Associations between Occupational Homogamy and Fame: A Biographical Analysis of 253 French-Speaking Singers

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Abstract

In creative fields, individual talent is often considered paramount for fame and success. However, forming social bonds, particularly romantic relationships with influential individuals, may also play a crucial role in career advancement. In this study, we investigate the associations between an individual's fame in one creative industry and their engagement in romantic relationships with partners working in similar occupations, industries or sectors (referred to as 'occupational homogamy'), as well as with famous partners. The French music industry, known for its numerous high-profile creative couples, provides a compelling context for this exploration. We conducted a web-based analysis of biographical data from 253 prominent French-speaking singers born in the 20th century, examining three Internet-derived metrics of fame (i.e., total number of hits, Wikipedia page length in octets and total number of pageviews), the timing of their musical hits, and the formation of romantic relationships. Data were primarily sourced from Wikipedia, press articles, and the Infodisc database, which lists musical success records in France since 1900. We found that occupational homogamy was common, with nearly two-thirds of singers engaging in at least one such relationship, more often women than men. Homogamy was positively associated with fame metrics (Wikipedia views, article length, chart hits). Relationships with celebrity partners did not yield additional visibility beyond homogamous non-celebrity ties, underscoring occupational proximity as the main channel. Sequencing analyses showed that a significant proportion of singers formed homogamous ties before their first hit, though these only modestly predicted later fame. This study suggests that, beyond talent and passion, forming a creative collaborative couple may both promote and accompany a rise in the occupational hierarchy, particularly in this competitive industry.

Keywords: collaborative couples; occupational homogamy; fame; creative industry; mate preferences

Significance Statement

This study examines how fame in the music industry relates to romantic relationships with partners who are either occupationally similar or already famous. Drawing on biographical data for 253 French-speaking singers, we show that such relationships are widespread and systematically associated with higher visibility. The findings suggest that beyond talent and artistic achievement, partnering within one's professional field can both foster and accompany career advancement in this highly competitive industry.

Main Text

Introduction

For music singers, fame and success often hinge not only on talent and creativity but also on the strategic partnerships that individuals cultivate, particularly in the realm of romantic relationships. In occupations where high visibility is key to fame and success, mentors and collaborators are undoubtedly primary drivers in the emergence of new “stars” as well as in the achievement of lasting reputations. In the music industry, these supportive relationships are often critical for accessing jobs, booking gigs, collaborating with other musicians, and securing the assistance of industry players who help advance musicians’ careers, such as managers or publicists (1, 2). Within the French music industry, iconic couples like Serge Gainsbourg and Jane Birkin or Edith Piaf and Georges Moustaki exemplify how romantic partnerships can shape the trajectories of singers' careers, both professionally and personally. For example, Edith Piaf contributed considerably to the global fame of her past lover, the songwriter Georges Moustaki, who wrote the lyrics of her international hit “Milord” in 1959. A few years after their separation, he launched a successful career as a performer himself. Despite their short relationship, he publicly highlighted the importance of Piaf for his career: “She opened a door. I didn't know what was behind it, but I found so many things... I shared a love story and a passion for music with Édith. Which makes this encounter a major event in my life” (3). Building on the literature on how romantic partnerships can shape artistic careers and the existing gaps in quantitative data regarding celebrities’ romantic partnerships, we explored the associations between occupational homogamy and fame in a sample of 253 well-known French-speaking singers.

Romantic partnerships in the workplace extend beyond the music industry, occurring across nearly all sectors. Around one-quarter of new businesses in France involve couples, with similar or higher proportions in other Western countries (4). Research on assortative mating reveals a growing tendency for couples to form partnerships within similar occupational fields, particularly among individuals in high-status occupations (5–7). A recent analysis of 4,270,463 U.S. couples (2015–2017) found that 17% of men and 38% of women in upper professional roles were married to similarly ranked spouses (5). Prior studies also show that occupational similarity between partners contributes significantly to social inequality and stratification (8–10). For example, a study of (10) from the 2004-2011 French waves of the European Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) on 7966 couples reported a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.45$ for partners’ occupations and demonstrate that economic homogamy in earnings persists after controlling for education and family background. Authors also indicated that economic homogamy may contributes to 3–9% to individual earnings inequality and 10–20% to household potential earnings inequality, greater than those for educational homogamy, a far more extensively studied case than occupational homogamy (8, 9). Collectively, this evidence underscores the role of partner similarity in partner choice and their substantial impact on economic inequality and social stratification.

The late 20th century, particularly in France with May 68’ and subsequent "new social movements," saw shifts in partner formation, gender roles, and household patterns, spurring extensive research on dual-earner dynamics and their gendered career implications. Dyadic-exchange theorists, drawing on social exchange theory, attribute rising occupational homogamy to transitions in which partner preferences shift from ascribed to achieved status (11–13). Initially introduced by Merton (14) and Davis (15), status exchange theory argues that partnering with lower-status individuals may involve losses offset by “marrying up” in other dimensions. This framework—first explored in racial–educational exchanges in Black–White marriages in the United States—has been extended to age and beauty in Eastern and Western societies (16–21), revealing a growing prominence of homogamy in achieved status (occupation, education, income) over ascribed status (age, race, family of origin, physical attractiveness).

Existing research in creative and visibility-driven sectors (e.g., Hollywood, academia) indicates that occupational homogamy is relatively common and may facilitate career advancement (22–24). A large number of books, press articles and case studies also tend to suggest that celebrities who form romantic relationships in the public eye often boost both partners’ popularity (25–30). Among the few empirical studies that have systematically investigated the romantic relationships of celebrities or highly eminent creators, these individuals

often attribute their career success to the emotional, intellectual, and practical support they receive from their romantic partners, especially when both partners pursue similar careers (25, 31, 32). Interestingly, Gorji et al. (22) collected information contained in the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) on 1,168 married couples who were active in Hollywood between 1970 and 2010 and found that, following intra-professional marriage, both men and women benefit from the size and quality of their spouse's social network. They suggested that marriage provides an entrée into these tightly connected groups with an increased probability of being cast in a movie project. While this study did not found significant difference between men and women in the benefit of occupational homogamy on career advancement, existing research across high-status occupations (e.g., lawyers, university professors) tend to suggest that occupational homogamy is prevalent and has stronger effects on women's careers than on men's (23, 24, 33–35).

