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Policy Change Through Negotiated Agreements: The Case of Greening Swiss Agricultural Policy

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Negotiated agreements are a promising pathway for policy change. This paper revisits and extends characteristics of negotiated agreements using the Advocacy Coalition Framework. We focus on two characteristics of negotiated agreements that previous literature has not explicitly addressed. First, we scrutinize the role of policy core and secondary policy beliefs in actor constellations. Secondly, we address partial success, that is, the notion that actors concede on some points, but in return succeed in others. We investigate these two characteristics in the 2014 reform of Swiss agricultural policy. Based on cluster and social network analysis, we exemplify how negotiated agreements embedded in a participatory policy process lead to a surprising level of policy change by promoting agricultural production practices with an intended positive effect on the environment. We show that rather than coalitions based on policy core beliefs, the formation of groups of actors based on secondary beliefs who span across the coalitions formed the basis for a negotiated agreement. Green and conservative groups were both able to achieve partial success. We conclude that insights from this exemplary case study should revive the concept and initialize a research agenda on negotiated agreements as a pathway for change in domestic policymaking.

KEY WORDS: advocacy coalition framework, agricultural policy, negotiated agreements

谈判协议是通往政策变革的有效路径。本文使用倡导联盟框架，重审了谈判协议的特征，并对特征进行了扩充。我们聚焦于以往文献还未明确研究过的两个谈判协议特征。第一，我们审视了政策核心信念和次要政策信念在行动者群集（*actor constellations*）中发挥的作用。第二，我们研究了部分成功（*partial success*）的概念，即行动者在某些方面做出让步，但反过来在另一些方面取得成功。我们调查了2014年瑞士农业政策改革中的这两个特征。基于聚类分析和社会网络分析，我们举例证明了根植于参与政策过程中的谈判协议如何通过推动对环境产生积极效应的农业生产实践，进而让政策变革达到出乎意料的程度。我们表明，形成谈判协议基础的并不是那些基于政策核心信念的联盟，而是各联盟中基于次要信念而形成的行动者团体。绿党和保守党都能实现部分成功。我们的结论认为，这一典型案例研究得出的见解能重新审视部分成功概念，并启动一个研究议程，将谈判协议作为通往国内决策变革的路径。

关键词: 倡导联盟框架, 农业政策, 谈判协议

Los acuerdos negociados son un camino prometedor para el cambio de políticas. Este documento revisa y amplía las características de los acuerdos negociados utilizando el Marco de la Coalición de Defensa. Nos enfocamos en dos características de los acuerdos negociados

que la literatura previa no ha abordado explícitamente. En primer lugar, examinamos el papel de las creencias políticas centrales y secundarias en las constelaciones de actores. En segundo lugar, abordamos el éxito parcial, es decir, la noción de que los actores ceden en algunos puntos, pero a cambio tienen éxito en otros. Investigamos estas dos características en la reforma de la política agrícola suiza de 2014. Con base en el análisis de conglomerados y redes sociales, ejemplificamos cómo los acuerdos negociados integrados en un proceso de política participativa conducen a un nivel sorprendente de cambio de política al promover prácticas de producción agrícola con un efecto positivo previsto en el medio ambiente. Mostramos que, en lugar de coaliciones basadas en creencias fundamentales de políticas, la formación de grupos de actores basados en creencias secundarias que abarcan las coaliciones formó la base para un acuerdo negociado. Los grupos ecologistas y conservadores lograron un éxito parcial. Concluimos que las ideas de este estudio de caso ejemplar deberían revivir el concepto e iniciar una agenda de investigación sobre acuerdos negociados como una vía para el cambio en la formulación de políticas nacionales.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Marco de la coalición de defensa, política agrícola, acuerdos negociados

1. Introduction

Finding agreement on a common policy is a major challenge for policy actors. Policy changes are often blocked in such a way that the status quo prevails (Jones et al., 2009). The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF)—a common policy process theory—introduced the concept of “negotiated agreements” as one potential pathway to policy change (Sabatier & Weible, 2007).¹ Negotiated agreements in the ACF involve policy changes that come about through consensus on a common policy by previously warring coalitions and in the absence of a major external or internal perturbation (Sabatier & Weible, 2007, p. 205).

