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Research fields

Political Economy, Cultural Economics, Applied Econometrics, Economic History

Current position

Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University of Vienna

Graduate studies

Ph.D. in Economics   2017

University of Lausanne, Switzerland

Thesis title: «On exposure to violence and political behaviour»

Committee: Elena Esposito, Mathias Thoenig (Advisor) , David Yanagizawa-Drott

M.Sc. in Economics   2012

University of Lausanne, Switzerland

Working papers

Inglorious wars and political radicalization

Abstract. This paper investigates how conscription in inglorious wars affects political behaviour. The hypothesis tested is that fighting such wars weaken the identification with the polity. During WWII men from Eastern France were forcibly conscripted to the German army. A discontinuity in the draft rule within affected regions allows establishing a plausibly causal link from this conscription to voting behaviour. In early elections, incorporation has a positive and significant effect on abstention. With the emergence of the radical right, the effect on abstention is transformed into increased support for anti-establishment candidates. To test if this behaviour is the result of low political trust I exploit political discourse data. Wehrmacht conscription increases electoral support not only for the radical right, but for all candidates that are more critical towards the polity. Survey data confirms these findings; individuals living in places more exposed are more critical of political classes and less trustful towards institutions.

Seeds of Populism: Media Coverage of Violence and Anti-Immigration Politics

(with M. Couttenier, S. Hatte, and M. Thoenig)

Abstract. We study how news coverage of immigrants' criminality impacted municipality-level votes in the 2009 referendum on "Minaret Ban" in Switzerland. The campaign, successfully led by the populist party SVP, played aggressively on the fears of Muslim immigration and linked Islam with terrorism and violence. We make use of an exhaustive dataset of violent crime detection that we combine with detailed information on crime coverage from 12 newspapers. First, we quantify the extent of the media bias in covering immigrant's criminality. Second, we estimate a theory-based voting equation at the municipality-level. Exploiting random variations in crime occurrences, we find a positive and large effect of news coverage on the votes in favour of the Minaret ban. Our counterfactual quantifications show that, in presence of a law forbidding the report of crime perpetrators nationality, the outcome of the referendum would have been nearly reverted at the national level.

Technological innovations in electoral campaigns: Direct canvassing and partisan mobilization

(with J. Buggle)

Abstract. Despite the opportunities that technological innovations offer to reach an ever growing audience, traditional means to access the electorate, such as direct canvassing, are widely used. In this paper we argue that the main reason direct canvassing persists as a campaign strategy is because it is a very efficient mean to mobilize voters that are already supportive of a candidate's program. To test our hypothesis we exploit a unique historical context: in 1896, due to limited funding, the Democratic Presidential candidate adopted an unprecedented campaign strategy by using the railroad to go on a national speaking tour. We make use of the railroad network to draw causal inference of the impact of direct canvassing on the electoral outcome. Results indicate that the Democratic candidate obtained significantly more votes in places where he gave a speech. We then exploit political competition in the House of Representatives election to disentangle between votes gained from persuasion and mobilization. The electoral gain of the Democratic candidate can be decomposed into 65% from increased mobilization of his electorate, and 35% from persuading Republicans.

Work in progress

The long-run consequences of extractive institutions: Economic Aryanization (with J. Senn)

Abstract. This paper investigates the channels through which extractive institutions affect development. We test the hypothesis that extractive institutions reduce competition, which in turn reduces the incentives of firms to innovate, and eventually slows down growth (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012). During the German occupation of France in WWII, the policy of «Economic Aryanazation» was introduced. The purpose of this policy was to exclude the Jewish population from any economic activity. Variation in this set-up comes from the «Demarcation line», the line separating France into the Occupied (North-West), and «Free» (SE) zones for 2.5 years. The initial drawing of this line was so imprecise, that the authorities of the «Free» zone had to wait several months before learning where the border was fixed (Alary, 2003).

Conferences & Workshops

2017

Erasmus Political Economy Workshop, ASREC Annual Meeting

2016

Rimini Conference in Economics and Finance, 31st Annual Congress of the European Economic Association, Annual Meeting of the Swiss Statistics and Economics Society, 13th Augustin Cournot Doctoral Days, Lisbon Meeting on Institutions and Political Economy

2015

14th Journées Louis-André Gérard-Varet, Spring Meeting of Young Economists

Fellowships, Grants & Awards

Best Paper Award, 13th Augustin Cournot Doctoral Days	2016
Research Fund CHF 3000. –, University of Lausanne, Switzerland	2014
Greek State Scholarship Foundation (I.K.Y) Scholar	2010

Teaching experience

Main instructor

Political Economy (Master's), University of Vienna

Seminar in Economic Policy (Master's), University of Lausanne

Graduate teaching assistant

Economic Growth (Master's), University of Lausanne

Applied Econometrics (Master's), University of Lausanne

Applied Econometrics and Statistics (Undergraduate), University of Lausanne

Academic community service

Hiring Commission (Development Economics), University of Lausanne

Hiring Commission (Public Economics), University of Lausanne

Faculty Council, HEC, University of Lausanne

French B.Sc. Students' Evaluation, HEC, University of Lausanne

M.Sc. in Economics Evaluation Committee, University of Lausanne

Undergraduate studies

B.Sc. in Economics   2005

University of Macedonia, Greece

Erasmus Programme   2005
Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal

Skills

Softwares: Stata, Mata, ArcGIS, LaTex

Languages: Greek (native), French (native), English (fluent), Italian (intermediate),
                           Portuguese (intermediate), Spanish (intermediate), German (basics)

References

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