Overall, these studies suggest that romantic relationships can serve as crucial catalysts for career advancement, offering access to resources, networking opportunities, and heightened visibility. Among the various collaborative forms, establishing a romantic relationship with a *famous* partner in a *similar occupation* may provide a strong alliance, potentially critical for career advancement in highly competitive creative fields (36). Indeed, as celebrities are -by definition- highly exposed in media and public discourse, it is likely probable that dating someone already famous, even only once, may bring increased visibility and attention, and in turn more fame and opportunities for succeeding in music. Research on celebrity status further highlights that individuals achieve this status through the accumulation of numerous positive and/or negative evaluations and pronouncements within media and broader public discourse (37). These studies demonstrate that celebrity status often provides transferable resources, enabling transitions across domains and industries, such as from music to film (38, 39). However, several questions remain regarding the generalizability of previous findings among celebrities, regarding gender differences in these associations, and regarding the timing of romantic relationships in relation to career outcomes.

To address these issues, this study draws on biographical data for 253 French-speaking singers born between 1900 and 1983 to describe and examine patterns of occupational homogamy and their associations with indicators of fame. We formulated four research questions to guide our investigation. First, is lifetime occupational homogamy highly prevalent among French famous singers (RQ1)? Second, is lifetime occupational homogamy positively associated with fame (RQ2)? Third, is homogamy with a celebrity partner, as opposed to a non-celebrity partner, linked to additional visibility benefits (RQ3)? Finally, which comes first: fame or homogamous relationships (RQ4)? For all four questions, we also examined whether the associations differed between male and female singers. Robustness of the findings was assessed with alternative inclusion thresholds, added covariates, and influence diagnostics. Main results are summarized above; full details appear in the Supporting Information and in our OSF repository (https://osf.io/uh32s/).

Results

Data Collected and Sample Description

We first compiled a list of personalities categorized as singers, born between 1900 and 1983 from the Wikidata Query Service (WDQS). We selected those primarily known as solo singers who mainly perform in French and have had significant activity in the music industry. The final sample included a total of 253 singers, with 140 men and 113 women (55% vs. 45%). The majority were French citizens (86%), with 65% still alive in 2023. Our aim was to focus on fame as public visibility, which we consider an important indicator, though not exhaustive, of success in the music industry. For each singer, we collected in 2023 three indicators of fame: (1) the total number of hits from the Infodisc database, which lists songs that reached top positions in French charts and their dates of entry, (2) the number of pageviews since 2015 of singer's Wikipedia page (French-version) and (3) its length (in octets). Wikipedia page views and length have been used in recent research as proxies for fame, public interest and notability (e.g., (40–43)), and chart hits provide relatively objective indicators of mainstream reach and commercial success. These three indicators were found to be moderately to highly correlated with each other, ranging from r = 0.59 between numbers of hits and Wikipedia page length to 0.8 between pageviews and

length of Wikipedia pages (the correlation matrix is available in the Supporting Information in Figure S1). We also provide Mann-Whitney U Tests results for the comparison by gender of fame indicators in the Supporting Information (Figure S2).

Using information from Wikipedia and online press sources, we collected a total of 659 romantic relationships (42.2% marriages, 56% non-marriages, 1.7% undetermined, 2.12% homosexual). These include long and short-term relationships that have been publicly reported and likely underscore the real number of romances. Overall, we found a mean number of partners per singer of 2.64 (SD=2.60), with no difference between men and women ($t = 1.14$, $p = 0.256$). Number of publicly-known partners (later referred to as 'partners') ranged from 0 to 16 partners (skewness = 2.74). We identified 15 singers with no reported relationship. Additionally, we found a mean number of children per singer of 1.67 (SD = 1.45), with significantly more children for men than women singers ($M_{Men} = 2.1$ vs. $M_{Women} = 1.1$ children; $t = -5.70$, $p < 0.001$). Finally, a clear difference between men and women in mean age gap with romantic partners was found ($t = 7.63$, $p < 0.001$), with in average female singers dating older partners ($M_{Women} = +3$ years) and male singers dating much younger partners ($M_{Men} = -7$ years).

We were able to collect the occupation(s) of the partners for 534 relationships. For 125 relationships of 101 singers, we could not determine the occupation of the partner and this issue involved more often men than women singers ($\chi^2 = 10.78$, $p = 0.001$; 34 women vs. 67 men). We assume that when the partner's occupation could not be identified, the partner is more likely 'not being famous' and 'not in a similar occupation'. When the occupation was found, we then determine their degree of occupational homogamy as (1) *High* when the partner works in the same occupation as the singer (e.g., both are singers; we also consider in the case of when individuals have multiple main occupations such as actor or actress, writer, or dancer in addition to singer), (2) *Moderate* when the partner works in the same industry but does not have the same occupation (e.g., one is singer, the other is a music producer), (3) *Low* when the partner works in a different artistic industry (e.g., one is a singer, the other is a model, an actor, a painter, a photograph). Otherwise, we considered the relationship *heterogamous*. A summary of singers' relationship-status during their lifetime is available in Table 1. We also provide a summary of the relationships collected in the Supporting Information (Table S1).

RQ1: Is occupational homogamy highly prevalent among French famous singers?

We first explored the prevalence of lifetime occupational homogamy in our sample. Because occupational homogamy may be positively linked to career advancement, we speculated that it may be prevalent among famous individuals. We defined occupational homogamy for each singer by a binary variable: having (or not having) at least one documented homogamous relationship in their lifetime. We found that, among the 253 renowned singers, 172 singers (68%) have already engaged in at least one homogamous relationship in their lifetime (any degree), with women engaging more than men (77% of women vs. 61% of men; χ^2 (1) = 7.61, $p = .006$, Cramér's V adj = 0.162).