The concept has received scarce attention in the policy process literature so far, as very few applications exist (exceptions include: Bandelow, Vogeler, Hornung, Kuhlmann, & Heidrich, 2017; Heikkila et al., 2014; Kukkonen, Ylä-Anttila, & Broadbent, 2017). In this paper, we provide an in-depth analysis of a negotiated agreement in a recent agricultural policy reform in Switzerland using cluster and social network analysis. The goal of the study is to investigate the concept of negotiated agreements by asking: How do coalition constellations affect the success of negotiated agreements?

The ACF has set forth a list of favorable conditions for negotiated agreements. Most of them highlight the importance of participatory policy processes with repeated interactions and the inclusion of various interests, which have been widely studied (Susskind, McKearnen, & Thomas-Lamar, 1999). In this paper, we move beyond the existing research and hone in on two further conditions that potentially support negotiated agreements (hereafter referred to as “characteristics”), which the ACF literature has thus far not explicitly addressed. First, we scrutinize the role of policy core and secondary policy beliefs in coalition constellations. We focus on groups of actors spanning across the coalitions, where actors may be able to compromise at

the level of secondary beliefs to reach a negotiated agreement. Second, we address partial success, that is, the notion that actors concede on some points, but in return succeed in others.

To address these two characteristics of negotiated agreements, we investigate the case of Swiss agricultural policy and the agreement reached in the Swiss Agricultural Reform of 2014. The country adopted policy changes that promote greening in agriculture. Greening is a metaphor for European policy measures aiming to enhance the positive impact of agricultural production on the environment and climate change (e.g., Pe'er et al., 2019). Agricultural reforms toward more sustainable agricultural practices are a pressing need across the world, but have been difficult to adopt due to strong political pressure to maintain the status quo (Swinnen, 2018). This general opposition makes agricultural policy reforms a particularly suitable showcase to study negotiated agreements.

Our case study is exemplary for negotiated agreements embedded in a participatory policy process: The Swiss system of consensus-oriented policymaking is by design participatory. It for instance includes a wide range of stakeholders' interests through the consultation phase, which accommodates actors' positions as widely as possible. The administration acts as a mediator between the diverse stakeholders and thereby facilitates negotiations, because it is its institutionally given task to bring the agricultural reform to fruition (Christopoulos & Ingold, 2015). Also in the parliamentary stage of the policy process, actors who are not members of parliament can participate in numerous side-events outside of the formal parliamentary to shape parliamentary decisions (Fischer, 2014).

The article proceeds as follows: We start with outlining characteristics of negotiated agreements, before we provide background information on agricultural policy, the difficulties to reform this sector and the current situation in Switzerland. We continue with a data and methods section where we explain our methodological approach. First, we present how we identified the actors involved in the policy process and determined their beliefs by coding official documents. Second, we also lay out how we operationalized coalitions in a cluster and social network analysis and we present how we assessed the actors' success by comparing the secondary beliefs with the results of the policy reform process, that is, the amended Federal Act on Agriculture. We then discuss and reflect on characteristics of negotiated agreements that we find in our case.

2. Negotiated Agreements in the ACF

The ACF explains policy change and stability whereby learning and external shocks have been central explanatory factors (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993). In 2007, a revision to the ACF (Sabatier & Weible, 2007) introduced internal shocks and negotiated agreements as additional pathways to policy change. Predominantly, aspects of participatory policy processes are set forward as favorable for negotiated agreements among political opponents—even in the absence of internal or external shocks—and precipitate policy change (Heikkilä et al., 2014; Sabatier & Weible, 2007). Beyond the widely studied participatory policy process characteristics (Susskind

et al., 1999), we outline two additional characteristics of negotiated agreements that serve as a basis of analysis for how policy change came about in the Swiss agricultural sector: groups of actors who find compromise at the level of secondary beliefs and the extent of partial success of these groups.

