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Dominance or challenge? An explanation of power structures among coalitions in Swiss decision-making processes

Manuel Fischer

*University of Geneva*¹

Abstract

This paper studies the conditions under which a given power distribution among coalitions of collective actors in political decision-making processes emerge. The distribution of power among actors is one of the basic dimensions of politics and is important because of its influence on the output of the decision-making processes. The paper distinguishes between ideal-types of power structures with a dominant coalition (“dominance”) and structures with distributed power among several coalitions (“challenge”). It takes into account four conditions supposed to interact with each other, i.e. the degree of federalism of a policy project, its degree of Europeanization, its policy type (i.e. direct vs. indirect coercion), and the openness of the pre-parliamentary phase of the decision-making process. In order to assess the importance of these conditions, I compare the 11 most important decision-making processes in Switzerland between 2001 and 2006 by a Fuzzy-Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA). Results suggest that Europeanization or an open pre-parliamentary phase lead to a power structure of dominance, whereas only a specific combination of all four conditions is able to explain power structures of challenge. I argue that this is good news for the integration capacity of the Swiss political system.

¹ Contact: Département de science politique et relations internationales, Université de Genève, 40, Bd du Pont-d’Arve, 1211 Genève, Switzerland. Email: manuel.fischer@unige.ch. Tel.: + 41 22 379 99 01.

1 Introduction²

This paper studies the conditions under which given power distributions among coalitions of collective actors in political decision-making processes emerge. The distribution of power among coalitions is one of the basic and most important dimensions of political decision-making (Knoke et al. 1996, Kriesi et al. 2006a, Adam and Kriesi 2007). In political decision-making processes, actors are supposed to collaborate in coalitions with other actors defending similar policy preferences. The power distribution among coalitions is important because of its influence on the output of the decision-making processes (e.g. Atkinson and Coleman 1989, Scharpf 1997, Kriesi and Jegen 2001, Christopoulos 2006, Adam and Kriesi 2007). If there exists one dominant coalition, i.e. in a situation of dominance, this coalition can most probably achieve its preferred solution without taking into account the preferences of smaller opposition coalitions. A solution elaborated under these circumstances is most probably very stable over time. Alternatively, if there are two or more coalitions which are about equally powerful, i.e. in a situation of challenge, there is a high probability of mutual blockage. Solutions must be brought about by narrow majority decisions or compromise seeking. While the former is supposed to bring unstable solutions, the latter runs the risk of bringing “smallest common denominator” solutions.

Under which conditions are actors able to form a dominant coalition, and which conditions lead to a situation of challenge? Answers to this question do not only contribute to the understanding of the functioning of the political system, but – from a normative point of view – can also help us to learn about the conditions under which “better” power structures can be achieved. For the explanation of power structures, the paper takes into account the conditions of the degree of federalism of a project, its degree of Europeanization, its policy type (i.e. direct vs. indirect coercion as intended by the policy), and the openness of the pre-parliamentary phase of the decision-making process. It is assumed that these different conditions interact with each other when they influence power structures.

In order to assess the importance of these conditions, I compare the 11 most important decision-making processes in Switzerland between 2001 and 2006. Methodologically, I rely on an innovative combination of two methods. In a first step, Social Network Analysis (SNA)

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tools are applied to describe the coalitions and the power distribution among them. In a second step, the 11 cases are compared by a Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). The data stems from over 240 face-to-face interviews with representatives of political actors as well as from documentary sources about the 11 processes. Results on the one hand suggest that Europeanization or an open pre-parliamentary phase lead to a situation of dominance. On the other hand, only a specific combination of all four conditions is sufficient for power structures of challenge. More specifically, power structures of challenge appear in non-federalist, domestic decision-making processes that provide redistributive or regulative policies and have a closed pre-parliamentary phase.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. In the next section, I will discuss the concepts of coalitions and power distribution, as well as the conditions under which given ideal-types of dominance or challenge might appear. Section three describes the data and the methods; the analysis follows in section four. Finally, section five concludes.

2 Ideal-types of power structures and conditions for their emergence

2.1 Power structures among coalitions

In modern policy-making, different collective actors such as political parties, interest groups, state executives, administrative units, cantons, and experts participate at different venues of the decision-making process and are connected by different kinds of relations (Schneider 1992, Waarden 1992, Kriesi 1994, Sciarini 1995, Knoke *et al.* 1996: 3, Sciarini 1996, Börzel 1998: 254, Kriesi *et al.* 2006a, Kriesi 2007, Henry 2011). While often separated in early theoretical models, it is argued that today, the boundaries between the different functions of these different actors have become "fluent and irrelevant" (Laumann and Knoke 1987: 381, Knoke *et al.* 1996). Actors defending a similar policy preference form coalitions across different actor types. It is argued that an actor can only influence decision-making processes in a decisive manner by being part of a coalition, and that actors do have incentives to form large and encompassing, and thus only a limited number of coalitions (Sabatier 1987, Knoke *et al.* 1996, Sabatier and Weible 2007). Today, important theoretical strands in the public policy literature such as the Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier 1987, Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999, Sabatier and Weible 2007) or the Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (Baumgartner and Jones 1991, True *et al.* 2007, Baumgartner *et al.* 2009), as well as other

empirical applications argue that the key actors in modern political decision-making are not individual players, but coalitions of actors (Atkinson and Coleman 1992: 161, Kriesi and Jegen 2001, Beyers 2002: 598, Beyers and Kerremans 2004: 1126, Fischer 2005, Heaney 2006, Kriesi *et al.* 2006a: 342, Adam and Kriesi 2007, Ingold 2008, Beyers and Braun-Poppelaars 2010: 2ff., Ingold 2010, Knoke 2010). Thus, the analysis of power structures is based on coalitions of collective actors.³

Political decision-making encompasses different aspects, but power structures among the coalitions are certainly one of the most important aspects. Power is one of the most basic and oldest concepts in political science, and even in the social sciences in general.⁴ The power structure determines whether power is concentrated in the hands of a coalition of actors, or whether it is distributed among several coalitions (Knoke *et al.* 1996, Weible 2005, Kriesi *et al.* 2006a, Adam and Kriesi 2007, Fischer 2011a). If there is a dominant coalition, this coalition is able to impose its preferred solution, pointing to a policy monopoly (Baumgartner and Jones 1991, True *et al.* 2007), which is based on certain basic values and a specific, widely accepted perception of the problem at hand. In such a situation, conflicts over policy preferences need not to be "solved" in the proper sense in order to achieve a sufficiently acceptable solution. The uneven distribution of power enables a majority decision, by which the dominant coalition can enforce its preferred solution without much resistance from one or more minority coalitions (Scharpf 1997: 45ff.). Also, a dominant coalition that represents a policy monopoly has a high probability of being able to dominate the policy domain over a longer period of time. The opponents of the dominant coalition, if they exist at all, are too weak to get any concessions from the dominant coalition. Thus, power structures of dominance are supposed to bring about stable policy solutions. On the contrary, if power is

³ First, if actors defending the same or similar preferences are able to work together in a coalition, they can pool financial and organizational resources and thus use them more efficiently. Examples include the joint gathering of relevant information and expertise, or joint funding of expensive campaigns. Second, a coalition of different actors can demonstrate a broad support for a particular position to the responsible decision makers, especially if disagreements within the coalition have already been solved (Mahoney 2007: 368). For these reasons, it is assumed that actors in coalitions are usually more successful than if they act alone. These coalitions need not to be formally and publicly communicated, but can also coordinate on a more informal and possibly even secret level (Heaney 2006: 891f.).

⁴ The concept of power is controversially discussed in the literature and as a consequence has been defined and measured in different ways (z.B. Dahl 1957, 1961, Bachrach and Baratz 1962, Emerson 1962, Lukes 1974, Scott 1994, Bates 2010). One of the most basic definitions is from Max Weber: "Power means every opportunity, within a social relationship, to enforce one's own preference despite resistance." (Weber 1980, cited in Weiss 1996: 306). Power is thus not to be understood as a fixed attribute of an actor, but it always depends on the interaction between two or more actors (Knoke 1990). Thus, power on the one hand means to exert influence on other actors, and on the other hand to influence policy decisions (see Knoke *et al.* 1996: 17ff., 190).

distributed among several coalitions, they can mutually block the decision-making process. In such a situation, where two (or more) roughly equally strong coalitions are opposed, the coalitions represent different views and perceptions of a problem and its possible solutions. A solution can be achieved either by a marginal majority decision, or by negotiations among the actors trying to reach a compromise. The former is supposed to bring unstable solutions because only a small change of the preferences or the power of an actor can reverse the power distribution. The latter runs the risk of bringing “smallest common denominator” solutions that might be accepted by a big part of the actors, but might not satisfy objective criteria for a technically good solution.

2.2 Conditions influencing power structures

The distribution of power among different coalitions depends on the specific conditions under which decision-making among coalitions takes place. Conditions are as diverse as the type of actors implied, the level of the political system concerned, the institutions guiding decision-making, or the specific policy domain a process deals with. Because of the big diversity of potential conditions, it is improbable that only one condition can explain the diversity of power structures. Rather, I expect different conditions to interact and jointly influence the power structure (Ragin 1987, 2000, Braumöller 2003, Hall 2003, George and Bennett 2005, Bennett and Elman 2006, Ragin 2008, Rihoux and Ragin 2009). Four different conditions, presented below, are included in the analysis. They are selected because they are important in the existing literature on power structures or Swiss politics, have been recognized as important through my in-depth knowledge of the 11 cases, and jointly cover a broad palette of different theoretical conditions.

