

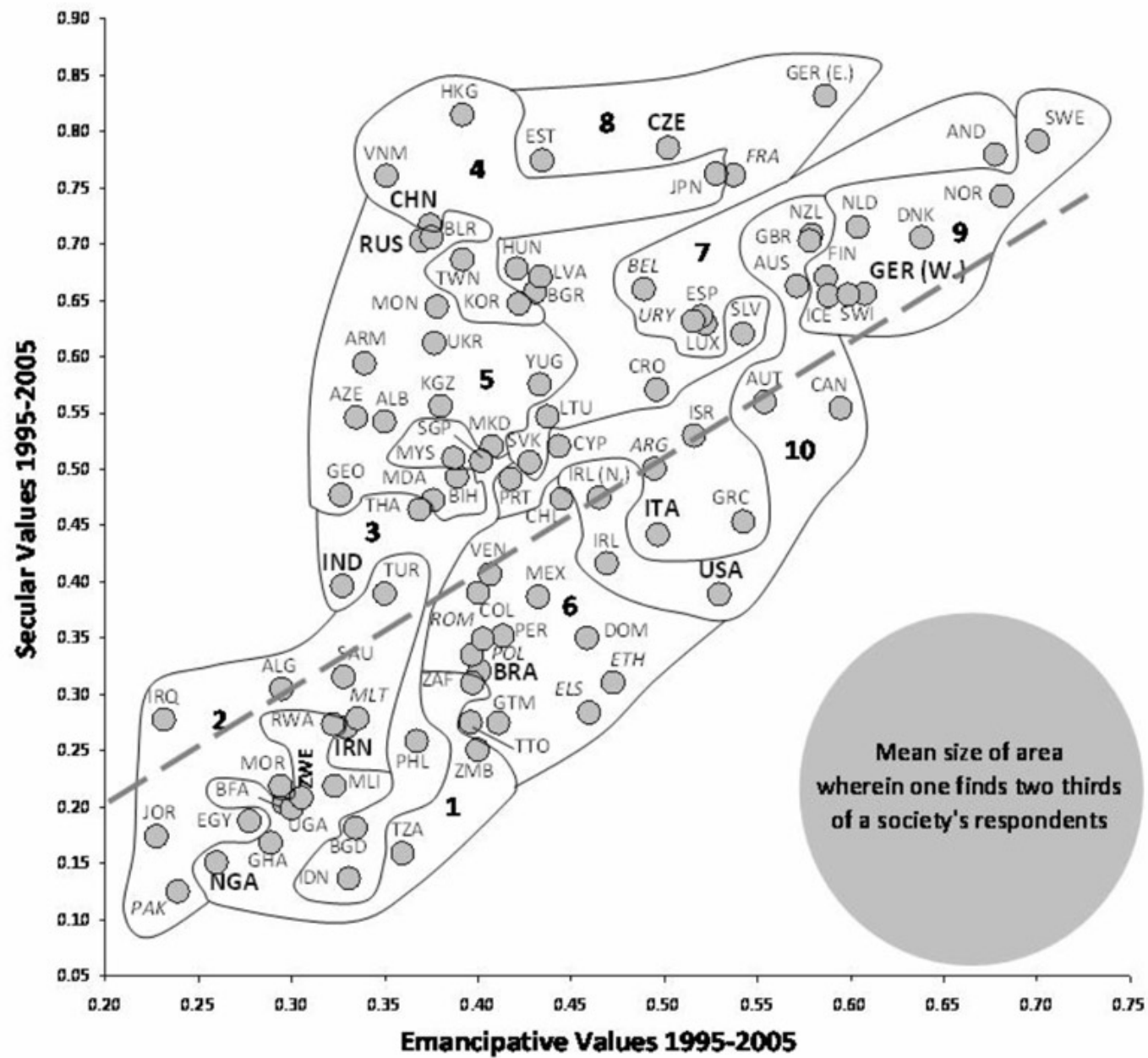
A satellite map of Eurasia and surrounding regions, showing landmasses in green and brown and oceans in dark blue. The map is oriented with North at the top.

The Mongol Invasions as a Natural Experiment in World History

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The State and the Rise of Secular-Rational Values

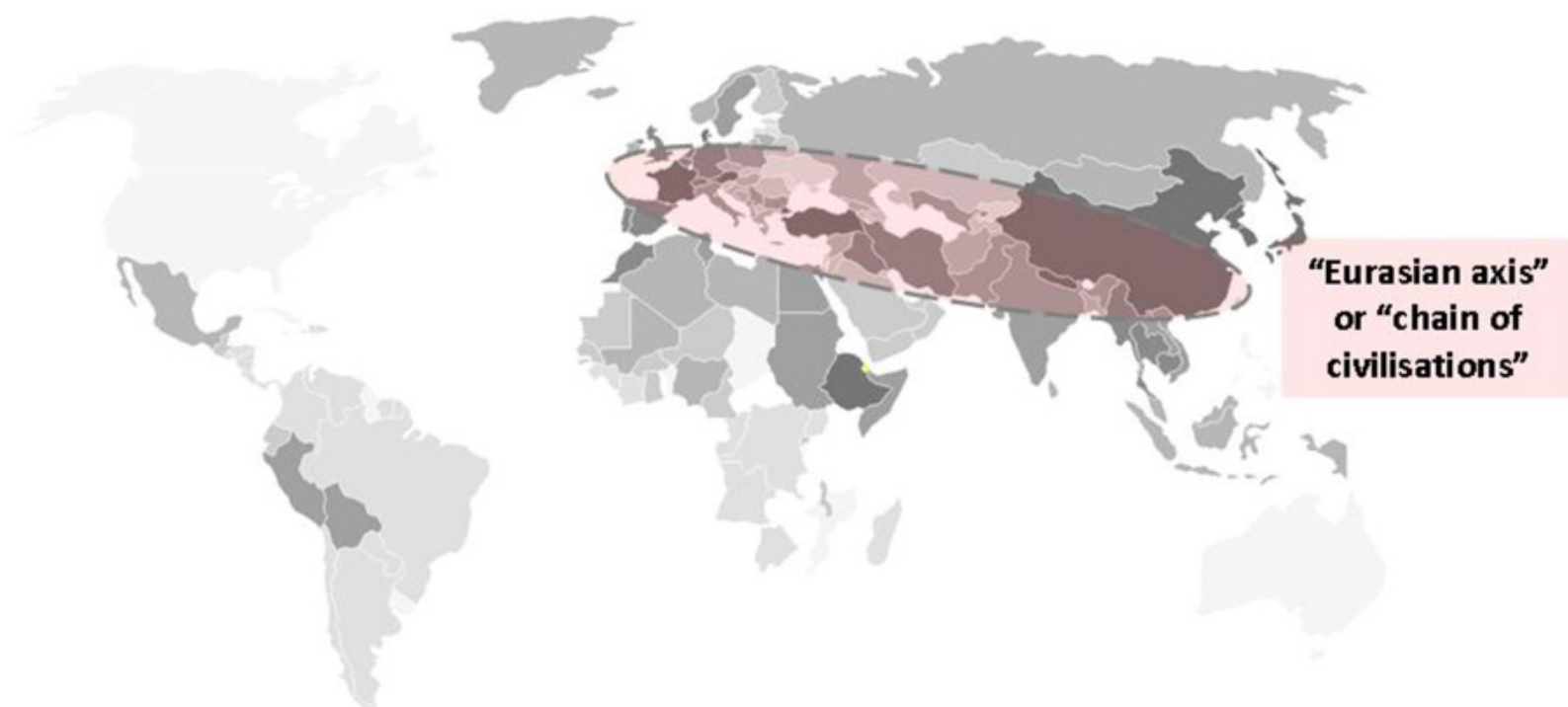


“State History” (darker = longer state history)