2.1. *Secondary Beliefs in Advocacy Coalitions*

The ACF defines advocacy coalitions as groups of actors with shared beliefs who engage in coordination (Sabatier, 2007). Beliefs are a central concept in the ACF defined as a set of perceptual filters through which actors relate to the world (Sabatier & Weible, 2007, p. 194). Beliefs guide actors' policy preferences and are difficult to alter, because actors tend to search for information that confirms their beliefs, while filtering out dissonant information. The ACF conceptualizes a three-tiered hierarchical structure of beliefs by differentiating between the broadest to the narrowest level: deep core beliefs, policy core beliefs² and secondary aspects (Sabatier & Weible, 2007).

- *Deep core beliefs* represent general normative assumptions about human nature and priorities of fundamental values (e.g., liberty vs. security). They provide actors with a sort of "compass" for taking fundamental policy decisions across most policy subsystems.
- *Policy core beliefs* represent the translations of deep core beliefs to one specific policy subsystem, such as the role of markets vs. state in agricultural policy. They are generally conceived of as stable, but may deviate from a one-to-one translation of deep core beliefs in certain cases (Sabatier & Weible, 2007, p. 195).³
- *Secondary beliefs* guide actors' decisions in choosing policy instruments to address single issues within a subsystem. As secondary beliefs are relatively narrow in scope, actors tend to adapt them in accordance with the issue and context at hand. Secondary beliefs include both the choice of an instrument (e.g., a tax or a government subsidy), and, instrument calibration (e.g., eligibility criteria to a subsidy).

To translate beliefs into policy—despite restricted power—actors form advocacy coalitions among actors with shared policy core beliefs. The ACF puts the analysis of such advocacy coalitions center stage for the explanation of policy change. Finding allies through advocacy coalitions is crucial in western democracies, because there usually is not one actor that has enough power to make decisions alone. As actors need to agree collectively on policy change, they pool their power and other resources in the form of advocacy coalitions (Fischer, 2014; Ingold, 2011; Nohrstedt, 2010; Weible, 2007). Empirical studies have shown that there often is a status quo coalition objecting policy change, and, at least one, pro-change coalition advocating policy change (Metz, 2017).

ACF scholars have taken a heterogeneous approach to defining what constitutes policy core beliefs and what their role for coalition structure is. Traditionally, ACF scholars have argued that coalitions are formed based on policy core beliefs, that is, actors' translation of deep core beliefs in a specific subsystem. Recent developments in the ACF literature have shown the role of deep core and policy core beliefs for coalition formation (Jenkins-Smith, Silva, Gupta, & Ripberger, 2014; Sotirov &

Winkel, 2016). While the role of policy core beliefs vs. secondary beliefs for the formation of advocacy coalitions remains less explored, Kukkonen et al. (2017) recently found that in some policy domains, secondary beliefs are where opposing coalitions find agreement; in others, these are contentious. Hence, these authors call for a clarification of how secondary beliefs contribute to coalition formation. We build on this literature and argue here that—rather than changing policy core beliefs—it is more likely to observe shifts at the level of secondary aspects, which are conducive for coming to a negotiated agreement. Put differently, actors from different coalitions may compromise on secondary beliefs in order to craft a negotiated agreement. Coalitions may indeed make tradeoffs related to some of their secondary beliefs through negotiation, without changing coalition structures that are based on policy core beliefs. From this reasoning, we deduce:

Characteristic 1: Policy changes that come about through negotiated agreements are characterized by actors' compromise at the level of secondary beliefs rather than by changes in actors' policy core beliefs.

2.2. *Partial Success*

Another characteristic of negotiated agreements involves actors' willingness to succeed only partially in translating their policy preferences into the final policy. Or, put differently, partial success means that benefits of a policy are distributed across actor coalitions. This aspect of negotiated agreements may have been entirely obvious to the authors of the ACF, yet, it has not been made explicit, neither in the definition nor in the list of characteristics of negotiated agreements. Partial policy success means that the actors, or coalitions, participating in the policy-making process concede on some points, but in return succeed in others. Ideally, coalitions achieve their main priorities, while they concede on agenda items that are of less priority to them.