First, in federalist states like Switzerland, decision-making as well as implementation competences are shared between the central and sub-national levels (i.e. cantons). In federalist processes, i.e. decision-making processes that affect the distribution of competences between the two levels, sub-national units are involved on the national level in order to defend their competences. In these cases, and contrary to processes opposing two societal groups (as e.g. the left and the right), the central state does not need to negotiate with two conflicting sides in order to achieve a solution, but there is usually only one partner to agree with, namely the cantons (see e.g. Thomas 2001: 16f., Linder 2005: 117). Under these circumstances, it is very likely that the federal government and the cantons reach a compromise early and form a dominant coalition defending this solution throughout the process. On the contrary, if the

cantons or parts of them do not support the project, chances are high that it will fail sooner or later. If a federal project, however, enjoys the support of the federal government and (a clear majority) of the cantons, this is a relatively safe basis for success, and major resistance from other actors is not to be expected. Therefore, it can be assumed that the federal character of a project is a sufficient condition for a dominant coalition. This should be the case independent of the conditions of Europeanization and of the policy type, and federal decision-making processes are expected to have an open pre-parliamentary phase anyways. Federalism, however, is not a necessary condition for the emergence of a dominant coalition. If a project is non-federalist, this contributes to the distribution of power among coalitions. For power to be distributed, non-federalism needs to be combined with a domestic project and redistributive or regulatory measures. Federalism is thus not individually sufficient, but necessary for power to be distributed among coalitions.

Second, Europeanization describes the phenomenon that even in the non-EU-member Switzerland, more and more policy domains are influenced by the European environment, not only affecting public policies, but also the institutions and actor constellations of the decision-making process (Mach *et al.* 2003, Sciarini *et al.* 2004, Fischer 2005). In comparison with domestic processes, Europeanized processes differ in both the design and relative importance of the institutional venues. Most importantly, the inner-administrative phase of Europeanized processes include international negotiations, which tends to shift the centre of gravity away from the domestic level: Taking place at the beginning of the process, these negotiations influence the content of the bill substantially and therefore tend to become the most important part of the whole process (e.g. Sciarini 1994, Moravcsik 1998). The main actors present in these negotiations are the federal government and its administration. Because the federal government in Europeanized projects does not play the role of the mediator between different domestic interests, but is trying to impose its own priorities with respect to its foreign policy, it needs to form a dominant coalition in support of these preferences. In order to build a dominant coalition in support of the international treaty, so-called "side payments" for critical stakeholders might be necessary (Fischer 2002, 2003). Europeanized projects give mainly rise to a cultural conflict between the representatives of the opening of Switzerland and representatives of its autonomy and independence. While most political parties on the left and the center welcome an ordered opening to the European Union and its population, right-wing conservative forces oppose this development (Brunner and Sciarini 2002, Kriesi *et al.* 2006b, 2008). Therefore, the federal government should normally be able to form a dominant

coalition with the actors welcoming an opening of the country. Europeanization is thus a sufficient condition for a dominant coalition. However, this condition is not necessary for a dominant coalition. If a project concerns domestic politics, this contributes to a distribution of power, but is not an individually sufficient condition. A domestic project needs to be combined with the conditions of non-federalism and regulatory or redistributive measures. The domestic character of a project is thus not individually sufficient, but necessary for the emergence of a power structure of challenge.

Third, Lowi (1964, 1970, 1972, 1985) formulated the hypothesis that structures among political actors depend on the type of policy, i.e. they are dependent on the nature of the proposed policy measure. This idea is known as “policy determines politics” (Lowi 1972: 299). Partly based on previous experiences with the same type of policy, actors develop expectations regarding the benefits that they can expect from a policy measure. These expectations of the actors influence the power structures (Lowi 1964: 688f.). If the measure provides direct coercion in the context of regulatory or redistributive measures, this leads to a distribution of power among various coalitions, because the whole parts of the society or well-organized interests are supposed to be directly affected by the measure and mobilize accordingly. However, if such measures are part of Europeanized and / or federal projects, this is not sufficient to lead to a distribution of power between the coalitions. Also an open pre-parliamentary phase in such processes helps to build a dominant coalition. A regulatory or redistributive does thus not represent an individually sufficient, but a necessary condition for power structures of challenge. In contrast, indirect coercion in the context of a distributive or constitutive type of policy is sufficient for a dominant coalition. Distributive measures can be expected to be supported by many different and not directly interdependent interests benefitting from the measure. Constitutive measures involve mainly state actors and possibly the cantons. Because of the weak or only indirect concern of other actors, a dominant coalition can be expected to support the projects. This condition is however not necessary for a dominant coalition.

Fourth, the pre-parliamentary phase is commonly seen as the key phase in decision-making processes in Swiss politics. Its working groups and consultation procedures offer access points for non-state actors that allow them to express their view and influence the project

accordingly (e.g. Kriesi 1980, Sciarini 2006).⁵ An open and inclusive pre-parliamentary phase increases the opportunities for actors to meet, exchange their positions, and negotiate. This is why decision-making processes with an open pre-parliamentary phase are supposed to lead to structures of dominance. As an open pre-parliamentary phase offers opportunities for exchange and negotiations between external actors and external actors and state actors, it is assumed that on these occasions, a majority of the actors can agree on a solution and a dominant coalition can be formed. This condition alone is sufficient, because I expect that even under other conflict-prone conditions, actors are able to form a dominant coalition. The condition is not necessary for a dominant coalition. A closed pre-parliamentary phase hardly contributes actively to the creation of several coalitions. It is however a necessary condition for a distribution of power among coalitions.

Table 1: Expected effects and interactions

Conditions				Outcome
FED	EUR	REDREG	OPEN	DOM
1	0	1	1	1
1	0	0	1	1
0	1	1	0	1
0	1	0	0	1
0	0	1	0	0
0	0	0	1	1
0	0	1	1	1
0	0	0	0	1

Table 1 summarizes the different combinations of the four conditions and the expected outcome based on the theoretical discussion above. Because federalist processes with a closed pre-parliamentary phase as well as Europeanized processes with an open pre-parliamentary phase are highly unlikely to occur, these combinations are not present in the table.⁶ Only one combination of conditions, presented in the fifth row of table 1, is supposed to lead to a power structure of challenge. It is the specific combination of non-federalist, domestic decision-making processes dealing with redistributive or regulative issues and having a closed pre-parliamentary phase. The rest of the combinations should provoke a power structure of

⁵ According to Neidhart's (1970) reasoning, the intense pre-parliamentary phase with several access points for non-state actors is designed to include a maximum of different positions and thereby to avoid a later referendum against the project.

⁶ This also excludes projects that are at the same time federalist and Europeanized. This seems to make sense theoretically. Note that this exclusion does not influence the analysis, but only simplifies the presentation of the expectations.

dominance, meaning that each of the four conditions (i.e. federalist process, Europeanized process, distributive or constitutive process, and process with an open pre-parliamentary phase) are alone sufficient for the emergence of a power structure of dominance.

3 Data and methods

3.1 Data on the 11 most important decision-making processes

This paper compares the 11 most important decision-making processes in Switzerland between 2001 and 2006.⁷ The cases are the 11th pension reform, the program of budget relief 2003, the extension of the bilateral agreement on the free movement of persons and flanking measures, the bilateral agreement on the taxation of savings, the bilateral agreement on Schengen/Dublin, the law on nuclear energy, the law on the infrastructure fund, the new law on foreigners, the reform of fiscal equalization and tasks distribution, the new constitutional articles on education and the law on telecommunication. Data on these processes was gathered through approximately 250 semi-structured interviews with individual representatives of collective actors involved in the decision-making processes. Based on positional, decisional, and reputational approaches (see e.g. Knoke 1993: 30), 20 to 30 organizational actors per process were identified and interviewed.⁸ Besides the answers to the pre-structured questions, additional information given by the interview partners was written down in an interview protocol and provides helpful information for the interpretation of the data and the in-depth knowledge of the cases. Additionally, the study of official documents on the cases provide me with supplementary information on the 11 decision-making processes.

3.2 Social Network Analysis and Qualitative Comparative Analysis

Methodologically, I rely on an innovative combination (for more details, see Fischer 2011b). In a first step, Social Network Analysis (SNA) tools are applied to describe the coalitions and the power distribution among them. In a second step, the 11 cases are compared by a Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA).

⁷ The importance of the decision-making processes is based on a written expert survey among approximately 80 experts of Swiss politics conducted in 2007.

⁸ Most of the interviews were conducted between February and July 2008 by the author of this paper and four specifically trained colleagues.

