How Europe hits home: Evidence from the Swiss case

Pascal Sciarini, Alex Fischer and Sarah Nicolet
Abstract

This article contributes to the debate on the domestic consequences of European integration by focusing on three aspects often neglected in the literature. First, while most works deal with the policy dimension of Europeanisation, we develop a set of research hypotheses on its polity and politics implications. Its consequences on the institutions of the decision-making process, on elite conflictuality and on domestic power configuration are examined. Secondly, close attention is paid to the transmission mechanisms at work by comparing the effects of “direct” and “indirect” Europeanisation to a control case where European influences are only minimal. Thirdly, we provide empirical evidence from a non-EU member country (Switzerland), a type of state for which the consequences of Europeanisation are still little explored. Based on a quantitative network analysis, our empirical tests reveal some important differences in the effects of direct and indirect Europeanisation.

Key words: comparative case studies, decision-making process, Europeanisation, network analysis, power configuration, Switzerland
Introduction

The domestic consequences of European integration, known as Europeanisation, have recently received increased attention in the scholarly community. Both the deepening and the widening of the European Union (EU) account for this interest. An important issue in this burgeoning literature regards the conditions under which Europeanisation is likely to succeed, that is, to lead to national adaptation. Thus, several studies show that a domestic change depends on the existence of a “misfit”, that is of some degree of incompatibility between a European policy and a national policy (e.g. Börzel 1999, Green Cowles et al. 2001, Héritier et al. 2001). However, they also show that the existence of a misfit is not a sufficient condition for adaptation (Börzel and Risse 2000: 5): The latter will depend on the existence of factors facilitating – and/or on the absence of factors hindering – change, such as domestic institutional veto points (e.g. Haverland 2000). Other scholars highlight the different transmission mechanisms through which Europeanisation may succeed (Knill and Lehmkuhl 1999, Radaelli 2001). Finally, some scholars have attempted to identify clusters of states with similar adaptational behaviour (e.g. Goetz 2002).

While the Europeanisation literature provides important insights into the domestic consequences of the process of European integration, it has nevertheless three weaknesses. Firstly, it usually focuses on the extent to which a given national policy has adapted to Europeanisation, that is, it treats the policy aspect of the domestic change as a dependent variable in the analysis. Yet, the effects of Europeanisation go beyond the policy dimension and also affect national institutions, as well as power configuration and conflict among domestic actors. In the existing literature, the polity dimension of domestic institutions and the politics dimension of conflicts and power configuration have mainly been included as intervening variables in the analysis. We claim that these two additional dimensions deserve closer look.
Secondly, many studies on Europeanisation suffer from a methodological bias, namely from the lack of a control case. As Radaelli (2001: 113) puts it “the [Europeanisation] literature is somewhat reluctant to tell us what falls outside Europeanisation. If everything is Europeanised to a certain degree, what is not Europeanised?” This shortcoming is an artefact of the research design of these studies, which focus on “Europeanised” policy domains, without contrasting them to non-Europeanised policy domains. Of course, if one is interested in the effects of Europeanisation, one has to compare cases that are influenced by European integration with cases in which the latter does not (or hardly) play a role.

Thirdly, the work on Europeanisation mainly concentrates on EU member states. However, as shown by studies of non-EU member states such as Switzerland, Norway or Central and Eastern Europe countries, the influence of the EU on domestic politics is not limited to its member states (e.g. Ágh 1999, Fischer et al. 2002, Grabbe 2001, Lavenex and Uçarer 2002, Mach et al. 2003). The common denominator of all European non-EU members is that they cannot decide on EU legislation. Besides this, however, these countries differ greatly from one another with respect to their institutional ties with the EU and, therefore, with respect to possible transmission mechanisms of EU influence. In the European Economic Area (EEA) countries (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein), transmission mechanisms are close to those at work in EU member states.³ For the accession countries from Central and Eastern Europe adaptational pressure obviously arises from the membership agreement and the prospect of full membership in 2004. Finally, there is the case of Switzerland. As a country that is neither a member of the EU nor of the EEA, Switzerland is legally not subordinated to European rules. However, owing to both its geographical location and the utmost importance of the EU market for its economy, Switzerland is in fact highly influenced by the process of European integration.
In Switzerland, Europeanisation takes mainly two forms. The most straightforward transmission mechanism results from an international negotiation between Switzerland and the EU. We call this mechanism “direct” Europeanisation. But Europeanisation may also occur without formal negotiations with the EU. This is typically the case when a non-EU member state adapts unilaterally to existing EU rules. In Switzerland, this form of adaptation is known as “autonomous adaptation” (autonomer Nachvollzug). We name it “indirect” Europeanisation.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a contribution to the debate on Europeanisation, one that overcomes the three weaknesses mentioned above. Firstly, focusing on the Swiss case will help us to highlight how Europeanisation affects non-EU countries. Secondly, we compare the effects of two distinct transmission mechanisms, i.e. a case of direct Europeanisation and a case of indirect Europeanisation, and contrast them with a case in which the EU influence is supposed to be minimal. Our case of direct Europeanisation is the negotiation between Switzerland and the EU on the free movement of persons, one of the major issues of the “bilateral treaties” (Dupont et al. 2001). The case of indirect Europeanisation is the reform of the Swiss telecommunication policy, a reform that was strongly influenced by corresponding changes in the EU. The control case is the ongoing reform of the pension system (the so-called eleventh reform). Thirdly, unlike it is the case in most of the earlier studies on Europeanisation, policy adaptation is not the main dependent variable in our analysis. In this paper we are interested in the polity and politics dimensions of Europeanisation: We study the impact of Europeanisation on Swiss institutions – and more specifically on the institutions of the decision-making process – and on the conflict level and power configuration among the Swiss elite.

