A Cross Cultural Comparison of Four Gnerations of American, Brazilian, French, and German Male and Female First Names Categorized According to Gender, Decade of Birth, and Geo-Location of Birth

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American Name Society – January 7, 2007

Design

- The names and corresponding information were acquired through the combination of the following resources:
  - Four Generation Genealogy Sheets of 7 Undergraduate Students
  - Four Generation Genealogy Sheets of several native Germans
  - The website *familysearch.org*
  - Families and Friends

Design

- A reduced list of non-redundant first names for both male and female names were produced with approximately 50 names per gender for each nation.
- Respondents rated each of these names on a set of seven adjective pairs:
  - Informal/formal
  - Old-fashioned/modern
  - Unfamiliar/familiar
  - Unusual/popular
  - Undistinguished/distinguished
  - Unattractive/attractive

Design

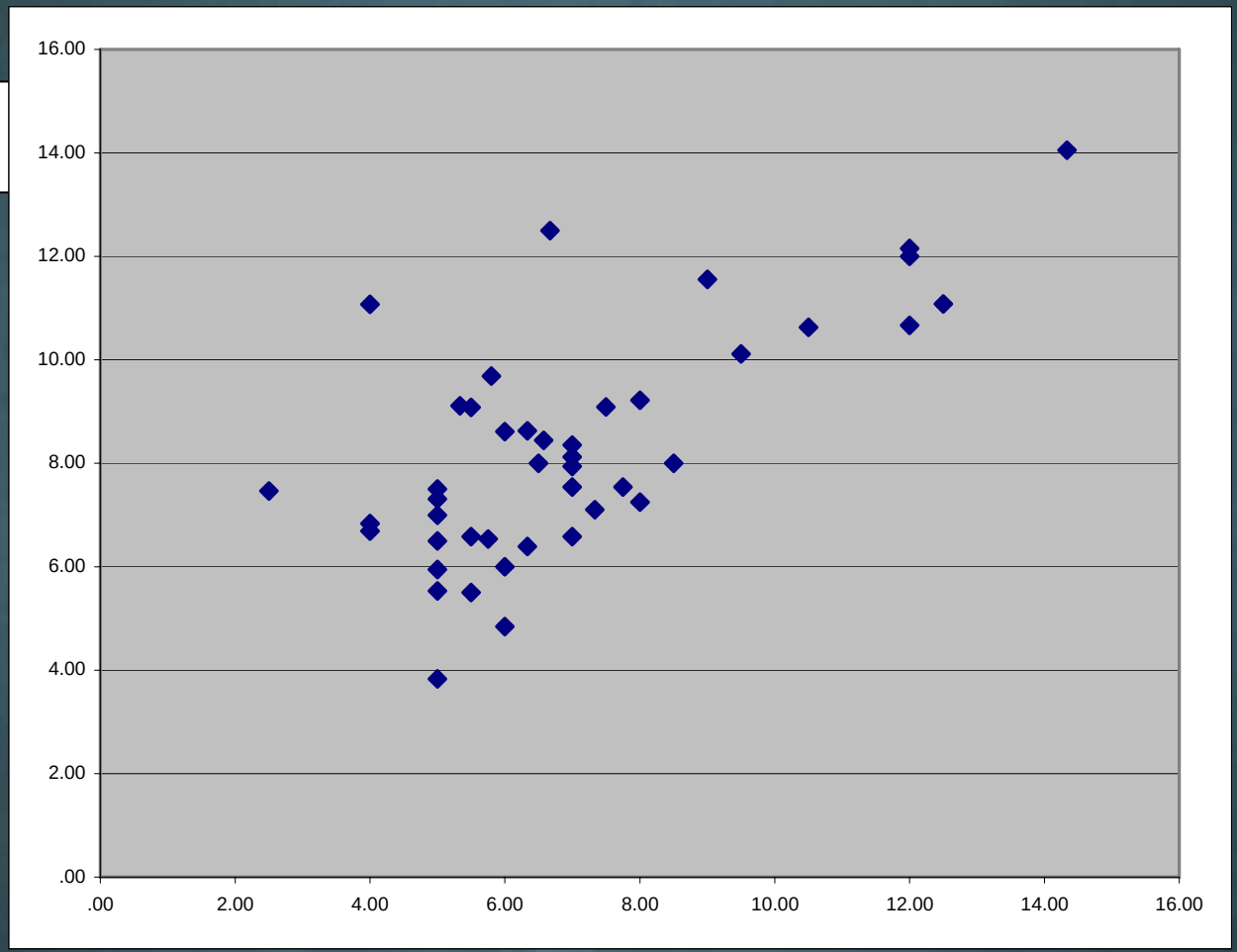
- Our previous intent was to determine the rater accuracy of identification of gender, location, and decade of birth.
- Our current intent is to find out how the subjective properties of given names are compared according to the gender, birth geo-location, and birth decade associated with each name for the four national groups (USA, Brazil, France, and Germany)

Scatter plot for the Correlation between Actual Decade and Judged Decade on the 45 Most Common American Women's Names

