

Text Analysis and International Organizations

Slava Jankin Mikhaylov
University of Essex

The General Debate of the United Nations



“Speeches at the General Debate are interesting because they flesh out national policies; what states think. It is the one place where states can speak their mind – it reflects the issues that states consider to be most important. In this way, the speeches in the General Debate are unique... The [GD] speeches are one of the least coordinated parts of the [EU’s] UN activities.”

–Deputy Head of Finnish Mission to the UN

“coordination for the General Debate does not happen; governments do not want other states looking over their speeches ... these speeches are the most sovereign thing that a country does as a member of the UN.”

–Spokesperson for the German Mission to the UN

“Each country does it [the GD statement] its own way... this is a national speech; there is no coordination with other countries.”

–Diplomat for the Portuguese Mission to the UN

“the September speech outlines the country’s vision of the world, and how you think the challenges of the world should be addressed... so it’s not cheap talk, in the speech we outline our priorities for the year to come; we outline our positions; then you cannot really go against them.”

–Diplomat for the Slovenian Mission to the UN

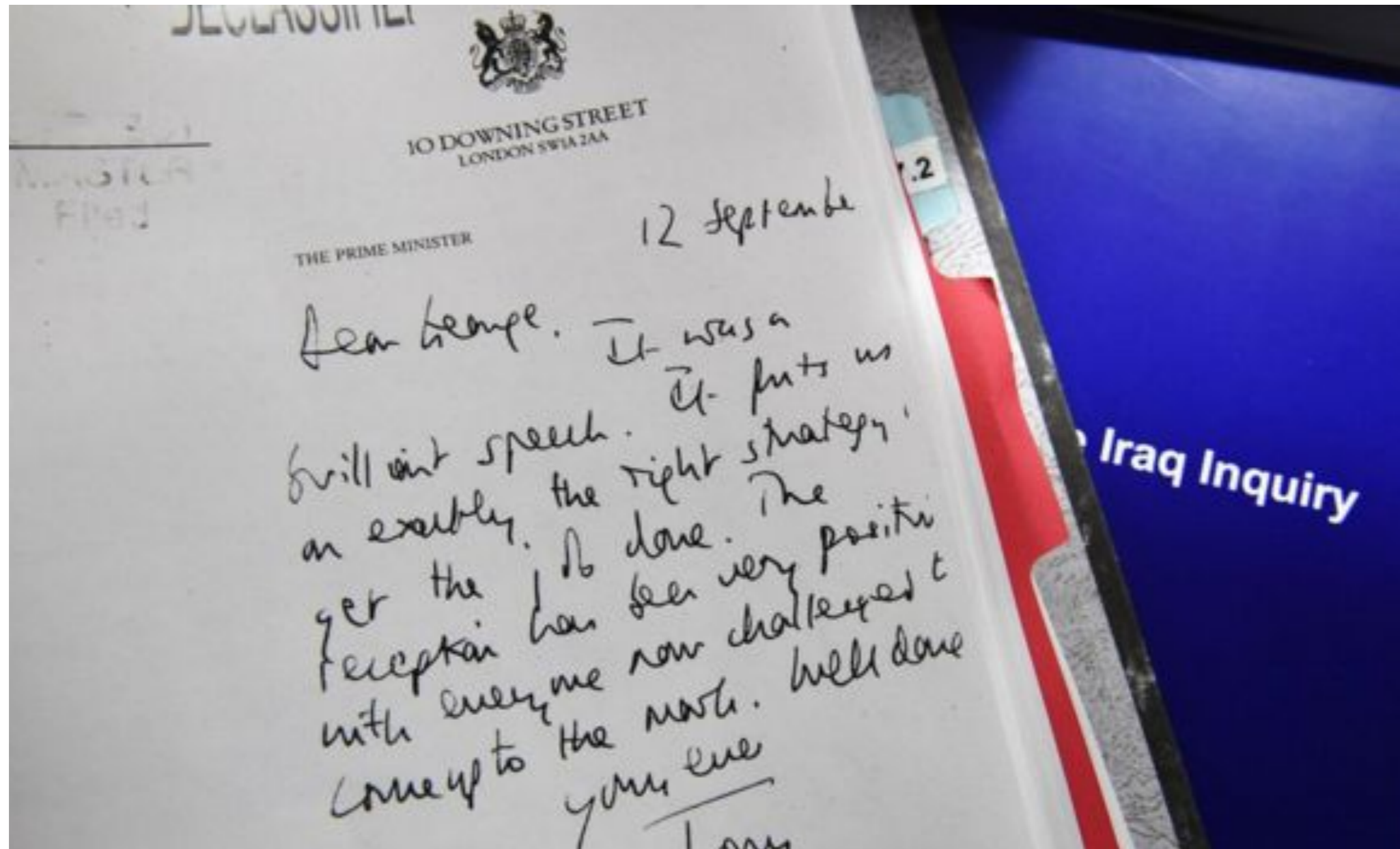
“the General Debate is important because it officially sums up the position of Italy on the most important things in international politics in that particular year... the speech is a summary of a country’s foreign policy in a given year.”

–Diplomat for the Italian Mission to the UN

UNGD 2002: Strategy and politics



The Case for War in Iraq



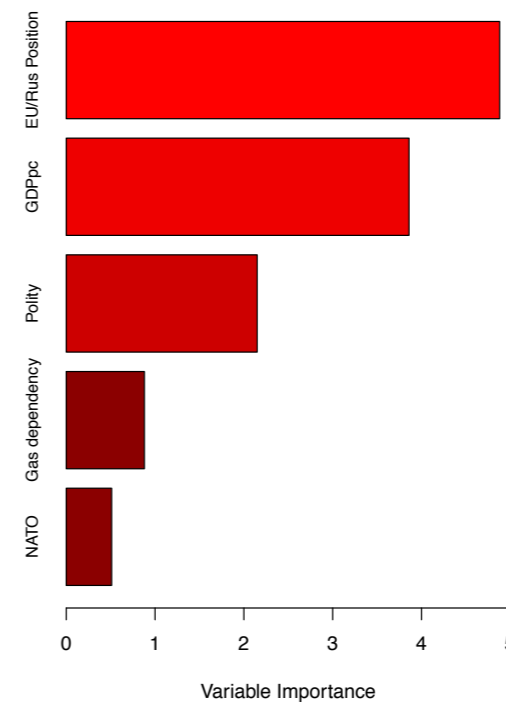
More than talk?



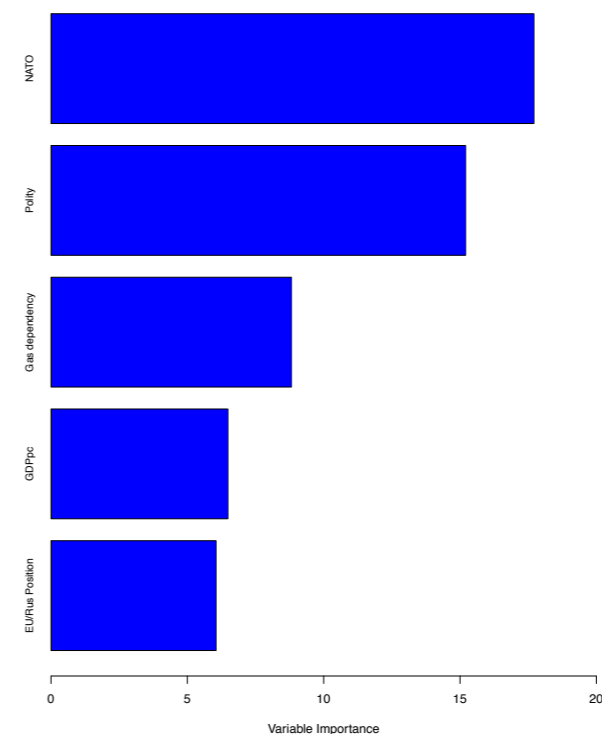
Ukraine Territorial Integrity

- Vote on Resolution 68/262; Sanctions
- Random forest estimation
- Out-of-bag test error rate 7.78%
- Variable importance - aggregate improvement in the optimization objective for each predictor.

Resolution 68/262



Sanctions



UN General Debate Corpus

UNGDC

- All speeches from 1970 to 2017.
- United Nations Dag Hammarskjold Library: English version.
- 7,897 statements.
- UN membership: 70 (1970) and 193 (2017).
- On average 123 sentences, 945 unique forms, and 3,248 individual words each.

The meeting was suspended at 11.25 a.m. and resumed at 11.50 a.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. GEORGE BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA













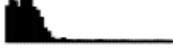













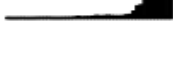

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the United States of America.

Mr. George Bush, President of the United States of America, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the United States of America, His Excellency Mr. George Bush, and to invite him to address the General Assembly.

President BUSH: I am honoured to address the General Assembly today at the beginning of its forty-fourth session. I should like to congratulate Joseph Garba of Nigeria, a distinguished diplomat, on his election as President of this session of the General Assembly, and I wish him success in his presidency.