When considering the 172 singers that have establish at least one homogamous relationship, 104 singers (60.5%; 52 women) have already been in a romantic relationship with a partner who share a *high* degree of similarity in occupation (e.g., both are singers or actors), with no sex difference ($\chi^2(1) = 0.036$, $p = .850$, Cramér's V adj ≈ 0.00). Second, we found that 77 singers (44.8%; 53 women) had at least one *moderate*-similarity partner, with more women than men ($\chi^2(1) = 18.6$, $p < .001$, Cramér's V adj = 0.321), indicating that women were more likely than men to date someone within the same industry but who occupied another occupation (e.g., songwriter, musician, composer, manager, producer, or music journalist). Third, we found that 74 singers (43%; 26 women) had at least one low-similarity partner, with more men than women ($\chi^2(1) = 12.4$, $p < .001$, Cramér's V adj = 0.258). Considering the full sample (N = 253), this translates to 46.0% of women vs. 37.1% of men in high-similarity homogamy; 46.9% vs. 17.1% in moderate-similarity homogamy; 23.0% vs. 34.3% for low-similarity homogamy.

In contrast, we also found that approximately 81 singers (32%; 26 women) had never engaged in a homogamous relationship, with more men than women (39.3% of men vs. 23% of women; $\chi^2(1) = 7.61$, $p = .006$, Cramér's V adj = 0.162). Among them, we found that 14 had only heterogamous partners (mostly men, N = 11), 52 had only partners with undetermined

occupations (mostly men, N = 38), and we found no partner at all for 15 of them (mostly women, N = 9).

In the post-1990 subsample (n = 91), homogamy remained prevalent (60.4%; $\chi^2(1) = 3.97$, p = .046) and women were more likely than men to have ever been homogamous (72.5% vs. 51.0%; $\chi^2(1) = 4.34$, p = .037, Cramér's V_adj = 0.192), while sex differences in degrees of homogamy were not statistically significant (high: $\chi^2(1) = 0.381$, p = .537; moderate: $\chi^2(1) = 1.90$, p = .168; low: $\chi^2(1) = 2.92$, p = .088; unknown: $\chi^2(1) = 0.292$, p = .589). Under the ≥20-item cutoff (n = 109), overall prevalence increased to 75.2% and did not differ by sex ($\chi^2(1) = 0.70$, p = .403), yet among homogamous singers (n = 82), the same pattern of sex differences in degrees of homogamy re-emerged (moderate-similarity higher among women: $\chi^2(1) = 9.85$, p = .0017, V_adj = 0.330; low-similarity higher among men: $\chi^2(1) = 4.90$, p = .0268, V_adj = 0.219). In other words, the direction of sex differences matches the full sample, but magnitudes attenuate post-1990, and the overall sex difference in homogamy (without considering any degree) disappears under the ≥20 threshold.

Finally, we used Mann-Whitney U tests to compare singers who ever vs. never had a homogamous partners on their total number of partners and children, separately for men and women singers (Supporting Information Figure S3). Occupational homogamy was associated with a significantly higher number of partners for both male ($U = 846$, $p < .001$, r = 0.638) and female singers ($U = 284$, $p < .001$, r = 0.749), with large effect sizes in both groups, and the association being somewhat stronger among women. In contrast, homogamy was not associated with number of children for men ($U \approx 2085$, $p = .269$, $r = 0.11$) and showed a stronger but non-significant tendency for women ($U \approx 860$, $p = .054$, $r = 0.24$).

RQ2: Is occupational homogamy positively associated with fame?

We explored whether occupational homogamy was positively associated with three indicators of fame, and whether singer's sex moderate these associations. Because a singer was classified as "homogamous" if they had at least one such relationship, we expected occupational homogamy to correlate with number of partners (as more partners may certainly increase the likelihood of homogamy) and with age at first hit (as earlier success may increases the time window to form at least one homogamous relationship). Three initial regression models were estimated, including these covariates and the homogamy × sex interaction (Table 2).

Our data revealed occupational homogamy was positively associated with all three fame indicators. The size of these associations was moderate to large: Wikipedia pageviews (β = 0.885, $p < .001$), Infodisc hits (β = 0.510, $p = .020$), and Wikipedia length (β = 0.302, $p = .029$). The interaction term between occupational homogamy and sex (being a female) was positive in direction across all models but only marginal for Wikipedia length (β = 0.424, $p = .054$), and non-significant for Wikipedia pageviews (β = 0.576, $p = .159$) and Infodisc hits (β = 0.540, $p = .120$). This pattern suggests that homogamy may be more strongly associated with fame for women, although evidence is not conclusive. We plotted the interactions in Supplementary Information (Figure S5). The number of partners showed consistently positive and robust associations across all models, with effect sizes in the small-to-moderate range: Wikipedia length (β = 0.15, $p < .001$), Wikipedia pageviews (β = 0.20, $p < .001$), and Infodisc hits (β = 0.12, $p < .001$). Age at first success had no association with Wikipedia length (β = −0.004, $p = .556$) or Wikipedia pageviews (β = −0.021, $p = .104$), but showed a small negative association with Infodisc hits (β = −0.085, $p < .001$), indicating that earlier career success was linked to accumulating more chart entries. Female sex was negatively associated with all fame indicators, with relatively large coefficients: shorter Wikipedia articles (β = −0.788, $p < .001$), fewer Wikipedia pageviews (β = −1.460, $p < .001$), and fewer Infodisc hits (β = −1.430, $p < .001$). These results indicate substantial gender disparities in fame indicators.

Excluding identified outliers in addition to standardizing our predictors showed the same overall results pattern, with larger positive homogamy coefficients (Wikipedia pageviews: β = 1.060, $p < .001$; Infodisc hits: β = 0.698, $p < .001$; Wikipedia length: β = 0.504, $p < .001$). The homogamy × sex interaction for Wikipedia length remained positive and marginal (β = 0.42, $p = .056$), while partner number (Wikipedia length: β = 0.156, $p < .001$; pageviews: β = 0.201, $p < .001$; hits: β = 0.177, $p < .001$), age at first hit (Wikipedia length: β = −0.008, $p = .273$; pageviews:

β = −0.022, p = .077; hits: β = −0.080, p < .001), and sex (Wikipedia length: β = −0.593, p < .001; pageviews: β = −1.040, p < .001; hits: β = −1.100, p < .001) were similar in direction and magnitude to the main models.