r = .689

r^2 = .475

Half Signal and Half Noise

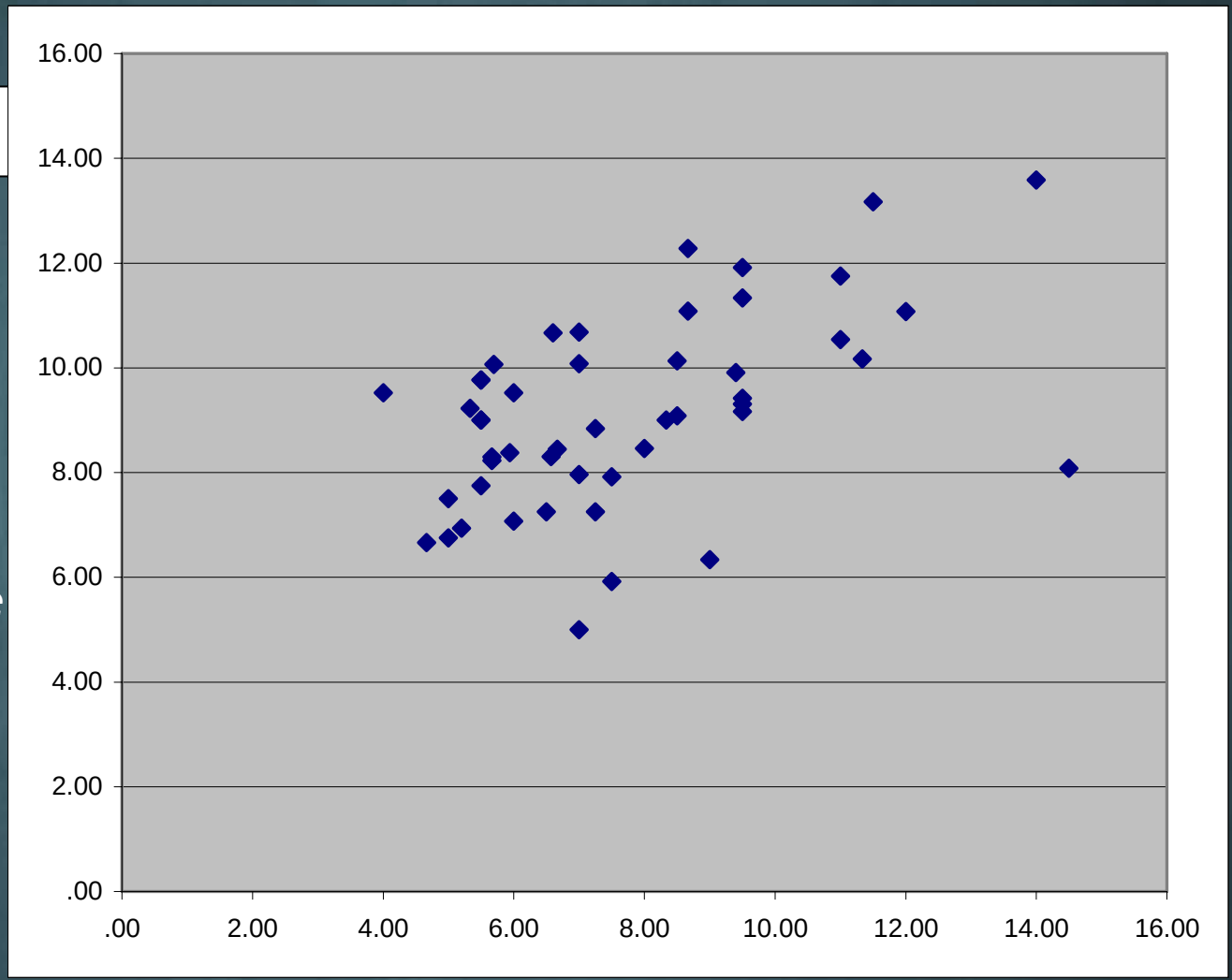


Scatter plot for the Correlation between Actual Decade and Judged Decade on the 48 Most Common Women's Names

