The Political Economy of Anti-Immigrant Parties

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1 Overview

My dissertation addresses a reemergent question in comparative politics: How do anti-immigrant parties achieve and exercise political power in democracies? This question has acquired new bite, as Western democracies increasingly come to grapple with refugee crises, terrorist attacks, and concomitant growth in the demand for xenophobic and parochial policies. Reflecting the recent turbulence, parties on the far right have enjoyed unprecedented success, not just in longtime strongholds (Switzerland, Austria) but also in countries where previous successes were either partial and sporadic (Denmark, France) or wholly nonexistent (Sweden).[1]

The literature on anti-immigrant parties, although voluminous, is inadequate to explain their resurgence. For example, “demand-side” theories contend that anti-immigrant parties prosper under high levels of immigration and unemployment (Golder 2003). Yet, anti-immigrant parties have achieved their most notable successes in countries with comparatively low rates of unemployment and immigration, such as Austria, Denmark, and Switzerland. On the other hand, “supply-side” theories attribute these parties’ success to their internal characteristics; for example, Kitschelt (with McGann 1997) argues that far right parties are successful only when they combine exclusionary social ideologies

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Denmark – http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/22/opinion/denmarks-far-right-kingmakers.html
with free market economic platforms. However, in recent years, anti-immigrant parties have experienced success endorsing economically left- as well as right-wing platforms (de Lange 2007). Not only does the current crop of anti-immigrant parties – many of them rising, for the first time, to positions of direct policy influence – thusly invite scholars to revise old theories about how parties on the far right achieve political power, it has generated new questions about how they plan to wield it.

In this prospectus, I develop a new explanation for how anti-immigrant parties achieve electoral success, and of why they so often fail. My theory focuses on an overlooked axis of variation among anti-immigrant parties, their programmatic commitments on economic issues such as redistribution. While scholars have grown increasingly aware of the ideological diversity of anti-immigrant parties, they have not explained why these parties take such varied positions on economic issues, nor analyzed the implications of their platforms for party performance (de Lange 2007; Mudde 2007). Nevertheless, for many anti-immigrant parties, these commitments are no less central (and perhaps even more important) to their ideology than ethnocentrism, as the following quote suggests:

Most [xenophobic parties] combine cultural conservatism with left-wing economic policies that please their older, less-educated supporters. […] Two exceptions are the Swiss Peoples Party and [Germany’s Alternativ für Deutschland (AfD)], both liberal opponents of large welfare states. (Asked recently whether she would collaborate with Marine Le Pen, the AfD’s leader, Frauke Petry, answered with surprise that the FN is “a largely socialist party” whereas her party believes “in freedom and personal responsibility”.)

The Economist 2015

Why do anti-immigrant parties cultivate economic populism in some contexts and “personal responsibility” and fiscal conservatism in others? How do the economic platforms that anti-immigrant parties adopt shape their electoral performance? Finally, do anti-immigrant parties actually implement these platforms once in power? These questions are fundamental to a convincing explanation, not just of the electoral breakthrough of the far right, but of their electoral consolidation over time (Golder 2016). Parties cannot achieve lasting power on the basis of single issues. They must formulate a credible plan for government, one that inevitably includes decisions about how to manage tradeoffs between spending and taxation, inflation and unemployment, and growth and inequality. Unfortunately, the literature on anti-immigrant parties – and on the far right in general – has yet to explore the causes and effects of the economic platforms they endorse. This
gap is all the more glaring given that so much of the literature attributes the success of anti-immigrant parties to economic factors, such as unemployment, economic instability, and inequality.

