

## 4 From Surviving the War Trenches to Storming the Gender Barricades?

### Marriage Patterns in Belgium in the Early Twentieth Century and the Impact of War on Gender Relations

*Saskia Hin, Paul Puschmann,  
and Koen Matthijs*

#### **Introduction: The Impact of War on Marriage and Gender Relations**

Warfare profoundly affects the life courses of men, children, and women. It is less clear how war is related to (the dynamics of) gender (in)equalities. A survey in the early 2000s suggested that the *frequency* of warfare across societies correlated somewhat with cross-cultural levels of gender inequality but did so only to a modest and uneven extent.<sup>1</sup> Of how individual wars impact upon gender relations, we know very little, and of how war, gender relations, and marriage and family patterns influence each other, even less: so far, demographic perspectives have not played a prominent role in the historical debate. This study seeks to fill part of this gap by studying trends in first marriage patterns before, during and after World War I (WWI). Since marriage patterns are intricately linked with couple dynamics and gender relations at the micro-level, marriage certificates provide us with excellent material for a bottom-up perspective on how the First World War affected gender relations.

Various aspects of marriage behaviour may be understood in the light of gender dynamics and the position of men and women in the private and public domains. Large age gaps between partners may point to less equal relationships and imbalances in the bargaining power of each partner.<sup>2</sup> Young ages at first marriage for women have been seen as indicative of gender-separated spheres, of male (reproductive) power over women, and of a normative system in which men are seen as heads of the household, while women are valued primarily as wives and mothers.<sup>3</sup> In this study, we use long-term trends in ages at first marriage and age gaps between partners as an – not *the* – indicator of gender patterns. Second, we look at trends in social homogamy, based on the profession of partners. The

argument is that women who marry men with a higher social status have lower bargaining power within marriage compared to those women who marry partners with an equal or lower social status, since the socio-economic capital in the former type of marriage is provided mainly by the male, pushing women into a more dependent relationship.

Using historical marriage records from Belgium, we focus on a country directly and profoundly affected by warfare, but with a particular wartime experience, in the sense that Belgium – contrary to, for instance Great Britain – was occupied by Germany, and that there was no substantial expansion of labour opportunities for women during the war.<sup>4</sup> Whereas, for instance, in France, Germany, and Great Britain, women took over typical male occupations in the public service sector and in (war) industry, as men were fighting at the front, such a profound change in the gender composition of the workforce did not occur in Belgium, also because of the high unemployment rate following the economic decline that was caused by the German invasion and the looting of Belgian factories.<sup>5</sup>

Lasting changes in marriage patterns have also been thought to be linked to changes in the sex ratio invoked by the war: high mortality among young men during the war meant that the sex ratio came to be skewed, with a pronounced surplus of women at marriageable age.<sup>6</sup> This lasting shortage of men is thought not only to have had a profound effect on the life histories of these particular women, but also on societal change in gender relations. Following along the lines of earlier work by Becker on mating,<sup>7</sup> Guttentag and Secord argued in their seminal work *Too Many Women? The Sex Ratio Question* that in any society, the sex of which the supply is low will hold dyadic power in a relationship between two people of opposite sexes, since alternatives are more readily available to them than to the sex of which there is a surplus.<sup>8</sup> As a result, if there is a shortage of men due to warfare, men are supposed to have greater power within the relationship. The impact on power relations between partners as generated by imbalanced sex ratios is furthermore affected by the so-called structural power, the (im)balance in economic, political and social power between the sexes. Dyadic and structural power can strengthen each other, but they can also counterbalance each other. As a result, the effects of imbalanced sex ratios can widely diverge across societies.

In Belgium, sex ratio patterns within the mating and marriage market were distinctive to that of other countries involved in WWI. During the war, there was a shortage of men, but this shortage was due mostly to temporary male absence: men had to take up forced labour outside of their home region, or volunteered to do so to avoid worse.<sup>9</sup> Recruitment for the army, by contrast, was halted shortly after the beginning of the war, as the largest part of Belgium was quickly overrun and occupied by German troops, and King Albert decided not to participate in several major battles against the Germans in order to save the lives of Belgian

soldiers. Consequently, the share of Belgian military men who died during the war made up 2% of the total male population in the age category 15–40, considerably lower than in France (16%), Germany (12%), the United Kingdom (7%), and Italy (10%).<sup>10</sup> As a result, the sex ratio was only locally and temporarily skewed.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, by the summer of 1917, almost all forced labourers had returned to their homes.<sup>12</sup> Towards the end of the war, sex ratios in the population were close to what they had been before. While there were surpluses of women in the marriage market, these surpluses were small. For example, in the age group 20–24, in 1920 there were 100.8 women for every 100 men (compared to 99.6 women for every 100 men in 1910); in the age group 25–29 – the one hit hardest by soldier mortality – 105.6 women for every 100 men, compared to 99.1 in 1910.<sup>13</sup> After the war, therefore, the Belgian marriage market was not marked by a dramatic lack of men in the marriageable age groups.

These two distinctive characteristics make the country an interesting test case for the question whether changes in gender relations that are often attributed to this period occurred as a consequence of, or independently from, direct engagement with warfare and new economic roles for women during wartime. Given the particular situation of the country, to what extent can we observe changes in partner choices in wartime and post-war Belgium? Do changes in ages at first marriage, age differences between partners, and status homogamy indicate an improved position of women vis-à-vis men? And if so, did changes occur across the board, or were only specific social groups affected? Did mating and marriage patterns change permanently, or did the return of peace lead to a return of the pre-war order?

### **Gender, Marriage and the Position of Women in Pre-War Belgium**

While European countries are currently characterized by high shares of singles, late marriage, and high incidences of divorce, a century ago this picture looked very different. During the second half of the nineteenth century several Western European countries, including Belgium, had witnessed a decrease in marriage ages, a decrease in final celibacy (i.e. widespread marriage), and the emergence of strong norms surrounding the ‘right age’ at marriage.<sup>14</sup> At the same time divorce rates were (very) low. All this coincided with the gender-specific separation of male and female domains: the rise of the male breadwinner model and new ideals of domesticity.<sup>15</sup> Women were increasingly relegated to the private sphere, while men occupied the public one. The traditional role pattern that emerged exalted the ideal of women as wives, mothers, and caregivers. This pattern tallies with a historical context in which there was a male surplus up to age 40, and men held strong structural power.<sup>16</sup>

According to Hagemann, warfare and nationalism in Europe played an important role in fostering similar trends across Western Europe, and elevated domesticity ‘to the foremost patriotic female duty’.<sup>17</sup>

In the legal realm, the positions of men and women differed strongly. Belgian law defined men as the legal heads of households and left little independence for married women. Upon marriage, women lost liberties they had enjoyed as single women, notably the right to sign contracts,<sup>18</sup> and became, in fact, fully subordinated to their husbands.<sup>19</sup> The position of married women should be seen within the Belgian context, in which the feminist movement had achieved only modest success and had rallied for ‘difference feminism’ rather than ‘equality feminism’ in order to avoid the critique that women were about to masculinize.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, Belgian feminists argued that both sexes were fundamentally different, but complementary and therefore equal.<sup>21</sup> This, in turn, should be viewed against the background of the political focus on nationalism in a young nation (Belgium was founded in 1830), the strong hold of Catholicism, and the economic and social crisis of the 1880s, which had led to a systematic political focus on family values in order to restore the social order.<sup>22</sup>

As elsewhere, feminism was driven primarily by members of the *petite bourgeoisie*, who recruited their members mainly among the middle classes. Shortly before WWI, the feminist movement started to focus on the public, political, and economic rights of women,<sup>23</sup> internationalized, and achieved considerable success: It established that married women could dispose of their own salaries and savings. Moreover, from 1908 on, women were allowed to sign marriage certificates as witnesses, signifying recognition of their intellectual ability. The foundation of a women’s movement tied to the Catholic party, moreover, meant enhanced visibility for ideals of greater equality between men and women. These all were signs that at the eve of World War I, the old patriarchal order was increasingly questioned and challenged in Belgium.