This paper is structured as follows. In the next section we develop our hypotheses regarding the impact of Europeanisation. We then turn to the presentation of the data. This data comes
from face-to-face interviews carried out with the main political actors in the three decision-making processes between Summer 2001 and Fall 2002. Methodologically, our paper is mainly based on a quantitative, network analysis, which enables us to compare the effects of Europeanisation in our three cases. Our empirical tests appear in the third section. We start with the impact of Europeanisation on the institutions of the decision-making process and then proceed with the effects on the power configuration among domestic (public and private) actors. In conclusion, we offer a summary of the main results and highlight their contribution to the ongoing debate about Europeanisation.

1. The impact of Europeanisation on decision-making processes of non-member states

1.1 The impact of Europeanisation on the institutions of the decision-making process

The institutions of the decision-making process are one of the dependent variables in our analysis. In Switzerland, the “standard” decision-making process includes extensive pre-parliamentary consultation procedures. In order to overcome the “referendum threat” – that is, the threat that a federal law adopted by the Swiss Parliament is attacked by a referendum and/or the threat that a legislative act is rejected in a popular vote – elites must compromise during the initial, pre-parliamentary, phase of the legislative process (Neidhart 1970). A number of formal consultation mechanisms, such as commissions of “experts” and consultation procedures, are available to favour the inclusion of relevant social, economic, and cultural groups. In addition, informal consultation procedures can also be used. They can take many different forms from an organised pre-consultation of interested actors to a mere phone call.

Several studies have shown that the pre-parliamentary phase is very important, and in fact more important than the subsequent phases of the decision-making process (e.g. Kriesi 1980).
The Europeanisation process, and more particularly its direct form, is likely to modify the picture: According to our first hypothesis, direct Europeanisation reduces the importance of formal, pre-parliamentary, consultation procedures. The rationale for this hypothesis is twofold. First, it has for long been shown that decisions in the field of foreign policy have overall a more “closed” character than domestic policy decisions (e.g. Sidjanski 1966), meaning that the former include fewer non-state actors and result in more exclusive decision-making processes than the latter. The usual slowness of formal pre-parliamentary procedures does not fit the rapid and discontinuous rhythm of international talks (Germann 1996: 99). Secondly, international negotiations, when they take place, tend to shift the centre of gravity of the decision-making process away from the domestic level, becoming themselves a more important step, if not the most important one (e.g. Moravcsik 1998, Sciarini 1994).

Our expectations are more ambivalent with respect to the effects of indirect Europeanisation. On the one hand, there are reasons to also anticipate a reduced importance of formal consultations in the case of indirect Europeanisation. This, since some of the constraints that characterise the decision-making process in the case of direct Europeanisation (constraints on the content of the legislation, time constraints) are also present in the case of indirect Europeanisation (i.e. autonomous adaptation). On the other hand, the decision-making channel that applies to the case of indirect Europeanisation differs from that of direct Europeanisation. Given the absence of international negotiations, the leeway for domestic consultation is higher than in the case of direct Europeanisation: Both the decision to adapt and the extent of this adaptation may be submitted to domestic discussions.

In sum, the importance of formal, pre-parliamentary, consultation procedures is expected to be lower in the case of direct Europeanisation than in the “standard” domestic decision-making process, indirect Europeanisation being presumably an “in-between” case in that respect.
However, the hypothesis that direct Europeanisation reduces the importance of formal consultation procedures does not necessarily mean that consultations do not take place at all. As mentioned above, in Switzerland state actors have a strong incentive to consult domestic actors (political parties, interest groups, etc.) in order to avoid a failure of their legislative act in a referendum: Powerful groups whose preferences are not taken into account are likely to campaign against an international agreement in the referendum phase. As a result, one should witness an extensive use of informal consultation procedures in the case of direct Europeanisation.\(^8\)

Our expectations are, again, more ambivalent as far as indirect Europeanisation is concerned. While state actors are less dependent upon informal consultation in this case than in a case of direct Europeanisation (see our previous hypothesis), they may nevertheless choose to use both formal and informal channels, this in order to increase the likelihood that a project arising “from outside” is accepted by domestic non-state actors and goes successfully through the subsequent phases of the decision-making process.

1.2 The impact of Europeanisation on the level of conflict among the elite

Scholars hold contradicting views with respect to the impact of Europeanisation on the level of conflict among the domestic elite. On the one hand, there are scholars, both in Switzerland and abroad, who argue that Europeanisation/internationalisation makes the adoption of new domestic rules easier (e.g. Armingeon 1998, Grote and Schmitter 1999, Sciarini 1994). This, since it helps policy makers to reform domestic policies without being blamed for the unavoidable domestic redistributive effects (Armingeon 1998: 108). In that sense, decisions that would be highly controversial in a domestic setting are more likely to be accepted under European pressure. This vision is compatible with Katzenstein’s (1984 and 1985) work on small European states, which suggests that economic openness and vulnerability favour consensus domestically. If this argument holds, the external pressures for change associated
with Europeanisation should translate into a higher level of domestic consensus. Given that this pressure is more constraining in the case of direct Europeanisation, we expect an especially low level of conflict in this case.

On the other hand, and as we mentioned before, the strong “take-it-or-leave-it” character of legislative acts arising from the European arena severely reduces the room for manoeuvre of domestic actors. Because these acts touch the established domestic order, they are likely to foster conflict among the elite (Hug et Sciarini 1995). More generally, Europeanisation (both direct and indirect) leads to a loss of control of the domestic elite over the political agenda, since it has to deal with acts that are in a way imposed from “the outside world”. This should translate into a higher level of conflict in decision-making processes that are “Europeanised” compared to those that are not.

1.3 The impact of Europeanisation on the domestic power configuration

1.3.1 Empowerment of state actors

By modifying the opportunity structure in which actors evolve the Europeanisation process is said to lead to a redistribution of power among domestic actors and, therefore, to a “differential empowerment” (Börzel and Risse 2000, Risse et al. 2001). Moravcsik (1998 and 2001) has put forward a more specific hypothesis that “Europeanisation” strengthens the state. According to this author “international negotiations and institutions change the domestic context in which policy is made by redistributing four domestic political resources: initiative, institutions, information and ideas (the “four I’s”)” (Moravcsik 1998: 2). In other words, international negotiations shift the control over domestic agendas (initiative), modify who can participate in domestic decision-making procedures (institutions), increases asymmetries in information and “alter[ing] legitimate domestic ideological justifications for policies (ideas)” (Moravcsik 1998: 11). In this view changes in the channels of decision-making brought about by Europeanisation usually favour the actors who are directly involved in international
negotiations and institutions, that is state executives. This argument is in line with Putnam’s (1988) work on the two-level-game, which contends that the transfer of a domestic issue to the international level reinforces state executives. The latter can take advantage of their presence at both the international and domestic levels, and benefit from a reinforced autonomy with regard to other domestic actors, including the legislative body; the strong “take-it-or-leave-it” character of an agreement concluded at the international level reduces the room for amendments in the ratification phase too.