Including additional covariates (birth cohort, citizenship, living status) left the pattern unchanged. Homogamy remained positively associated with fame (Wikipedia length: β = 0.527, p < .001; Wikipedia pageviews: β = 1.000, p < .001; Infodisc hits: β = 0.732, p < .001). The homogamy × sex interaction for Wikipedia length stayed positive and marginal (β = 0.405, p = .077). Cubic spline models for year of birth produced nearly identical results, with homogamy again showing positive coefficients across all outcomes (Wikipedia length: β = 0.495, p < .001; Wikipedia pageviews: β = 0.970, p < .001; Infodisc hits: β = 0.676, p < .001).

Finally, the direction of associations was overall consistent across alternative selection cutoffs, but their magnitudes were somehow attenuated and became non-significant in some cases. For the ≥1990 career start sample (n=91), homogamy was positively associated with Wikipedia length (β = 0.362, p = .045) and marginally with Wikipedia pageviews (β = 0.760, p = .065), but not anymore with Infodisc hits (β = 0.288, p = .344). For the ≥20 Wikimedia items cutoff (n=109), homogamy was no longer significant for Wikipedia length (β = 0.267, p = .180) or Infodisc hits (β = 0.515, p = .128) but remained positively associated with Wikipedia pageviews (β = 0.837, p = .012). Overall, these checks suggest the associations are not artifacts of outliers or sample definitions, though magnitudes can attenuate under stricter selections.

RQ3: Is occupational homogamy with a celebrity (vs. non-celebrity) positively associated with fame?

The findings above suggested a positive relationship between occupational homogamy and fame metrics. We next tested whether this relationship may be stronger when the homogamous partner was also a celebrity. In addition to having a romantic partner that works in a similar occupation, having a partner that is also already famous may likely help to increase one's visibility. Thus, we coded partners as "famous" when they had a Wikidata page, and we checked if partners were famous before the relationship, and otherwise of "being the partner or spouse of".

We first estimated the prevalence of dating a famous partner: We found that, among the 253 singers, 99 of them (39.1%) has been in romantic relationship with a celebrity during their lifetime, with women being more likely to be in relationships with a celebrity (46.9% vs. 32.9%, χ^2 = 5.18, p = .023, Cramer's V adj = 0.129).

We then estimated the prevalence of occupational homogamy with a famous partner. We found that almost all singers who have ever dated a celebrity had done it with a homogamous partner (96%, N=95). Interestingly, only 4 singers (including 3 women) have never dated any homogamous partner although they dated a famous partner. Considering the four categories—both homogamous and famous (n = 95), only homogamous not famous (n = 74), only famous not homogamous (n = 4), and neither (n = 80)—the distribution differed by sex ($\chi^2(3)$ = 9.96, p = .019, Cramér's V adj = 0.166): a higher share of women were in homogamous relationships with celebrities (44.2% vs. 32.1%), women also slightly more often had homogamous but non-famous partners (31.0% vs. 27.9%), whereas men more often had neither a famous nor homogamous partner (39.3% vs. 22.1%). Finally, the number of famous partners was strongly correlated with the total number of partners (Spearman's ρ = 0.75 for women; 0.69 for men) and with the number of homogamous partners (ρ = 0.84 for women; 0.82 for men); full correlation matrices are provided in Supporting Information (Figure S4).

We again conducted three separate regression models to compare all three indicators of fame between three groups of singers: (a) singers who had ever engaged with a *both* famous and homogamous partner (N = 95; '*Both* Homogamous *and* famous' group) ; (b) singers who had ever engaged with *only* homogamous *but not famous* partners (N = 74; our reference group); and (c) singers who had *never* engaged in such two types of relationships (i.e., neither with a famous nor homogamous partner; N = 80; '*Neither* Homogamous *nor* famous' group). We have not included singers who had ever only dated famous but non-homogamous partners as only 4 singers were included in it. The proportion of singers in each group is displayed in Table 3. As previously, we added age at first hit and numbers of partners as covariates. Results of regression analyses are displayed in Table 4.

Across all fame outcomes, singers who had a homogamous celebrity partner ("Both Homogamous and famous") did not differ from the reference group (Wikipedia length: β = −0.152, p = .380; Wikipedia pageviews: β = 0.017, p = .959; Infodisc hits: β = −0.134, p = .628), and these effects did not vary by sex (length: β = 0.067, p = .780; pageviews: β = 0.281, p = .528; hits: β = −0.069, p = .855). By contrast, singers who had never been in either a homogamous or a celebrity relationship ("Neither Homogamous nor famous") showed lower fame on all three indicators relative to the reference group (length: β = −0.377, p = .020; pageviews: β = −0.924, p = .002; hits: β = −0.564, p = .029). The "Neither × Female" interaction was negative and nonsignificant across outcomes (length: β = −0.462, p = .076; pageviews: β = −0.485, p = .316; hits: β = −0.638, p = .124). Covariates followed the same pattern reported in the previous section: female sex was negatively associated with all outcomes (length: β = −0.396, p = .027; pageviews: β = −1.072, p = .001; hits: β = −0.845, p = .003); age at first hit was near-zero for the Wikipedia metrics and negative for hits (length: β = −0.005, p = .471; pageviews: β = −0.016, p = .251; hits: β = −0.087, p < .001); and number of partners was positive across all three (length: β = 0.161, p < .001; pageviews: β = 0.193, p < .001; hits: β = 0.130, p < .001). We plotted the interactions in the Supplementary Information (Figure S6).

