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Nominating immigrant-origin candidates: an electoral strategy of political parties?

Anna-Lena Nadler (University of Geneva)
anna-lena.nadler@unige.ch



ABSTRACT:

Political parties in Western democracies with significant ethnically heterogeneous populations have become increasingly interested in nominating immigrant-origin candidates. This paper investigates how contextual factors explain political parties' effort of immigrant representation. I argue that minority nominations are shaped by parties' strategic calculations weighing out potential vote gains among immigrant voters compared to a potential native backlash. I contend that alien enfranchisement and liberal naturalization policies provide important incentives to nominate minority candidates. In contrast, poor economic conditions imply potential material threat perceptions generating a native backlash against minority representatives, therefore reducing minority nomination. Using a novel dataset on candidates in Switzerland that enables party-municipality-level analysis unlike most previous studies, the analysis reveals that the political and economic context indeed heavily constrains parties' nomination strategies. The findings of this paper have significant implications for our understanding of strategic behaviors of political parties and the promotion of minority representation.

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1 Introduction

The steadily rising number of immigrant-origin populations across European democracies makes the question about their political representation increasingly important. Previous research suggests that despite relatively growing in size, ethnic minority populations remain politically underrepresented, even though many immigrants have eventually become citizens (Bloemraad, 2013; Bergh & Bjorklund, 2011). Consequentially, such persisting underrepresentation of growing immigrant populations underpins democratic legitimacy and corroborates immigrant communities' political integration. Against this persistent political underrepresentation, recent developments suggest that political parties have become more interested in immigrant communities. While left-wing parties have historically been more eager to nominate immigrant-origin candidates, more recent research shows that right-wing parties are becoming increasingly interested to designate candidates with immigration background to run for office (e.g. for the UK see Martin, 2016; for Germany, France and the UK see Sanhueza, 2015). In this article I tend to address the reasons for this recent turn in nominating minority candidates. More particularly, I seek to go about the question under what conditions political parties nominate ethnic-minority candidates.

I argue that, as to rational choice theory, political parties are vote-seekers aiming at maximizing votes (Downs, 1957). In context with significant immigrant populations, parties strategies to maximize their vote shares are increasingly influenced by perceptions to what extent immigrant populations serve as a new voter base. Research on immigrant political integration has illustrated that nomination of immigrant candidates can boost mobilization of immigrant electorates (Teney et al., 2010; Bergh & Bjorklund, 2011; Martin, 2016). However, the nomination of immigrant-origin candidates can also generate negative reactions from certain native voters, which are more likely to remove minority candidates from voting list (Besco, 2018; Portmann & Stojanovic, 2018; Zingher & Farrer, 2016). Hence, political parties are facing a trade-off when it comes about nominating immigrant-origin candidates. While previous research already hints at the existence of such nomination trade-off, so far, only little is known how contextual factors influence parties' strategy of minority nomination. In this paper I argue that political parties' strategies to nominate immigrant-origin candidates are on the one side influenced by minority electoral rights and naturalization proceedings, both public policies that are important determining factors of the potential of immigrant populations to become a new electorate. I contend that alien enfranchisement and liberal naturalization policies boost minority nomination as both policies increase the size of immigrant-origin electorates, therefore rendering so-called ethnic voting and support from minority voters more likely. On the other side, basing on literature on material threat perceptions, I argue that economic insecurities imply certain native voters to develop stronger opposition towards minority candidates. In the fear of a native backlash, parties will therefore be less likely to strive for minority representation.

Here, using a new dataset on municipal elections in Switzerland, I provide evidence that trade-offs over immigrant-origin candidate nomination are indeed conditioned by the political and economic context that political parties face. Taking advantage of the Swiss federal structure that implies that local alien enfranchisement and naturalization policies vary across cantons and municipalities, I show that liberal naturalization practices and the presence of alien enfranchisement enhance political parties' decision to include immigrant-origin candidates on their voting list. Consequentially, I conclude that ethnic minority political representation is a product of an interaction between internal political party nomination procedures and public policies concerning immigrants' political rights. Against this, I further show that positive effects of immigrant enfranchisement and liberal naturalization policies on minority nomination are offset in contexts of local economic insecurity, especially for parties to the right. I put

forward that such reduced effort of minority inclusion in contexts of high economic insecurity stems from political parties considering a higher potential native backlash. Particularly in contexts where the presence of radical right implies immigration issues to be salient, voters to the right are more likely to develop material threat perceptions and consequentially negatively react to immigrant-origin candidates. I conclude that parties' decision to nominate immigrant-origin candidates is driven by their perception to what extent minority candidacy can mobilize immigrant electorates and to what agree such candidates scares off native voters that are uneasy with minority representatives.

2 Explaining variation in immigrants' descriptive representation

The political under-representation of immigrants and ethnic minorities has received increasing attention in the scholarship only more recently. So far, research suggests that there is no coherent theory to explain the descriptive representation of immigrants. Borrowing the concept of "political opportunity structures" from the social movement literature, migration studies suggest that immigrants' political representation is shaped by various factors that together form an opportunity structure. From a **supply-side perspective**, the political opportunity theory foresees that collective identity of (the) immigrant group(s) and immigrants' capacity to organize themselves influence the minorities' motivation to run for office and therefore affects their political representation. Recent research however suggests that differences in political interest and engagement between immigrants and natives cannot account for persistent political underrepresentation of immigrants (Dancygier et al., 2019). There are no significant differences between immigrants and natives with respect to the interest and motivation to run for office. However, natives were found to be more than twice as likely to transition to the nomination stage than are candidates of immigrant-origin. These findings are in line with scholarship that argues that the limited presence of immigrant representatives is not a result of limited supply of immigrant-origin candidates to run for political office, but that **demand-side** explanations are more convincing in explaining political underrepresentation of immigrant and ethnic minorities. More precisely, immigrants' political underrepresentation is theorized to be mainly a direct consequence of political parties' procedures of candidacy nomination. In political systems where aspiring candidates require the formal approval of party leaders to run for office, political parties have acted as gatekeepers and decisively influenced the representation of minority groups such as women or ethnic minorities (Cheng & Tavits, 2011; Luhiste, 2012, Michon & Vermeulen, 2013). Political networks and interest groups are found to be crucial for minority candidate nomination as well as their election, as they facilitate minorities' access to resources necessary for running a successful campaign (Ocampo, 2018). For instance, studying Pakistani immigrants in the UK, research shows that ethnic networks influence nomination decisions of gatekeepers in the British Labour Party Pakistani immigrants in the UK (Akhtar & Peace, 2019). In a similar vein, based on interviews with party representatives in Spain, Burchianti and Zapata-Barrero (2017) show that immigrant-origin candidates heavily rely on party-internal mentors to access positions of power or party lists. Certain of the interviewed party representatives explain that the inclusion of immigrants in visible list positions is a product of strategic calculations. For instance, among right-leaning parties, immigrant-origin individuals' inclusion is conditioned by immigrants' nationality and cultural proximity to Spanish, while left parties use immigrant-origin candidates to underline their support for pro-immigration policies. What underlies all these theories is the assumption that political parties are rational actors whose nomination strategy seeks to maximize electoral power. The nomination of immigrant-origin candidates occurs only if party gatekeepers are convinced that such nominations enhance the party's electoral turnout. The potential of mobilizing immigrant

voters is however context dependent. It is therefore necessary to understand the contexts in which political parties' strategic decisions take place.