The observation of executive reinforcement as a result of Europeanisation has also been specifically made with regard to the Swiss case. The more exclusive character of “Europeanised” decision-making processes goes hand in hand with a strengthening of the executive most closely involved in the international talks at the expense of both the Parliament and non-state actors (interest groups and political parties; see e.g. Mach 2004, Sciarini 1992).

We assume that this strengthening also takes place in the case of indirect Europeanisation, although it is presumably of a lower magnitude than in the case of direct Europeanisation. In the latter case, the role of state executives is central in the transmission mechanism, since they directly represent their country at the negotiation table. But even in the absence of an international negotiation state actors are presumably reinforced by the existence of an external (European) pressure for change. Among Moravcsik’s four I’s, only one (the institutional channel) no longer holds. In particular, state actors can still try to mobilise the resource “idea” and hence use the external pressure to increase their power vis-à-vis domestic actors in the case of indirect Europeanisation. Such a strategy is not available in a “purely” domestic decision-making process.
1.3.2 Empowerment of export-oriented business over trade unions

It does not follow from our hypotheses regarding the strengthening of state actors that private actors are all equally weakened by Europeanisation. Rather, we expect a differential empowerment among private actors. First, the formal institutions of the EU create a new political opportunity structure that “may offer domestic actors additional resources” (Börzel and Risse 2000: 7). Yet, access possibilities to these institutions vary among actors. Based on this, we expect a strengthening of the export-oriented business sectors, since they have more competencies in the international arena and more channels of access to European institutions. This is explained by the fact that employers organisations – including the Swiss ones (Mach 1999: 429) – have been able to organise themselves at the international level much earlier than unions.

Secondly, as Risse et al. (2001:11) put it, “we expect that domestic actors use Europeanisation as an opportunity to further their goal”. Following from that, one can argue that the process of Europeanisation (be it direct or indirect) reinforces the actors whose preferences are the most in phase with the changes taking place at the European level. Differential empowerment should thus vary on a case-by-case basis depending on actors’ preferences and developments in the European arena. It is often argued that so far in the EU “negative integration”, that is liberalisation and deregulation, has overall taken the lead over “positive integration”, that is the adoption of common European policies shaping the conditions under which markets operate (e.g. Scharpf 1997: 210-211). This general argument also holds for the two projects under consideration: As will become clear in the next section, both our case of direct Europeanisation (the agreement between Switzerland and the EU on the free movement of persons) and of indirect Europeanisation (the reform of the Swiss telecommunication policy) were liberalisation projects, from which the export-oriented sectors of the economy were
expecting great benefits. In both cases, therefore, we should witness a reinforcement of these sectors over trade unions.

We can now summarise our hypotheses:
1a. Europeanisation, and especially its direct form, reduces the importance of formal pre-parliamentary consultation procedures.
1b. Europeanisation, and especially its direct form, increases the resort to informal pre-parliamentary consultation procedures.
2. Europeanisation influences the level of conflict among the elite, but our expectations regarding the direction of the effect are mixed.
3a. Europeanisation, and especially its direct form, results in a strengthening of state executives over both the legislative body and private domestic groups.
3b. Europeanisation results in a strengthening of export-oriented business over trade unions.

2. Methodological aspects

2.1 The selection of cases

We have selected three decision-making processes on issues that, first, were of major importance in Swiss politics and, secondly, differ from one another with respect to the nature and degree of Europeanisation. The first is the negotiation between Switzerland and the EU on the free movement of persons (1994-1998), which constitutes a case of direct Europeanisation. The second is the reform of the Swiss telecommunication policy (1994-1997), which represents a case of indirect Europeanisation (“autonomous adaptation”). Finally, our control case is the eleventh reform of the pension system, a decision-making process with no (or very little) influence from the EU. Before turning to the empirical tests, we briefly present the three cases as well as our methodology.
2.1.1 The negotiation on the free movement of persons

The question of the free movement of persons has been a controversial issue between Switzerland and the EU for a long time. On the one hand, the free movement of persons is a major achievement of the EU and a cornerstone of the “acquis communautaire”. On the other hand, Switzerland’s immigration policy is restrictive in nature and rests on a strict control of immigration and on the system of quotas and permits (permit of abode, permit of permanent residence and a seasonal permit). Not surprisingly, then, Switzerland has been repeatedly asked by the EU to loosen its immigration policy, if not to actually take part in the completion of the free movement of workers on the continent. This issue was already at the heart of the EEA negotiations in the late 1980s – early 1990s. Initially, Switzerland tried to avoid the implementation of the free movement of persons and asked for a permanent derogation to this rule. It ultimately gained only a temporary derogation (five years) during which the free movement of persons should be progressively achieved, and a safeguard clause. Fear of an uncontrolled inflow of foreign workers that would threaten Swiss jobs was a major issue during the EEA referendum campaign (Kriesi et al. 1993; Sciarini and Listhaug 1997). After the rejection of the EEA agreement, the free mobility of persons came again in the spotlights during the bilateral talks with the EU. The EU insisted that the final agreement should include provisions for the complete freedom of movement for persons but the Swiss authorities disagreed, arguing that this would certainly lead to a rejection in a popular vote. After several rounds of discussion, positions progressively converged on a sophisticated compromise (Dupont et al. 2000, Grossen 2001): Switzerland gained a long transitory period, a number of safeguard clauses, as well as the possibility to terminate the agreement after seven years by referendum; the EU obtained the free movement of persons, on trial since 2007, and without restrictions after 2014. On May 21, 2000, an overwhelming majority of more than two thirds of the Swiss people accepted this agreement together with six other bilateral treaties.
2.1.2 The reform of the telecommunication sector

In the middle of the 1990s, the Swiss telecommunication policy has been strongly reformed: Besides the separation of the PTT, the former national monopolist, in postal services and PTT Telecom (Swisscom), and its partial privatisation, the new telecommunication framework also included the liberalisation of the telecommunication market (Conseil fédéral 1996, Pravato 1998). The fully revised telecommunication act regulated the market in fields such as interconnection or universal services. Finally, the new law established an independent agency for the sectoral regulation of the market (the Commission of Communication, “Comcom”).