I feel a great personal pleasure on this occasion, for this is a homecoming

topic	1970—2014	top words	proportion of corpus	
Topic 5		international nations united economic development efforts countries peace world security cooperation general states community assembly		12.1%
Topic 8		international organization charter states peoples general time countries community situation principles fact assembly make respect		7.4%
Topic 6		nations united world time years war today year people make future great work past ago		5.7%
Topic 2		united nations rights human security council states international nuclear weapons member organization treaty important work		5.5%
Topic 17		issues international nations assembly peace community global organization security process continue major remain remains states		5.5%
Topic 10		south africa international nations united people countries economic namibia independence world peace session apartheid situation		5.2%
Topic 20		nations united countries world session government assembly conference co-operation economic general delegation international africa development		4.9%
Topic 26		co-operation countries efforts international community problems political hope negotiations peace conference progress government parties development		4.9%
Topic 12		world political international economic system order interests relations national common nations power social development problems		4.4%
Topic 11		countries economic developing development world trade developed international resources cent growth economy financial debt food		4.0%
Topic 13		arab peace international security israel palestinian people region states resolutions israeli east middle iraq council		3.9%
Topic 4		human people world rights peace freedom life country today justice nations peoples democracy children dignity		3.5%
Topic 15		development poverty world human countries united global cooperation international general commitment council terrorism assembly security		3.5%
Topic 14		development global climate change goals security agenda support crisis energy efforts poverty commitment food world		3.4%

Simple Insights for Policy Making

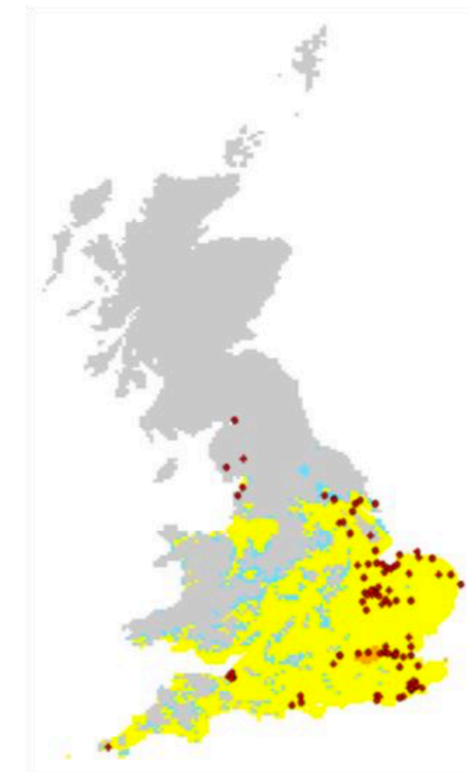
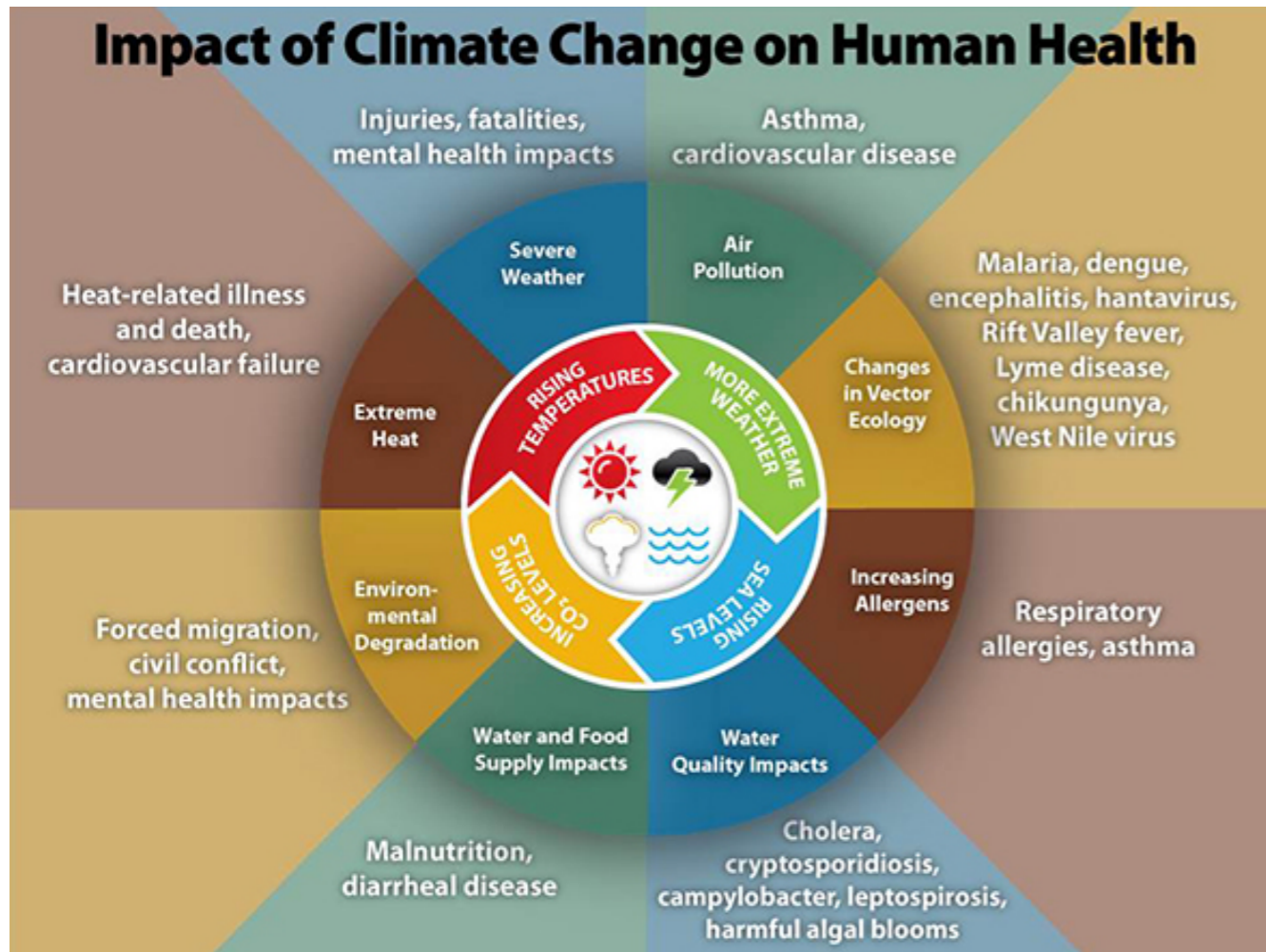


Figure 8.4. Areas of the UK where the climate could support vivax malaria. Shading represents the number of months where vivax malaria could be transmitted (grey =0, blue =1, yellow =2, orange =3). Red circles show malaria cases in the 19th Century. Based on the UKCIP for 1961-90.

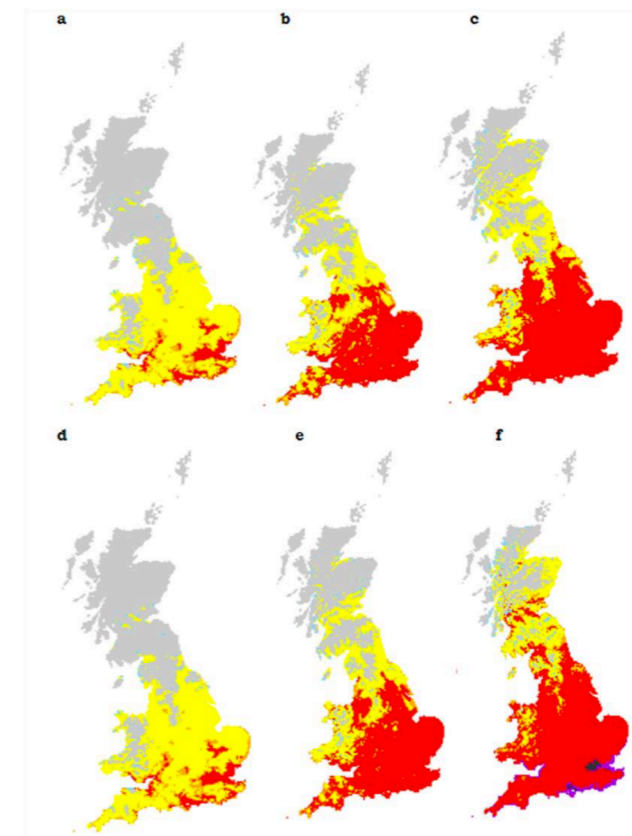
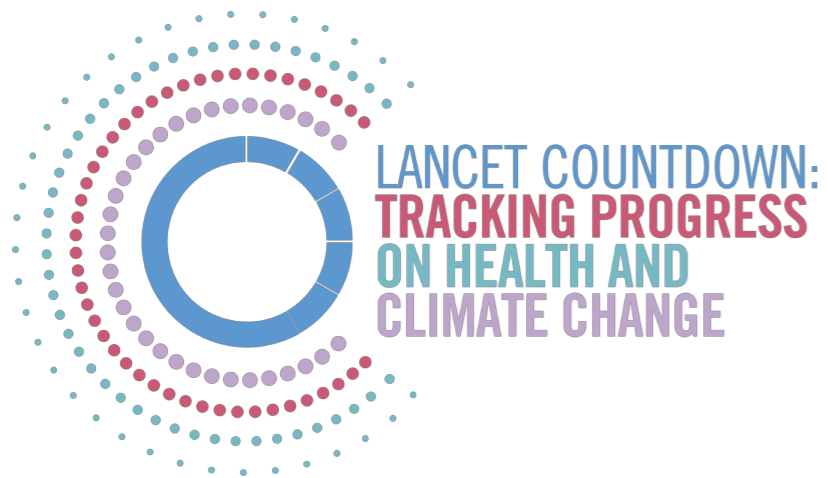
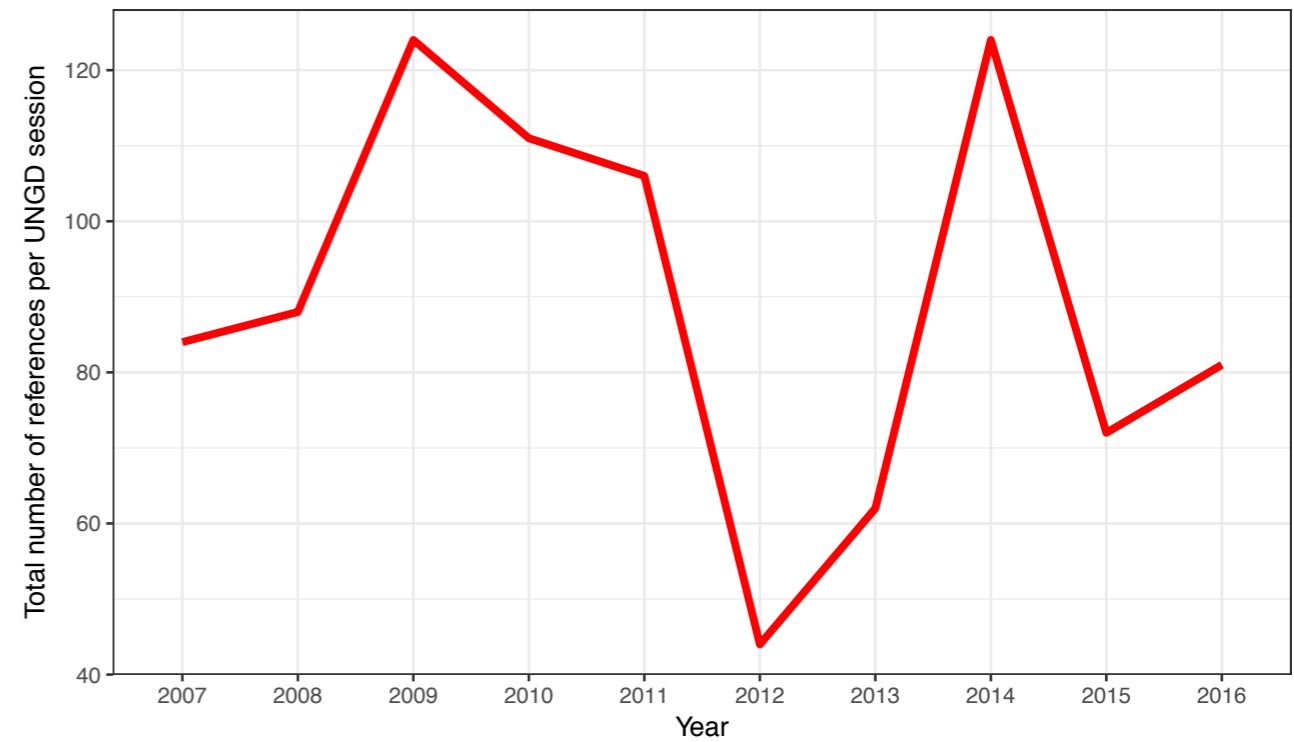


