: (a) unskilled manuals, (b) skilled manuals, (c) lower level white collar (clerical, sales, services), (d) middle level managers, (e) professionals and higher managers. Because there has been some dispute in the literature about the relative position of skilled manual and lower level white collar occupations (e.g., Halle, 1984), we have repeated our analyses with the order of these categories reversed. Because the fit of the reversed models turned out to be worse, we have chosen to order the skilled manual occupations below the white collar occupations. Because we do not know the exact status distances between the categories of the occupational variable, we consider this variable to be an ordinal scale.

To assess the effects of our independent variables on the wife's occupational achievement, we use a version of the cumulative logit model (Agresti, 1990). This model, the *proportional odds model*, is based on the assumption that a regression model would hold if the dependent variable was measured more finely (p. 323). It estimates the effect of explanatory variables on the

logits (log-odds) of working above a certain occupational category instead of in or below that category as a function of an intercept and a set of explanatory variables. For each logit, the intercept has a different value, but the coefficients of the explanatory variables are the same for all logits. This last property makes the results of this analysis easy to interpret.

Independent variables. To study the effect of occupational status differences between spouses on the wife's participation in the labor force, we have to measure her *potential*, that is, the occupation in which she most likely would work if she decided to engage in paid employment. Some studies (e.g., Hiller & Philliber, 1980; Oppenheimer, 1982) use a measure of the wife's occupational potential based on her educational level. But for married women, the relationship between education and occupation may be distorted because many women have interrupted their careers for childbirth or because they adapted their careers to the needs of their families. Therefore, we follow Bowen and Finegan (1969) and Oppenheimer (1977), and measure the wife's occupational potential by the occupation in which she has actually been working, that is, the *current* occupation for working wives and the *last* occupation for wives who worked in the past. Because of this choice, our analysis is restricted to women who were employed at some time in their lives. Women who never held paid jobs (21%) had to be left out of the analysis. To measure the husband's occupation and the wife's potential occupation, we use the same five-category occupational classification used to measure the wife's occupational achievement.

Control variables. In our analysis, we control for several variables that are expected to influence the wife's labor force participation and her occupational achievement. These variables are the wife's education, her age, the presence of children in the household, whether or not she regularly attends church, size of the place of residence, and the regional unemployment rate for women. The wife's educational level is positively related to her participation in the labor force (e.g., Bowen & Finegan, 1969; Oppenheimer, 1982) and is also expected to be positively related to her occupational achievement. Besides education, the wife's age and the presence of children also have been found to be related to her labor force participation (e.g., Moen, 1991; Waite, 1980). Many wives

leave the labor force when the first child is born. Women without children are expected to invest more in their careers and, hence, to achieve more than women with children. In the analysis of wife's occupational achievement, we have added a term to the model for the interaction between marital status and whether or not there are children in the household. This was done because the burden of having children may be heavier for single women than for married women, who may share part of the work with their husband.

With regard to age, a quadratic term is added to the equations because the relationship is expected to be nonlinear (Moen, 1991). Church attendance and the size of the place of residence may play roles because of their relationship to traditionalism, which may affect the labor market decisions of wives (Philliber & Vannoy-Hiller, 1990). Finally, regional unemployment rates for women reflect the opportunities—or lack of opportunities—in the local labor market (Bowen & Finegan, 1969).

The wife's educational level is measured by the age she left school. The classification runs from "14 years or younger" to "22 years or older." The wife's age is measured in years. Church attendance is measured with two categories: (a) never/seldom, (b) regularly/much. The number of children under 16 years of age is measured with a three-category variable: (a) no children, (b) one child, and (c) two or more children. The size of the place of residence is measured with a three-category variable: (a) rural/village, (b) small, middle-sized town, (c) large town. Regional unemployment percentages for women in 1989 for all but one country come from Eurostat (1990). For East Germany the percentage comes from the International Labor Office (1992) and pertains to 1990. For Ireland, Northern Ireland, Luxemburg, and East Germany, only national figures were available.