The liberalisation of the Swiss telecommunication market was highly influenced by the European reform (Pravato 1998: 162f). As such, it is a good example of indirect Europeanisation, that is, of Europeanisation without formal negotiations with the EU. Firstly, the content of the reform proposal was fully compatible with the EU guidelines. Secondly, on the time dimension, Swiss decision-makers worked hard to match the deadline adopted by the EU member states, i.e. full liberalisation by January 1, 1998. A major reason for the strong EU influence stemmed from the willingness of Swisscom, the national operator, to participate in Unisource, a consortium of several European operators. Such participation had to be approved by the EU, which raised the issue of reciprocity, i.e. the liberalisation of the Swiss telecommunication policy. The issue of reciprocity thus became central in the Swiss debate, and a strong argument in favour of a rapid and far-reaching reform.

2.1.3 The eleventh pension reform

The field of social policy belongs to those policy domains where the influence of the EU on domestic politics is rather weak. This can be explained by the fact that the EU has not been very active in this field thus far. The reform of the old age pension system, the eleventh in history, may thus serve as a reference case where Europeanisation does hardly play a role.
In Switzerland the pension system is based on three pillars (EDI 1995). The eleventh reform aims at consolidating the first pillar, the basic old age insurance, which is supposed to cover retired citizens’ fundamental needs (Gay-des-Combes 2001). Economic stagnation, demographic ageing and budget crisis have put the financing of the pension system under pressure. The main purpose of the ongoing reform is to safeguard the financial health of the pension system. To that end, the reform envisages a mix of spending cuts (for example through a raise of women’s retirement age or a reduction of pension for widows) and income increases (most noticeably through a raise of the Value Added Tax).

2.2 Network analysis in political science

We resort to the tools of network analysis (e.g. Wassermann and Faust 1999) to test our hypotheses on our three exemplary cases. The use of network analysis to study the structures and power configuration that govern the elaboration and/or implementation of political decisions rests on a long tradition (e.g. Kriesi 1980, Laumann and Knoke 1987, Schneider 1988, Sciarini 1994).

We draw upon these earlier works to offer a structural account of the decision-making process under consideration. Our data stem from face-to-face interviews with 154 persons representing 65 organisations (see appendix 1) of the Swiss political elite in the three policy domains carried out between June 2001 and September 2002. In line with Knoke et al. (1996: 7), we believe that formal organisations rather than individuals stand in the foreground in today’s politics. Our study focuses on all major actors involved in the policy networks under study. To identify these actors we relied on the classical combination of positional, decisional and reputational approaches (e.g. Kriesi 1980, Sciarini 1994).

To test the validity of our research hypotheses we analyse the power structure, the importance of the various phases (“intervention points”) of the decision-making process, as well as the collaboration and conflict networks. Given that the actors and decision-making phases
obviously differ across the three empirical cases our comparative analysis of the cases will be based on aggregate measures (for example, “state actors” instead of the specific ministries and bureaucracies active in each case).

3. Results

3.1 The impact of Europeanisation on the importance of formal pre-parliamentary consultation (hypothesis 1a)

In each of the three cases under consideration our questionnaire included a question on the perceived importance of the various phases of the decision-making process. Based on a list of these phases, the interview partners were asked to mention the three phases that, in their view, had been the most important ones. The results appear in an aggregate form for the three main phases of the decision-making process (the pre-parliamentary phase, the parliamentary phase and a residual category comprising mainly the referendum phase) in table 1. Given our specific interest for the pre-parliamentary phase, we further divide it into two sub-phases: The consultation phase, which consists of procedures open to private actors such as for instance commissions of experts, and the administrative phase, which comprises the procedures in which only the federal administration can formally take part.15

{TABLE 1}

In line with our first hypothesis the importance of formal pre-parliamentary consultation procedures is lower in the case of direct Europeanisation than in the other two cases: The perceived importance of these procedures is four to five times higher in the latter cases than in the former. Tight constraints with respect to the timing and content of the project as well as
the particular decision-making channels associated with direct Europeanisation presumably account for this result.

It should, however, be noted that the weakness of consultation procedures does not mean that these procedures were absent. In fact, non-state actors had access to a series of formal consultation mechanisms, including a consultation procedure after the conclusion of the bilateral treaties.\textsuperscript{16} The decision-making process was thus not as exclusive as expected. Yet these consultation procedures do not seem to have had any importance at all. This finding suggests that it is not the absence of consultation procedures that mainly characterises the decision-making process of legislative acts negotiated at the European level (direct Europeanisation) but rather their low level of importance.

Turning to indirect Europeanisation (the telecommunication reform), our results are more straightforward than expected: Consultation procedures played a very important role in that case, and were in fact as important as in the control case (the eleventh pension reform).\textsuperscript{17} This findings highlights the relevance of the distinction between direct and indirect Europeanisation: Whether a non-member state adapts through an international agreement or “autonomously” seems to matter much as far as the role played by domestic formal consultation procedures in the process of adaptation is concerned.