The focus of Social Network Analysis (for an introduction, see Wasserman and Faust 1994) is, as its name suggests, on networks, i.e. relations between cases. The central assumption underlying the focus on networks and network relations is that these relations and the interdependencies that come with them matter for the explanation of individual or collective behaviour. In the context of the empirical application in this paper, the nodes of the network are collective political organisations such as political parties, interest groups, or agencies of the state administration. These actors are linked by ties of convergence or divergence of preferences on a specific policy project, as well as by ties of collaboration. Both types of relational information are used for the reconstruction of actors' coalitions, which are the basic units of analysis of power structures (for similar approaches, see Knoke *et al.* 1996, Adam and Kriesi 2007, Ingold 2011).

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (Ragin 1987, 2000, 2008, Rihoux and Ragin 2009) is a method for the systematic comparison of usually a medium (5-50) number of cases. It is based on the assumption that causality in the social reality is complex, i.e. that different combinations of causal conditions can lead to an outcome and that the effect of a condition is dependent on its combination with other conditions.⁹ The method formally presents the values for the outcomes and the conditions in a so-called "truth table". This table is then reduced by eliminating redundant conditions and finally identifies necessary and sufficient conditions or combinations of conditions that lead to an outcome. In order to do this, fsQCA identifies set relationships between the outcome and the conditions. These set relationships indicate the presence of necessary or sufficient (combinations of) conditions for a particular outcome. The goal is to be able to explain all the cases under study, and the method emphasises the best possible case knowledge and the repeated dialogue between theory and evidence. The basic form of QCA is crisp-set QCA, in which the conditions and the outcome can take on only dichotomous values – 0 or 1. Fuzzy-set QCA allows overcoming the inherent limitation of dichotomization and works with fuzzy set membership scores that take on values between 0 and 1 (Ragin 2000, 2008, Rihoux and Ragin 2009). The procedure of attributing such values to the cases to determine to what degree they display a condition or an outcome is called "calibration".

⁹ In the language of QCA, the outcome is the phenomenon to be explained, and the conditions are the potential causal factors included in the analysis.

SNA and QCA have only rarely been combined in a joint research design (for exceptions, see Stevenson and Greenberg 2000, Spreitzer and Yamasaki 2008, Magetti 2009). There are however potential mutual contributions of the two methods, as each method allows one to add elements to the analysis that are often lacking in applications of the other method alone (Fischer 2011b). On the one hand, QCA allows for a systematic comparison of network structures. While SNA is often only used in a descriptive manner, QCA offers one way of identifying potential causal paths involving networks. On the other hand, a formal quantitative tool like SNA allows the researcher to systematically apply the same criteria as a basis for the calibration of cases in QCA. Systematic calibration is an important criterion for a good QCA, especially when one compares more than only a handful of cases.

3.3 Calibration of the outcome and the conditions

As argued above, the description of the power structure is based on coalitions of actors. Actors in a coalition have similar preferences and cooperate in order to achieve their goals (see the "advocacy circle", Knoke *et al.* 1996: 21). Therefore, coalitions are identified as follows. In a first step, actors are regrouped into blocks of actors according to their profile of convergence/divergence of preferences.¹⁰ This procedure results in 2 to 5 blocks per decision-making process. Actors within one block should have convergent preferences, while actors from different blocks should have divergent preferences. These blocks of similar preferences constitute the basis for the identification of coalitions. A second criterium of a coalition is internal cooperation. Therefore, in a second step, I identify actors that cooperate at least indirectly within each block.¹¹ This procedure eliminates actors that have similar preferences, but are not integrated in the cooperation structure within the block. Thus, actors that share similar preferences (step 1) and cooperate with each other at least indirectly (step 2) form a coalition. The power of each coalition is then calculated in a third step. I aggregate the

¹⁰ This procedure is based on the network of convergence/divergence of preferences. Based on a list comprising all the actors that participated in the specific process, interview partners were asked to select the actors with which their organization had mainly convergent or divergent positions during the decision-making process. This results in a directed network with positive values indicating convergence and negative values indicating divergence of preferences. Blocks in the network are then identified with the "balance"-procedure in Pajek (Batagelj and Mrvar 1996). This procedure continuously rearranges the matrix of actors until reaching an arrangement that is closest to a pre-defined structure, in this case a structure with only positive ties within the block and only negative ties towards other blocks (Doreian *et al.* 2005, Nooy *et al.* 2005, Doreian 2008). Deviations from this ideally arranged matrix are indicated with an error term (Doreian and Mrvar 1996, 2009). For this analysis, the block structure with the lowest error term was selected.

¹¹ This procedure is based on the cooperation network. Based on a list comprising all the actors that participated in the specific process, interview partners were asked to select the actors with which their organization had frequent contacts during the decision-making process. Within each block, I identify so-called "2-cliques" with the software UCINET (Borgatti *et al.* 2002).

reputational power¹² of each actor in a coalition. The aggregation is computed as the mean between the “part-of-the-sum” and the average score of the reputation of each coalition.¹³ Table A1 in the appendix gives an overview over the calibration of the outcome.

For the assessment of the degree of Europeanization, the degree of federalism, as well as the policy type, substantive case knowledge stemming from qualitative information from the interviews and documentary sources is used. Tables A2 - A4 in the appendix give an overview over the calibration of these two conditions. The openness of the pre-parliamentary phase is assessed by two indicators: First, I look at the number of venues which constitute formal access points for non-state actors compared to all venues of the process.¹⁴ Second, I look at the intensity with which non-state actors actually participated in the different venues of the pre-parliamentary phase together.¹⁵ The final indicator on the openness of the pre-parliamentary phase is given by the average of both indicators and the cases are calibrated as shown in table A5 in the appendix.

Table 2 shows the fuzzy-values for the outcome and the conditions. DOM represents the set of cases with a power structure of dominance, FED represents the set of federalist cases, EUR represents the set of Europeanized cases, REDREG the cases with a redistributive or regulatory policy type, and OPEN the set of cases with an open pre-parliamentary phase.

¹² Based on a list comprising all the actors that participated in the specific process, interview partners were asked to indicate those actors that, in their view, had been very influential. Based on these answers, I calculated the score of reputational power of each actor, which corresponds to the mean of all the judgments of the interview partners.

¹³ The first, the “part-of-the-sum” measure (summing up the reputational power of each actor in the coalition and expressing the sum as the part of the total power of all coalitions), tends to overestimate the power of coalitions that contain a lot of actors with little power. The second, the average measure (calculating the average reputational power of all actors in a coalition), on the other hand, tends to underestimate the power of these coalitions. Using the mean of the two measures enables us to control for these potential biases.

¹⁴ This is based on the reconstruction of the decision-making process prior to the interviews. This reconstruction was based on documentary sources and was later validated by the interview partners.

¹⁵ To assess their participation at the different stages of the decision-making process, interview partners were asked in which stages from a list of all stages of the decision-making process their organization was involved. The participation score of the whole pre-parliamentary phase was then calculated as the average of each stage’s percentage of all external actors involved in the process that participated in that stage. The differentiation of consultation phases and inner-administrative phases is based on the formal nature of the stages: Consultation stages are officially open to external actors, while inner-administrative stages are officially closed to them.

Table 2: Calibration of the outcome and the four conditions

Case	Power distribution DOM	Federalism FED	Europeanization EUR	Policy type REDREG	Pre-parl. phase OPEN
<i>Nuclear</i>	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.8	0.4
<i>Pension</i>	0	0	0	1	0.4
<i>Fiscal equal.</i>	0.6	1	0	0.6	0.8
<i>Budget</i>	0.8	0.2	0	0.2	0.6
<i>Persons</i>	0.8	0.2	0.6	0.8	0.4
<i>Savings</i>	0.8	0	0.8	0.8	0.2
<i>Schengen</i>	0.6	0.4	0.8	0.6	0.2
<i>Foreigners</i>	0.8	0.4	0.4	1	0.6
<i>Education</i>	1	1	0	0	0.8
<i>Telecom</i>	0.4	0	0.4	1	0
<i>Infrastructure</i>	0.6	0.6	0	0.2	0.6

4 Analysis

A QCA should always be only one step in the analysis. While the calibration based on in-depth case knowledge is the previous step, results must be placed in the context of the individual cases in order to test their plausibility.¹⁶ Therefore, I discuss the ideal-types of power distribution together with the individual cases towards the end of this section.

4.1 Necessary conditions

Table 3 shows the results of the test for necessary conditions for both outcomes. In the first column on the left all conditions and their negations are listed. The table provides consistency and coverage measures for each condition. The former indicates to which extent results are consistent with the statement that the condition is necessary for the outcome. For such a statement to be accepted, it must be consistent with the empirical observation to at least 90% (Schneider and Wagemann 2007, Schneider 2009). The coverage measure provides information about the empirical importance of a necessary condition and indicates whether it is a trivial (high value) or non-trivial (lower value) necessary condition.¹⁷ As it makes no

¹⁶ The presence and absence of the phenomenon under study (i.e. dominance and absence of dominance, i.e. challenge) are to be analyzed separately, which is due to the asymmetric causal assumptions. Also the analysis of necessary and sufficient conditions are carried out separately (see "standards of good practice", Schneider and Wagemann 2007: 266ff., Rihoux *et al.* 2009: 167ff., Schneider and Wagemann 2010).

