"Coming apart? Lives of the rich and the poor over time" (with Marianne Bertrand)

We analyze temporal trends in the cultural distance between the rich and the poor in the United States. We measure cultural distance between the rich and the poor as the ability to infer whether an individual is in the top or bottom quartile of household income based on his or her (i) media consumption, (ii) consumer behavior, (iii) time use, and (iv) social attitudes. We find that, based on each of these four measures, cultural distance has been constant over the last few decades. We obtain qualitatively similar answers about the trends in cultural distance between the top and bottom half of the household income distribution or between individuals with high and low education.