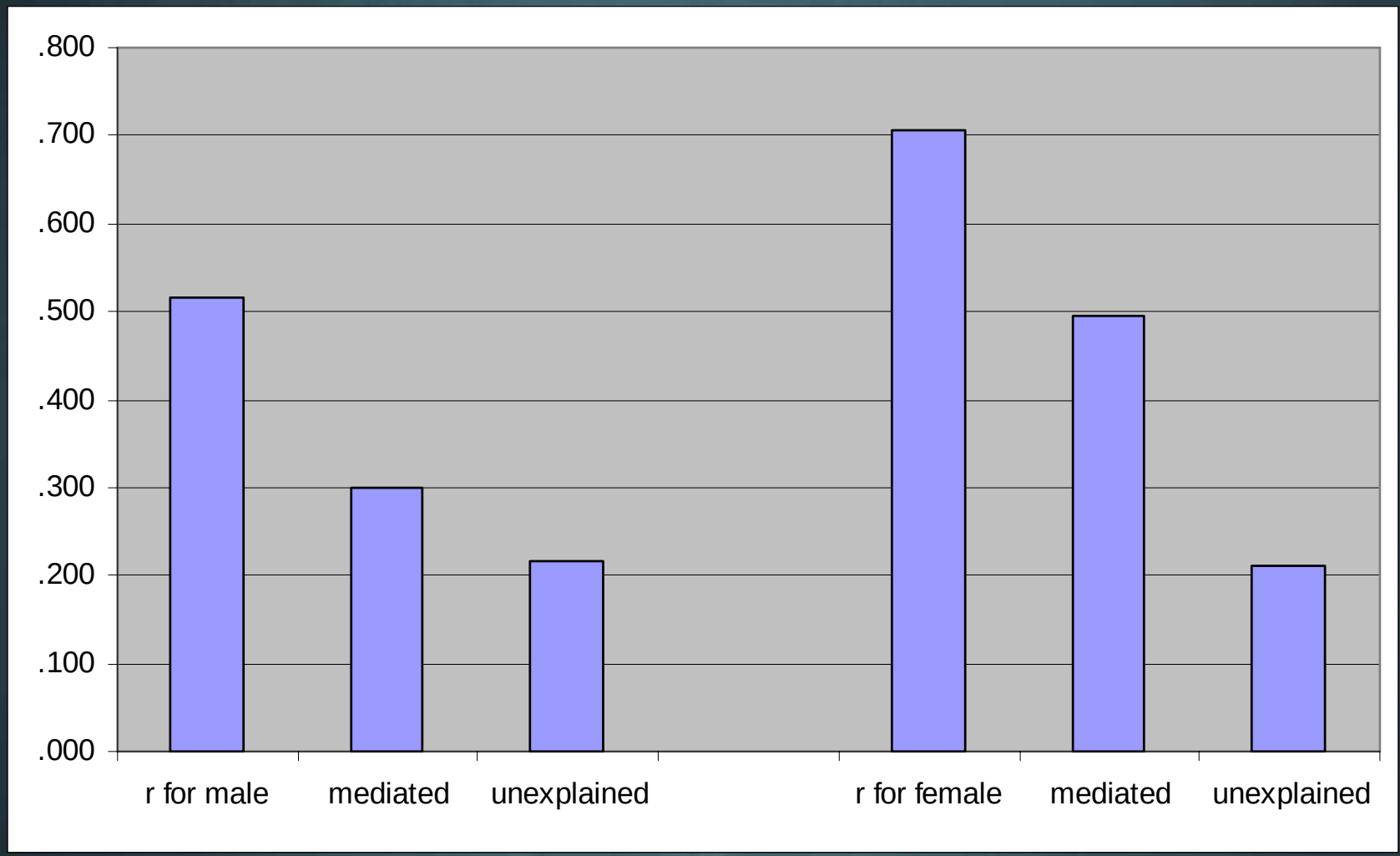
r = .515

r^2 = .265

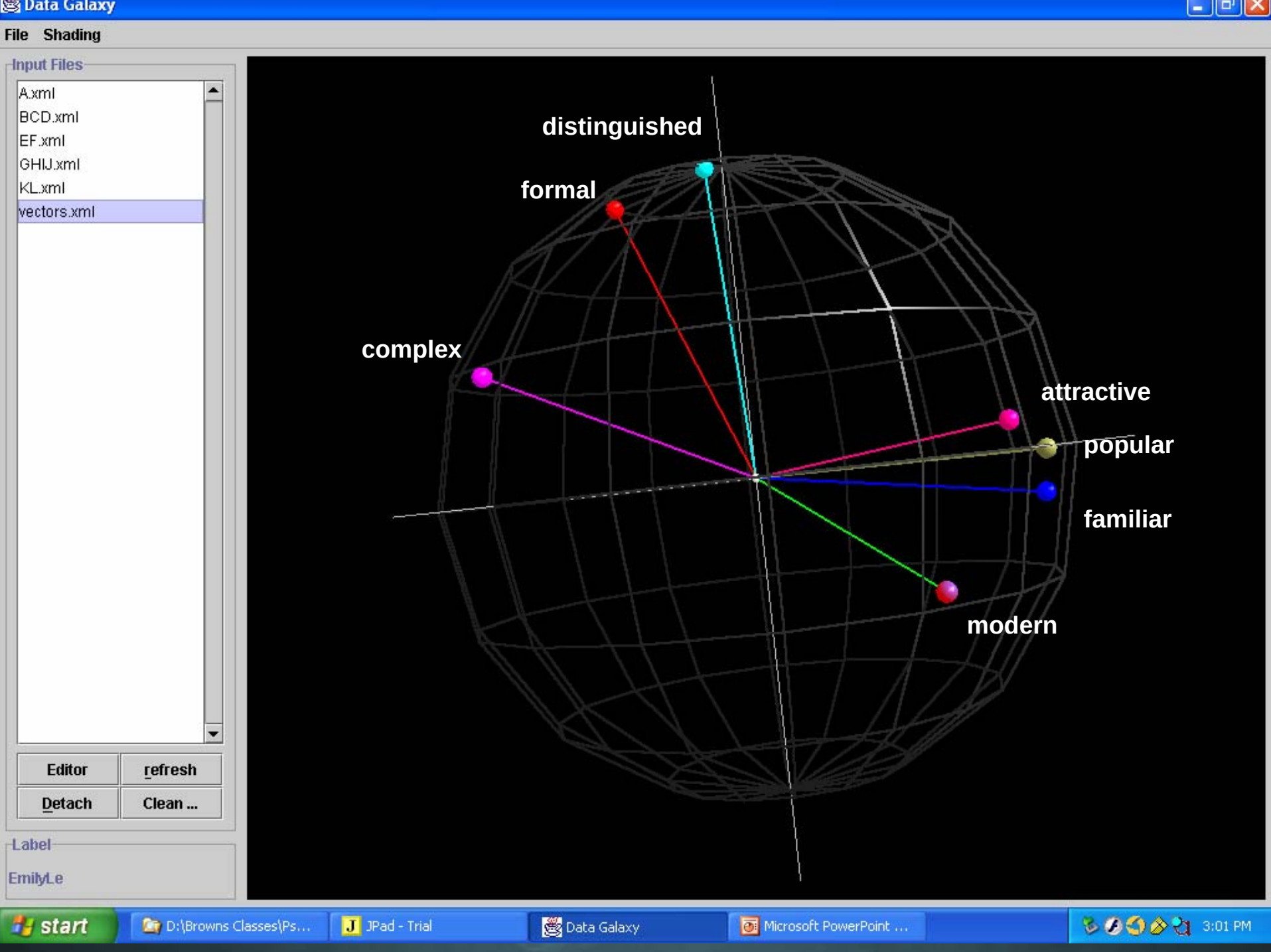
One Fourth Signal
and
Three Fourths Noise



Lens Model Analysis of Adequacy of Adjective Ratings of Names in Accounting for Decade Identification Accuracy



