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La "Doña" è mobile: The role of women in social mobility in a premodern economy

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*La “Doña” è Mobile: the Role of Women in Social Mobility in a Pre-modern Economy**

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Abstract

We use data from marriage records in Murcia, Spain, in the 18th century to study the role of women in social mobility in the pre-modern era. Our measure of socioeconomic standing is identification as a don or doña, an honorific denoting high, though not necessarily, noble status. We show that this measure, which is acquired over the lifecycle, shows gendered transmission patterns. In particular, same-sex transmission is stronger than opposite-sex, for both sons and daughters. The relative transmission from fathers versus mothers varies over the lifecycle, and grandparents may have an effect on the status of their grandchildren.

JEL Codes: D31; J62; N33

Keywords: Social mobility; Spain; Assortative mating; Marriage; Status

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1 Introduction

The study of historical patterns in intergenerational mobility has experienced a resurgence in recent years. The increasing availability of large datasets linking individuals and families over time, coupled with awareness of declines in social mobility in the United States over the past several decades, has led researchers to investigate the degree to which societies vary in intergenerational mobility, as well as why these differences arise (Chetty et al., 2014). The bulk of studies on social mobility focus on the transmission of socioeconomic status (SES) between fathers and sons, with status usually measured by occupation. However, this narrow focus could hide interesting dynamics on the role of women and the evolution of this over time. The correlation in SES between fathers and sons is a function of both the effect of fathers and of mothers on sons. Moreover, most of the work is done for post-industrial societies, with the result that we have an incomplete picture of social mobility in pre-industrial societies, and particularly the importance of the role of women in them.

We use marriage records for the city of Murcia (Spain) during the 18th century to study social mobility and assortative mating. The records contain the socioeconomic status of the bride, the groom, and their parents. We investigate the role that fathers and mothers, independently, have in determining the SES of their sons and daughters. Very little is known about inequality and social mobility in pre-industrial societies, especially for late-industrializing countries (Espín-Sánchez et al., 2019). While historians of the family have examined the topic, they have approached it in a less quantitative way, focusing instead on particular case studies and narrative evidence.¹ By the end of the 18th century, Murcia was experiencing important structural economic changes due to the early stages of industrialization (María Teresa Pérez Picazo, 1979). Results from this period could thus shed light on the differences between early industrializing countries, such as the US and the UK, and

¹Chacón Jiménez and Recaño Valverde (2002) use a cross-sectional dataset (the Godoy's census of 1797) to study the neighboring town of Lorca.

late industrializing countries like Spain.

To measure status, we use whether or not an individual is recorded as a *don* or a *doña*. These are Spanish honorifics denoting individuals who, while not necessarily noble, are of relatively high status. [Alfani and Gourdon \(2016\)](#) use a similar measure, *monsieur* and *signore*, to ascribe high status to godparents for France and Italy respectively. We discuss this measure in detail below, but we note here several salient features. First, being recorded as a *doña* measures the status of women directly, as it is not imputed based on the status of husbands or parents. While such imputations are common, they can obscure gender-specific differences in intergenerational mobility. Second, the status can be gained, but not lost, for a particular individual. Once a person is recorded as a *don* or *doña*, this will be done so consistently in later records. In this sense, the measure is similar to studies of intergenerational correlations in years of education. Third, the honorific is not strictly hereditary, in that some individuals who have parents who are *dons* and *doñas* will have children who are not, and vice versa. The failure of a son to acquire the *don* status of his father does not appear to be based on birth order, as we find no effect of marriage order within a family on intergenerational mobility, as we discuss later.²

This paper contributes to several strands of the intergenerational mobility literature. First, it uses a measure of social status which, to our knowledge, has not been used to measure social mobility before but is available across a variety of places and times and over long periods of time. Second, it studies transmission of status from (and to) women, but using a direct measure of female status, rather than one imputed from the status of women's husbands. Given relatively low levels of information about female occupation or income in historical records, such information is extremely rare. Third, it generates estimates of social mobility (for men and women) for a time and place about which little is known about social mobility, as it predates modern censuses.

The literature in economic history using linking records has grown immensely since

²This might not be surprising given the system of partible inheritance present in Castile ([Barrera-González, 1998](#)).

the seminal work of [Ferrie \(1996\)](#). Some examples of this are [Long and Ferrie \(2007\)](#) and [Long and Ferrie \(2013\)](#) for the United States and the United Kingdom before 1950, [Parman \(2011\)](#) for early 20th century Iowa, and [Long \(2013\)](#) for Victorian England. The best quality studies of recent social mobility have been done with administrative Scandinavian data ([Jäntti and Jenkins, 2015](#), [Björklund et al., 2017](#), [Landersö and Heckman, 2017](#)) which, unlike the other studies mentioned before, contain the full population and their history, as well as family relations. Moreover, they rely on tax data, which contains several years of income data, so the measurement error in lifetime income is negligible, compared to studies that only use one year of income. However, these studies, by the very nature of the data, cannot go back in the past and rarely use data from before the 20th century. There is also a literature that studies social mobility in European countries using probate records, usually for the 19th century: [Harbury and Hitchins \(1979\)](#) for Britain; [Arrondel and Grange \(2006\)](#) for France; [Dribe and Svensson \(2008\)](#) using local population registers for Sweden; and [Santiago-Caballero \(2018\)](#) using marriage records in Valencia (Spain).

The voluminous literature on intergenerational mobility has generally relied on father-son links, largely for reasons of data availability. There are two reasons data availability is much greater for males. First, in societies where women lose their last name upon marriage, it is hard to track the matrilineal lineage. Recent studies, however, are using marriage records to find the bride's maiden name ([Craig et al., 2019](#), [Dribe et al., 2019](#)), though these generally rely on status of women as measured through that of male relatives. Second, even after linking the mother's family side, individual information on women's socioeconomic status (SES) might not be available. Some authors have opted for computing the correlation between the son and his father-in-law ([Santiago-Caballero, 2018](#), [Joana-Maria Pujadas-Mora, 2018](#)). Another solution, particularly associated with [Olivetti and Paserman \(2015\)](#), is to construct pseudo-links, based on first names, between fathers and daughters, in addition to sons.³ In this article, however, we use a direct measure of SES for women,

³There are exceptions to the usual focus only on males, using contemporary data, such as [Altonji and Dunn \(2000\)](#) who study transmission from mothers and to daughters, and [Chadwick and Solon \(2002\)](#), who

which allows us to identify individually the effects of each parent for sons and daughters, and also the degree of assortative mating. In addition to studying the effect of mothers, a number of recent studies have challenged the implicit view that only the status of the parents matters for predicting the status of sons. [Long and Ferrie \(2018\)](#) find that parental grandfathers have predictive status independent of that of fathers, and [Olivetti et al. \(2018\)](#), using pseudo-links, find maternal grandmothers also have predictive power. Our data allows us to link all four grandparents for grooms and all four grandparents for brides.

We begin by examining the transmission of status at the age of children's marriage. Marriage records contain the *don* and *doña* status for the bride and groom, as well as all four parents, at the time of the marriage. This avoids issues arising from overrepresentation of rare names and incorrect links, both of which can bias estimates. We regress the standardized status of children on that of both their fathers as well as their mothers and find highly persistent status for both men and women. There are substantial differences across gender in how status is transmitted. For grooms, the predictive power of fathers is about twice that of mothers: When regressing the status of sons on both parents, the coefficient on fathers is 0.59 and that on mothers 0.28. For brides, these respective figures are 0.32 on fathers and 0.57 on mothers.

We then link marriage records over time, *i.e.*, the marriage record of a couple and the marriage of one of their children. Notice that, given the Spanish naming convention, we are linking four different words when linking two marriage records—groom's given name and surname, and bride's given and surname—which improves matching accuracy. This linked sample allows us to do two things, both of which are novel. First, they allow us to study the effects of all four grandparents directly, in addition to that of the parents, in both sons and daughters. The coefficients on fathers and mothers for grooms are not much changed when grandparents are added. We show, consistent with [Long and Ferrie \(2018\)](#), that parental grandfathers have predictive status independent of that of parents.

estimate intergenerational elasticities for sons and daughters. More recently, economists have extended the analysis to more complex family dynamics.

The second key advantage of linking marriage records over time is that it allows us to calculate status transmission at two points in the lifecycle. Our estimate without linking uses the status of parents and children at the same date, but at different points in their lifecycle: children at marriage, and parents at their children’s marriage. With the linked sample we also study the transmission of status taken at different dates, but at the same point in their lifecycle: young adulthood and middle age. This means we have three measures of status transmission: i) same date; ii) both at young adulthood; and iii) both at middle age. In other words, when we link two samples, we have a measure of status in each sample for the couple linked, one measure when they married and another measure when their child married. The coefficients are lower than in the specification above, but still gendered, particularly when measured young.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides historical background on the honorifics *don* and *doña*. Section 3 explains in detail the data sources and how the dataset was created from primary sources. Section 4 presents the main results of the paper. It shows the effects of mothers and father on sons and daughters using the unlinked sample. Using the linked sample it also shows the transmission measured at different points in time, the effects of grandparents, and of household composition. Finally, Section 4 also discusses assortative mating. Section 5 concludes with ideas for future research.