Figure 8.5. Projected future risk maps for vivax malarial transmission under a medium-low (a, b and c) and a medium-high (d, e and f) climate change scenario. Maps show risk for the period 2020s (a and d), 2050s (b and e) and 2080s (c and f). Based on UKCIP02.

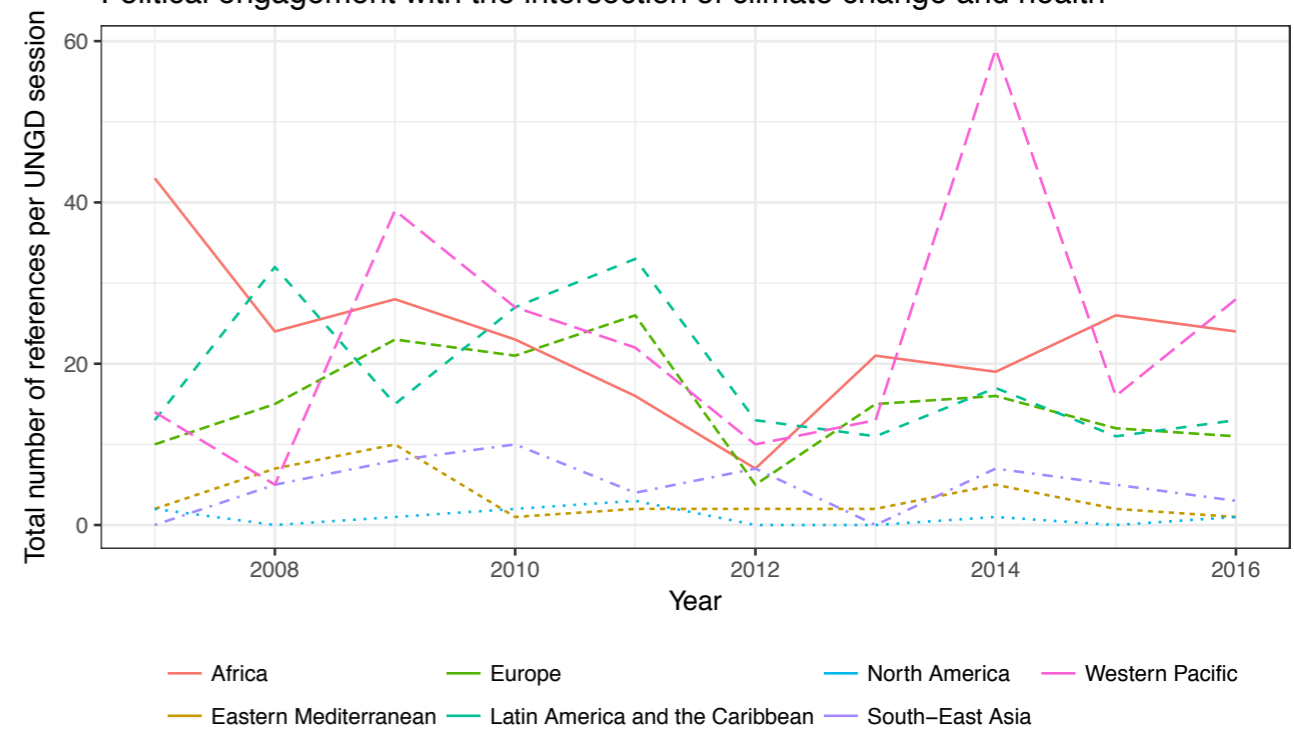




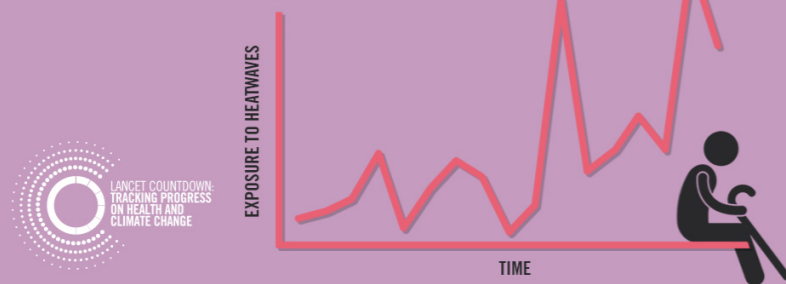
Political engagement with the intersection of climate change and health



Political engagement with the intersection of climate change and health



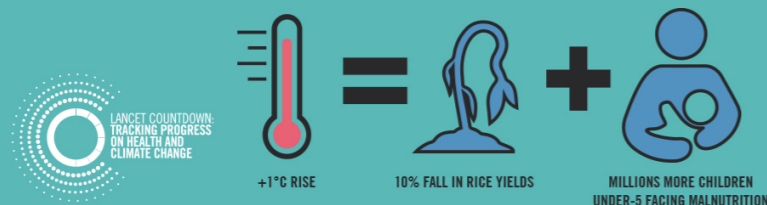
175 million people exposed to heatwaves in 2015. A record high, harming the health of millions.



1.6 million deaths due to air pollution in 2015 across China, India, Japan and Indonesia. Tackling climate change will slash these numbers.



Every 1°C rise in global temperature sees global rice yields fall 10%. Millions more children under 5 facing malnutrition as a result of unmitigated climate change.



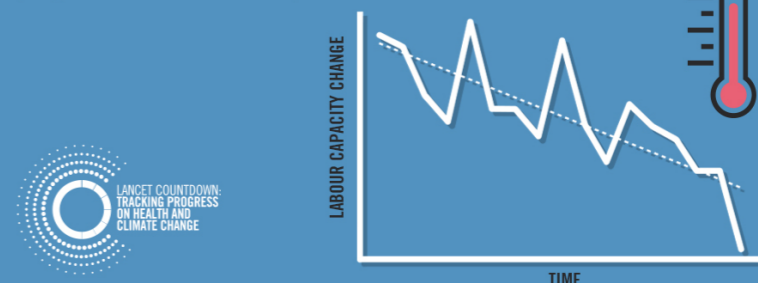
11% global increase in the vectorial capacity for transmission of Dengue Fever from just 1 type of mosquito over the past 60 years.



Global coal use peaked in 2015. New planned coal power capacity has halved. UK, Canada, France and others phasing it out altogether.



Staggering 5.3% fall in rural labour productivity since 2000. Days when heat and humidity make physical labour impossible are on the rise.