Male Lens Model Stats **Female Lens Model Stats**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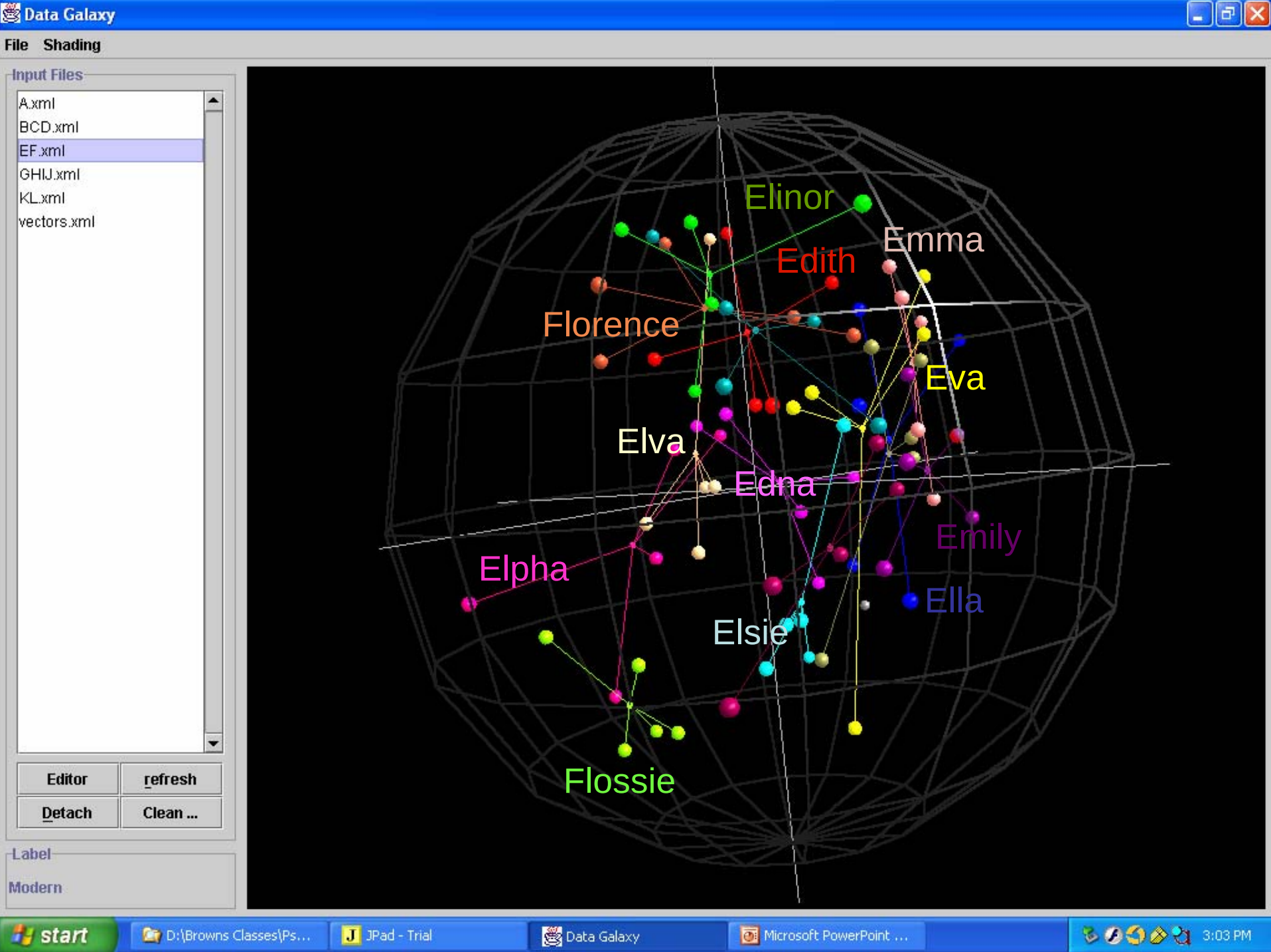
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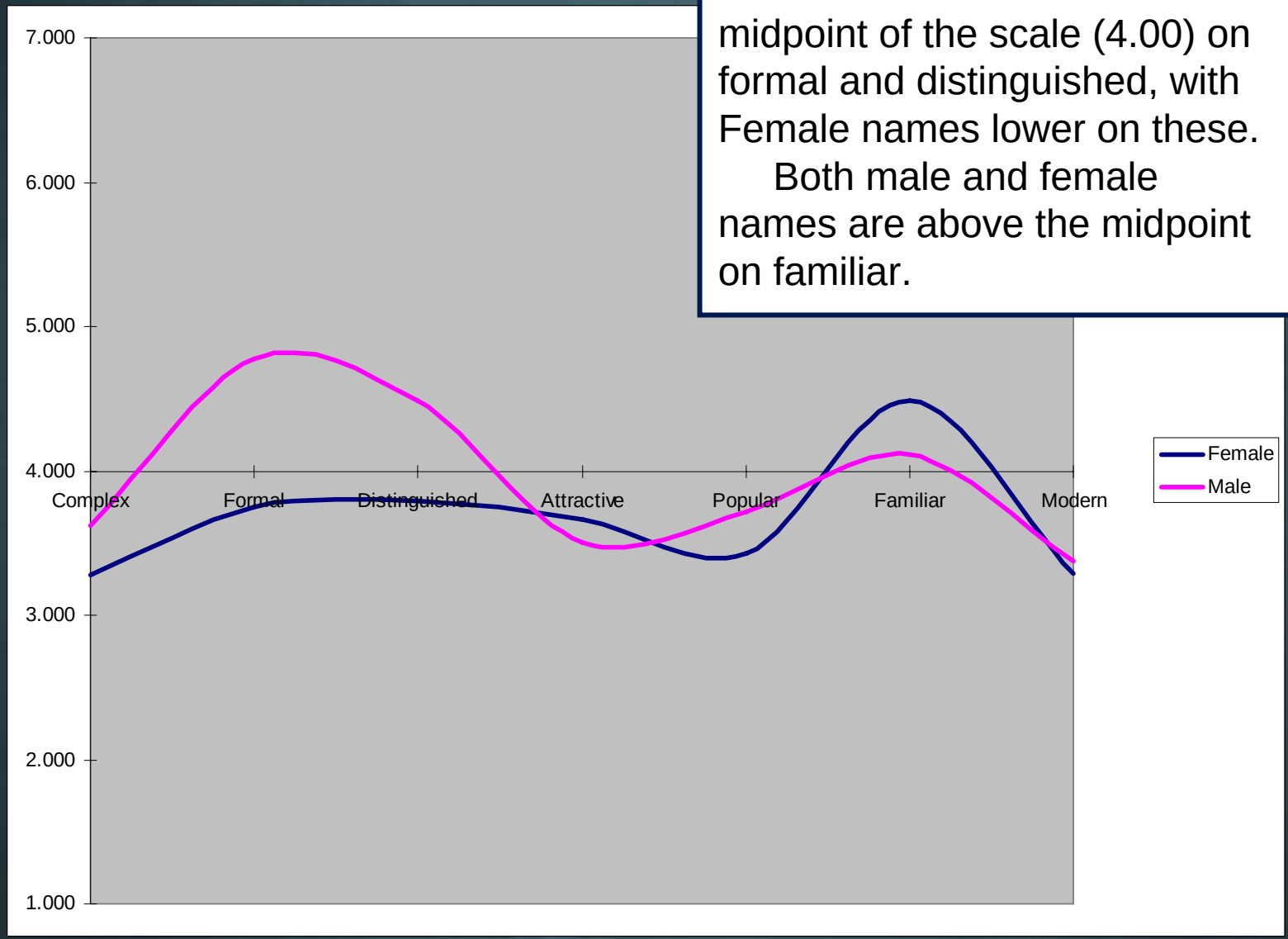
- **Gender comparisons for combined American data.**

American male names on the whole are rated above the midpoint of the scale (4.00) on formal and distinguished, with Female names lower on these.