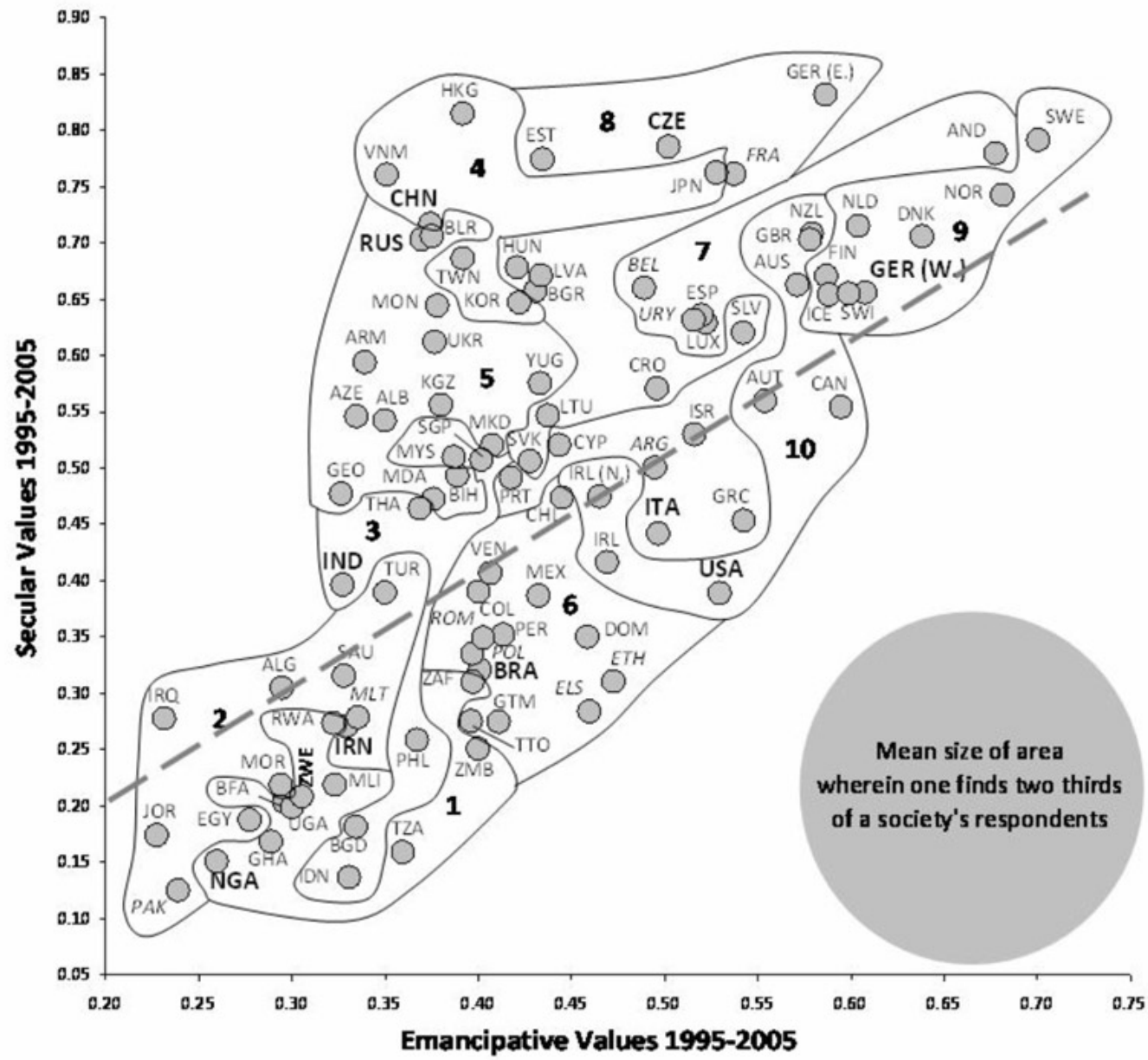


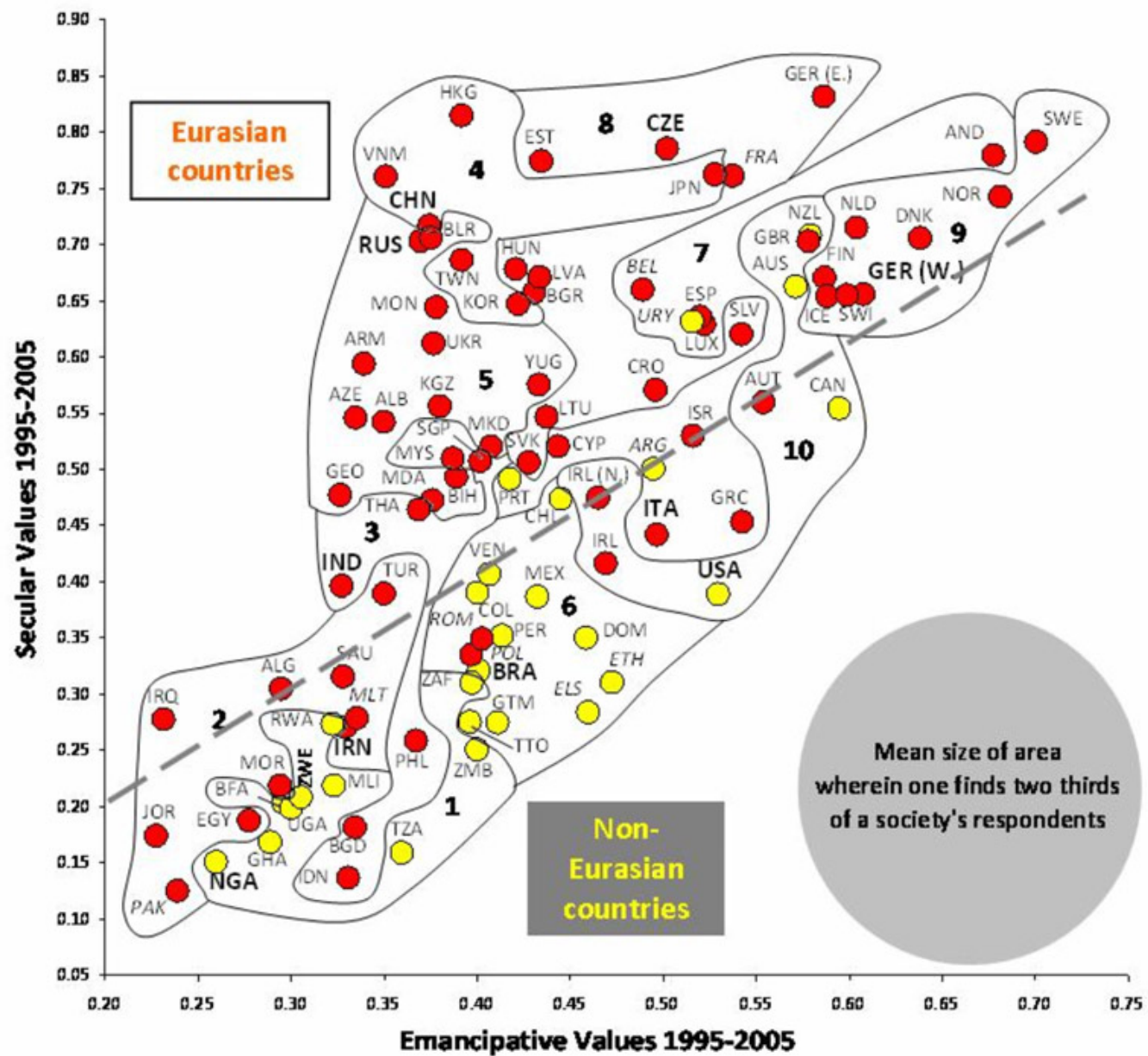
Source: Bockstette et al. (2002). Shown is the state history index with a discount

