

Is Europe pulling apart? Findings from the analysis of social distance

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Phase 1 project '***Is Britain pulling apart? Analysis of
generational change in social distances***'

<http://www.camsis.stir.ac.uk/pullingapart>

<http://www.twitter.com/pullingapart>

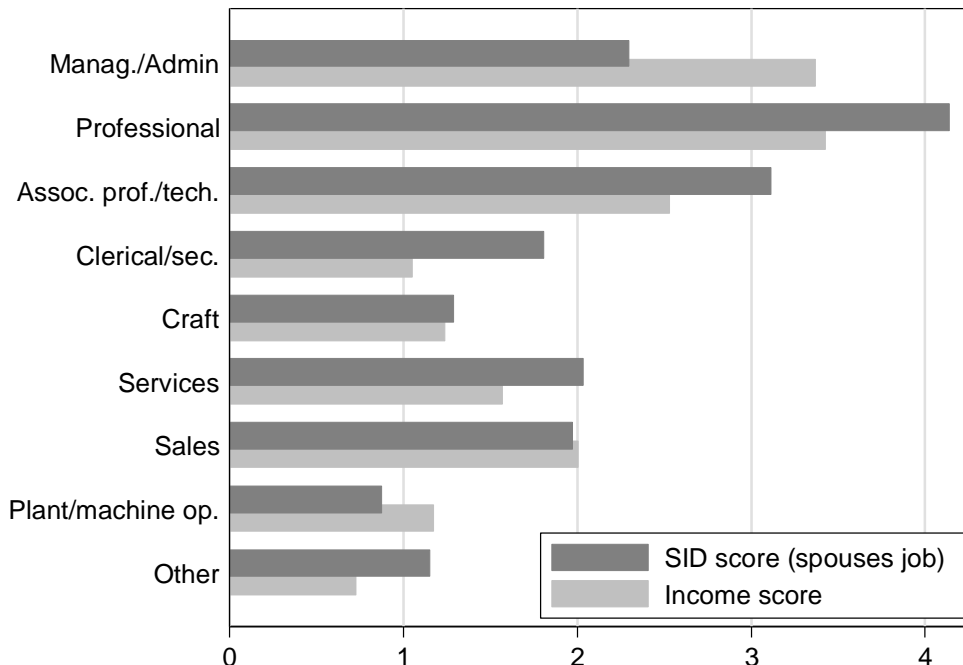
<http://pullingapartproject.wordpress.com/>

Social structure & social distance

(a) Study associations around a distribution of positions, for connected individuals

- Homophily/homogamy trends are important, but are fairly stable, and contrast with popular perceptions of fast growth in separation (e.g. Murray 2012)

Some evidence on homophily/homogamy trends			
	UK, spouses (Brynin et al. 2008)	X-nat, spouses (e.g. Kalmijn 1998)	US, confidants (Smith et al. 2014)
Educ.	+	0, + & -	+
Occup.	0	0, + & -	0
Other	+ (attitudes)	- (ethnicity)	0 (age, ethnicity) - (gender)



Source: Analysis of married males in BHPS. Scores mean standardised plus 2.

(b) Social structure as defined by social distance is revealing

- Interaction structure not identical to other structures and of theoretical interest (?the trace of social reproduction)
- May be particular connections of interest (e.g. bridging ties)

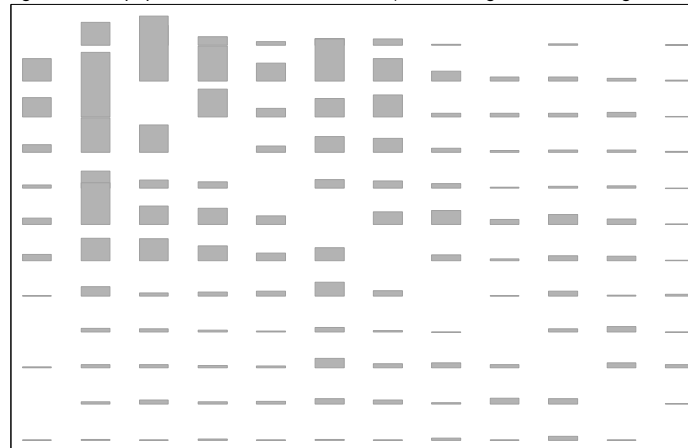
Finding new evidence on trends?

- Use/compare methods that both estimate and evaluate the social distance structure
 - Based on prevalence of social interactions
 - Previous work on occupations (e.g. www.camsis.stir.ac.uk) generalised to other forms of social distance
- Take advantage of rich new data resources
 - Vast scale of husband-wife records from resources such as IPUMS-I
 - Current and previous household sharers from longitudinal household survey data
 - {Proxy questions on alters, e.g. on friends}
 - {Administrative data (e.g. shared workplace)}

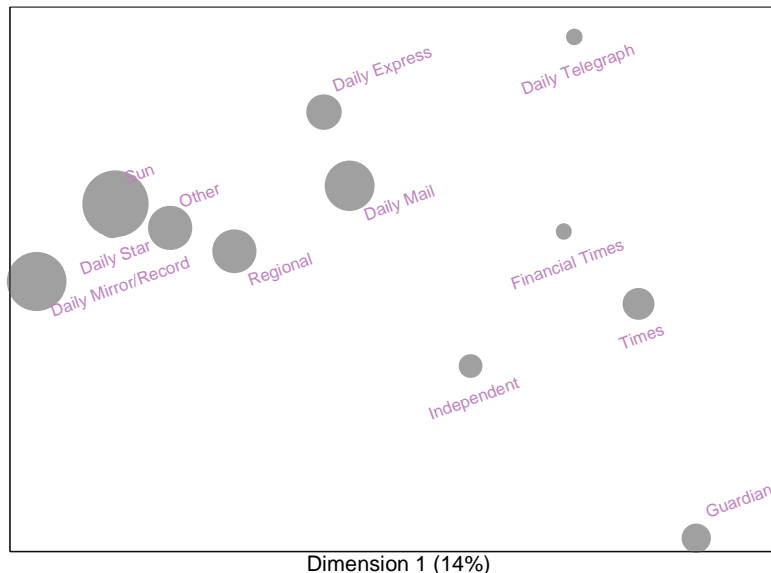
Methods used

- Summary stats on ego-alter associations and their trends
 - Absolute association (e.g. Cramer's V)
 - Dimensional orientation ($\{1^{\text{st}}\}$ dimensional structure & ego-alt cor.)
 - Net association (e.g. Smith et al. 2014's case control approach – the level of contact relative to chance)
 - Network summaries of ego-alter relations by cohort or time