2 *Dons and Doñas*

The social treatment of *don* and *doña* was originally meant to distinguish the aristocracy (*hidalgos*, literally “son of something”) from commoners. Its origins come from the Late Middle Ages, where the king would recognize the value of an individual due to personal merit. In Spain, these merits would typically be linked to some assistance during the *Reconquista*. Over time, however, *hidalgos* were associated with social class, not necessarily with the aristocracy (Pita Pico, 2013). In Spain, the public display of being a *don* has been linked

to the creation of the national identity. Miguel de Cervantes makes his delirious character Alonso Quijano call himself *don Quijote*, thus elevating himself with the elite, present and past. One could become a *don* for different causes: lineage, place of origin, wealth (including purchase of nobility titles), wisdom (such as becoming a doctor), or religious (all priests are automatically *dons*). Therefore, by the 18th century this relation is not that strong, so that some elite people are considered *dons* despite not holding an aristocratic title (Pita Pico, 2013). Appendix A.1 presents more information about *hidalgos* and their prevalence in Spain as a whole. Appendix A.2 and the included tables show the prevalence of *dons* and *doñas* in our data.

Don is a measure of high status in Spain and the Spanish Empire, similar to a *Signore* in Italy, a *Gentleman* in England and a *Monsieur* in France.⁴ There is not a clear consensus in the literature on how this somewhat informal title is transmitted. The literature that studies the meaning of the title is scarce and, to the best of our knowledge, there are no works studying its transmission from the parents to their children. Pérez León (2012) argues that the title transmission in Castile was regulated by the royal decree on July 3, 1611, where the king Philip III established that it should be reserved for bishops, counts, the sons of the high nobility (including illegitimate sons), and the wives and daughters of the low nobility, but not their sons. However, these rules changed over time. The financing needs of the Crown meant that a royal decree on July 3, 1664, by Philip IV, established that the title could be used only after paying a fee: 200 *reales* for one life (the buyer); 400 *reales* for two lives (the buyer and his first-born son); and 600 *reales* in perpetuity (the buyer and his patrilineal descendants). A new royal decree on February 10, 1795, raised the fees to have the title in perpetuity to 1000 *reales*, raised again to 1,400 *reales* on 1801 (Bustos Argañarás, 2015). Nonetheless, Soria Mesa (2004) argues that in practice, the title was always up for sale, including bribes to witnesses to certify a noble family origin. Thus the title is less rigid than the official laws would suggest, but it is a good measure of social (elite) status.

⁴The prefixes Von and Van in German and Dutch names respectively, also denoted high or noble status originally.

Moreover, [Soria Mesa \(2004\)](#) argues that, unlike the common opinion, the 17th and 18th centuries in Spain were characterized by high social mobility, where wealth, not birth, played a central role in social status.

One particular case in our data deserves special attention, that of women who appear as *doñas* when they married, even when their parents do not. There are famous cases of women in pre-modern Castile acquiring high status coming from humble origins. Beatriz Galindo, born in 1465, was the first female to get a university degree worldwide. Luisa de Medrano became the first University Professor in the world. Moreover, she replaced the great Antonio de Nebrija as Grammar Professor in the University of Salamanca in 1508. These are, however, rare exceptions. The most common way for women to climb the social ladder would be to marry a high status husband, or to work after marriage in the family business and earn the respect of her community. Beatriz Galindo, mentioned above, was the royal tutor for the daughters of Queen Isabel of Castile. Being a personal tutor for the children of the nobility was another way that a young women would climb the social ladder. Unfortunately, we do not have much information in this regard. [Irigoyen López \(2012\)](#) argues that one key figure for upward mobility was the clergy. Though did not have (legitimate) children of their own, they would play a key role on helping their relatives, such as siblings or nephews, to climb the social ladder. [Molina-Puche \(2005\)](#) emphasizes that this role was particularly relevant for their sisters and nieces. Therefore, some of the cases of upward mobile women that seems paradoxical could be explained by the help they got from a relative in the clergy. Another way, of course, was to become a nun, and ascend in the organization of the Catholic Church. Nuns, however, would not appear in marriage records.

We have 84 cases (out of 18,175) of fully upwardly-mobile women in our dataset, *i.e.*, brides that appears as *doña* when both of their parents and the groom are not *don*. We looked intensively for them in the primary and secondary sources. In fourteen of the cases, the parents come from outside the city. Therefore it is plausible that they were of high

status, but the local priest would not know them well enough as to classify them of high status, even if he did not hesitate to classify the bride as *doña*. In eight of the cases, we could not find any information on the parents, but we have found information on the bride. It is uncertain whether the parents were of high status in this case. In 56 of the cases, we could not find any information, in primary or secondary sources, regarding the bride or her parents. For the remaining six cases, we could find detailed information both on the parents and the bride. Two of these cases exemplify this issue in general. The first case is that of *Doña* Ginesa Martínez, who married José Antonio Oliver on December 25, 1698. She was an important landowner in the neighboring town of Moratalla, due to a previous marriage in 1685 with *Don* Miguel de Medina ([Lisón Hernández, 1989](#)). The second case is that of *Doña* Tomasa Galiana, who married Antonio Galvache on February 27, 1755. His father, Onofre Galiana, appears as owner of a flour mill in the city of Murcia on 1753 ([Cremades Griñán, 1981](#)). Therefore, it seems that he was wealthy enough so that his daughter would be a *doña* at marriage but, maybe due to his occupation as a miller, not high status enough to be himself call *don*.

3 Data

We use data from the city of Murcia, located in southeastern Spain (see Figure 1). Murcia is the historical capital of the Kingdom of Murcia and the current Region of Murcia. Since it is the bureaucratic capital, it has historically drained resources from the rest of the region. Fortunately, Murcia has not suffered much from siege or pillage since the 14th century, which means it has excellent historical sources ([Espín-Sánchez et al., 2019](#)). The data come from marriage records in Murcia for the 18th century. These church records exist for the years 1565 through 1910, and some of them are available at [FamilySearch \(2016\)](#). However, not all have been transcribed. Although much of the basic demographic data for the transcribed records is available on [ancestry.com](#), the measure of social status we

employ is not transcribed. The key point for our purposes is that the records contain six related individuals, all recorded with a social status as either a *don* or *doña* or not. That is, we observe the names and status of the grooms and brides as well as both of their parents.

The parish records are books created by the local priest of every church/parish. They keep the basic information from the main sacraments performed by the priests in a given parish. The main relevant records refer to death, baptisms, and marriage records. They are useful for genealogical studies and to study social mobility. They are very similar across time and across the Catholic world, especially after the Council of Trent (1563) imposed homogeneity in the sources and made it compulsory for priests to keep accurate records ([Chacón Jiménez, 1987](#), [Pérez Ortiz et al., 2017](#)). While the sources are homogeneous across time and space, their survival is heterogeneous. Even within Spain, the sources have not survived in many cities, as a consequence of thefts, wars, fires, and other hazards ([Pérez Ortiz et al., 2017](#)). Nonetheless, the region of Murcia, and in particular the city of Murcia, has one of the best preserved demographic records in Spain, and in the world. Most of the Murcia parishes preserved most of their data, at least since 1563 ([Irigoyen López, 2012](#), [Chacón Jiménez and Chacón Martínez, 2015](#)).

The city of Murcia, like many medieval cities, was restricted in size by its medieval walls. In addition to the walls, the old city was bounded in the south by the Segura River. Figure 1 shows the “old” parishes: Santa María, San Pedro, Santa Catalina, San Antolín, San Juan, San Lorenzo, San Miguel, San Nicolas and Santa Eulalia.⁵ Santa María is the name of the cathedral parish, San Bartolomé is the closest church, and the two parishes merged into a single parish for administrative purposes. We refer to the merged parish as Santa María for simplicity. In Table 1, we can see that Santa María holds a much larger number of records than the other parishes.⁶ The Santa María parish provided sacraments

⁵To the best of our knowledge, this is the first map representing the parishes in the city of Murcia. We constructed the map using a booklet (*Boletín Eclesiástico*) from the Cargatena Bishopric from 1908, pages 89-94 ([Obispado de Cartagena, 1909](#)). In the memo, there is a detailed description of the limits of each parish, listing the street names that mark the boundaries. Because some streets have changed names since 1908, we used historical maps of Murcia from 1896 and 1882 ([Archivo General Región de Murcia, 2019](#)).

⁶The “new” parishes were created in the early 19th century. They are all attached to the city walls, from

for citizens in the irrigated orchards around the city, before these areas had their own parishes (Henarejos López, 2011). The “old” parishes are clustered around the cathedral and inside the medieval city walls.⁷

Marriage records contain the date and place of the marriage, and the full name of the groom, the bride, their parents, and the witnesses. By full name, we mean that the record includes the honorary *don* or *doña*, which we use to denote elite status. The marriage records also contain the following information: name of the priest; name of the notary; place of residence of the groom, the bride and the witnesses (best men and maids of honor); place of origin of the groom and bride and their parents; whether the groom or the bride are widows, and the name of their deceased spouse; and whether the groom and the bride are relatives, up to third cousins. In Figure 2, we can see how a single record contains the links for both the groom and the bride with their parents, and the social status of each individual. For this reason, we do not need to link records to perform the main analysis. Moreover, the marriage records contain the same information for men and women. In this particular example, we can see how assortative mating is not perfect. The groom and bride have different status. The same is true for the parents of the groom, but the parents of the bride are both from high status. Notice that, whereas the parents of the bride did transmit their high status to their daughter, the mother of the groom could not transmit her high status to her son.