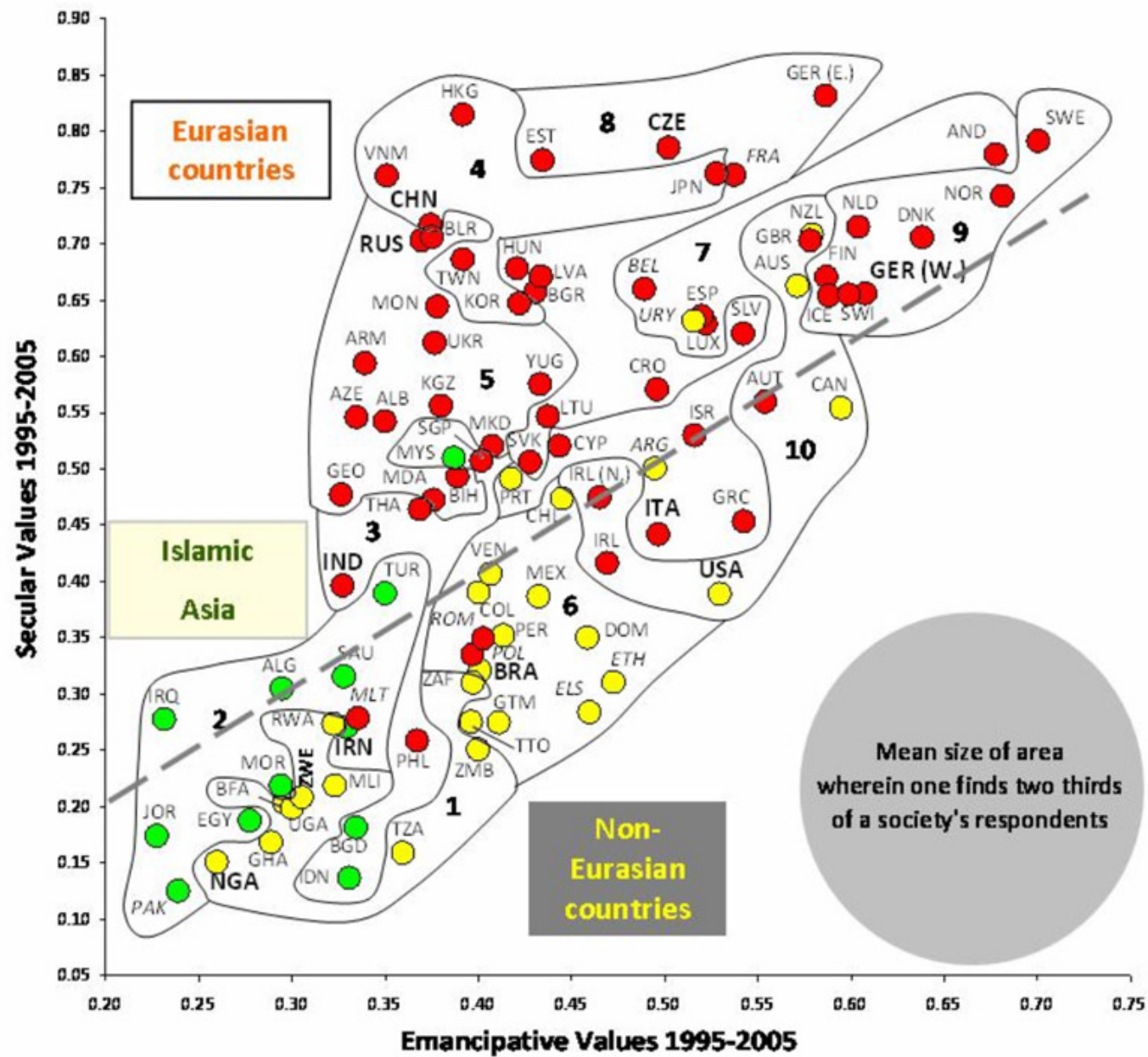
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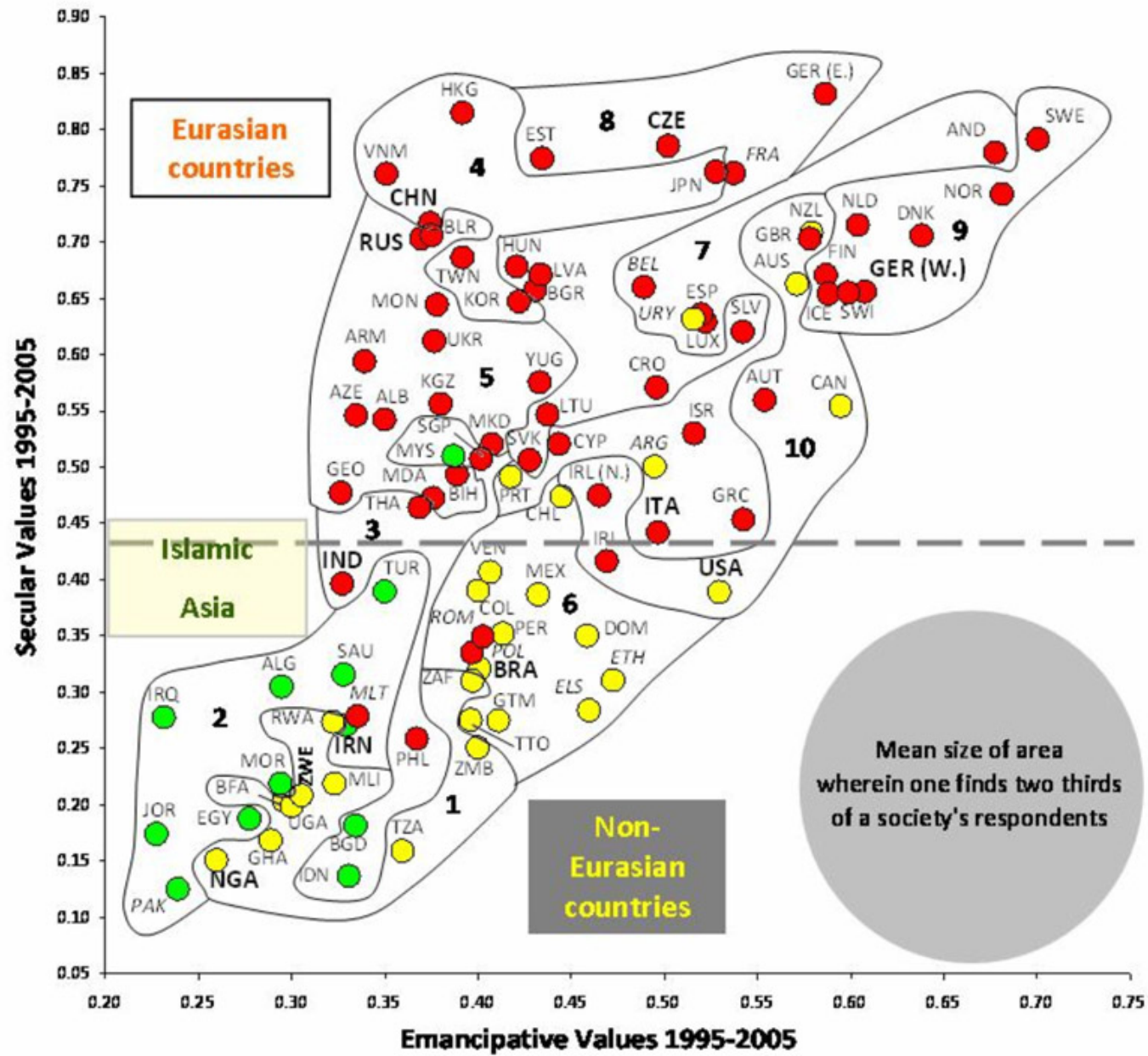


Source: Bockstette et al. (2002). Shown is the state history index with a discount rate 50.