A final issue is the comparability of the single and married women in the analysis of WOA. These women are comparable only with regard to the variables that are used in this analysis. Because the major factors that are expected to influence the occupational achievements of women (like their education, their age, and the presence of children) are used as control variables, we feel confident that this comparability works well enough for the purpose of our study. However, we cannot rule out completely the possibility that between single and married women other differ-

ences exist that are related to their occupational achievements.

Country characteristics. To measure the degree of modernization of the countries, we use the percentage of the labor force working in agriculture and the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. Because valid measures of income inequality are not available for all countries, we measure social inequality with two other indices: occupational inequality and educational inequality. These indices were derived from the Eurobarometers. To construct them, we used an unrestricted version of our data set, representing the complete male and female populations of the countries, aged 15 years and older. To measure occupational inequality, we divided the number of persons working in manual or farm labor by the number of persons working in professional or managerial jobs. To measure educational inequality, we divided the number of persons who left school at age 15 or younger by the number of persons who left school at age 19 or older. To measure the influence of social democracy or state socialism in the years before 1988, we used the number of years that social democratic parties were in government—or the number of years of state socialistic government—since 1970.

Dominant religion is measured with a dummy variable that indicates whether or not a country is predominantly Roman Catholic. Countries with more than 75% Roman Catholics in the mid-1970s are coded 1 on this variable and the other countries 0. Table 1 presents the values of the explanatory variables and their sources.

RESULTS

Wife's Labor Force Participation

Questions about the effects of occupational status differences between spouses are questions about interaction effects. We want to know whether certain combinations of occupations of husbands and wives lead to higher labor force participation for her—and whether other combinations lead to lower labor force participation for her—than predicted by the direct effects of the occupational variables themselves.

Our analysis starts with a model that contains only the main effects of the explanatory variables. Next, we add interaction parameters that model the pattern of interaction between the occupational variables according to our hypotheses. This is done until a model is reached that cannot significantly be improved by adding further interaction parameters. To test whether two models differ significantly, we use the likelihood-ratio test (Agresti, 1990, p. 48).

TABLE 1. COUNTRY-LEVEL VARIABLES TO EXPLAIN DIFFERENCES AMONG THE E.U. COUNTRIES

	AGRIC	GDPC	OCCINEQ	EDINEQ	SOCDEM	RELIG
France	5.1[b]	17063	1.42	1.44	5	1
Great Britain	2.0[a]	13978	1.56	3.05	5	0
West Germany	3.3[a]	19880	0.85	2.58	12	0
Italy	7.5[b]	16099	1.94	3.76	12	1
Netherlands	4.2[b]	15611	0.69	0.80	5	0
Denmark	5.5[b]	20444	1.73	0.33	11	0
Belgium	2.4[a]	15959	1.58	0.90	8	1
Ireland	12.8[a]	10563	3.10	3.23	10	1
Greece	22.3[a]	5626	2.51	2.88	6	0
Spain	9.5[c]	10925	2.56	3.92	5	1
Portugal	11.2[c]	5927	4.28	7.24	6	1
Luxemburg	3.2[b]	19510	0.98	1.43	8	1
Northern Ireland	4.5[b]	10748	2.62	4.05	5	0
East Germany	6.1[b]	5705	1.35	1.17	17	0

Note: AGRIC = percentage of labor force in working agriculture. From International Labor Office (1993). For Northern Ireland, data are from Eurostat (1993b). GDPC = gross domestic product per capita in the European Economic Union for 1991 at 1993 prices and exchange rates. From Eurostat (1993a). For Northern Ireland, data are from Eurostat (1994). OCCINEQ = occupational inequality for 1988–1991. EDINEQ = educational inequality for 1988–1991. SOCDEM = number of years between 1970 and 1987 when socialist parties were in government or there was state socialism. From Lane, McKay, and Newton (1991). RELIG = whether (1) or not (0) a country is predominantly Roman Catholic. From Barrett (1982).
[a]1990
[b]1991
[c]1992

