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Research fields

Political Economy, Public Economics, Economic History

Current position

Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University of Vienna

Graduate studies

Ph.D. in Economics (with honors)

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

On war and political radicalization

Abstract. During World War II, the Third Reich annexed the French eastern borderlands and forcibly conscripted their inhabitants into the Wehrmacht. I demonstrate how this historical event persistently affected political preferences and how these translate into observable electoral support as the political landscape evolves. Municipality-level conscription data, voting outcomes, and political discourse data are combined to estimate the impact of conscription on support for radical candidates and on abstention in elections during the 1965-2017 period. Identification exploits the fact that conscription affected different birth cohorts in each annexed region by using eligible births as an instrument. In earlier elections in which candidate positions were more similar, both radical and moderate candidates were penalized in municipalities where more men were conscripted, resulting in higher abstention. In recent, more polarized elections, conscription increased support for radical candidates. Survey data is then used to show how this transition is due to reduced political trust.

THE LOGIC OF FEAR – Populism and media coverage of immigrant crimes

(with [M. Couttenier](#), [S. Hatte](#), and [M. Thoenig](#))

Abstract. We study how news coverage of immigrant criminality impacted municipality-level votes in the November 2009 “minaret ban” referendum in Switzerland. The campaign, successfully led by the populist Swiss People's Party, played aggressively on fears of Muslim immigration and linked Islam with terrorism and violence. We combine an exhaustive violent crime detection dataset with detailed information on crime coverage from 12 newspapers. The data allow us to quantify the extent of pre-vote media bias in the coverage of migrant criminality. We then estimate a theory-based voting equation in the cross-section of municipalities. Exploiting random variations in crime occurrences, we find a first-order, positive effect of news coverage on political support for the minaret ban. Counterfactual simulations show that, under a law forbidding newspapers to disclose a perpetrator's nationality, the vote in favor of the ban would have decreased by 5 percentage points (from 57.6\% to 52.6\%).

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 Aryanization» 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, & Seminars

2019 Seminar in Political Economy (HSE Moscow), Seminar in International Economics (WiiW Vienna), Masaryk University Economic Seminar (MUES Brno)

2018 Regular Research Seminar (JKU Linz)

2017 SFB 884 Seminar (U Mannheim), IdEP Research Seminar (USI Lugano), 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

Doctoral Prize "Nicolas and Hélène Porphyrogenis"	2018
Heinrich Graf Hardegg Stiftung EUR 5000.-	2018
Best Paper Award, 13 th Augustin Cournot Doctoral Days	2016
University of Lausanne Research Fund CHF 3000.-	2014
Greek State Scholarship Foundation (I.K.Y.) Scholar	2010 - 2013

Teaching experience

Main instructor

Political Economy (Graduate), University of Vienna

Quantitative Economic History (Undergraduate), University of Vienna

Graduate teaching assistant

Economic Growth (Graduate), University of Lausanne

Applied Econometrics (Graduate), University of Lausanne

Applied Econometrics and Statistics (Undergraduate), University of Lausanne

Academic community service

Commissions

Hiring Commission (Development Economics), University of Lausanne 2016

Hiring Commission (Public Economics), University of Lausanne 2015

French B.Sc. Students' Evaluation, HEC, University of Lausanne 2015

Refereeing

American Political Science Review, Swiss National Science Foundation, Swiss Journal of Economics and Statistics, The Economic Journal

Undergraduate studies

B.Sc. in Economics

2005

University of Macedonia, Greece

Erasmus Program

2005

Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal

Skills

Softwares: Stata, Mata, R, ArcGIS, LaTeX

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

References

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