Ego-alter newspapers, BHPS 1991,2,6,7,2004 (5k non-diagonals, excluding 36k di



Papers are in rank order of average CAMSIS score of readers



Husband's paper

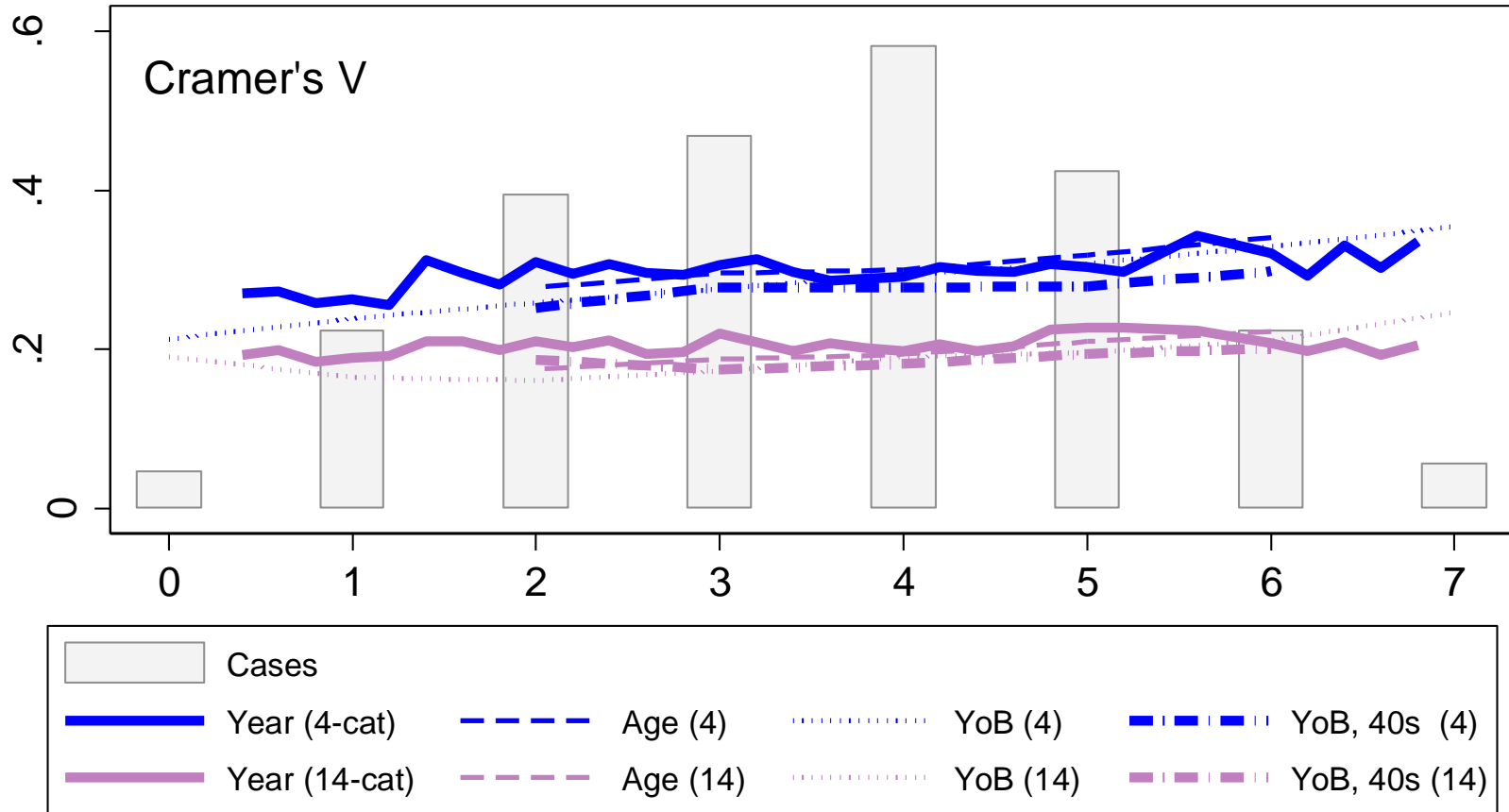
		y	x
FT	T	1	0
FT	M	0	0
S	S	1	1
S	R	0	0

Wife's paper

Random wife's paper

...(1) trends in time don't seem to be altered by different permutations in the number of categories measured, or the way that time is used...

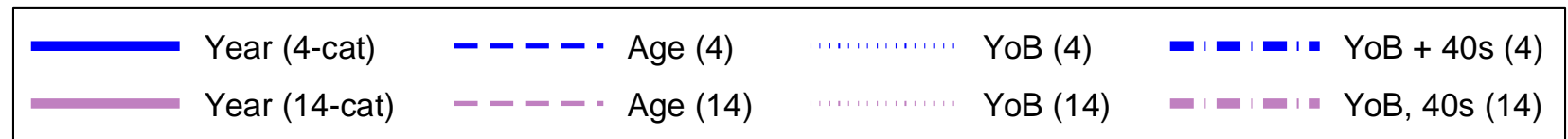
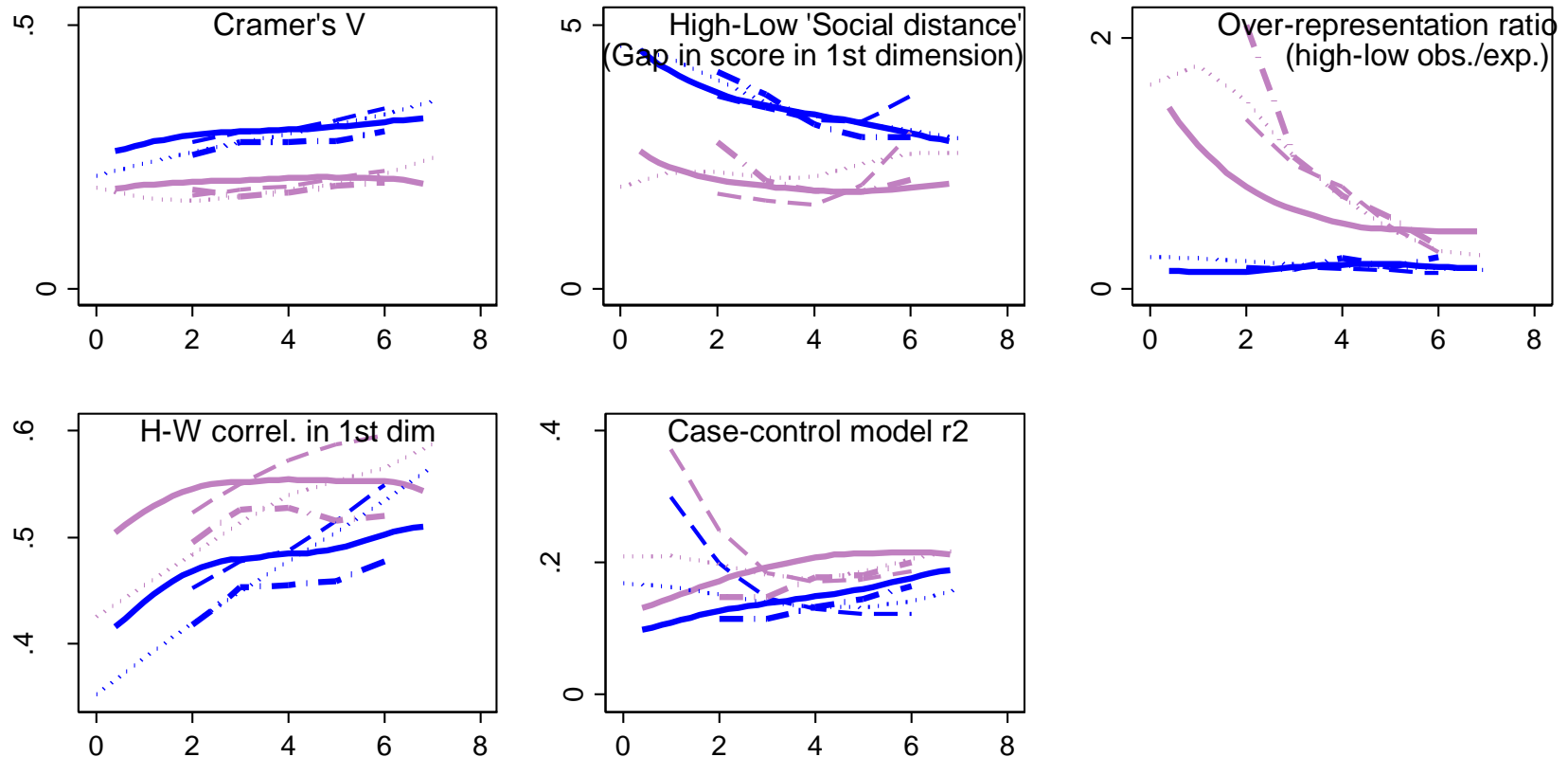
Educational homogamy in the UK



Source: Pooled GHS time series, 1974-2004. Horizontal axis refers to different time metrics by line. Metrics refer to: Years since 1970/5; age in decades-1; birth cohort (year of birth since 1900). Lines show statistics when education is coded into 4 or 14-category versions, and for different measures of time (year, age, year of birth, and year of birth for adults in their 40s).