## Research Questions and Hypotheses

How did WWI affect these trends? Traditionally, WWI has been regarded as a turning point in gender history, and as a catalyst for female emancipation.<sup>24</sup> It is indeed striking that in several countries affected by WWI, women suffrage was installed during or just after the war, including Russia, Germany, and Austria.<sup>25</sup> During the war, women in these countries had symbolically claimed their citizenship rights by replacing men at crucial positions in society and the labour market, as men were fighting at the front. However, more recent historical research has questioned and criticized this perspective, by showing that many of the gender-related changes WWI brought about either continued trends that had already started before the war or were short-lived. Once men had returned home,

they successfully reclaimed their jobs, women were fired, and in many Western European countries female labour market participation fell in fact below pre-war levels.<sup>26</sup>

When it comes to marriage trends, shortages of men have been theoretically perceived as a catalyst for more equal gender relations, since in such situations women outnumber men. In Guttentag and Secord's view, low sex ratios, or shortages of men, provide impetus for feminist movements: the inability of a distinct group of women to find suitable marriage partners leads to dissatisfaction and a desire for greater independence and increasing structural power.<sup>27</sup> From this point of view, it is perfectly logical that the contingency of WWI, which led to such shortages of men, went hand in hand with an upsurge of feminism, and a strengthening of women's rights in many European countries. In the Belgian context, where the sex ratio was biased locally<sup>28</sup> and for limited time only, we expect to see a more limited impact both in time and space.

At the same time, shortages of men may set opposing forces at work: when there is a surplus of women, men may attach greater importance to youth in the mating process, and a competition over men may lead women to settle down earlier – before competition has reduced their opportunities.<sup>29</sup> Age gaps between partners may thus increase, as women's marital age decreases while that of men does not. This will lead to a loss of dyadic power among the surplus sex. Imbalanced sex ratios as produced by warfare, therefore, can lead to opposing directional trends that coincide in society.

This leaves many questions as to how the short-term imbalances in sex ratios might have played out empirically in Belgium – questions which have not yet been studied. Here, we integrate evidence on sex ratios in order to investigate whether they had a bearing on marriage patterns. More in particular, our research focuses on three specific questions. First, we ask whether the pattern of decreasing ages at first marriage, which has been interpreted as an expression of increasing familiarization and separation of gender spheres,<sup>30</sup> persisted during and after WWI. Did 'things turn back to normal' on the marriage front after the first dust of the war had settled, in a country that had been deeply affected by war, but in which sex ratios had altered only to a limited extent? Did the decline in pre-war mean ages at first marriage persist throughout the 1920s? The latter would suggest that women continued to focus on their role as (house)wives, mothers, and caretakers. Or was the war a turning point, breaking the trend in declining ages at first marriage that was connected with increasingly separated gender spheres in late-nineteenth-century Belgium?

Second, we investigate trends in age differences between first marriage partners. Women marrying a partner much older than themselves had lower bargaining power than their counterparts who married a man of comparable or younger age. Regardless of where we ought to place the

causes of changes, trends in the age differential between partners for the period 1900–1930 can shed light on gender dynamics within households. If the data reveal a decrease in age gaps between men and women, with marriage ages rising faster for women than for men, this can be interpreted as a sign of female emancipation, or at least as a phenomenon paving the way for it.<sup>31</sup>

Third, we aim to gain a better understanding of the characteristics (socio-economic status, age, urban-rural origin, and migration status) of those married couples driving the observed changes in marriage trends. Following the results of our descriptive analyses, we focus on digging deeper into the following questions: Did different socio-economic groups display similar trends with regard to spousal age gaps, or did the shape and the pace of change differ between social groups? Which individuals were at higher odds of marrying a partner well above their own age, and did their characteristics differ before and after the war?

## Data and Methods

We use a large dataset of newly collected marriage records (N=49,650) covering the pre-war, war, and post-war periods (1830–1930). These data pertain to marriages concluded in the current province of Flemish Brabant and the city of Brussels, located in the heart of Belgium. While most grooms and brides in the dataset were born in this area, and the data hence cannot be taken to be representative of Belgium as a whole, but should rather be considered as representative of the Flemish Brabant province, the data do include people born elsewhere in Belgium and beyond.<sup>32</sup>

We enriched this dataset with additional geographic information in order to establish whether places of birth and residence were urban or rural, and coded the professions into the Historical International Standard Classification of Occupations (HISCO).<sup>33</sup> Literacy was measured through the proxy of the husband and bride's (in)ability to underwrite their marriage contract with their names. Between 1870 and 1900, the ability of grooms and especially of brides to write their names under their marriage contracts rose quickly, from 67.4% of men and 52.6% of women in 1870 to 85.6% of men and 83.1% of women. By 1930, the gap between men and women had closed, but the improvement in writing skills had halted, and was stuck at 86.6% for brides and 86.9% for grooms.<sup>34</sup>

We use descriptive methods to analyse marriage ages, and we conduct multinomial logistic regression to test statistically the differences between couples with a 'traditional' partner choice (husband at least three years older than wife) and couples marked by a more 'progressive' partner choice (the age difference between husband and bride was less than three years, or the bride was older than the husband).

## Descriptive Results

### *Age Homogamy*

When it comes to age at first marriage, WWI caused a brief interruption of existing trends in Belgium. Both for men and for women, ages at first marriage spiked during, but especially shortly after the war: this points to the postponement of marriages by both sexes during the war itself. However, soon the existing trend of declining ages at first marriage among women, which had characterized the second half of the nineteenth century, picked up again. For men, by contrast, the 1920s were characterized by a stagnation of the pre-war decline in ages at first marriage (Figure 4.1). For comparative purposes, we include a comparable data series on the developmental trend in age at first marriage from the neighbouring Netherlands (data drawn from the Historical Sample of the Netherlands (HSN)).<sup>35</sup> We consider this brief comparison of interest because unlike Belgium, the Netherlands remained neutral during the war. Hence, it did not face issues surrounding the absence of men due to war conditions, and it did not face the wartime economic decline Belgium experienced.

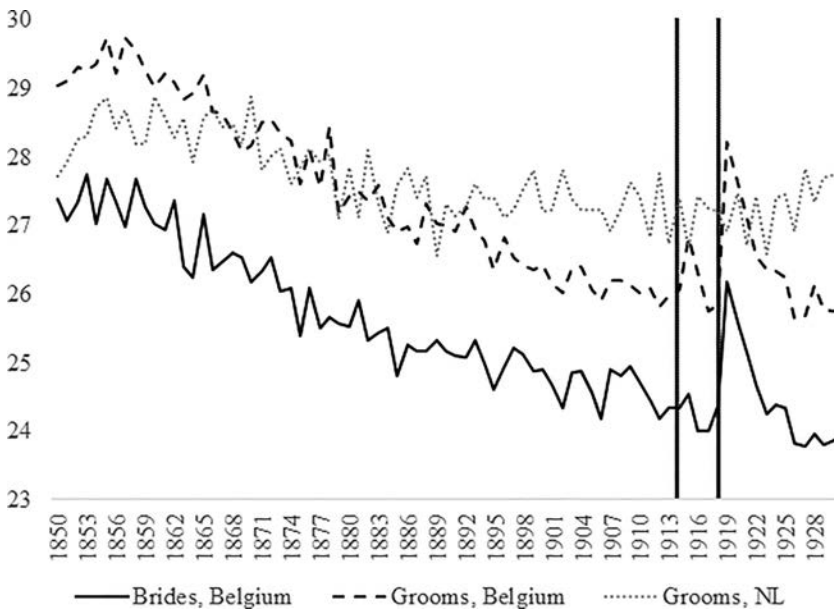


Figure 4.1 Development of mean age at first marriage, Belgium (province of Flemish Brabant and Brussels), and the Netherlands, 1850–1930.

Source: Marriage Certificates Flemish Brabant & Brussels, National Archive Leuven; Historical Sample of the Netherlands (HSN). Data Set Civil Certificates Release 2010.01.

Interestingly, in the Dutch data, we observe a rather similar developmental trend in ages at first marriage until the 1890s, but then stagnation occurred – more or less simultaneously among men and women. From the mid-1910s ages at marriage started to go up, especially among women. This comparison thus provides an intriguing additional perspective to the Belgian data. It seems that in the Netherlands the 1910s were a turning point in gender relations, signifying a trend towards an improved position among women. In war-torn Belgium, by contrast, the position of women vis-à-vis men decreased further during the Interbellum. It is interesting in this regard to point at the fact that Dutch women – who had hosted the International Congress of Women during World War I – gained voting rights in 1919, while their Belgian counterparts would obtain full female suffrage only in 1948.<sup>36</sup> In 1913 a front had been formed in Belgium for female suffrage, but the outbreak of WWI had obstructed the activities of the *Fédération belge pour le Suffrage des Femmes*. After the war, the only women to gain voting rights for parliamentary elections (in 1919) were those who were widows or widowed mothers of deceased soldiers, or of political prisoners, and women who were recognized as war heroes themselves.<sup>37</sup> Altogether, they amounted to an estimated 0.5% of the electorate in 1920, and 0.3% in 1930.<sup>38</sup> In this sense, WWI seems to have acted as a brake on the emancipation of Belgian women.