¹⁷ Trivial necessary conditions are those which occur in all cases and are therefore necessary, but are not closely related to the outcome (e.g. air to breathe is necessary for war, but also for peace) (Ragin 2008: 61f.).

sense to determine the empirical importance of inconsistently necessary conditions, the respective values are specified as not relevant (nr).

Table 3: Necessary conditions

	Dominant coalition		Power distributed	
	<i>Consistency</i>	<i>Coverage</i>	<i>Consistency</i>	<i>Coverage</i>
Federalist project	0.53	n.r.	0.48	n.r.
Non federalist project	0.71	n.r.	0.90	0.54
Europeanized project	0.44	n.r.	0.38	n.r.
Non Europeanized project	0.76	n.r.	0.95	0.51
Redistributive/regulatory project	0.71	n.r.	0.95	0.57
Constitutive/distributive project	0.56	n.r.	0.48	n.r.
Open pre-parliamentary phase	0.65	n.r.	0.62	n.r.
Closed pre-parliamentary phase	0.65	n.r.	0.86	n.r.

As expected, there is no necessary condition for the emergence of a power structure of dominance. In contrast, three of the eight conditions (and their negations) are necessary for the emergence of a power structure of challenge.¹⁸ For such an outcome, a project needs to be non-federalist, domestic, and deal with a redistributive or regulatory policy. First, only in the context of a non-federal project, power can be distributed between different coalitions, because only in those cases, there is no dominant coalition between the federal and cantonal actors. The statement that the absence of federalism is necessary for distributed power is 90% consistent with the empirical observation, and its coverage value of 0.54 demonstrates that this is not a trivial condition. Second, only in domestic projects, two or more coalitions are supposed to oppose each other, while in Europeanized projects, the federal government builds up internal support for its own foreign policy preferences, and tries to form a dominant coalition. This condition is even more consistent (0.95) as the condition of the absence of federalism and is also not trivial (0.51). Third, redistributive and regulatory projects directly affect different, important social groups, leading to the emergence of several equally strong coalitions. This necessary condition is also a high consistency (0.95) and coverage with a value of 0.57 is not trivial. Besides these three conditions, I also expected that a closed pre-parliamentary phase is necessary for the emergence of a power structure of challenge, because in a closed pre-parliamentary phase, actors have no venues to exchange their positions and develop a compromise within a dominant coalition. Based on my results, a closed pre-

¹⁸ The respective XY-plots for the three necessary conditions can be found as graphs A1- A3 in the appendix.

parliamentary phase is however not necessary for power to be distributed. If the other conditions are met, even an open pre-parliamentary phase can lead to a power structure of challenge.¹⁹

4.2 Sufficient conditions for the outcome “dominance”

Sufficient conditions for the analysis of the possible combinations of the four conditions are listed in a so-called truth table. The combinations of four conditions result in 16 possible combinations. Each of these combinations describes a corner of the property space which is built by the conditions and where cases can be localized according to their set memberships. The cases listed in the last column of each row are the strong members, which are more inside than outside the relevant set. Then, it must be examined to what extent the empirical observation supports the postulate that the combination of conditions in a row is sufficient for the emergence of the outcome.²⁰ The consistency measure takes on the value 1 if the membership values of all cases in the given combination of conditions is less than or equal to the membership values of cases in the set of the outcome. If the membership values in the combination of conditions are greater than the membership values in the set of the outcome in one or more cases, the consistency measure takes on a lower value.²¹ If the empirical evidence for a row of the truth table is sufficiently consistent with the statement that the given combination of conditions is sufficient for the outcome, the researcher codes this row of the truth table with the value 1. Rows for which consistency is not strong enough are coded with the value 0. Since perfect consistency is the exception rather than the rule in the empirical reality, consistency values of less than 1 are also acceptable, but they should not be lower than 0.75. In this analysis, all rows of the truth table whose strong members are members of the outcome set (and simultaneously have a consistency value of at least 0.75) are coded with the value 1 (see Table 4).²²

¹⁹ The condition of a closed pre-parliamentary phase does not reach the threshold (0.86). Nevertheless, this close miss is an indication of the likely importance of this condition for the explanation of the distribution of power between coalitions.

²⁰ This assessment is based not only on the strong members in the set, but a consistency measure of the potential relationship between the set of the combination of conditions and the outcome.

²¹ Contradictions between the empirical evidence of different cases, both of which are strong members in the set of the outcome but not in the set of the combination of conditions are expressed by not perfect consistency values in the respective row of the truth table (Schneider and Wagemann 2010).

²² Compared to stricter criteria, this focus on strong members results in solutions with higher coverage, but lower consistency values. Since it is a major goal of this paper to explain the ideal-types of power structures, the highest possible coverage values with a strong concentration on these members should be achieved. Empirical applications indicate that coverage levels ranging from 0.60 to 0.70 are already relatively high (see e.g. Schneider and Grofman 2006, Emmenegger 2008, Christmann 2010).

Table 4: Truth table for the analysis of power structures of dominance²³

FED	EUR	REDREG	OPEN	Consistency	DOM	Strong members
1	0	1	1	1.00	1	Fiscal equal.
0	1	1	0	1.00	1	Persons, Schengen, Savings
1	0	0	1	1.00	1	Education, Infrastructure
0	0	0	1	1.00	1	Budget
0	0	1	1	0.85	1	Foreigners
0	0	1	0	0.71	0	Telecom, Pension, Nuclear

Rows for which the combination of conditions do not have strong members in the empirical data are not directly relevant and do not appear in the truth table. These are so-called logical remainders, which are (partly) included in the minimization procedure as simplifying assumptions. The 11 cases represent strong members in 6 of the 16 possible combinations of conditions; the remaining 10 combinations are logical remainders.²⁴ By minimizing the truth table, the researcher then attempts to reduce the complexity of the statement about the sufficient combination of conditions for an outcome. Depending on which logical remainders are included for the reduction of the solution term, three different possible solutions are possible. A complex solution is obtained by minimizing the truth table without the inclusion of the logical remainders. A simple solution is obtained when the truth table is minimized by taking into account all logical remainders. In this analysis, I focus on the intermediate solution, for which only the so-called "simple" simplifying assumptions can be made, i.e. the ones in accordance with prior theoretical knowledge (siehe Ragin 2008: 160ff.).²⁵ All analyses are conducted with the computer program fsQCA (Ragin *et al.* 2009)²⁶.

²³ The values in the table do not correspond to the fuzzy-values of the cases transformed into crisp-values, but describe edges of the property space. These edges describe ideal-types of combinations of conditions, and the 11 cases under study are partly members in the edges of this property space. The cases in the last column are the strong members (membership values greater than 0.5) in the corresponding edge of the property space. However, the consistency values of the rows are calculated based on all cases and not only on the strong members.

²⁴ For most of these unobserved combinations of conditions, it is likely that they do exist in reality. Some combinations like those of a Europeanized act with an open pre-parliamentary phase, however, are most probably not observable in reality.

²⁵ This theoretically informed intermediate solution is located between a potentially too simplistic and inaccurate simple solution and a more accurate, but theoretically uninteresting complex solution (Ragin 2008: 160ff.). The simple and the complex solutions are presented in tables A7 and A8 in the appendix.

²⁶ The analysis of sufficient conditions is conducted relying on the truth-table algorithm.

Table 5: Sufficient conditions for power structure of dominance

	<i>Consistency</i>	<i>Raw coverage</i>	<i>Unique coverage</i>
EUR +	0.94	0.44	0.24
OPEN	0.88	0.65	0.44
Solution	EUR + OPEN		
Total consistency	0.88		
Total coverage	0.88		

Assumptions: FED, EUR, redreg, OPEN

Table 5 shows the sufficient conditions for the emergence of a power structure of dominance.²⁷ In the tables, * is the character for a logical "and" and the + sign stands for a logical "or". Conditions and outcomes written with capital letters stand for their presence, those in lower-case letters indicate absence of the phenomenon.

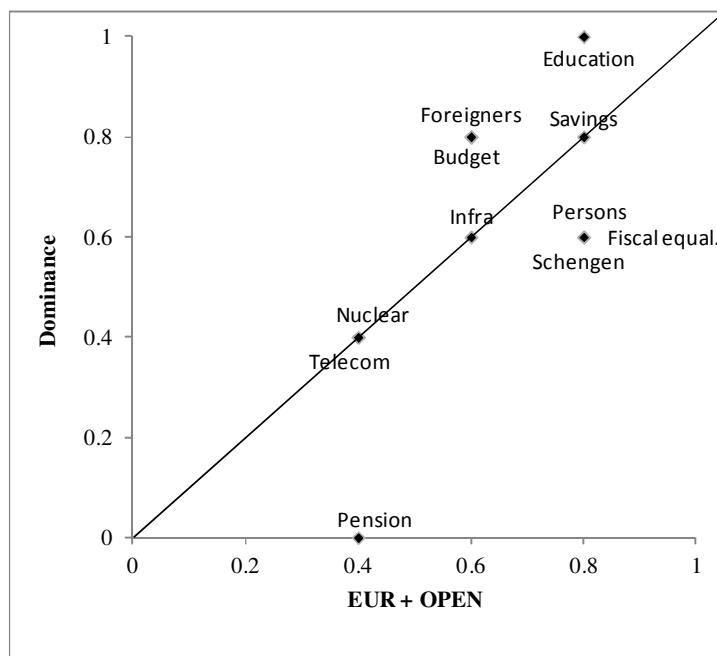
Two alternative conditions lead to power structures of dominance. Both Europeanization and an open pre-parliamentary phase are sufficient conditions for the emergence of dominant coalitions. With a value of 0.88, the solution has a good consistency. With 88%, this solution covers practically the whole outcome to be explained.²⁸ The open pre-parliamentary phase has a raw coverage of 65% and a single coverage of 44% of the outcome and is thus the empirically more important of the two sufficient conditions. The condition of Europeanization covers only approximately half of the fuzzy membership-values in the outcome.