..(2) Different summary statistics can point in different directions

Educational homogamy in the UK

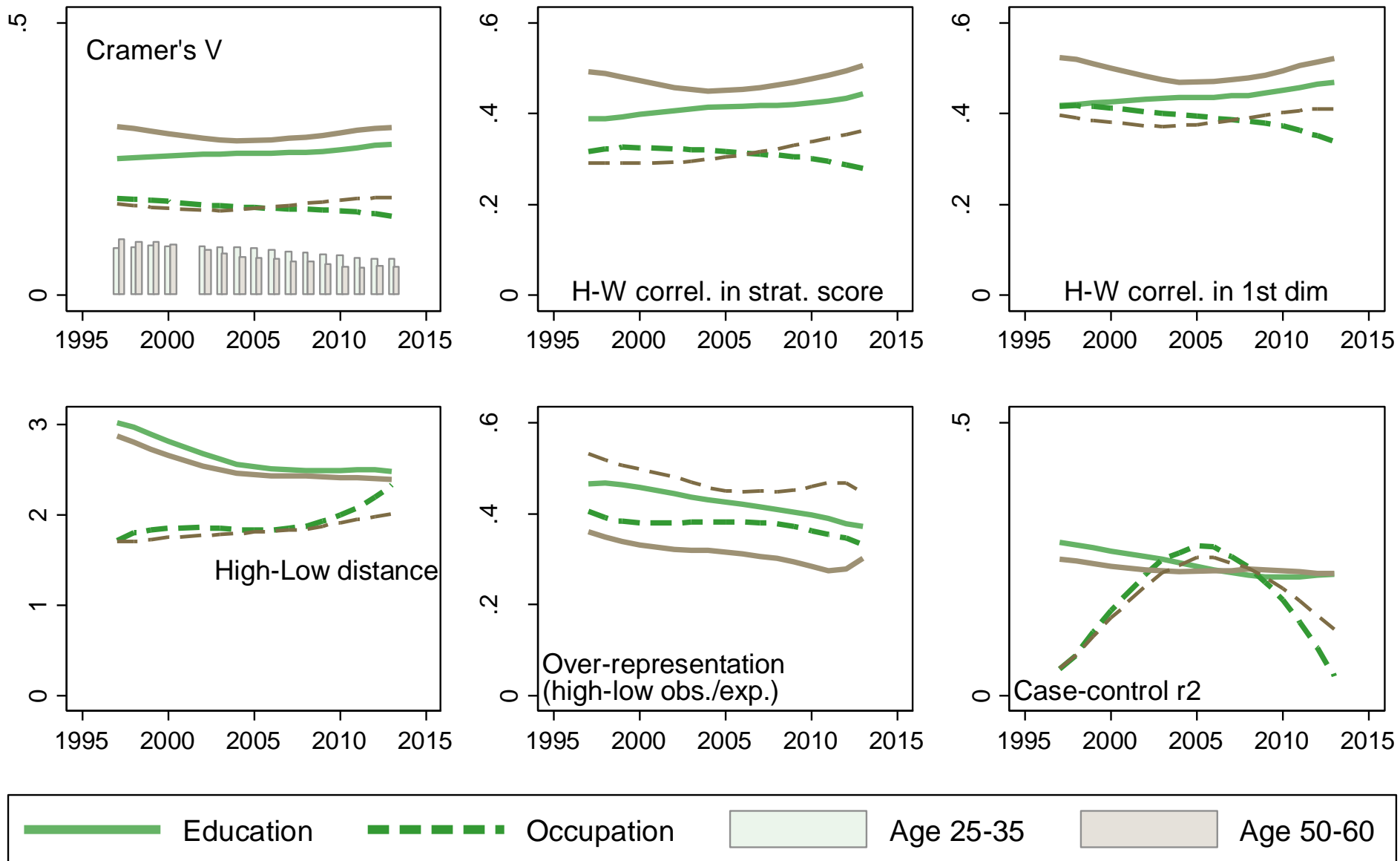


Source: Pooled GHS time series, 1974-2004. Horizontal axis refers to different time metrics by line. Metrics refer to: Years since 1970/5; age in decades-1; birth cohort (year of birth since 1900). Lines show statistics when education is coded into 4 or 14-category versions, and for different measures of time (year, age, year of birth, and year of birth for adults in their 40s). Lines smoothed with local linear smoothing (lowest

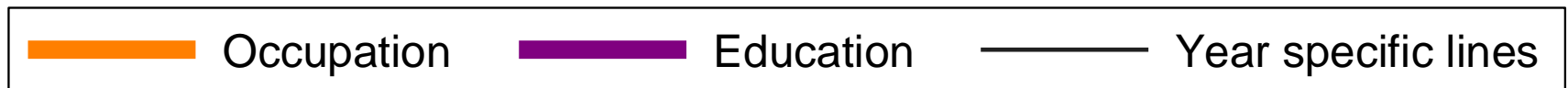
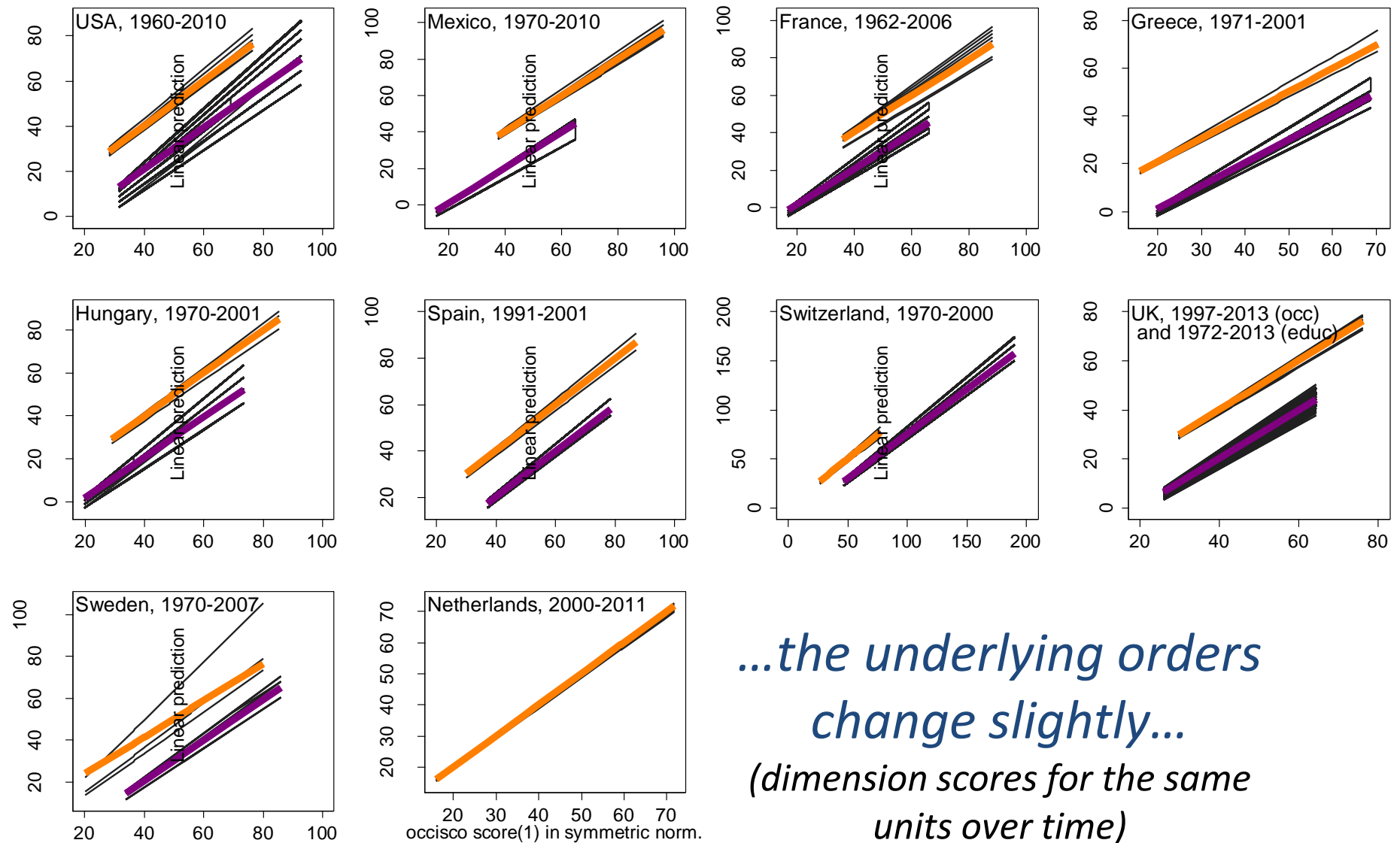
..(3) Social distance trends don't particularly match up to stories of pronounced social change

