Marital homogamy as social stratification indicator

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What is homogamy?

- Marital sorting follow regular **patterns** at the aggregate societal level

- Rule of homogamy (sometimes also endogamy) says:

  - most people who marry do not choose a partner at random

  - they seek partners based on similarities in social characteristics

    - family backgrounds

    - educational levels

    - social class

    - race/ethnicity

    - religion

    - age

- Marital sorting is not purely random process

What is homogamy?

- Homogamy is a tendency to vote for a partner with similar social criteria

- Homogamy is a result of marital sorting

- The opposite of homogamy is heterogamy

2004		B.04.01 Sňatky podle vzájemného věku svobodných snoubenců										B.04.02 Sňatky podle vzájemného věku svobodných snoubenců															
		First marriages: by age of groom and bride										*First marriages: by age of groom and bride*															
Věk ženicha	Celkem					Věk nevěsty	Age of bride						Věk nevěsty			Age of bride											
Age of groom	Total	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40+
Celkem Total	33022	18	35	417	807	1289	1798	2248	2897	3544	4162	3999	3513	2779	2053	1299	761	416	302	214	123	73	56	38	30	151
16	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
17	4	1	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18	80	-	3	15	20	12	11	5	-	5	1	1	3	-	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
19	160	2	5	33	40	26	16	8	8	4	4	5	1	6	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20	348	1	5	50	64	67	48	28	25	18	14	3	6	4	4	4	3	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
21	554	1	4	33	81	100	91	72	44	31	35	20	20	8	4	2	3	2	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
22	1004	2	5	57	73	138	156	158	115	88	61	70	31	24	9	8	5	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
23	1557	3	3	48	78	156	212	226	251	192	139	98	59	37	24	14	8	2	1	2	1	2	1	-	-	-	-
24	2537	2	3	43	111	162	255	334	389	415	309	222	126	70	41	24	11	5	4	2	1	3	1	1	-	-	3
25	3133	-	2	31	82	154	220	315	373	521	597	359	204	103	71	49	32	5	5	1	2	1	2	1	-	-	3
26	3638	3	2	16	57	120	205	266	422	518	650	612	354	193	109	41	36	16	9	4	-	-	2	-	-	-	3
27	3925	-	1	22	53	93	179	250	334	503	571	586	614	338	183	98	43	16	13	10	4	5	-	3	1	5
28	3695	-	-	16	50	72	115	173	287	364	523	587	536	476	251	114	57	32	13	13	5	2	1	1	1	6
29	3193	1	-	13	28	54	90	140	205	289	383	458	449	432	339	154	76	33	27	13	3	1	1	-	-	4
30	2648	-	-	9	17	47	80	89	154	219	311	352	374	347	287	182	74	46	26	18	10	1	2	-	1	2
31	1789	-	-	4	14	20	41	72	91	131	184	211	238	230	186	174	102	39	23	14	5	5	2	1	-	2
32	1281	-	-	6	9	25	16	31	66	99	119	133	150	179	146	120	86	37	29	11	8	2	6	-	-	3
33	913	-	-	3	9	11	20	25	43	36	83	94	115	112	116	90	55	31	24	19	11	6	5	1	1	3
34	643	1	-	3	1	8	15	18	29	32	48	49	87	64	73	79	38	42	18	18	10	1	2	-	3	4
35	455	-	-	2	2	8	5	11	18	18	39	38	40	44	61	45	32	23	24	20	9	7	4	1	-	4
36	373	-	-	2	2	3	8	7	14	18	31	28	31	30	49	27	32	28	24	11	8	5	3	5	1	6
37	249	-	-	2	3	2	3	4	5	11	19	20	22	31	31	19	22	12	17	6	6	3	2	2	3	4
38	185	-	-	3	2	1	3	4	4	9	6	14	14	18	16	18	17	13	9	9	8	9	-	3	-	5
39	156	-	-	1	1	2	1	4	7	6	13	13	8	10	20	9	7	8	11	10	7	3	7	2	2	4
40+	501	-	-	5	9	8	8	8	13	17	22	26	31	23	31	27	21	21	23	31	25	17	14	17	16	88

Why to study homogamy? Example of educational homogamy

- Educational homogamy is the indicator of "societal openness"

- It is the indicator of educational differences and their role among people

- High educational homogamy means, that people perceive educational differences as high and these differences are reflected in their marital choic