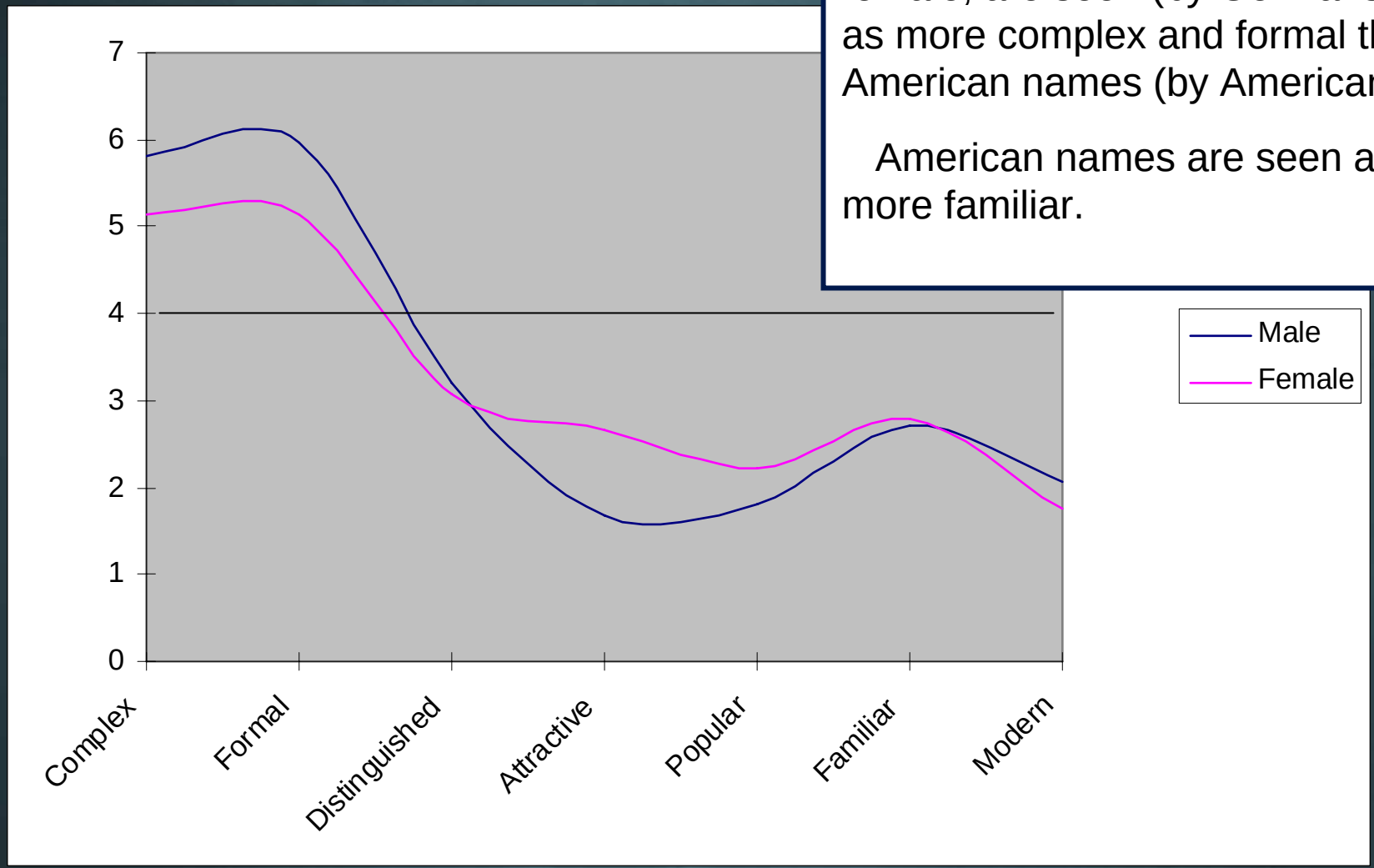
Both male and female names are above the midpoint on familiar.



- **Gender comparisons for combined German data.**

German names, both male and female, are seen (by Germans) as more complex and formal than American names (by Americans).

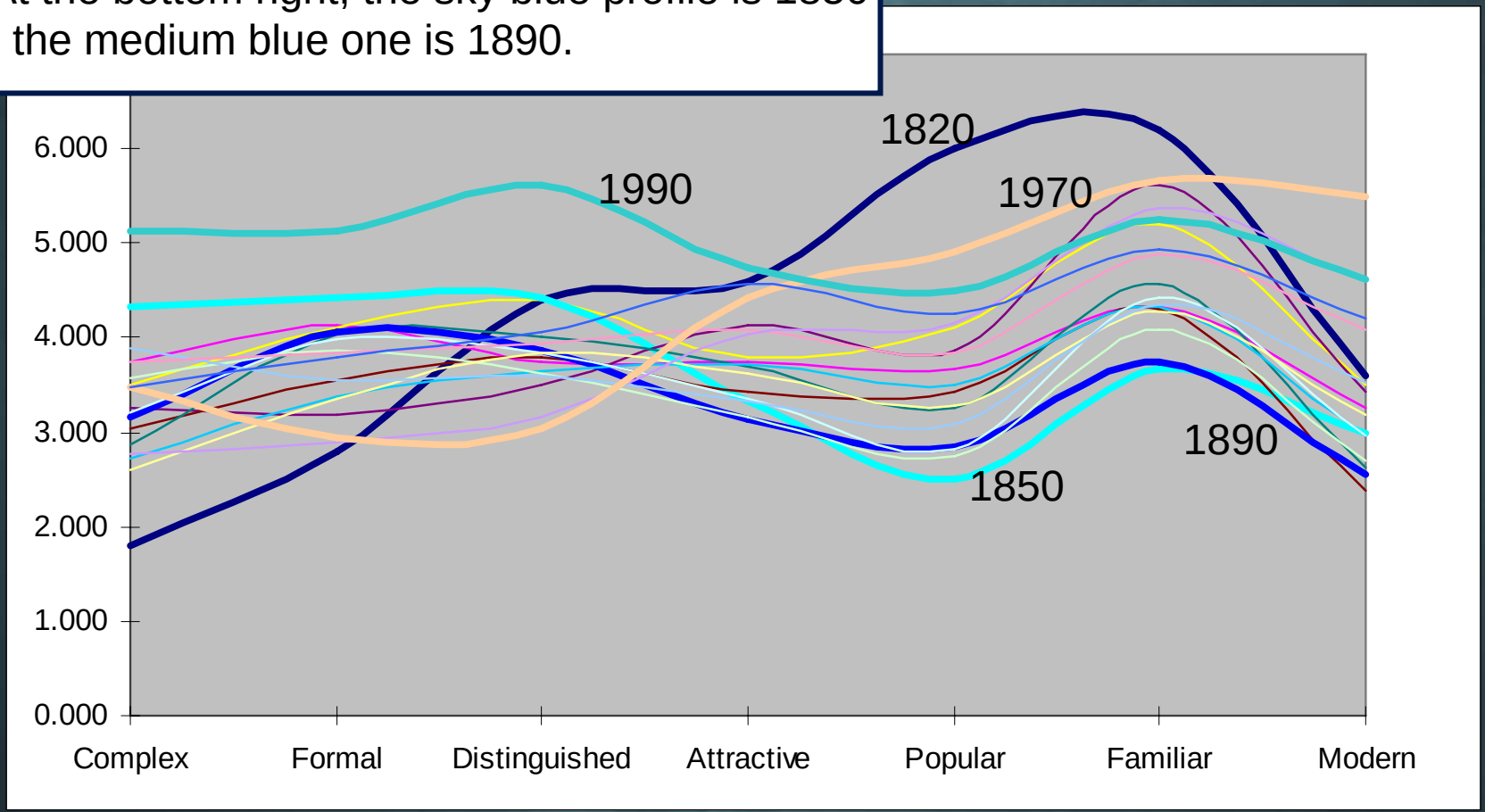
American names are seen as more familiar.