Beginning with the observation that the groups most opposed to immigration – and therefore the natural constituencies of anti-immigrant parties – are the relatively uneducated and unskilled (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007), I hypothesize that the economic composition of the electorate gives rise to different electoral incentives and challenges. In low unemployment economies, as in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, the underrepresentation of working-class voters creates an incentive for anti-immigrant parties to reach across the aisle to moderates. However, because these voters are more economically conservative than their core constituents, anti-immigrant parties must compromise along a different axis of political contestation: redistribution. Thus, with varying degrees of success, anti-immigrant parties in Austria, Belgium, Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Switzerland have sought to blend blue-collar nativism with fiscally conservative positions on issues such as taxation and trade (see table 1). In high unemployment economies, particularly where the welfare state is strong, an opposing set of incentives prevails. Thus, in countries such as France, Finland, and Denmark, anti-immigrant parties pursue a strategy of “welfare chauvinism,” promising to maintain and even enlarge the welfare state, but to enforce rigid boundaries on who is allowed to enjoy its fruits (Crepaz and Damron 2009).
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Freedom Party (FPÖ)</td>
<td>Center-right</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belgium (Flanders)</td>
<td>New Flemish Alliance (N-VA)</td>
<td>Right-wing</td>
<td>31.9*</td>
<td>5.1</td>
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<td>–</td>
<td>Flemish Interest (VB)</td>
<td>Center-right</td>
<td>5.92</td>
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<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Danish People’s Party (DF)</td>
<td>Center-left</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>The Finns Party</td>
<td>Left-wing</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>9.5</td>
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<td>National Front (FN)</td>
<td>Center-left</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>10.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Sweden Democrats (SD)</td>
<td>Center-left</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>UK Independence Party (UKIP)</td>
<td>Center-right</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>Freedom Party (PVV)</td>
<td>Center-right</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>6.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Alternative for Germany (AfD)</td>
<td>Right-wing</td>
<td>4.3</td>
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<td>–</td>
<td>National Democratic Party (NPD)</td>
<td>Center</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Swiss People’s Party (SVP)</td>
<td>Right-wing</td>
<td>29.4*</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
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<td>Norway</td>
<td>Progress Party</td>
<td>Center-right</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
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Despite these different incentives, anti-immigrant parties face a similar need to credibly commit to the winning platform. This dilemma is especially sharp in low unemployment economies, where anti-immigrant parties must commit to policies that are more economically conservative than their blue-collar core prefers. One strategy that parties can use to bind themselves to economically conservative policies is the nomination of candidates with greater human and economic capital than their core constituency (cf. Persson and Tabellini 1997). Contrary to standard accounts, I show that the inability of anti-immigrant parties to recruit wealthy candidates, and thereby to credibly commit to conservative economic platforms, explains the characteristic weakness of these parties in low unemployment states. By contrast, in low unemployment countries where anti-immigrant parties have achieved enduring success, these parties have solved the recruitment problem – albeit by selecting candidates who are descriptively and ideologically far removed from their core constituency.

In the second half of my prospectus, I substantiate this argument using data from Switzerland, where the anti-immigrant Swiss People’s Party (SVP) is one of the few governing radical right parties in the world. Using a new data set of more than 11,000 Swiss political candidates from 1995-2011 – a period spanning the rise of the most powerful anti-immigrant party in Western Europe – I show not only that the descriptive gap between politicians and voters is largest among political parties for the SVP, but that SVP politicians endorse much more conservative policies than the average SVP voter prefers. Yet, SVP voters continue to reward candidates for being wealthier, better educated, and more xenophobic, even though it results in poorer representation on economic issues such as regulation and redistribution. These findings resonate with the research of Roemer, Lee, and van der Straeten (2007) and Shayo (2009), among others, who contend that the multidimensionality of voters’ preferences – over cultural identity and xenophobia, on the one hand, and redistribution on the other – leads voters to choose more conservative policies than they would otherwise prefer.

Moving forward, I plan to test my theory more rigorously. One possibility is to examine a core implication of my theory – that the choice of economic platform determines which voters are on the margin of supporting anti-immigrant parties. For example, while anti-immigrant parties who position themselves on the economic left will be more attractive to left-wing voters, the latter may not be sufficiently xenophobic to support the former. However, shocks to xenophobia such as terrorist attacks should be more likely to push left-wing voters to support left-wing anti-immigrant parties, and vice versa. I am also looking at how differences in the local penetration of the welfare state, as reflected by
municipal tax rates, affect anti-immigrant party strategy. Switzerland, with its federal tax structure and tradition of direct democracy, provides an ideal setting in which to analyze this relationship.