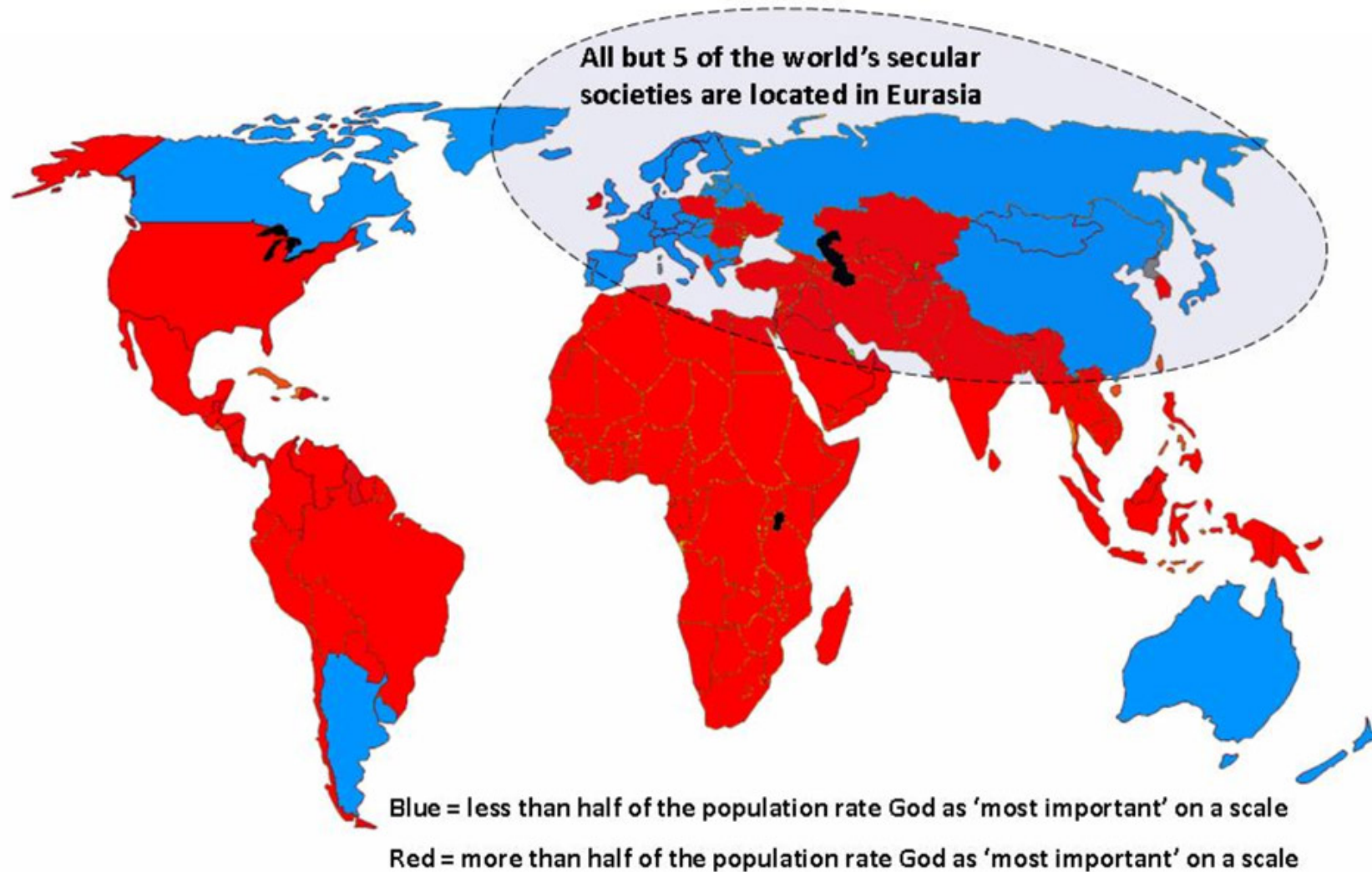




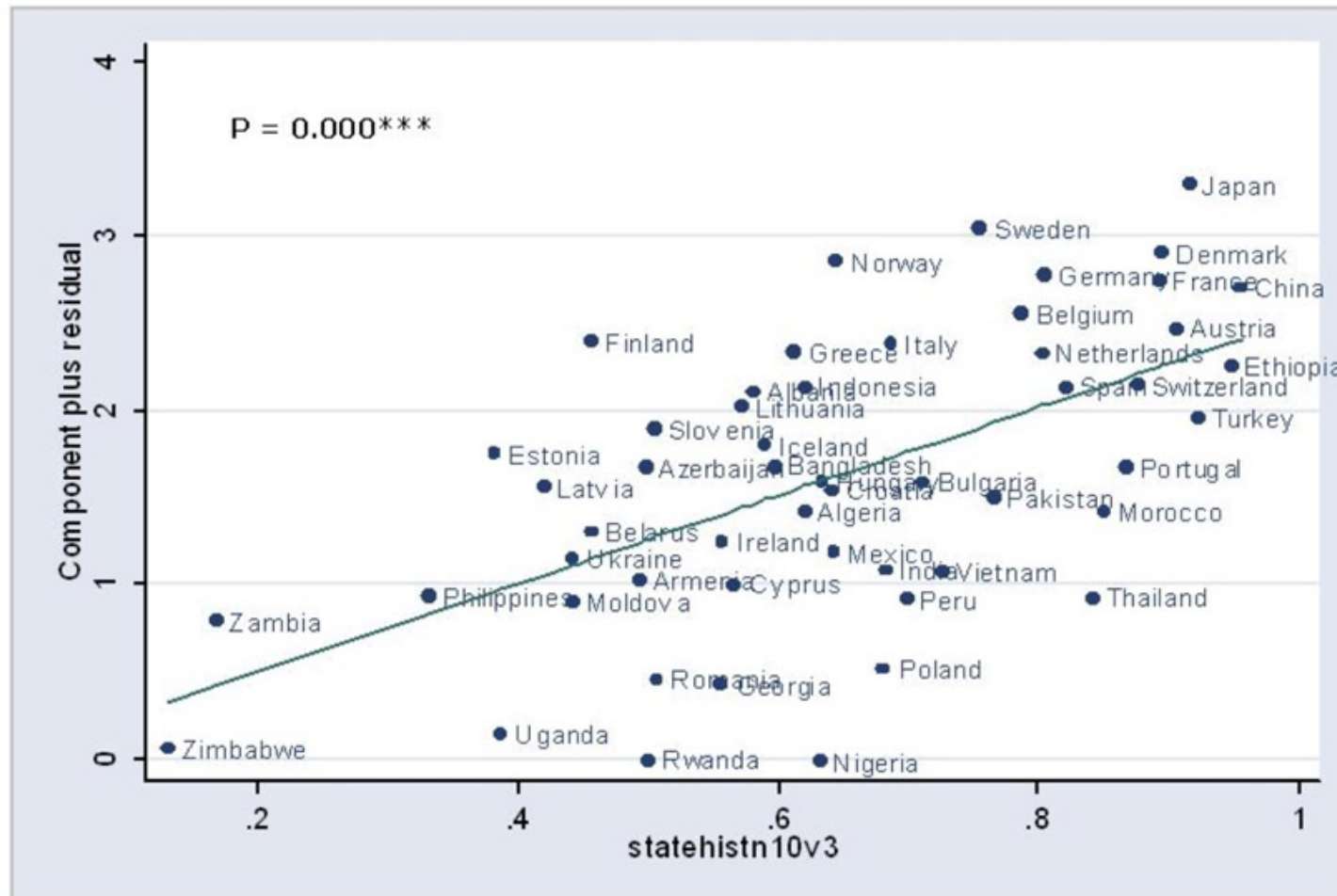




Why does the secular world live in Eurasia?



Partial correlation, state history and secular-rational values



Partial correlation between state history variable and secular-rational values, controlling for legacy of communism (0/1), Islamic (0/1), and Catholic cultural zones (0/1)



What is secular-rationalism?

Disenchantment

“the knowledge or belief that... there are **no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play**, but rather that one can, in principle, **master all things by calculation**” (Weber, *Science As A Vocation*)

‘we ring the church bells **when lightning threatens...**
the whole community turns out in procession to
“beat the bounds” of the parish on rogation days.
Carrying the host and whatever relics we possess,
we march around the boundaries, in this way warding
off evil spirits for another season. [...] The Gospels
were read “in the wide field among the corn and
grass, that by virtue of the operation of God’s word,
the power of **the wicked spirits**, which keep in the air
and infect the same... may be laid down... **to the**
intent the corn may remain unharmed, and not
infected... but serve us for our use and bodily
sustenance.”

(Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, p.42)

- Charles Taylor suggest that secular-rationalism is not simply the absence of spirituality, but rather a distant and original belief-system in its own right -

Ontology: materialism (nothing exists except matter)

Epistemology: empiricism (no truth except what can be verified by observation)

Ethics: consequentialism (means-ends, costs & benefits)

- The highest expression of secular-rationalism is *positivism*, the belief that science is progressive; is the only form of knowledge; and can be extended to (re)solve other domains (aesthetic, ethical, political)

- What are the historical origins of secular-rationalism?
- 'Supply-side' theories like Rodney Stark argue that lack of religious competition explains secularisation. But this doesn't seem to apply outside the US (or tell us much about the origins of secular-rational ideas). We need to explain the fall in long-term **demand** for spiritual alternatives to the secular-rational worldview.
- One might link secular-rationalism to rising **economic prosperity** and **material security** (e.g. Inglehart and Norris 2003) - but this leaves a lot of unexplained variance (e.g. the US) and the mystery of limited change over time.

- Going back in history, we might link secular-rational ideas to **capitalism** or the **industrial revolution**. But this is far too late – the industrial revolution only took off in the nineteenth century, whereas the Enlightenment occurred from the 15th-18th centuries.
- Taylor (2007) - like Weber (or for that matter Nietzsche) links the shift to **protestantism** and the **reformation**. Once religious reformers began to purge Christianity of saints, relics, angels, and so on, the door was open to complete secularisation.
- This might be true, but seems incomplete – where did religious dissidents get their support? Was secular-rationalism the only possible outcome?

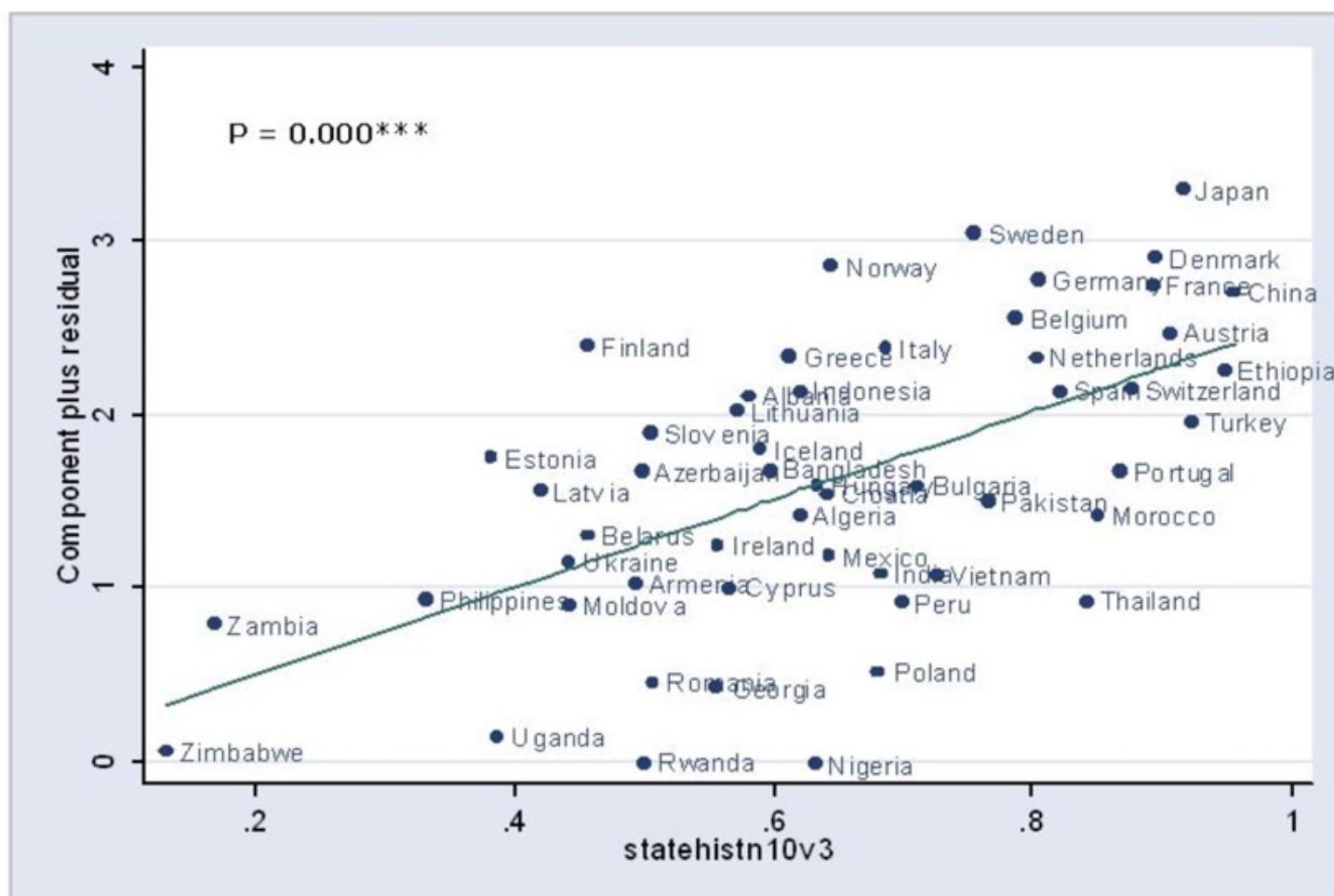
The State and Secular- Rationalism

States and Secular-Rationalism

We can think of several mechanisms that link state formation and secular-rationalism:

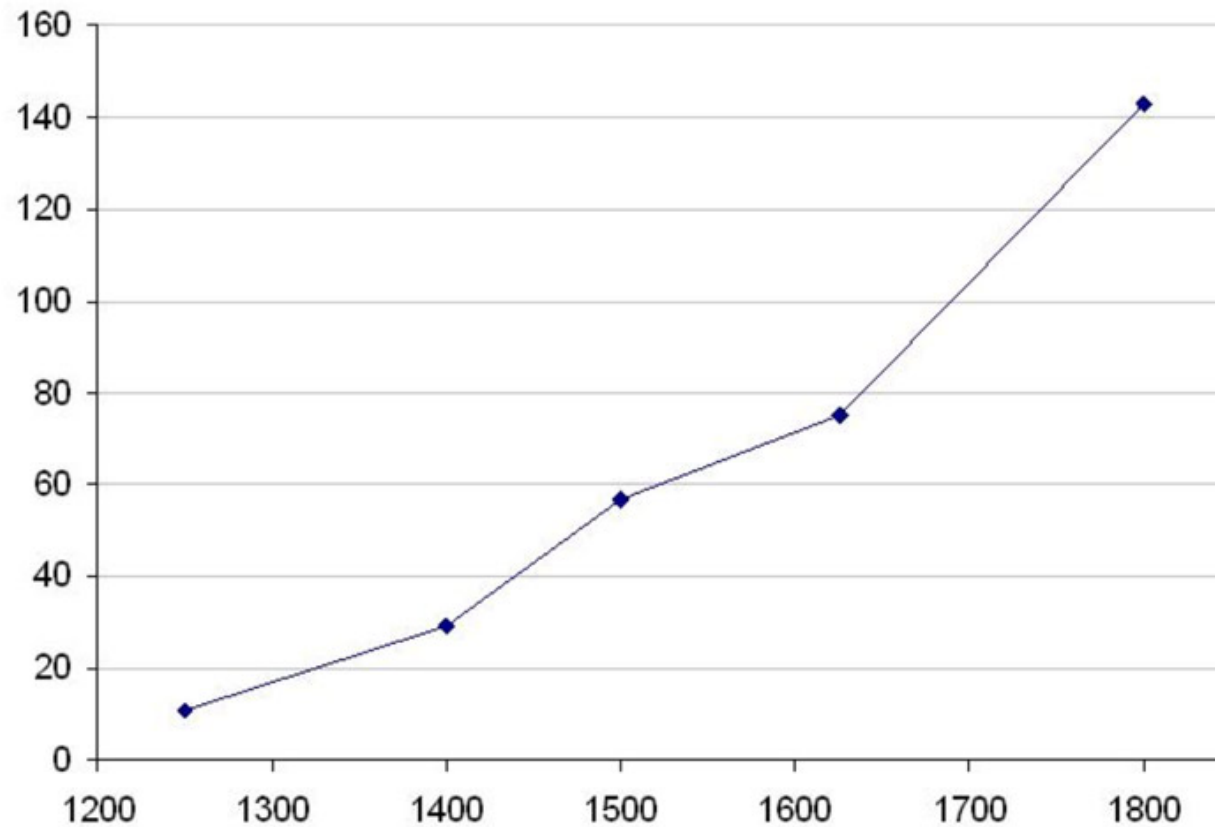
- i) Direct *conflict* between emerging states and religious structures over the monopoly of legitimacy;
- ii) The role of states in *sponsoring* non-religious centres of knowledge;
- iii) Socialisation of the population into secular ideology as a precondition of *bureaucratic recruitment*;
- iv) States as rationalising agents in their own right, in order to make their societies legible;
- v) States as sources of order and *human security*, rendering religious faith less salient to everyday life.

Partial correlation, state history and secular-rational values



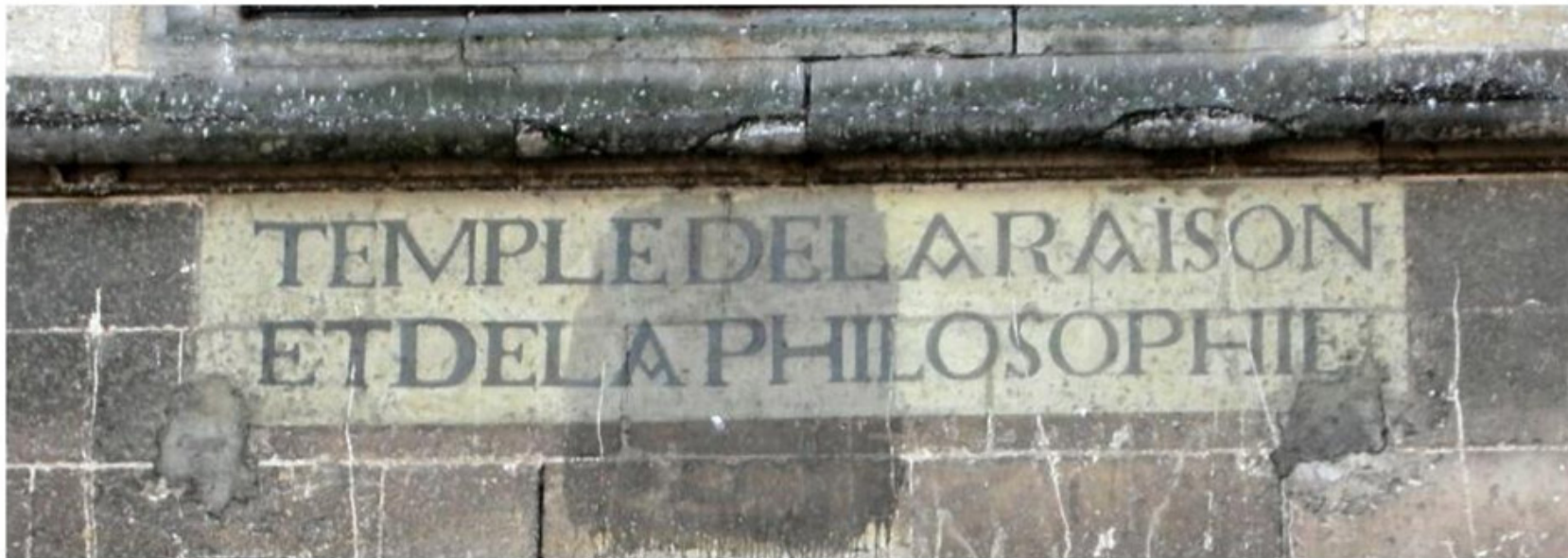
Partial correlation between state history variable and secular-rational values, controlling for legacy of communism (0/1), Islamic (0/1), and Catholic cultural zones (0/1)

Number of Universities in Europe, 1200-1800



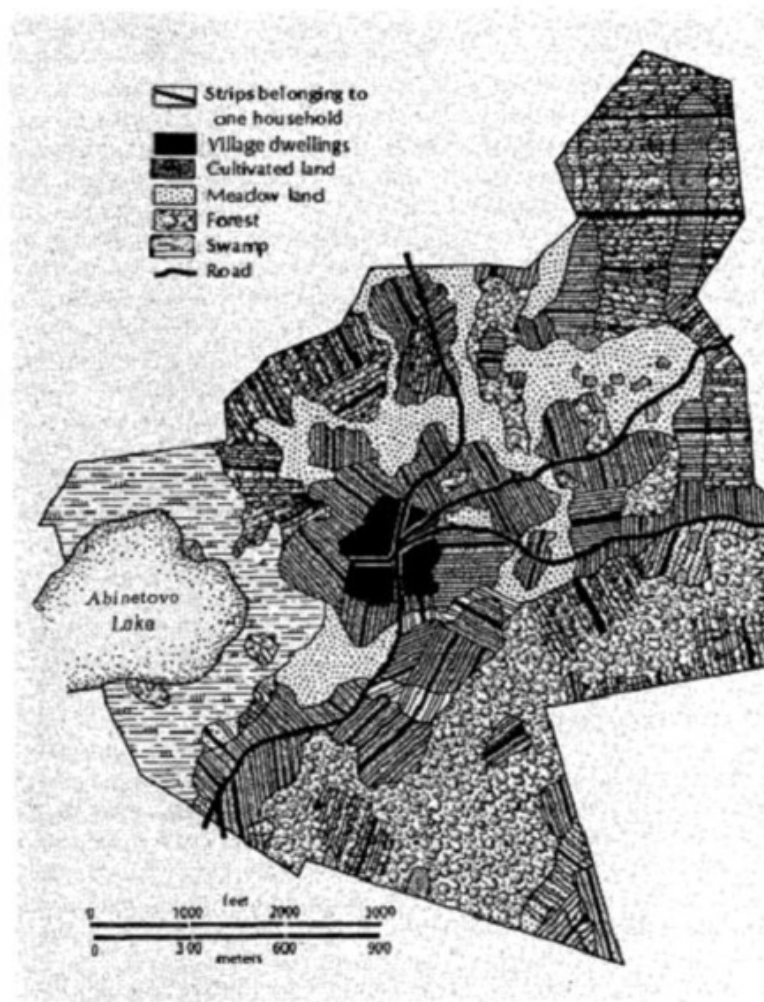
Source: Frijhoff, W. (1996). Patterns. In H. D. Ridder-Symoens (Ed.), *Universities in early modern Europe, 1500-1800, A history of the university in Europe*. Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, p. 75.