In negotiated agreements, policy actors play a different type of game than the "winning coalition game" conventionally described in theories of the policy process. The latter emphasize that, in democracies, actors' pool resources within advocacy coalitions to build winning majorities that shape policy content in line with their own preferences (Ingold, 2011; Weible & Sabatier, 2005). In contested policy fields with opposing coalitions of equal power, coalitions tend to block each other creating hurting stalemates that inhibit policy change. In the absence of internal or external perturbation, actors are then unlikely to change their beliefs and build a majority coalition advocating change. Policy changes through negotiated agreements then only come about if actors play a different game. Rather than a winning coalition game, actors need to be involved in a negotiation game in which they are making alterations to their secondary beliefs while maintaining their policy core beliefs. In a negotiation game, actors do not block the policy process if they cannot realize their policy preferences entirely, but agree to a policy if they are partially successful. The ACF puts forward that actors agree to partial success, if actors across coalitions

perceive the status quo as unacceptable. With such a negative perception of the status quo, actors may be more inclined to negotiate about policy change than risk policy failure (Heikkilä et al., 2014; Sabatier & Weible, 2007).

Characteristic 2: Policy changes that come about through negotiated agreements are a partial policy success to a majority of the involved actors

The above characteristics of negotiated agreements serve as a basis of analysis for how policy change came about in the Swiss agricultural sector, which we describe below.

3. Agricultural Policy

Agricultural production systems include positive and negative externalities. Positive ones include public goods such as biodiversity conservation, landscape maintenance; while negative ones contribute to, for example, greenhouse gas emissions (Power, 2010). To strengthen positive externalities, agricultural policies worldwide try to promote more sustainable agricultural production systems in addition to ensuring the production of food (Pretty, 2018). In Europe, greening, that is, the support of environmental services of agriculture has been one of the key concepts in the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in 2013 (e.g., Anania et al., 2015) and has been an important policy goal in non-EU countries such as Norway or Switzerland. It continues to be an important topic in current policy debates, increasingly also in the context of climate change mitigation and adaptation (e.g., Erjavec & Lovec, 2017). Further development of instruments supporting the greening of agriculture seems to be critical for agricultural policies that aim at both supporting farming practices and promoting to meet environment and climate goals (e.g., Pe'er et al., 2019).

3.1. *History of Swiss Agricultural Policy Reforms*

Swiss agricultural policy has been a first mover in implementing greening strategies. Until the 1990s, however, Swiss agricultural policy focused on the support of domestic production by a very restrictive trade policy and public financial support for Swiss agriculture was one of the highest worldwide. Domestic and international pressure led to a major change in the Swiss agricultural policy in 1999. The regulatory change came with a new article in the federal constitution that was accepted in a public vote in 1996 (Huber & Finger, 2019). The article foresees a multifunctional role for agriculture and defines multifunctionality as the underlying justification for public financial support. While overall support of the agricultural sector remained high, the type of support had considerably shifted. The former market-based support, that is, the protection of the Swiss domestic market from foreign agricultural products, was gradually substituted for direct payments conditional on environmental and animal-welfare standards.

The new constitutional article also foresaw a periodic examination of the agricultural policy strategy. This recurrent check of the Swiss agricultural policy led to four consequent reform steps named after the year they were implemented (AP02, AP07, AP11, and AP14–17). The fourth reform step (AP14–17) is our subject of analysis.

3.2. The Swiss Agricultural Policy Reform AP14–17 in Brief

The reform's core element was the adaptation of direct payments. The reform aimed to abolish payments for current production levels and increase the environmental targeting of direct payments, that is, greening (category A in Table 1). The reform also foresaw a change in the eligibility criteria for the receipt of these payments (category C in Table 1).

In addition to the reform of the direct payment system, AP14–17 comprised two more aspects. First, the farmers union wanted to include the concept of "food sovereignty" into the federal law on agriculture. The main purpose was to reinforce and secure the conceptual ground for border protection and other types of support for the domestic market (category B in Table 1). Second, the federal administration formulated a so-called "quality strategy". This strategy included instruments for the promotion of high-quality products, for example via product labeling or better collaboration within the agricultural value chains (category D in Table 1).