Lastly, I plan to compare the governing styles and strategies of anti-immigration parties in Western and Eastern Europe, such as the SVP and Poland’s Law and Justice Party (PiS). I am especially interested in the sustainability of leftist anti-immigration governments. As Peters (2015) has shown, governments have been able to maintain rigid anti-immigration policies only at the expense of opening their markets to trade. However, because the opening of markets negatively impacts labor and wages, the restriction of immigration puts pressure on the fiscal capacity of the welfare state. The tension between the economic liberalism and social conservatism inherent in left-wing anti-immigrationism has raised “serious questions” in Poland’s business establishment “about the state of mind of the potential new government” under PiS (Financial Times 2015). Along similar lines, Finnish voters became rapidly disenchanted with the leftist, anti-immigrant Finn’s Party, which promised to strengthen the Finnish welfare state without addressing the competitiveness of Finnish wages (The Helsinki Times 2015). Although these examples raise important questions about the viability of anti-immigrant parties in high unemployment countries, to my knowledge, there has not yet been a comparative study of anti-immigrant governments. However, given that anti-immigrant parties constitute the “fastest growing party family in Europe” (Golder 2016) and the “most successful of the new party families” (Mudde 2007), the literature is ripe for a study of how these parties are likely to exert their newfound influence.

2 On the electoral appeal of anti-immigrant parties

How do anti-immigrant parties come to power? Perhaps the most prominent hypothesis in the literature is that these parties are successful when unemployment and immigration are high (Golder 2003). While methodologically sophisticated, this body of research is empirically ambiguous and weakly theorized. As the contradictory findings of Golder (2003) and Arzheimer (2009; with Carter 2006) suggest, there is no consensus in the literature regarding the effect of aggregate unemployment on support for far right parties. At the macro-level, anti-immigrant and economically conservative parties have been most successful in low unemployment countries such as Austria, Norway, and Switzerland (Norris 2005). Perhaps most importantly, there is no convincing theoretical story for why economic grievances would mobilize support for fiscally conservative parties, which many
anti-immigrant parties are.

In view of these deficiencies, scholars have recently turned to “supply-side” explanations that focus attention on the internal characteristics of anti-immigrant parties. These characteristics are typically sorted into the ideology, organization, and personnel of anti-immigrant parties (e.g., Art 2011; Golder 2016).

An important precursor to my argument was made by Kitschelt (with McGann 1997), who argued that radical right parties are successful only when they adopt a “winning formula” combining exclusionary social ideologies with free market economic platforms. This is because, while nativist and conservative sociocultural appeals draw blue-collar workers and small domestic producers, far right parties can only fully mobilize the latter group by espousing conservative positions on issues such as economic regulation and taxes. Thus, Kitschelt (2007) concludes, a “market-liberal appeal may be a necessary, albeit not a sufficient condition of radical right-wing electoral success.”

The literature has largely rejected this hypothesis, as parties on the radical right have enjoyed success endorsing leftist as well as conservative economic platforms (de Lange 2007; Mudde 2007) – even “blurring” their positions on economics altogether (Rovny 2013). However, merely pointing out the empirical shortcomings of Kitschelt’s hypothesis is insufficiently charitable to the underlying logic of the argument, namely, that successful parties seek to assemble significant voter constituencies through the strategic use of party programs that appeal to moderate voters without alienating their extremist base (with McGann 1997, p. vii). Thus, even if, as de Lange (2007) argues, the economic component of Kitschelt’s “winning formula” may have evolved from fiscal conservatism to welfare chauvinism – although even this shift should not be overstated – Kitschelt’s underlying analysis remains insightful.

The deeper problem with Kitschelt’s argument is that it does not identify the constraints on parties’ programmatic appeals, which prevent them from promising anything and everything to voters. These constraints take the form of parties’ credibility. In the case of anti-immigrant parties in low unemployment, the credibility constraint is obvious: The core constituencies of anti-immigrant parties typically hail from blue-collar sectors, who favor greater redistribution than the median voter prefers. Given moderate voters’ reasonable beliefs about the biases of these parties, how have economically conservative, anti-immigrant parties credibly committed to implementing economically conservative policies once in power? Because Kitschelt does not recognize this constraint, he cannot explain why anti-immigrant parties who adopt economically conservative platforms – that
is, who imbibe the winning formula – so often fail at the polls. However, as shown in figure 1 below, many anti-immigrant parties have positioned themselves on the economic right without success.