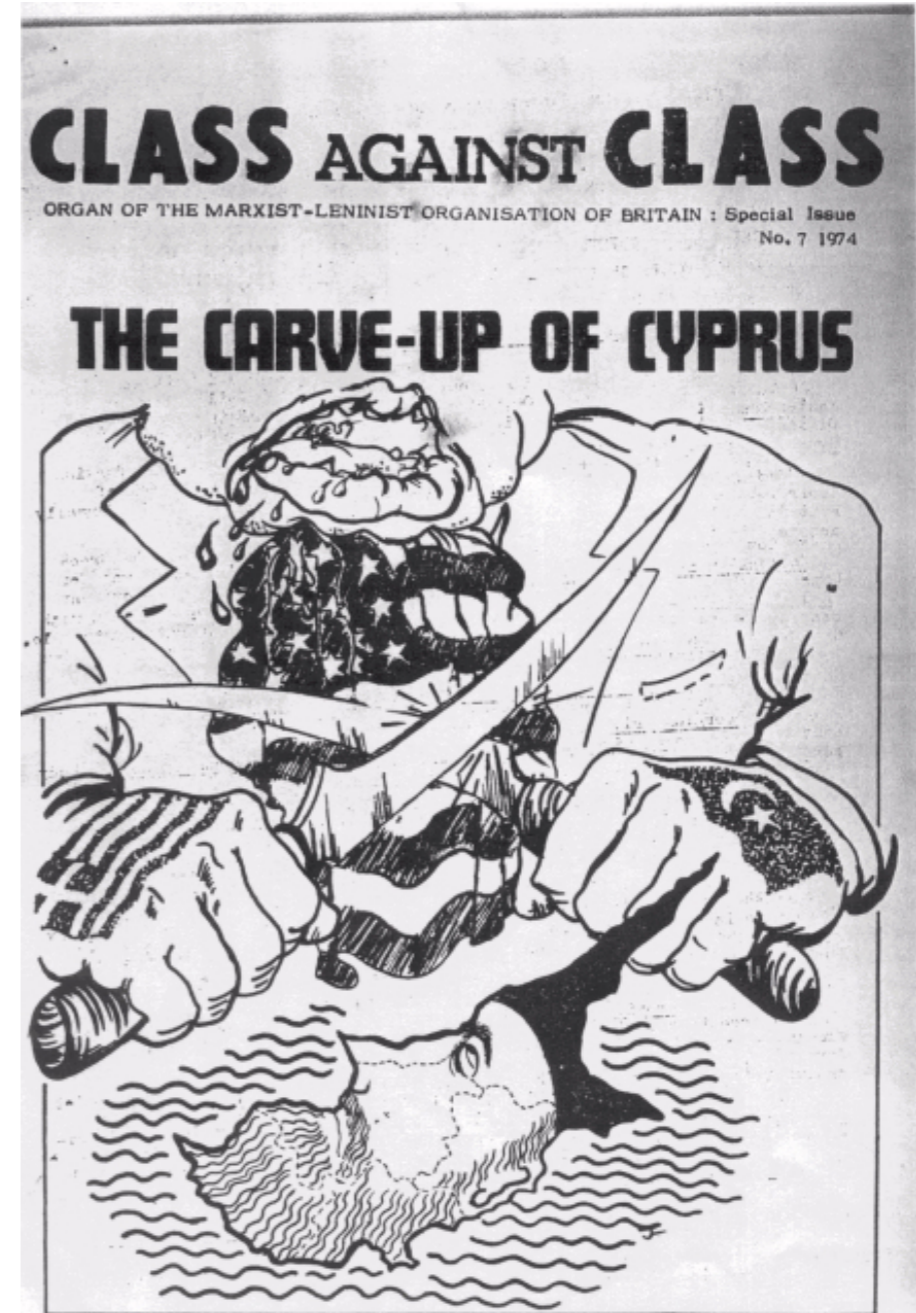


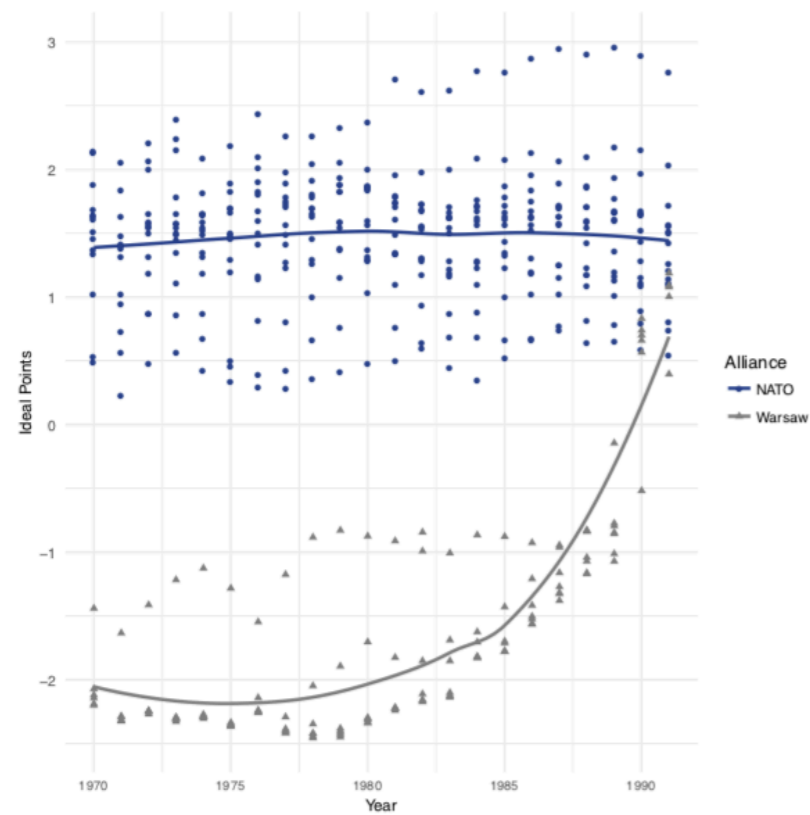
Disunited Nations?

**A Multiplex Network Approach to Detecting
Preference Affinity Blocs using Texts and Votes**

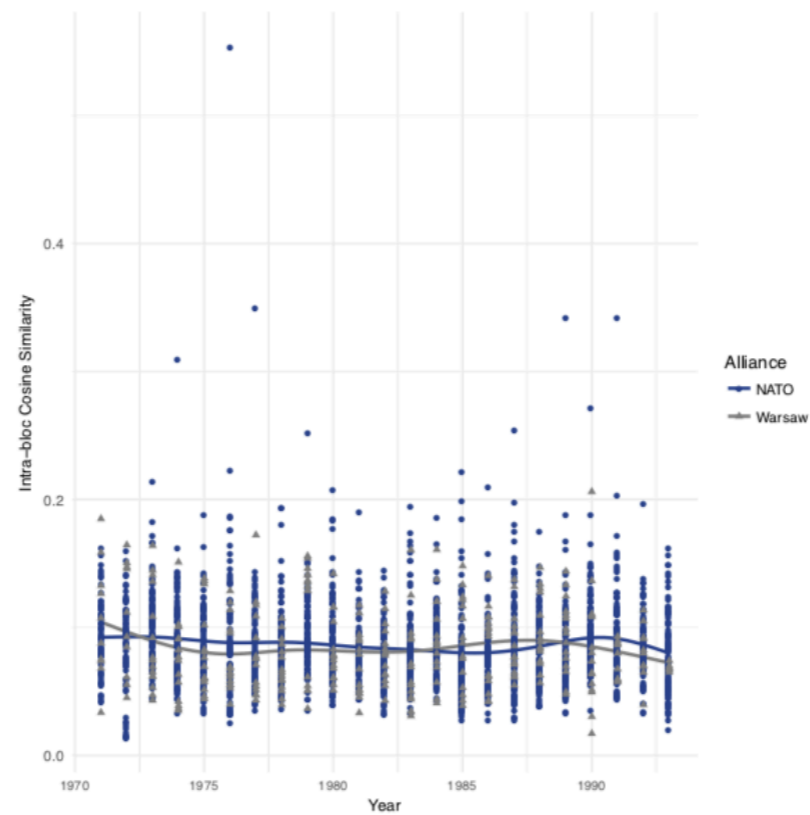
Best of friends

- **Greece:** *Two hours later, the Turkish troops were on the move again, sowing death and destruction, killing United Nations troops, bombing hospitals and schools. Repeated cease-fire calls by the Security Council went unheeded. Turkey even ignored the ceasefire proclaimed by its own Prime Minister on 16 August 1974.*
- **Turkey:** *I have not, however, finished correcting all the false allegations and baseless charges made by my colleague. I reserve the right to do so when we speak on this matter before the General Assembly. My Greek colleague's speech, unfortunately, shows the nature of the atmosphere in which the debate will take place on the future of the two communities, Turkish and Greek, in the island.*