In situations of electoral competition, the decision of party gatekeepers over the nomination of immigrant-origin candidates is a determinant of combined **contextual factors**. Previous research has shown how parties' scope of action and strategies of candidature nomination are heavily constrained by the existing electoral system. A variety of studies have assessed how features of the political institutions in place, namely the electoral system, affect the nomination of immigrant-origin candidates (Forest, 2012; Bloemraad, 2013; Sanhueza, 2015; Alba et al., 2009 or Moser, 2008). One focus thereby concerned electoral rules and how they affect immigrant descriptive representation. While some suggest that proportional electoral systems can produce more immigrant-origin representatives if parties put candidates on the list at the first place (Bloemraad, 2013), others (Moser, 2008; Ruedin, 2009) conclude that electoral rules appear to be of little significance in determining minority representation. According to these studies, electoral rules only matter in a complex interaction with geographic concentration of immigrants (and cultural assimilation). It has been argued that political parties nominate strategically minority candidates in voting districts with large minority concentration because minority voters are more inclined to vote for minority candidates (Saggar & Geddes, 2000; Teney et al., 2010; Bergh & Bjorklund, 2011; Martin, 2016). In fact, research has shown that minority concentration in constituencies increases the nomination of minority candidates (Koch, 2018; Saggar & Geddes, 2000; Ruedin, 2009). Parties however abstain from nominating minority candidates in voting districts where immigrants are less concentrated because not many minority voters can be mobilized while native voters might negatively react to such. There is statistical evidence that ethnic minority candidates receive fewer votes than otherwise identical majority candidates (Besco 2018; Portmann & Stojanovic, 2018).

Tying on this literature, I make two arguments in this paper, linking micro (voters), meso (political parties) and macro levels (policies and economic conditions). First, aligning voters and parties, I argue that political parties face a trade-off when nominating immigrant-origin candidates, with minority voters reacting positively and (certain) native voters reacting more negatively to such candidates. Second, I put forward that the macro context influences this link between voters and political parties. I maintain that besides electoral systems and the concentration of immigrant populations, there are other contextual factors that parties take into account when determining to what extent immigrant candidates improve their electoral score. Precisely, I contend that the public policies defining immigrants' political rights and local economic conditions further influence these nomination trade-offs. The next section explains my theoretical framework in detail.

3 Theoretical framework

3.1 Nomination trade-offs

In this paper, I argue that political parties' nomination strategy of candidates with immigration background is driven by their perception to what extent immigrant voters serve as a new electorate and to what degree reaching out to these voters scares off traditional voters. To understand whether inclusion of minority candidates is strategically beneficial, parties compare the potential gains from additional immigrant votes to the potential loss in native voters in reaction to minority nomination.

On the immigrant electorate side, by nominating immigrant-origin candidates, parties send a signal to voters of immigrant origin that they take their representation serious. Burchianti and Zapata-Barrero (2017) indeed show that parties explain the nomination of minority candidates by the awareness that the inclusion of immigrants in visible positions is often perceived by immigrants themselves as a demonstration of the party's commitment to the issue of immigrant representation. Moreover, theories of ethnic voting suggest that immigrant-origin voters are more likely to support other immigrant-origin candidates, at least if these candidates share the same region of origin (Teney et al., 2010; Bergh & Bjorklund, 2011; Martin, 2016). Several possible mechanisms for such ethnic preference voting have been proposed. Immigrant voters might perceive that minority candidates are more likely to represent their interest. Minority voters might also exhibit higher levels of trust in candidates of similar background or ethnic networks of minority candidates might be better at motivating immigrant voters to vote (Teney et al., 2010). Hence, political parties can mobilize immigrant-origin voters by nominating immigrant-origin candidates (Zingher & Farrer, 2016).

On the native voter side, the nomination of immigrant-origin candidates can however have opposite effects for a variety of reasons. First, the nomination of candidates of immigrant-origin might also lead to a backlash of traditional voters who are uneasy with immigrant-origin representatives. Negative reactions to immigrant-origin candidates can be a product of general anti-immigrant sentiments, most likely to be present among voters to the center right. Secondly, I argue that attitudinal differences between natives and immigrants generate nomination trade-offs for all parties. In another article for my thesis I show that immigrant voters of the left are culturally much more conservative than native voters to the left, while native voters to the right hold significantly more restrictive attitudes towards liberal immigration policies than immigrant voters of these right parties. When comparing self placement on the left-right scale, there are significant differences between immigrant and native voters of the same party across different party families (Bergh & Bjorklund, 2011). Immigrant voters to the left position themselves more to the right than their native counterparts, while immigrant voters of the right place themselves more to the left than native voters of the right. Hence, political parties are faced with a voter base that holds significant ideological differences and is stratified by immigration experience. Nominating immigrant-origin candidates might not only serve as a signal to immigrant populations that political elites care about their representation. Native voters could negatively react to the nomination of minority candidates because they might perceive that their representation respectively the representation of their interests is at stake. Indeed, there is evidence that native voters discriminate against minority candidates by removing them on voting lists (Portmann & Stojanovic, 2018; Besco, 2018) and parties might face a decline in native electoral support if they nominate more minority candidates (Zingher & Farrer, 2016).

Taking together these two opposing reactions towards minority candidates, I argue that it is the expected net vote gain which motivates parties' nomination processes of immigrant-origin candidates. Political parties will nominate more minority candidates if perceived vote gains from immigrant voters exceed the loss of native voters in reaction to minority representatives. On the contrary, parties will be more hesitant to nominate minority candidates if perceived native backlash is high and surpasses expected immigrant vote gains. In the next sections I present three contextual factors that I theorize to influence political parties calculation over net vote gains when deciding over the nomination of immigrant-origin candidates: alien enfranchisement, naturalization policies and economic insecurity.

3.2 Nomination trade-offs: immigrant voting rights and liberal citizenship practices

In this paper I put forward that this aforementioned potential mobilization strategy is altered by two public policies affecting immigrants' political rights: non-citizen voting rights and naturalization policies. I contend that both alien enfranchisement and liberal naturalization policies boost the designation of immigrant-origin candidates. First, in contexts of **alien enfranchisement**, political parties cannot only mobilize naturalized immigrants through the nomination of immigrant-origin candidates but also immigrants without citizenship. Depending on the strictness of alien enfranchisement policies, i.e. the criteria on length of residency or possession of specific permit to qualify for non-citizen voting rights, such policies enlarge parties' potential immigrant-origin electorate. This is most likely to be true for the case of Switzerland which is analyzed in this study, as Switzerland disposes of a high share of immigrant population without citizenship due to a combination of large immigration stocks and overall strict naturalization policies. Hence, I argue that municipalities that grant non-nationals voting rights see more immigrant-origin candidates nominated. Moreover, I contend that the effect of alien enfranchisement is conditioned by the presence of a large immigrant population. Only if a substantive size of immigrant population is present, the introduction of alien enfranchisement implies the existence of a large potential electorate of immigrants that can be mobilized by political parties. The first set of hypotheses reads as follows:

- **H1a** Political parties nominate more immigrant-origin candidates in voting districts with non-citizen voting rights than in constituencies without alien enfranchisement.
- **H1b** The nomination of immigrant-origin candidates in voting districts with non-citizen voting rights is conditioned by the presence of a large immigrant population.