²⁷ The simplifying assumptions, on which the intermediate solutions are based, are listed below the table. It is assumed due to theoretical argumentation in section 2 that in federal, Europeanized and constitutive or distributive projects with an open pre-parliamentary phase, power structures with a dominant coalition emerge. For the reduction of the solution term, the opposite of any of these assumptions is not accepted, even if this would allow a simplification of the solution.

²⁸ The consistency and coverage measures are the quality criteria of a QCA and express to what extent statements about set-theoretic relations between conditions and an outcome enjoy empirical support (Ragin 2008: 44ff.). The consistency measure provides information to what extent the empirical observation supports the postulate of a perfect relationship between the conditions and the outcome, or how well the solution formula describes the cases. Similar to statistical significance, the consistency measure indicates which relations should gain the attention of the researcher. The coverage measure is, similar to statistical strength, an indicator of the empirical importance of a relationship (Schneider and Wagemann 2007: 218f., Ragin 2008: 45). It indicates what proportion of the fuzzy-membership values of the cases in the set of the outcome can be explained by the solution. A value of 1 indicates that the solution covers all the fuzzy-membership values of a particular outcome. With sufficient conditions, measures of single coverage (which part of the solution is explained only by this part of the sufficient solution?), raw coverage (which part of the outcome is explained by the fuzzy-membership values of cases in this part of the sufficient solution, but possibly also by other parts of the solution?) and total coverage (Which part of the fuzzy membership-values of cases in the outcome set is explained by the solution?) are distinguished. .

The XY-plot in graph 1 shows the positions of the cases relative to the solution term and the outcome “dominant coalition”.²⁹ Four cases are below the diagonal, because they violate the perfect consistency of the sufficiency. The cases of the free movement of persons, the treaty on Schengen/Dublin and the fiscal equalization scheme are mostly in the set of the solution, but only more in than out of the set of power structures with a dominant coalition. However, these cases are only 0.2 fuzzy values below the line and are thus only slightly violating the consistency of the solution. The revision of the pension scheme lays 0.4 fuzzy-values below the diagonal. Power in this structure is more distributed between the coalitions than one would expect given the conditions.³⁰ The pension scheme revision is neither a strong member in the set of the solution nor in the set of the conditions, and is therefore not particularly relevant for the determination of sufficient conditions. Only cases that are members of the condition, but not in the solution – i.e. cases in the lower right quadrant of the XY-plot – are in strong contradiction with the postulate of sufficiency of the condition for the outcome. No cases are located in this "forbidden" lower right quadrant of the plot.

Graph 1: XY-Plot for sufficient conditions for power structures of dominance



²⁹ For a given solution with two alternative paths (logical "or"), their membership in the solution corresponds to the maximum fuzzy-membership value in the individual paths. If the solution is a combination of multiple conditions (logical "and"), then the minimum fuzzy-membership value of each condition corresponds to their membership in the solution.

³⁰ This discrepancy could possibly be explained by the fact that the 11th pension scheme revision is a typical case of the area of social policy, which represents a major area of conflict for decades between the political left and the right. Under these circumstances, even a pre-parliamentary phase that is only more in than out of the set of cases with a closed pre-parliamentary phase does not allow to form a dominant coalition.

The first path leading to a dominant coalition is given by Europeanization. This corresponds to my theoretical expectations, including the fact that the condition is individually sufficient for the outcome. As the federal government tries to defend its own interests on the international level, it is expected to gather domestic support already before or during the negotiation phase. Europeanization strengthens not only the power of state actors, but also has an impact on their efforts to build a dominant coalition in support of the international treaty. This mechanism – together with the fact that most political actors in Switzerland favor an opening towards the EU – ensures that independently of other conditions, Europeanization leads to a power structure of dominance. The three cases of the bilateral treaties on the free movement of persons, the taxation of savings, and Schengen/Dublin are strong members in this set. Especially in the case of the free movement of persons, the federal government's strong efforts to build a supportive, dominant coalition are obvious. Through the extension of the flanking measures and the associated involvement of the left parties and trade unions into the dominant coalition, the federal government secured broad support for the treaty. Also in the treaty on the taxation of savings, the banks, directly affected by the measure, were strongly included from the very beginning of the process. Banks were involved in drafting the Swiss proposal for negotiations, and have thus supported the agreement within the dominant coalition.

A second sufficient path to the emergence of a power structure of dominance is given by the condition of an open pre-parliamentary phase. This finding also corresponds to my theoretical arguments. During an open pre-parliamentary phase, the interested actors have the possibility to meet and to develop a consensual solution early in the process, defended in the later stages of the process by a dominant coalition. The cases of the fiscal equalization scheme, the program of budget relief, the law on foreigners, the education reform, and the infrastructure funds are all strong members in the set of this condition. For example, in the case of the fiscal equalization scheme and – after an initial blockade in the case of education reform (see Fischer *et al.* 2010) – the cantons were strongly involved in the drafting of the law during the pre-parliamentary phase. In the cases of the law on foreigners and the program of budget relief, the access of non-state actors led to the formation of a dominant coalition of center-right parties early in the process, while in the decision-making process for the infrastructure fund all interested and affected external actors were included already at the very beginning of the process. This integration process was initiated by the federal actors responsible for the

project, and a solution supported by a dominant coalition could be defended during the process.

The conditions of federalism and the policy type are not part of the sufficient combination of conditions leading to a situation of dominance. Federalist projects were expected to be individually sufficient for a power structure of dominance. However, all federalist projects do also have an open pre-parliamentary phase, and all of them result in a dominant coalition. Thus, the formation of a dominant coalition in federalist projects seems to function through the logic of an open pre-parliamentary phase.³¹ Regarding the type of policy, it was expected that constitutive or distributive projects contribute to decision-making structures with a dominant coalition. Also, all constitutive or distributive projects have an open pre-parliamentary phase, and therefore lead to a dominant coalition. However, on a theoretical level, there is no obvious relationship between these two conditions.³² Thus, at least the condition of federalism can be considered as individually sufficient for the emergence of power structures with a dominant coalition. However, the condition of the open pre-parliamentary phase represents the more general and consistent explanation for such outcome.

Table 6: Sufficient conditions for power structures of challenge

	<i>Consistency</i>	<i>Raw coverage</i>	<i>Unique coverage</i>
fed*eur*REDREG*off	0.88	0.71	0.71
Solution	fed*eur* REDREG*open		
Total consistency	0.88		
Total coverage	0.71		

Assumptions: fed, eur, REDREG, open

4.3 Sufficient conditions for the outcome “challenge”

Table 6 shows the combinations of conditions for the emergence of power structures of challenge.³³ As already indicated by the existence of three necessary conditions for this

³¹ Even if federalist decision-making processes with a closed pre-parliamentary phase should normally not occur, this analysis does not allow to define if such a constellation would also be sufficient for the emergence of a power structure with a dominant coalition.

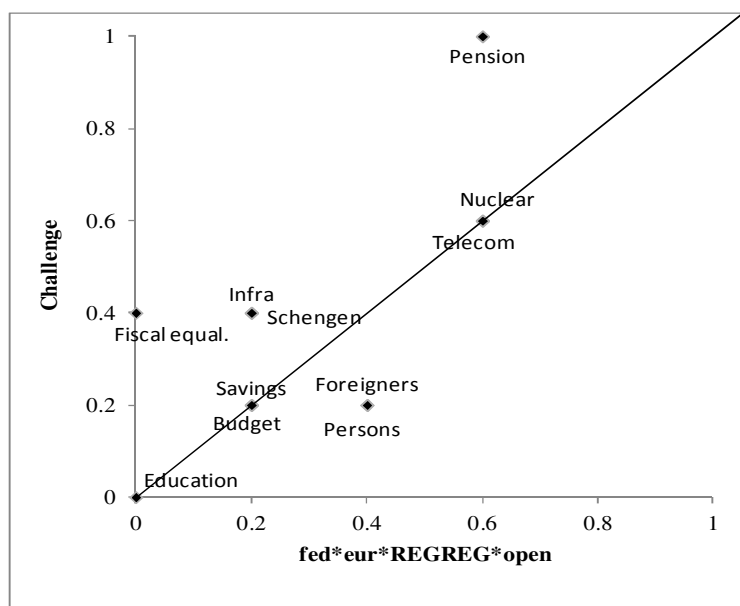
³² Again, the question of whether constitutive or distributive projects with a closed pre-parliamentary phase would also lead to a power structure of dominance cannot be answered by the analysis of the cases studied in this paper.