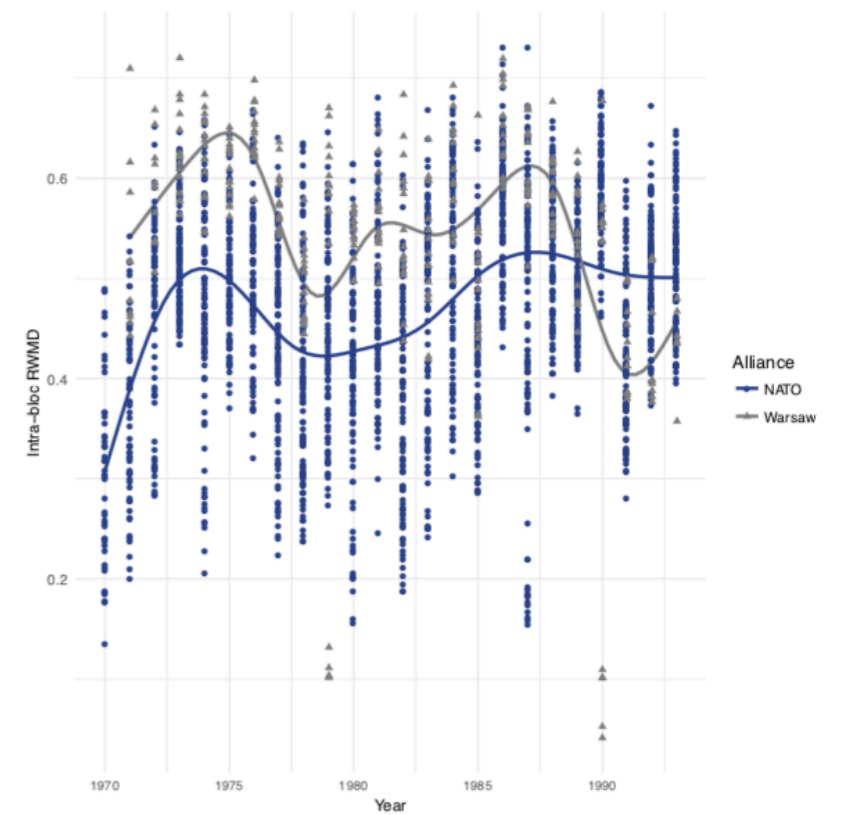




(a) Ideal Points

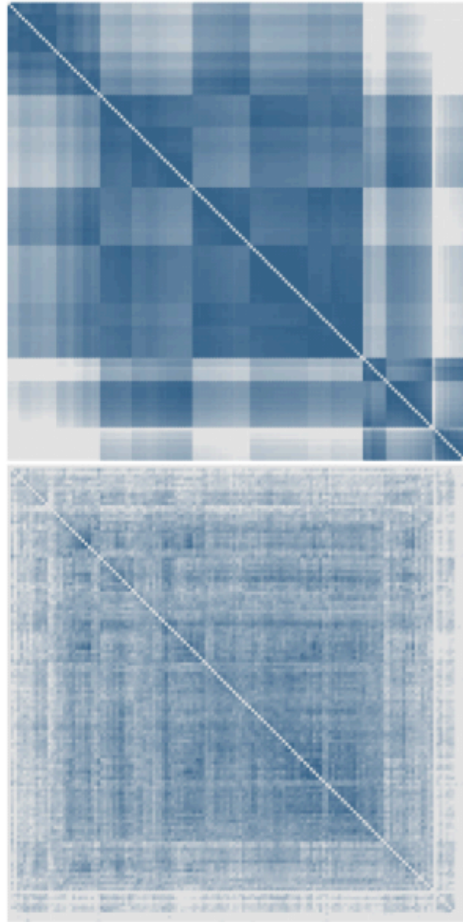


(b) Cosine Similarities



(c) RWMD Similarities

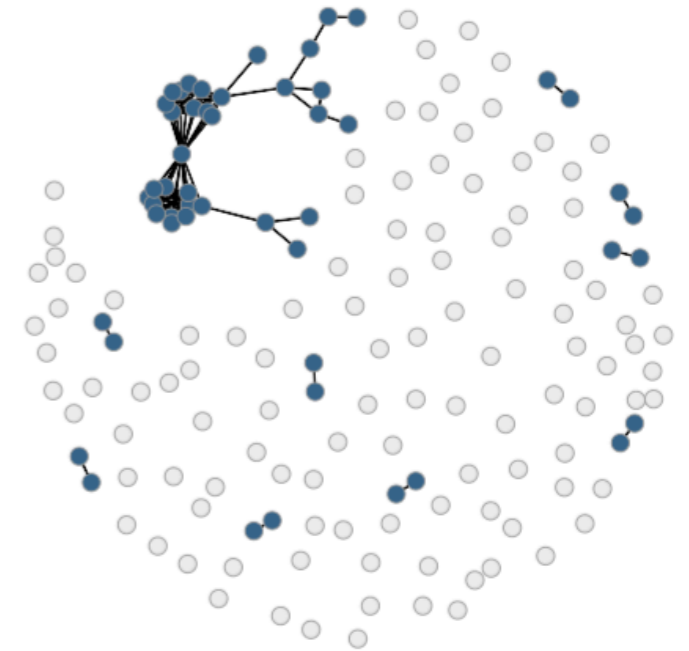
NATO-Warsaw Pact intra-block differences in votes and speeches



(a) Similarities



(b) One-Mode Clusters

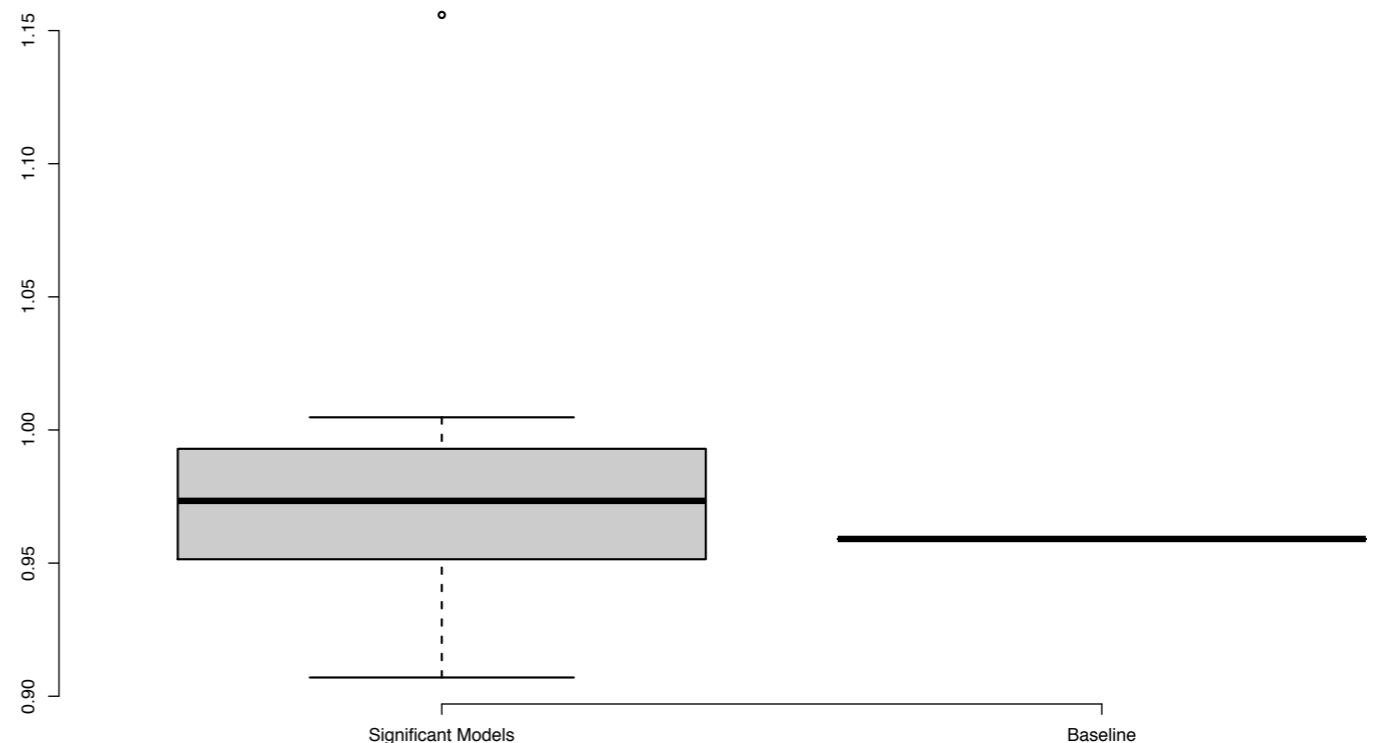


(c) Multiplex Clusters

Multiplex Affinity Bloc Detection

Violent conflict onset and affinity communities in the UNGA

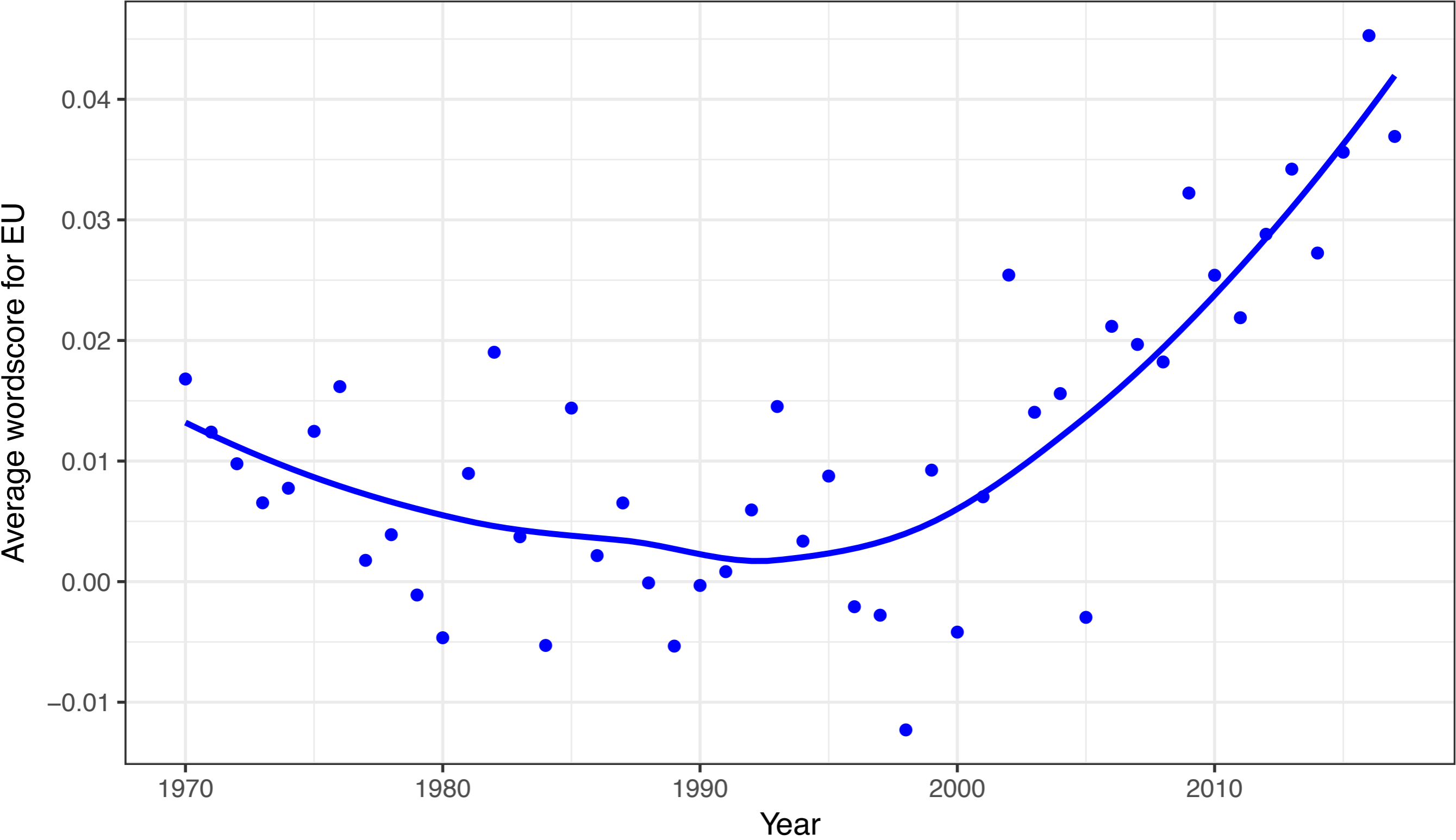
- Pauls, Scott D and Skyler J Cranmer. 2017. “Affinity communities in United Nations voting: Implications for democracy, cooperation, and conflict.” *Physica A: Statistical Mechanics and its Applications* 484:428–439.
- Out-of-sample predictive accuracy comparison multiplex vs vote-only.
- 20.5% increase in AUPRC