- The growth of the university is very closely tied to the formation of early European states. Many universities were founded by **royal grants** (e.g. the University of Naples, Charles University), but even those which were voluntary (e.g. Bologna, Oxford), existed because students needed accreditation in law to become judges and bureaucrats (e.g. Thomas Cromwell – a commoner who trained in law and became chief minister to Henry VIII)
- Law, in particular, had a close relationship to secular-rationalism - Copernicus studied law at Bologna in 1496, and Descartes studied law at Poitiers in 1616 (much later, Marx also studied law, at Bonn in 1835)
- During the French Revolution, nearly all of the revolutionary leaders were trained lawyers (who chose to abolish the Church and declare a *Cult of Reason* as the new national religion)

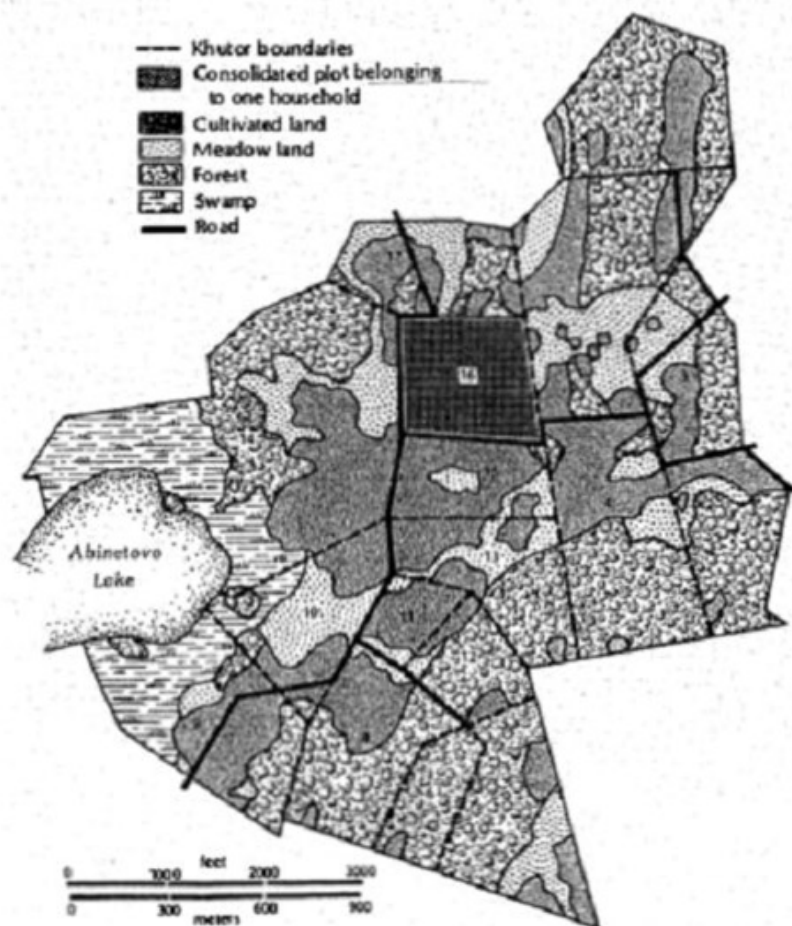


Inscription placed on a church in Ivry-la-Bataille during its conversion to a “temple of reason and philosophy”

- Not only did states break the church's 'monopoly of truth' by nurturing secular poles of reflection and debate (the university) but played a direct role in rationalising lived reality
- James Scott's *Seeing Like A State* is a fantastic (critical) account of how early states led the Cartesian revolution through standardised weights and measures, land cadastres, population censuses.
- Much of Foucault's work (e.g. *The History of Madness*, *Birth of the Clinic*, *Discipline and Punish*) deals with the ways in which states rationalised areas which previously were left to the individual or spiritual realms.
- States refashioned society to make it more legible, less mysterious, and more amenable to rational control.

