

# How Persistent is Human Behaviour?

ECON 1339 Behavioural Business

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- ▶ Is history destiny?
- ▶ No. Norms of behaviour can change, sometimes rapidly

# Today's Themes

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## 3. Voting behaviour:

- ▶ Did Trump's election make it acceptable to be openly xenophobic?

# Gender Roles

- ▶ Reading: Alberto Alesina, Paola Giuliano and Nathan Nunn:  
“On the Origins of Gender Roles”  
<http://economics.mit.edu/files/6674>

## Survey Question: Should Women Work?

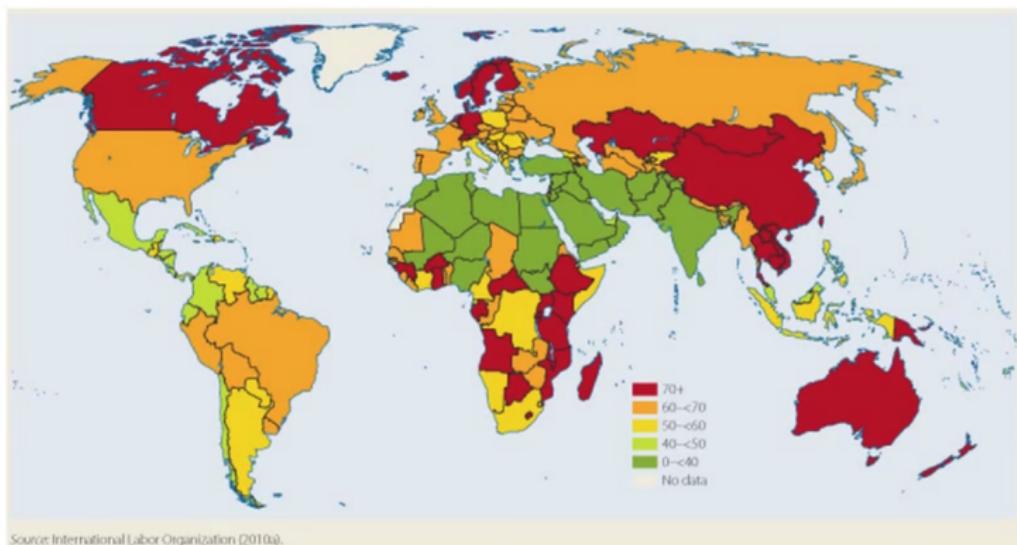
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Agree Most		Agree Least	
Country	% Agree	Country	% Agree
Egypt	92	Sweden	4
Jordan	86	Andorra	5
Yemen	81	Ethiopia	7
Saudi Arabia	81	Norway	11
Iraq	80	Netherlands	11

# Female Labor Force Participation around the world



Source: International Labor Organization (2010a).

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- ▶ Neighbouring countries tend to have similar FLFP rates
- ▶ This suggests that geographic / environmental factors are important

- ▶ Why?

- ▶ Why?
- ▶ Ester Boserup (1970): plough agriculture vs. hoe agriculture



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- ▶ Human behaviour is highly persistent!!
- ▶ Norms established in the distant past still guide our behaviour today

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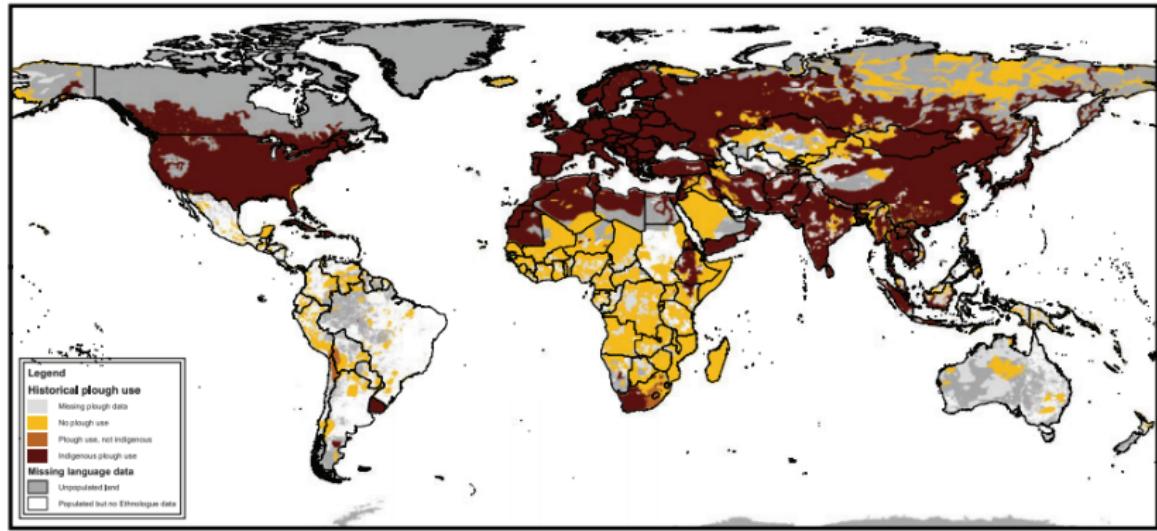
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  - ▶ Whether they historically used the plough
  - ▶ Whether/how women were involved in agricultural work