So far, only few studies attempted to investigate the interaction between electoral rights and parties' effort to include minority candidates. Demonstrating that descriptive representation of Muslims is higher in Belgium and Great Britain than in Austria and Germany, Dancygier (2017) suggests that this is partially due to more liberal citizenship regimes in Belgium and Great Britain, resulting in greater shares of Muslims with voting rights. Those higher shares of Muslims with voting rights consequentially incite political parties to reach out to Muslim voters. In a similar manner, Miller (2013) finds that center-right parties across Europe make a difference between ethnic minorities with citizenship and those without when reaching out to ethnic minority voters. While these studies provide first hints at the role of immigrant voting rights in minority nomination, statistical evidence is scarce. Among the rare research on that matter, Koch (2016) using a similar design as in this paper however with a much more limited scope, finds that some parties seem to nominate more immigrant-origin candidates if non-nationals have the right to vote. Center and right parties in Switzerland designate more minority candidates, left parties are however unaffected by alien enfranchisement policies. On the other side, left parties' nomination is positively influenced by the share of immigrant population.. He concludes that left parties nominate immigrant-origin candidates to emphasize their pro-immigrant politics, where center and right parties select such candidates to mobilize immigrant-origin voters.

Left parties' responsiveness to the size of immigrant population such as found by Koch (2016) might indicate that not only current minority voters but also future immigrant-origin constituents might shape their candidate

nomination strategy. In this paper, expanding existing literature, I therefore argue that also the strictness of **naturalization policies** might play a role regarding the nomination of immigrant-origin candidates. Naturalization policies decide to what extent current non-citizen immigrants will eventually become future immigrant-origin voters. In contrast to alien enfranchisement that influences the mobilization of immigrant voters without citizenship, the strictness of naturalization policies affects directly the size of the immigrant population with voting rights due to nationality, i.e. immigrant populations that can potentially be mobilized. Hence, I also anticipate that parties nominate more immigrant-origin candidates in contexts where naturalization rates are high.

- **H2** Political parties nominate more immigrant-origin candidates in voting districts with high naturalization rates.

3.3 Nomination trade-offs: economic insecurity

Following the previous section, alien enfranchisement and liberal naturalization policies are assumed to increase the nomination of immigrant candidates because parties expect significant vote gains from immigrant populations. However, the nomination of immigrant-origin candidates might also lead to a backlash of traditional voters who are uneasy with immigrant-origin representatives. As laid out previously, I expect that *net* vote gains eventually motivate parties' nomination processes. I argue that the positive effect of naturalization and voting right policies on minority nomination have to be examined in contrast with a potential native backlash. There is evidence that ethnic minority candidates receive fewer votes from native voters than otherwise identical majority candidates (Besco 2018; Portmann & Stojanovic, 2018). The inclusion of immigrant-origin candidates in a xenophobic environment might be particularly harmful for parties in Switzerland, because the Swiss electoral system allows voters to cast both positive and negative preference votes for single candidates and is therefore a candidate-centred rather than party-centred system (Carey, 1995). Political parties will therefore be more hesitant to nominate minority candidates if perceived native backlash is high. I therefore expect that more negative attitudes towards immigrants within a municipality do result in parties nominating fewer minority candidates. Negative attitudes towards immigrants can be fuelled by economic conditions. Basing on **economic threat** theories (Citrin, 1997), Ecevit & Kinsey (2013) find that strategies of political parties in Belgium to include immigrant-origin candidates might be constrained not only by natives' xenophobic attitudes, but also by higher levels of inequality and unemployment. Immigrants are indeed more likely to be made targets in political conflict when resources are scarce (Tajfel, 1979; Dancygier, 2010). Hence, higher levels of unemployment should be linked to an increase in native backlash to minority representation and therefore fewer nominations of immigrant-origin candidates; and there is some evidence for this (Ecevit & Kinsey, 2013). It is therefore expected that political parties take into account the economic context and calculations about material threat perceptions among native voters, when nominating immigrant-origin candidates. However, I expect that political parties to the left will be less likely to fear a native backlash towards minority representation, because native left voters tend to be more supportive of immigration (Mayada, 2006; Polavieja, 2016) in general. Moreover, economic concerns about immigration are positively correlated with identifying with the political right and voting for the radical right (Davis & Deole, 2015).

- **H3** Political parties nominate fewer immigrant-origin candidates in voting districts where unemployment is high.

3.4 Ballot position

Parties might not only reach out to ethnic minority voters by nominating immigrant-origin candidates, but the list position of minority candidates can further be used as a signal of minority inclusion. The position on the voting list is found to heavily affect the chances to be elected, with candidates on top of the list having greatest chances to be voted for (Lutz, 2010; Faas & Schön, 2006). Thus, parties' effort to reach out to immigrants might manifest itself by putting minorities on higher positions on the list. Using data for the 2013 elections to the German Bundestag, Geese and Schacht (2019) show that candidates of immigrant-origin received better party list positions when they were selected to run in constituencies where many citizens of immigrant-origin reside. In contrast, English (2019) shows that parties in the United Kingdom place minority candidates in "unwinnable" seats in areas of high anti-immigrant public opinion. Research on Muslim candidates in Belgium provides indeed evidence that such strategic placement of minority candidates on voting lists can be beneficial to political parties. Dancygier (2017) finds that preference votes for (male) Muslim-candidates in Belgium rise in areas of Muslim concentration. Building upon these studies, I therefore argue that perceived positive effects of liberal naturalization policies and alien enfranchisement on vote gains are not only reflect in more minority candidates being nominated, but parties are also expected to put immigrant candidates on higher ballot positions.

- **H4a** Immigrant-origin candidates are placed higher on ballot lists in voting districts with larger immigrant populations.
- **H4b** Parties position immigrant-origin candidates higher on voting lists in electoral districts with non-citizen voting rights than in constituencies without alien enfranchisement.
- **H4c** Immigrant-origin candidates are placed on higher list positions in voting districts with higher naturalization policies.

