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The autocratic roots of social distrust

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Highlights

- This paper identifies a new source of social distrust: an individual's autocratic origin.
- Individuals whose ancestors migrated from countries with higher autocracy levels are less likely to trust others and to vote in presidential elections in the U.S.
- The impact of autocratic culture on trust lasts for at least three generations whereas the impact on voting disappears after one generation.
- The results are not driven by selection into migration or other factors such as the GDP, education, or the strength of family ties in home countries in the U.S.
- Autocratic culture also has similar impacts on trust and voting across Europe.

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