As expected, in both Belgium and the Netherlands, we observe a consistent existence of an age difference between husbands and brides, with men being older than their wives. This tallies with the general preference of men for younger partners, and of women for slightly older men. However, the trends in the magnitude of the age gap between husbands and wives differ between Belgium and the Netherlands. In Belgium, the pattern of declining marriage ages coincided with an increase in the average age difference between men and women in the post-war period as compared to the pre-war period (Figure 4.2). This again contrasts with the comparative data on the Netherlands. Here, the period after 1918 did not constitute a clear break in a pattern of very slowly declining age differences between partners that had started in the 1860s. During the war, the age differences in Belgium reached a high in the initial phase of WWI and then steeply decreased. However, after the war, age differences went up further and further, signifying increased inequalities between Belgian husbands and wives in the period 1900–1930 as a whole.

In Belgium, the trend of increasing *average* age differences was driven by an increase in the share of marriages in which grooms were older than brides, and a decrease in marriages in which brides were older (Figure 4.3). In age-heterogamous marriages in which the groom is older, the age gap between partners was much larger than in those in which the bride was older: men in this category were on average 6 years older, while women in age-hypogamous marriages were on average about 3.5 years older than their husbands (Figure 4.4).



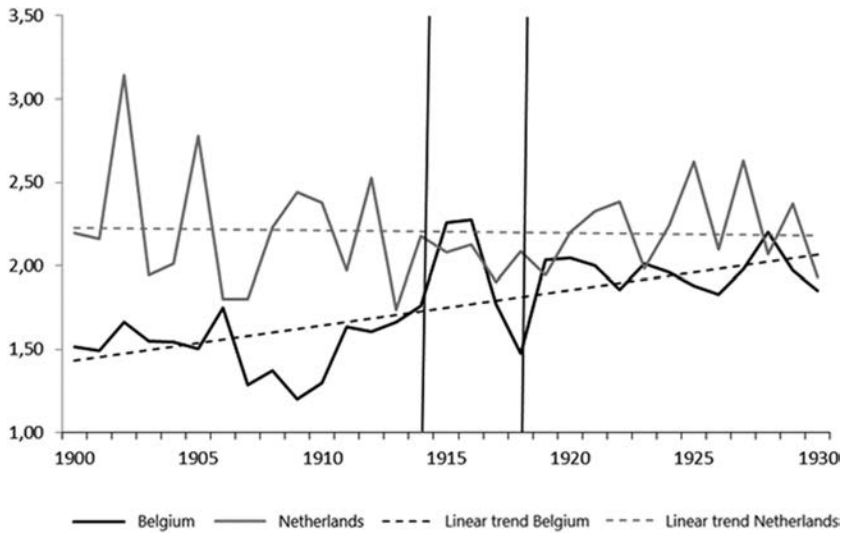


Figure 4.2 Average age difference in years between groom and bride (age groom – age bride), 1900–1930, first marriages, Belgium (province of Flemish Brabant and Brussels) and the Netherlands.

Source: Marriage Certificates Flemish Brabant & Brussels, National Archive Leuven; Historical Sample of the Netherlands (HSN). Data Set Civil Certificates Release 2010.01.

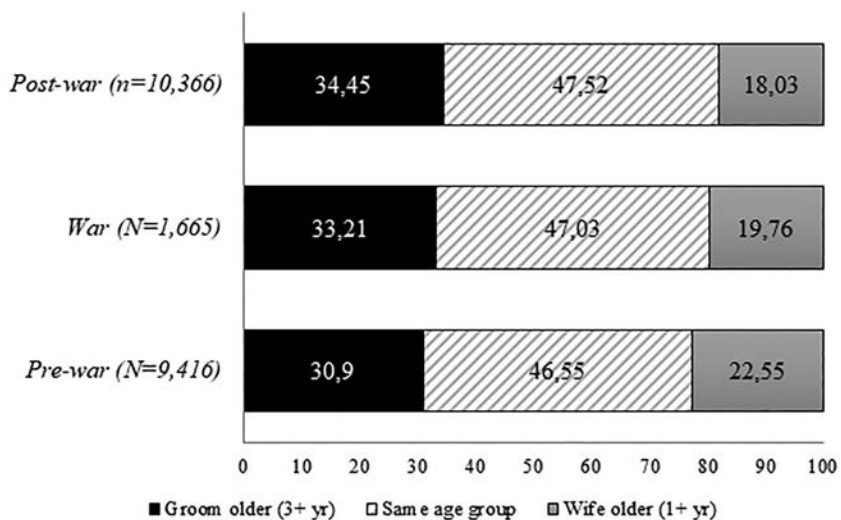


Figure 4.3 Distribution of marrying couples by age difference before WWI (1900–Aug. 1914) during WWI (Aug. 1914–Nov. 1918) and after WWI (Nov. 1918–Dec. 1930).

Source: Marriage Certificates Flemish Brabant & Brussels, National Archive Leuven.

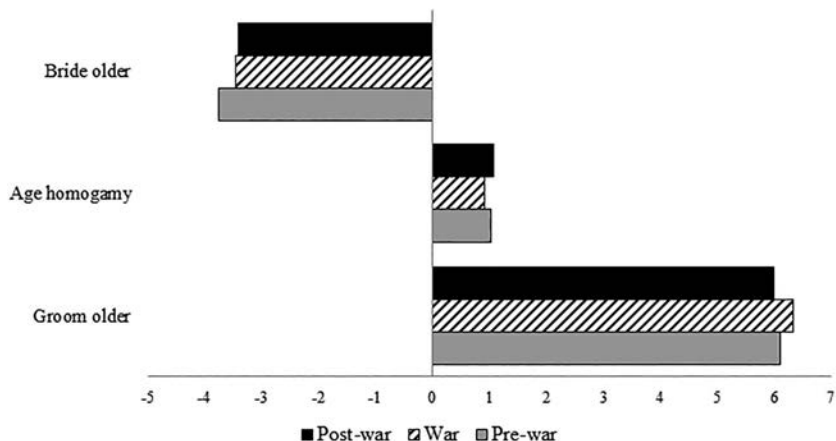


Figure 4.4 Average age difference between partners within marriage types (age homogamy, bride older, groom older), by period.

Source: Marriage Certificates Flemish Brabant & Brussels, National Archive Leuven.

### Social Homogamy

When looking at patterns of homogamy by profession (Figure 4.5), which we consider here as a proxy for social homogamy, it is noticeable that Belgium and the Netherlands experience opposing trends in the post-war period. In the Netherlands, status differences between grooms and brides peaked in 1918 and showed a rapid decline from then onwards. In Belgium, with the exception of 1921, there was a clear upward trend in status differences between husbands and wives. Belgium became more heterogamous than before the war.

The picture provided by Figure 4.5, however, leaves out of sight what happened among most couples, since in the Dutch case, 72.70% of women were said to be ‘housewives’ without profession. Whether these women in reality had no profession, we cannot know: it is likely that some did but did not get recorded as such. The ‘male breadwinner’ norm was strong in the Netherlands, and being able to provide for your wife so that she did not need to go out to work was a source of pride.<sup>39</sup> The notion that women preferably should be at home led to legal enforcement from 1924 onwards: women in government functions were fired upon marriage (until the ‘motie Tendeloo’ in 1955).<sup>40</sup> In the Belgian case, while similar norms were influential, they were not as omnipresent: here, 60% of women in the marriage records had their own profession, while 40% could not be assigned a HISCLASS because no clear indication of profession was provided.