Most of the discussed instruments were accepted by the parliament in 2013 and entered the revised Federal Act on Agriculture enforced in 2014 (last column of Table 1). The new direct payment system, including the greening measures, was introduced and payments based on current production largely abolished. While the final law maintained protective measures for the domestic market, food sovereignty was not considered in the final act. In contrast, the quality strategy explicitly became integral part of the agricultural law in Switzerland. The establishment of the new instruments led to a redistribution of the budget (Figure 1). The share of direct payments for greening measures increased to one third of the budget. This share, 700 Mio. Swiss francs, represents 12 percent of the total support for Swiss agriculture.

4. Research Approach, Data, and Methods

Our case study approach includes four steps to address the conceptual characteristics of negotiated agreements in our empirical case-study: 1) Identification of actors through document analysis and expert interviews along the participatory policy process (to retrace the policy process, we analyzed 457 official documents, see Table D1 in the Online Appendix); 2) Determination of actors' beliefs by coding consultation responses; 3) Analysis of advocacy coalitions and groups of actors sharing secondary aspects through a cluster and social network analysis using UCINET; 4) Identification of the partial success of different actor groups by comparing secondary beliefs with the enacted changes in the Federal Act on Agriculture.

Table 1. Policy Instruments in the AP14–17 Reform

Category	Instruments	Definition	Enacted in the Federal Act on Agriculture
A Greening	Biodiversity payments	Promotion of output-oriented agri-environmental programs	Yes
	Payments for landscape quality	Collaborative payments for the preservation of landscape diversity.	Yes
	Payments for production systems	Remunerates production systems such as organic farming, grassland-based milk and meat production and animal welfare programs.	Yes
	Resource efficiency payments	Promote environmental friendly technologies such as no-tillage or drag hoses.	Yes
B Domestic support	Standard contract	Regulatory instrument to protect domestic market: Contracts allow farmers to get a minimal security for price and volume when selling milk to upstream dairy industry.	Yes
	Auction of import quotas	Adjustment of auction-based system in the distribution of import quotas of meat (considering buyers of domestic meat).	Yes
	Milk price supplement	Factor subsidy: Support of milk that is used for cheese production.	Yes
	Food sovereignty	Compensates farmers for losses due to liberalizing markets. Explicit mentioning of the term «food sovereignty» in the Federal Act on Agriculture.	No
C Eligibility of direct payments	Payments based on current production	Abolishment of payments for holding grass-fed livestock in difficult conditions (mountain regions).	Yes
	Farmland payments	Payments for arable land and compensating difficult production conditions in hilly and mountainous regions.	Yes
	Payments for ensuring food supplies	Support of agricultural production with an area-based payment.	Yes
	Limits for payments to large farms	Abolishment of limits for direct payments based on objective farm size measure (i.e., standardized labor units).	No
D Quality strategy	Minimal farm size	Abolishment of limits for direct payments based on area size and number of animals.	No
	Building area	Abolishment of limits for direct payments based on wealth and income. Increase in minimal farm size to receive direct payments based on objective farm size measure (i.e., standardized labor units).	Yes
	Quality standards	No direct payments on land that had been rezoned into building area. Explicit integration of «quality strategy» in the Federal Act on Agriculture; introduction of incentives to increase quality and branding.	Yes