- *Have you noticed how there's more and more talk about social change these days?*
 - Rise of precariousness and neo-liberalism (*e.g. Ross 2009*)
 - Growing nepotism, reproduction, exclusionary individualism (*e.g. Dorling 2013, Murray 2012, Winlow & Hall 2013*)
 - Unerring drive towards modernisation (*e.g. Marks 2014*)
 - Diffident stability (*e.g. Erikson & Goldthorpe 2010*)
 - Social distance trends ought to be an important marker of any of these changes
 - To what extent do social distance trends fit these trajectories?

Homogamy in the UK

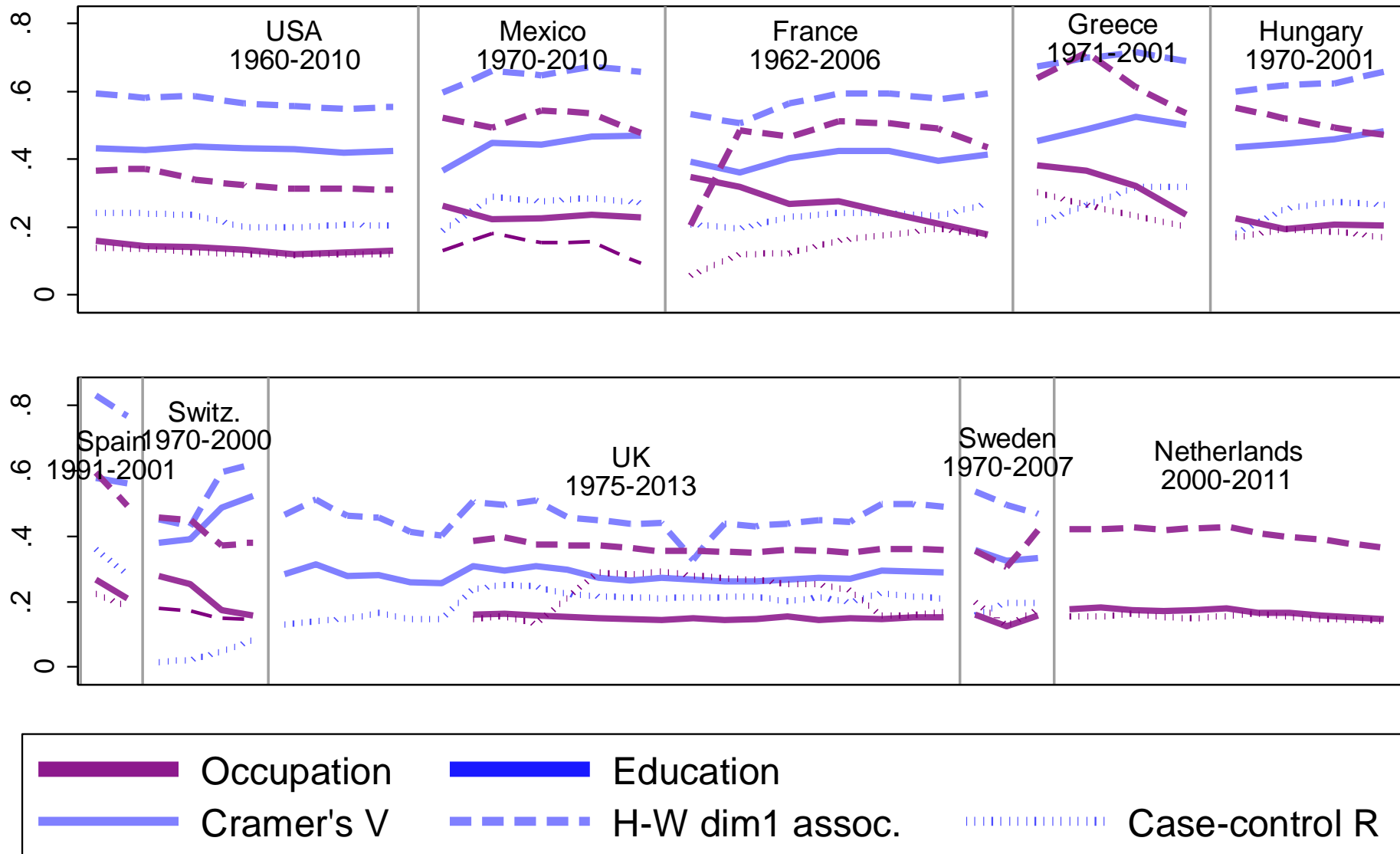


Source: Pooled LFS, 1997-2013, cohabiting couples. Horizontal axis refers to time point of observation. 'Lowess' lines plotted (local linear smoothing). Colours indicate age cohort within time period (age of husband). N ≈ 5k couples per time period.