TABLE 2. LOGISTIC REGRESSION MODELS FOR THE
INTERACTION BETWEEN HUSBAND'S OCCUPATION AND
WIFE'S POTENTIAL OCCUPATION ON WIFE'S
LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Model	Deviance
1. BM	10183.9
2. BM + DIA	10140.5
3. BM + DIA + ASYM	10140.5
4. BM + DIA + DIADIF	10123.1
5. BM + STEP + DIADIF	10119.9
6. BM + STEP + STEP^2 + DIADIF	10117.1
7. BM + VARSTEP + DIADIF	10115.5
8. SAT	10102.1
9. MODEL 5 + STEP × COUNTRY	10083.5
10. MODEL 5 + STEP × AGRIC	10119.8
11. MODEL 5 + STEP × GDPC	10119.9
12. MODEL 5 + STEP × OCCINEQ	10119.0
13. MODEL 5 + STEP × EDINEQ	10119.2
14. MODEL 5 + STEP × SOCDEM	10116.0
15. MODEL 5 + STEP × RELIG	10112.5
16. MODEL 5 + STEP × SOCDEM + STEP × RELIG	10110.3

Differences Between Models	G^2	df	p
MODEL 1–MODEL 2	43.4	1	<0.01
MODEL 2–MODEL 3	0.0	1	>0.05
MODEL 2–MODEL 4	17.4	4	<0.01
MODEL 4–MODEL 5	3.2	0	—
MODEL 5–MODEL 6	2.8	1	>0.05
MODEL 5–MODEL 7	4.4	3	>0.05
MODEL 5–MODEL 8	17.8	11	>0.05
MODEL 5–MODEL 9	36.4	13	<0.01
MODEL 5–MODEL 10	0.1	1	>0.05
MODEL 5–MODEL 11	0.0	1	>0.05
MODEL 5–MODEL 12	0.9	1	>0.05
MODEL 5–MODEL 13	0.7	1	>0.05
MODEL 5–MODEL 14	3.9	1	<0.05
MODEL 5–MODEL 15	7.4	1	<0.01
MODEL 15–MODEL 16	2.2	1	>0.05

Note: BM = baseline model. DIA = diagonal parameter. ASYM = assymetry. DIADIF = differences between diagonal cells. STEP = linear step parameter. VARSTEP = separate parameters for each step. SAT = saturated interaction model. Deviance = –2 log (likelihood). G^2 = likelihood-ratio test statistic. df = degrees of freedom. The meanings of the other abbreviations are explained in the note to Table 1.

Model selection procedure. Table 2 presents the results of the model selection procedure. Model 1 contains all explanatory variables but no interaction effects. In Model 2, a parameter is added for the difference in wife's labor force participation between spouses with the same occupational group and spouses with different occupational groups. The likelihood-ratio test statistic (G^2) in the bottom panel of Table 2 shows that the difference in deviance between Model 1 and Model 2 is statistically significant. We, therefore, are led to the conclusion that wife's labor force participa-

tion differs between spouses with the same and spouses with different occupational groups. As the parameter estimates of the selected model will show later on, wife's labor force participation is highest for spouses who work at the same occupational level, as predicted by the status-similarity hypothesis. In Model 3, a parameter is added to test for differences between couples in which the wife's occupation is higher and couples in which the wife's occupation is lower than the husband's occupation. Adding this parameter does not improve the fit of the model. This indicates that both the within-family-competition hypothesis and the among-families-competition hypothesis must be rejected.

In Models 4 and 5, two extensions of the status-similarity hypothesis are tested. In its strictest form, this hypothesis predicts a difference in wife's labor force participation between spouses with the same and spouses with different occupational status, but it can be extended in two meaningful ways. First, it is possible that the strength of the tendency towards status similarity differs between occupational groups. Status considerations may be more important in some occupational groups than in others. Although we have no hypotheses about which occupational groups will be most open in this respect, Model 4 tests for this possibility. This model fits significantly better than Model 2, so we can conclude that, for spouses with the same occupational groups, differences in wife's labor force participation exist that depend on *which* occupational group they have.