  - Lower educational homogamy indicates that educational differences are not significant in people's perception

  - The educational differences among people are not reflected in marital selection

- Smits, Ultee a Lammers says: "(a) society in which many marriages take place between persons belonging to different social groups (…) can be considered a more open society than one in which few socially mixed marriages occur" (ASR 1998a: 265)

Three factors influencing choice of partner

- Individual (preferences, *propensity*)
- Structural (social barriers and constrains)
- Social (closeness, acceptability)

- Based on common sense or massmedia we are convinced that only individual factors play a role, that we choose our partners mostly by ourselves

- However, in an everyday reality, the choosing of partners does not happen according individual preferences as we would expect

Individual factors

- Economically and social-psychologically oriented sociologists
- Sociological micro-perspective
- Partner preferences and their effect on marital behaviour
- People usually prefer similar or the same partners

- Why?
  - because of status maintenance and stabilization of economic individual level
  - because of cultural understanding and sharing the same values
  - Because of Exchange of gender expectations connected with male and female gender role in family

Structural factors

- Sociological macro-perspective
- Analysis of concluded marriages (ex-post data analysis)
- Opportunity structure
- There is a supply from which single people collect
- 3 dimensions (educational homogamy):
  - Number of educational groups – analytical effect
    - *higher number of educational groups increase educational heterogamy*
  - The size of educational groups – prevalence effect
    - *increased size of educational group means the rise of educational homogamy in this group*
  - Gender gap in educational groups – gender effect
    - *gender gap closure inside of educational group means the rise of educational homogamy in this group*

Social factors

- Sociological macro-perspective
- Analysis of concluded marriages (ex-post data analysis)
- Social factors are connected with social constrains between groups of men and women on marriage market
- These are „distances" that must be overcome in order the marriage could be concluded
- Differences are educational, age, occupational, religious, ethnical or regional.
- It depends on what differences are societal important, which role people in marriage market give them
- The effect of social structure, social stratification, social segregation on partner choice
- Differences determine this choice, however, the choice is a mechanism that maintains and confirms these differences

Homogamy: basic concepts

- Homogamy, hypergamy, hypogamy
  - Gender is a key
  - Hypogamy is usually defined: W higher, M lower
  - Hypergamy is usually defined: W lower, M higher

- Absolute homogamy
  - opportunity structure
  - prevalence effect

- Relative homogamy – assortative mating
  - social distances
  - preference effect

Absolute educational homogamy (AEH)

- AEH: the result of both:
  - the opportunity structure and assortative mating
- AEH is also influenced by:
  - cultural factors such as marriage tradition
  - demographic trends, religion
  - degree of ethnic segregation
  - women's labor market participation
- AEH is indicated by the percentage distributions
  - this is the proportion of marriages in which men and women are identical in the characteristics examined.

- In homogamy tables we cannot distinguish
  - what proportions of the marriages are conditioned by structural circumstances
  - what proportions are result of partners' intentions and preferences (of assortative mating)

Absolute educational homogamy – data/table

• What can be computed?

Men's ed. level	Women's educational level				
	EL	VC	HS	TE	Total
EL	15456	3891	2129	103	21579
VT	12894	25892	10112	403	49301
HS	2363	4554	10493	913	18323
TE	243	561	3166	1753	5723
Total	30956	34898	25900	3172	94926
EL	11784	2742	2228	117	16871
VT	10281	22312	9960	416	42969
HS	2488	3986	10950	1091	18515
TE	311	506	3460	1841	6118
Total	24864	29546	26598	3465	84473

AEH and trends in ES (educational structure)