Taken together, the robustness checks generally point in the same direction but warrant a cautious reading. After excluding outliers and standardizing predictors, the "Neither Homogamous nor Famous" group shows more negative associations with fame indicators (length: β = −0.608, p < .001; pageviews: β = −1.050, p < .001; hits: β = −0.884, p < .001), while the "Both Homogamous and Famous" group remains close to null (length: β = −0.119, p = .370; pageviews: β = 0.159, p = .503; hits: β = −0.168, p = .426). In the post-1990 subsample, the "Neither" coefficients attenuate and are not statistically significant (length: β = −0.393, p = .067; pageviews: β = −0.738, p = .137; hits: β = −0.289, p = .441), and "Both" again shows no clear advantage (β ∈ [−0.080, 0.124], all p ≥ .749). Adding decade-of-birth fixed effects yields a similar pattern ("Neither": length β = −0.626, p < .001; pageviews β = −0.992, p < .001; hits β = −0.814, p < .001; "Both": β ∈ [−0.144, 0.146], p ≥ .298), as do cubic year-of-birth splines ("Neither": length β = −0.594, p < .001; pageviews β = −0.974, p < .001; hits β = −0.777, p < .001; "Both": β ∈ [−0.155, 0.103], p ≥ .254). With the ≥20 Wikimedia-items cutoff, results remain aligned for Wikipedia outcomes ("Neither": length β = −0.480, p = .042; pageviews β = −1.060, p = .008) but are mixed for hits (β = −0.532, p = .197); estimates for "Both" remain small and non-significant (β ∈ [−0.299, 0.062], p ≥ .163). Overall, the direction is largely consistent across specifications, though magnitudes vary, and some contrasts weaken under tighter selections—so claims should be interpreted as suggestive rather than definitive.

RQ4: Fame and homogamous relationships: which comes first?

We then examined their age at their first hit collected from Infodisc (M=26.55 year-old, SD=7.07) as well as their age at their first identified romantic relationships (M=25.26 year-old, SD=7.10). We first found that, among the 253 singers, half (N= 128, 50.6%) had been in at least one romantic relationship before their first hit, with no difference according to singer's gender (χ^2 = 0.09, p = . 767). Interestingly, most of them (71.1%, N = 91) have been in at least one homogamous relationship, with more women than men (44% for women vs. 29% for men, χ^2 = 6.08, p = .014, Cramer's V = 0.14). Additionally, among all singers who have been in a homogamous relationship before their first hit, 30.2% (N=38) were in a relationship with a celebrity. This represented around 15% of all singers of our sample, with around 20% of women (N=23), compared to 11% of men (N=15) (χ^2 = 4.55, p = .033).

We then examined whether singers who formed a homogamous relationship before their first hit had higher fame than those who did not. Mann–Whitney (Figure 1) tests indicated group differences for Wikipedia pageviews (overall: *W* = 5666, *p* = .002, rank-biserial *r* = −0.231; men: *W* = 1395, *p* = .0037, *r* = −0.313; women: *W* = 1164, *p* = .0176, *r* = −0.261) and Wikipedia length (overall: *W* = 5739, *p* = .0035, *r* = −0.221; men: *W* = 1551, *p* = .0286, *r* = −0.236; women: *W* = 1130, *p* = .0102, *r* = −0.283), but not for Infodisc hits (overall: *W* = 6867, *p* = .367, *r* = −0.068; men: *W* = 1670, *p* = .100, *r* = −0.177; women: *W* = 1456, *p* = .494, *r* = −0.075). However, in regressions controlling for age at first hit and number of partners, pre-hit homogamy showed

small, positive, and non-significant associations in the baseline regressions—length (β = 0.119, p = .299), pageviews (β = 0.114, p = .321), hits (β = 0.195, p = .282). Regression results are displayed in dot-whisker plots in S7. This pattern held when adding additional covariates, such as with decade fixed effects (length: β = 0.125, p = .291; pageviews: β = 0.317, p = .124; hits: β = 0.155, p = .389) and with birth-year splines (length: β = 0.089, p = .446; pageviews: β = 0.285, p = .159; hits: β = 0.083, p = .638). Sex interactions were consistently null across these specifications (all p ≥ .760). In the career-start ≥ 1990 subsample, estimates were near zero for Wikipedia outcomes and negative (but non-significant) for hits (length: β = 0.010, p = .950; pageviews: β = 0.010, p = .950; hits: β = −0.282, p = .288), again with null interactions (ps ≥ .368). Under the Wikimedia ≥ 20 cutoff, magnitudes increased modestly yet remained non-significant for Wikipedia (length: β = 0.234, p = .106; pageviews: β = 0.234, p = .106), while the association for hits turned positive and significant (β = 0.525, p = .028). Overall, the direction and size of effects are stable and small across models, with significance emerging only for hits in the ≥20-item robustness check.

Discussion

The objective of this study was to describe and analyze occupational homogamy among famous French-speaking singers and to examine its associations with Internet-derived metrics of fame, including differences by gender and by the celebrity status of the partners. In a sample of 253 singers, roughly two-thirds had at least one homogamous relationship, with women more likely than men to do so. By degree, women were disproportionately represented in moderate-similarity pairings (same artistic industry, different occupations), whereas men more often appeared in low-similarity pairings (different artistic industries). Homogamy was positively associated with multiple visibility metrics (Wikipedia pageviews, article length, and chart hits), and these associations were generally stronger for women. Effect sizes were typically in the small-to-moderate range, indicating that while occupational homogamy was systematically related to visibility, its contribution is partial and should be understood alongside other structural and individual factors. Notably, prevalence and directional effects persisted, although attenuated, across alternative inclusion thresholds and career-start subsamples, suggesting robustness to sampling while underscoring the context-dependent dynamics of music and other attention-driven industries.