³³ The truth table for this analysis is presented as table A6 in the appendix.

outcome, only a very specific combination of conditions leads to distributed power between the coalitions. Non-federalist and domestic processes providing redistributive or regulatory measures and having a closed pre-parliamentary phase lead to power structures of challenge. The solution has a good consistency with 0.88 and covers 71% of the fuzzy membership values.

The XY-plot in graph 2 shows that two cases, namely the free movement of persons and the law on foreigners, lay just below the diagonal and are thus weakly violating the postulate of sufficiency. These again are cases which are only weak members in the solution as well as in the outcome and are thus not particularly relevant for the analysis. If the solution was a complete, linear explanation for power structures of challenge, power should be less distributed in the cases of the infrastructure fund, the agreement on Schengen/Dublin and particularly in the pension scheme and the fiscal equalization should be less distributed. However, a sufficient condition only means that the condition always leads to the outcome, but there might be other conditions leading to the same outcome.³⁴

Graph 2: X-Y-Plot for sufficient conditions for power structures of challenge



³⁴ This is particularly true for the cases of the pension scheme and the fiscal equalization scheme, which are both of a redistributive policy type. It is conceivable that in these cases, the second axis for the distinction between policy types, the one between measures of individual and collective coercion, plays a role. In contrast to regulatory transactions, which are associated with individual coercion, redistributive projects have direct, coercive consequences for whole social groups and might thus have an even stronger influence on the distribution of power as a regulatory project. This could explain the fact that the distribution of power in the cases of the pension scheme and the fiscal equalization cannot be fully explained by the four conditions.

The solution corresponds to my theoretical expectations, since only a specific combination of the four conditions leads to a power structure of challenge. In non-federal as well as in domestic projects, the federal government and its administration do not necessarily pursue their own goals, but try to negotiate a compromise between well mobilized internal actors defending different interests. This means that they cannot focus on one negotiating partner and form a dominant coalition. However, these two conditions are not sufficient for the formation of power structures of challenge. Additionally, the policy type contributes to the explanation. Because well-defined sectors of the society are directly affected by the measure, several coalitions defending their interests. Further, the condition of the pre-parliamentary phase plays an important role. If the pre-parliamentary phase is rather closed for external actors, it is unlikely that there are sufficient opportunities for negotiations and a rapprochement of positions, which in turn would enable the emergence of a dominant coalition. In a context that is conducive to a distribution of power, a closed pre-parliamentary phase is thus additionally necessary to really achieve a power structure of challenge. The cases of the pension scheme revision, the law on nuclear energy and the law on telecommunications are strong members in this outcome set. In all three cases, the responsible agencies of the federal administration had to struggle with two opposing social interests. For the pension scheme revision and the law on nuclear energy, a center-right coalition faced the left. The pre-parliamentary phase in the case of the pension scheme reform consisted mainly of working groups, but the federal government was unable to present a proposal that was completely acceptable for one or the other side. The rather closed pre-parliamentary phase prevented the formation of a dominant coalition. Also in the process on the law on nuclear energy, the pre-parliamentary phase gave access mainly to the technically relevant actors, but political parties or interest groups were only very sparsely included. Therefore, also in this case, no dominant coalition could be formed. In the case of the law on telecommunications, the pre-parliamentary phase contained practically only phases at the administrative and judicial level; the time pressure was another reason which made an opening of the pre-parliamentary phase difficult. Especially in this new and complex domain, it would have been essential to strongly involve the external actors in the decision-making process in order to form a dominant coalition. The fact that the three context conditions, i.e. federalism, Europeanization, and policy type, to explain the emergence of a power structure of challenge, but that a closed pre-parliamentary phase is additionally necessary, is illustrated by the case of the law on foreigners. Although this case meets all three context conditions for power to be distributed, its pre-parliamentary phase was – unlike the other three cases – more open.

4.4 Power structures of dominance

The law on foreigners, the fiscal equalization scheme, the program on budget relief, the education reform, the infrastructure funds and the three bilateral treaties with the European Union display a power structure of dominance. In these cases, the existence of a dominant coalition is to be explained by the open pre-parliamentary phase of the decision-making process.

Due to its membership scores, the law on foreigners is the typical example of a power structure of dominance. The dominant coalition of the federal administration, public and business interest groups, and political parties supporting the project formed during the very open pre-parliamentary phase of this decision-making process. Already the first report in 1995 was subject to a consultation procedure, the governing parties exchanged views in a parliamentary working group, and the representatives of the federal and cantonal agencies and the concerned interest groups sat together in no less than three working groups and expert committees preparing the project. These opportunities allowed the actors to exchange information and opinions and to elaborate a solution that was defended by a dominant coalition against a left minority coalition.

Also in the case of the fiscal equalization scheme, the open pre-parliamentary phase is responsible for the dominant coalition. From the very beginning, the project gave rise to a strong cooperation between the Confederation and the cantons in the project organization and in several project groups. These bipartite bodies allowed a careful elaboration of a mutually acceptable solution, and thus the emergence of a dominant coalition formed by the main actors involved, i.e. the Confederation and the cantons. Given these carefully elaborated solution among the main stakeholders, the main business associations and the center parties, not directly affected by the project, joined the dominant coalition.

The dominant coalition of conservative parties, business associations and the federal government in the case of the program of budget relief is also due to the open pre-parliamentary phase. On the one hand, the initiative for the relief program came from the parliament, where the center-right parties exerted pressure on the federal government by the

way of parliamentary motions.³⁵ On the other hand, the parliamentary delegation on finance and the finance committees of both chambers were involved in the process very early. The cantons were consulted in order to avoid increasing costs for them as a consequence of budget cuts at the level of the Confederation, and were thereby included in the dominant coalition.

In the case of the educational reform, the negotiations in the pre-parliamentary phase between the Confederation (represented mainly by the parliamentary commissions) and cantons were responsible for the successful compromise. After an initial blockage by the cantons, they were involved as equal partners in the preparation of the bill (see Fischer *et al.* 2010). Additionally, by the fact that the parliamentary commission played a very strong role and together with the Conference of Cantonal Directors of Education worked out a compromise in many joint meetings worked out a compromise, the political parties were strongly involved in this extremely open pre-parliamentary phase by their commission members. The open pre-parliamentary phase allowed constituting a very dominant coalition, which could impose its compromise without major resistance.

In the case of the infrastructure fund, it was the involvement of all key actors of the domain of traffic and transport immediately after the rejection of the referendum on the “Avanti” counter-proposal, which laid the bases for the emergence of a consensus within a dominant coalition.³⁶ The pre-parliamentary phase remained open also later on. In particular, the parties were involved via the parliamentary committees already in the pre-parliamentary phase. The cantons as important players in the domain of traffic and transport policy were informed and included in the process via the Conference of Cantonal Directors of Public Transport and the Conference of Cantonal Directors of Building, Planning and Environment from the first debate in 2004. Additionally, the cantons were able to announce their most urgent projects, and thus supported the project as members of the dominant coalition.

The last three cases representing the ideal-type of power structures of dominance are the bilateral agreements of the extension of the free movement of persons, the association to Schengen/Dublin, and the taxation of savings. In all of these cases, a dominant coalition with

³⁵ Interviews: Representative Christian-Democratic Party, St.Gallen, 21.4.08 / Representative Federal Finance Administration, Berne, 20.3.08 / Representative Swiss People’s Party, 12.6.08 / Representative Swiss People’s Party, Mettmenstetten, 23.6.08.

³⁶ Interviews: Representative Cantonal Directors of Public Transport, Solothurn, 28.5.08 / Representative Conference of Cantonal Directors of Building, Planning and Environment, Zurich, 28.4.08 / Representative Social-Democratic Party, Schaffhausen, 23.6.08.

actors from the center and left, favoring an opening towards the EU, was opposed to a minority coalition of the national-conservative and extreme right. The condition of Europeanization explains the emergence of the dominant coalition, because the federal government actively and early searches domestic support in order to defend its foreign policy preferences. In the case of the free movement of persons, the strong efforts of the federal government are obvious. Already during the negotiation phase, the federal government formed a tripartite working group with representatives of the administration, the trade unions and the business associations in order to address the strong demand from the left for an extension of the flanking measures for the protection of the domestic workforce. Without the support of the left and the almost certain rejection of the contract by the national-conservative right, the extension of freedom of movement would have been doomed to failure.³⁷ By the concessions concerning the extension of the flanking measures, the government could win the support of the left and integrate them into the dominant coalition. Concerning the treaty on Schengen/Dublin, there was no comparable threat from the left, as the more general interest of an opening up to Europe dominated concerns about the Dublin Convention on asylum issues and privacy.³⁸ Nevertheless, the federal government negotiated on an informal basis with the cantons, affected by the shifts of competences concerning the border guard and police forces to ensure the dominant coalition during the international phase of negotiations.³⁹ Additionally, many other competing interests (tourism, banking, gun possession, data protection), were involved via the relevant federal agencies in the extremely big negotiation's delegation,⁴⁰ which helped the federal government to secure support for the agreement in a dominant coalition. Finally, in the case of the agreement on the taxation of savings, the banks as the main stakeholders and powerful representatives of the economy were heavily involved already in the elaboration of the Swiss proposal for negotiations. With the strong involvement of the banks and the widespread success of the Swiss proposal, the federal government had provided the necessary support for the agreement. A dominant coalition of the federal government, the banks, the center parties and business associations was able to bring the project through the domestic process.⁴¹

³⁷ Interviews: Representative State's Secretary for Economic Affairs, Basel, 6.3.08 / Representative State's Secretary for Economic Affairs, Neuchâtel, 27.2.08.