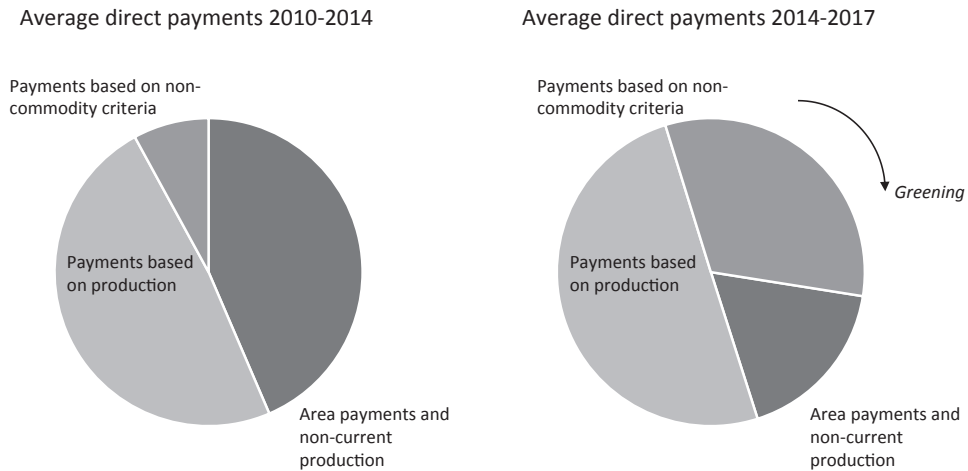


Figure 1. Payments for greening measures before and after the reform AP14–17. Categorization of instruments according to OECD standards, which classify policy instruments with respect to their impact on agricultural production. Payments based on production include payments based on current area, animal numbers, receipts or income, and for which production is required; Area payments and non-current production refer to payments based on parameters such as area, animal numbers, receipts, or income that are not linked to current production; Non-commodity criteria involve support of public goods (i.e., greening measures). Total amount of payments in both periods: 2.5 Mio. CHF. Data based on OECD (2015). See Online Appendix A for a detailed compilation of the different measures and budgets

4.1. Data

Identification of Actors. We define actors as collective actors. We regard individual persons as representatives of their organizations. To identify the involved actors, we followed the decisional, positional, and reputational approach (Laumann, Marsden, & Prensky, 1983). We discerned all actors who took part in events of the policy process with a threshold value set to participating in at least four events. Using the positional approach, we identified actors who held a key role in preceding agricultural policy reforms in Switzerland (Hirschi, Widmer, Briner, & Huber, 2013). Applying the reputational approach, we verified the list of actors against the expertise with representatives of the Federal Office of Agriculture (expert interview 18.10.2018). The combination of approaches led to a final list of 45 actors (see also systematic actor overview in Online Appendix B).

Determining Actors' Beliefs. We coded policy core and secondary beliefs by means of a content analysis of official consultation responses from 41 documents. In the consultation phase, actors provided their policy positions with regard to the ongoing agricultural policy reform to the Federal Office of Agriculture. These consultation responses deliver direct information about the actor, without any distortions by interpretations of third parties. Beyond coding actors' consultation responses, we also considered the report summarizing the consultation results (BLW, 2011a). For administrative offices, we coded beliefs by consulting the official responses to the inner-administrative consultations. We captured the consolidated positions of government (BLW, 2011b; Bundesrat, 2012) and parliamentary actors

(LwG, 1998) through their official reports. This approach made it impossible to disentangle belief-data of the National Council (NC) and the Council of States (CA) as well as individual Cantons (CAN), and, therefore, the belief-data set contains only 42 (rather than 45) actors.

To identify policy core and secondary beliefs, we used five strategic goals derived from our content analysis of actors' consultation responses (Table 2). We coded the policy core beliefs as actors' positions toward the five statements with values between -2 (strong disagreement) and $+2$ (strong agreement) following a coding guide and defined exemplary quotes for each statement (see Online Appendix C).

Secondary beliefs capture actors' preferences toward the 17 most intensively discussed policy instruments of AP14–17 (see Table 1 for a description of instruments and Online Appendix C for coding principles). Table 3 provides an overview about the distribution of actors' secondary beliefs in our data set.

4.2. Data Analysis

Analysis of Advocacy Coalitions. We undertake a plausibility probe of the first characteristic regarding the creation of agreement on secondary beliefs. To this end, we performed a cluster analysis of policy core beliefs and secondary beliefs. The analysis of the policy core beliefs was our point of departure to get an overarching picture of advocacy coalitions. The analysis of the secondary beliefs provided a more fine-grained picture of actor constellations. To this end, we created actor \times actor Manhattan distance matrices for the five policy core beliefs (Table 2) and the 17 secondary beliefs (see Table 3), respectively. Cells contain information about the dissimilarity of beliefs between each pair of actors. For example, if actor a is coded with the value of $+1$ and actor b with -1 for the secondary belief "animal premiums," then, the Manhattan distance $d(a, b)$ between actor a and actor b equals 2, because the absolute difference between their secondary beliefs is 2. Then, we summed up the distances w for all

Table 2. Policy Core Beliefs

Policy Core Belief	Explanation
Self-sufficiency	Agricultural policy should support food production to guarantee a certain amount of self-sufficiency.
Income	Agricultural policy should support the incomes of farmers, because their average income is significantly lower than the average Swiss income.
Environment	Agricultural policy should support farmers to protect the environment and biodiversity.
Public goods	Agricultural policy should support the provision of public goods like the cultivation of attractive landscapes, decentralized settlement, animal welfare, etc.
Economic freedom	Agricultural policy should distort markets as little as possible and mainly guarantee an economy-friendly environment.