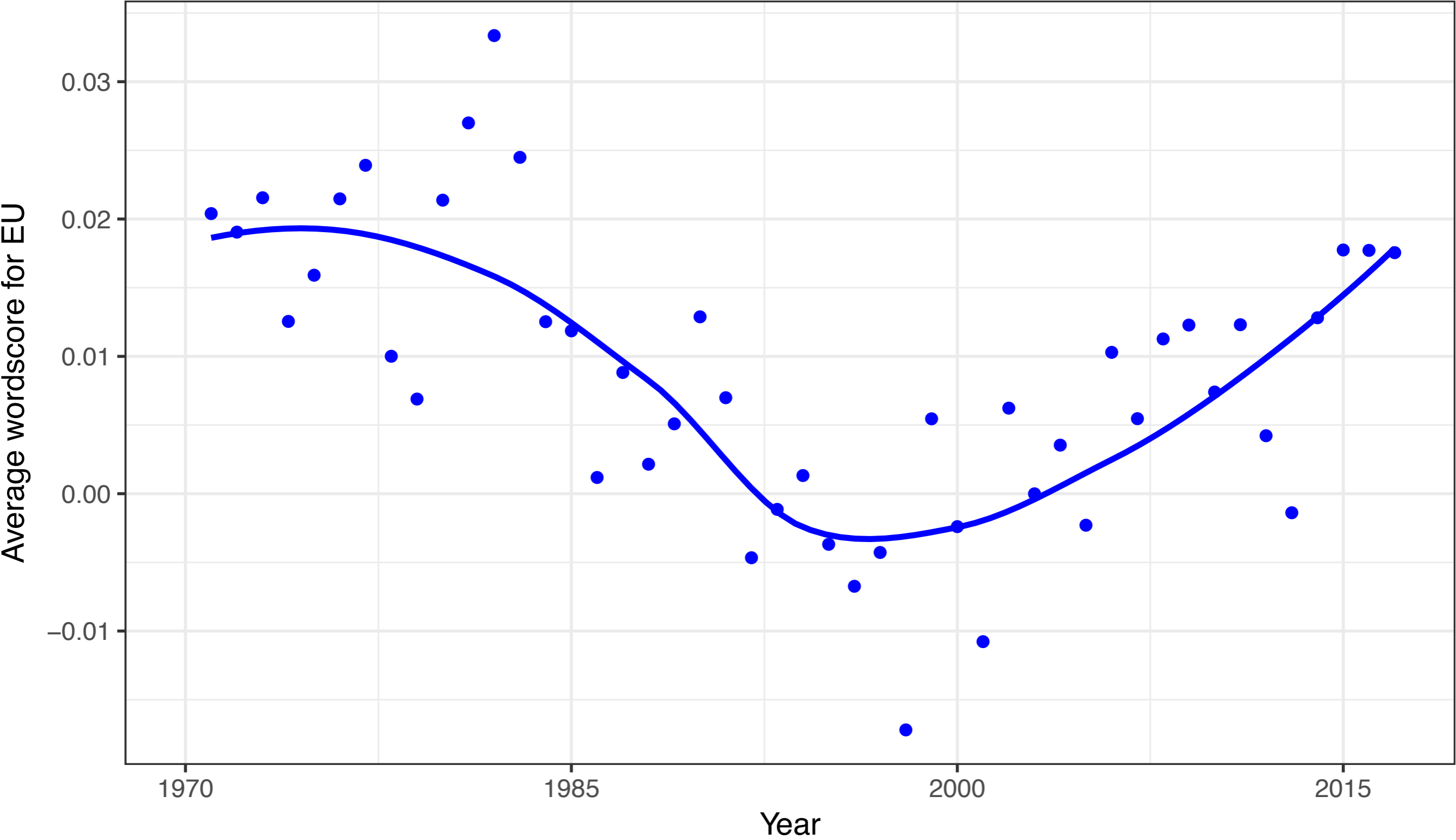
Socializing National Interests in Intergovernmental Organizations