Several hypotheses have been developed to explain the increased prevalence of occupational homogamy among women, especially those occupying higher hierarchical levels, and its gendered effects on career outcomes. One common explanation relies on the sex ratio within occupations, where in male-biased fields, women may have more opportunities to partner with ‘attractive’ mates (44–46). Another discussed reason is that homogamy may mitigate the "mother penalty," as career advancement often coincides with reproductive age, a constraint more significant for women than men. Consistent with this hypothesis, a study conducted in academia found that heterosexual women in homogamous relationships benefited more from their partner support in work- or in family-related tasks compared to their heterogamous female counterparts (24). Alternatively, we propose that sex differences in mate preferences may also help explaining these findings. Indeed, a large number of studies showed that women tend to value more status in their partner choice while men tend to value youth and physical appearance (for a review, see (47)) , potentially leading to an unbalanced exchange of resources that favors younger women’s career advancement. This is consistent with the workplace relationship literature, which indicates that younger female employees, particularly those recently hired and of lower rank, are more likely to enter into romantic relationships with other employees (48). In line with our findings showing sex differences in mean age difference with their partners, men may be more likely to pursue such relationships with younger partners for ego gratification, while women may prioritize partners with higher status or experience, potentially leveraging these relationships for career advancement (49).

A second key finding is that singers with homogamous celebrity partners did not show greater visibility than those with homogamous but non-celebrity partners. This suggests that occupational proximity—shared production contexts, complementary roles, and overlapping audiences—may be a more decisive factor than the added fame of a partner (39, 50). Such patterns resonate with research on assortative mating and cumulative advantage in creative labor

markets, where within-field partnerships foster access to networks, tacit knowledge, and reputational spillovers (22, 23, 35). Evidence from sequencing further points to co-evolution: many singers formed homogamous ties before their first hit, yet pre-hit homogamy only modestly predicted subsequent visibility once partner counts and timing were considered. This dynamic echoes cumulative-advantage accounts, in which opportunity structures, assortative encounters, and feedback from reputational gains interactively shape career trajectories (22–24, 34, 51, 52).

This study has several limitations. First, reliance on online media (Wikipedia, press articles) introduces coverage and framing biases in both relationship histories and visibility metrics. Popular magazines may differentially emphasize women's private lives (53–55) while lesser-known artists often have sparse or outdated entries, potentially creating nonrandom missingness. Our sampling frame (well-known French-speaking solo singers born between 1900 and 1983) favours established visibility and limits generalizability beyond this cultural and historical context. Temporal heterogeneity further complicates comparisons, as norms around intimacy, disclosure, and celebrity journalism shift across decades. With respect to measurement, internet-derived indicators capture public attention but may over-weight short-term salience and scandal relative to fame (43). Chart hits better index enduring mainstream reach, but neither source fully maps onto expert reputation or career esteem. Our operationalization of occupational homogamy as an "ever" or "lifetime" event simplifies relational dynamics, and the binary celebrity status of the partners is a coarse proxy that likely misses domain-specific prestige outside online mass media. Finally, causal inference is also out of scope. The associations observed here plausibly reflect reciprocal processes: visibility increases the chance of meeting similar, prominent partners, while partnering within one's field (and especially with well-known figures) can amplify exposure. Future research may use panel or event-history data with within-singer fixed effects to control for unobserved heterogeneity, difference-in-differences designs exploiting exogenous shocks to exposure (e.g., policy or media platform changes), or regression discontinuity designs around quasi-random thresholds (e.g., award nominations). Such designs would help disentangle selection from influence and clarify how occupational homogamy contributes to distinct dimensions of success such as visibility, reputation, and durability.

Fame and expert performance in creative occupational fields have, without a doubt, multifactorial explanations (e.g., for a recent review of factors which might contribute to individual differences in expertise in creative fields, see (56)). Yet, the availability and quality of social support as well as personality traits have been found to be 'catalysts' of innate aptitudes (57), affecting performance outcomes either positively or negatively. Interestingly, both having a higher number of partners and strategic opportunistic relationships have been previously associated with higher levels of narcissism, a complex personality trait also associated with creativity (58–60). Based on this literature, we may speculate that individuals who strive for attention, fame and recognition (e.g., narcissists) might favor the use of homogamous romantic relationships, to increase their own visibility and gain a higher status. Among the few existing studies, celebrities tend to exhibit higher levels of narcissism and engage more often than general population in infidelity and sex crimes (61, 62). Narcissism has been linked to heightened motivation for status, particularly in contexts involving public exposure, where traits like differentiation and persuasion play a role in gaining recognition (63–65). Forming homogamous relationships and multiplying romantic partners may be another channel by which narcissistic traits might promote fame and success. Future studies should investigate the complex relationship between personality, strategic romantic relationships, and career trajectories in creative fields.

Materials and Methods

Sample Selection. Our aim was to define a consistent sample of singers based on public visibility in French popular music. Thus, we first compiled a list of personalities categorized as singers, born between 1900 and 1983, by using the Wikidata Query Service (WDQS), a SPARQL-based public service, providing free data in the public domain. The sample selection process is described in the SI. The resulting list comprised 638 famous individuals. To refine the sample to those primarily known as singers who mainly perform in French and have had

significant activity in the music industry, we (three French-speaking individuals) independently reviewed the French and English Wikipedia pages of each individual and documented the rationale for inclusion or exclusion. Individuals were excluded if they were not primarily known as singers, did not mainly sing in French, or were associated with classical music rather than French popular music. The reviewers then discussed disagreements and excluded remaining ambiguous cases. The final sample included 253 French-speaking singers active in French popular music in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Data Collection Procedure. For the 253 singers, we initially collected demographic information from WDQS, including gender. Wikidata's "sex or gender" label categories include male, female, non-binary, and other gender identity minorities; however, our sample consisted solely of individuals labeled male and female. We then collected data on singers' romantic relationships and partners' characteristics using biographical public data sources such as Wikipedia as well as online press, interviews, or biographies to verify and supplement information on their professional and personal lives. A romantic relationship was defined as involving one romantic partner, regardless of duration and marriage status. We documented partners' names, main occupations, and the timing of the relationship (start year, marriage year if applicable, and end year). We also recorded partners' birth dates to determine age differences and the number of biological children with the singer. The degree of occupational homogamy for each relationship was categorized as high, moderate, or low. Relationships were considered homogamous when there was a significant similarity in occupation; otherwise, they were considered heterogamous. We also categorized partners' notoriety, determining if they were famous or influential before the relationship began based on the presence of a Wikidata or Wikipedia page and additional searches on the emergence of a partner's popularity. To capture singers' fame, we used Wikipedia metrics (total pageviews since 2015 and length in octets for the French page) and we web-scraped data from Infodisc, which lists musical success records in France since 1900, to collect singers' hits over time, identifying songs that reached top positions in French charts and their dates of entry. The age at first hit was calculated as the difference between the year of birth and the year of the first hit recorded. Finally, although we extracted each singer's listed musical genres from their Wikidata/Wikipedia pages, the extensive overlap among genres and subgenres (e.g., pop, chanson, variété), coupled with the multiple genre labels per singer, rendered these variables too collinear to be included in our statistical models. Indeed, a large majority of our sample (84%; N=208) was associated to "pop" genre or subgenres (e.g., chanson, variété, pop, indie pop, pop rock, electropop, synthpop). More information on sample selection, data collection procedure, statistical analyses as well as the correlations matrices between the different variables are available in the Supporting Information.