Art (2011) provides one of the most sophisticated supply-side explanations for anti-immigrant party success. Using a wide range of case studies, he argues that variation in the success of anti-immigrant parties is chiefly attributable to differences in their personnel, organization, and cohesiveness. Specifically, anti-immigrant parties are successful only when they are able to attract moderate, sensible members who temper the party’s extremist tendencies. By granting the party competence, cohesion, and ideological flexibility, moderates enable the party to respond quickly and credibly to political opportunities.

Art’s explanation of the success of anti-immigrant parties in Western Europe uniquely captures the enormous supply-side variation in the competence and credibility of far right parties. However, due to his inductive approach, the indicators of competence that Art identifies tend to strike the reader as unsystematic and ad hoc. For example, Art claims that parties’ moderation, ideological flexibility, and organizational cohesion are requisites for their success. However, these variables can logically be in tension; for example, adding moderates can result in the fissioning of the radical core. Moreover, empirically, parties have benefitted from sacrificing moderation and cohesion in exchange for ideological flexibility. For example, many observers interpreted the massive defection, in 1998, of the conservative wing of the French National Front (FN) to spell the demise of the party. Yet, this defection has enabled the FN to credibly reform itself as an economically left-wing party, and therefore to capitalize on rising unemployment and industrial decline in France (Igounet 2014; Ivaldi 2015).

3 Theory and hypotheses

In contrast with much of the literature, which has treated the ideology of anti-immigrant parties as homogeneous and fixed, my dissertation asks: Why do anti-immigrant parties exhibit so much diversity, particularly with respect to redistribution? The range of this diversity, as well as its implications for party success, are suggested by figure 1, which plots the standardized redistributive positions of anti-immigrant parties against their vote share separately for high and low income country-years.

My theory begins with the observation that, while many more voters harbor anti-
immigrant preferences than turn out for anti-immigrant parties, the groups most likely to oppose immigration are the relatively uneducated and unskilled (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007). By driving the numerical representation of these voters, the state of the economy gives rise to distinct electoral incentives and challenges. In low unemployment states, anti-immigrant parties must commit to economic platforms that are more conservative than their typically blue-collar and agrarian constituencies prefer. The need to credibly commit to these platforms, in turn, generates a demand on the part of parties for wealthy and successful candidates – a political class referred to in Austria as *feschisten*, or good looking fascists (Art 2011, p. ix).

In high unemployment states, anti-immigrant parties confront a lower barrier to success, as they do not need to recruit wealthy candidates in order to credibly commit to the winning platform. Nevertheless, in high unemployment states, the commitment problem may recur in a different guise for anti-immigrant parties whom voters associate with an authoritarian past, such as the French National Front (FN). In order for these parties to credibly commit to left-wing platforms, they must take costly steps to distance themselves from their right-wing legacy – to the point of culling respectable *feschisten* from their ranks (as the FN did in the late 90s).
My theory generates different hypotheses compared to either demand- or supply-side theories. Because demand-side theories do not distinguish between types of anti-immigrant parties, they do not anticipate differences in the types of voters who are on the margins of supporting an anti-immigrant party. However, according to my argument, factors such as unemployment and immigration should only benefit anti-immigrant parties that position themselves on the left. On the other hand, supply-side theories do not provide a theoretical framework for interpreting the tradeoffs between party ideology, personnel, and cohesion. According to my theory, party personnel are helpful to the extent that they signal the party’s commitment to the winning ideology. Thus, a collection of center-right candidates may be helpful in one context (as in Switzerland) and negligible in another (as in France). Moreover, parties can actually benefit from sacrificing ideological moderation and cohesion in exchange for programmatic flexibility.