In order to study the effects of grandparents and family composition, as well as the transmission of status at different ages, we link marriage records backwards one generation, as described in the Appendix A.3. We perform an iterative matching procedure, first

the outside and grew concentrically outwards. In this paper, we focus on the old parishes of the city of Murcia. The sources survived for all parishes, except for San Nicolas during 1700-1780. We drop this parish from our main specification. The church of Santa Eulalia was built in 1766. The marriage records for this parish are only available after 1790, so we do not use it in our main specification. The new parishes were created in the 19th century and so are not relevant to our analysis.

⁷The medieval wall was built in the 12th century, during the Islamic occupation (García Antón, 1993). After 1492, with the union of Castile and Aragon, and the conquest of Granada, the region no longer had a land border with a hostile enemy. This *Pax Iberica* meant that a defensive structure like the city walls was no longer necessary (Jiménez Castillo and Sánchez González, 2004). Nonetheless, parts of the wall were preserved as a protection from floods until the 19th century (García-Tornel, 1997).

matching exactly, then after performing some standardization of names, and then after a phonetic regularization. In a few cases, we have multiple matches, but in the vast majority of these cases, the relevant variables, that is the statuses of the marrying couple and their parents, were identical between the multiple matches. In this case, we included the information from one of the matches.

Note that in addition to expanding the set of relatives, linking gives us two measures for parents and children, at different ages. Consider for concreteness a son, whom we label in generation as G3, a father (G2), and a grandfather (G1). We link the son's marriage record at time T2 to that of his father at earlier time T1. Note this gives us a measure of transmission from fathers to sons recorded when both married, that is, in young adulthood. This measure uses the groom (G3) at T2 and the groom (G2) at T1. Additionally, there is a measure of transmission of status recorded when one of their children married, which we denote as at middle age. This is the father (G2) at T2 and the father (G1) at T1.

4 Results

We now describe the transmission of social status as measured by being recorded as a *don* or *doña* in the marriage records. Several important stylized facts emerge. As mentioned earlier, once an individual becomes a *don* or *doña*, they maintain such status all their lives. In that sense, this measure of social status is similar to years of education. Our first set of results refers to unlinked data. We find that the transmission of social status by this measure is relatively persistent and that the transmission differs by gender, with fathers having a stronger effect on sons and mothers on daughters.

We can link together two marriage records for each couple: when they married and when the parents of either the bride or the groom married. This means that for the linked sample, we have two measures of social status at different points in their lifetime, and also that we can measure the effect of grandparents on predicting social status. We find that

gendered effects on the transmission of status are lower for grooms, but not for brides, when we measure status at older ages by using linked marriage records. Finally, we find that grandparents' status has a direct effect on that of their grandchildren, contrary to models of social transmission status which are first order Markov.

4.1 Intergenerational Transmission of Status

For all of the following specifications, we standardize the measure of status, a binary indicator for status as a *don* or *doña*, to have constant mean and variance. We begin the analysis in Table 2.A, first examining the transmission of social status to grooms. All regressions throughout contain fixed effects for the parish in which the child was married and standard errors are clustered at the parish level. The first column uses only the status of the father to predict the status of the son, in line with the most basic test of social mobility. We find an elasticity of 0.79, high but in line with the historical record as suggested by Clark (2014). The equation used by Clark (2014) and most of the literature, corresponding to the first column, is the following

$$S_i = \tilde{\beta}_F^S F_i + \tilde{\varepsilon}_i^S \quad (1)$$

where S_i is the status of the son and F_i is the status of the father. Unlike most of the literature we also have information on the status of the mother, denoted as M_i . The coefficient in the second column, using the mother only as the predictor, is slightly lower, at 0.71. Moreover, we can decompose the effect of both the father and the mother using the following equations, where D_i is the status of the daughter:

$$S_i = \beta_F^S F_i + \beta_M^S M_i + \varepsilon_i^S \quad (2)$$

$$D_i = \beta_F^D F_i + \beta_M^D M_i + \varepsilon_i^D \quad (3)$$

In the third column, we predict the groom’s status using the status of both of his parents to disentangle the relative contributions of each to the social status of the child. Both the mother’s and the father’s status independently predict the social status of the sons, with the effect of the mother about half the magnitude of that of the father.

At this point, it is useful to consider the implied correlation in status of these models. Note that if the true model of status is the one in equation 2, but we instead estimate equation 1, then $\tilde{\beta}_F^S = \beta_F^S + \rho\beta_M^S$, where ρ is the correlation in status between fathers and mothers. Therefore the correlation between the father and son status, $\tilde{\beta}_F^S = 0.790$, can be decomposed into the direct effect of the father $\beta_F^S = 0.586$ and the indirect effect that is equal to the degree of assortative mating $\rho = 0.734$ times the direct effect of the mother $\beta_M^S = 0.278$. Here, $\rho = 0.734$ corresponds to the correlation between the parents’ status. The same decomposition is possible when looking at the correlation between mothers and sons, or for either parent and daughters.

We then look at the social status of the daughters, based on the status of their parents, in the first through third columns of Table 2.B. Looking only at column (1), the coefficient is 0.72, relatively similar to that for fathers and sons, though slightly lower. In column (2), predicting the daughter’s social status based on that of her mother, the figure is 0.79, essentially identical to that of fathers and sons. When the father and mother of the bride are considered separately, in the sixth column, the coefficients are 0.32 and 0.56. That is, for brides the social status of the *mother* has roughly twice the effect of the father, the opposite of what held for grooms.

Table 2 shows several important facts for social status transmission. Transmission to daughters appears quite similar to that of sons, in the sense that the coefficient is high. However, the *relative* contributions to the status of children from each parent is different for sons versus daughters. In particular, the same-sex transmission of status is roughly twice as strong as that of the opposite-sex parent. Second, the coefficients when looking at each parent fit a similar pattern of same-sex vs opposite sex transmission. That is, the

father-son coefficient and mother-daughter coefficient are virtually identical. Similarly, the mother-son coefficient and father-daughter coefficients are both very similar. Notice that these measures are not intergenerational elasticities per se. The variables are measured at the same date, but at different points in the life-cycle for the parent and the children. Instead, they show that status *as measured at young adulthood* is strongly dependent on status of parents *as measured at their middle age*. Moreover, the transmission of that status is gendered: Fathers matter more for sons, and mothers for daughters. In the next subsection, we discuss how the measures change if we look at variables for parents and children at the same point in their life-cycle.

In Figure 3, we show the results from estimating equations (1) and (2) for sons and daughters separately by decade. When estimated by itself father-son transmission is steady, *i.e.*, the empirical correlation between father and son status is stable. However, we see some evidence for a change in gendered patterns over time, with the mother becoming relatively more important to the status of the son than the father. This is important and underscores our contribution of using a direct measure of socioeconomic status for the mother. Without this direct measure we would get a biased measure in the effect of the father on the son, as discussed above. Moreover, we would also get a biased measure about the evolution of social mobility over time.

In historical studies, the best method for assigning women's status is by using pseudo-links based on names, and assigning to a woman her father's status (Olivetti and Paserman, 2015). Olivetti and Paserman (2015) acknowledge that their method could create biased estimates, but it is useful to see changes over time, if the bias is constant over time. The results in Figure 3 shows that, in the case of 18th century Murcia, the bias does change over time. This implies that one should also be cautious when drawing conclusions about changes over time based on the assumption of a constant bias. If the role of women is changing over time, then so is the bias.

4.2 Transmission of Status in Middle Age and Young Adulthood

In this subsection, we analyze the transmission of status from parents to children again, but after having matched the marriage records to the marriage record of a previous generation. In other words, given the parents of a groom or a bride in a marriage record, we link this marriage record to the one in which the parents were married. We discuss the details of the matching process in Appendix [A.3](#). Note that the regressions above consider the relationship between the status of an individual at marriage and the status of his or her parents at the child's own marriage. However, we may be more interested instead at the transmission of status as measured at a consistent age, which we discuss below.

The analysis in the previous subsection has the advantage that the status of the parent and the child are measured at the same date and, more importantly, it does not require linking. In addition to avoiding linking, measuring status for parents and child in the same document has other advantages. By seeing what elements of status are transmitted to children at marriage versus when it is measured later in life, we get further information on the life-cycle nature of this transmission. Such a measure does have some disadvantages as well. First, the ages at which status is measured are different for the parent and the child, in that it is the age of marriage for the children and the age of their children's marriage for parents. This is somewhat difficult to compare with more traditional measures of intergenerational status transmission. Second, we may be more interested in status during late adulthood. If the status of children is primarily based on that of parents at marriage, but subsequent young and middle adulthood causes the children to develop status independently, then the above specifications will overstate the degree of persistence in status. Rather than viewing either the measures of the transmission at younger or older ages, or alternatively measuring at different ages, as the "correct" model of status transmission, we view each of them as providing information about the nature of the intergenerational persistence of status.