3.2 The impact of Europeanisation on informal pre-parliamentary consultations (hypothesis 1b)

Besides formal consultation procedures, state actors may also consult non-state actors in the pre-parliamentary phase through more informal channels. Given its informal character, this type of consultation is not easy to identify. As an indicator for the existence of informal consultation, we use the percentage of non-state actors that had access to the administrative phase. While formally restricted to state actors this phase is in fact open – to various extents – to non-state actors; it is in this phase that informal consultations typically take place between
state actors and non-state actors. Table 2 presents the share of non-state actors (political parties, interest groups, NGOs, etc.) that participated at least in one administrative phase of the decision-making process.18

TABLE 2

The figures of table 2 confirm our hypothesis that direct Europeanisation leads to more informal consultation than in a domestic decision-making process: According to our analysis, more than half of the non-state actors (57%) have informally had a say in the administrative phase in the case of the free movement of persons, whereas the corresponding figure is only one third in the case of the pension reform. This result is in agreement with the existing literature that emphasises the role of informal consultation in legislative acts negotiated at the international level (e.g. Kriesi 1980: 611–612). Relying on informal rather than on formal consultation procedures has an additional advantage for state actors, since it enables them to be more selective when choosing whom they consult.

We see, however, that the share of non-state actors taking part in the administrative phase is even higher in the case of indirect Europeanisation than in the case of direct Europeanisation: In the telecommunication reform, 69% of non-state actors had access to the administrative phase. This is in line with our argument that in the case of indirect Europeanisation state actors may choose to use both the formal and informal consultations channels at their disposal in order to increase the likelihood of a successful decision-making process.

In sum, our findings suggest that Europeanisation, whether direct or indirect, results in an increase of informal consultations compared to the situation prevailing for domestic policy issues. However, while in the case of direct Europeanisation informal consultations serve as a sort of “functional equivalent” for the usual, formal, consultation procedures, in the case of
indirect Europeanisation formal and informal consultation mechanisms complement each other.

3.3 The impact of Europeanisation on the level of conflict among the elite (hypothesis 2)

In order to analyse the conflict network, our questionnaire included a question regarding both convergence and divergence of views with the other actors of the network. This question enables us to assess the effects of Europeanisation on the level and structure of conflict in the decision-making process. The average level of conflict is negative in our control case (-0.04), whereas it leans towards convergence in the telecommunication reform (0.18) and, especially, in the free movement of persons (0.43). This finding suggests that Europeanisation results in a lower level of conflict among the domestic elite.

A finer-grained analysis of the structure of conflict reveals interesting patterns. It is based on a structural equivalence analysis of the conflict network. The principle of structural equivalence is to summarise a complex network of relations between actors in relations between positions or blocks of actors. The initial operation consists in identifying the positions of equivalence, i.e. in grouping actors with the same relational profile. In the present case, actors are grouped according to the similarity of their convergence/divergence profile towards the other actors of the network. This enables us to identify the main converging and diverging camps in each of the three cases under study (the detailed results of the structural equivalence analysis are presented in appendix 2).

The eleventh pension reform is characterised by a high level of conflict due to a strong opposition between the political left (political parties and unions) and right (political parties and employers associations). This dividing line also affected state actors. In the case of the telecommunication reform, by contrast, state actors built a block of their own in the conflict network. While favouring the reform, state actors could nevertheless act as mediators between the right, which supported the liberalisation, and the left, which was far more
sceptical. According to its political program the left should in fact have opposed full liberalisation (e.g. Sozialdemokratische Partei 1994: 51). Yet it eventually accepted it by a large majority. The fact that the telecommunication reform was EU-inspired turned out to be a major argument to rally the left: As a strong supporter of Switzerland’s adhesion to the EU it could hardly block an important reform coming from Brussels.\textsuperscript{22}

In the case of the agreement on the free movement of persons, the decision-making process resulted in an even wider political consensus. Our structural equivalence analysis reveals the existence of an over-sized coalition of state and non-state actors (both from the left and right) supporting the agreement, and a very small group of opponents from far right. This wide consensus in favour of the bilateral agreement could come as a surprise, since the free movement of persons contradicted the traditionally very restrictive Swiss immigration policy. However, the free movement of persons was the price to pay for the other bilateral agreements, which the Swiss economy and the centre-right parties deeply wanted.\textsuperscript{23} For their part, the political left and the unions welcomed in principle the free movement of persons, which was in line with their preference for a loosening of the immigration policy. They definitely backed the agreement once they had obtained a safety net against “wage dumping” (see below).

These results are in line with the well-spread hypothesis that international pressures for change in general and Europeanisation in particular are likely to reduce conflict – or to foster consensus – domestically. Even in a non-EU member state, Europeanisation can act as an external leverage to implement reforms that would be accepted with difficulties in a purely domestic setting.

\textbf{3.4 The impact of Europeanisation on state actors’ empowerment (hypothesis 3a)}

Two measures are used to evaluate the importance of actors in the decision-making process. Our first measure is the reputational power, that is the power that an actor is said to have
according to the other actors in the network. More concretely, we presented to our interview partners a list comprising all state and non-state actors that took part in a given decision-making process and asked them to mention the three actors that, in their view, were the most important ones. In addition to this subjective measure, we use an indicator that is based on the position of an actor in a network, namely its degree of centrality in the collaboration network responsible for the elaboration of a given policy. More specifically, we use here the so-called betweenness centrality that indicates to what extent an actor plays the role of a “broker” or “gatekeeper” for the connection with many other actors. Such a role would potentially grant an actor with a power of control over other actors (Scott 1997: 89f).

\{TABLE 3\}

The strengthening of state actors as a result of direct Europeanisation clearly transpires from our data (table 3). According to both reputational and centrality measures state actors substantially outweigh private actors in the case of the free movement of persons. Results are less clear-cut for our case of indirect Europeanisation (the telecommunication reform). Compared to our domestic control case, state actors display higher scores on the reputational measure but lower ones with regard to centrality. On the one hand, the federal office of communications (Bakom) acted as a transmitter of policy developments in the EU, which presumably accounts for its perceived importance (reputational measure). But given the absence of international negotiations, state actors were not as central as in the case of the free movement of persons.

