

Is Britain Pulling Apart?

Analysis of generational change in social distances

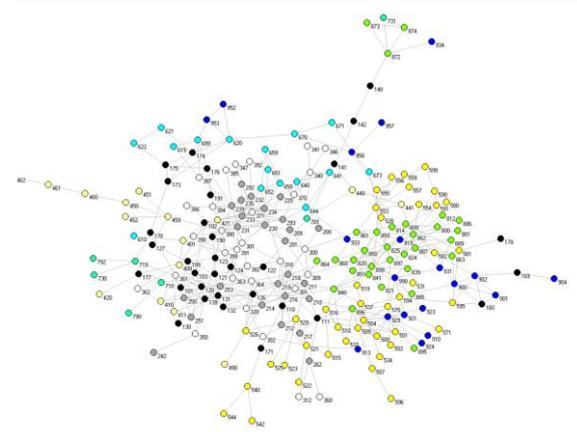
This project investigates social distance between people within the UK. Patterns of social interaction are mapped to explore the closeness, or distance, between social groups. These are traced across recent decades to explore if social interaction structures have altered in parallel with major demographic and other social changes (such as changes in family structure and employment patterns, and innovations in travel and communication).

Various measures of connections and connectivity are assessed. Interactions are measured through marriage, friendship or household sharing networks. Social groupings can be based upon positions, attitudes or outcomes, such as political values and viewpoints, media consumption, volunteering and leisure interests or health and educational outcomes. We apply our extensive background in measuring social interaction distance between occupational groups, to explore how distant other social groups are from each other and whether this changes over time.

Data is analysed from major UK (and European) social surveys, including Understanding Society, the British Household Panel Survey, the 1958 and 1970 cohort studies and national censuses. Multilevel modelling, social networks and social interaction distance analyses are amongst the methods used.

This study analyses the benefits, utilisation and stratification of social capital in the UK. We will pull apart the often conflicting dimensions of connectivity to understand which social ties hold the strongest influences; how diverse people's networks are; levels of segregation and diversity across the multiple identities individuals possess (i.e., Christian, socialist, Times reader, swimmer); and the role of attraction and repulsion in determining whom we interact with.

The project runs from January 2013 until June 2014 and is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council's Secondary Data Analysis Initiative Phase 1 programme.



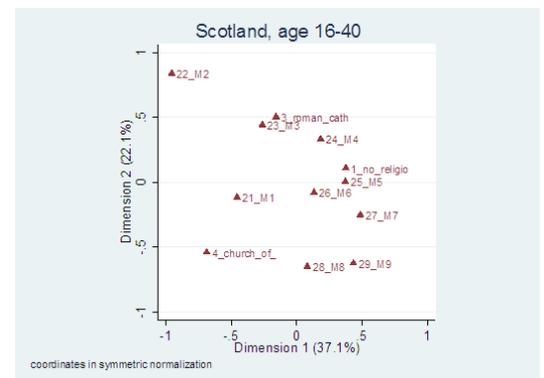
Research Team:

Paul Lambert (Univ. Stirling)

Vernon Gayle (Univ. Edinburgh)

Mark Tranmer (Univ. Manchester)

Dave Griffiths (Univ. Stirling)



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