The linked sample provides us with two potential measures of status measured at con-

sistent ages: status of the parents of the marrying couple for both the older and younger generation, *i.e.*, in middle age; and the status of the marrying couples themselves for both generations, *i.e.*, both at young age. We do this exercise for both brides and grooms, and this gives a separate estimate of status transmission. The results for status of grooms measured at middle age for both generations are in the first three columns of Table 3.A. The coefficient is substantially lower, at 0.62, than in the regression in Table 2.A. Perhaps more interestingly, the coefficients on men and women are much more similar when measured at the same age. Status thus appears more “persistent” when measured at the time of marriage, in that sons most closely resemble their middle age fathers at the time of the son’s own marriage. The same exercise is repeated for status measured at age of marriage for both generations (that is, at a young age for both fathers and sons) in the fourth through sixth columns of Table 3.A. Here, the gender differences observed above in the first regressions are more apparent: The relative contribution of fathers to social status is much higher than that of mothers, compared to when status is measured in middle age.

We then perform the same exercise for brides, with the results in Table 3.B. When we look at the transmission of status as measured in middle age, we find somewhat lower coefficients than for grooms and considerably lower than for age-at-marriage transmission. In particular, in column (1) the father-daughter coefficient is measured to be 0.43, whereas the coefficient for mother-daughter is higher at 0.49. For brides in comparison to grooms, the gendered difference is sharper when status is measured at middle age. When we estimate both fathers and mothers together in column (3), the coefficient on the father is 0.22 and that on the mother is 0.37. The more surprising finding is when looking at status measured as young adults. Here, the gendered coefficients are *reversed*: Status of the father is more predictive of status of the daughter than the status of the mother.

One explanation for this surprising result when using the measure of status as young adults is that the measure of status may contain some error. As explained in Section 2, the status is acquired over time. This means that when measuring the status at middle age,

all men and women that would eventually become *don* have already done so. When measuring status at young adults, however, many individuals that would become *don* have not already done so, and are thus measured as low status. Measurement error alone, however, cannot explain all the results. In particular, measurement error would mean that the coefficients for middle age in Table 2 should be larger than those in Table 3. But this is not what we see in the data.

Comparing the results in Tables 3 and 2, we see that the coefficients and the R-squared are always smaller in Table 2. This is consistent with the idea that what is being transmitted is not something intrinsic, but rather something temporary. What matters in determining your status when you married is not so much the status that your parents had when they married, but their status now. Notice that the results in Tables 3 and 2 for status measured at young age have the same variable for the children, and a slightly different variable for the parents. For parents who were always low status, the two measures are the same. For parents who were always high status, *i.e.*, were already high status when they married, the two measures are also the same. The only difference between the two variables is then for parents that were not high status when they married, but were high status by the time their children married. Because the coefficients are larger in Table 3, this implies that the transmission is stronger precisely for those parents which changed status.

A criticism of earlier work on social mobility, associated with Clark (2014), is that occupation or income may fail to capture an underlying “status,” or “social competence,” with greater persistence than occupational status. The true trait to be transmitted would be status, and occupation would be an imperfect measure of status, leading to attenuation bias when measuring social mobility. In other words, occupation/income is only one component of status. Without information on the other components, the intergenerational transmission equation is misspecified, and in particular attenuation bias leads to estimates of intergenerational mobility showing incorrectly large amounts of social mobility. Clark (2014) used surname-based pseudo links to study social mobility in different countries,

often over long time spans. [Clark \(2014\)](#) argues that using surnames better captures a true underlying measure of social competence which is highly persistent, with an intergenerational elasticity of 0.7-0.8 across places and times. We use a direct measure of SES, rather than income or occupation, so we have less or no attenuation bias. Moreover, it is measured at the individual, rather than the group level as with names or surnames in [Clark \(2014\)](#), so the results could be interpreted as individual mobility rather than group mobility ([Solon, 2018](#)). Our results suggest that even a direct measure of status may show lower persistence than surname-based measures if information about women’s status is directly available. In Appendix [A.4](#), we calculate the estimates for intergenerational mobility using the surname method of [Clark \(2014\)](#).

4.3 Transmission of Status from Grandparents

In this subsection, we examine the effect of the status of grandparents as well as parents by using the matched records mentioned above. First, we examine the transmission of status to sons in Table [4.A](#). The first column duplicates Table [2.A](#), but for the linked sample. There is a slightly higher rate of persistence in these individuals than in the records as a whole. Note that in the specifications here, the status of the child (the dependent variable) is measured at young age, but the status of the parents as well as the grandparents are measured at middle age, *i.e.*, the same specification as in Table [2](#).⁸

In column (2), we regress the status of grooms on that of their fathers and their paternal grandfathers. Contrary to the first order Markov process model of [Clark \(2014\)](#), we find evidence for an independent effect of paternal grandfathers on status of sons. This is consistent with the findings of [Long and Ferrie \(2018\)](#), which looks at the transmission of status from fathers and paternal grandfathers. This result suggest that their model would be correct here, and that the transmission of status is second order (non-Markovian). There remains a grandparent effect here even when including the status of the mother in the re-

⁸An alternative here would be to use the status of the parents when they are young, which is also observed.

gression in column (3), suggesting that the effect of paternal grandparents in Long and Ferrie (2018) is not an artifact of missing information about the mother’s status. We then include all grandparents in the regression. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first empirical study in a pre-industrial society that looks at the effects of all four grandparents. The results in column (4) suggest that among all the grandparents, only the paternal grandfather has a statistically significant effect. Notice that the effect is significant even controlling for the parents and the other grandparents. Moreover, the coefficients on the parents change very little from the previous columns. In Table 4.B, we repeat this exercise for brides. Comparing the first column to the corresponding column in Table 2, in the matched sample the coefficients on fathers and mothers are similar to those in the total population. Unlike the results for grooms, there is little evidence of a grandparent effect for brides. This might not be surprising given that the mobility mechanisms for men and women are different in this society. The coefficients for fathers and mothers are virtually unchanged when we add grandparents to the regressions.

To summarize, we find a role for grandparents in explaining the social status of children, as measured by status at marriage. We find this is true even when considering the status of women separately, suggesting that this grandfather effect is not capturing some latent variable of “status” which the status measures for fathers imperfectly captures. However, this is more true for grooms than brides. For women, there is little evidence of transmission of status from grandparents.

4.4 Family Composition

With the linked marriages we can also examine the effect of family composition on the transmission of social status. In particular, we can observe the number of siblings, both own sex and other, that are in the linked sample, as well as the order in which individuals within the family marry. We note several important caveats to our analysis. First, we only observe linked individuals, so, for example, the “first to marry” among our sample may

not actually be first to marry, if for whatever reason the earlier marrying individual was not linked. Second, we do not observe *birth* order, only *marriage* order. While we believe the results are informative about the effect of within-family composition, they are not identical to observing birth and thus the effects of, for example, rules about inheritance. Third, we do not observe individuals who never marry at all, such as sons who enter the priesthood, even setting aside those who fail to link.

We regress the status of grooms on that of their parents as well as various family composition characteristics, with the results in Table 5. In these regressions, we use the status of parents as measured at the time of their child's wedding, similarly to Table 2. Column (1) in Table 5 just replicates the regression in column (1) on Table 2, but for the linked sample. In column (2) of panel A, we see that the number of siblings has no effect on the status of the groom. This remains true when splitting the siblings into own or other sex siblings in columns (3) and (4). In column (5), being the first groom to marry, an imperfect proxy for being the oldest son in the family, also has no effect on the transmission of social status. This remains the case when including the number of siblings in column (6). This might not be surprising given that Castile has had partible inheritance since the times of the Visigoths. The rules were formalized by the Laws of Toro (1505).⁹

In Table 5.B., we perform the same exercise for brides. Again, the coefficients on the father and the mother change only slightly, and the results for the new variables are all small in magnitude for family composition variables across all specifications. To summarize, when looking at transmission at own marriage with parents status measured at the time of the child's marriage, there is no evidence of any effect of family structure on social mobility.

Due to the incomplete linking, one might be worried that our sample is selected, and that selection is driving our results. One could be concerned that the youngest sisters in high status households are less likely to marry, and that would bias the results. In partic-

⁹Inheritance rules in the Kingdom of Aragon, also in Spain, prescribed primogeniture. It would be interesting for future research to replicate our analysis with data from the Kingdom of Aragon.

ular, if daughters of high status parents were likely to enter the Church rather than marry, for example if families saved resources to increase the eligibility of one daughter, then we would observe only “status preserving” (high status) marriages. The same story could be told for sons, with brothers being pushed into the priesthood, masking downward mobility. In Table 6, we show the number of brothers and sisters within the linked sample for both high status and low status parents. Note that more brides relative to grooms are linked, which goes against the idea that sisters were less likely to marry than brothers. Moreover, individuals have more sisters than brothers in the linked sample. For the same reason, there are more brothers than sisters linked, in each category. For individuals with low status parents, there is no difference in the number of either brothers or sisters between grooms and brides. For high status individuals, however, we have fewer siblings within the linked sample in general. Moreover, there is a marked difference by sex in the number of siblings. That is, grooms have fewer siblings, both brothers and sisters, than do brides. However, there does not appear to be much difference in the relative gap between the number of brothers and sisters of high vs low status brides: High status brides have 0.26 more sisters than brothers, and low status 0.23. This suggests that while family size differs between high and low status, it does not do so in a way that differentially affects “the second sister” of a family. Similarly, high status grooms have 0.09 more sisters than brothers, 0.14 for low status grooms, a relatively small difference, again suggesting a lack of attrition based on individuals leaving marriage.