3.1 Empirical implications

1. In low unemployment states, anti-immigrant parties succeed only when they can recruit candidates with high levels of personal wealth and human capital, as these candidates credibly commit the party to conservative economic platforms. Therefore, candidates of successful anti-immigrant parties in low unemployment states will be wealthier, better educated, and more conservative relative both to candidates of unsuccessful anti-immigrant parties, and to their supporters.

2. In high unemployment states, anti-immigrant parties can be successful without committing to conservative platforms. Consequently, they do not face the same recruitment problem as parties in high unemployment states. However, in high unemployment states, anti-immigrant parties whom voters associate with an authoritarian past must take costly steps to distance themselves from their conservative legacy.

4 From farmers to CEOs: The rise of the Swiss People’s Party

On January 9th, 2016, Toni Brunner announced that he would be stepping down from his post as chairman of Switzerland’s governing Swiss People’s Party (SVP), in order to spend more time working in local politics and on his farm. Brunner’s resignation neatly
symbolizes the SVP’s rise, beginning in 1995, from a middling agrarian party into a dominant, highly professionalized force in Swiss politics. A farmer whose predecessor was a farmer (whose predecessor was also a farmer), Brunner is to be succeeded by Albert Rösti, a business consultant with an MBA from the University of Rochester.

In this section, I describe data that I have been collecting on political candidates in Switzerland from 1995-2015. These data, which contain the names, ages, party affiliations, home towns, and occupations of around 11,000 candidates for parliament, provide insight as to how and why the Swiss People’s Party (SVP) was able to succeed where other anti-immigrant parties in Switzerland had failed. In particular, I suggest that these data show that the SVP has distinguished itself through the recruitment of wealthy and successful candidates, who have been able to sell the party’s mix of blue-collar nativism and fiscal conservative to economically conservative voters.

4.1 Background

For most of the 20th century, Swiss politics were viewed as an aberrant “case of failure of the radical right” (Skenderovic 2009, p. 4). This was for good reason: Despite seemingly propitious institutional conditions for the emergence of a radical party, such as extreme political decentralization and weakly rooted partisan identities, anti-immigrant movements prior to the 1990s, which prominently took the form of a “Movement against Overforeignization” in the 1960s and 70s, gained virtually no traction.

Despite the scholarly perception that the Swiss were inoculated against fascist appeals, in the late 1990s, the Swiss People’s Party, a traditional agrarian party, took a sharp turn to the right. Although both groups share an ethnocentric and populist ideology, the chief difference between SVP and the Movement against Overforeignization lies in their economic ideology. Where the Movement “stressed […] the large gap between the ‘common people’ and the ‘power holders,’ such as the political authorities, mainstream parties, economic interest groups and intellectuals,” and “laying the blame for unrestrained immigration at the door of the ‘political establishment’ and ‘big business,’” the SVP is big business (Skenderovic 2009). For example, the rise of the SVP was spearheaded by Christoph Blocher, a Swiss billionaire and CEO with a doctorate in law from the University of Zürich. Today, although the SVP positions itself as the party of the middle class, it is also the most fiscally conservative party in Switzerland. For example, it opposes estate taxes as well as the regulation of CEO pay and compensation. In contrast to SVP voters, who tend to be less educated and skilled than the average voter, SVP
candidates are highly educated and successful; indeed, my data indicate that, over the past fifteen years, the SVP has nominated more business owners and executives than any other party in Switzerland.

4.2 Descriptive and ideological differences between SVP voters and politicians

Figure 2 illustrates the descriptive gap between Swiss politicians and voters by plotting rates of higher educational attainment among voters and candidates by year and party. The solid lines represent the proportion of candidates who state that they have an advanced degree or credential (and therefore is likely to be an underestimate of true rates of higher educational attainment), while the dashed lines represent the proportion of voters who have completed either higher vocational training or university. The source for the former data comes from my candidate database while the source for the latter data comes from Swiss election surveys. This plot shows that, compared to the major left- and right-wing parties (the social democratic SP and Christian democratic CVP), the descriptive gap between voters and politicians is largest for the SVP.