# Ancestral Plough Use



# The Plough's Effect in the Past

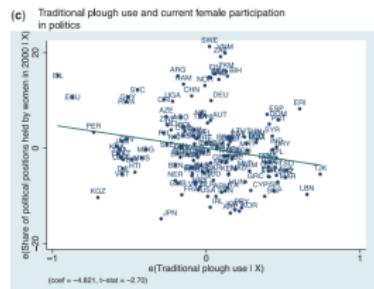
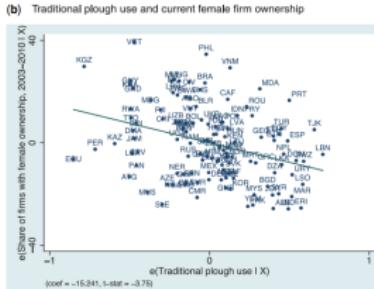
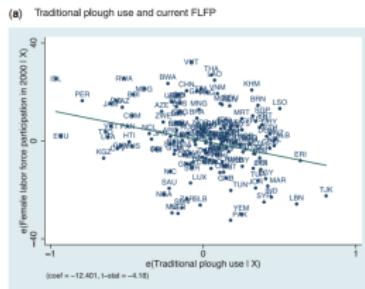
- ▶ Dependent variable: women more involved in agricultural work

TABLE I  
TRADITIONAL PLOUGH USE AND FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN PRE-INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURE

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Dependent variable: Traditional participation of females relative to males in the following tasks:							
Overall agriculture	3.04	2.83	1.45	2.15	2.86	3.16	3.23
Mean of dep. var.							
Traditional plough agriculture	-0.883*** (0.225)	-1.136*** (0.240)	-0.434** (0.197)	-1.182*** (0.320)	-1.290*** (0.306)	-1.188*** (0.351)	-0.954*** (0.271)
Ethnographic controls	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Observations	660	124	129	124	131	122	131
Adjusted R-squared	0.13	0.19	0.14	0.10	0.09	0.13	0.16
R-squared	0.14	0.23	0.18	0.14	0.13	0.18	0.20

# The Plough's Effect into the Present

## ► Country-level relationships:



# The Plough's Effect into the Present

- ▶ Individual-level relationships:

INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL OLS ESTIMATES USING WVS DATA

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Dependent variable:					
	Female labor force participation, 1995–2007	When jobs are scarce, 1995–2007		Men better political leaders, 1995–2007		
Mean of dep. var.	0.55	0.55	0.46	0.47	2.62	2.64
Traditional plough use	-0.177*** (0.035)	-0.002 (0.031)	0.193*** (0.033)	0.100* (0.059)	0.224*** (0.069)	0.304*** (0.117)
Individual & district controls	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Contemporary country controls	yes	n/a	yes	n/a	yes	n/a
Fixed effects	continent	country	continent	country	continent	country
Number of countries	73	78	74	79	50	55
Number of districts	672	698	674	700	453	479
Observations	43,801	47,587	80,303	87,528	64,215	72,152
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- ▶ Individual-level relationships:
- ▶ If your ancestors were from a plough society, how likely are you to believe that men are more entitled to jobs than women / think that men make better political leaders?

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- ▶ ⇒ Do so if beneficial!

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- ▶ **Result:** it does. The environment matters a great deal!