4.5 Assortative Mating

In addition to the results regarding social mobility, the data allows to study assortative mating. In Table 7.A, we predict the status of the groom using information about the bride and her parents in a regression, in the same way that the social mobility regressions were defined above. The goal of this exercise is to understand the process of assortative mating, *i.e.*, how the status of the groom and his parents is correlated with the status of his bride,

and whether the other individuals in the family have additional predictive power. In column (1), we see a high correlation between the statuses of the groom and bride, with the correlation at about 0.80. The degree of assortative mating is high, but is far from perfect. This is precisely what allowed us to independently identify the effects of the mother and the father earlier. We now proceed to investigate further the marriage market by looking at the status of the groom and bride parents.

For pre-industrial Murcia, [Chacón-Jiménez and Molina-Puche \(2004\)](#) argue that the parents of the groom and bride try to find a match that is suitable to the human and physical capital of their child. In other words, there is an active mechanism for assortative mating. The main factors here are the prospective match family status and prestige as well as the potential inherited wealth. This is consistent with [Molina-Puche \(2005\)](#) who argue that, for other towns in the region, the local elites use marriages with other families of the elites as a way to consolidate their power.¹⁰

When we regress the status of the groom on that of the bride and her father, we see a significant effect of the status of the bride's father into the status of the groom. This might suggest that assortative mating is non-Markovian. In other words, that the status of the previous generation (parents) have predicting power on the status of the bride's groom. Including the bride's mother individually shows a smaller effect, that is only marginally significant. The results in columns (4), which include both of the bride's parents, seem to suggest that, even conditional on the status of the groom, parents play an important role in the "marriage market." It is important to remark here that, similarly to social mobility, we do see a pronounced gendered pattern. The status of the bride's father, in addition to the status of the bride, seems to have a high predictive power regarding the status of the groom. The fact that it is the bride's father status, and not her mother, which correlates with the groom's status seems to suggest that there is a social relation between the two men

¹⁰[McCaa \(1984\)](#) argues that, for the case of Mexico in the late 18th century, social status was the key determinant for both the timing of marriage and the social status of the bride. For brides, however, there was no relation between their status and the status of the husband, and the timing was mostly determined by the grooms age, with larger age differences for higher status grooms.

(groom and bride's father). In other words, as a bride, if your father has high status, you are more likely to marry with a high status groom, even conditional on your own status at marriage. This is consistent with the bride's father using his network to "find" a suitable husband for her daughter.

We now turn our attention to Table 7.B. The regression here is analogous to the one above: We predict the status of the bride based on the status of the groom and his parents. There we can see a similar picture to the one in Table 7.A. Individually, both the father and the mother of the groom have a significant effect on the status of the bride. Similarly to our results earlier, the effect is gendered. Now it seems that is the status of the groom's mother that affects the bride's status. Again, this is consistent with a gendered marriage market where the groom's mother could more easily find a high status wife for his son, if she herself is of high status.

The picture here of assortative mating is complex. It shows that the status of the parents affect the status of the spouse, even conditional on the spouse's status. Moreover, it seems that mothers find wives for their sons and fathers find husbands for their daughters. There are several implications of these results for understanding marriage markets in pre-industrial Murcia. To understand marriage markets we need to look beyond the status correlation among spouses. Moreover, regarding social mobility, our results raise doubts about whether or not lack of information about women in a study of social mobility can be corrected in an obvious way. Even if one were to have information about the degree of assortative mating as measured by the correlation between husbands and wives, it appears in this data that the status of grooms and brides depends additionally on the *parents* of the spouses. Given that the status of parents is correlated with children, this is further evidence that grandparent effects may exist, and moreover may exist through the effect the status of extended families on the parents themselves through marriage, not only through "direct" effects on grandchildren. Understanding better the effects that each relative have on the status of sons and daughters is then an important avenue for future research.

5 Conclusion

In this paper, we use a community-based measure of socioeconomic status that exists in areas with Spanish origins: The use of honorific titles *don* and *doña*. This measure, at its core, simply measures whether or not this individual has high status as understood by the community, in this case Murcia (Spain) in the 18th century. What is virtually unique about this measure is that it exists for both men and women, allowing us to study the transmission of status from women and to women. We found that the role of mothers in transmitting social mobility is important, especially for daughters. Moreover, we see that the relative importance of mothers and fathers in transmitting their status to their children changed during the 18th, so that by the end of the century the effects of mothers and fathers are similar for both sons and daughters. Further research is needed to understand this change.

Although these particular records were not linked to records which contain income or occupation, a natural extension of this research would be to see how well these measures correlate to measures based on occupation or income. Given Spanish naming conventions as well as the relatively large numbers of surviving records from church archives and censuses, as well as increasingly complete family trees from genealogical efforts, it should soon be feasible to compare these measures, and many of these church records will contain information on honorifics. Such comparisons of income or wealth based measured with “direct” measures of social status can be made across a wide range of places and times, as many societies have honorific titles similar to those we use. The widespread availability of records containing honorific titles will open up avenues for further study of social mobility, and in particular the role of women in it, in many areas in Spain and Latin America. More systematic studies of status and its effects are feasible and the study of intersection of race, class, and gender in social mobility based on acquired status seems particularly fruitful as an setting for future work.

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Table 1: Summary Statistics by Parish

Parish	Num Marriages	Frac. High Status		Match Rate	
		Grooms	Brides	Grooms	Brides
San Antolin	2927	8.06	9.90	14.7	19.4
San Juan	1332	7.50	8.93	11.1	13.6
San Lorenzo	562	7.82	9.60	5.33	6.04
San Miguel	1447	8.91	10.2	15.6	19.2
San Pedro	966	11.8	16.4	9.73	15.2
Santa Catalina	774	20.2	23.3	10.3	13.8
Santa Maria	10167	3.72	4.58	20.2	25.7
TOTAL	18175	6.37	7.79	16.8	21.6

Notes: Parish is the church in Murcia in which the marriages were performed. Santa Maria is the main cathedral church. Fraction high status denotes the percentages of grooms and brides who were denoted as having status as a *don* or *doña*. Match rate is the percent of marriages for which the marriage of the parents of the groom or bride respectively could be linked to the child's marriage.

Table 2: Status Transmission: Marriage Records

	(1)	(2)	(3)
<i>Panel A: Grooms (N=18175)</i>			
Father	0.790*** (0.009)		0.586*** (0.019)
Mother		0.710*** (0.010)	0.278*** (0.019)
Parish FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
R-squared	0.636	0.516	0.670
	(1)	(2)	(3)
<i>Panel B: Brides (N=18175)</i>			
Father	0.719*** (0.009)		0.317*** (0.019)
Mother		0.791*** (0.011)	0.561*** (0.023)
Parish FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
R-squared	0.537	0.636	0.684

Notes: OLS regression for status as a *don* or *doña*. Dependent variable is the standardized social status measure, measured at the time of marriage. The independent variables are the standardized social status measures for fathers and mothers respectively, measured at the time of their child's marriage. All standard errors are clustered at the parish level. *, **, and *** represent $p < 0.1$, $p < 0.05$, and $p < 0.01$ respectively.

Table 3: Status Transmission in Linked Marriage Records

	Middle Age			Young		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Panel A: Grooms (N=3070)</i>						
Father	0.624*** (0.061)		0.419** (0.118)	0.687*** (0.029)		0.585*** (0.053)
Mother		0.589*** (0.067)	0.321** (0.124)		0.559*** (0.054)	0.144** (0.044)
Parish FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R-squared	0.415	0.374	0.474	0.495	0.340	0.504
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Panel B: Brides (N=3931)</i>						
Father	0.427*** (0.040)		0.219*** (0.037)	0.497*** (0.043)		0.362*** (0.061)
Mother		0.494*** (0.057)	0.369*** (0.063)		0.444*** (0.041)	0.218*** (0.034)
Parish FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R-squared	0.223	0.280	0.312	0.279	0.228	0.307

Notes: OLS regression for status as a *don* or *doña*. Dependent variable is the standardized social status measure. The independent variables are the standardized social status measures for fathers and mothers respectively. "Middle Age" represents status measured for both children and parents at when both generations have a child getting married. "Young" represents status measured for both children and parents at the time of each's own marriage respectively. All standard errors are clustered at the parish level. *, **, and *** represent $p < 0.1$, $p < 0.05$, and $p < 0.01$ respectively.

Table 4: Status Transmission from Grandparents

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Panel A: Grooms (N=3070)</i>				
Father	0.625*** (0.053)	0.777*** (0.066)	0.560*** (0.060)	0.551*** (0.059)
Mother	0.280*** (0.043)		0.271*** (0.046)	0.277*** (0.045)
Paternal GF		0.127** (0.049)	0.115** (0.046)	0.105* (0.052)
Paternal GM				-0.023 (0.020)
Maternal GF				0.065 (0.053)
Maternal GM				-0.037 (0.029)
Parish FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	3070	3070	3070	3070
R-Squared	0.769	0.755	0.777	0.779
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Panel B: Brides (N=3931)</i>				
Father	0.258*** (0.038)	0.721*** (0.026)	0.243*** (0.039)	0.239*** (0.037)
Mother	0.615*** (0.051)		0.613*** (0.050)	0.632*** (0.037)
Paternal GF		0.043 (0.024)	0.032* (0.016)	0.034 (0.022)
Paternal GM				0.002 (0.048)
Maternal GF				0.026 (0.028)
Maternal GM				-0.059** (0.020)
Parish FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	3931	3931	3931	3931
R-Squared	0.704	0.571	0.705	0.707

Notes: OLS regression for status as a *don* or *doña*. Dependent variable is the standardized social status measure, measured at the time of marriage. The independent variables are the social status measures for the relatives shown, measured in “middle age” as defined in Table 3. All standard errors are clustered at the parish level. *, **, and *** represent $p < 0.1$, $p < 0.05$, and $p < 0.01$ respectively.