According to our hypothesis 3a, Europeanisation strengthens state executive actors not only \textit{vis-à-vis} private actors, but also \textit{vis-à-vis} the legislative body. Table 1 shows that this hypothesis is confirmed in the case of direct Europeanisation (overall importance of only 13% for the parliamentary phase) but not in the case of indirect Europeanisation, which does not
differ from our control case in that respect (38% respectively 35%). The result for the free movement of persons suggests that, despite the additional consultation, information and co-decision rights that the Swiss Parliament obtained in 1992 in the elaboration of foreign policy (Art. 47bis of the Geschäftsverkehrsgesetzes), it still plays a marginal role in that domain.

3.5 The impact of Europeanisation on the power relations between export-oriented business and trade unions (hypothesis 3b)

Table 4 summarises the power relations between export-oriented capital and unions in the three case-studies. The score for trade unions is the sum of the scores of all unions active in the policy network. For the export-oriented capital, we included the values of the two major export-oriented peak associations “economiesuisse” and Swiss Employers Union (SAV), as well as those of their main members.

Table 4 provides mixed evidence with regard to the hypothesis of increased power of export-oriented business relative to trade unions. On the one hand, the hypothesis is confirmed in the case of the telecommunication reform, where export-oriented organisations substantially outweigh unions. This is all the more clear if we compare these findings to those of our control case, where power relations are far more balanced. On the other hand, a balance of power also holds in the free movement of persons. Moreover, in that case unions were in fact even stronger than is suggested by the figures of table 4. Knowing that the export-oriented sector of the Swiss economy desperately wanted the bilateral agreements, the unions threatened to attack the whole package by a referendum unless a safety net against social dumping was adopted in the free movement of persons. The use of the referendum threat turned out to be a very successful strategy, one that put the domestic power configuration on its head and resulted in legislative innovations – such as the possibility to introduce minimal
wages in case of salary dumping – that the unions would have been unable to get in a purely domestic setting (Fischer et al. 2002: 160-161, Fischer 2003a).

In sum, the case of the free movement of persons does not confirm the hypothesis that direct Europeanisation reinforces the actors who have a better access to the institutions of the EU and/or whose preferences are the most in phase with the changes taking place at the European level. Empirical evidence even suggests than the reverse may, in some circumstances, be true.

Conclusion

Thus far the literature on Europeanisation has mainly dealt with the domestic policy implications of European integration in EU-member states. This contribution, by focusing on the politics and policy implications of the phenomenon for a non-EU member, has aimed at broadening the scope of analysis. In addition, we have also paid close attention to the transmission mechanisms at work by distinguishing direct and indirect forms of Europeanisation and contrasting them with a case relatively sheltered from European influences.

Empirical evidence based on our analysis of three decision-making processes in Switzerland reveals some interesting findings. First, our results show that the direct and indirect form of Europeanisation share some similar effects. Both transmission mechanisms lead to an increase in the resort to informal consultation mechanisms as compared to our control case. They also both contribute to a reduction of the level of conflict among the elite, which suggests that even in non-EU member states Europeanisation can be used as an external leverage to launch reforms that would be strongly opposed in a purely domestic setting.

However, there are also some marked differences in the impact of direct and indirect Europeanisation. This is clearly visible when comparing their effect on the importance of formal consultation mechanisms. While their weight in the decision-making process was very
weak in the agreement on the free movement of persons, they played an important role in the
telecommunication reform. The distinction between the two forms appears thus warranted:
Whether a non-member state adapts as a consequence of an international negotiation or on a
more autonomous basis is reflected in differences in the adaptation process. The distinction
appears also useful when studying the effects on the domestic power configuration. While
direct Europeanisation leads to a clear reinforcement of state executives over the legislative
body and private actors, the evidence is much less clear-cut for the indirect form.
The results presented here are more illustrative than generalisable given that they rest on an
examination of three case-studies from a single country. However, the highlighted patterns
show the need of paying closer attention to the forms of Europeanisation and to the
differences in their effects on the adaptation process. The framework developed here could be
fruitfully applied to the study of Europeanised decision-making process in both EU and non-
EU member-states. Further empirical evidence could deepen our comprehension of the
transmission mechanisms at work and of the reasons explaining their diverging effects. In
addition, in the context of the EU’s enlargement to Eastern European states, useful insights
could be gained from a better understanding of the differences between EU and non-EU
members in the effects of Europeanisation.
References


Workshop, Europeanization and Domestic Political Change, The European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre, Florence, Italy.