**Evidence from the UN General Debate on the
European Union**

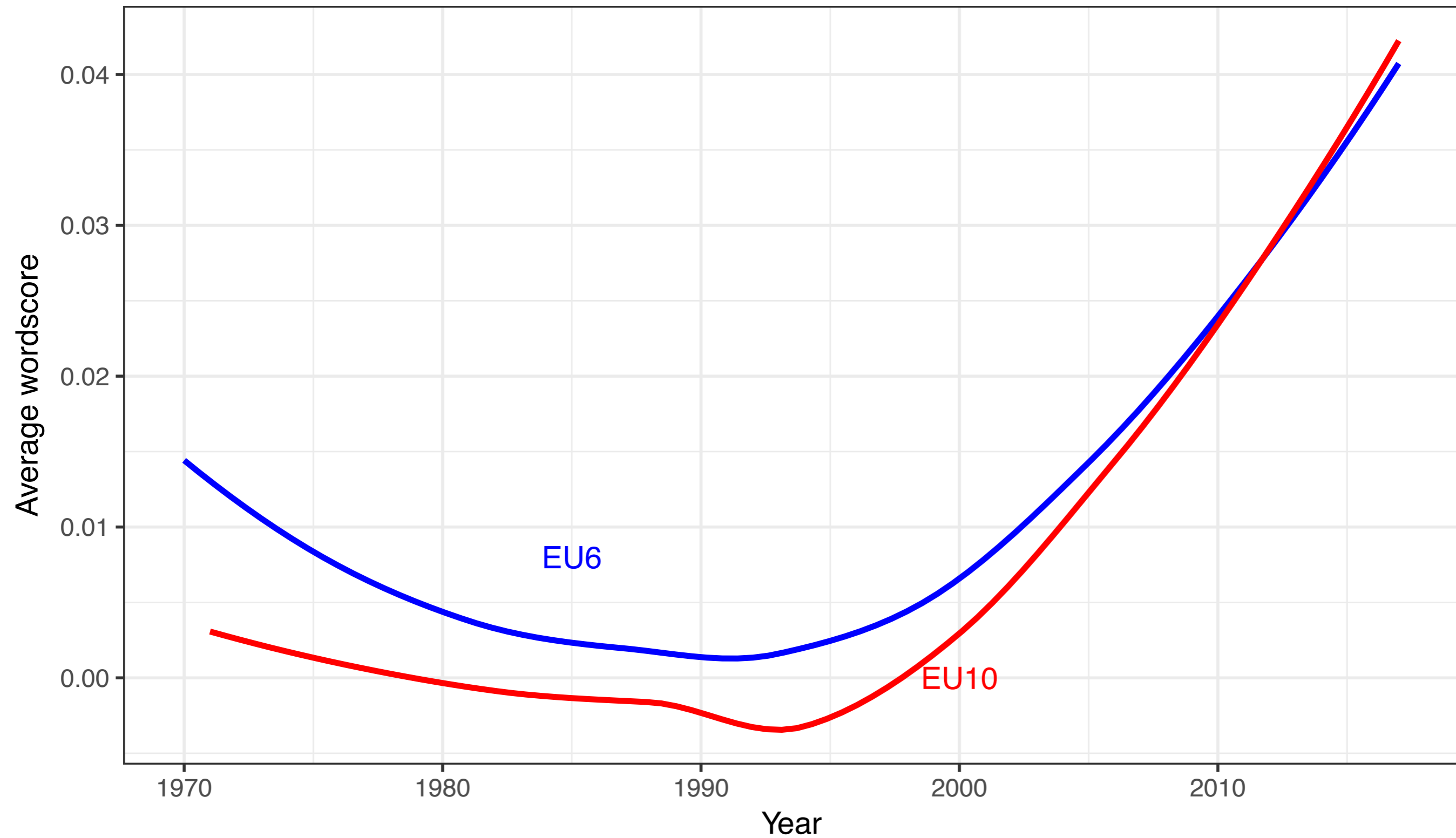
Presidency (+1) – USA (–1) dimension



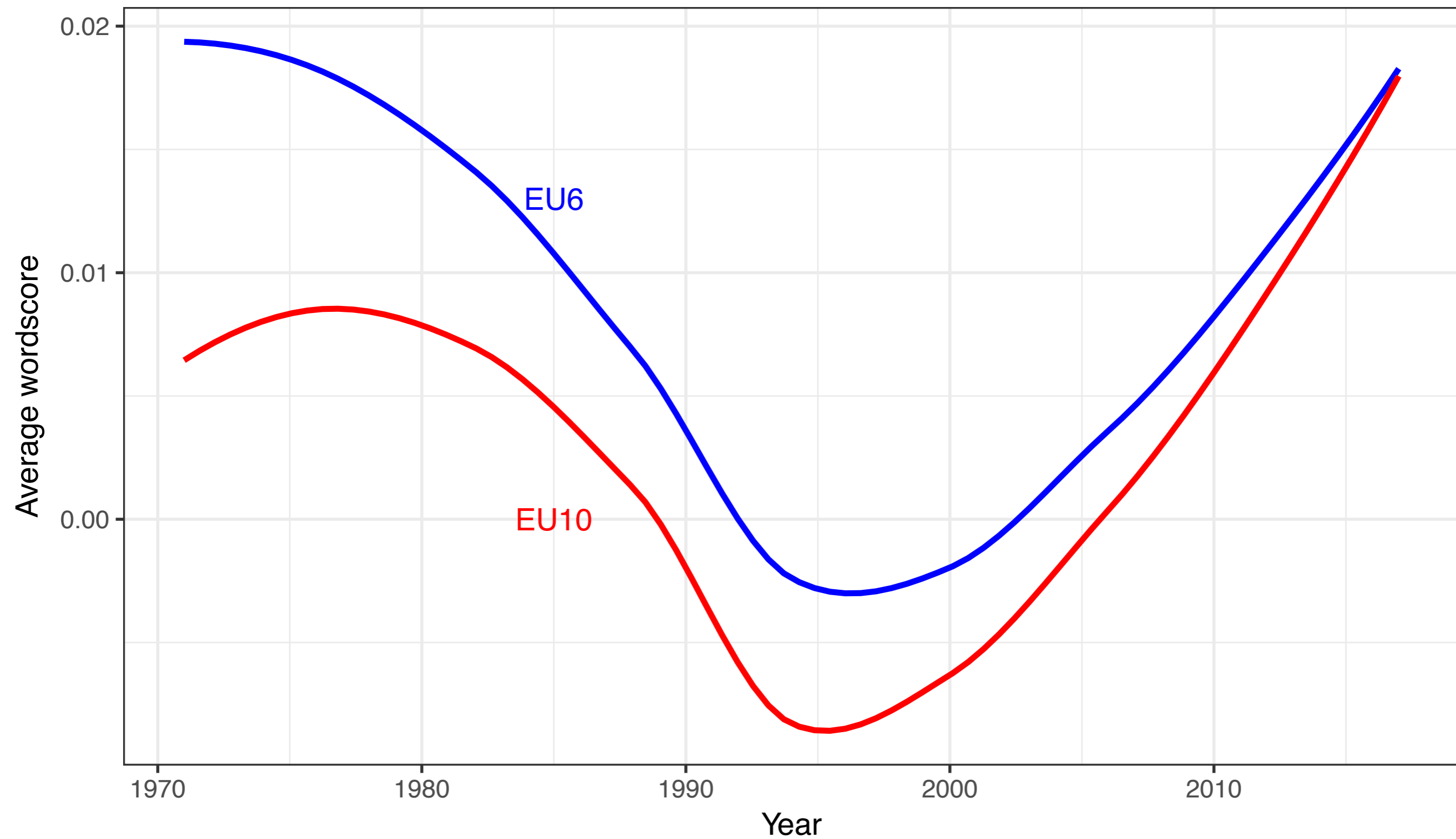
Presidency (+1) – RUS (–1) dimension



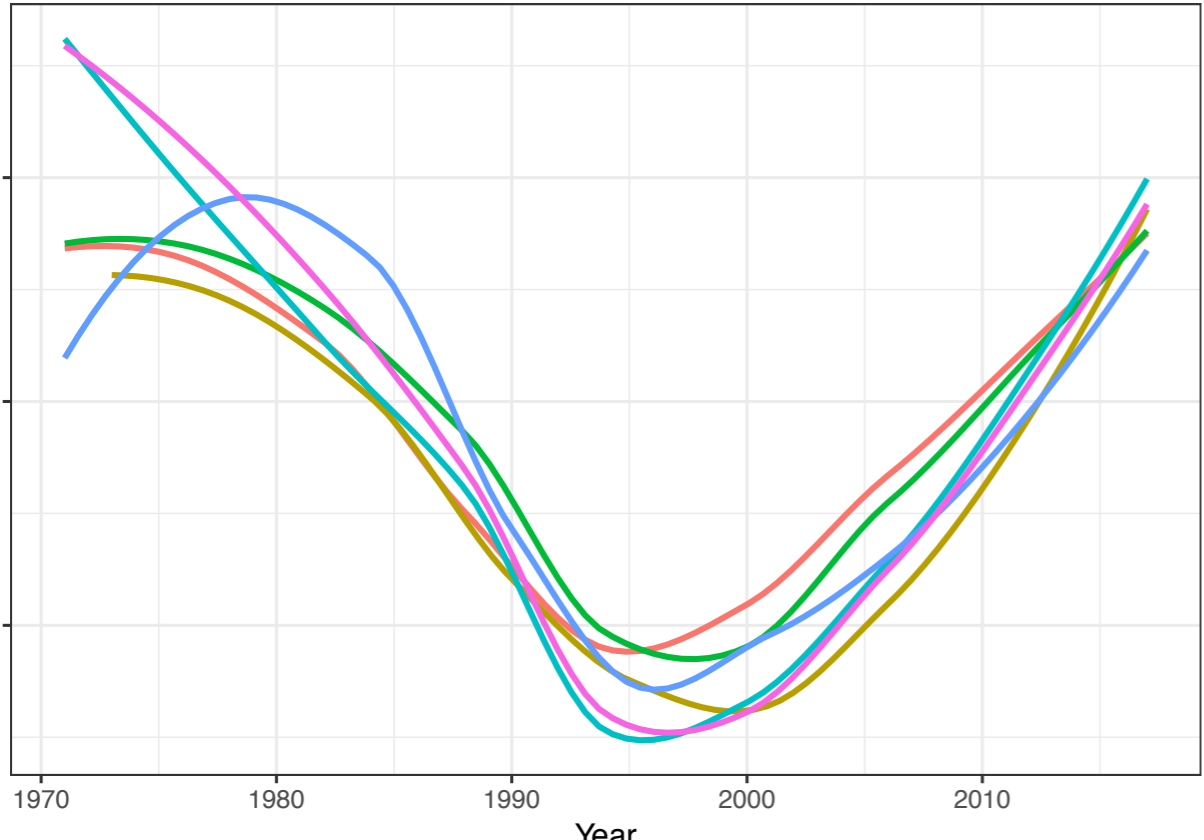
EU Presidency (+1) – USA (–1) dimension



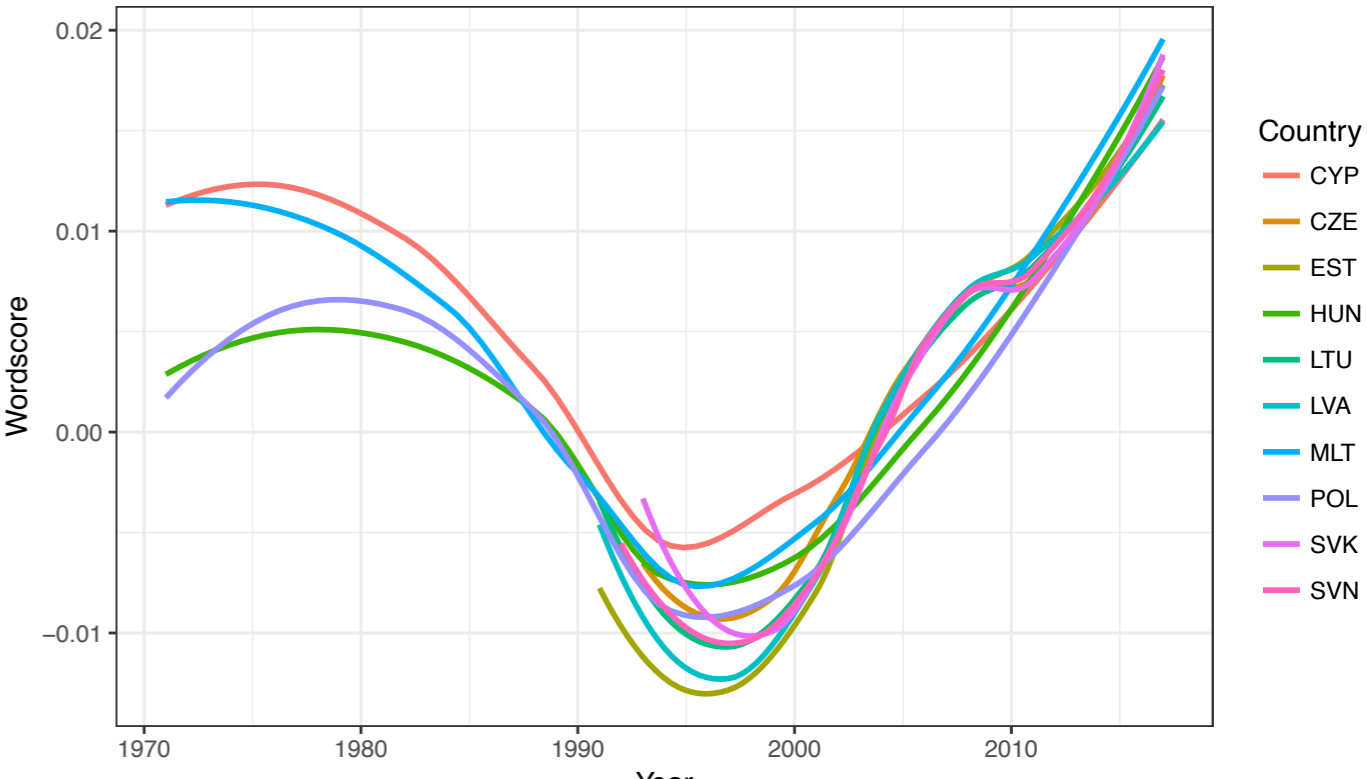
EU Presidency (+1) – Russia (–1) dimension