Figure 2:


This descriptive gap mirrors ideological differences between the economic preferences of SVP voters and candidates. This is illustrated in figure 3, which compares the views on redistribution for SVP candidates (top panel) and voters (bottom panel). In 2007, the
only year for which reliable candidate survey data are available, half of all SVP candidates for the National Council (the lower house of the Swiss parliament) strongly disagreed with the statement that the government should redistribute income towards ordinary citizens. On the other hand, more than half of respondents in the 2008 European Social Survey who stated that they had voted for the SVP agreed or strongly agreed that the government should take measures to reduce income inequality.

Figure 3:
Economic Views of SVP Candidates vs. Voters, 2007

Candidates: Gov't Should Redistribute to Ordinary Citizens

Voters: Government Should Reduce Differences in Income
4.3 The electoral returns to candidate human capital

I have also modeled the votes received by individual candidates for around 3,500 political candidates in six major Swiss cantons, Zürich, Bern, St. Gallen, Aargau, Geneva, and Lucerne. (These are the data whose coding I have done by hand.) The results are shown in table 2. The purpose of this regression is to see whether candidates on the radical right who are likely to be fiscally conservative and pro-business (i.e., who have business experience) receive more votes. In theory, these candidates receive more votes compared to their peers on the radical right who do not have business experience, as they signal competence and credibility to economic moderates. In line with this hypothesis, business experience is correlated with more votes among candidates from radical right parties only.

I am also thinking about using this data to model the defection of pro-business candidates from other radical right parties to the SVP. There is some historical evidence on this point; along with the SVP, another right-wing anti-immigrant party, the Swiss Car Party (APS) enjoyed some electoral success in the early 1990s. However, as the SVP began its meteoric rise, it drew many APS members and politicians into its ranks. The most notable defection from the APS was its founder, Michael Dreher – another MBA who works as a legal and business consultant and lives in one of the wealthiest suburbs in Zürich.

4.4 The SVP electoral coalition

According to my theory, anti-immigrant parties are successful only when they can appeal to moderate voters whose preferences on issues other than immigration fail to align with the preferences of their core constituency. My theory therefore offers a parsimonious explanation for why the SVP succeeded where other anti-immigrant parties had failed – not only did they appeal to the culture- and identity-based preferences of working-class voters, but they were able to attract economic conservatives by marshalling business-friendly candidates.

To test this hypothesis, I examine data from the Swiss Household Panel extending from 1999 to 2013. Specifically, I divided the 1999 cohort into (possibly overlapping) panels of economic conservatives, economic liberals, and xenophobes. Economic conservatives were those who responded that the government should cut taxes and expenditures; liberals were those who responded that the government should raise taxes and expenditures; and
Table 2: Modeling the Vote Share of Swiss Political Candidates, 1995 - 2011

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Log(Votes)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Business experience</td>
<td>$-0.008$</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.143)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>$0.580^{**}$</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.088)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>$0.107^{**}$</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.040)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>$0.355^{**}$</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.109)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Center-right party</td>
<td>$-0.732^*$</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.295)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radical right party</td>
<td>$-1.113^{**}$</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.366)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business experience $\times$ Center-right</td>
<td>$0.187$</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.126)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business experience $\times$ Radical right</td>
<td>$0.690^{**}$</td>
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<td>(0.118)</td>
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$^{†}p < .1; ^{*}p < .05; ^{**}p < .01$

Note: Center-right parties include Freisinnig-Demokratische Partei (FDP) and Christlichdemokratische Volkspartei (CVP). Center-left party is the Sozialdemokratische Partei (SP). Radical right parties include SVP, FPS/AP, and SD (Schweizer Demokraten). Year- and canton-fixed effects excluded for presentation. Other omitted covariates include age and age$^2$. 

xenophobes were those who responded that there should be no fair chances for immigrants in the Swiss economy relative to native Swiss workers. I then tracked the proportion of those who voted for the SVP over time. As the following figure shows, support remained low and stable for economic liberals but high and stable for xenophobes. On the other hand, support for the SVP among economic conservatives has more than doubled during this period.
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