Figure 1. The relationship between absolute educational homogamy and levels of educational number and gender gaps amongst men and women getting married.
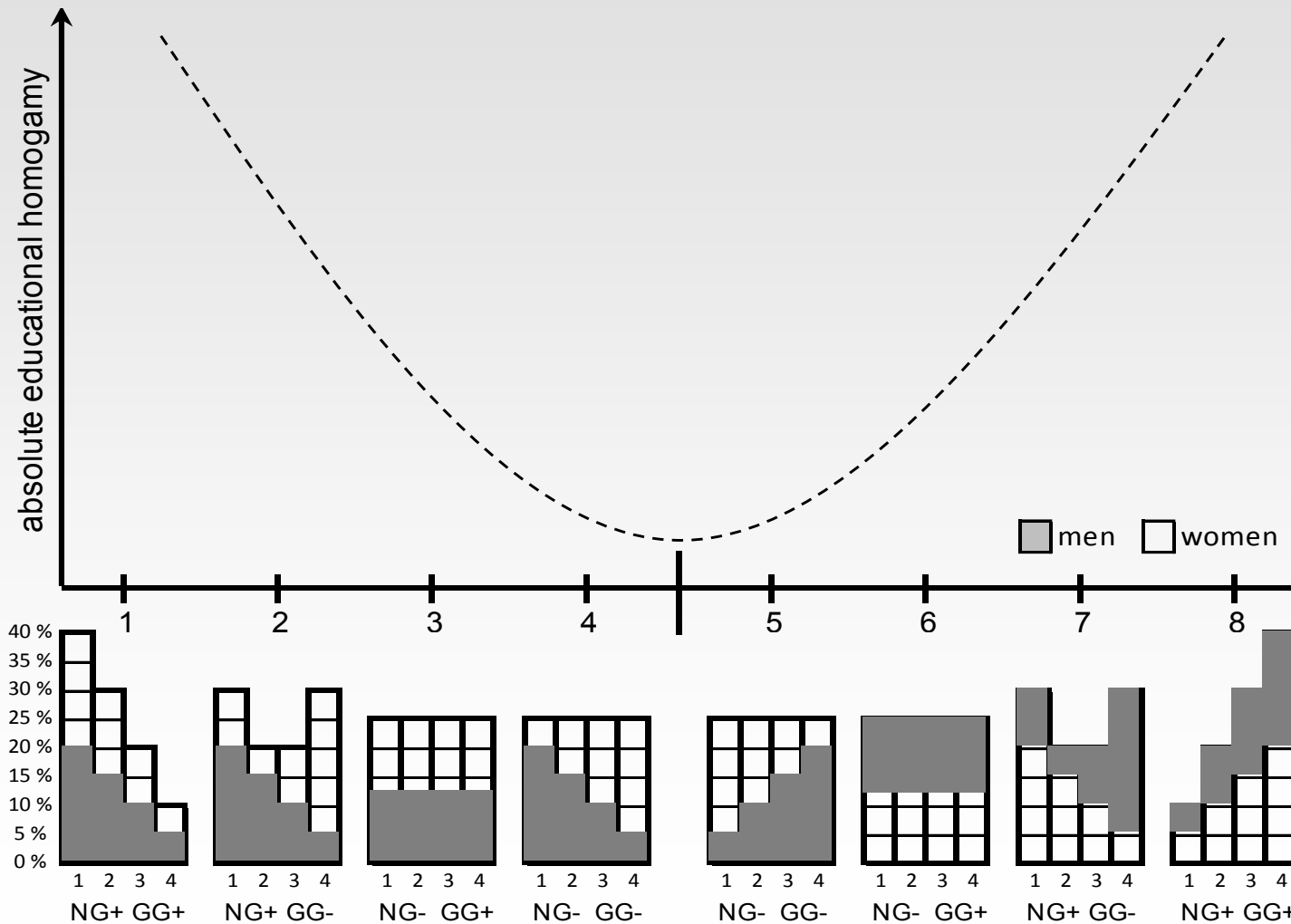

A "great U-turn" hypothesis. The proportion of educationally homogamous marriages declines from the turn of the twentieth century until mid-century and then steadily increases thereafter