4 Data and methodology

4.1 Case selection

Switzerland offers a great potential to test those hypotheses because certain integration policies vary on cantonal and municipal level. While some cantons and municipalities know liberal voting right policies for non-nationals, other municipalities do not foresee any electoral rights for non-Swiss citizens. Moreover, naturalization requirements are more strict in some cantons and municipalities than others (Manatschal, 2011; Blatter et al., 2015).¹ Variations with regard to residence requirements, integration conditions on language and political knowledge, finances and fees, result in naturalization rates also differing heavily across municipalities. On the other side, the consistent use of proportional electoral systems across Swiss municipalities allows controlling for potential influence on electoral systems on immigrant candidacies. In addition, although a certain degree of nationalisation of political parties in Switzerland has been observed recently, the federalist structure of the Swiss political system implies an important

¹Access to citizenship in Switzerland is based on a three level citizenship regime. While the requirements for federal citizenship are set by the federal state, municipalities and cantons impose the requirements for access to municipal respectively cantonal citizenship and show often a local ethnic logic (D'Amato, 2009). According to Article 37§1 of the Swiss Constitution, federal citizenship can only be obtained, if municipal and cantonal citizenship is granted.

degree of autonomy of regional parties in the selection process of candidates (Ladner & Mathys, 2015). Autonomy of regional parties in their candidate selection process is an important condition for this research. Only if the selection of candidates takes place in a decentralized manner, i.e. if parties dispose of a certain degree of liberty, local contextual factors can be strategically taken into account. The Swiss electoral system is characterized as a list system with preferential voting that allows for cumulation of two personal votes for one candidate. Research suggests that preferential voting is further assumed to have a decentralizing effect on candidate selection. Moreover, the use of candidate list system allows testing hypotheses on the role of contextual factors on immigrant-candidates list position. For these reasons, I consider the Swiss context to be optimal to test my hypotheses. However, it is worth noting that the theoretical framework is considered to apply on a broader perspective. I contend that across immigrant Western democracies, political parties face minority nomination trade-offs. Additionally, the role of alien enfranchisement, naturalization policies and local economic conditions are supposed to be important drivers of minority representation across advanced democracies with large immigrant populations regardless of the Swiss-specific context.

For the empirical analysis, I have constructed my own dataset based on the municipal parliamentary voting lists of the seven main political parties² in Switzerland across 20 voting districts in 13 municipalities between 1996 and 2018. Note that depending on data availability, the last three to six communal elections have been collected. The 13 municipalities included in this study are: Basel, Bellinzona, Bern, Fribourg, Genève, Lausanne, Lugano, Luzern, Neuchâtel, Renens, Thun, Winterthur, Zürich.³ The municipalities have been chosen given their size (largest Swiss municipalities with communal parliament) and with their variation in immigrant voting rights and immigrant population size. Table one gives an overview of the municipalities included in the dataset:

Table 1: Municipalities

Municipalities	Voting rights	Foreign population (2016, in %)
Basel	No	36.5
Bellinzona	No	25.6
Bern	No	25.2
Fribourg	Yes (since 2006)	37.3
Geneve	Yes (since 2005)	48.3
Lausanne	Yes (since 2002)	42.9
Lugano	No	38.1
Luzern	No	24.2
Neuchatel	Yes (since 1849)	33.6
Renens	Yes (since 2002)	54.8
Thun	No	13.1
Winterthur	No	23.6
Zurich	No	32.0

The municipalities cover all linguistic regions of Switzerland (German-, French- and Italian-speaking), in order to

²The parties included are: SVP, SP, FDP, CVP, Greens, GLP, BDP. It is worth noting that the parties GLP (founded in 2007) and BDP (founded in 2008) have not been present throughout the entire period studied.

³Note that the original research design foresaw a comparative study of 40 municipalities in Switzerland. Due to time constraints, so far, data for 13 municipality elections from 1996 to 2018 have been coded. It is possible that after this first pilot analysis, more municipalities are added.

be as representative as possible. It is however worth noting that so far, alien enfranchisement policies have been only introduced in French-speaking cantons (Neuchâtel, Jura, Vaud, Geneva, Fribourg), with the exception of Appenzell-Ausserrhoden and Graubünden that have adopted legislation allowing municipalities to pass alien enfranchisement for municipal elections. However, all municipalities that have adopted voting rights for non-citizens in Appenzell-Ausserrhoden and Graubünden do not have a parliament but operate under the system of municipal assembly ("Gemeindeversammlung"). Therefore, no municipality in a non-French-speaking region of Switzerland with local alien enfranchisement could be added to the dataset.

4.2 Identifying immigrant candidates

Matching data from the Historic Register of Swiss Surnames that contains the names of all individuals holding citizenship in at least one Swiss municipality up until 1962, with the names on the candidates on the lists, immigrant candidates are identified as individuals with non-Swiss names. Such method has been adopted by other scholars in similar studies (Portmann & Stojanovic, 2018). This method certainly entails certain drawbacks. For instance, female candidates often adopt the name of their husband upon marriage. Moreover, given similar languages and cultural proximity, immigrant-origin candidates from neighbouring countries (Germany, France, Austria, Italy) often hold last names that are also inherent to Switzerland, therefore concealing immigrant background. Nevertheless, as voters in Switzerland typically have very limited information regarding political candidates (such as first and last name, date of birth, profession, and incumbency) this is probably the most appropriate research method in the Swiss context: a candidate's name most likely provides an important heuristic shortcut that voters take into account when casting their vote. Using the coded party lists, I then constructed my dataset with voting list per party per year per municipality as unit of analysis. Based on the immigrant-origin candidates identified through the above mentioned approach, I have further refined the coding into region of origin for each immigrant-origin candidate. The codes enable to distinguish between the following regions of origin: Western European/Nordic/English, Southern European (e.g. Italian, Greek), Hispanic, Eastern European, Slavic (i.e., Slavic names from the former Yugoslavia) and Albanian, Arabic and Turkish, and other non-European (Indian, Eastern Asian, Central Asian, and non-Arab African). Again relying on the identification strategy of Portmann & Stojanovic (2018), I used the online database "forebears" and cross-checked, in case of ambiguous results, with the database "worldnames" to identify the corresponding region. The final dataset therefore does not only include a variable on the number of immigrant candidate by party list per year per municipality but also the number of candidates for each region of origin per party list per year per municipality.

4.3 Operationalization

Based on this data, the empirical strategy involves different models with three different dependent variables. First, for my main dependent variable, I calculate the propensity of immigrant-origin candidates by dividing the number of immigrant-origin candidates nominated on each party list by the total number of candidates on that list. Second, in order to test hypotheses about the list positioning of immigrant candidates, I construct a variable that assesses the difference between the average list position of immigrant candidates and the average list position of native candidates. The smaller this difference, the higher immigrants' average position. If the difference is negative, immigrant candidates' average position is higher than natives' average position, indicating that parties treat minority

candidates on average favourably relative to native candidates. Consequently, effort of minority inclusion is higher, the smaller the value of the variable "difference in average list position". Finally, as an alternative measure of list positioning, I calculate the propensity of immigrant-origin candidates in the first half of the voting list over the total number of candidates. The idea behind this measure is that candidates in the first half of the list are preferred candidates with higher chances to be elected. Hence, the higher such propensity, the stronger a party's effort of minority inclusion.