Data for cohabiting m-f couples from IPUMS-I, or from national Labour Force Surveys (UK, NL) or census (SE)

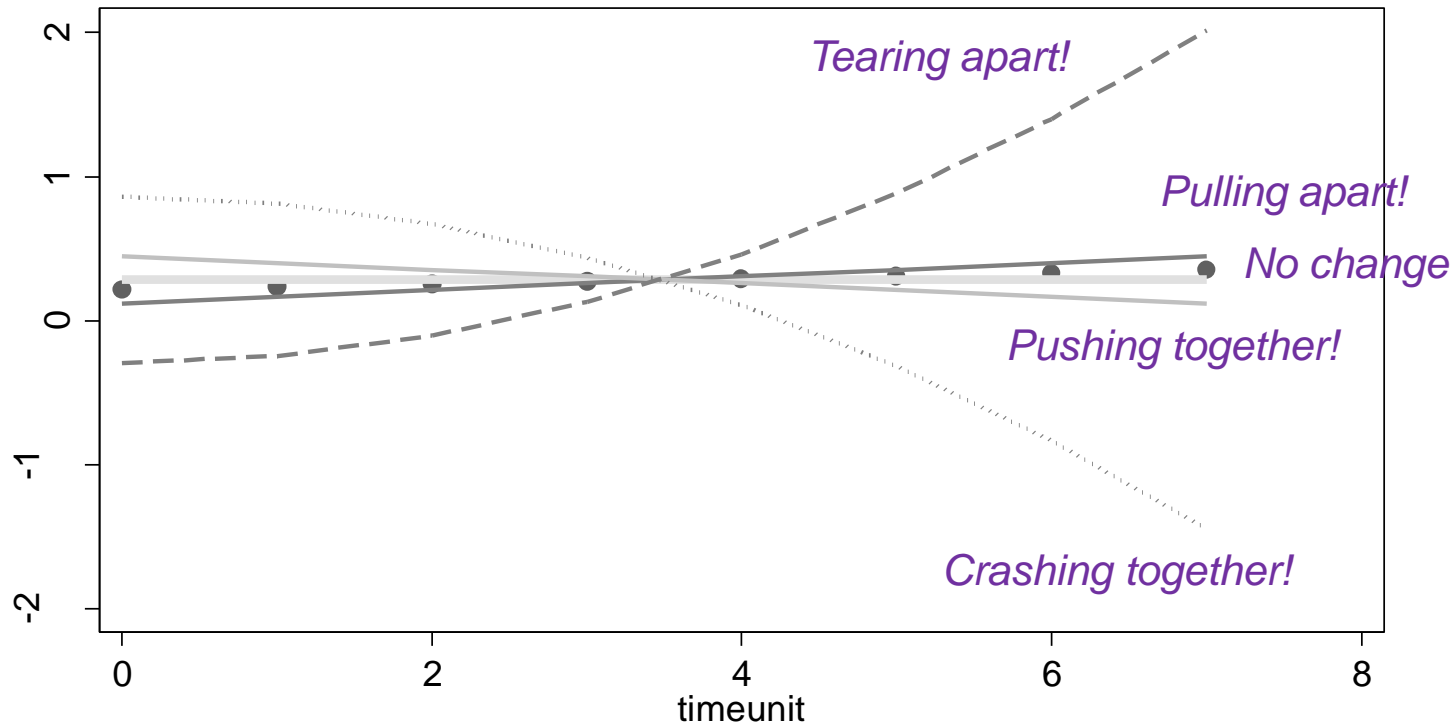
International trends in social distance



Analysis based on husband-wife associations from IPUMS-I or LFS data.
 Statistics are ego-alter Cramer's V, Ego-Alt dim1 association, or case-control R.

- It might be more consistent to compare patterns against an anticipated (a priori) trend line?

➤ Either flatline, or linear change by 1 sd each decade, or quadratic by (sd/dec²)...



Cramer's V trend with time for education, GHS.

The observed patterns fit somewhat with 'linear increase' but of the options, 'no change' is best

Unconstrained, a more moderate linear increase fits best

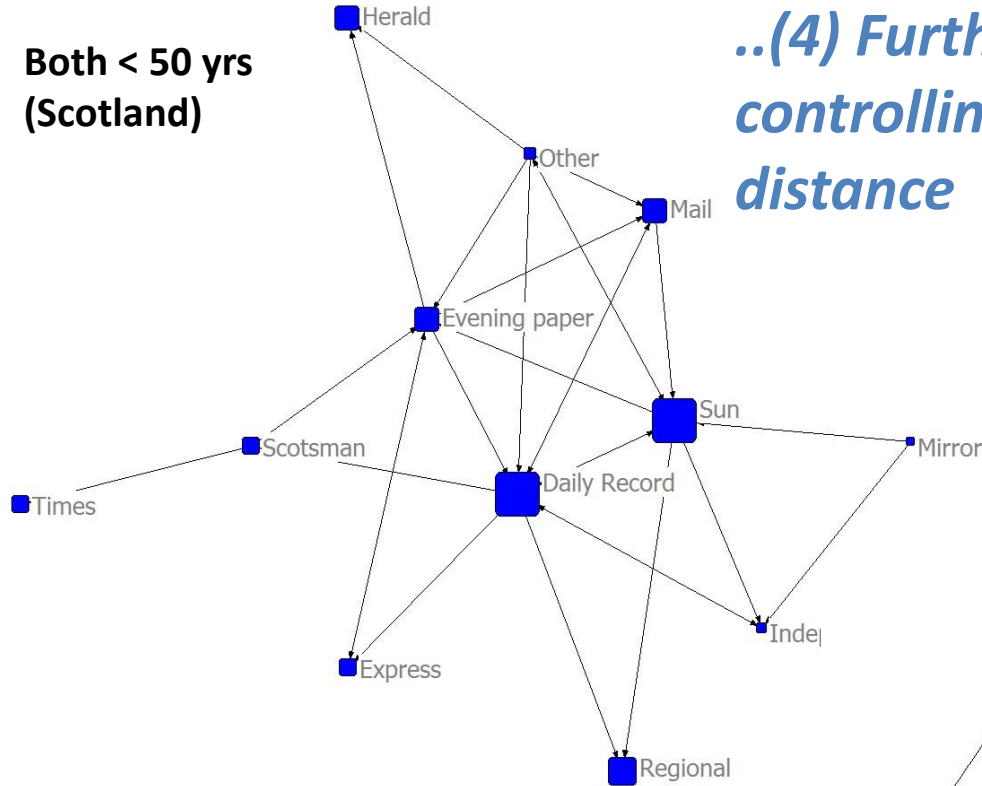
● Data points	— No change (.875)
— Linear increase (1.849)	— Linear decrease (10.4)
- - - Quadratic increase (276.826)	... Quadratic decrease (336.548)

Statistics are a mean value for the squared error expressed as a proportion of the variance