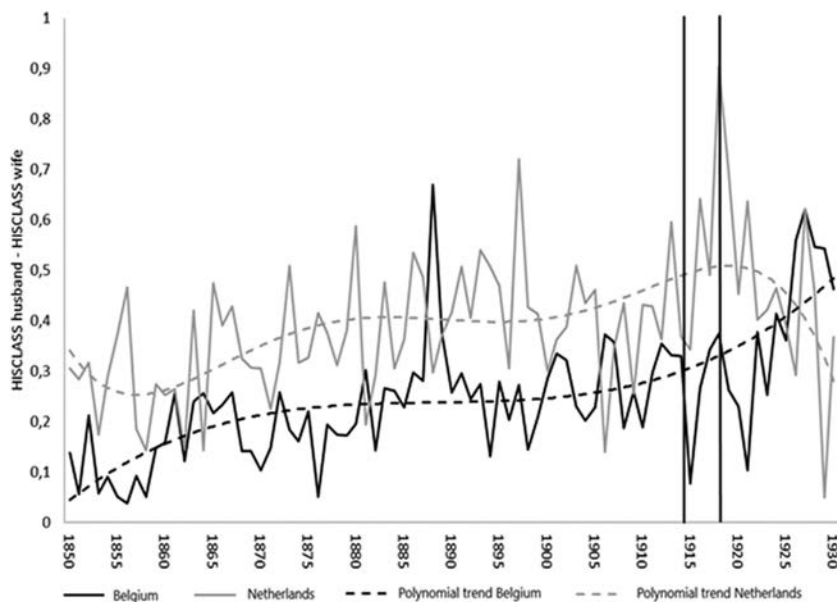


Figure 4.5 Average status difference between partners, based on own profession, by year.

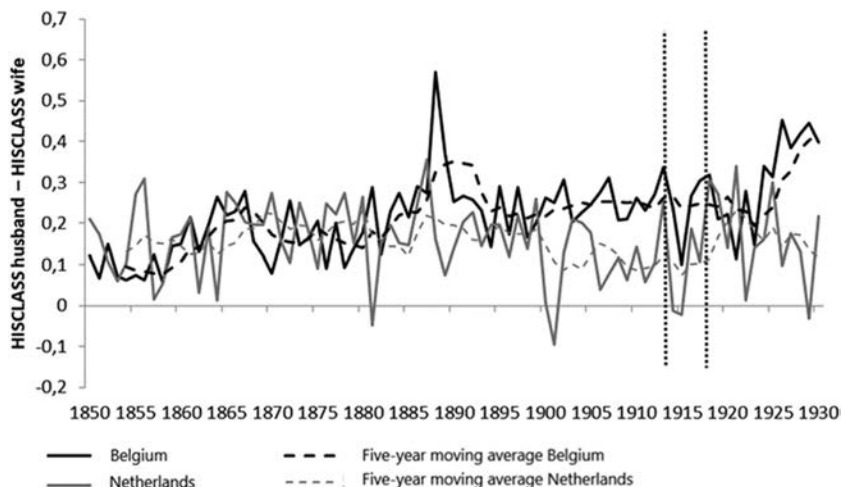
Source: Marriage Certificates Flemish Brabant & Brussels, National Archive Leuven; Historical Sample of the Netherlands (HSN). Data Set Civil Certificates Release 2010.01

Note: status difference between partners is based on HISCO-classifications, which were subsequently recoded and summarized into 4 HISCLASSES (1=low, 2=farmers, 3=medium and 4=high). The status difference between partners is expressed as status husband minus status wife.

By including the profession of the father of the bride as a proxy for the socio-economic status of brides who were said to have no profession of their own,<sup>41</sup> we get a more complete picture of the nature of women's partner choices: it raises the share of women for whom we have status information to 74% in the Netherlands (N=15,714), and 77.6% for Belgium (N=33,556).

The inclusion of this much broader group of women brings along a reversal in the pattern: while if we base ourselves on bridal professions alone, marriages in Belgium are more equal by status, when we take the group of women into account who can be assigned only an approximate status through that of their father, marriages in the Netherlands are more homogamous. This certainly holds true for the beginning of the twentieth century – the period of greatest interest to us.

But the time trend that we saw among the minority group of women who had known professions of their own is confirmed by the data in



*Figure 4.6* Average status difference between partners, based on own profession for men and women, and on father's profession in case of absence of own profession for women, by year.

Source: Marriage Certificates Flemish Brabant & Brussels, National Archive Leuven; Historical Sample of the Netherlands (HSN). Data Set Civil Certificates Release 2010.01.

Note: status difference between partners is based on HISCO-classifications, which were subsequently recoded and summarized into 4 HISCLASSES (1=low, 2=farmers, 3=medium and 4=high). The status difference between partners is expressed as status husband minus status wife.

Figure 4.6 that include a wider share of marriages: in Belgium, the war is followed by a trend towards greater heterogamy, while in the Netherlands no such trend can be identified.

In sum, our descriptive findings on partner choice and marriage patterns suggest that WWI had no progressive impact on gender relations in Belgium, at least as far as marriage patterns can be seen as an expression of these. Instead of liberating women, the war pushed females into more conservative marriage patterns and behaviours, and the results of it became especially clear in the Interbellum.

### Digging Deeper: Profiling 'Traditional' Versus 'Modern' Couples

That the characteristics of marriage changed during and after WWI in Belgium, which differentiated it from its non-occupied neighbour the Netherlands, has become clear from looking at trends in age differences and socio-economic differences between partners. Heterogamy increased on both dimensions – a trend that can be associated with more traditional

gender relations. How might we understand this trend? One way of getting a better idea of underlying processes is to look at whether or not the trends occurred indistinctively across different social groups within society. Did different socio-economic groups display similar trends with regard to spousal age gaps, or did the shape and the pace of change differ between social groups? Were people with specific profiles (urban or rural born, with or without a migration profile, younger or older, etc.) more likely than others to marry a partner of similar or different socio-economic background? Put more sharply, can we distinguish profiles of more 'traditional' couples between younger women of lower status with older men of higher status on the one hand, and more 'progressive' couples with smaller age and status gaps between them? We will first look at the age dimension, and then at the status dimension.

### *Age Homogamy and Heterogamy*

Consistent with our descriptive findings, the analytical multinomial regression models for age at first marriage in Belgium (Table 4.1) confirm that WWI marked the beginning of a trend towards greater age heterogamy. During the war, there is a trend of marriages in which grooms were markedly older than their wives becoming more prevalent than before, but this was not a significant trend. The latter might have been caused by the fact that the N is smaller for the wartime years (N=402 for marriages in which the groom was 3+ years older than the bride), and hence too small to tell whether the observed trend was a real one or a statistical coincidence. After the war, the trend towards increased 'traditional' marriages becomes stronger and highly significant, as compared to the pre-war period. There is, therefore, no indication of lasting changes towards greater gender equality, as proxied by a rise in marriages in which women were of more or less the same age or older than their spouse. From the perspective of the impact of war on gender, it might, therefore, prudently be suggested that Belgium, as a war-affected country, experienced an afterwar setback. This contrasts with the data on the Netherlands, where, as we saw, trends towards a lowering of age hypergamy by women, which had been set in before 1914, continued more or less uninterruptedly.

What characteristics of individuals and their family can be linked to a tendency to marry homogamously by age, or to marry an older or younger husband? Our analytical approach reveals a few factors that stand out: the odds at having a 'progressive type' of marriage increase with the age of the bride. By contrast, being a migrant increased the odds at a traditional age pattern, with the groom more than three years older than the bride, for both men and women by about one-fourth. This finding might be of interest to a better understanding of the rise of age heterogamy in Belgium: after all, it is well-known that the disruption of

Table 4.1 Results of multinomial logistic regression for age heterogamy in Belgium

	<i>CONSERVATIVE PATTERN: Groom &gt; 3 years older than bride</i>
	<i>Odds (p-value)</i>
PERIOD=WWI (pre-war=ref.)	1.118 (0.160)
PERIOD=post-war (nov1918-dec1930)	1.298 (0.000)
AGE OF BRIDE	0.861 (0.000)
HISCLASS (FATHER)BRIDE=LOW (ref. cat. = farmer)	0.728 (0.000)
HISCLASS (FATHER)BRIDE=MEDIUM (ref. cat. = farmer)	0.715 (0.000)
HISCLASS (FATHER)BRIDE=HIGH (ref. cat.=farmer)	0.949 (0.797)
HISCLASS GROOM = LOW (ref. cat. =farmer)	0.776 (0.010)
HISCLASS GROOM = MEDIUM (ref. cat. =farmer)	0.768 (0.009)
HISCLASS GROOM = HIGH (ref. cat. =farmer)	1.580 (0.014)
BRIDE URBAN BORN	0.941 (0.173)
GROOM URBAN BORN	0.998 (0.964)
MIGRANT BRIDE	1.262 (0.001)
MIGRANT GROOM	1.272 (0.000)
SEX RATIO (ref. cat=<1)	1.139 (0.016)
CONSTANT	21.121 (0.000)

Note: outcome compares 'traditional' couples in which the groom is more than 3 years older than the bride to the reference category of 'progressive' couples in which the groom is less than 3 years older than the bride, or the bride is older than the groom. Number of observations in model = 7,960; LR chi2=624.40 (prob > chi2=0.000); Log likelihood = -4650.0156; Pseudo R2= 0.0629.

warfare led to increased levels of migration after the war, as many refugees returned, and many towns in the western, most devastated regions of Belgium lost large shares of their population, who had to find a place to live elsewhere, at least temporarily.<sup>42</sup> More internal migrants meant more age heterogamy.