## Appendix 1: List of interviewed organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>State Offices and Ministries</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakom</td>
<td>Federal Office of Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BfA</td>
<td>Swiss Federal Aliens Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BFS</td>
<td>Swiss Federal Statistical Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJ</td>
<td>Federal Office of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSV</td>
<td>Federal Social Insurance Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV</td>
<td>Directorate of International Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDA</td>
<td>Federal Department of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDI</td>
<td>Federal Department of Home Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFD</td>
<td>Federal Department of Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFV</td>
<td>Federal Finance Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVD</td>
<td>Ministry of Economic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IB/Verh</td>
<td>Direction of Negotiation/Integration Office Switzerland-Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>Swiss Mission to the European Communities Brussels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preisüberwacher</td>
<td>Price Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECO (formerly BAWI, BIGA, BFK and BWA)</td>
<td>State Secretariat for Economic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UVEK</td>
<td>Federal Department of Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weko (formerly Kartellkommission)</td>
<td>Federal Competition Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Representatives of the Cantons (states)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KdK</td>
<td>Conference of the Cantons Governments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VSAA</td>
<td>Swiss Association of Labour Offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political Parties</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVP</td>
<td>Christian Democratic Party (centre-right party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDP</td>
<td>Free Democratic Party (liberal right-wing party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPS</td>
<td>Green Party (left ecological party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lega</td>
<td>League of the Ticinesi (regionalist right-wing party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPS</td>
<td>Liberal Party (liberal right-wing party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PdA</td>
<td>Workers Party (communist Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Swiss Democrats (extreme-right wing party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Social Democratic Party (left-wing party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVP</td>
<td>Swiss People’s Party (conservative right-wing party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employers and Business Associations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASUT</td>
<td>Swiss Association of Telecommunications Users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>economiesuisse (formerly Vorort and wf)</td>
<td>Swiss Business Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRSP</td>
<td>West Swiss Federation of Employers Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro Telecom</td>
<td>The Swiss Telecom Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAV (formerly ZSAO)</td>
<td>Swiss Employers Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBV BAU</td>
<td>Swiss Society of Entrepreneurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBV Bauer</td>
<td>Swiss Farmers Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGV</td>
<td>Swiss Union of Small Businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swisscable</td>
<td>Association for Communication Networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swissmem (formerly ASM and VSM)</td>
<td>Swiss Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIT</td>
<td>Association Inside Telecom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trade Unions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNG</td>
<td>Confederation of Swiss Christian Trade Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GBI</td>
<td>Industry and Construction Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kommunikation (formerly PTT-Union, VSBP, VSTTB, VSFP, SPV, PTT-Vereinigung)</td>
<td>Trade Union of the Communications Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGB</td>
<td>Swiss Federation of Trade Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKV</td>
<td>Association of Blue Collar Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMUV</td>
<td>Industry, Construction and Services Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfair (formerly CHPTT)</td>
<td>Christian Trade Union of the Communications Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VSA</td>
<td>Federation of Swiss Employees Societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Interest Organisations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHV/IV</td>
<td>Association of Pensioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance-F</td>
<td>Peak Organisation of Women’s Associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUNS</td>
<td>Campaign for an Independent and Neutral Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro Senectute</td>
<td>Foundation for Old Age Pensioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAB</td>
<td>Swiss Centre for Mountain Regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAEB</td>
<td>Association for the Integration of Disabled People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKS</td>
<td>Foundation for Consumerism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSRV</td>
<td>Association of Old Age Pensioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vasos</td>
<td>Association of Old Age Pensioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Firms</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Commcare</td>
<td>Telecommunication Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-Holding (formerly diAx-Holding)</td>
<td>Telecommunication Investment Company of Swiss Electricity Companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diAx</td>
<td>Telecommunication company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infras</td>
<td>Consulting Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migros</td>
<td>Supermarket Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBB</td>
<td>Swiss Federal Railways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunrise</td>
<td>Telecommunication Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swisscom (formerly PTT Telecom)</td>
<td>Telecommunication Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBS</td>
<td>UBS (Bank)</td>
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</table>
Appendix 2: Results of the structural equivalence analysis (equivalence blocks)

**Free movement of persons** *(average density: 0.43)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Position 1</th>
<th>Position 2</th>
<th>Residual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All other actors</td>
<td>“Far right opponents”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 1</td>
<td>0.761</td>
<td>-0.833</td>
<td>-0.375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 2</td>
<td>-0.833</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.667</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>-0.667</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Position 1: IB, EVD, Seco, EDA, Mission, DV, Bfa, KdK, VSAA, FDP, CVP, SP, LPS, GPS, SAV, Vorort, SGV, SBV Bau, SBV Bauer, FRSP, SGB, CNG, VSA, SMUV

Position 2: SD, Lega, AUNS

Residual: SVP

**Telecommunication reform** *(average density: 0.18)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Position 1</th>
<th>Position 2</th>
<th>Position 3</th>
<th>Position 4</th>
<th>Residual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“strictly pro liberalisation”</td>
<td>“mediators”</td>
<td>“apologist of public services”</td>
<td>Swisscom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 1</td>
<td>0.738</td>
<td>0.480</td>
<td>-0.633</td>
<td>-0.600</td>
<td>0.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 2</td>
<td>0.547</td>
<td>0.500</td>
<td>0.133</td>
<td>0.400</td>
<td>0.350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 3</td>
<td>-0.611</td>
<td>0.067</td>
<td>0.233</td>
<td>0.333</td>
<td>-0.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 4</td>
<td>-0.467</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>0.333</td>
<td>0.350</td>
<td>-0.417</td>
<td>0.250</td>
<td>-0.083</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Position 1: FDP, SVP, LPS, Infras, economiesuisse, ASUT, VIT, Sunrise, SBB, Migros, UBS, diAx, Dholding, Commcare, Swissable

Position 2: UVEK, Bakom, Seco, Weko, CVP

Position 3: SP, GPS, PdA, Kommunikation, SKS, SAB

Position 4: Swisscom

Residual: Preisüberwacher, Swissmem, Pro Telecom, Transfair

**Eleventh pension reform** *(average density: -0.04)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Position 1</th>
<th>Position 2</th>
<th>Position 3</th>
<th>Residual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“pro consolidation”</td>
<td>“pro expansion”</td>
<td>“leading state offices”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 1</td>
<td>0.700</td>
<td>-0.556</td>
<td>-0.550</td>
<td>-0.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 2</td>
<td>-0.856</td>
<td>0.764</td>
<td>0.389</td>
<td>0.111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 3</td>
<td>-0.600</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>-0.080</td>
<td>-0.067</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>-0.050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Position 1: EVD, Seco, EFD/EFV, FDP, SVP, LPS, SAV, SGV, economiesuisse, FRSP

Position 2: SP, GPS, SGB, CNG, VSA/SKV, Vasos, AHV/IV, Pro Senectute, SAEB

Position 3: EDI, BSV

Residual: BFS, CVP, SBV, SSRV, alliance-F
Address for correspondence: Pascal Sciarini, Institut de hautes études en administration publique (IDHEAP), 21, rte de la Maladière, 1022 Chavannes-Lausanne, Switzerland. Email: pascal.sciarini@idheap.unil.ch.
Pascal Sciarini

Pascal Sciarini is Professor at the Graduate Institute of Public Administration (IDHEAP), Lausanne. He has written on Swiss politics, European integration and comparative political economy. His most recent publication is a co-edited book on the 1999 Swiss federal elections (2003).

Alex Fischer

Alex Fischer is Research Assistant at the Graduate Institute of Public Administration (IDHEAP), Lausanne. He has recently completed his Ph.D. thesis about the influence of internationalisation and Europeanisation on decision-making processes in Switzerland.