Social distance trends in Britain

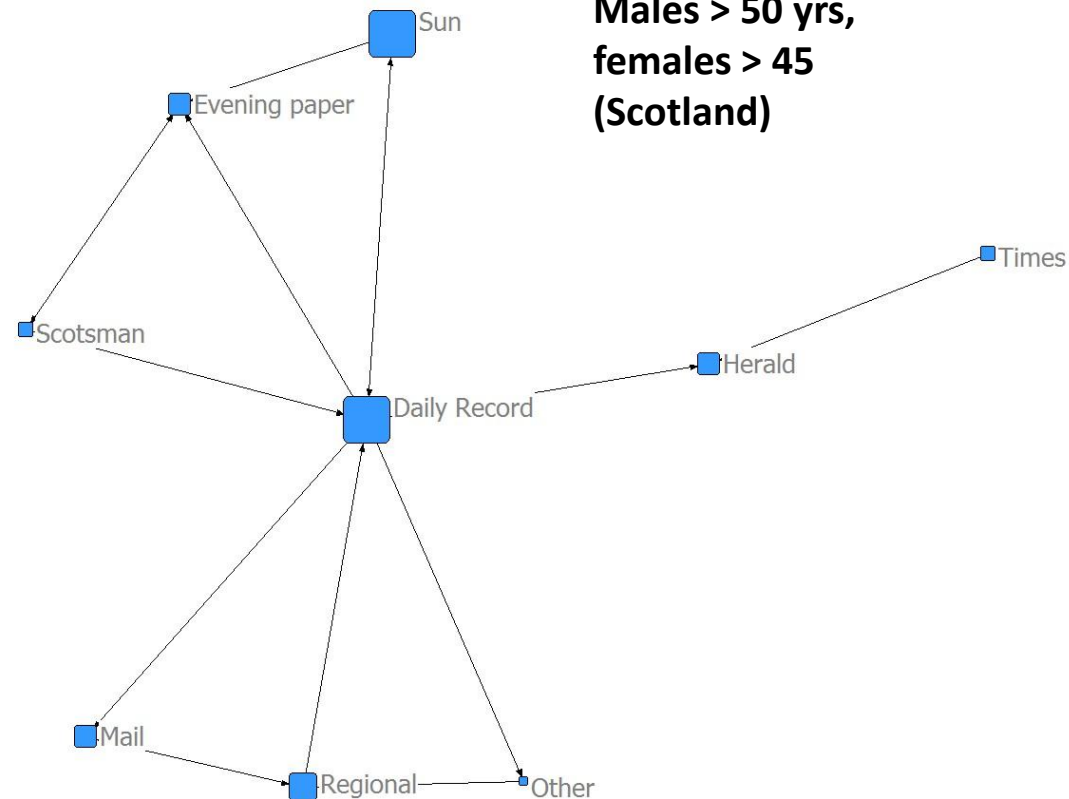
GHS data, 72-04	Type of Stat.	Best trend line
Educ (4) by yob	Cramer's V	No change (+)
``	HW Dim 1 cor.	No change (+)
``	High-Low dist.	No change (--)
``	H-L occurrence	No change (-)
	H-W strat cor.	
Educ (4) by yob for age 40-50	Cramer's V	Pulling apart (+)
	HW Dim 1 cor.	Pulling apart (+)
``	High-Low dist.	Pulling together (-)
``	H-L occurrence	No change
	H-W strat cor.	
Educ(14) by yob	Cramer's V	No change (++)
``	HW Dim 1 cor.	No change (++)
``	High-Low dist.	No change
``	H-L occurrence	No change (-)
	H-W strat cor.	

Both < 50 yrs
(Scotland)



..(4) Further insight from exploring, or
controlling for, different elements of social
distance

Males > 50 yrs,
females > 45
(Scotland)