- **Decade comparisons for American female data.**

At the top right, the dark blue profile is 1820, the tan one is 1970, and the teal profile that is high on both left and right is 1990.

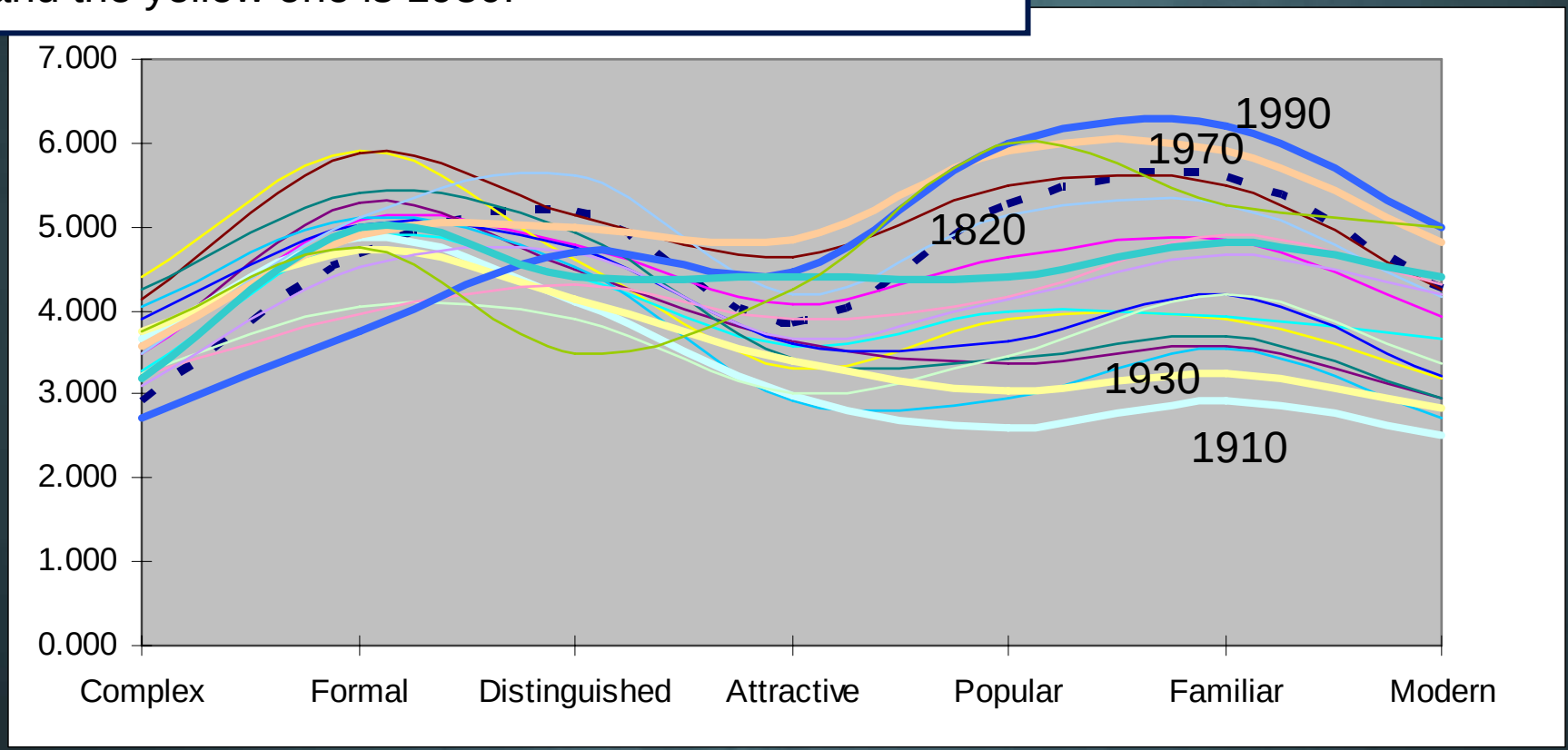
At the bottom right, the sky blue profile is 1850 and the medium blue one is 1890.



- **Decade comparisons for American male data.**

At the top right, the medium blue profile is 1990, the tan one is 1970, and the dotted profile below them is 1820.