With regards to the independent variables, in order to test the first set of hypotheses (H1a and H1b) about the effect of alien enfranchisement on minority candidate nomination, a dummy variable indicating whether the municipality grants voting rights to non-nationals is included. I further use data on the share of immigrant population in the voting district obtained through the Federal Office for Statistics. In order to examine H1b, I construct an interaction term between the voting right dummy and the variable measuring the percentage of immigrant population in the district. With respect to H2a and H2b, liberal naturalization policies are operationalized by using naturalization rates at the municipal level, with higher rates indicating more liberal practices. The data is provided by a combination of statistics from the Federal Office for Statistics, cantonal statistic offices or official websites of the municipalities concerned. With respect to H3, the unemployment rates at the time of election for each municipality is included to operationalize the concept of material threat.

I further include a categorical variable capturing party-specific effects (with SVP as reference category). In order to facilitate comparison of estimates across party ideology, I recode political parties in a dummy variables for left, center and right parties. To do so, I used left-right placement of the different parties by the Party Manifesto Project. Green and SP were coded as "Left", SVP and FDP were coded as "Right" and CVP, GLP and BDP were coded as "Center". Tables 5 to 7 in the appendix show that when party dummies are used instead of ideological dummies results basically remain the same. Finally, the total number of candidates is used as a control variable, as well as a variable controlling for strength of left parties in the previous municipal election and year dummies.

4.4 Empirical strategy

The structure of the dataset would imply the adoption of a multilevel model. Political parties are nested in municipalities (respectively voting districts), the dataset is further characterized as containing panel data as we observe the same party-municipality units over time. Therefore, a three-level multilevel model would be appropriate. However, the number of observations on each level are rather low. I have therefore adopted a linear regression with clustered standard error terms on the municipality level for all models estimated, controlling further for time fixed effects using year dummies.

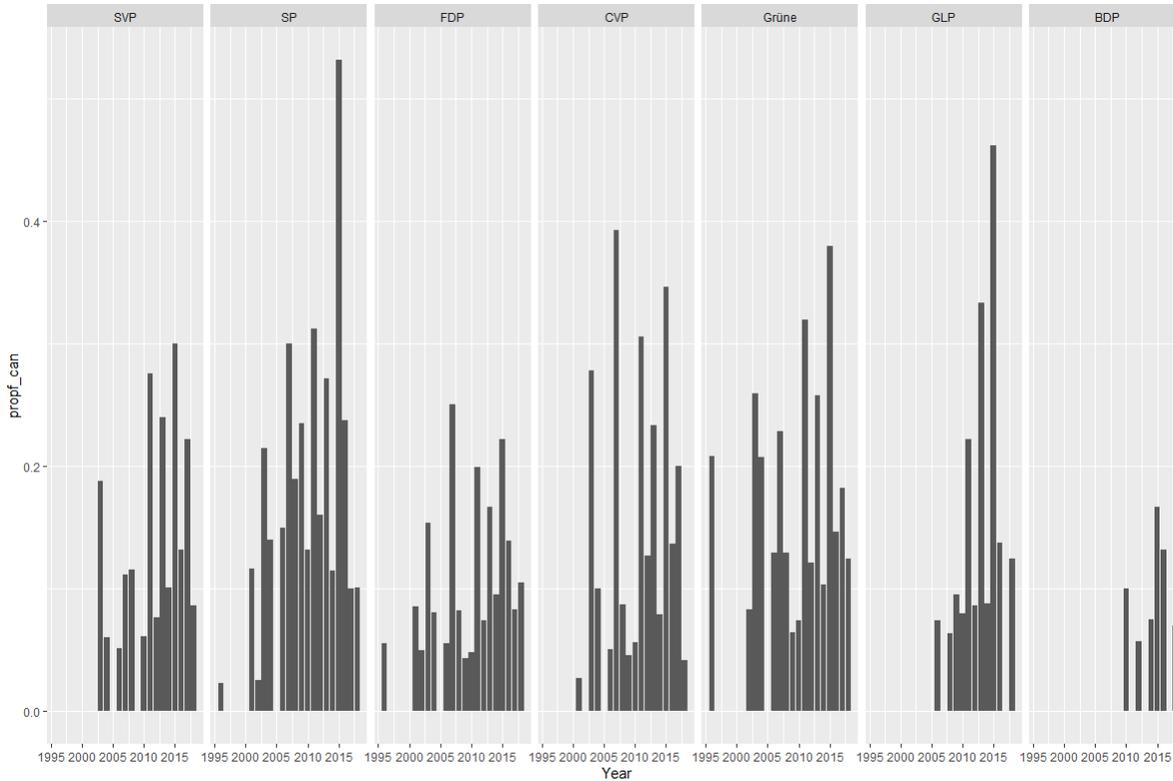
5 Results

5.1 Descriptive statistics

Starting with some descriptive statistics, Figure 1 illustrates the average propensity of immigrant-origin candidates among all candidates on a party's voting list across time. The figure suggests a general trend of an increase in the relative number of candidates with immigration background over time. Such as previous research has shown in other European democracies, left parties (SP, Greens) generally exhibit higher proportion of immigrant-origin candidates than parties to the right (SVP, FDP). More recent literature suggests that right-wing parties are becoming more

interested in nominating minority candidates (e.g. for the UK see Martin, 2016; for Germany, France and the UK see Sanhueza, 2015). Likewise, Figure 1 illustrates that, also in the context of Switzerland, the right (SVP, FDP) appears to slowly increase their propensity of candidates with immigration background. This increased interest in nominating immigrant-origin candidates therefore calls for better understanding of factors underlying parties' nomination strategy.

Figure 1: Propensity immigrant candidates per party over time



5.2 Results hypotheses testing

Turning now to the empirical testing of the first two hypotheses, Table 2 shows the regression results of alien enfranchisement and naturalization policies on the propensity of immigrant-origin candidates among parties' voting lists. Looking at the **effect of alien enfranchisement**, both Model 1 and Model 3 indicate support for the hypothesis that political parties strategically nominate immigrant-origin candidates in voting districts where non-citizen immigrants have the right to vote. The propensity of foreign candidates increases by 11.5 percentage points in municipalities that have immigrant voting rights compared to municipalities without alien enfranchisement policies. Moreover, the analysis suggests that political parties do not only take into account whether a municipality adopted some kind of alien enfranchisement policy when deciding over minority candidate nomination. They also consider, like predicted in H1b, the mutual presence of immigrant voting rights and an immigrant population of considerable size. The coefficient for the interaction term of voting rights and foreign population in Model 2 and 4 shows that the joint presence of alien enfranchisement and a large immigrant population increases the propensity

of immigrant-origin candidates significantly. When using the interaction term of alien enfranchisement and foreign population, results display a negative effect of voting rights in municipalities where foreign population is at zero percent. Immigrant voting rights only benefit political parties, when a significant immigrant population is present that can be politically mobilized. Hence, these findings convey that, political parties' strategy of minority candidate nomination is indeed a function of immigrant political rights and the size of the potential immigrant electorate. As outlined in the theoretical framework, these results imply that in contexts of combined alien enfranchisement and important minority populations, political parties perceive of a net gain in vote shares when reaching out to minority voters despite potentially facing a native backlash. Put differently, signalling awareness of immigrant issue through the nomination of minority candidates is considered to result in gaining higher shares among immigrant voters than losing votes among traditional natives that oppose to minority candidates.