Second, it is possible that larger differences in status between spouses will result in stronger reactions of the wife than smaller differences. If that is true, we can expect a gradual decrease of wife's labor force participation with increasing difference between the spouses' occupations. Models 5, 6, and 7 test for this possibility. Model 5 assumes that with each step increase in distance between the occupational groups of the spouses, wife's labor force participation decreases by a fixed amount. This model fits better than Model 4, so the assumption of a gradual decrease is most in line with our data. In Model 5, the extent to which wife's labor force participation decreases with each step increase in distance between the occupational groups is indicated with a single parameter, which will be called the *step parameter.*

Models 6 and 7 test whether, with increasing differences among the occupational groups, wife's labor force participation decreases in a nonlinear, instead of in a linear, way. In Model 6,

besides the linear step parameter, a quadratic step parameter is added to the model. In Model 7, the step parameter is replaced by four separate parameters, one for each possible number of steps. Because the fit of these models is not significantly better than the fit of Model 5, the assumption of Model 5, of a linear decrease, is most in line with our data.

To study whether, besides the interaction effects that are contained in Model 5, other substantial interaction effects exist between the occupational groups of the spouses, Model 5 is compared with Model 8, which allows wife's labor force participation to be different for each combination of husbands' and wives' occupations. Because Model 8 does not fit significantly better than Model 5, we will use Model 5 to describe our data.

To test for differences in the strength of the status effect between the E.U. countries, some additional models are estimated. Model 9 allows the step parameter of Model 5 to differ among the countries. This results in a significant improvement of the model, so we can conclude that the step parameter differs among the countries. Models 10 to 15 test whether these differences in the step parameter among the countries are related to differences in other country characteristics. In Model 10, the parameters for differences in the step parameter among the countries are replaced by the percentage of the labor force working in agriculture; in Model 11, by the gross domestic product per capita; in Model 12, by the degree of occupational inequality; in Model 13, by the degree of educational inequality; in Model 14, by the extent of social democratic or state socialist government; and in Model 15, by the dominant religion. Table 2 shows that Models 14 and 15 fit significantly better than Model 5. So, both the degree of social democracy/state socialism and the dominant religion explain a significant part of the differences among countries. In Model 16, these two explanatory variables are put together in one model. Because this model does not fit significantly better than Model 15, we are led to the conclusion that these variables are correlated.

Parameter estimates. Table 3 presents parameters of Model 5, Model 9, and Model 16. For the categorical variables, deviation from mean coding is used. The values of these parameters indicate how much wife's labor force participation in a category of a variable differs from the mean of wife's labor force participation over all categories of that variable.

The parameters of Model 5 show that education has a significantly positive effect on wife's labor force participation, and church attendance and number of children, a significantly negative effect. With increasing age, the probability of participation first increases and subsequently decreases. The size of the place of residence and the regional unemployment rates for women have no significant effect. Among the countries, large differences in participation exist. Participation rates are highest in East Germany and Denmark and lowest in Ireland and Luxemburg. The husband's occupational group has no significant effect on wife's labor force participation. The effect of the wife's occupational potential is rather strong. For wives with professional and managerial occupational potentials, the probability of participation is higher than for other wives.

Of the interaction parameters, the step parameter is significantly negative, indicating that with increasing status differences, wife's labor force participation decreases. The parameters for the differences between spouses who work at the same occupational levels show that wife's labor force participation is highest among middle managers and lowest among professionals/higher managers and unskilled manual workers. The step parameter has a (multiplicative) value of 0.80. So, in the E.U. countries—on average—the odds on wife's labor force participation decrease by 20% at each step increase in difference between the occupational levels of the spouses.

Table 3 presents for Model 9 only the interaction parameters and the parameters for the differences in strength of the step parameter among the countries. The other parameters keep about the same value as in Model 5. In Great Britain, Ireland, and Northern Ireland, this parameter is significantly lower than average. This indicates that these countries are more open to occupational status differences between spouses than the other countries. In Portugal and East Germany, the step parameter is significantly higher than average. For Model 16, the parameters for the effects of social democracy/state socialism and of dominant religion are presented. Only the effect of dominant religion is significant. Countries that are predominantly Roman Catholic are *less* open than other countries.