We also included the sex ratio in the place of marriage as an explanatory factor in the model. The sex ratio is calculated by setting the number of men aged 22–29 against the number of women aged 20–27 in the place of marriage. Sex ratios were retrieved only for the years 1910 and 1920, for which they could be derived from the censuses. This is because it is only during the period 1910–1920 that we might expect substantial changes in local sex ratios. In fact though, sex ratios did not change dramatically in the province of Flemish Brabant: while in 1910 it ranged from .88 to 1.08, in 1920 this range had shifted to .84 to 1.04. The share

of men, in other words, declined somewhat, but not dramatically. In line with this pattern of modest change, we do not find evidence of strong effects of the sex ratio on marriage patterns, either by age or by status. We do find that higher sex ratios, or surpluses of men, are associated with conservative age patterns of marriage in which grooms are >3 years older than brides. Interactions of sex ratio with period (not displayed here) proved to be non-significant.

Separate models for the pre-war, war, and post-war periods (not displayed here) revealed interesting patterns of divergence in the effect of the social status of fathers and grooms on the likelihood of women having a traditional marriage with age hypergamy of 3 years or greater, versus a partner of similar age or younger. Before the war, farmers displayed the most traditional age heterogamy pattern. Lower-class and middle-class grooms were significantly less likely to opt for such a traditional pattern, and so were brides who themselves were, or whose fathers were, of lower- or middle-class status (odds ratios between 0.623 and 0.640, p-values between 0.001 and 0.006). The behaviour of grooms of high status, and brides of high status or high-status background, did not differ significantly from that of farmers. During the war, low numbers of marriages make it hard to see exactly what was going on. But after the war, we see clear evidence of change among grooms: the behaviour of lower- and middle-class grooms no longer differed from that of farmers. Their odds at choosing for a traditional marriage type had converged: if the odds for farmers were 1, those for lower-class grooms were 0.941, and those for middle-class grooms 0.971. The behaviour of men of high-status background is now clearly distinctive: they were far more likely than the other groups to opt for a much younger bride (odds 2.340, p-value 0.001). While it is difficult to tell why this was the case, we can offer two potential explanations here. First, Sexual Strategies Theory predicts that higher-status men are able to attract younger women, and will tend to prefer them because young women provide higher chances at reproductive success.<sup>43</sup> Second, it is possible that the trend of older men marrying younger women was not so much the result of new preferences, but rather the result of the impact of the war on elite households. The war came with large economic losses, also for families in the higher classes. In order to establish a household befitting the pre-war status background of their families, young men might have needed to postpone their marriages longer under the conditions of economic devastation in post-war Belgium.

### *Social Homogamy and Heterogamy*

Further exploration of marriage partner selection by HISCLASS sheds light on the groups driving the trends towards greater social heterogamy in Belgium. From Tables 4.2 and 4.3 it is evident that the war changed

Table 4.2 Marriage partner selection by HISCLASS for women, 1900–1930, differentiated between pre-war, war, and post-war periods

<b>WOMEN IN HISCLASS1: LOWER-CLASS WOMEN/DAUGHTERS</b>			
	<i>PRE-WAR</i>	<i>WAR</i>	<i>POST-WAR</i>
Same HISCLASS	48.11	44.27	46.78
Groom 1 class higher	4.28	7.06	3.74
Groom 2 classes higher	46.38	47.57	47.49
Groom 3 classes higher	1.23	1.1	1.98
N	3338	637	3632
Average annual change (ref.=pre-war)		-34.5%	+30.4%
<b>WOMEN IN HISCLASS2: FARMSTERS/FARMERS' DAUGHTERS</b>			
	<i>PRE-WAR</i>	<i>WAR</i>	<i>POST-WAR</i>
1 class higher than groom	32.39	23.67	35.02
Same HISCLASS	47.04	66	42
Groom 1 class higher	20.15	10	21.54
Groom 2 classes higher	0.42	0.33	1.44
N	1201	300	1662
Average annual change (ref.=pre-war)		-14.3%	+65.9%
<b>WOMEN IN HISCLASS 3 &amp; 4: MIDDLE-CLASS &amp; UPPER-CLASS WOMEN/DAUGHTERS</b>			
	<i>PRE-WAR</i>	<i>WAR</i>	<i>POST-WAR</i>
3 classes higher than groom	1.27	0.72	1.47
2 classes higher than groom	29.12	28.43	28.24
1 class higher than groom	5.31	6.75	5.55
Same HISCLASS	61.48	61.45	59.93
Groom 1 class higher	2.81	2.65	4.81
N	2277	415	2181
Average annual change (ref.=pre-war)		-37.5%	+14.8%

marriage opportunities for farmers, and to a smaller extent also for labourers in the lower classes.

The number of marriages involving female farmers and daughters of farmers does not decline as much as that of other groups during the war, and does increase much more after the war than that of lower-class women and women from the middle and upper classes. For men, in fact, marriage among farmers spiked up during the war, with an almost 300% annual increase in the number of marriages compared to before the war. While unfortunately we cannot control for the marginal distribution of



Table 4.3 Marriage partner selection by HISCLASS for men, 1900–1930, differentiated between pre-war, war, and post-war periods

<b>MEN IN HISCLASS1: LOWER CLASS MEN</b>			
	<i>PRE-WAR</i>	<i>WAR</i>	<i>POST-WAR</i>
Same HISCLASS	59.84	59.49	58.07
Bride 1 class higher	14.49	14.98	19.89
Bride 2 classes higher	24.59	24.89	20.95
Bride 3 classes higher	1.08	0.63	1.09
N	2684	474	2926
Change in annual marriages (ref=pre-war)		-37.5%	14.8%
<b>MEN IN HISCLASS2: FARMERS</b>			
	<i>PRE-WAR</i>	<i>WAR</i>	<i>POST-WAR</i>
1 class higher than bride	18.19	14.93	35.02
Same HISCLASS	71.88	76.62	42
Bride 1 class higher	9.54	8.12	21.54
Bride 2 classes higher	0.38	0.33	1.44
N	786	911	1662
Change in annual marriages (ref=pre-war)		297.7%	153.4%
<b>MEN IN HISCLASS3 &amp; 4: MIDDLE CLASS &amp; UPPER CLASS</b>			
	<i>PRE-WAR</i>	<i>WAR</i>	<i>POST-WAR</i>
3 classes higher than bride	1.23	1.14	1.98
2 classes higher	46.41	49.59	48.08
1 class higher	9.15	6.69	12.73
Same HISCLASS	41.84	41.6	35.93
Bride 1 class higher	1.37	0.98	1.29
N	3346	613	3638
Change in annual marriages (ref=pre-war)		-37.1%	30.3%

professional groups, these trends are suggestive of the greater resilience of farmers to the war conditions in Belgium. In many cases, warfare was economically beneficial to this group, and dramatically rising numbers of marriages illustrate this.<sup>44</sup> Female farmers and farmers' daughters during the war increasingly opted for homogamous marriages, but when peace returned, they again increasingly married non-farmers, like before the war. Unlike women from the middle and upper classes, and men from any class, farmers' daughters after the war were younger on average than before: 24.56 years instead of 25.11.

Among farmers, however, the post-war period led to an opening up of their partner selection: while before the war, 72% of farmers married

a female farmer or the daughter of a farmer, after the war this percentage strongly declined, to 42%. More farmers married women outside of their own profession and class, and the share of farmers who managed to attract a middle-class bride almost tripled. At the same time, the share of farmers who concluded a marital union with a woman from the lower classes also doubled.