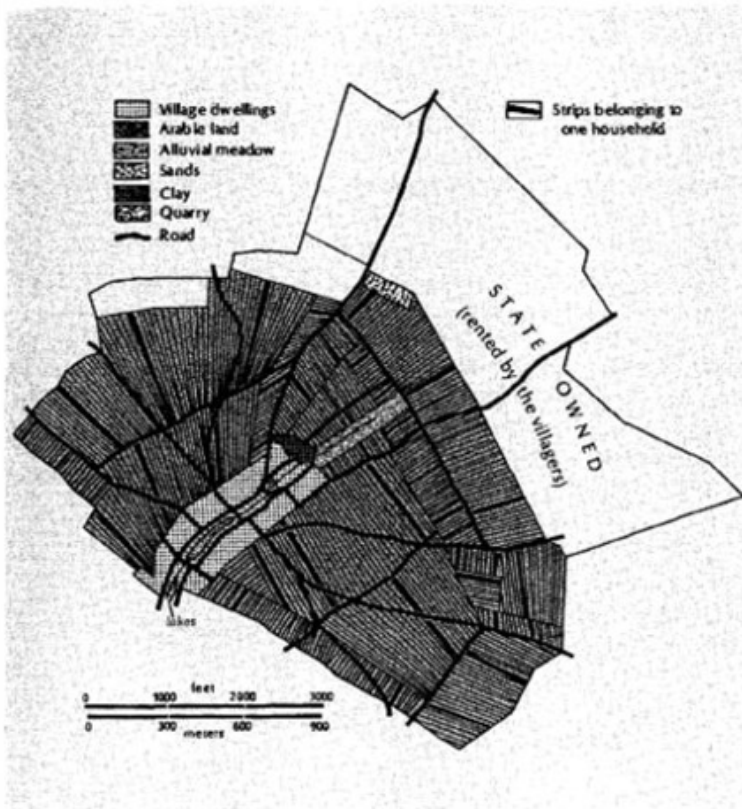


3. Novoselok village before the Stolypin Reform

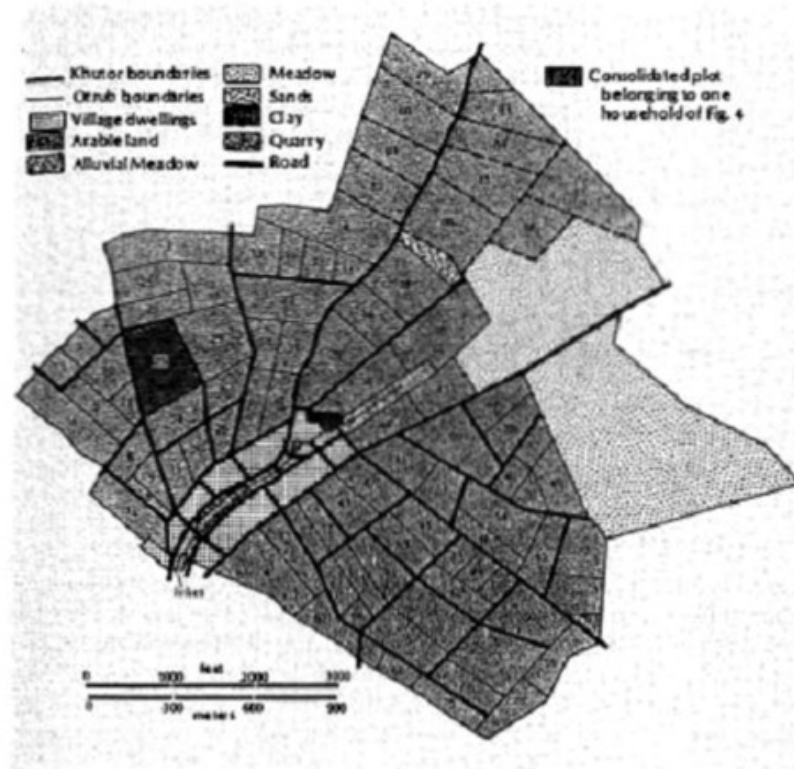


5. Novoselok village after the Stolypin Reform

Source: James Scott, *Seeing Like a State* pp. 40-42

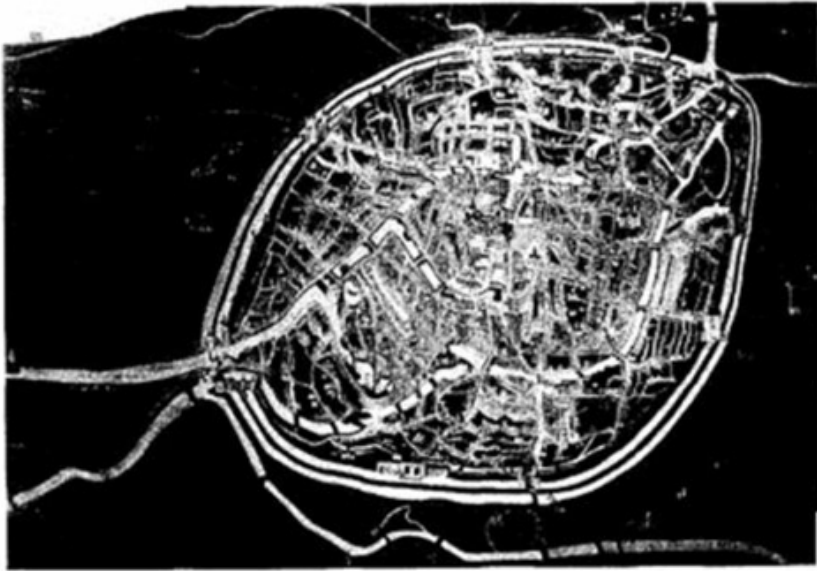


4. Khotynitsa village before the Stolypin Reform



6. Khotynitsa village after the Stolypin Reform

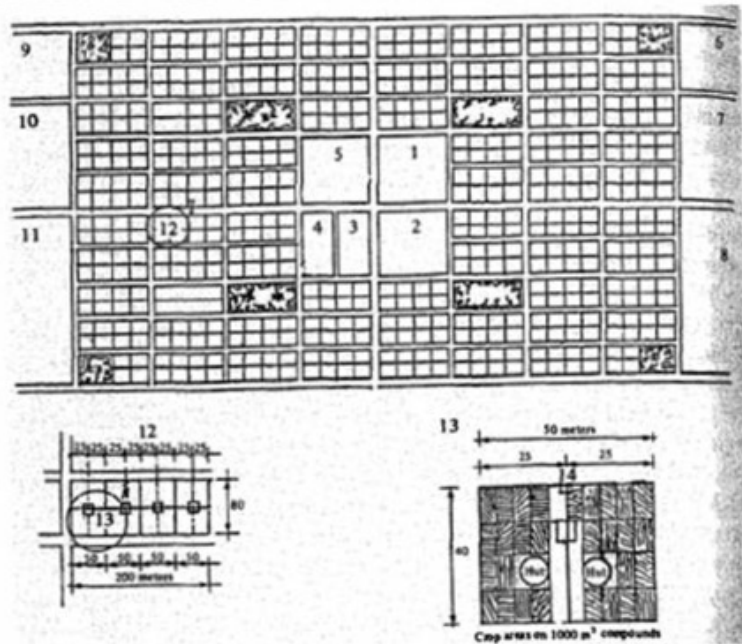
Source: James Scott, *Seeing Like a State* pp. 41-43



8. Bruges circa 1500, from a painting in the Town Hall, Bruges



9. Map of downtown Chicago, circa 1893



32. A government plan for a standard socialist village, Arsi region, Ethiopia. The layout shows 1, a mass organization office; 2, a kindergarten; 3, a health clinic; 4, a state cooperative shop; 5, peasant association office; 6, reserve plots; 7, a primary school; 8, a sports field; 9, a seed-multiplication center; 10, a handicrafts center; and 11, an animal-breeding station. Detail 12 depicts an enlargement of compound sites, and detail 13 is an enlargement of two sites, showing the neighborhood latrine at 14.



33. Aerial view of a resettlement site in southwestern Ethiopia, 1986

'Would it not be a great satisfaction to the king to know at a designated moment every year **the number of his subjects, in total and by region, with all the resources, wealth and poverty of each place...**

[Would it not be] a useful and necessary pleasure for him to be able, in his own office, to review in an hour's time the present and past condition of a great realm of which he is the head, and be able himself to **know with certitude in what consists his grandeur, his wealth, and his strengths?**'

The Marquis de Vauban, proposing an annual census to Louis XIV, 1686



The English Social Hierarchy in 1688 according to Gregory King,
 take from D.C. Coleman (1977) *The Economy of England 1450-1750*, OUP.

TABLE I
*Gregory King's estimate of population and wealth, England and Wales,
 1688*

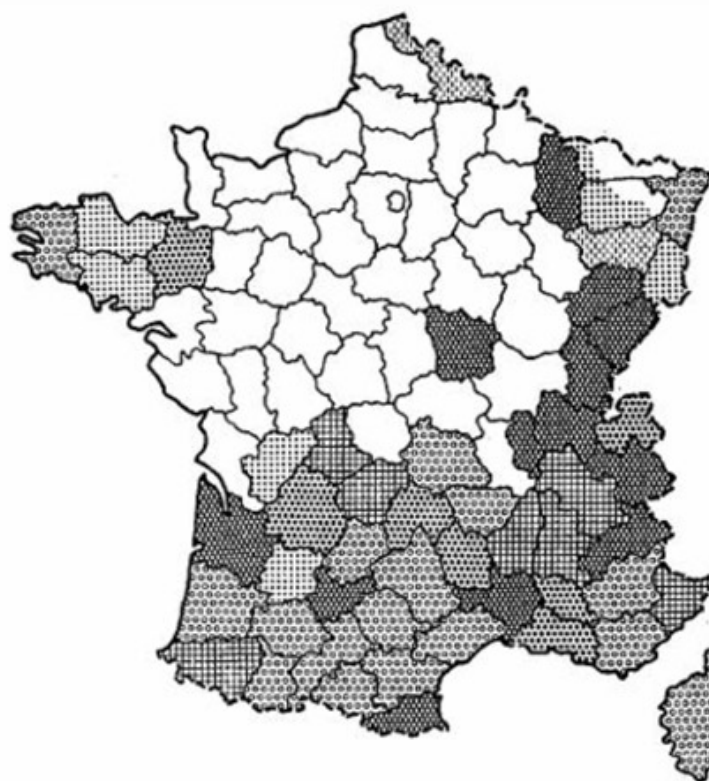
Number of families	Ranks, Degrees, Titles, and Qualifications	Heads per family	Number of persons	Yearly income per family
160	Temporal Lords	40	6400	2800
26	Spiritual Lords	20	520	1300
800	Baronets	16	12 800	880
600	Knights	13	7800	650
3000	Esquires	10	30 000	450
12 000	Gentlemen	8	96 000	280
5000	Persons in Offices	8	40 000	240
5000	Persons in Offices	6	30 000	120
2000	Merchants and Traders by Sea	8	16 000	400
8000	Merchants and Traders by Sea*	6	48 000	200
10 000	Persons in the Law	7	70 000	140
2000	Clergymen	6	12 000	60
8000	Clergymen	5	40 000	45
40 000	Freeholders	7	280 000	84
140 000	Freeholders	5	700 000	50
150 000	Farmers	5	750 000	44
16 000	Persons in Sciences and Liberal Arts	5	80 000	60
40 000	Shopkeepers and Tradesmen	4½	180 000	45
60 000	Artisans and Handicrafts	4	240 000	40
5000	Naval Officers	4	20 000	80
4000	Military Officers	4	16 000	60
511 586		5½	2 675 520	67
50 000	Common Seamen	3	150 000	20
364 000	Labouring People and Out Servants	3½	1 275 000	15
400 000	Cottagers and Paupers	3½	1 300 000	6.5
35 000	Common Soldiers	2	70 000	14
849 000		3½	2 795 000	10.5
	Vagrants		30 000	
849 000		3½	2 825 000	10.5
511 586	Increasing the Wealth of the Kingdom	5½	2 675 520	67
849 000	Decreasing the Wealth of the Kingdom	3½	2 825 000	10.5
1 360 586			5 500 520	







Source: *Two Tracts by Gregory King*, ed. G. E. Barnett (Baltimore, 1936).