³⁸ Interview: Representative Green Party, Baden, 28.4.08.

³⁹ Interview: Representative Radical-Democratic Party, Zurich, 21.4.08.

⁴⁰ Interviews: Representative Federal Police Administration, Berne, 30.6.08 / Representative of the Swiss Association for Shooting Sports, Lucerne, 10.4.08.

⁴¹ Interviews: Representative Integration Office, Berne, 23.4.08 / Representative Swiss Banker's Association, Basel, 22.4.08.

4.5 Power structures of challenge

Power structures of challenge are explained by the fact that projects are non-federalist, and domestic, providing regulatory or redistributive measures and having a closed pre-parliamentary phase. Examples of such a power structure are given by the pension scheme reform, the law on nuclear energy, and the law on telecommunications.

As a non-federalist project, the pension scheme reform does not primarily involve the federal government and the cantons, but potentially opposes two important social groups. Since it is also a fully domestic project, the federal government did not have to defend own preferences. It thus did not try to form a dominant coalition to support their own preferences, but tried to find a compromise between the different camps. Additionally, as a redistributive project, the pension scheme reform concerns well identifiable and well organized groups of the society, and these are directly affected by the measure. On the one side, the left parties and trade unions as representatives of women and workers would have been in the main direct losers of the proposed revision. On the other side, there are the center-right parties and business associations representing the employers that are partially responsible for financing the pension scheme. In such a non-federalist, domestic and redistributive context, an open pre-parliamentary phase might still lead to the emergence of a dominant coalition. Therefore, a closed pre-parliamentary phase has been identified as a necessary part of the sufficient combination of conditions leading to a power structure of challenge. In fact, the decision-making process in this process was only rather closed, because the social partners and the cantons did have some access to the interdepartmental working group on the financing of social insurances (IDAFiSo2). Accordingly, a certain degree of consensus, including an increase of the value-added tax instead of an increase of the contribution from wages, was found in the pre-parliamentary phase.⁴² Towards the end of the pre-parliamentary phase, however, it became increasingly clear that there were large concerns on the left side, particularly regarding the flexibility of the retirement and reduction of the widow's pension.⁴³ The women's associations and the left parties, particularly concerned by the reduction of the widow's pension, were not enough included in the pre-parliamentary phase.⁴⁴ The relevant

⁴² Interviews: Representative Swiss Association of Employers, Zurich, 10.3.08 / Representative, Fribourg, 18.2.08 / Representative Christian-Democratic Party, Luzern, 29.4.08.

⁴³ Interviews: Representative Federal Office of Social Security, Fribourg, 18.2.08 / Representative Swiss People's Party, Berne, 11.6.08 / Representative Federal Office of Social Security, Berne, 14.2.08 / Representative Green Party, Berne, 1.4.09 / Representative Christian-Democratic Party, Luzern, 29.4.08.

⁴⁴ Trade unions, which were present in the pre-parliamentary phase, are – contrary to left parties – not typical representatives of the new, value-based social demands like the one for gender equality (Häusermann *et al.* 2004: 50).

discussions were therefore postponed to the parliament phase, where the Federal Council's proposal had only a very narrow support.⁴⁵

As a domestic non-federalist and regulatory project, the law on nuclear energy also combines all three context conditions for the emergence of a power structure of challenge. As in the pension scheme reform, the federal government and its administration did not have to defend own preferences and to form a dominant coalition. The responsible state actors tried much rather to develop a compromise. In a regulatory project, but this is however difficult, since well identifiable groups of actors are directly concerned by the measures. Accordingly, both sides – the pro- as well as the anti-nuclear energy coalition – tried to pressure the federal government. In this context, the pre-parliamentary phase was formally rather open, but only very few actors had real access to the preparations of the bill.

Since the law on telecommunications is only indirectly Europeanized and thus rather a domestic project, the federal government does not necessarily need to form a dominant coalition to enforce its own foreign policy preferences. Additionally, as a non-federalist and regulatory project, there were different coalitions, directly affected by the regulatory action. First, there was a coalition with the center parties, which, together with the alternative providers and regulatory authorities aimed at liberalizing the last mile. Second, there is a coalition of the former monopolist Swisscom, logically against a further liberalization, together with the left parties and the trade unions, worried about the impact of liberalization on the "public service" and the labor market. Third, the Swiss People's Party played an ambivalent role and, at the last moment before the vote in Parliament, opposed the liberalization. Because of the high complexity of the domain and because of the pressure from the regulatory authority and the Federal Court, the pre-parliamentary phase happened mainly at the administrative and judicial level and remained closed to external actors. Political actors such as political parties or interest groups were hardly involved in the pre-parliamentary phase. The federal government could create a strong, but not sufficiently dominant coalition and had to negotiate with critics from both sides in order to reach a compromise.

⁴⁵ Interview: Representative Federal Office of Social Security, Berne, 14.2.08.

5 Conclusions

This paper studied the conditions under which given power distributions among coalitions in political decision-making processes emerge. The distribution of power among coalitions is one of the basic and most important dimensions of political decision-making (Knoke *et al.* 1996, Kriesi *et al.* 2006a, Adam and Kriesi 2007), mainly because of its influence on the output of the decision-making processes (e.g. Atkinson and Coleman 1989, Scharpf 1997, Kriesi and Jegen 2001, Christopoulos 2006, Adam and Kriesi 2007).

Indeed, there seems to be an important influence of the power structures on the outputs when one looks at the 11 policy domains under study. First, power structures of dominance are supposed to result in policies that are very stable and undisputed over time. While in four out of the eight cases of dominance, the solution of the dominant coalition was attacked by referendum, none of these referenda were successful and none of the eight policies has been seriously questioned until now. Even small changes of some actor's power or preferences can not threaten the overall consensus. On the contrary, policies resulting from power structures of challenge are supposed to be narrow and unstable majority decisions, or compromises that are technically unsatisfying. A small change of an actor's preference or power might reverse the situation. Indeed, the reform of the pension scheme is a good example of instability, as the left won the referendum against the solution decided in parliament and the policy never came into force. A subsequent reform attempt failed in parliament, and today policy makers are still struggling to come up with a new reform of the pension scheme. Also the domain of nuclear energy is highly unstable, a tendency even reinforced by the recent events in Japan in early 2011. In the case of the law on telecommunications, one can observe a typical compromise, where most of the actors agreed, but no one was completely satisfied. While the coalitions agreed upon a certain liberalization of the last mile of the telecommunications network, this liberalization is not complete and not all the technical and judicial means have been accorded to the regulator and the competitors of the current monopolist in order to really create a liberalized market.

According to my results, power structures of dominance able to breed stable policy solutions can be achieved under the conditions of Europeanization or an open pre-parliamentary phase. First, this result underlines the increasing importance of the relations of Switzerland with the European Union and its influence not only on policies, but also on politics and power structures. Second, the result that an open pre-parliamentary phase is able to create a

dominant coalition indicates that the political system of Switzerland still has a strong integration capacity. If external actors are granted broad access early in the pre-parliamentary phase, chances are very high that a consensual solution can be found. On the contrary, under the conditions of a domestic, and non-federalist, and regulatory or redistributive with a closed pre-parliamentary phase, power structures of challenge are supposed to emerge. In such a situation, actors have a hard time to achieve a stable and technically good policy solution.

I have argued that the power structure is one of the most important aspects of policy making, and the analysis shows that it can be well explained by different conditions, as well as contribute to the understanding of the respective policy solutions. However, other aspects of decision-making among coalitions, especially their conflictive or consensual relations, might also be important for the understanding of the political system and the policy solutions being produced by the actors (Knocke *et al.* 1996, Weible 2005, Kriesi *et al.* 2006a, Adam and Kriesi 2007, Fischer 2011a). For example, looking more closely at the empirical examples for the ideal-type of challenge, one can see that while relations among coalitions were very conflictive in the cases of the pension scheme reform and the law on nuclear energy, coalitions had much more consensual relations in the case of the law on telecommunications. While the former two cases led to a narrow majority decision that is supposed to be unstable, the latter gave rise to a compromise among the different coalitions.

The analysis in this paper is based on the 11 most important decision-making processes in Swiss politics between 2001 and 2006. These 11 processes cover practically all of the different policy domains in Swiss politics, therefore the analysis can be supposed to represent the political system of Switzerland as a whole. However, one should be careful with generalizing the results from this analysis. First, results might not be valid for less important processes. For example, in less important processes, it might be easier to form a dominant coalition even with a less open pre-parliamentary phase. Second, results as such are not exportable to other countries. While power structures in other political systems are certainly also influenced by several different conditions, results including the condition of federalism for example are obviously not valid for non-federalist countries. Third, in other periods of time, other conditions might have been important, and conditions such as Europeanization surely did not play the same role as today.