Table 5: Marriage Order Regressions

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Panel A: Grooms (N=3070)</i>						
Father	0.856*** (0.039)	0.625*** (0.053)	0.624*** (0.053)	0.625*** (0.053)	0.625*** (0.054)	0.625*** (0.054)
Mother		0.280*** (0.043)	0.280*** (0.043)	0.280*** (0.043)	0.280*** (0.044)	0.280*** (0.044)
Number of siblings		-0.001 (0.003)		0.002 (0.008)		0.002 (0.008)
Number own sex siblings			-0.004 (0.004)	-0.007 (0.013)		-0.009 (0.015)
First married own sex					0.009 (0.019)	0.013 (0.023)
Parish FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R-Squared	0.746	0.769	0.769	0.769	0.769	0.769
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Panel B: Brides (N=3931)</i>						
Father	0.742*** (0.016)	0.258*** (0.038)	0.258*** (0.038)	0.258*** (0.038)	0.258*** (0.038)	0.258*** (0.038)
Mother		0.614*** (0.051)	0.615*** (0.051)	0.614*** (0.051)	0.614*** (0.051)	0.614*** (0.051)
Number of siblings		-0.006 (0.004)		-0.009 (0.005)		-0.009 (0.005)
Number own sex siblings			-0.005 (0.005)	0.005 (0.006)		0.002 (0.005)
First married own sex					0.016* (0.007)	0.022*** (0.006)
Parish FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R-Squared	0.570	0.704	0.704	0.704	0.704	0.704

Notes: OLS regression for status as a *don* or *doña*. Dependent variable is the standardized social status measure, measured at the time of marriage. The independent variables are the standardized social status measures for fathers and mothers respectively, measured at the time of their child's marriage. Marriage order based on sample of marriages matched back one generation. All standard errors are clustered at the parish level. *, **, and *** represent $p < 0.1$, $p < 0.05$, and $p < 0.01$ respectively.

Table 6: Number of Observed Siblings Based on Parents' Status

	Grooms		Brides	
	High Status	Low Status	High Status	Low Status
Number of Brothers	0.28	0.68	0.38	0.64
Number of Sisters	0.37	0.82	0.64	0.87
Number of Siblings	0.65	1.50	1.02	1.51

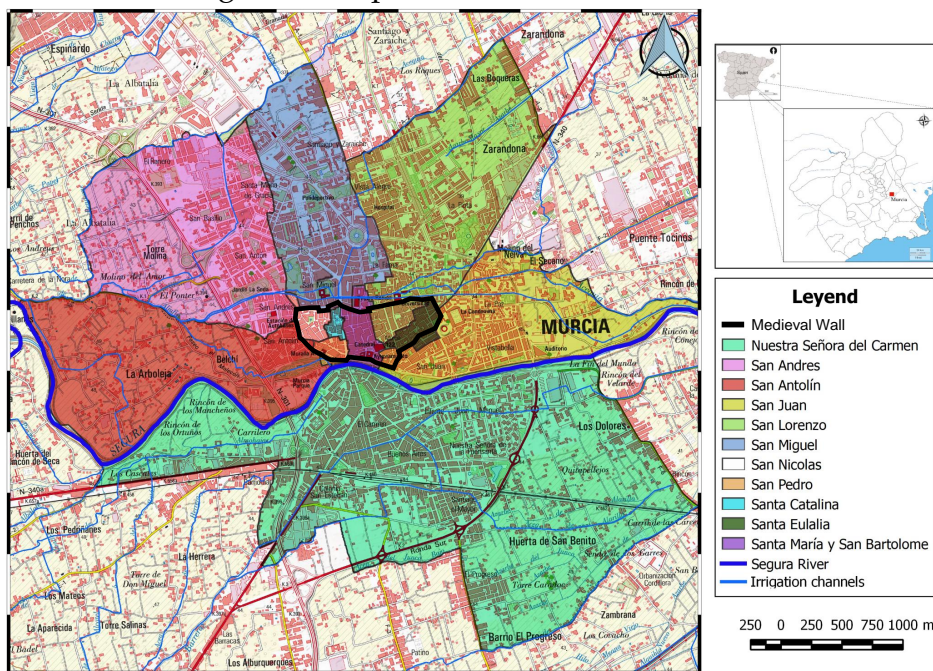
Notes: Table displays the number of other marriages from children of the same parents based on the status of parents, measured at the time of the parents marriage.

Table 7: Assortative Mating

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Panel A: Grooms (N=18175)</i>				
Bride Status	0.796*** (0.016)	0.578*** (0.015)	0.747*** (0.022)	0.616*** (0.019)
Bride's Father's Status		0.300*** (0.015)		0.321*** (0.014)
Bride's Mother's Status			0.062* (0.026)	-0.067* (0.028)
Parish FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R-squared	0.640	0.682	0.641	0.683
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Panel B: Brides (N=18175)</i>				
Groom Status	0.792*** (0.005)	0.702*** (0.015)	0.610*** (0.011)	0.613*** (0.013)
Groom's Father's Status		0.114*** (0.015)		-0.006 (0.023)
Groom's Mother's Status			0.256*** (0.011)	0.259*** (0.017)
Parish FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R-squared	0.641	0.646	0.673	0.673

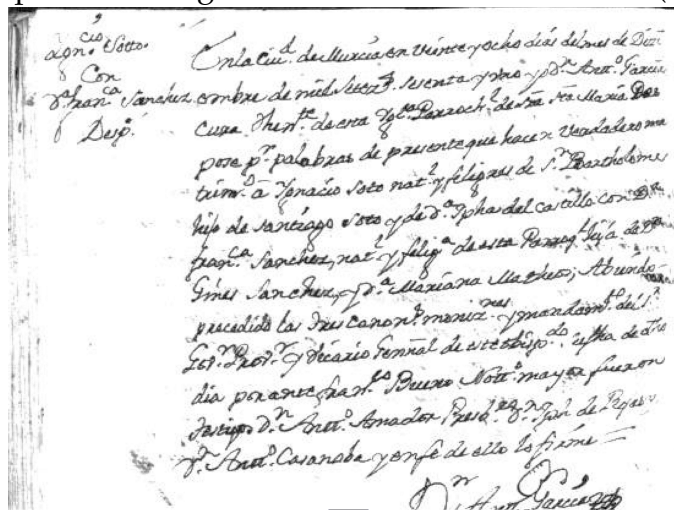
Notes: OLS regression for status as a *don* or *doña*. Dependent variable is the standardized social status measure, measured at the time of marriage. The independent variables are the social status measures for the relatives shown, at the time of the child's marriage. All standard errors are robust. *, **, and *** represent $p < 0.1$, $p < 0.05$, and $p < 0.01$ respectively.

Figure 1: Map of Murcia Parishes in 1896.



Notes: Own elaboration with information using the *Boletín Eclesiástico* from the Cargatena Bishopric from 1908, pages 89-94 (Obispado de Cartagena, 1909). Because some streets have changed names since 1908, we used historical maps of Murcia from 1896 and 1882 (Archivo General Región de Murcia, 2019).

Figure 2: Example of marriage record. Parish of Santa María (Murcia) in 1761.

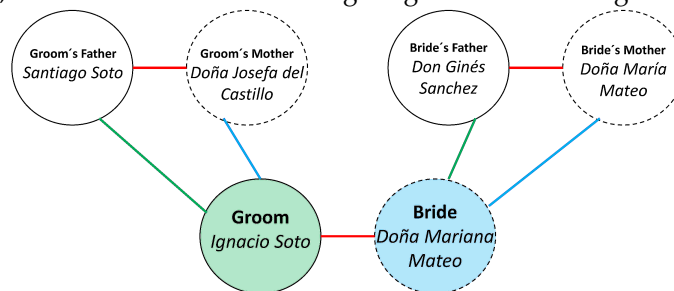


Ignacio Soto con Doña Francisca Sánchez, Desposados

En la ciudad de Murcia en veinte y ocho días de mes de Diciembre de mil setecientos sesenta y uno y presente Don Antonio García, cura teniente de esta Iglesia parroquial de Santa María, despose por palabras de presente, que hacen verdadero matrimonio a Ignacio Soto, natural y feligrés de San Bartolomé, hijo de Santiago Soto y de Doña Josefa del Castillo, con Doña Francisca Sánchez, natural y feligresa de esta Parroquia, hija de Don Ginés Sánchez y Doña Mariana Mateos. [...] En fecha de dicho día por ante Francisco Bueno, Notario mayor fueron testigos Don Antonio Amador, Presbítero, Don Ignacio de Reyabas, Don Antonio Casanoba y en fe de ello lo firme - Don Antonio García