-  wholly French-speaking
-  largely French-speaking but with some cantons holding to their own dialects

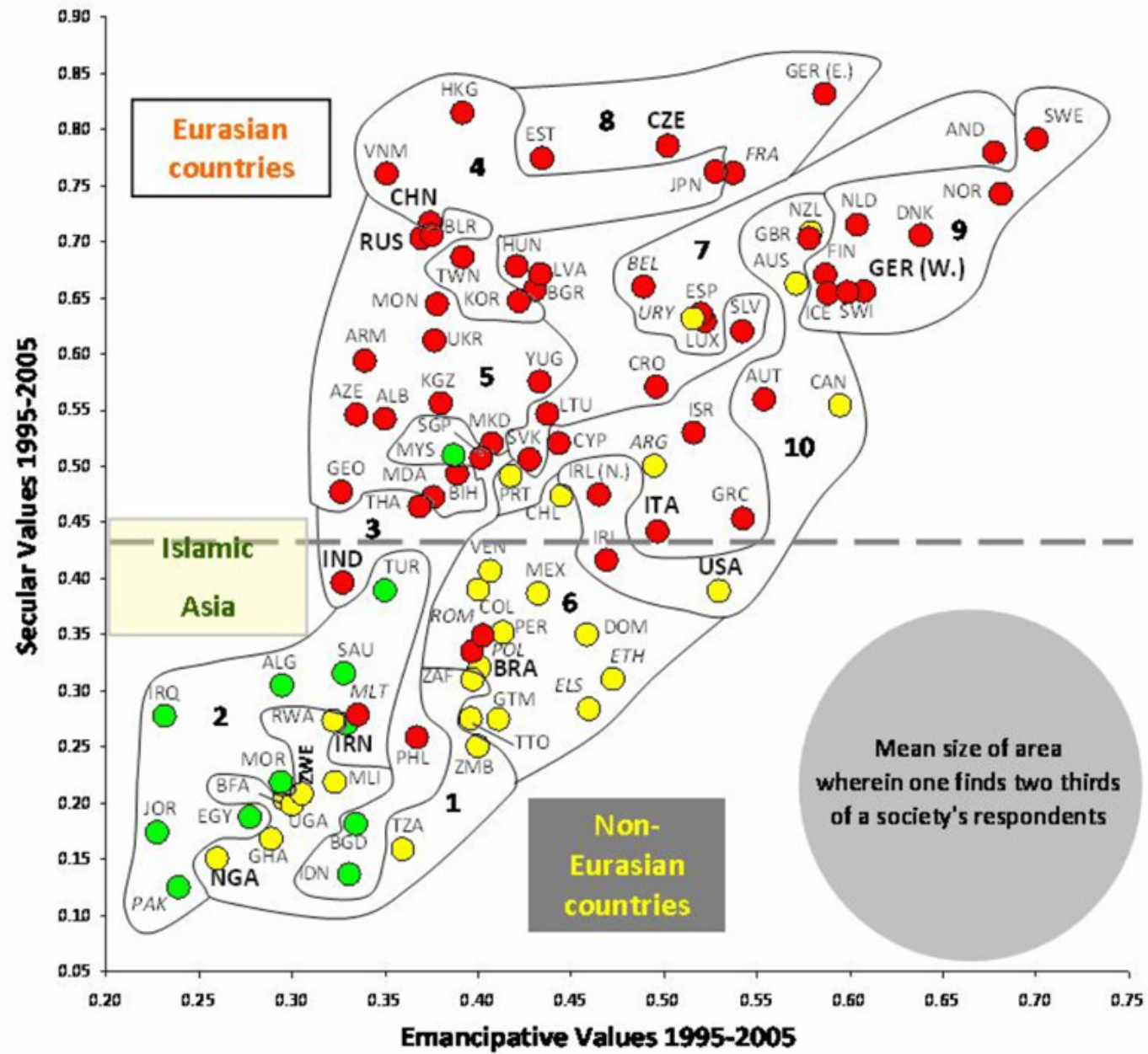
Map 2. French-speaking departments, 1835. SOURCE: Abel Hugo, *La France pittoresque* (Paris, 1835), 1: 16.



-  all or nearly all communes non-French-speaking
-  50%+ of communes non-French-speaking
-  significant proportion of communes non-French-speaking
-  cohesive groups of communes non-French-speaking
-  patois indicated
-  questionable

Map 3. Patois-speaking communes, 1863. SOURCE: Archives Nationales, F17* 3160, Ministère de l'instruction publique, "Statistique: Etnes divers."

Source: Weber, Eugen (1976) *Peasants into Frenchmen*, Stanford University Press, p. 68.



Secular-rationalism beyond Europe

Asia

- It is impossible to explain the secular-rationalism of east Asia without the Chinese state. China was once very religiously diverse, with strong Buddhist and Taoist subcultures, as well as smaller groups of Judeo-Christian faiths.
- During the Tang Dynasty (618-907), examination in Confucian works became the basis for recruitment into the imperial bureaucracy, while religion became severely proscribed.
- Confucianism is essentially a secular ideology (you might compare this to what would have happened in the Roman Empire if they suppressed Christianity and based access to public life on the study of Aristotle's *Ethics*)
- During the 'four Buddhist persecutions' of the 4th to the 10th centuries, many monasteries were destroyed, and Christians, Jews and Muslims were also targeted.

“People of the Western Ocean, should they propagate in the country the religion of heaven’s Lord, or clandestinely print books, or collect congregations to be preached to, and thereby deceive many people... the head or leader shall be **sentenced to immediate death** by strangulations... Those who are merely hearers or followers of the doctrine, **if they will not repent and recant**, shall be transported to the Mohammedan cities (in Turkistan) and **given to be slaves** to the beys and other powerful Mohammedans who are able to coerce them”

*- 1814 Amendment to China’s Fundamental Law,
concerning: ‘Wizards, Witches, and all Superstitions,
prohibited’*

- As in Europe, in China a nexus was formed between scholars and the bureaucracy - as to ascend to public service, you had to pass examination in Confucianism, just as Europeans had to graduate in the study of law.
- In Qing dynasty China, **one million** examinees competed for just 20,000 posts in the imperial bureaucracy. Though attaining a position was unlikely, failed applicants were trained in Confucian values, many of whom became scholars, teachers, or employed in clerical trades.

**Confucian Examination
Halls in Guangdong, 1873**



Why did Secular-Rationalism not Flourish in the Islamic World?

- The very early post-Mongol states maintained a commitment to secularism (Genghiz Khan had proclaimed religious freedom as part of his basic law)
- Post-Mongol and Turkic states separated secular law (*Yasa* for the Mongols, *Tuere* for the Turks) from religious law (shari'a), and their leaders took secular titles (*Shah* or *Sultan*, meaning King or Emperor, rather than *Caliph*)
- And, as in other parts of the world, secular rulers in post-Mongol countries came into conflict with religious authorities – e.g. Emperor Akbar's abolition of the *jizya* in India in 1579



Emperor Akbar's coins – the *Shahada* (left) was replaced by “Alahu Akbar” (right), which could mean either “God is great” or “Akbar is God”

Why did Secular-Rationalism not Flourish in the Islamic World?

- In the post-Mongol states of the Islamic world – unlike in Europe and China – there was no nexus between institutions of scholarship and the state.
- Until a very late point, the Ottomans recruited their civil servants from the *devshirme*, a form of military slavery; there was no ‘diffusion’ of secular values to the population as a whole.
- The bureaucratic elite remained a minority in Constantinople (Istanbul), and did not have popular support for its secularising policies (e.g. abolishing the *jizya* in 1856).

- Eventually, the post-Mongol states were 'resacralised' to varying degrees, as the *ulema* managed to convert and convince the sovereign.
- E.g. Safavid Persia (1501-), Mughal India (under Emperor Aurangzeb, r. 1658-1707)
- With resacralisation, pluralism came to an end.
- Though interestingly, secularism was revived as official ideology by nationalists in most of these states (e.g. by Reza Shah in Iran, Ataturk in Turkey, or Nehru in India)

Conclusion

Conclusion

- Variation in secular-rationalism may reflect processes of **socioeconomic change** (e.g. rising material security), but also is importantly determined by long-term processes of political and ideological conflict.
- Secular authorities and pre-state religious hierarchies have frequently been in **conflict** for the monopoly of legitimate authority. The (contingent) resolution of these struggles is a key determinant of the spread of secular-rational ideals.

- In the conflict between secular and spiritual authorities, states have frequently taken direct action against religious hierarchies by nationalising or **expropriating** religious sites (e.g. in Japan, China, Reformation Europe, revolutionary France); in establishing their legitimacy, they have also i) **sponsored** non-religious centres of knowledge as a source of secular morality (law); ii) **socialised** population into secular ideology as a precondition of bureaucratic recruitment; and iii) acted as **rationalising agents** in their own right, in order to make their societies legible. In addition, there may be a direct effect of state formation (or state failure) as a source of (or detriment to) order and *human security*, rendering religious faith less (or more) salient to everyday life.
- Eurasian states, having formed much earlier than other regimes and frequently having experienced absolutism, have gone further in these areas. However, as the Islamic world shows, the resolution of these struggles is contingent.

Next Time

- This lecture, we've looked at the puzzle of why secular societies are overwhelmingly located in Eurasia, while the rest of the world tends to be religious, and suggested that the explanation lies in the relationship between state formation and conflict with religious hierarchies.
- In the next (and final) lecture, we will look at the puzzle of why Eurasian societies were the first to experience economic growth after the Dark Ages, and why they have grown so rapidly in the twentieth century while others have fallen behind.

Why Did Economic Growth Start in Eurasia?

Income per capita for the year, 1500. Source: Maddison (2008)



Source: Maddison (2008) Historical Statistics of the World Economy, 1-2008 AD.

Why Did Eurasian States Develop the Fastest Economically in the Twentieth Century?