Wife's Occupational Achievement

The analysis of the effect of the husband's occupation on wife's occupational achievement focus-

TABLE 3. PARAMETERS OF LOGISTIC REGRESSION MODELS FOR WIFE'S LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION ($N = 10,007$)

	Model 5			Model 9	
	B	EXP(*B*)		*B*	EXP(*B*)
Main Effects			Interaction Effects		
Education	0.107**	(1.11)	Step-parameter	−.291**	(0.75)
Age	0.058**	(1.06)	Diagonal parameters[a]:		
Age-square	−0.001**	(1.00)	Both professional/manager	−0.364*	(0.69)
Church attendance	−0.183**	(0.83)	Both middle manager	0.643**	(1.90)
Place of residence	0.011	(1.01)	Both lower white-collar	0.197	(1.22)
Reg. unemployment rate	0.000	(1.00)	Both skilled manual	−0.116	(0.89)
Number of children[a]:			Both unskilled manual	−0.361*	(0.70)
None	0.514**	(1.67)	Differences Between Countries[a]		
One	−0.017	(0.98)	Step by France	−0.021	(0.98)
Two or more	−0.497**	(0.61)	Step by Great Britain	0.248**	(1.28)
Country[a]:			Step by West Germany	0.007	(1.01)
France	0.332**	(1.39)	Step by Italy	−0.032	(0.97)
Great Britain	0.122	(1.13)	Step by Netherlands	0.131	(1.14)
West Germany	−0.401**	(0.67)	Step by Denmark	0.079	(1.08)
Italy	−0.266**	(0.77)	Step by Belgium	−0.117	(0.89)
Netherlands	−1.090**	(0.34)	Step by Ireland	0.216*	(1.24)
Denmark	1.553**	(4.73)	Step by Greece	0.091	(1.10)
Belgium	0.794**	(2.21)	Step by Spain	0.057	(1.06)
Ireland	−1.454**	(0.23)	Step by Portugal	−0.453**	(0.64)
Greece	−0.534**	(0.59)	Step by Luxemburg	−0.050	(0.95)
Spain	−1.127**	(0.32)	Step by N. Ireland	0.414*	(1.51)
Portugal	1.185**	(3.27)	Step by East Germany	−0.568*	(0.57)
Luxemburg	−1.280**	(0.28)			
N. Ireland	−0.135	(0.87)		Model 16	
East Germany	2.301**	(9.98)			
Occupation of husband[a]:				*B*	EXP(*B*)
Professional/manager	−0.109	(0.90)			
Middle manager	−0.028	(0.97)	Explanatory Variables		
Lower white-collar	−0.007	(0.99)	Step by SOCDEM	−0.014	(0.99)
Skilled manual	−0.025	(0.98)	Step by RELIG	−0.139*	(0.87)
Unskilled manual	0.168	(1.18)			
Occupation of wife[a]:					
Professional/manager	0.795**	(2.21)			
Middle manager	0.758**	(2.13)			
Lower white-collar	−0.517**	(0.60)			
Skilled manual	−0.602**	(0.55)			
Unskilled manual	−0.434*	(0.65)			
Interaction Effects:					
Step-parameter	−0.227**	(0.80)			
Diagonal parameters[a]:					
Both professional/manager	−0.502**	(0.61)			
Both middle manager	0.737**	(2.09)			
Both lower white collar	0.217	(1.24)			
Both skilled manual	−0.047	(0.95)			
Both unskilled manual	−0.404**	(0.67)			

[a]Contrast: deviation from mean.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

es on differences in achievement between single women and women who are married to husbands working in different occupational groups. The ceiling hypothesis predicts a downward effect on the wife's occupational achievement when the husband works in a low occupational group. If this prediction holds, wives with husbands in low occupational groups work in lower occupations than comparable single women. On the other hand, the facilitating hypothesis predicts wife's occupational achievement to be upwardly affected when the husband works in a high occupational group. If this is true, wives with husbands working in high occupational groups work in higher occupations than comparable single women.