When looking at associations through logistic regression analysis, we are able to include the effects of other factors that might have been driving choices for a partner from the same versus a different status group. The results of these analyses are displayed in Table 4.4. Interactions (not displayed here) show that Belgian middle-class daughters in the post-war period were significantly less likely (odds ratio = 0.586,  $p=0.000$ ) than before the war to marry upwards by social status. This likely had to do

*Table 4.4* Results of multinomial logistic regression for heterogamy, by HISCLASS

	<i>I) CONSERVATIVE PATTERN: Groom higher HISCLASS than bride</i>	<i>III) PROGRESSIVE PATTERN: Bride higher HISCLASS than groom</i>
	<i>Odds (p-value)</i>	<i>Odds (p-value)</i>
PERIOD=WWI (pre-war=ref.)	0.894 (0.154)	0.819 (0.113)
PERIOD=post-war (nov1918-dec1930)	1.445 (0.000***)	0.921 (0.353)
AGE OF BRIDE	0.993 (0.521)	1.012 (0.531)
AGE OF GROOM	1.002 (0.866)	0.974 (0.154)
AGE DIFFERENCE IN 3 CAT (ref. groom=older)	0.880 (0.044*)	0.971 (0.774)
HISCLASS OF (FATHER) BRIDE=LOW (ref. cat.=farmer)	1.795 (0.000***)	n/a
HISCLASS OF (FATHER) BRIDE=MEDIUM (ref. cat.=farmer)	0.881 (0.119)	0.934 (0.508)
HISCLASS OF (FATHER) BRIDE=HIGH (ref. cat.=farmer)	n/a	5.418 (0.145)
BRIDE URBAN BORN	1.285 (0.000***)	1.031 (0.700)
GROOM URBAN BORN	1.127 (0.006**)	0.807 (0.006**)
MIGRANT BRIDE	1.206 (0.008**)	1.060 (0.634)
MIGRANT GROOM	1.297 (0.000***)	0.980 (0.845)
SEXRATIO (ref. cat. <1)	1.134 (0.021*)	0.880 (0.141)
CONSTANT	0.776 (0.190)	1.228 (0.505)

Note: outcome patterns I (conservative) and III (progressive) are each compared to the reference outcome of couples that are homogamous by HISCLASS. Number of observations in model = 3,556; LR  $\chi^2 = 1473.44$  (prob >  $\chi^2 = 0.0000$ ); Log likelihood = -2841.9084; Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> = 0.2059.

with the impoverishment of the middle class during the war, when many job opportunities for, among others, government employees and shop owners were lost.

Surprisingly, we find that urban-born brides were more likely to marry following a conservative pattern in which the partner is of higher socio-economic status. Maybe this was related to the wider availability of men of higher status in the urban environment. In comparison, rural born brides were more likely to be of higher status than their groom.

## Discussion and Conclusion

We set out to study the effects of WWI on gender relations in the province of Flemish Brabant and Brussels in Belgium, using marriage data. While the older historiography has underlined the liberating effects of WWI (and WWII) for women by pointing, for instance, at the fact that many countries installed female suffrage during or shortly after the war, more recent literature has challenged this by referring to the fact that many of the newly created opportunities for women during the war – for instance, in the labour market – were short-lived.<sup>45</sup>

Our results for Belgium comply with the latter strand in the literature. The war did alter partner choice processes and marriage patterns temporarily, but after the war, a continuation of pre-war trends took place, underlining the increasing importance of the separation of gender spheres, the strengthening of the model of the male breadwinner, and the position of women as caretakers of partner and children. During the Interbellum, the labour market participation of women in industry decreased even further. Although new opportunities were created in the service sector and in education, these were usually not eligible for married women.<sup>46</sup> While in neighbouring France, Great Britain, and Germany, the share of women in employment in 1920 was above the level of 1910, in Belgium it had officially declined by 5.9% to 25.4%.<sup>47</sup> Women were increasingly relegated to the private domain, and wives became more dependent on their husbands.

For our purposes, we used a newly constructed dataset consisting of almost 50,000 marriage certificates from the Flemish part of the province Brabant and Brussels for the period 1830–1930. With this dataset we studied trends in ages at first marriage, age differences between spouses, and patterns of social homogamy. The trend of lowering ages at marriage among women, which has been linked to the rise of the male-breadwinner model and the separation of gender domains, was interrupted at the start of the war. But during the post-war period, ages at first marriage among women declined further, signifying that women's female roles became even more valued over their potential to contribute to the public domain during the Interbellum. Married women had become primarily wives and mothers, notwithstanding the fact that Belgian women had once played a crucial role in the country's industrial revolution.<sup>48</sup>

Both the lack of expansion in labour opportunities for women and the strengthening emphasis on the value of women as mothers should be understood in the light of the immediate post-war context in Belgium. The end of the war had, on the one hand, led to a greater *esprit de vivre* in which women took greater liberties, especially in cities, and moral standards had become less strict.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, amidst all the destruction the war had caused, economically and otherwise, conservative forces were strongly convinced not only of the need for economic and demographic revival, but also of a need for the restoration of pre-war norms and values.<sup>50</sup> Their political sentiment was that the end of the war had led to unwanted changes in gender roles.<sup>51</sup> Among them was Prime Minister Delacroix, who emphasized that the Belgian population should be reminded of their ‘civic and familial duties’, and who regarded religion as a fruitful institution to achieve the aim of strengthening traditional values.<sup>52</sup> Part of the conservative agenda was to ‘rétablir un ordre patriarcal qui remet “chaque sexe à sa place”’.<sup>53</sup> Belgian governments tried to re-establish the traditional family and to valorize conventional sex roles as a means of securing stability. Increasing female labour participation was seen as a threat to this agenda – to the traditional family, to high birth rates, and to the desired reign of a strict morale.<sup>54</sup> Thus, strong natalist policies joined forces with Catholic propaganda and nationalistic glorification of motherhood that encouraged women to stay at home.<sup>55</sup>

Within marriage, there were growing age differences between spouses, with men becoming older relative to their wives. These rising differences might simply have been the result of the reduced availability of male marriage partners in the same age group as female marriage candidates. Regardless of the origin of the shift in pattern, however, the outcomes it led to, with more women being married to distinctly older men, likely weakened women’s overall position in marriage, as suggested by the literature discussed in the introduction. The average age differences peaked indeed during the war, signifying that the war had a conservative effect on mating patterns. The share of couples in which the wife was older than the groom decreased during the war, and even further so in the post-war period, while simultaneously the share of couples in which the groom was at least three years older systematically increased. Moreover, in the post-war period, status heterogamy increased, in the sense that women were increasingly married to husbands who had a higher social status than themselves, which provides still another argument for the fact that women’s position vis-à-vis men weakened.

The multinomial logistic regressions showed that especially migrant women had higher odds of entering a marriage with a husband who was considerably older than they were, as well as a husband of considerably higher social status. This might have been a result of lack of options, or of their vulnerable position in society, which inclined them to opt for security within marriage. However, such outcomes or choices likely

undermined their bargaining power towards their husbands. For men this security argument does not hold, since male migrants seem to have preferred women who were considerably younger than themselves, and from a lower social class than themselves. There were, in other words, interesting interaction effects between migration-background and sex, which are revealed through the inclusion of an intersectional approach.

When it comes to social status, elite men were the ones who opted most often for a considerably younger wife, which is in line with social exchange theory, stating that men with a lot of resources prefer women who are beautiful and fertile, and 'thus' relatively young. Age can be seen as an indication of fecundity, beauty, and thus of sexual capital.<sup>56</sup> Women with more sexual capital will prefer men with a lot of resources, exchanging their erotic capital for socio-economic security.

Last but not least, higher sex ratios went hand in hand with men marrying both considerably younger women and women from a lower social class. This makes it indeed assumable that, in line with the arguments of Guttentag and Secord, the sex of which supply is short becomes more powerful (from a dyadic perspective), as they can choose from a relatively larger supply of mates from the opposite sex.<sup>57</sup> In that sense, the First World War improved the bargaining position of men in the marriage market and led to more unequal gender relations. However, this effect of mere numbers seems to have been small in the Belgian case, as the sex ratio became skewed only very temporarily.