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- ▶ Logic: if behaviour adjusts quickly, effect of the plough should not be found

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- ▶ How long does it last? Unknown

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- ▶ Problems that might be considered mundane are settled violently

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- ▶ Good example: cattle

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- ▶ As time went on, violent culture disappears in the North, but not in the South
- ▶ South was relatively lawless, North was not
- ▶ Few sheriffs, courts, etc

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- ▶ Next we turn to big events as *shocks*
- ▶ We'll see that these shocks cause changes in behaviour that can also be permanent

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  - ▶ Patterns found in many other regions / time periods:
    - ▶ e.g. Black Death → Anti-Semitism in Germany

# Readings

- ▶ Nunn and Wantchekon (2011): The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa
  - ▶ <http://doi.org/10.1257/aer.101.7.3221>
- ▶ Karaja and Rubin (2017): The Cultural Transmission of Trust Norms: Evidence from a Lab in the Field on a Natural Experiment
  - ▶ [https://www.chapman.edu/research/institutes-and-centers/economic-science-institute/\\_files/WorkingPapers/karaja-rubin-2017.pdf](https://www.chapman.edu/research/institutes-and-centers/economic-science-institute/_files/WorkingPapers/karaja-rubin-2017.pdf)

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- ▶ Contracts, yes, but imperfectly enforced

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- ▶ Raids by powerful organized states, wars, etc

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- ▶ ⇒ Environment is one of people turning on each other for financial gain

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- ▶ ⇒ mistrust is a useful heuristic!

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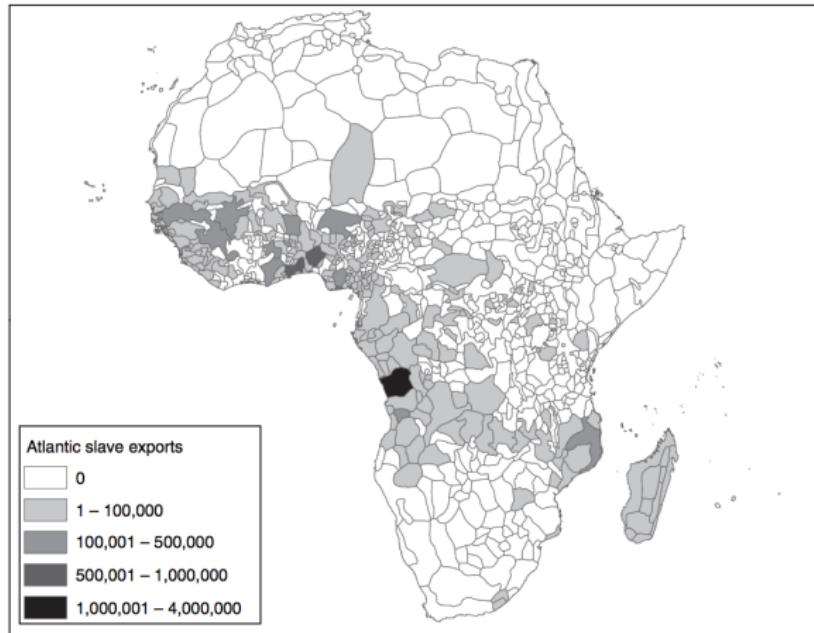
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# Captured Slaves by Ethnic Group

Panel A. Transatlantic slave trade



# Results

	Trust in...				
	Relatives	Neighbours	Local gov.	Co-Ethnics	Other Eth.
Slave Exports	-0.133***	-0.159***	-0.111***	-0.144***	-0.097***

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- ▶ Effect is largest for neighbours and co-ethnics!

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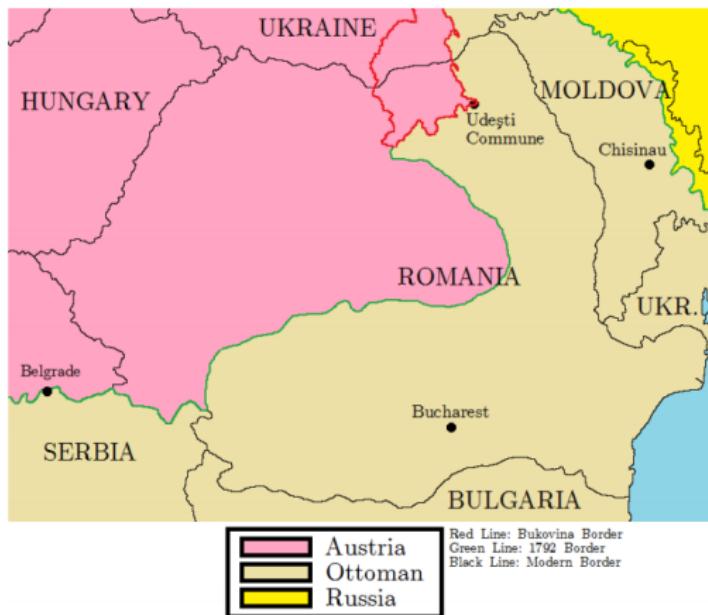
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- ▶ Hitherto homogenous Udesti commune split into Habsburg Empire and Ottoman Empire:

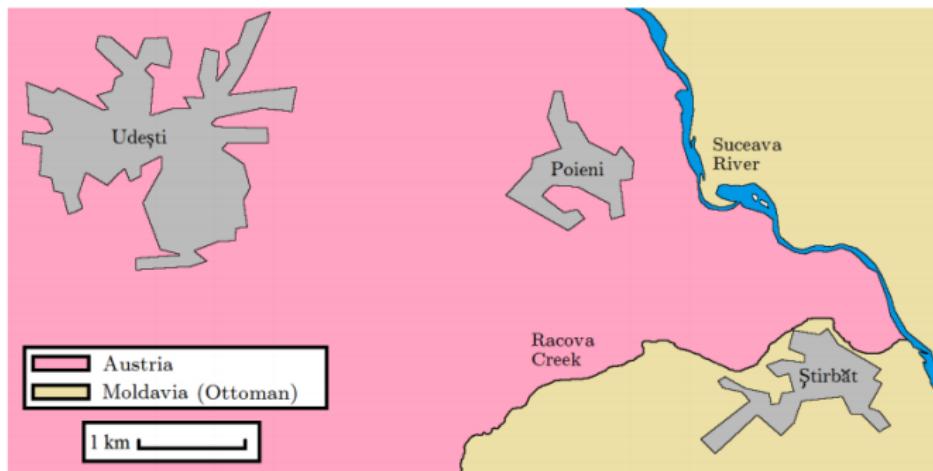
# Udesti

Figure 1: Habsburg Border in Late-18th Century



# Udești

Figure 2: Udești, Poieni, and Stirbat Villages



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- ▶ Trust across villages should not be different

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- ▶ Results:

Village	Sent to Co-villager		Sent to outsider	
	Grandparents from village?		Yes	No
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Udesti ( <b>Habsburg</b> )	1.96	1.71	2.02	1.85
Stirbat ( <b>Ottoman</b> )	2.04	2.30	1.48	1.98
p-value (mean diff.)	0.686	0.002***	0.006***	0.445

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- ▶ (2) Transmitted through families: only true for people with ancestral roots in Ottoman village

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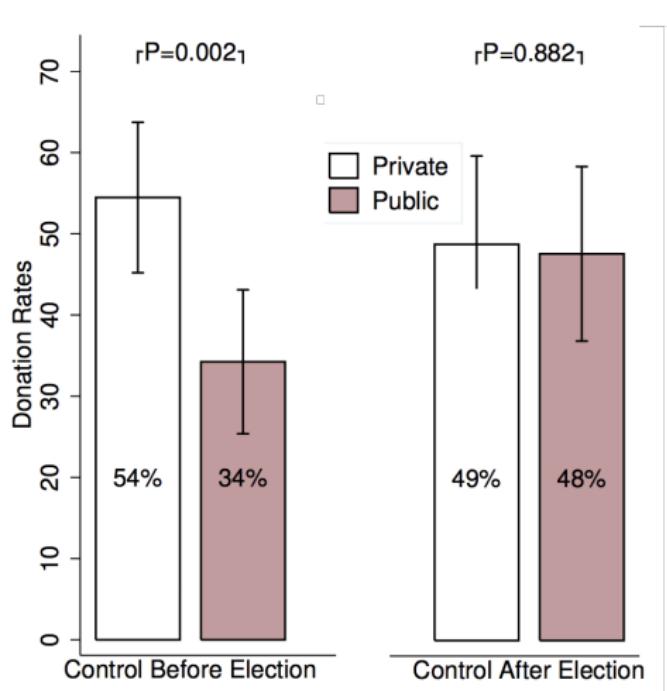
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- ▶ Variation in **timing**:
  - ▶ Immediately before vs. after 2016 election

# Donations



## Take-Aways

- ▶ Environmental conditions matter
- ▶ Big events, even temporary ones, can leave a permanent mark
- ▶ Norms can unravel quickly

## Optional readings

- ▶ Nathan Nunn and Diego Puga (2012). Ruggedness: The Blessing of Bad Geography in Africa
  - ▶ [https://doi.org/10.1162/REST\\_a\\_00161](https://doi.org/10.1162/REST_a_00161)
- ▶ Voigtlaender and Voth (2012): Persecution Perpetuated: The Medieval Origins of Anti-Semitic Violence in Nazi Germany
  - ▶ <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjs019>