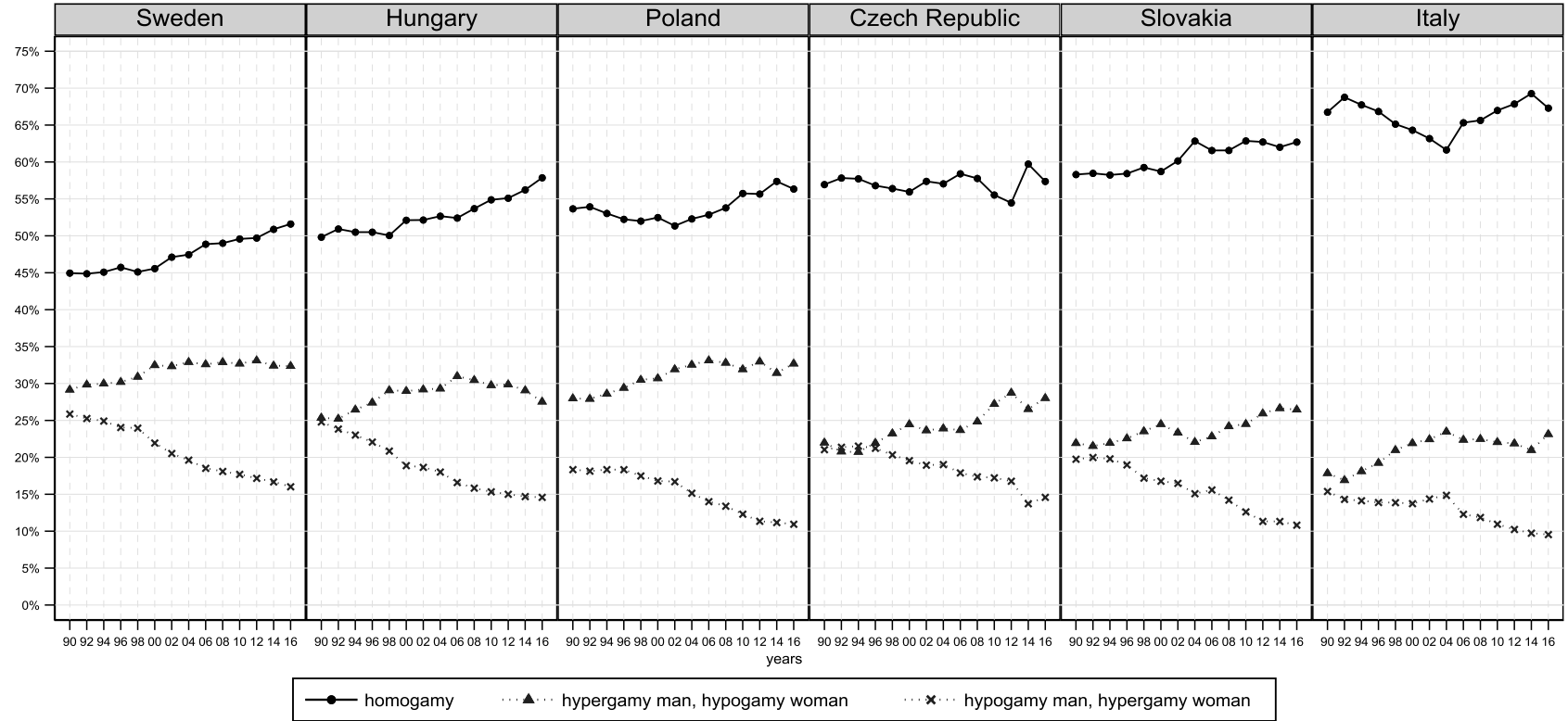Note: NG means number gap in educational structure; GG means gender gap in educational structure.

AEH and EE (educational expansion)