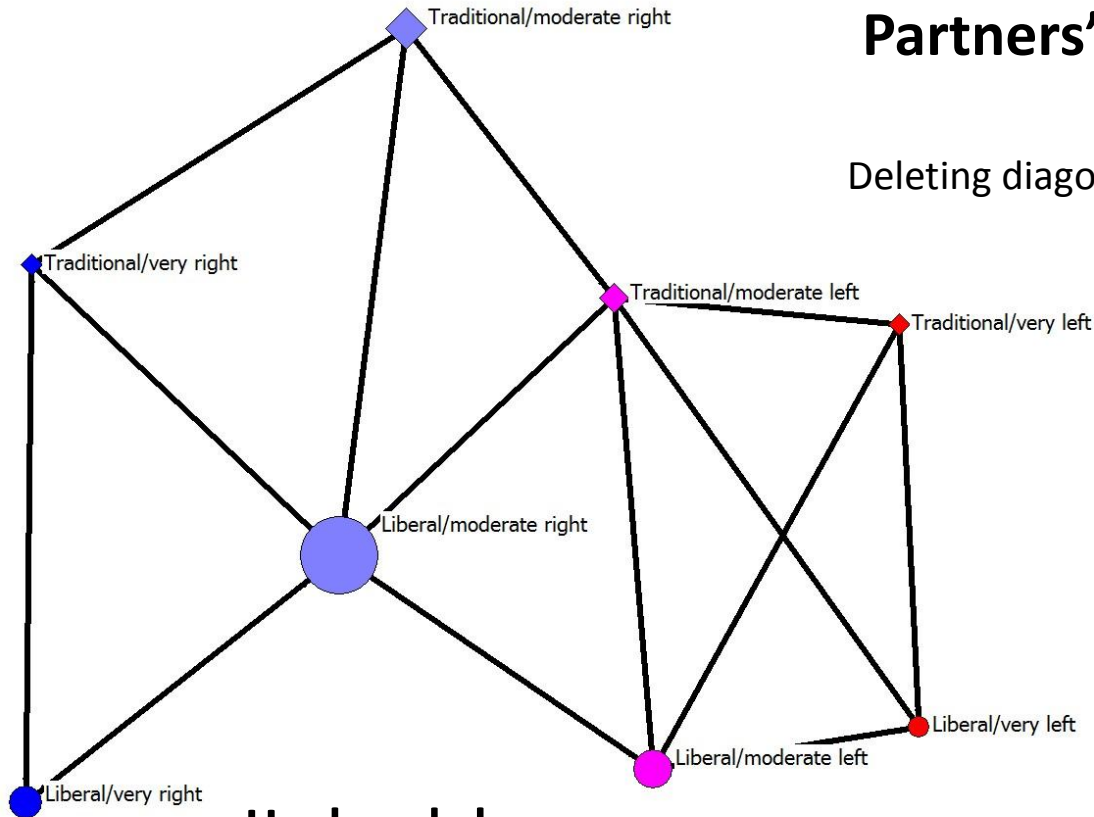


UKHLS 2011 - Partners reading diff. papers

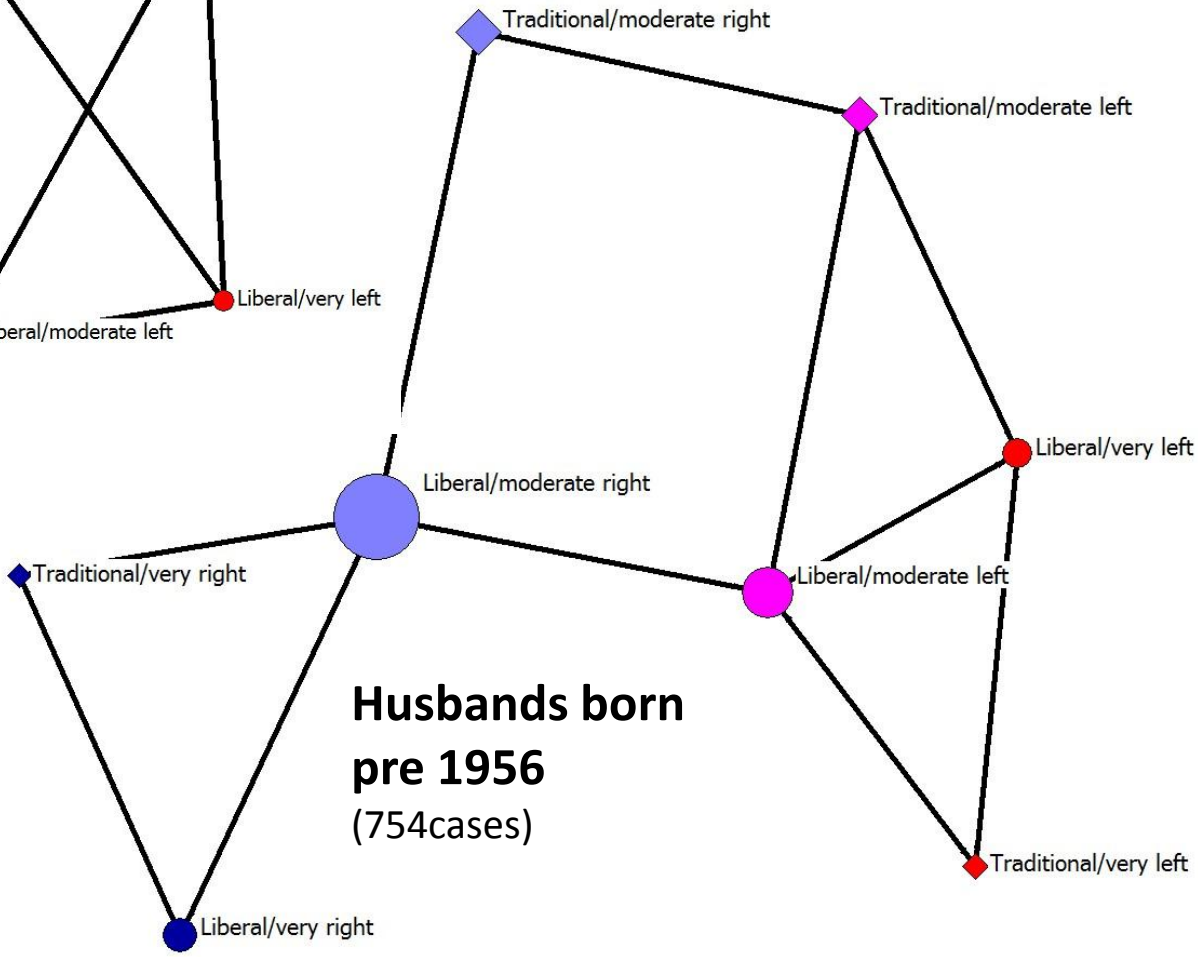
Ignores couples which read same
paper (39% of younger couples and
73% of older couples).

Partners' views on family and state in Sweden (LNU 2000)

Deleting diagonals (33% of younger couples, 32% of older)



**Husbands born
since 1956**
(1,035 cases)



**Husbands born
pre 1956**
(754 cases)

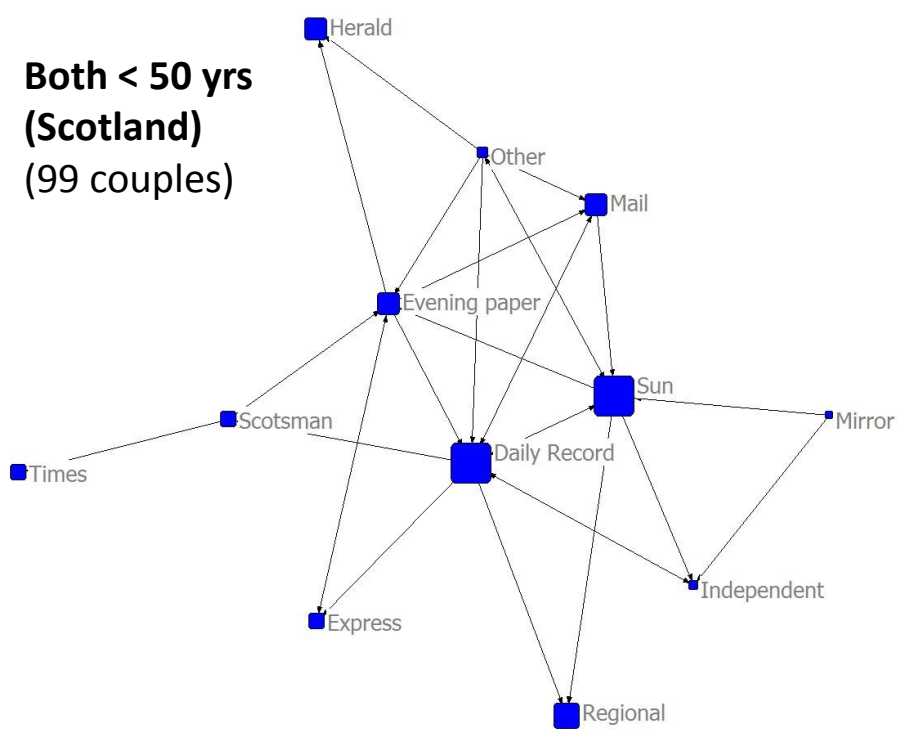
Conclusions

- Methodological results
 - Number of categories and time comparisons don't change trends; but different summary stats may do so, and the better summary stats are probably those that try to control for other changes in social structure
 - Similar (absence of dramatic) trends across domains (socio-economic, demographic, cultural)
- A diffident peroration
 - Both socio-economic and socio-cultural trends in social distance reject a characterisation of dramatic change and might, if anything, suggest a 'Europe pulling together'
 - Nothing very exciting happening, to be honest

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**Both < 50 yrs
(Scotland)
(99 couples)**



UK-HLS 2011 - Partners reading diff. papers

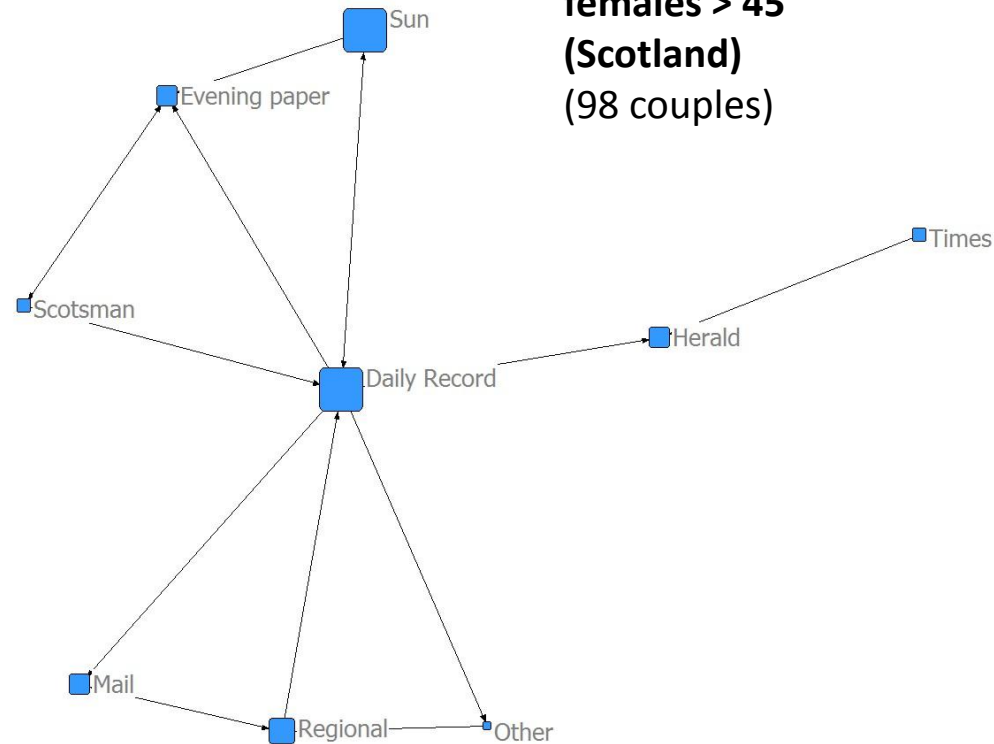
Ignores couples which read same paper (39% of younger couples and 73% of older couples). UKHLS, 2011 (min. 2 ties).