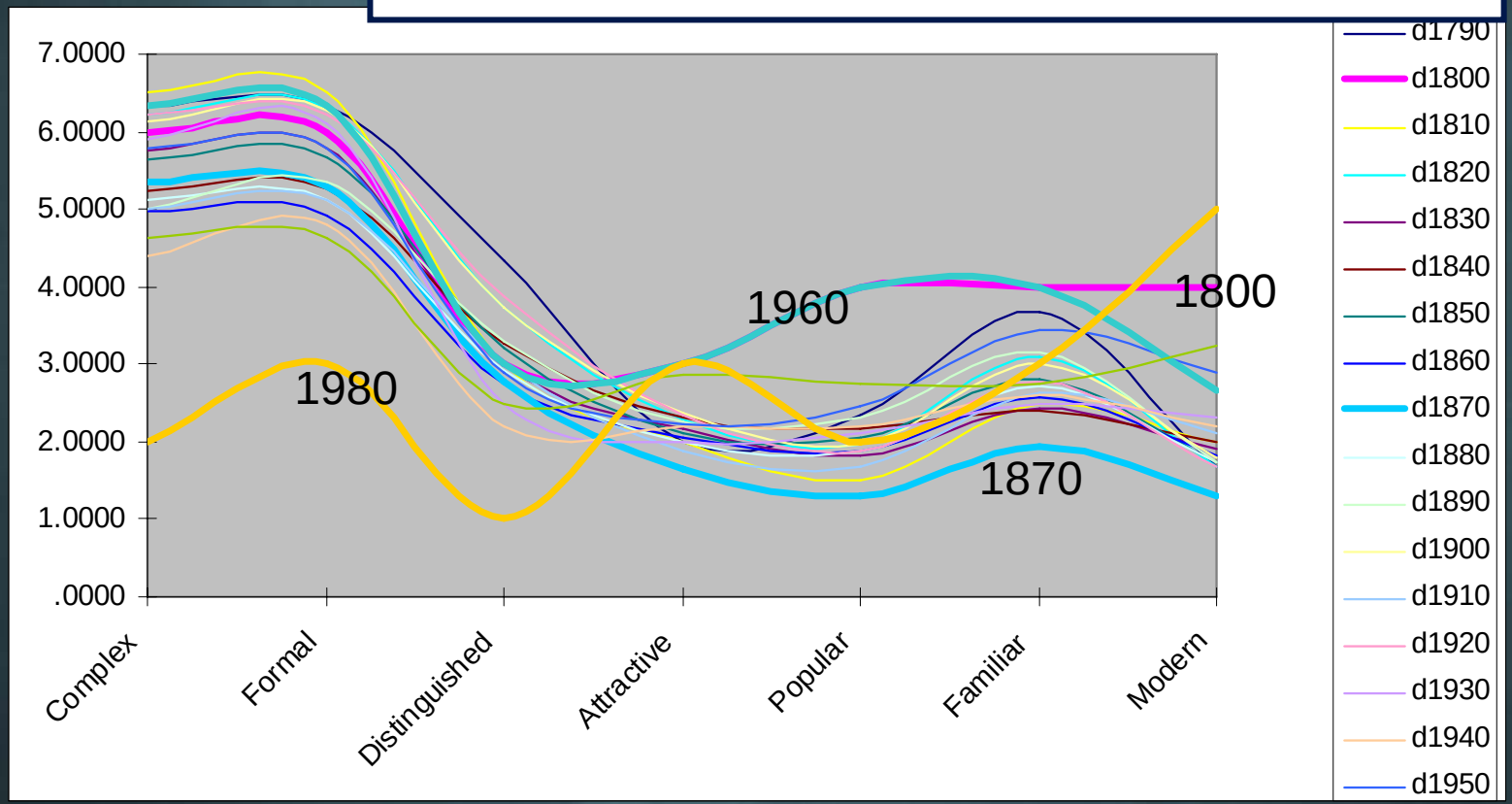
At the bottom right, the sky blue profile is 1910 and the yellow one is 1930.



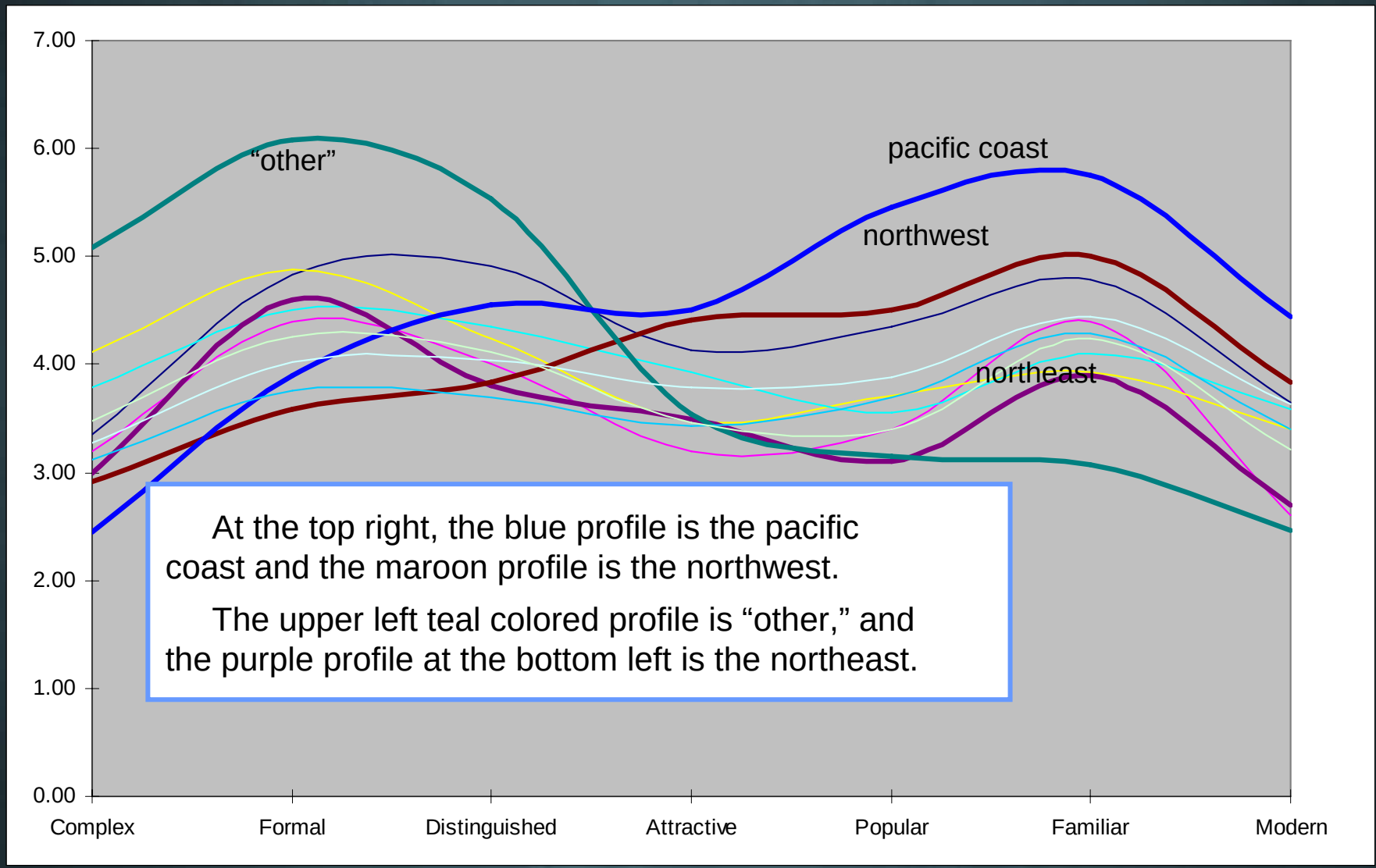
- **Decade comparisons for combined German data.**