Statistical Analyses. All data cleaning and analyses were performed in R (version 4.4.1). We employed various statistical tests, including chi-squared tests, t-tests, Spearman correlations and Mann-Whitney U tests. Multiple linear regression models were used to test the associations between occupational homogamy, sex, number of partners, age at first success, and fame indicators (total hits, Wikipedia pageviews, and Wikipedia length), with interaction terms included to examine gender differences in the associations with homogamy and fame. Additional exploratory analyses were conducted on the total numbers of partners and numbers of children by occupational homogamy status (results are provided in the Supporting Information). Main analyses and visualizations were generated with the R package *ggstatsplot*, which by default applies Holm corrections for multiple comparisons. Nevertheless, given the number of tests performed, we acknowledge the potential for an elevated Type I error rate, and results should therefore be interpreted with appropriate caution. To test the robustness of our findings, we repeated all analyses with alternative inclusion thresholds (≥20 Wikimedia items; first hit > 1990), included demographic covariates in regression models (birth year, French citizenship, living status in 2023), and examined the exclusion of highly influential observations (based on studentized residuals, Cook's distance, leverage). All results, data, materials, and analysis code are available in our OSF project page (https://osf.io/uh32s/).

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Author Contributions: B.L and B.R designed research; B.R performed data collection and coding; B.L provided cross-checking on the data collection; B.R and P.H analyzed data; and all authors wrote the paper.

Competing Interest Statement: The authors declare no competing interest.

Data Availability: Supplementary information, script analyses, and the datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are available in the OSF repository (https://osf.io/uh32s/).

Ethical Approval and Informed Consent: The analysis of publicly-available pages, archives, or logs is generally considered exempt from informed consent and ethical requirements. All contributions to Wikipedia are publicly released under the GNU Free Documentation License (see Wikipedia:Copyright). The processing of personal data already accessible to the public was done under the Swiss Data Protection Act (LPD) and doesn't require to have a legal basis (art. 34 al. 4 lit. b in fine LPD). Assuming that the legal conditions are met, we are also free to disclose such personal data under the same conditions, even in the absence of a topical legal basis (Art. 36 para. 2 lit. d Data Protection Authorities). We also comply with the general principles of data protection (Art. 6, 7 and 9 LPD) and we guarantee to data subjects their right of access, right of modification/rectification, right to object.

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Figures and Tables

	Total of singers (N=253)	Women singers (N=113)	Men singers (N=140)
Ever being in a romantic relationship	238 (94.1%)	104 (92.0%)	134 (95.7%)
Ever being married	179 (70.8%)	73 (64.6%)	106 (75.7%)
Ever engaged in a homogamous relationship	172 (68.0%)	87 (77.0%)	85 (60.7%)
- High-degree homogamy (same occupations)	104 (41.1%)	52 (46.0%)	52 (37.1%)
- Moderate-degree homogamy (different occupations, same industry)	77 (30.4%)	53 (46.9%)	24 (17.1%)
- Low-degree homogamy (different industries within the arts and creative sector)	74 (29.2%)	26 (23.0%)	48 (34.3%)
Never engaged in a homogamous relationship	81 (32.0%)	26 (23.0%)	55 (39.3%)
- Has only heterogamous partners	14 (5.5%)	3 (2.7%)	11 (7.9%)
- Has only partners with undetermined occupation	52 (20.6%)	14 (12.4%)	38 (27.1%)
- No partner found	15 (5.9%)	9 (8.0%)	6 (4.3%)

Table 1. Summary of singers and their relationship status, including occupational homogamy.

The table shows the relationship status and occupational homogamy of 253 singers by gender (113 women, 140 men). It details the percentage of singers who have ever been in romantic relationships, married, involved (or not) in homogamous relationships.

	Dependent Variables[1]		
Terms	Wikipedia length	Wikipedia pageviews	Infodisc hits
(Intercept)	10.00 **(< .001)**	13.4 **(< .001)**	4.608 **(< .001)**
Homogamous Ever	0.308 **(.027)**	0.896 **(< .001)**	0.524 **(.017)**
Sex (Female)	-0.781 **(< .001)**	**-1.447 (< .001)**	**-1.418 (< .001)**
Age at 1st hit	-0.004 (.570)	-0.021 (0.111)	**-0.084 (< .001)**
Number of Partners	0.154 **(< .001)**	0.204 **(< .001)**	0.120 **(< .001)**
Homogamous Ever × Female	0.418 (.058)	0.565 (.168)	0.540 (0.130)
R^2 (R^2 adjusted)	0.353 (0.340)	0.319 (0.305)	0. 350 (0.337)

Table 2. Combined results of generalized linear models for the relationship between occupational homogamy, sex, their interaction, age at first hit and number of partners on career outcomes.

Each cell contains the estimated regression coefficient (Beta coefficient) followed by the p-value in parentheses for two-sided tests (bold values indicate significance at p = 0.05).

[1] Dependent variables are log-transformed.