The comparison with the neighbouring Netherlands, which had successfully remained neutral during the war, makes even more assumable that Belgium's wartime experience had a negative effect on the position of women. After all, the Netherlands, where in the pre-war period marriage trends had been quite similar to those of Belgium, saw ages at first marriage among women rising during the 1910s and 1920s, while status differences between husbands and wives became somewhat smaller. Moreover, contrary to Belgium, age differences between spouses did not grow in the Netherlands. Importantly, women gained full voting rights in the Netherlands in 1919, while universal female suffrage in Belgium was only introduced in 1948. Voting rights had not been the highest priority of the late nineteenth-century women's movement in Belgium, but they had become a central issue at the eve of World War I. The war pushed these ambitions aside, and during the Interbellum, Belgian women had to content themselves with the right to participate in local elections. The idea of female emancipation seemed further away than ever since the rise of the first women's movement.

## Notes

1. Goldstein 2004, 114.
2. Engelen and Puschmann 2011; Puschmann and Matthijs 2015; Van de Putte et al. 2009.

3. Carmichael 2011.
4. See Verfaillie, in this volume.
5. De Geest 2018.
6. Note, however, that the balance of the sexes on the marriage market in wartime Belgium was not affected only by the wartime losses of men. It was also shaped by the preceding period of declining birth rates. In fact, declining birth rates are associated with a shortage of marriageable women. This is because men, on average, have a preference for marriage partners somewhat younger than themselves, while women prefer slightly older men. The age groups (men and women) that were around 20 to 25 years old during the war, and hence on the wartime marriage market in Belgium, had been born between about 1890 and 1900. The end of the nineteenth century in Belgium was characterized by strong declines in fertility, with fewer children born every year. This implies that, all else equal, men were seeking partners among a pool of women that was smaller than their number of competitors. In other words, the effects of the death of young men on the marriage market were partly compensated by a pre-existing male surplus among the wartime generation of young, marriageable adults.
7. Becker 1973 and 1981.
8. Guttentag and Secord 1983.
9. Thiel 2013; Scholliers and Daelemans 1988; Charon 2018a.
10. Majerus 2016.
11. Charon 2018b.
12. Thiel and Westerhoff 2014.
13. Source: population censuses 1910 and 1920, as published by the Ministère de l'Intérieur et d'hygiène (1916 and 1926).
14. Matthijs 2002.
15. *Ibidem*; Timm and Sanborn 2016.
16. Matthijs 1996.
17. Hagemann 2013, 49 with further references
18. Deruysscher 2014, 3.
19. Van den Plas 1909.
20. The nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century opposing visions between 'equality feminists' and 'difference feminists' were at the heart of a typical nature-nurture debate. Equality feminists stretched similarities between men and women and argued that differences between men and women were created by the different societal treatment (e.g. parenting, education, etc.), i.e. the differences were a socio-cultural construction. In order to push the feminist project forward, it was essential that women and men were treated equally. Equality feminists argued, by contrast, that there were inherent biological differences between men and women – for instance, with respect to anatomy and reproduction, including motherhood – but that both sexes deserved to be valued equally as they were complementary, and dependent on each other. Difference feminists stretched, therefore, womens' rights to be different from men.
21. Van Genderachter 2002.
22. Gubin, Piette and Jacques 1997, 66.
23. *Ibidem*.
24. Thébaud 2014; Timm and Sanborn 2016, 131.
25. Moreover, many of the European countries which had not yet introduced female suffrage did so in the wake of WWII.
26. Pott-Buter 1993; Timm and Sanborn 2016, 158.
27. Guttentag and Secord 1983, 32, 166.
28. The strong local divergences in the percentage of men forced to work in Germany, see Charon 2018b.

29. Guttentag and Secord 1983, 166.
30. Matthijs 2002.
31. Carmichael 2011; Van de Putte 2005.
32. Of the records with information about the province of birth (N=40,192 for women and N=36,484 for men), 6.9% of men and 3.5% of women were born neither in Flemish Brabant nor Brussels, but in other Belgian provinces. Another 402 grooms and 256 brides were born outside of Belgium.
33. Maas, Van Leeuwen and Miles 2002.
34. The N of marriage partners able to sign in 1870 is 192 for women, and 246 for men. In 1900, 547 brides were able to sign, and 563 grooms. In 1930, 711 brides able to sign, and 713 grooms.
35. Mandemakers 2000.
36. In 1919 Belgian women did gain the right to vote in the local elections ‘on the grounds of the proofs of patriotism that they had shown during the occupation’, as stated by Belgium’s postwar Prime Minister Delacroix in Delacroix 1920: 95. Quote translated from French by S. H.
37. Neither liberal nor socialist politicians supported the case for universal female suffrage in Belgium after WWI, reportedly because they feared that women would *en masse* vote for the Catholics: see e.g. De Weerd 1993, 237.
38. Errera 1920, 31–32; Gubin and De Smaele 2015, 169.
39. Schulz 2013; Van Poppel, Van Dalen and Walhout 2009.
40. Linders 2003.
41. Matthijs 2002.
42. Stengers 2004, 320–21; Olbrechts 1926. On Belgians from the frontzones spending the war elsewhere in Belgium, see De Geest 2018, ch. 15.
43. See Buss and Schmitt 1993, esp. 208.
44. On farmers as benefiting economically from the war, see Pirenne 2014, 114; Jaumain and Piette 2005.
45. Timm and Sanborn 2016.
46. De Metsenaere, Huysseune and Scheys 1993, 540.
47. Gubin and De Smaele 2015, 161–62.
48. Cf. Penn Hilden 1993. On gender role specialization after WWI, see also Winter 2003, esp. 161–62.
49. Dumont 1981. Cf. Gubin and De Smaele 2015 with, displayed at p. 110, the telling Brussels cartoon of women dominating men.
50. Gubin and De Smaele 2015, 148–49; Flour et al. 2009, 10–11.
51. Flour et al. 2009, 64–65.
52. Delacroix 1920, 96–97.
53. Gubin and De Smaele 2015, 159–60.
54. Flour et al. 2009; Gubin and De Smaele 2015. On the role of Catholic movements as strengthening gender divides and ‘male’ and ‘female’ roles in Belgium during the Interbellum, see e.g. Van Osselaer 2009.
55. See e.g. Thébaud 1992. For a view that nuances the role of nationalist and Catholic Flemish women’s associations after WWI, which are often seen as anti-feminist, see Van Genderachter 2005.
56. Hakim 2011.
57. Guttentag and Secord 1983.

## References

- Becker, Gary S. 1981. *A Treatise on the Family*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Becker, Gary S. 1973. “A Theory of Marriage: Part 1.” *Journal of Political Economy* 81: 813–46.

- Buss, David M. and David P. Schmitt. 1993. "Sexual Strategies Theory: An Evolutionary Perspective on Human Mating." *Psychological Review* 100 (2): 204.
- Carmichael, Sarah. 2011. "Marriage and Power. Age at First Marriage and Spousal Age Gap in Lesser Developed Countries." *The History of the Family* 16 (4): 416–36.
- Charon, Arnaud. 2018a. "Les déportés belges au sortir de la Grande Guerre: un combat de longue haleine." *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains. Revue d'histoire* 272 (4): 107–20.
- Charon, Arnaud. 2018b. "Les déportations des ouvriers belges durant la Première Guerre mondiale: logique industrielle ou improvisation? L'impact sur la population belge." In *Composer avec l'ennemi en 14–18? La poursuite de l'activité industrielle en zones de guerre*, edited by Stéphane Palauze and Catherine Thomas, 119–30. Brussels: Académie Royale de Belgique.
- De Geest, Mark. 2018. *Een dure vrede: van brave little Belgium naar poor little Belgium*. Antwerp: Horizon.
- De Metsenaere, Machteld, Michel Huysseune and Micheline Scheys. 1993. "Gewapend met het gewicht van het verleden: enige resultaten van vrouwen-geschiedenis in België." In *De Twintigste eeuw. Geschiedenis van de vrouw 5*, edited by Françoise Thébaud, 523–56. Amsterdam: Agon.
- De Weerdt, Denise (1993). *De vrouwen van de Eerste Wereldoorlog*. Gent: Stichting Mens en Cultuur.
- Delacroix, Léon 1920. 'Le programme de la restauration', *Numéro spéciale consacré à la Belgique. Vendredi 9 avril 1920* (French translation of original publication in special issue of *The Times*). Brussels, Lamertin: 79–97. Available online at [https://archive.org/stream/numerospecial00brux/numerospecial00brux\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/numerospecial00brux/numerospecial00brux_djvu.txt)
- Deruysscher, D. Dave 2014. *Bending the Code Civil: Married Women, Their Capacity to Engage in Contracts and the Partnership Between Spouses (c. 1804–1865)*. Brussels: Bepress. <https://works.bepress.com/deruysscher/10/>.
- Dumont, Georges-Henri. 1981. *De dolle jaren in België, 1920–1930*. Brussels: R. Coolen.
- Engelen, Theo and Paul Puschmann. 2011. "How Unique Is the Western European Marriage Pattern? A Comparison of Nuptiality in Historical Europe and the Contemporary Arab World." *The History of the Family* 16 (4): 387–400. doi: 10.1016/j.hisfam.2011.07.004.
- Errera, P. Paul 1920. 'Comment est gouvernée la Belgique', *Numéro spéciale consacré à la Belgique. Vendredi 9 avril 1920* (French translation of original publication in special issue of *The Times*). Brussels, Lamertin: 31–36. Available online at [https://archive.org/stream/numerospecial00brux/numerospecial00brux\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/numerospecial00brux/numerospecial00brux_djvu.txt)
- Flour, Els, Eliane Gubin, Claudine Marissal, et al. 2009. *Jongens en meisjes . . . bestemming bekend? België, 1830–2000*. Brussels: AVG-Carhif.
- Goldstein, Joshua S. 2004. "War and Gender." In *Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender*, edited by Carol R. Ember and Melvin Ember, 107–16. New York: Springer. doi: 10.1007/0-387-29907-6\_11.
- Gubin, Éliane and Henk De Smaele. 2015. *Femmes et hommes en guerre*. Brussels: Renaissance du Livre.
- Gubin, Éliane, Piette, Valérie and Catherine Jacques 1997. "Les féminismes belges et français de 1830 à 1940. Une approche comparée." *Le Mouvement Social* 178: 36–68.