Figure 1. Trends in the educational structure of men and women entering marriage between 1990 and 2016 (%)
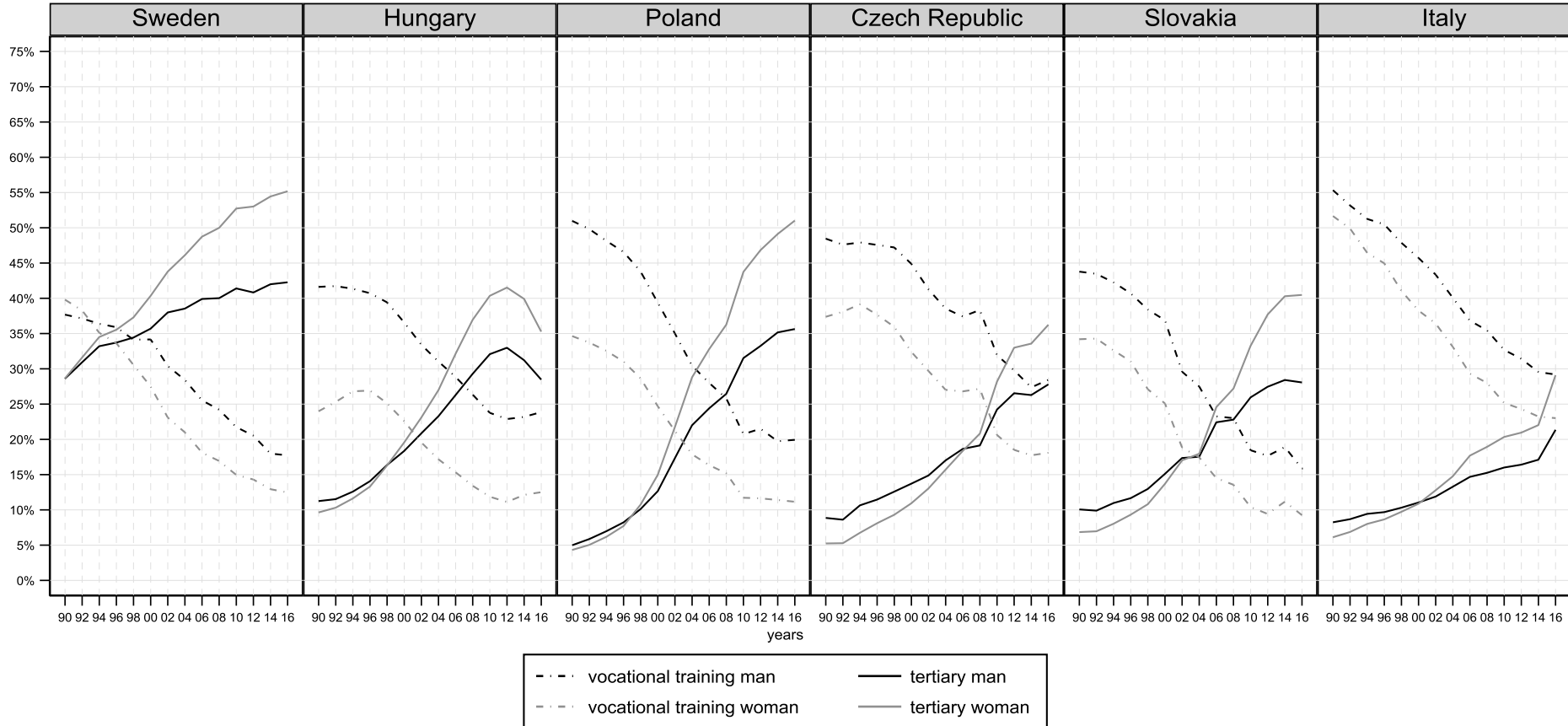
AEH - trends in time

Figure 2. Trends in absolute educational homogamy and heterogamy between 1990 and 2016 (%)

Counter-effects of changes in educational structure

- Two intentional counter-effects against structural conditions of educational hypogamy rise

- *Level effect* (from woman's point of view)
  - homogamy remains desirable as a norm among tertiary educated women (they look for a husband with the same education level)

- *Opportunity and benefit effect* (from man's point of view)
  - tertiary educated men have higher opportunities for homogamy marriage
  - tertiary educated women - high occupational status, high income
  - women's higher earnings prospects at a time when dual-income families have become the norm

- These two counter-effects are not sufficient to compensate for the increase of educational hypogamy

- But they mean an increase AEH (maximally maintained)

AEH by educational levels

- Is there one absolute educational homogamy?
  - or are there more homogamies?

- Tertiary homogamy is "deliberate" homogamy
  - given by partners' preferences

- Lower educational homogamy is structural homogamy
  - while the most attractive candidates select among themselves the least attractive candidates rely on one another
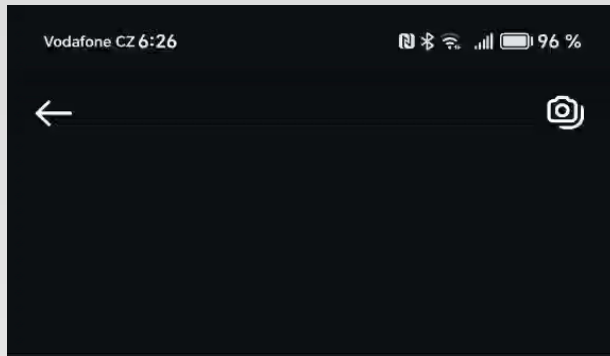 - the gap between preferences and possibilities is huge in the case of low education level candidates

AEH by educational levels (cont.)