Figure 2 further presents the average marginal effect of alien enfranchisement by political ideology. Figure 2 displays that the average marginal effects of alien enfranchisement on the nomination of immigrant-origin candidates are positive and strongly statistically significant for left and center parties, still positive but less significant for parties to the right. I conclude that parties' nomination of minority candidates in reaction to alien enfranchisement policies is therefore independent of political ideology, yet with the right being less reactive to non-citizen voting rights.

The above mentioned results remain rather stable when naturalization policies are introduced (Model 3 and 4). Concerning **naturalization policies**, results presented in Model 3 and 4 in Table 2 support the hypothesis H2 that political parties nominate more minority candidates in context of high naturalization rates. An increase by one percentage point in the naturalization rate implies an increase the propensity of immigrant-origin candidates by about 0.5 percentage points. Such as expected, political parties' minority nomination appears to be driven by naturalization policies that determine over the existence of a future potential immigrant constituency. High naturalization rates indicate that current foreign populations are more likely to become naturalized (compared to other contexts) and therefore are more likely to receive political rights through naturalization.

Table 2: Alien enfranchisement and naturalization rates on propensity of immigrant candidates

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Propensity immigrant candidates			
Alien enfranchisement	9.593** (4.22)	-27.28*** (-4.44)	11.32** (3.96)	-35.97** (-3.51)
Alien enfranchisement * Foreign population		1.035*** (6.26)		1.306*** (4.90)
Naturalization			0.529* (2.63)	0.429* (2.65)
Foreign population	0.177 (1.58)	0.0535 (0.57)	0.129 (1.12)	0.00701 (0.09)
Ideology (Ref. Left)				
Center	-4.810*** (-7.42)	-4.436*** (-7.16)	-4.921*** (-8.10)	-4.603*** (-8.33)
Right	-5.474*** (-4.93)	-5.319*** (-4.79)	-5.174*** (-4.80)	-5.191*** (-4.76)
Percentage left	-9.428 (-1.17)	-11.01 (-1.68)	-4.240 (-0.42)	-5.916 (-0.69)
Total candidates	-0.0356 (-1.14)	-0.0413 (-1.45)	-0.0359 (-0.99)	-0.0409 (-1.25)
Year dummies	YES	YES	YES	YES
Constant	13.03* (2.27)	17.41** (3.10)	10.26 (1.56)	14.95* (2.59)
<i>N</i>	522	522	468	468

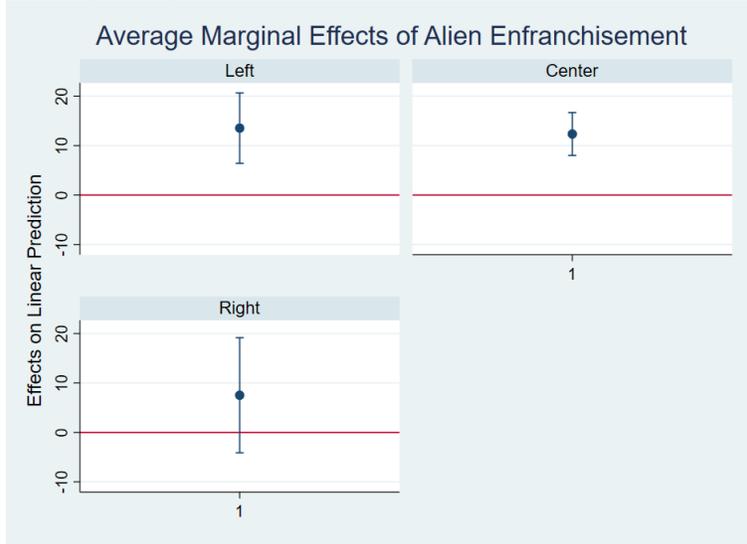
t statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 2 further confirms trends observed through descriptive statistics and previous findings in the literature: it shows positive effects of left ideology among parties on minority nomination. Parties to the left nominate significantly more immigrant-origin candidates than parties situated at the center or right-side on the ideological spectrum. Table 5 in the appendix shows that particularly the SP, followed by the Green party, nominates statistically significantly more immigrant-origin candidates than the right-wing reference party SVP. However, the effect is not statistically significant for the center parties neither for the other right party, FDP.

Looking now at the effect of **economic conditions**, Table 3 shows that higher unemployment rates are asso-

Figure 2: Average marginal effects of alien enfranchisement across political parties



ciated with the nomination of fewer minority candidates (Model 1). Such as predicted, this suggests that political parties will nominate fewer immigrant-origin candidates in contexts where scarce resources are more likely to produce a native backlash towards minority candidates. Model 2 shows that the effect of unemployment on the number of immigrant candidates varies by party ideology. Particularly parties to the right nominate fewer minority candidates in contexts where material threat is more likely to produce a native backlash. Moreover, Model 3 shows a positive relationship between the number of immigrant candidates and the presence of alien enfranchisement in contexts where unemployment rates are low (coefficient of immigrant vote). Hence, when parties have to fear weak material threat perceptions among natives because unemployment rates are low and immigrants can vote, parties are eager to reach out to the immigrant electorate by nominating minority candidates. However, high unemployment rates in combination with alien enfranchisement (interaction term of unemployment and voting rights in Model 3) imply a negative effect on minority nomination, confirming hypothesis H3. This again suggests that potential material threat perceptions among natives in context of scarce resources could scare off political parties to reach out to immigrant voters, despite their political rights. These results imply that political parties, indeed, appear to deal with trade-offs when it comes to reaching out to immigrant electorates: in contexts where native backlash is more likely, parties nominate fewer minority candidates.

Table 3: Economic conditions

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Propensity immigrant candidates		
Alien enfranchisement	14.66*** (5.48)	14.86 (1.92)	32.46*** (4.07)
Foreign population	0.164** (2.85)	0.164 (1.44)	0.133* (2.27)
Ideology (Ref. Left)			
Center	-4.659*** (-5.15)	-6.676*** (-4.42)	-4.563*** (-5.07)
Right	-5.286*** (-5.91)	-2.528* (-2.42)	-5.273*** (-5.92)
Unemployment	-1.534* (-2.20)	-1.452 (-0.76)	0.0667 (0.07)
Party*unemployment (Ref. Left)			
Center*unemployment		0.611 (1.54)	
Right*unemployment		-0.759* (-2.12)	
Immigrant vote*unemployment			-3.530* (-2.37)
Total candidates	-0.0163 (-0.60)	-0.0194 (-0.67)	-0.00606 (-0.22)
Year dummies	YES	YES	YES
Constant	17.35** (2.63)	11.32* (2.90)	5.903 (0.72)
<i>N</i>	518	518	518

t statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Finally, Table 4 displays the results for two alternative measures of the dependent variable that test hypotheses about immigrant-origin candidates' position on voting lists. Certain municipalities require candidates to be listed alphabetically on voting lists. Since political parties are not free to decide freely on candidates' list position and can therefore not use ballot positioning as signal for support of an individual candidate in such municipalities, they