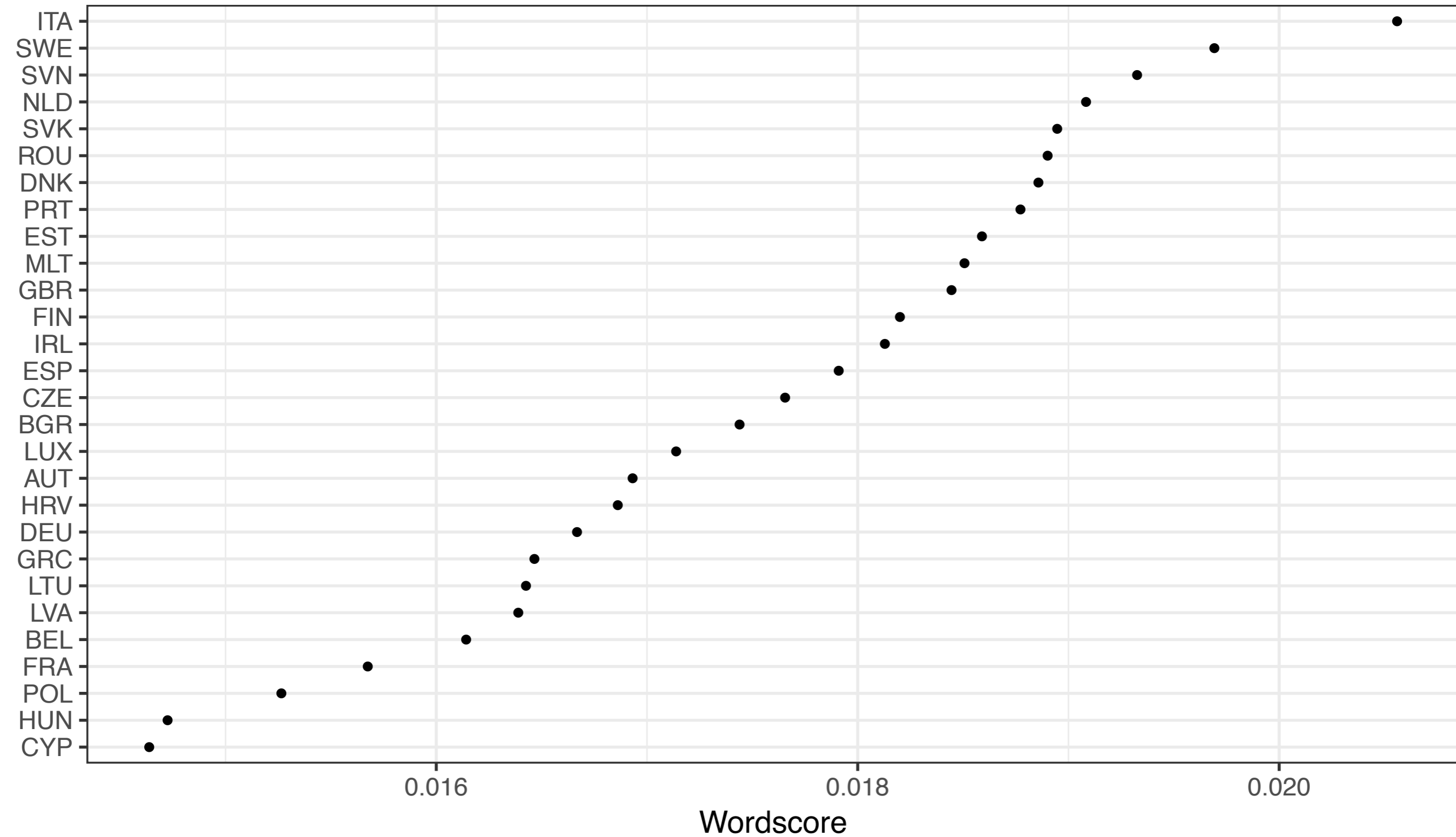
EU Presidency (+1) – Russia (–1) dimension: EU6



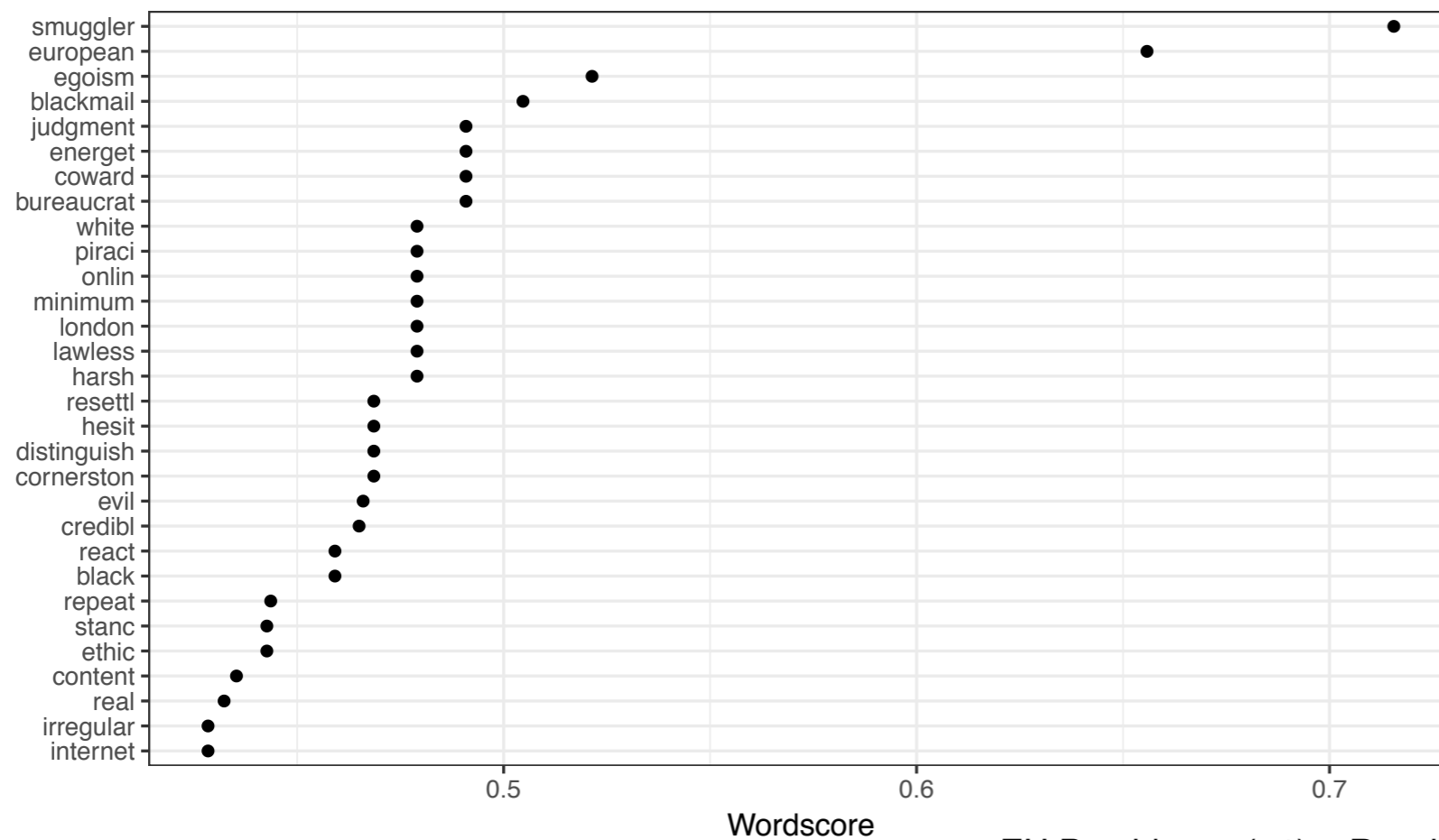
EU Presidency (+1) – Russia (–1) dimension: EU10



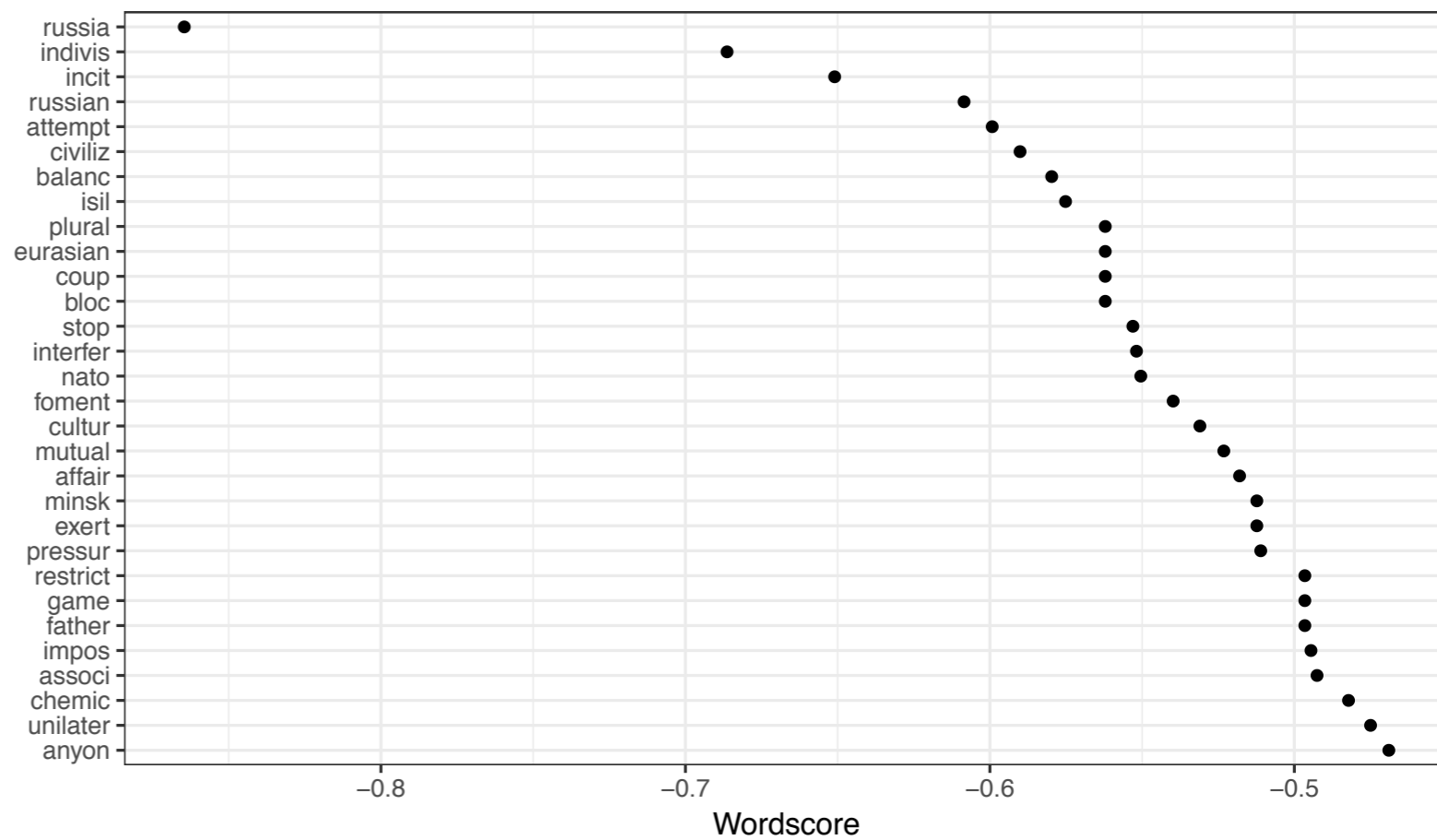
EU Presidency (+1) – Russia (–1): 2017



EU Presidency (+1) – Russia (–1): 2017



EU Presidency (+1) – Russia (–1): 2017



Thank you!

s.mikhaylov@essex.ac.uk