

# When Inequality Matters: The Role of Wealth during England's Democratic Transition

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## Objectives

- Use RD design to examine the effect of wealth inequality on development during England's democratic transition.
- Provide evidence on the social and political consequences of inequality as the right to vote is extended first to the urban middle-class and then the rural poor.
- Add further clarity on the role of elite capture during democratic transitions by exploring how inequality interacts with specific institutional reforms.

## Motivation

- Do democratic reforms confer equal benefits to all citizens?
- While most theories predict a more inclusive democratic system encourages economic growth, there is little conclusive evidence on whether the welfare gains following democratic transitions depend on the degree of pre-existing inequality.
- I use the geographic boundary between two distinct historical states in England to identify how initial differences in wealth distribution impact the evolution of economic development.
- Unlike previous empirical work which has mostly employed cross-sectional measures such as a land gini, the historical state boundary used in the present study provides an exogenous source of institutional variation in land concentration that is orthogonal to local geography.

## Background

- 410 CE • Roman forces leave Britain
- 597 CE • St. Augustine introduces Christianity
- 793 CE • Scandinavian incursions begin
- 866 CE • Viking armies seize York
- 878/886 CE • Danelaw Established
- 954 CE • Danelaw ends
- 1008 CE • First use of term *Deone lage*
- 1017 CE • Cnut becomes King of England
- 1066 CE • Norman conquest

Figure 1: Timeline

## The Danelaw

Table 1: Anglo-Scandinavian State Characteristics

	Anglo-Saxon	Danelaw
Organization	Hundred	Wapentake
Society	Feudal tenants	Free peasantry
Inheritance	Primogeniture	Paritability
Farming	Open-field	Independent

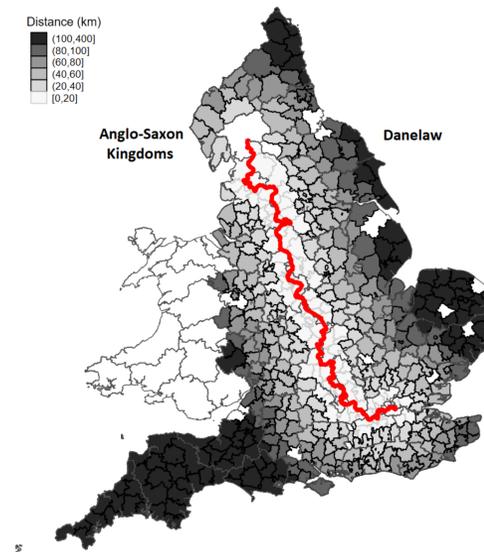


Figure 2: Danelaw Treaty Boundary (Baker & Brookes, 2013)

## Data

- Domesday Book 1086 CE (Palmer, 2010)
- Demographic Processes in England and Wales, 1851-1911 (Friedlander et al., 2007)
- Electoral Constituency Data (Bogart et al., 2018)

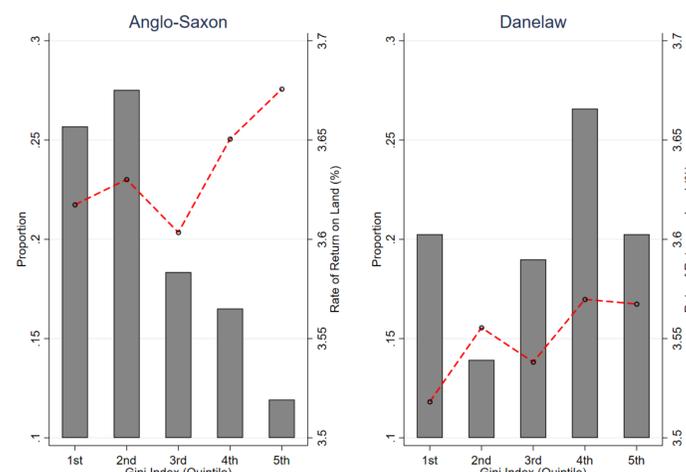


Figure 4: Gini Index (Border Distance ≤ 50km)

## RD Design

$$\Delta y_{db} = \beta \mathbf{D}_d + f(\text{location}_d) + \sum_{i=1}^n s_d^b + (\mathbf{X}'_d)\Gamma + \varepsilon_{db}$$

Where the variable  $\mathbf{D}_d$  equals one if district  $d$  is located on the side of the boundary where the historical state of the Danelaw existed, and zero otherwise.  $f(\text{location}_d)$  controls for smooth polynomial functions of distance to the Danelaw border.  $\sum_{i=1}^n s_d^b$  represents segment fixed effects of equal length.