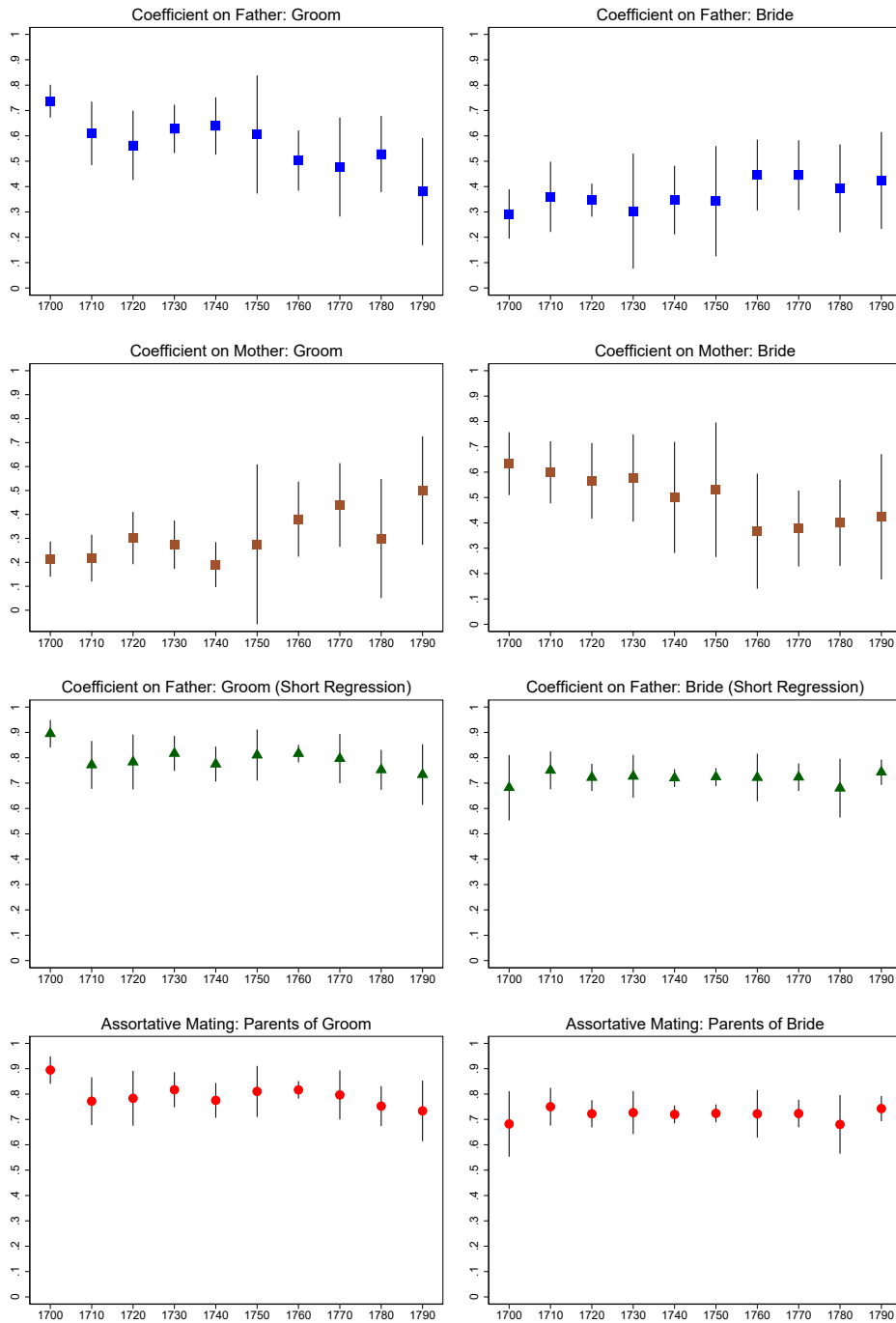
Ignacio Soto with Doña Francisca Sánchez, Married

In the city of Murcia December 28, 1761, under the presence of *Don Antonio García*, the local priest of this parish church of Santa María, marry out of their own will, in true matrimony, Ignacio Soto, born and parishioner of San Bartolomé, son of Santiago de Soto and *Doña Josefa del Castillo*, with *Doña Francisca Sánchez*, born and parishioner of this Parish, daughter of *Don Ginés Sánchez* and *Doña Mariana Mateos*. [...] At the said date, in the presence of Francisco Bueno, Notary Major, as witnesses *Don Antonio Amador*, presbyter, *Don Ignacio de Reyabas*, *Don Antonio Casanoba* and giving faith about all signed - *Don Antonio García*



Notes: Source: *España, registros parroquiales y diocesanos, 1307-1985*. Database with images, FamilySearch. Transcription from the original. In the transcription we have substituted the abbreviations in the original source with the complete words. Our translation to English from the original. Lower figure shows family relationship.

Figure 3: Coefficients on β_F and β_M by Decade.



Notes: Coefficients from OLS regression for status as a *don* or *doña* for brides and grooms, separately by decade. Dependent variable is the standardized social status measure, measured at the time of marriage. The independent variables are the standardized social status measures for fathers and mothers respectively, measured at the time of their child’s marriage. Plots show 95% confidence intervals based on robust standard errors and including parish fixed effects. Date refers to the first year of the decade; i.e., 1700 is for 1700-1709. “Short” regression refers to a regression of the status of the groom or bride on the father only, excluding the mother. Assortative mating refers to the coefficient on a regression of the status of the parents for the indicated relative, including fixed effects.

A Appendix

A.1 *Hidalgos and dons*

In Spain, the term *hidalgo* refers to the low aristocracy. It is typically reserved for people who are of noble origin but do not hold any nobility title. Dewald (1996) notes that during the 18th century there were two regions in Europe with different patterns regarding the number of aristocrats: Central Europe, with a percentage lower than 1%, and the periphery (Spain, Poland, Hungary and England), with more than 5%. Madramany y Calatayud (1788) mentioned that *hidalgos* were originally from “good places,” meaning places with little Arab influence in the north of Spain (Galicia, Asturias, Cantabria and the Basque Country). Therefore, lineage and place of origin, explain the high percentage of *hidalgos* in northern Spain. Moreover, the percentage in the remaining of Spain are closer to the 1% in central Europe. It is the high percentage in northern Spain makes the overall average closer to peripheral Europe.

According to the Floridablanca census (1787), 4.6% of the population in Spain were *hidalgos*. The northern provinces have over 10%, whereas Extremadura and Andalusia in the South have less than 1%. In the Kingdom of Aragon, there was traditionally a lower presence of *hidalgos* (Tomás Faci, 2015): 1.5% in Aragon, 0.14% in Valencia and 0.16% in Catalonia (INE, 2019). In the Region of Murcia, which belongs to the Kingdom of Castile, but shares many characteristics with Valencia and Catalonia, the number is 1.80%. In the city of Murcia, which is the interest of the article, the percentage of *hidalgos* was 0.45%. The fraction of *dons* that we observed in the data is an order of magnitude higher. This means, consistent with our interpretation, that the term *don*, by the 18th century, was no longer reserved for the nobility. On the contrary, the *nouveau riche*, the clergy and the higher ranks of the military also hold the honorary title. Dewald (1996) notices the sharp reduction in the percentage of aristocrats in Europe, beginning in the 18th century. In Spain, we observe a sharp decline between 1768 and 1787, from 7.9% to 4.6% (INE, 2019). In our

data, however, we do not observe a rise in the fraction of brides or grooms carrying the honorific title of *don* or *doña*.

A.2 Data description

Table A1 shows the fraction of the grooms and brides with the honorific, separately based on the status of the parents of the marrying couples. Approximately 6% of grooms and 8% of brides are recorded as high status. It is immediately clear that there is a high degree of persistence in this measure of social status. Of the 890 grooms with both a high status father and mother, 89% of them were themselves a *don* at marriage. This fraction is similar for brides. Conversely, only about 1% of the much larger number of individuals with low status parents were themselves *dons* or *doñas*. In general, the transmission from parents to grooms versus that to brides is similar for various combinations of status of parents, with one major exception. If the father is low status but the mother is high status, then brides are much more likely to be high status than are grooms.

In Table A2, we show the fraction of grooms and brides which marry a high status partner, based on their own status and that of their own parents. Of grooms listed with *don* status, 90% are marrying brides who are *doñas*. The comparable number for *doñas* is 73%. The parents' status matters in mating above their effect on the status of their children. In the first row, for example, we can see that while 92% of *don* grooms whose parents were themselves high status marry a high status *doña* woman, only 75% of *dons* whose parents were both low status have a high status bride. For women this difference is even stronger: While 96% of *doña* brides with high status parents marry a *don*, only 35% of "upwardly mobile" *doñas* with low status parents marry someone of high status. This is true for low status individuals as well: A downwardly mobile groom with high status parents has a 30% chance of marrying a high status bride, versus only 1.4% of low status grooms with low status brides. This table thus reveals several interesting facts about assortative mating. Most obviously, much like the high intergenerational transmission of status, assortative

mating on status is very strong. Second, and much less obviously, the degree of assortative mating depends on the status of the parents as well as that of the children. That is, a high status groom and particularly a high status bride who comes from higher status parents is more likely to marry a high status individual than a high status individual with low status parents. [Goñi \(2015\)](#) shows how assortative mating among the high classes of England increased inequality, but we are not aware of any study of mating among the low classes.