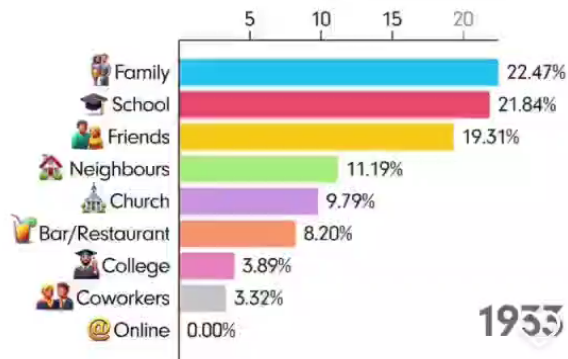Figure 3. Trends in absolute educational homogamy by education levels between 1990 and 2016 (%)
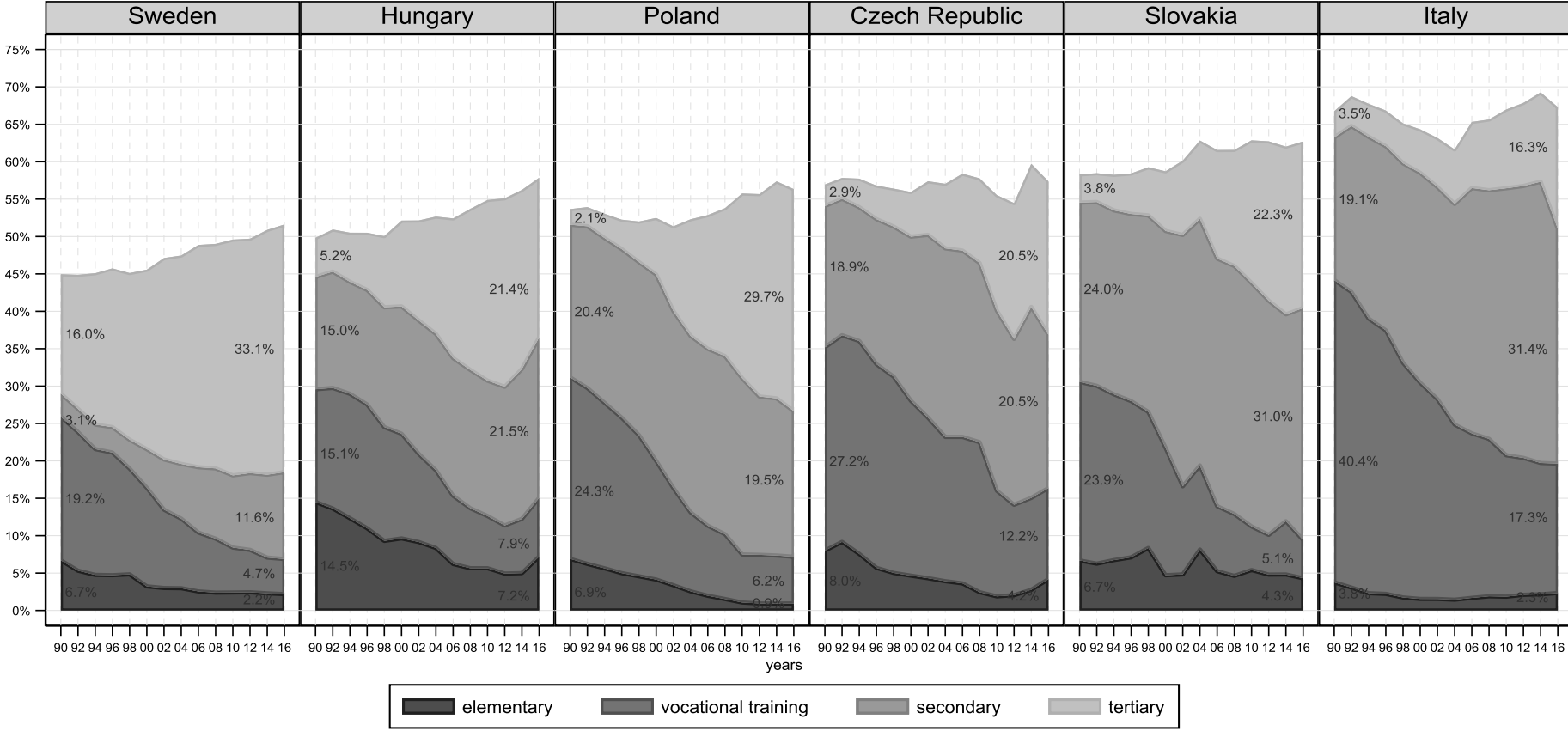
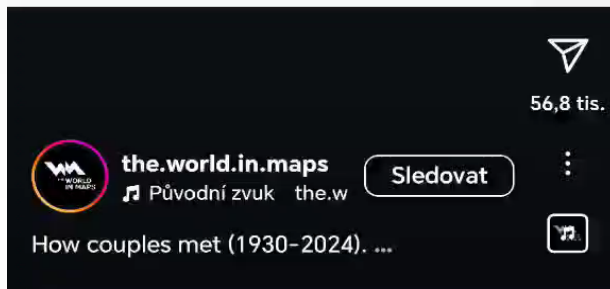# Trends in partners' meeting: 1930 - 2004