At the top right, the pink profile is 1800, the turquoise one is 1960. Similar to the American data, both recent names and also early 19th century ones are seen as popular, familiar, and modern.

German names from 1980 are low on complex, formal, and distinguished.



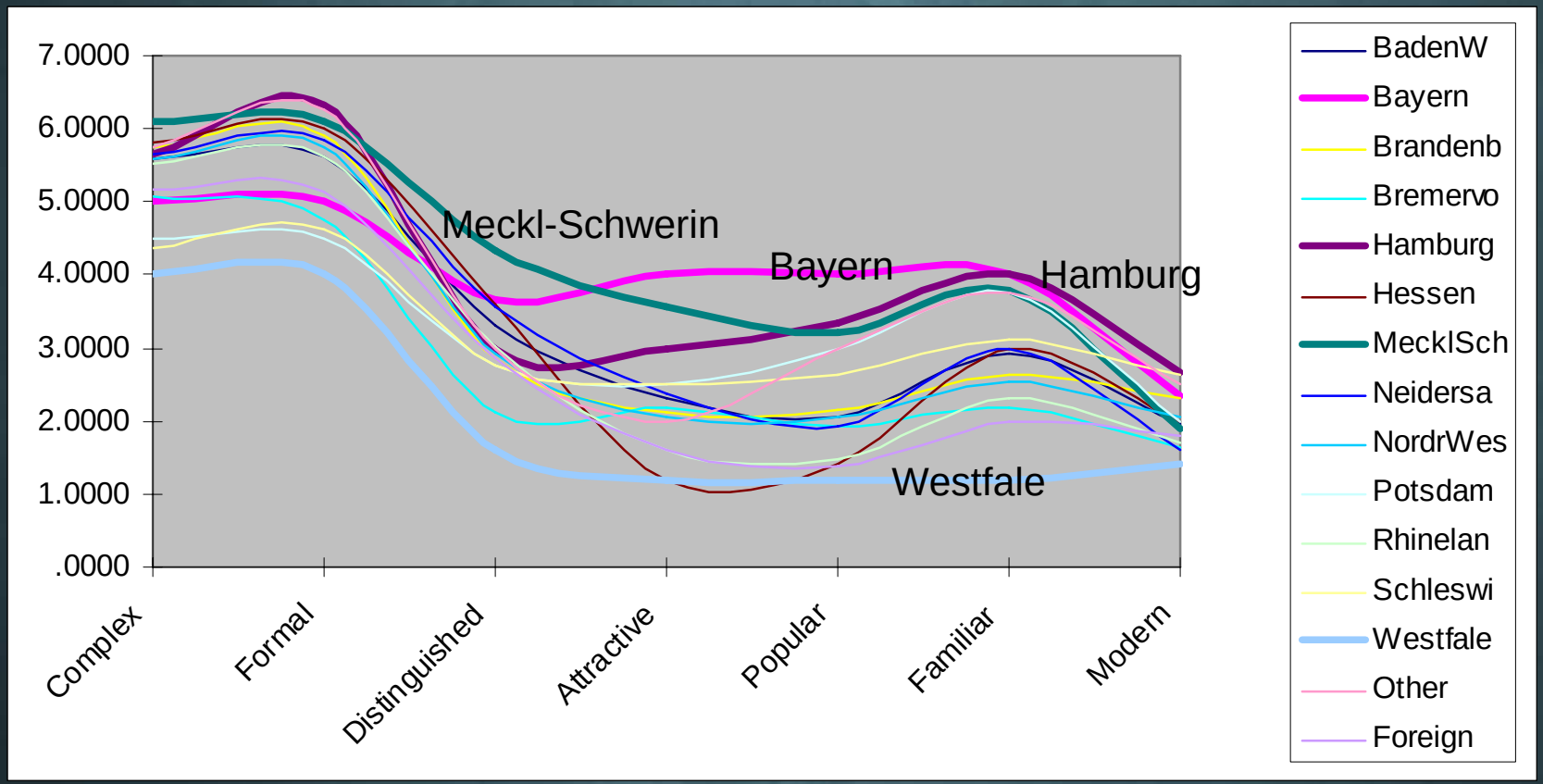
- **Location comparisons for combined American data.**



- **Location comparisons for combined German data.**

Names from Bavaria (Bayern), Hamburg, and Meckl-Schwerin are rated as relatively high on the attractive/popular/familiar adjectives.

Names from Westfale have a somewhat lower profile across all seven adjectives.



Discussion

- **Names are often cyclic**
  - **Names of grandparents are often come back into popularity.**
  - **In the 1980s it seems that there was in Germany, an increase in "modern," often foreign, names.**
  - **Knowledge of how names cycle through the generations and the relative location of names in the semantic spaces of persons born in different decades may help in understanding comparative naming practices in various nations.**