A.3 Linking

In this section, we describe the procedure we used to link marriage records from one generation to the previous generation. The only link variables are names: The names of both parents of either the bride or groom (in the childrens' generation), and the names of the marrying couple (in the parents' generation). For each generation, we restrict the possible set of links in the parents generation to the set of marriages between 18 and 45 years before the marriage of the children; in other words, we assume that individuals marry between ages 18 and 45.

The linking is performed iteratively, similar to [Ferrie \(1996\)](#) and [Abramitzky et al. \(2014\)](#). In each step, the links are removed from the set of both parents and children linked later. In all links, we first perform a minimal set of cleaning after parsing the names into given names and surnames.¹¹ This is limited to stripping out accents and the \tilde{n} and removing the words "Las", "Los", "La", "De", "Del", and "De La".

In the first step, we link on exact names, *i.e.*, we require the spelling to be identical, on four words: the given name and the surname of the parents, and disregard multiple links. Multiple links are relatively rare given the small area from which the marriages come and the use of four names to link. In the second step, we link replacing the names as transcribed and cleaned with a set of standardized spellings, and then again link on all four

¹¹This parsing is non-trivial, with the number of names for individuals varying and some name, such as Garcia, potentially being either a given name or a surname. We also exclude from the set of names special constructions such as "De La Cruz" or "Del Carmen", which are not consistently recorded for individuals.

words. For example, for surnames both “Hespinosa” and “Hespinossa” are standardized to “Espinosa”, and for given names both “Josef” and “Joseph” are standardized to “Jose.” Finally, we use a set of standardized phonetic changes to clean the names, and repeat linking all four names. These substitutions were as follows: “Y” for “I” or “LL”, “B” for “V”, “C” for “Z”, “F” for “Ph”, “T” for “Th” or “TT”, “G” for “J” or “X”, “S” for “CH” or “SS”, “N” for “NN” or “Ñ”, “HU” for “GÜ”, “Q” for “Qu”, and removing any remaining “H”.¹² It is worth noticing that the same individual could sometimes appear as *Fernandez* and other times as *Hernandez*. In those, more intricate cases, we have resorted to linking by hand before our iterative process.

After the second step, we used a novel third step. We look for the small number of remaining multiple links (number). In this final population of multiple links, there is still some remaining information. In particular, we have many marriages where all the potential links all have the same status information on all relevant variables. For the regressions using grandparents, that means that the status as a *don* is the same for all six individuals listed in the candidate link. For the groom’s regressions these six individuals are: the groom’s parents and grandparents. Notice, that we are not requiring those to be the same to the original marriage. As we explain above, status could change over time. Given the nature of the data, there are $2^6 = 64$ possible combinations, *i.e.*, we have 6 individuals that could have a binary value.¹³ In practice, there is high correlation among the values for those 6 individuals and some combinations are extremely rare. Moreover, because *don* status is held by a relatively small minority of the population, the group where all 6 individuals are not *don* makes up a substantial fraction of the relatively small number of multiple links. This is particularly important in this, and other settings, where usually the individuals with low status are also those with common names, and they are out of the

¹²In our experience, using *Soundex* with Spanish names did not perform as well. This is not surprising, because *Soundex* is built for Germanic languages, like English and German, which are phonetically based on consonants. Latin languages, like Spanish and Italian, are phonetically based on vowels.

¹³For the regressions using only the status of the parents, but taken at two different points in the lifecycle, we would only need that the status of both the father and the mother of the groom to be the same in all candidates. In this case there are only 4 combinations.

linked sample. Therefore, adding these final links helps in reducing the selection incurred when linking on names.

The great majority of the links are exact. Of the combined 7,017 links for grooms and brides, 6,832 (97.4%) are exact. There were a further 41 (0.6%) links after standardizing the spelling of names, and 48 links (0.7%) after making phonetic substitutions. Additionally, there were a further 96 (1.4%) multiple links for which the status of all six individuals was identical across multiple links and so could be included in the sample. As mentioned above, even if only 1.4% of the final links were included using the last step, those are all links referring to people with common names.

In the original dataset, we have 18,175 grooms and brides. In the first stage, when we link directly on exact names, we end up with 6,832. After the second stage, when we link the remaining observations using phonetically clean names, we end up with $6,832+41+48=6,921$ matches, and 139 observations with multiple candidate matches. Of those 139 matches we are able to create 96 synthetic observations, because all the candidate matches have the same values for status on all individuals. Of those 96 synthetic observations, in 89 of the cases none of the 6 individuals in all the multiple candidates have the don status, and in 7 cases all 6 individuals have the don status.

A.4 Surnames

In this subsection, we study social mobility using the information contained in last names using an alternative method to studying social mobility prominently associated with [Clark \(2014\)](#). This technique looks at the relative representation of surnames within the elite, over time. That is, rather than rely on linked data, one regresses the share of individuals who possess some measure of high (or low) status among people with a particular surname on the share of individuals with that surname having high (or low) status in a previous generation. This avoids the need to link data. [Clark \(2014\)](#) argues that it also generates a better measure of an underlying measure of social status with high intergenerational persistence

than the use of more standard measures such as income and occupation, which can be measured with considerable individual error. He generally finds estimates of between 0.7 and 0.8 across different societies, a pattern he names the “iron law of social mobility”.

To compare our estimates with his, we take the linked sample so that we can measure status for parents and children at consistent ages, to make the comparison as similar as possible. We take the “young” measure of status; that is, we use the measures of status taken at a groom or bride’s marriage and that of their parents, as in columns (4) through (6) of Table 3. For each observation, we calculate the *share* of individuals with a particular surname with status as a *don* or *doña* in each generation, and regress one on the other. The regressions are weighted by the number of individuals with each surname, to maximize comparison with the regression from the linked data.

The results from this regression are displayed in Table A3. The numbers for fathers are relatively similar to those from individual regressions, although they are still not in excess of 0.7. However, surname based measures seem to give considerably lower estimates for the effect of mothers on social status on grooms and brides. This is not an artifact of naming conventions: For both grooms and brides, someone with the surname “Navarro” will have a father with this surname, and a mother with a different surname. Remember that in Spain, women do not change their name when they marry. The low values in the coefficients in Table A3, especially for women, contrast with the results in Solon (2018) that pseudo-links would tend to inflate the estimated intergenerational elasticity because they measure group, rather than individual, transmission of status.

Surname-based methods appear in this case to give little information as to the role of women in social mobility, even when they are feasible to use. Comparing columns (1) and (2), and similarly for columns (4) and (5), we can see the drop in the size of the coefficient, and an R-squared that is an order of magnitude smaller. In other words, columns (2) and (5) would seem to imply that mothers status have very little effect on their children’s status. This result underscores the importance of having not only information on women’s status,

but that this information is about the individual women. If we were to have the surname for all the women in our sample, but not their individual status, based on the results of Table [A3](#), we would have wrongly concluded that they played little role in determining the status of their sons and daughters.

Table A1: Percent Dons by Parents Status

	Relationship between Father and Mother				
	All	Don/Doña	X/X	Don/X	X/Doña
Groom	6.37	89.6	.955	71.2	30.0
Bride	7.79	92.7	1.26	67.1	68.3
Number Grooms	18175	859	16745	139	432
Number Brides	18175	852	16712	140	471

Notes: Value in the table is the percent of grooms and brides with Don/Doña status based on the status of their (own) parents, given in the column header as the status of the father and status of the mother. Number grooms/brides refers to the total number of grooms and brides respectively with the parental status combination shown above.

Table A2: Percent Spouse Don/Doña Based on Parent's and Own Statuses

	Relationship between Father and Mother				
	All	Don/Doña	X/X	Don/X	X/Doña
	Percent Spouse High Status				
Groom Don	89.9	92.3	75.6	90.9	92.3
Groom X	2.20	30.3	1.36	7.50	39.0
Bride Doña	73.5	96.3	34.7	96.7	50.4
Bride X	.698	48.7	.237	19.5	5.15
	Number of Spouses				
Number Groom Don	1159	770	160	99	130
Number Groom X	17016	89	16585	40	302
Number Bride Doña	1417	738	348	93	238
Number Bride X	16758	121	16397	46	194

Notes: Value in the table is the percent of spouses with Don/Doña status based on the combination of the status of their (own) parents, given in the column header as the status of the father and status of the mother, and their own status. Number grooms/brides refers to the total number of grooms and brides respectively with the parental status combination shown above.

Table A3: Surnames Regression

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Rel. share groom father	0.655*** (0.044)		0.651*** (0.043)			
Rel. share groom mother		0.242*** (0.032)	0.022 (0.021)			
Rel. share bride father				0.368*** (0.012)		0.349*** (0.016)
Rel. share bride mother					0.223*** (0.041)	0.077** (0.028)
Parish FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	3070	3070	3070	3931	3931	3931
R-Squared	0.615	0.068	0.616	0.325	0.087	0.332

Notes: OLS regression for status as a *don* or *doña* based on surname status. Dependent variable is the fraction of individuals with a surname with high status, and the independent variables are these fractions for the surnames of an individual's father and mother. Status is measured at the time of marriage for both generations. Regressions are weighted by the number of individuals in the younger generation with a particular surname. All standard errors are clustered at the parish level. *, **, and *** represent $p < 0.1$, $p < 0.05$, and $p < 0.01$ respectively.