have been excluded from the dataset for these analyses. The results suggest that parties use list positioning less frequently as a signal of minority inclusion than the actual number of minority candidates, with mixed effects across the two alternative measures. Respectively, contextual factors appear to play a minor role in parties' strategies over what positions immigrant-origin candidate should hold compared to their native counterparts. Contrary to H4a, the size of the immigrant population in a constituency does not influence list position of minority candidates in general. Only when interacted with party ideology (Model 2), foreign population appears to influence immigrants' ballot position, however, only for right parties. Political parties to the right seat minority candidates relatively on higher positions when faced with larger immigrant communities compared to left parties. Conversely, immigrant-origin candidates' list position is independent of the size of the immigrant population in the voting district among left and center parties. Table 4 furthermore displays that the relative average list positions of immigrant over native candidates is higher for parties to the right compared to left parties. Left parties place minority candidates on higher list positions than right parties do. Turning to the number of minority candidates in the first half of the voting list (Model 3), I find similar evidence: on average, the propensity of immigrant candidates on the first half of the list among right parties is 3.3 percentage points lower than among left parties, and 2.4 percentages points lower for center parties compared to the left. Using again the propensity of immigrant candidates in the first half of the voting list as dependent variable, I find that alien enfranchisement appears to indeed have an effect. More minority candidates are placed in the first half of the list when non-citizens can vote, finding evidence that confirms H4b. The coefficient for naturalization rates hints at a positive relationship between liberal policies over citizenship acquisition and the nomination of minority candidates on higher list positions, yet remains statistically insignificant. Therefore, political parties seem not only nominating more immigrant candidates when context suggest potential net vote gains in return to minority mobilization. Parties strategically place minority candidates on higher ballot positions where they are more likely to be elected (Lutz, 2010; Faas & Schön, 2006) in municipalities where electoral policies facilitate political mobilization of immigrant-origin electorates.

Table 4: Immigrant candidate ballot position

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Diff. position	immigrant-native	Immigrant candidates first half
Naturalization	0.209 (0.41)	0.238 (0.47)	0.798 (1.58)
Alien enfranchisement	-0.914 (-0.63)	-0.748 (-0.51)	9.953*** (4.64)
Ideology (Ref. Left)			
Center	0.0671 (0.08)	1.773 (1.27)	-2.389** (-3.44)
Right	1.365* (3.12)	4.466** (3.20)	-3.251** (-4.43)
Foreign population	0.0744 (0.77)	0.115 (1.34)	-0.0362 (-0.51)
Ideology*Foreign population (Ref. Left)			
Center*Foreign population		-0.0553 (-0.91)	
Right*Foreign population		-0.0986* (-2.08)	
Total candidates	0.125* (3.04)	0.121* (2.87)	
Year dummies	YES	YES	YES
Constant	-4.906 (-1.41)	-6.269 (-2.01)	3.574 (1.38)
<i>N</i>	237	237	320

t statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

6 Conclusion

In this paper, I complement recent research on immigrant political integration and political parties' motivation to represent minorities in multiple ways. So far, previous research has ignored immigrant voting rights (with exception to Koch, 2016) and naturalization policies as a factor shaping candidate nomination. Here I argue that political parties' selection of immigrant-origin candidates is a product of strategic calculations of parties regarding their

net electoral gains when reaching out to immigrant voters. Precisely, I convey that public policies which define immigrants' political rights through alien enfranchisement and access to citizenship are important incentive mechanisms for political parties to nominate minority candidates. By granting non-citizens voting rights or by enabling immigrant access to electoral rights through naturalization, alien enfranchisement and liberal naturalization policies increase the size of the immigrant-origin electorate that political parties could mobilize through immigrant-origin candidates. Using new data on municipal elections in Switzerland from 1996 to 2018, I confirm my hypotheses and provide evidence that political parties' strategies to nominate immigrant candidates are indeed heavily constrained by the political and economic context. To put differently, political parties make strategic use of policies influencing non-citizens' political rights in order to boost electoral turnout. In contexts where liberal naturalization policies and alien enfranchisement increase the size of immigrant-origin electorates, candidates of immigrant origin are more likely to be nominated because they are found to mobilize minority voters more successfully than native candidates (Bergh & Bjorklund, 2011). Moreover, my study finds that political parties do not only reach out to ethnic minority voters by nominating more immigrant-origin candidates, but the list position of minority candidates is further used as a signal of minority inclusion. Parties place more immigrant-origin candidates on higher list positions in municipalities with alien enfranchisement and more liberal naturalization practices.

Tying on a large body of research on (material) threat perceptions in contexts of immigration, my study further examines how negative attitudes towards immigrants interact with alien enfranchisement and liberal naturalization practises when it comes to minority representation. I present evidence that positive effects of immigrant enfranchisement and liberal naturalization policies on minority nomination are offset in contexts of economic insecurity where political parties consider a potential native backlash. Native voters are found to negatively react to the nomination of minority candidates, because they fear that their representation is at stake, respectively do not feel represented by minority elects (Besco, 2018; Stojanovic & Portmann, 2018). I therefore conclude that it is the expected net vote gains which motivate parties' nomination of minority candidates: parties nominate immigrant-origin candidates only if perceived vote gains from mobilized immigrant voters exceed the loss of native voters that are uneasy with minority representatives.

The implications of this study are twofold. On the one hand, it provides better understanding of political parties' outreach strategies to minority voters. Accordingly, the paper gives insight into how political actors and public policies are intertwined when it comes to political representation of immigrant communities and potentially other minorities. More practically, the results of this paper highlight the importance of the political and economic context on the political integration of immigrant communities. Being confronted with large immigrant populations, many European countries are currently debating over the adoption of alien enfranchisement and are reevaluating their naturalization policies. My study shows that if political integration is a core objective of governing bodies, the adoption of non-citizen voting rights and the practice of liberal naturalization policies can boost political representation of minorities also indirectly. Such policies do not only allow political participation of immigrant communities to a larger extent by granting voting rights. However, they further incentivize political parties to actively mobilize minority voters by selecting candidates with whom they identify. Subsequently, the results suggest that discussions about minority political integration should be stronger linked to debates on alien enfranchisement and citizenship acquisition and involve a variety of political actors.