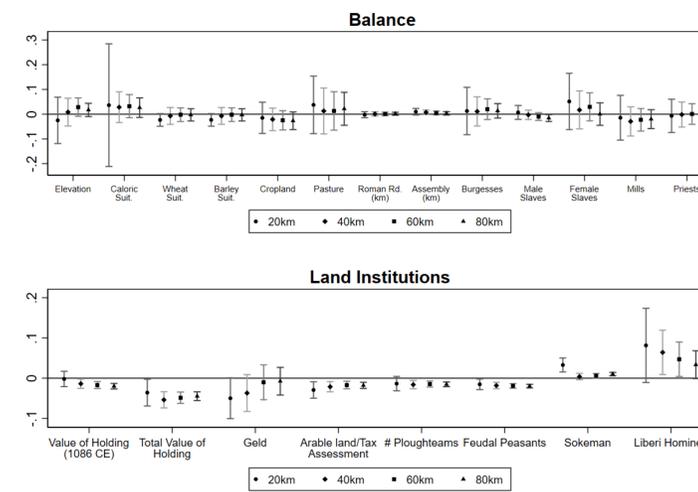


Figure 3: Sample Characteristics

## Main Results

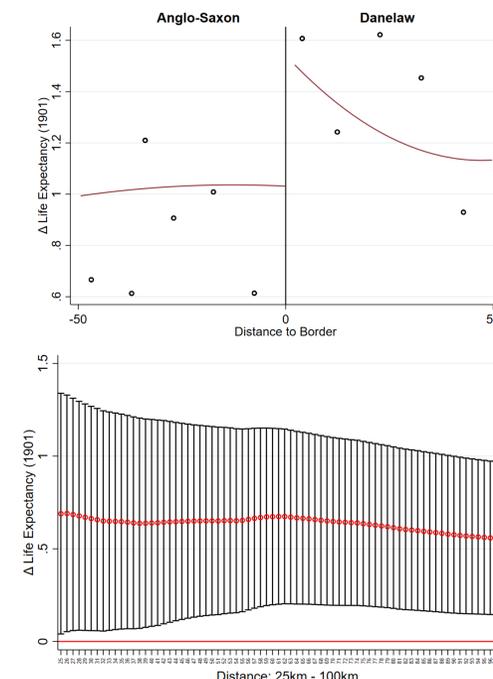


Figure 5: Life Expectancy ( $\Delta$  1901 - 1891)

## Mechanism: Franchise Extension

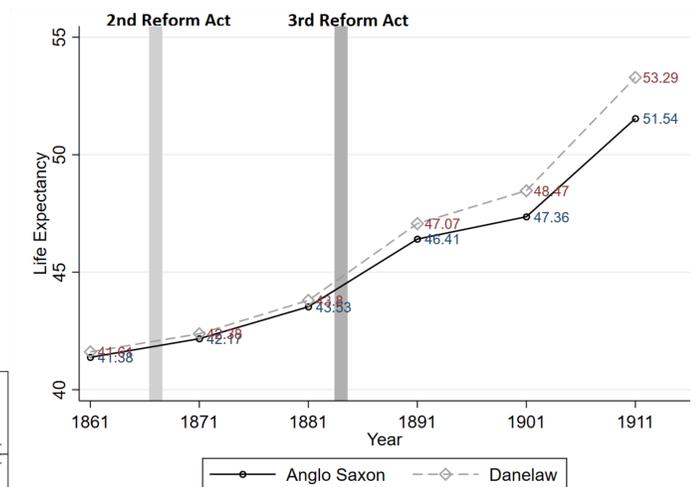


Figure 6: Difference-in-Difference Estimates

## Mechanism: Patronage

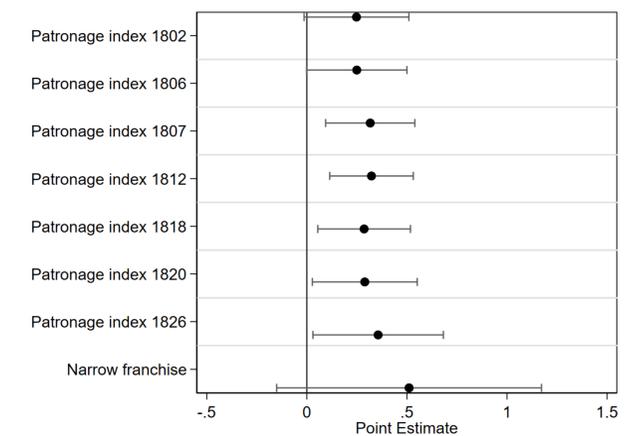


Figure 7: Electoral Constituency Characteristics

## Next Steps

- Gather information on local redistribution.
- Compile voter turnout data.
- Rule out alternative explanations (e.g., migration, industrialization, etc.).

## Contact Information

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