Sarah Nicolet

Sarah Nicolet is Research Assistant at the Graduate Institute of Public Administration (IDHEAP), Lausanne and Teaching Assistant at the Department of Political Science, University of Geneva. She is a doctoral candidate at the University of Michigan. Her dissertation focuses on the formation of opinion in European elections.
Acknowledgements

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1 While the Europeanisation literature is recent, it shares some similarities with the “second-image reversed” approach in international relations (e.g. Almond 1989, Gourevitch 1978, Katzenstein 1984 and 1985).


3 EEA countries have to adapt their national policies according to the EEA rules adopted by the EU; they have a say in the initial phases of a decision-making process (“decision-shaping”) but cannot vote on the adoption of a bill (“decision-making”).

4 There is an extensive literature on the impact of EU membership on Switzerland’s three institutional cornerstones: direct democracy, federalism and neutrality (for a summary of this literature see Kriesi 1998). By contrast, the study of the consequences of Europeanisation for the “soft” institutions of decision-making processes has been neglected thus far.

5 In Switzerland, all federal laws adopted by the Swiss Parliament are submitted to the facultative referendum: By collecting 50’000 signatures of citizens in 100 days against a law, a group may call for a final decision by the people.

6 A commission of experts, “as its name does not indicate, comprises not only specialists in the field but also representatives of interest groups, of the cantons and the parties” (Morand 1987: 76, our translation).

7 A consultation procedure is launched either by the Federal Council or by a department of the administration. It usually consists of a written consultation in which all the main political parties, interested organisations, and the cantons, are invited to express their opinions with respect to a legislative project. The analysis of the results of the consultation procedure, undertaken by the appropriate department, paves the way for the final draft of the legislative act, which is then adopted by the Federal Council (the Swiss government) and transmitted to the Swiss Parliament.

8 This hypothesis is in line with Kriesi’s (1980: 611–612) finding that the consultative procedures implemented during the negotiation between Switzerland and the European Community (EC) on the free trade agreement in 1971 were highly informal and included a limited number of participants.
9 For instance, the Swiss Business Federation (economiesuisse) is the only Swiss peak association that is directly represented in Brussels.

10 According to experts’ responses to a survey on the 210 legislative acts adopted by the Swiss Parliament during the 1995-99 legislative period, social policy issues appear as the legislative acts with the lowest level of “internationalization” (Sciarini et al. 2002: 13).

11 Access to the Swiss labour market has always been an important concern for southern EU countries.

12 The interview breakdown is the following: 53 persons for the case of the free movement of persons, 63 for the telecommunication reform and 38 for the eleventh pension reform. See appendix 1 for a detailed list of the organisations interviewed in the study.

13 The positional approach selects the actors according to the position they hold in the political system, the decisional approach identifies the participants in the decision-making process, and the reputational approach includes the actors according to the influence they are perceived to have.

14 To that end we use the softwares UCINET (5.0) and STRUCTURE (2.0).

15 This phase includes for instance the negotiations with the EU at the international level, or the preparation of the “message” on a given project that the Federal Council will then submit to the Parliament.

16 These procedures were offered to non-state actors by the federal administration as part of the latter’s strategy to open the network and to build stronger support for the bilateral treaties in the ratification phase (Fischer et al. 2002; see also below).

17 Note that in the field of social policy formal pre-parliamentary consultation procedures are still important but, presumably, much less important than they were in the early 1970s (Häusermann et al. 2002a).

18 The question asked encompasses the various phases of the decision-making process more generally. It was labelled as follows: “Here is a list of the main phases of the decision-making process on the free movement of persons. Could you tell me in which phases your organisation participated?” We focus here on the responses regarding the administrative phase.

19 The question was the following: “With regard to the elaboration of this act, could you tell me with which organisations you had great divergence of views, respectively great convergence of views?” The answers were coded in the following way: –1 for divergence, +1 for convergence and 0 for neither nor.

20 The average level of conflict is computed by adding the scores (-1, 0 or 1) of the convergence/divergence matrix. The resulting figure is then divided by the overall number of possible links.
They were joined only by the Christian-Democratic party, a key-player in Parliament giving its pivotal position in building or destroying majorities.

A second important argument for the left was the general perception that the public operator PTT Telecom needed an access to the European market in order to survive economically (Pravato 1998).

In order to prevent Switzerland from cherry-picking, the EU linked the agreement on the free movement of persons with the six other bilateral treaties. Given that most of them improved the access to the Single market for the Swiss export industry, the latter strongly supported the acceptance of the whole package.

The question was labelled as follows: “In your opinion, which are the three most important actors in the decision-making process on…?” The rationale behind such a question is that the major actors of the network are the best experts to evaluate the importance of the actors (or phases, see above) of a decision-making process.

The question was labelled as follows: “Here is a list of actors active in this decision-making process. Based on this list, could you please tell me with whom you collaborated closely?”

Technically, the betweenness centrality of an actor measures the percentage of actors that must transit through a specific actor in order to reach (i.e. to collaborate with) the other actors in the network.

Note that this result does not contradict that of the previous section where we found that state actors rely greatly on informal consultations of non-state actors. A more detailed analysis not presented here reveals that, although reinforced, state actors adopted an “inclusive” strategy in order to build stronger support for the agreement in the ratification phase (Fischer et al. 2002).

Note that in the telecommunication reform two other domestic actors, namely economiesuisse and the PTT, were also highly central in the network. At that time the PTT (and the federal railways) did still fully belong to the state. If we count the latter as state actors, then the degree of centrality of state actors comes close to that in the pension reform.

During our interviews, some MP’s mentioned that the new procedures adopted in 1992 certainly improved their level of information but not their ability to influence the policy line adopted by the Swiss Federal Council.

In doing so, we took into account the fact that not all members of peak organisations are export-oriented. Thus, we did not include in our sum the scores of economic organisations of the construction sector, which are mostly active in the domestic sector of the economy (Fischer 2002).

According to table 4, labour even clearly dominates over capital. Remember, however, that this table does not include the associations of the domestic economy, which are very important in the social policy field. Therefore, table 4 certainly underestimates the strength of capital in this case.