TABLE 4. PARAMETERS OF PROPORTIONAL ODDS MODELS FOR WIFE'S OCCUPATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

General Model ($n = 7,522$)			Model 2 ($n = 6,255$)		
	B	EXP(B)		B	EXP(B)
Main Effects			Main Effects		
Intercept			Occupation of husband[b]:		
Unskilled manual	−1.347**	(0.26)	Facilitating effect	1.219**	(3.38)
Skilled manual	−2.272**	(0.10)	Ceiling effect	−0.673**	(0.51)
Lower white-collar	−5.088**	(0.01)	Differences Between Countries:		
Middle management	−6.123**	(0.00)	Facilitating effect[a]:		
Education	0.275**	(1.32)	France	0.100	(1.10)
Age	0.131**	(1.14)	Great Britain	−0.668**	(0.51)
Age square	−0.001**	(1.00)	West Germany	0.129	(1.14)
Church attendance	−0.077	(1.08)	Italy	−0.319	(0.73)
Place of residence	0.073*	(1.08)	Netherlands	0.096	(1.10)
Reg. unemployment level	−0.002	(1.00)	Denmark	−0.574**	(0.56)
Children interaction	−0.188	(0.83)	Belgium	−0.317	(0.73)
Number of children[a]:			Ireland	0.278	(1.32)
None	0.114**	(1.12)	Greece	−0.128	(0.88)
One	−0.051	(0.95)	Spain	0.145	(1.16)
Two or more	−0.063	(0.94)	Portugal	0.400	(1.49)
Country[a]:			Luxemburg	1.119*	(3.06)
France	0.222**	(1.25)	N. Ireland	−0.233	(0.79)
Great Britain	−0.002	(1.00)	East Germany	−0.026	(0.97)
West Germany	0.130	(1.14)	Ceiling effect[a]:		
Italy	0.306**	(1.36)	France	0.019	(1.02)
Netherlands	0.006	(1.01)	Great Britain	−0.589**	(0.56)
Denmark	−1.395**	(0.25)	West Germany	−0.074	(0.93)
Belgium	−0.282**	(0.75)	Italy	0.005	(1.00)
Ireland	0.011	(1.01)	Netherlands	0.435*	(1.55)
Greece	0.318**	(1.37)	Denmark	−0.013	(0.99)
Spain	0.276*	(1.32)	Belgium	−0.139	(0.87)
Portugal	0.459**	(1.58)	Ireland	0.134	(1.14)
Luxemburg	0.237	(1.27)	Greece	−0.102	(0.90)
N. Ireland	−0.128	(0.88)	Spain	−0.169	(0.84)
East Germany	−0.157	(0.85)	Portugal	0.470*	(1.60)
Occupation of husband[b]:			Luxemburg	0.112	(1.12)
Professional/manager	1.196**	(3.31)	N. Ireland	−0.466	(0.63)
Middle management	1.188**	(3.28)	East Germany	0.376	(1.46)
Lower white-collar	−0.066	(0.94)			
Skilled manual	−0.613**	(0.54)			
Unskilled manual	−1.404**	(0.25)			

[a]Contrast: deviation from mean.
[b]Reference category: single women.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Table 4 shows the results of this analysis. For the parameters of the number of children and country variables, deviations from mean coding is used. For the parameters of husband's occupational group, the single women category is taken as reference category. We see that education and the size of the place of residence have significant positive effects on wife's occupational achievement, and that the presence of children has a negative effect. The negative effect of children is somewhat stronger for single women, but this interaction effect is not significant. With increasing age, wife's occupational achievement first increases and subsequently decreases. Church atten-

dance and regional unemployment rates for women have no significant effect. The wife's occupational achievement is highest in the Mediterranean countries and lowest in Denmark and Belgium.

With regard to the effect of the husband's occupation, compared with the situation of single women, we see that the occupational achievement of wives of husbands working in professional and managerial positions is significantly higher than the achievement of single women. This finding is in line with the facilitating hypothesis. On the other hand, the achievement of wives of manual workers, and especially of unskilled manual

workers, is significantly lower than the achievement of single women. This finding supports the ceiling hypothesis. Wives whose husbands have lower white-collar occupations do not differ from single women.

Differences among countries. To test whether the effect of the husband's occupation on wife's occupational achievement differs among the E.U. countries, several additional proportional odds models are estimated. To prevent the number of parameters from becoming exorbitantly high, in these analyses a simplified version of the husband's occupation variable is used. The professionals/higher managers and middle management categories, which both showed significantly higher occupational achievements for wives than for single women, are added together to form the higher occupations category. The skilled manual and unskilled manual categories, which both showed significantly lower occupational achievements for wives than for single women, are added together to form the category lower occupations. Couples with husbands working in lower white-collar occupations are removed from the dataset. As a result, the husband's occupational position is indicated with three categories: (a) lower occupations (ceiling effect), (b) higher occupations (facilitating effect), (c) single women (no husband's occupation).