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Appendices

Table A1: Power structure and corresponding fuzzy-membership values

<i>Fuzzy-value</i>	<i>Power structure</i>	<i>Criterion for calibration</i>	<i>Cases (power per coalition in brackets)</i>
1	Dominance	Only one coalition or one coalition with about 90% of power	Education (89/11)
0.8		One coalition with about 75% of power	Budget (75/16/8) Persons (77/21/2) Savings (79/21) Foreigners (74/26)
0.6		One coalition with about 60% of power	Fiscal equal. (64/36) Schengen (67/33) Infra (58/15/14/12)
0.5	Crossover point	One coalition clearly more powerful than others, but not more than 50%	
0.4		One coalition with about 45% of power	Kern (44/28/27) Telecom (47/31/22)
0.2		One coalition with about 40% of power	
0	Challenge	Two or more coalitions with about the same amount of power	AHV (36/33/31)

Table A2: Federalism and fuzzy-membership values

<i>Fuzzy-value</i>	<i>Criterion for calibration</i>	<i>Cases</i>
1	Federalist: Common project of Confederation and cantons	Fiscal equal., Education
0.8	Mainly federalist	
0.6	Rather federalist, cantons strongly concerned	Infrastructure
0.5	Crossover point: Half of the project concerns the federalist competence distribution, half of it only competences of the Confederation	
0.4	Mostly Confederation, cantons concerned	Schengen, Foreigners
0.2	Mostly Confederation, cantons weakly concerned	Nuclear, Budget, Persons
0	Non-federalist: Only Confederation	Pension, Savings, Telecom

Table A3: Europeanization and fuzzy-membership values

<i>Fuzzy-value</i>	<i>Criterion for calibration</i>	<i>Cases</i>
1	Europeanized: Only international treaty	
0.8	International treaty with some domestic aspects	Savings, Schengen
0.6	International treaty with important domestic aspects	Persons
0.5	Crossover point: Half of the project concerns an international treaty, half of it a domestic project	
0.4	Indirectly Europeanized project / domestic project with strong international dependencies	Foreigners, Telecom
0.2	Mainly domestic project with some international dependencies	Nuclear
0	Domestic: Only domestic project	Pensions, Fiscal equal., Budget, Education, Infrastr.

Table A4: Policy type and fuzzy-membership scores

<i>Fuzzy-value</i>	<i>Criterion for calibration</i>	<i>Cases</i>
1	Redistributive & regulatory projects	Pensions (redistributive) Foreigners, Telecom (regulatory)
0.8	Mostly redistributive/regulatory	Nuclear, Persons, Savings (all regulatory with a constitutive element)
0.6	Redistributive/regulatory with strong distributive/constitutive elements	Fiscal equal. (redistributive + constitutive) Schengen (regulatory + constitutive)
0.5	Crossover point: Half redistributive/regulatory, half distributive/constitutive	
0.4	Distributive/constitutive with strong redistributive/regulatory elements	
0.2	Mostly distributive/constitutive	Budget (constitutive + redistrib./regul. elements) Infrastructure (distributive + redistributive element)
0	Distributive & constitutive projects	Education (constitutive)

Table A5: Pre-parliamentary phase and fuzzy-membership values

<i>Fuzzy-value</i>	<i>Criterion for calibration</i>	<i>Cases (\emptyset Openness)</i>
1	Open pre-parliamentary phase	
0.8	Mostly open pre-parliamentary phase	Education (0.65), Fiscal equal. (0.60)
0.6	Rather open pre-parliamentary phase	Budget (0.54), Foreigners (0.55), Infrastructure (0.52)
0.5	Crossover point	
0.4	Rather closed pre-parliamentary phase	Nuclear (0.44), Pensions (0.42), Persons (0.45)
0.2	Mostly closed pre-parliamentary phase	Savings (0.37), Schengen (0.34)
0	Closed pre-parliamentary phase	Telecom (0.3)

Table A6: Truth table for the analysis of power structures of challenge

FED	EUR	REDREG	OPEN	Consistency	dom	Strong members
0	0	1	0	0.88	1	Telecom, Pension, Nuclear
1	0	1	1	0.80	0	Fiscal equalization
0	0	0	1	0.78	0	Budget
0	0	1	1	0.77	0	Foreigners
1	0	0	1	0.62	0	Education, Infrastrucutre
0	1	1	0	0.53	0	Savings, Persons, Schengen

Table A7: Complex solution for the outcome „dominant coalition“⁴⁶

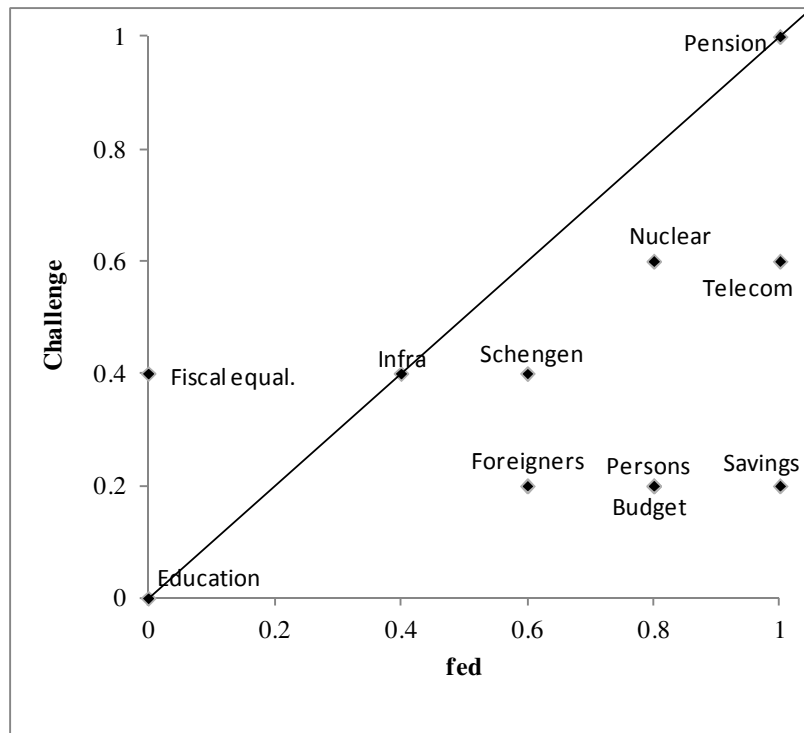
	Consistency	Raw coverage	Unique coverage
eur*OPEN +	0.88	0.65	0.44
fed*EUR*REDREG*open	1.00	0.44	0.24
Solution:	eur*OPEN + fed*EUR*REDREG*open		
Total consistency	0.91		
Total coverage	0.88		

⁴⁶ In this case, the simple solution corresponds to the intermediate solution and is therefore not shown here.

Table A8: Simple solution for the outcome „power distributed“⁴⁷

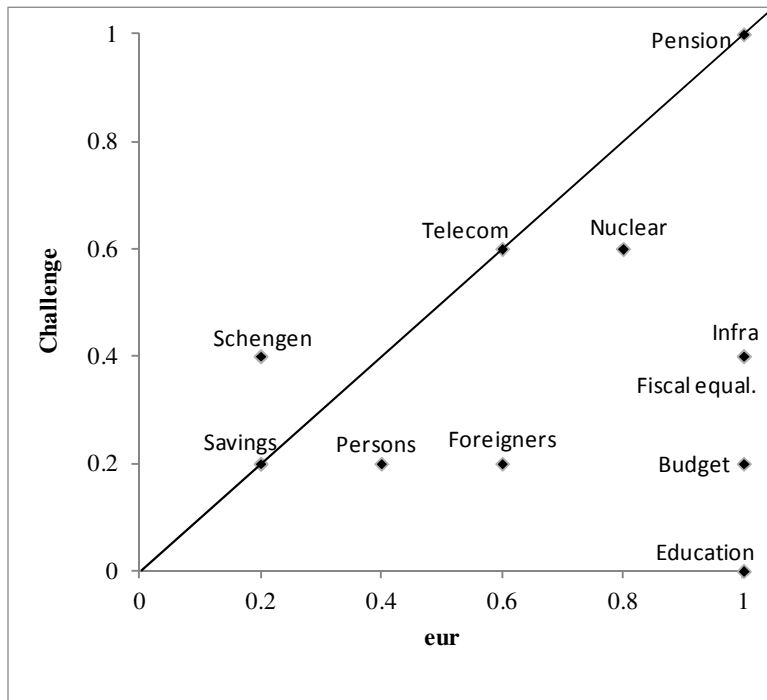
	Consistency	Raw coverage	Unique coverage
eur*open	0.81	0.81	0.81
Solution:	eur*open		
Total consistency	0.81		
Total coverage	0.81		

Graph A1: XY-Plot for the necessary condition fed for power structures of challenge



⁴⁷ In this case, the complex solution corresponds to the intermediate solution and is therefore not shown here.

Graph A2: XY-Plot for the necessary condition eur for power structures of challenge



Graph A3: XY-Plot for the necessary condition REDREG for power structures of challenge