- Guttentag, Marcia and Paul F. Secord. 1983. *Too Many Women? The Sex Ratio Question*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Hagemann, Karen. 2013. "Gendered Boundaries: Civil Society, the Public/Private Divide and the Family." In *The Golden Chain. Family, Civil Society and the State*, edited by Paul Ginsborg, Jürgen Nautz, and Ton Nijhuis, 43–65. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Hakim, Catherine. 2011. *Erotic Capital. The Power of Attraction in the Boardroom and the Bedroom*. New York: Basic books.
- Jaumain, Serge and Valérie Piette, eds. 2005. *Humor op oorlogspad. Brussel en de karikatuur in 14–18*. Brussels: Fontes Bruxellae.
- Linders, Anneke. 2003. "Frappez, frappez toujours!" N.S. Corry Tendeloo (1897–1956) en het feminisme van haar tijd. Hilversum: Verloren.
- Maas, Ineke, Marco H. D. Van Leeuwen, and Andrew Miles. 2002. *HISCO. Historical International Standard Classification of Occupations*. Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- Majerus, Benoît. 2016. "War Losses (Belgium)." In *International Encyclopedia of the First World War. 1914–1918 Online*. [https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/pdf/1914-1918-Online-war\\_losses\\_belgium-2016-01-25.pdf](https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/pdf/1914-1918-Online-war_losses_belgium-2016-01-25.pdf).
- Mandemakers, Kees. 2000. "Historical Sample of the Netherlands." In *Handbook of International Historical Microdata for Population Research*, edited by Patricia Kelly Hall, Robert McCaa, and Gunnar Thorvaldsen, 149–77. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota Population Center.
- Matthijs, Koen. 2002. "Mimetic Appetite for Marriage in Nineteenth-Century Flanders: Gender Disadvantage as an Incentive for Social Change." *Journal of Family History* 27 (2): 101–27. doi: 10.1177/036319900202700203.
- Matthijs, Koen. 1996. "De ongelijke geslachtsverhouding en de man-vrouwverhouding." In *Denken voor morgen: lessen voor de XXIste eeuw*, edited by Bart Raeymaekers and A. Van de Putte, 281–93. Leuven: Leuven Universitaire Pers Leuven/Dauidsfonds.
- Ministère de l'intérieur et de l'hygiène. 1926. *Population: recensement général du 31 décembre 1920*. Brussels: Société anonyme M. Weissenbruch.
- Ministère de l'intérieur et de l'hygiène. 1916. *Population: recensement général du 31 décembre 1910*. Brussels: Société anonyme M. Weissenbruch.
- Olbrechts, Raymond. 1926. "La Population." In *La Belgique Restaurée. Étude Sociologique*, edited by Ernest Mahaim, 3–69. Brussels: M. Lamertin.
- Penn Hilden, Patricia. 1993. *Women, Work and Politics: Belgium 1830–1914*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pirenne, Henri. 2014. *Belgium and the First World War*. Wesley Chapel, FL: The Brabant Press. English translation of French original.
- Pott-Buter, Hettie A. 1993. *Facts and Fairy Tales About Female Labor, Family and Fertility*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Puschmann, Paul and Koen Matthijs. 2015. "The Demographic Transition in the Arab World: The Dual Role of Marriage in Family Dynamics and Population Growth." In *Population Change in Europe, the Middle East and North-Africa*, edited by Koen Matthijs, Karel Neels, Christiane Timmerman, Jacques Haers, and Sara Mels, 119–65. London: Ashgate.
- Scholliers, Peter and Frank Daelemans. 1988. "Standards of Living and Standards of Health in Wartime Belgium." In *The Upheaval of War*, edited by Richard Wall and Jay Winter, 139–58. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Schulz, Wiebke. 2013. *Careers of Men and Women in the 19th and 20th Centuries*. PhD thesis, Utrecht University.
- Stengers, Jean. 2004. "Les mouvements migratoires en Belgique au XIXe et XXe siècles." *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 81 (1–2): 311–48.
- Thébaud, Françoise. 2014. "Understanding Twentieth-Century Wars Through Women and Gender: Forty Years of Historiography." *Clio* 39 (1): 157–82.
- Thébaud, Françoise. 1992. "La nationalisation des femmes." In *Histoire des femmes en Occident. Vol. 5. Le XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, edited by Françoise Thébaud, 26–29. Paris: Plon.
- Thiel, Jens. 2013. "Between Recruitment and Forced Labour: The Radicalization of German Labour Policy in Occupied Belgium and Northern France." *First World War Studies* 4 (1): 39–50.
- Thiel, Jens and Christian Westerhoff. 2014. "Forced Labour." In *International Encyclopedia of the First World War. 1914–1918*. [https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/forced\\_labour](https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/forced_labour).
- Timm, Annette F. and Joshua A. Sanborn. 2016. *Gender, Sex and the Shaping of Modern Europe*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Van de Putte, Bart. 2005. *Partnerkeuze in de 19de eeuw. Klasse, geografische afkomst, romantiek en de vorming van sociale groepen op de huwelijksmarkt*. Leuven: Universitaire Pers Leuven.
- Van de Putte, Bart, Frans Van Poppel, Sofie Vanassche, Maria Sanchez, Svetlana Jidkova, Mieke Eeckhaut, Michel Oris, and Koen Matthijs. 2009. "The Rise of Age-Homogamy in 19th Century Western Europe." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 71 (5): 1234–53.
- Van den Plas, Louise. 1909. *Étude sur la revision du titre du contrat de mariage*. Louvain: Institut supérieur de philosophie.
- Van Ginderachter, Maarten. 2005. "Gender, the Extreme Right and Flemish Nationalist Women's Organisations in Interwar Belgium." *Nations and Nationalism* 11 (2): 265–84.
- Van Ginderachter, Maarten. 2002. "'Dragen en baren willen we' of 'Wij zijn zelf mans genoeg'? De ambivalente verhouding tussen vrouwen en Vlaams-nationalisme tijdens het Interbellum." *Revue belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 80 (2): 531–61.
- Van Osselaer, Tine. 2009. "Christening Masculinity? Catholic Action and Men in Interwar Belgium." *Gender & History* 21 (2): 380–401.
- Van Poppel, Frans W. A., Hendrik P. Van Dalen, and Evelien Walhout. 2009. "Diffusion of a Social Norm: Tracing the Emergence of the Housewife in the Netherlands, 1812–1922." *Economic History Review* 62 (1): 99–127.
- Winter, Jay. 2003. "The European Family and the Two World Wars." In *Family Life in the Twentieth Century*, edited by David I. Kertzer and Marzio Barbagli, 152–73. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.