The fit measures of the models for country differences are shown in Table 5. Model 1 is a baseline model that contains the same variables as the general model of Table 4, but with the reduced version of the husband's occupation variable. In Model 2, parameters are added that allow the effects of the husband's occupation to differ among the E.U. countries. This model fits significantly better than Model 1, so there are some differences between the countries. Parameters of Model 2 are presented in Table 4. Because the parameters of the control variables do not differ substantially from the values of the general model, this table shows only the parameters for the facilitating and the ceiling effects of the husband's occupation and for the country differences in these effects. Again, we see that, compared with single women, occupational achievement is significantly higher for wives married to husbands with high-status occupations and significantly lower for wives married to husbands with low-status occupations.

The parameters for the country differences show that the ceiling effect is significantly weaker than average in the Netherlands and in Portugal and stronger than average in Great Britain. The facilitating effect is significantly weaker than average in Great Britain and in Denmark and stronger than average in Luxemburg. Models 3 to 8 in Table 5 test whether these country differences can be explained with the country-level variables. The fit measures show that none of these variables explains a significant part of the country differences.

TABLE 5. PROPORTIONAL ODDS MODELS FOR DIFFERENCES AMONG COUNTRIES IN THE EFFECT OF THE HUSBAND'S OCCUPATION ON THE WIFE'S OCCUPATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Model	Deviance
1. Baseline model	15692.9
2. Country differences	15644.3
3. AGRIC	15690.6
4. GDPC	15689.3
5. OCCINEQ	15690.5
6. EDINEQ	15689.5
7. SOCDEM	15690.4
8. RELIG	15689.1

Differences Between Models	G^2	df	p
MODEL 1–MODEL 2	48.6	26	<0.01
MODEL 1–MODEL 3	2.7	2	>0.05
MODEL 1–MODEL 4	4.0	2	>0.05
MODEL 1–MODEL 5	2.8	2	>0.05
MODEL 1–MODEL 6	3.8	2	>0.05
MODEL 1–MODEL 7	2.9	2	>0.05
MODEL 1–MODEL 8	4.2	2	>0.05

Note: Deviance = –2 log (likelihood). G^2 = likelihood-ratio test statistic. *df* = number of degrees of freedom. The meanings of other abbreviations are explained in the note to Table 1.

Effect Sizes

The parameters in Table 3 and Table 4 show significant effects of the status variables, but they do not show how important these variables are for the explanation of wife's labor force participation and wife's occupational achievement. To get a better impression of this, we have studied the effect of removing variables from the models on the fit measure (deviance) of the models. With regard to wife's labor force participation, removing the parameters of the status effect from Model 5 in Table 2 leads to an increase of the deviance by 64. If the parameter of education is removed, deviance increases by 76. So the part of deviance explained by the status effect is about 85% of the part explained by education. This may seem rather impressive, but the importance of educa-

tion in this model is reduced by the fact that the model also contains the wife's potential occupation. Part of the reason why a woman's education affects her labor force participation is because a higher education allows her to get a better paying job (see Waite, 1980). If we leave both the wife's education and her occupation out of the model, deviance increases by 290. Furthermore, if we drop the wife's age, deviance increases by 188, and if we leave out number of children, deviance increases by 245. So, the explanatory power of the status-effect variables in Model 5 is about one third to one fifth of the explanatory power of the other most important variables.

With regard to wife's occupational achievement, the magnitude of the effect of the husband's occupation is rather high. If we leave this variable out of the general model of Table 4, deviance increases by 678. If we drop education from the model, deviance increases by only 450, and if we leave one of the other variables (aside from country) out of the model, the increase in deviance is smaller still. So we are led to the conclusion that the husband's occupation has a larger explanatory power than all other (control) variables in the model.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Using data on the E.U. countries from around 1990, we have investigated the effects of occupational status differences between spouses on the wife's labor force participation and occupational achievement.