Older couples links mostly involve Daily Record.

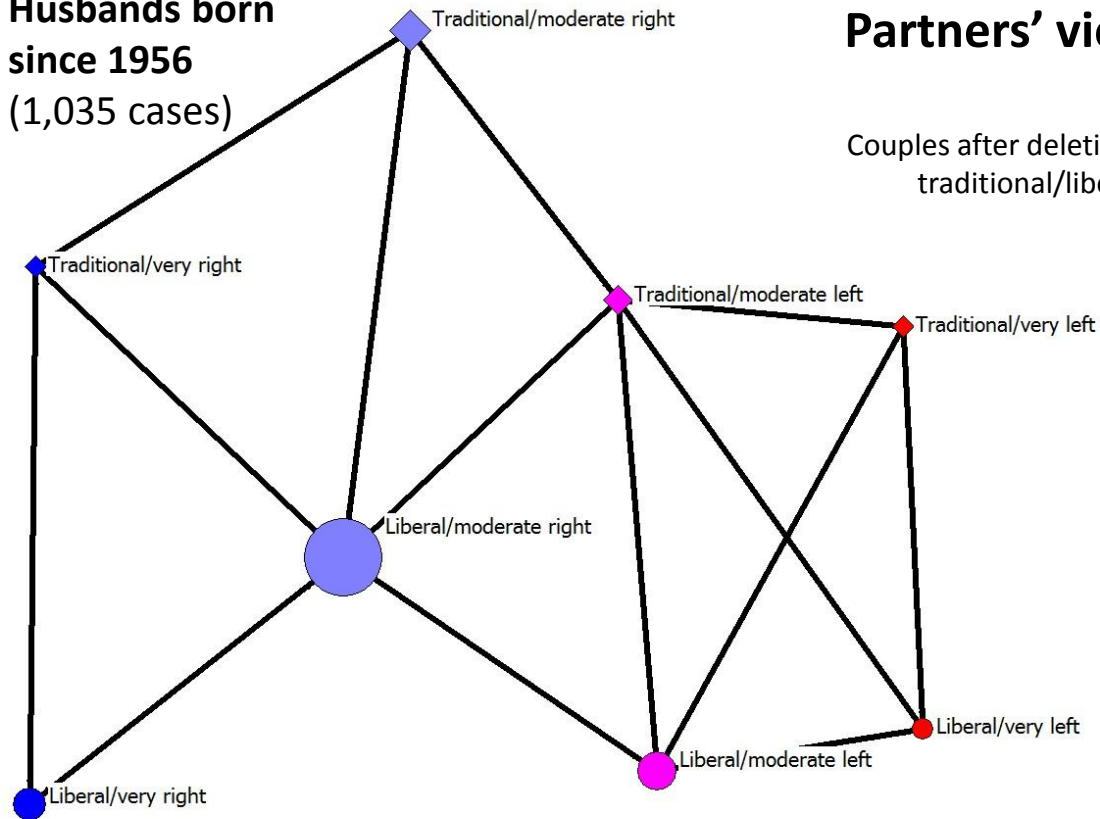
Younger couples show many more links in the papers they read, and more often read different papers.

Evidence that younger couples are more cosmopolitan / Britain isn't pulling apart?

**Males > 50 yrs,
females > 45
(Scotland)
(98 couples)**



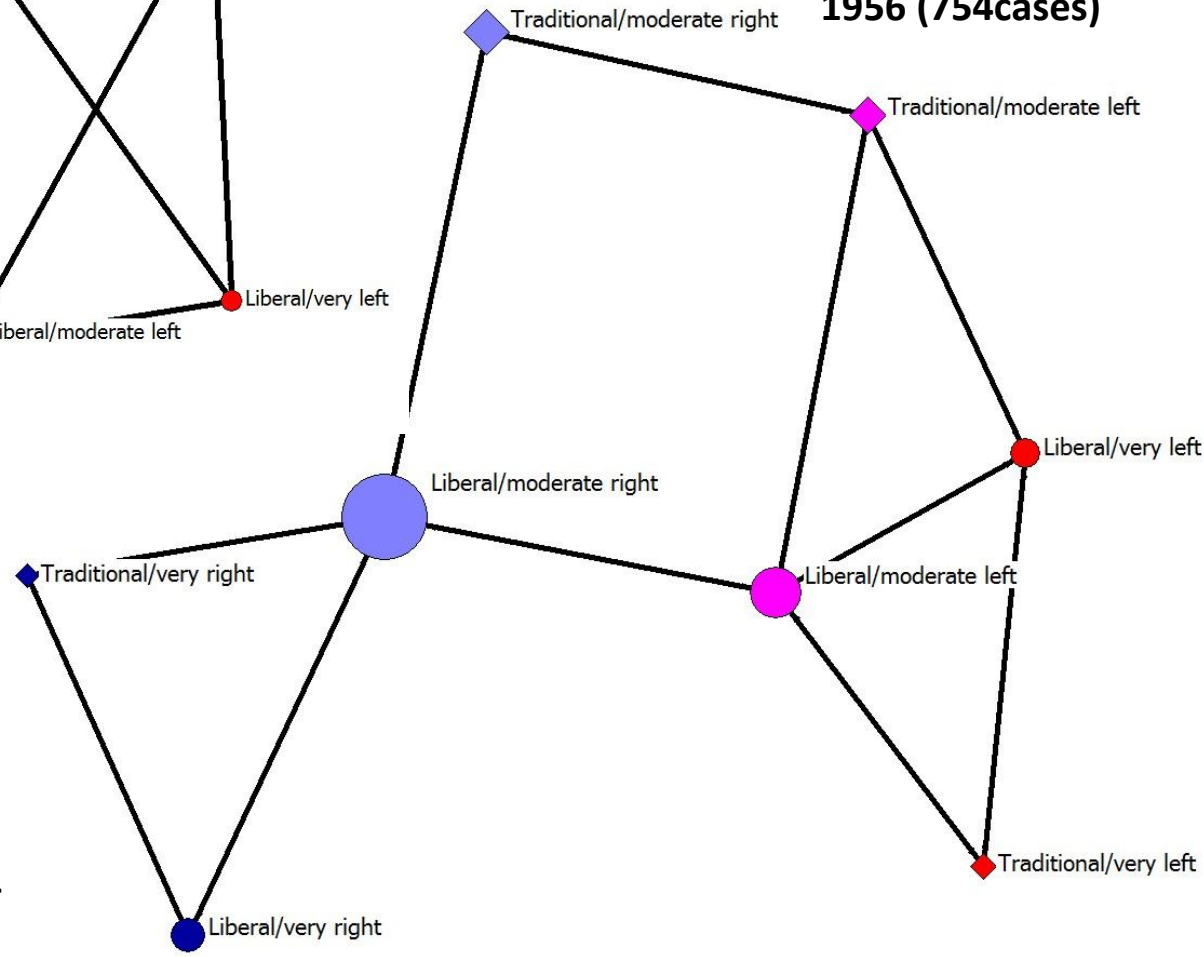
Husbands born since 1956 (1,035 cases)



Partners' views on family and state in Sweden (LNU 2000)

Couples after deleting those cases where both partners held same left/right & traditional/liberal values (33% of younger couples, 32% of older couples)

Husbands born pre 1956 (754 cases)



- Left/right division stable
- Younger cohort: more ties; older cohort: more homophily
- No evidence of 'pulling apart'. Similar % homophilous on both factors (around 1/3rd). If anything, evidence of becoming more diverse.