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8 Appendix

8.1 Descriptive statistics

Distribution minority candidates by party

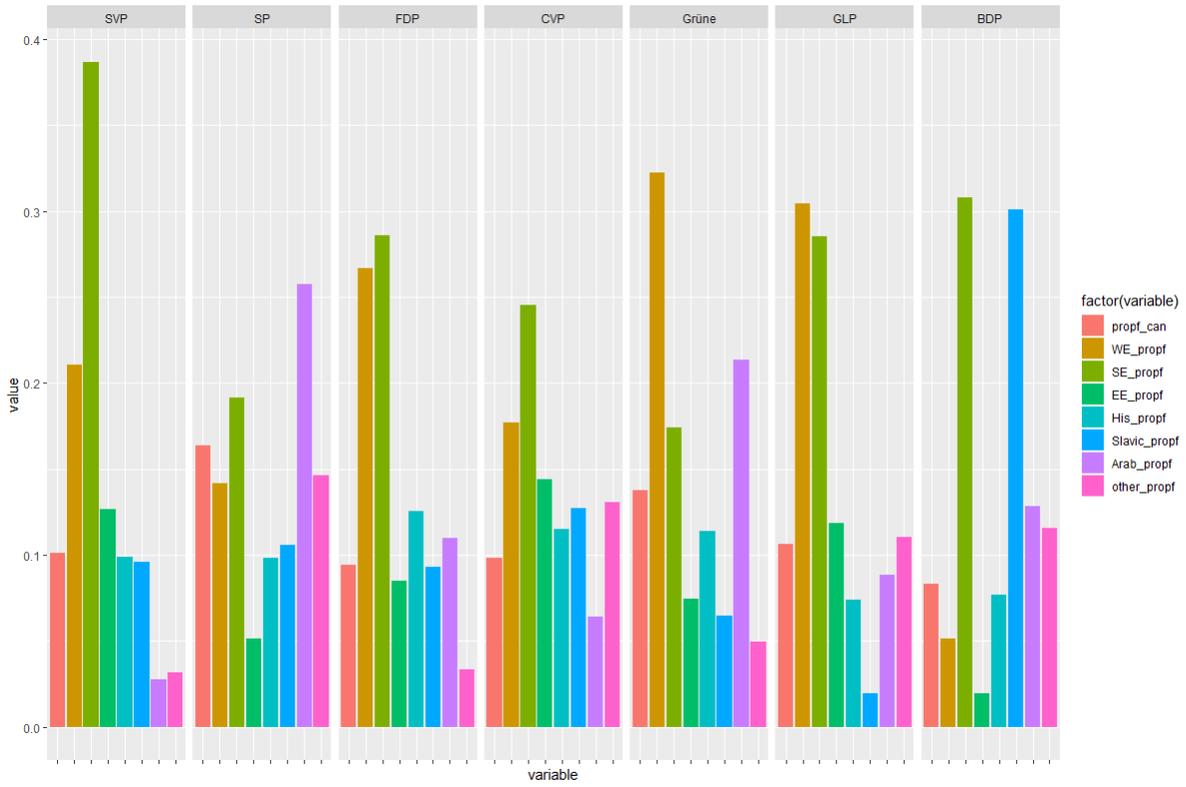
The following table shows the average number of immigrant-origin candidates per voting list per party, as well as the average percentage of minority candidates on a given ballot per party. Moreover, the last column displays the number of voting lists per party in the dataset.

	Number	Propensity	
	Mean	Mean	Freq.
BDP	1.208	7.97	24
CVP	3.024	9.55	82
FDP	2.682	9.41	88
GLP	1.609	10.3	64
Grüne	3.402	13.96	92
SP	5.393	16.47	89
SVP	1.867	10.13	83
Total	2.996	11.59	522

Distribution minority candidates by origin

Looking at the origin of immigrant-origin candidates, Figure shows great variation of the origin of minority candidates nominated across different political parties. Left parties (SP and Greens), compared to other parties, are more likely to include non-European candidates that are of Arab-/Turkish, Indian, Eastern Asian, Central Asian, and non-Arab African origin. It is particularly striking that right-wing parties (SVP, BDP) nominate very few Arab/Turkish or other non-European candidates. For voting lists of the FDP this trend is also present, although to a weaker degree.

Figure 3: Immigrant candidates' origin per party



8.2 Analyses by party

Table 5: Alien enfranchisement and naturalization rates on propensity of immigrant candidates

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Propensity immigrant candidates			
Immigrant vote	8.981** (3.72)	-27.42*** (-5.73)	11.03** (3.56)	-35.94** (-3.77)
Foreign population	0.152 (1.37)	0.0274 (0.33)	0.115 (0.98)	-0.0101 (-0.14)
Immigrant vote*Population		1.019*** (8.08)		1.294*** (5.27)
Naturalization			0.540** (3.26)	0.452** (3.15)
Parties (Ref. SVP)				
BDP	-1.721 (-0.59)	-1.500 (-0.51)	-1.946 (-0.67)	-1.574 (-0.55)
CVP	0.232 (0.10)	0.548 (0.23)	-0.662 (-0.33)	-0.170 (-0.08)
FDP	-0.364 (-0.32)	-0.333 (-0.29)	-0.715 (-0.58)	-0.654 (-0.54)
GLP	1.543 (1.21)	1.669 (1.40)	1.180 (0.97)	1.391 (1.35)
Grüne	3.918** (3.79)	3.766** (3.32)	3.305** (4.19)	3.322** (4.03)
SP	6.613** (3.64)	6.474** (3.48)	6.385** (3.39)	6.453** (3.34)
Total candidates	-0.0282 (-0.81)	-0.0317 (-1.18)	-0.0364 (-0.87)	-0.0395 (-1.18)
Year dummies	YES	YES	YES	YES
Constant	3.588 (1.12)	7.277 (2.04)	3.725 (1.22)	7.524* (2.37)
<i>N</i>	522	522	468	468

t statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Figure 4: Average marginal effects of alien enfranchisement across political parties

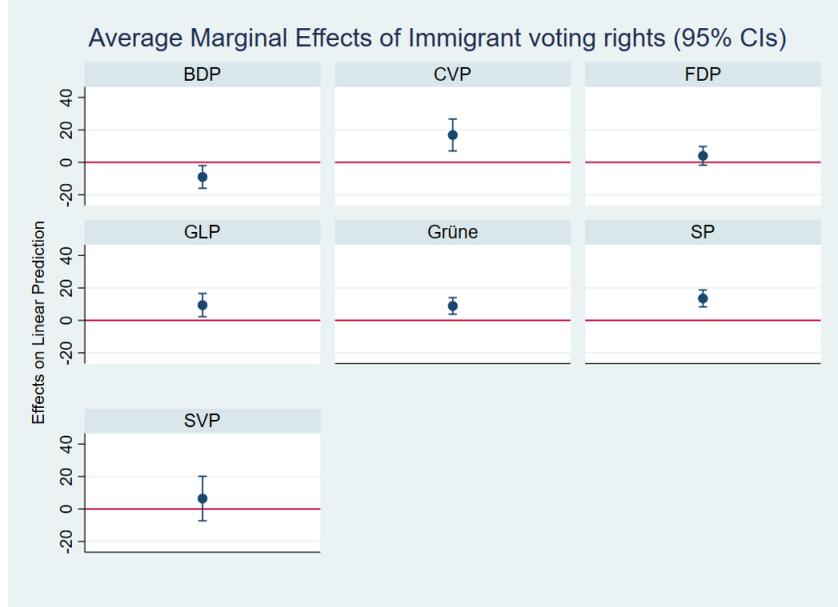


Figure 4 further presents the average marginal effect of alien enfranchisement for each political party separately. It shows that across all parties more immigrant-origin candidates make it to the voting lists if non-naturalized immigrants can participate in municipal elections. Only for the BDP this seems not to hold, however the party was founded in 2008 and the number of observations of this party is therefore very low.