We have found that, in these countries, spouses tend to work at the same or nearly the same occupational level. As predicted by the status-similarity hypothesis, for wives whose potential occupations differ from their husbands' occupations, the probability of being employed is lower than for wives with potential occupations equal to their husbands' occupations. Furthermore, as predicted by the ceiling hypothesis, the occupational achievement of wives married to husbands working in low-level manual occupations was lower than the occupational achievements of comparable single women. These results indicate that the career of a wife may be hindered by a marriage to a husband who works on an occupational level that is lower than she is able to achieve. Such wives may not realize their full occupational potential because they tend to drop out of the labor force or they may take a job with lower status than is possible. However, the effect of the hus-

band's occupation on the wife's achievement need not always be negative. Our findings show that a marriage with a husband working in a professional or managerial occupation may enhance the career of a working wife. As predicted by the facilitating hypothesis, wives of husbands with high-level occupations achieve more than comparable single women.

The strength of the status effects differs somewhat among the E.U. countries. To determine the reason for these differences, we tested several hypotheses derived from stratification theory. Modernization, inequality, or social democratic/state socialist government had no effect. The only factor that explains a significant part of the country differences is cultural: In countries that are predominantly Roman Catholic, the negative effect of occupational status differences on the wife's employment is significantly stronger than in the other countries.

The effect of Roman Catholicism invites some further comments. Because it has been found earlier that Catholics are more conservative than Protestants in family-related matters (e.g., Greeley, 1989), this effect was not unexpected. But does only the traditionalism of Roman Catholics account for this effect? Esping-Andersen (1990) has argued that the nature of the welfare system in European states with strong Catholic traditions differs from the welfare system in other European countries. His argument is that in the former countries, welfare is predicated on the male breadwinner. This may account for the stronger effects of status differences on the wife's employment in Catholic countries, too.

Our finding of effects of occupational status differences between spouses on the wife's employment and occupational achievement raises questions about the nature of the processes within marriage that are responsible for these effects. According to the status-similarity hypothesis—which receives the strongest support from our data—occupational status differences between spouses may lead to marital dissatisfaction and stress, especially when the boundaries between social status groups are crossed. In addition, status similarity is expected to lead to mutual understanding and solidarity between the spouses. Therefore, spouses are expected to prevent status differences and to try to attain status similarity. Given this explanation of our findings, an interesting question for further research is whether, in the E.U. countries, marital stress is higher in marriages with larger status differences between the spouses.

With regard to the effects of the husbands' occupations on the wives' occupational achievements, we have tested hypotheses from the literature about the ceiling and facilitating effects by enlarging our data set with data for single women. In this way, we have complemented the finding of Philliber and Vannoy-Hiller (1990) that the occupation of a married woman is higher when her husband has a higher occupation. We found that a woman married to a low-achieving husband achieves less than a similar, single woman, and that a woman married to a high-achieving husband achieves more than a similar, single woman. These additional findings, in our opinion, underline the idea that both a ceiling effect and a facilitating effect play a role. Because of the ceiling effect, the wives of low-achieving husbands achieve less than comparable single women (for whom this effect plays no role), and, because of the facilitating effect, the wives of high-achieving husbands achieve more than comparable single women (who lack the support of a husband).

The finding that the effect of the husband's occupation on the wife's occupational achievement is rather strong raises the question of whether, besides a ceiling and a facilitating effect, other processes play a role. A likely possibility is selection. Our finding that married women tend to drop out of the labor force to prevent occupational status differences with their husbands points to a selection process that takes place within marriages. As a result of this process, the association between the occupations of the remaining two-earner couples will increase. Other selection processes are at work at the beginning of marriage. The fact that people tend to select a partner with the same educational level (Ultee & Luijkx, 1990), together with the individual relationship between education and occupation, will establish a positive relationship between the occupations of spouses, even if no causal influence of either spouse on the occupation of the other exists. Although in our analyses this effect is largely controlled by adding the educational level of the wife to the equation, the possibility remains that within educational categories men with better prospects tend to marry women with better prospects. Furthermore, if marriage is postponed until after the start of the career, matches may be made directly on the basis of occupation. This argument leads to the question of whether at the time of marriage a relationship already exists between the occupational levels of spouses, net of the effect of the wife's education.

To answer this and other questions raised by our findings, comparative data sets are needed that are richer than those analyzed in the present study.

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