Singers who have…	Total of singers (N=253)	Women (N=113)	Men (N=140)
…ever dated a celebrity (homogamous or not)	99 (39.1%)	53 (46.9%)	46 (32.9%)
…ever dated a homogamous celebrity	95 (37.5%)	50 (44.2%)	45 (32.1%)
…ever dated a homogamous partner but never a celebrity	74 (29.2%)	35 (31%)	39 (27.9%)
…ever dated a celebrity but never a homogamous one	4 (1.6%)	3 (2.7%)	1 (0.7%)
…never dated a homogamous partner neither a celebrity	80 (31.6%)	25 (22.1%)	56 (39.3%)

Table 3. Summary of singers and their relationship status with homogamous celebrity in their lifetime.

The table shows the relationship status and occupational-celebrity homogamy of 253 singers by gender (113 women, 140 men). It details the percentage of singers who have ever been in romantic relationships with a celebrity and whether this celebrity was homogamous or not. We consider partners as famous only when they were already well-known before the relationship.

Terms	Dependent Variables[1]		
	Wikipedia length	Wikipedia pageviews	Infodisc hits
(Intercept)	**10.4 (< .001)**	**14.1 (< .001)**	**5.233 (< .001)**
Neither Homogamous nor famous	**-0.377 (0.020)**	**-0.924 (0.002)**	**-0.564 (0.029)**
Both Homogamous and famous	-0.152 (0.380)	0.017 (0.959)	-0.134 (0.628)
Sex (Female)	**-0.396 (0.027)**	**-1.072 (0.001)**	**-0.845 (0.003)**
Age at 1st hit	-0.005 (0.471)	-0.016 (0.251)	**-0.087 (< .001)**
Number of Partners	**0.161 (< .001)**	**0.193 (< .001)**	**0.130 (< .001)**
Neither × Female	-0.462 (0.076)	-0.485 (0.316)	-0.638 (0.124)
Both × Female	0.067 (0.780)	0.281 (0.528)	-0.069 (0.855)
R^2 (R^2 adjusted)	0.369 (0.351)	0.334 (0.315)	0.355 (0.336)

Table 4. Combined results of generalized linear models for the relationship between celebrity-homogamy, sex, their interaction, age at first hit and number of partners on career outcomes.

For the celebrity-homogamy variable, we specify *'ever been in a homogamous relationship but never with a celebrity'* as the reference group. Each cell contains the estimated regression coefficient (Beta coefficient) followed by the p-value in parentheses for two-sided tests.

[1] Dependent variables are log-transformed.

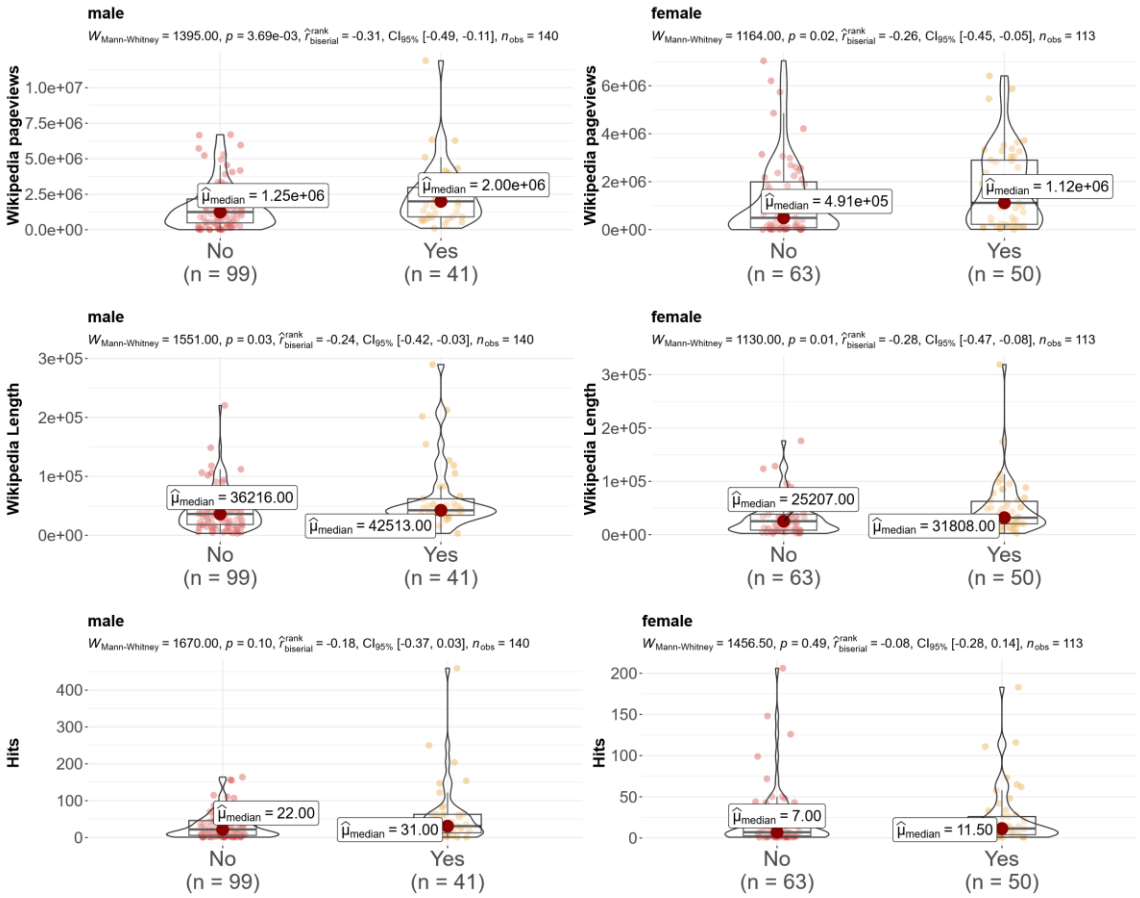

Figure 1. Fame and occupational homogamy before first hit for male and female singers.

Mann-Whitney U tests revealed that Wikipedia length and pageviews were higher for singers who had ever engaged into a homogamous relationship *before* their initial musical success ("Yes") as compared to singers who had never engaged in such relationships ("No"). This effect was not statistically significant for number of hits. We displayed here results of gender-specific analyses.