How couples met (1930-2024)

- Traditional dating
  - structural bariers
  - friends, school…
  - limited assortative mating

- Virtual dating
  - no structural barriers
  - more preferences and similarities
  - various pool of potential partners
  - more assortative matting???
  - lower homogamy???

REH (relative educational homogamy)

- the assumption that educational differences between groups of men and women define their chances in the marriage market

- REH is defined as educational assortative mating

- REH indicates the chances to enter into a homogamous marriage
  - regardless of what (unequal) proportion of men and women are in the marriage market

- if unequal chances do not exist = perfect heterogamy.

- REH empirically indicated by odds ratios in contingency tables.

REH - factors

- the size of social and educational reproduction
  - higher social mobility implies lower relative educational homogamy

- degree of modernisation and industrialization
  - developed countries have lower relative educational homogamy

- degree of political democracy
  - more politically developed countries show lower REH

- dominant religion
  - Protestant countries have lower REH than Catholic countries

- welfare state régime
  - REH is lower in social democratic regimes than in regimes with conservative social policies
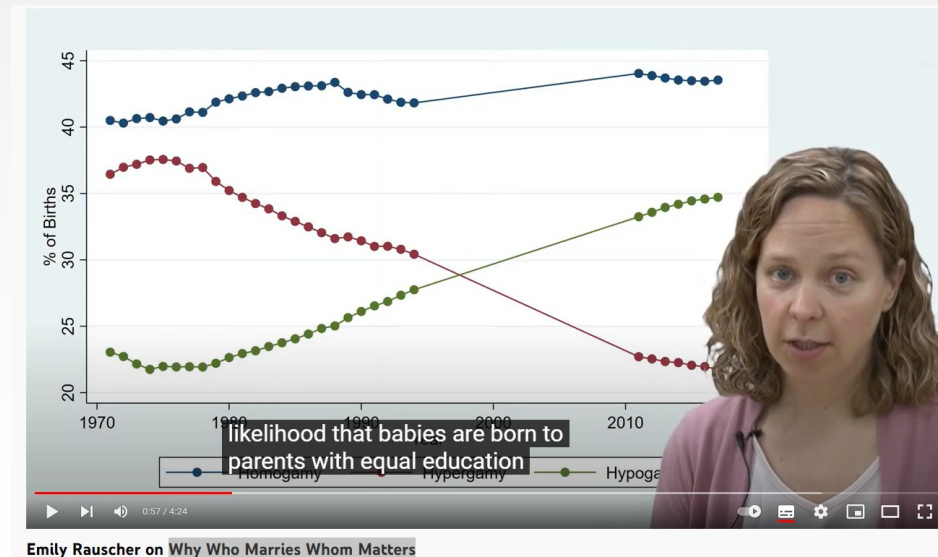
AEH or REH?

- It always depends on the focus of the research and the research question

- AEH is preferred when we are interested in the number of marriages in which the partners are similar in terms of social characteristics (pattern of pairing, its distribution in the population, size of the social group constituted on the basis of the marriages)

- REH is preferred when we are interested in the inequality of the chances of entering into a particular type of marriage

- However, since AEH incorporates the REH, it is standard in homogamy research to use both concepts together.

Relative edu homogamy - trends in time

Figure 4. Trends in relative educational homogamy by educational levels between 1990 and 2016

Why Who Marries Whom Matters

- Example of infant health

- Video
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PBe8Xmp1os

Emily Rauscher on Why Who Marries Whom Matters

Homogamy table – what can be computed?

	Men's ed. level	Women's educational level				
		EL	VC	HS	TE	Total
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