Table 3. Overview of Distribution of Secondary Beliefs in Our Data set (N = 42)

Instrument	Disagreement (%)		Agreement (%)		No Data (%)
	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	
<i>A. Greening</i>					
Biodiversity		16.7	19	26.2	38.1
Landscape quality	14.3	14.3	26.2	11.9	33.3
Production system		16.7	16.7	28.6	38.1
Resource efficiency	2.4	2.4	28.6	19.0	47.6
<i>B. Eligibility of direct payments</i>					
Farm size		16.7	50		33.3
Area and animals		21.4	26.2		52.4
Assets and income		33.3	33.3		33.3
Minimal farm size		47.6	19.0		33.3
Constructible area		26.2	7.1	28.6	38.1
<i>C. Domestic support</i>					
Standard contract		14.3	33.3		52.4
Import system meat		11.9	28.6		59.5
Milk price supplement		11.9	35.7		52.4
Food sovereignty		31.0	26.2	28.6	14.3
Payments based on production		47.6	26.2		26.2
Food sufficiency payments	11.9	31.0	14.3	26.2	16.7
Farmland payments		21.4	50.0		28.6
Standard contract milk		14.3	33.3		52.4
Cheese premium		11.9	35.7		52.4
Import system meat		11.9	28.6		59.5
<i>D. Quality strategy</i>					
Quality standards	4.8	11.9	47.6	7.1	28.6

policy core beliefs and all secondary beliefs, respectively, and, additionally for each category of secondary beliefs, separately, as follows:

$$d(a, b) = \sum_{i=1}^i |a_i - b_i|$$

We used the final dissimilarity-matrices to perform cluster analyses and identify coalitions of actors around policy core beliefs and to discern groups of actors around secondary beliefs, respectively. Below, “coalitions” refer to clusters based on policy core beliefs and “groups” to clusters based on secondary aspects. We discerned coalitions and groups with UCINET’s built in tabu optimization tool, which measures Pearson correlations between the patterns of the actors’ belief dissimilarities. The tool allowed selecting a number of clusters to which the cluster analysis optimizes the fit (Hanneman & Riddle, 2005). We chose the number of clusters resulting in the best fit without single-actor clusters. To visualize results, we employed distance plots via multidimensional scaling in Netdraw (Borgatti, 2002).

Partial Policy Success. To assess (partial) success (characteristic 2) we analyzed whether groups of actors, who share secondary aspects, managed to achieve their policy preferences in the final policy output. We measured the success of actors for several controversial issues, such as greening and domestic support, separately. Thereby we can observe whether groups of actors are successful on one issue, while being unsuccessful on other issues and, more generally, whether all groups are at least partially successful.

To measure the success of groups of actors, we compared their secondary beliefs to the corresponding legislation article in the Federal Act on Agriculture. For this purpose, we coded relevant articles of the Federal Act on Agriculture similarly to the way we coded actors' secondary beliefs. The articles were assigned values between -1 (instrument was abolished), 0 (instrument was attenuated), +1 (the instrument was newly introduced or stayed as in AP 2011) and +2 (instrument was tightened in the policy process of AP14–17, see further details on coding principles in Online Appendix C). We then calculated the absolute differences between the legislation l and the secondary beliefs p . Rather than considering each single secondary belief, we analyzed the sum of successes for the categories domestic support, greening, and eligibility of direct payments (s_i). Not all actors took a position for all secondary beliefs. To normalize, we divided the sum of successes per category by the number of positions n an actor took:

$$s_i = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^i |l_i - p_i|}{n}$$

With this procedure, smaller numbers stand for larger success, because numbers relate to distances between legislation and preference. We transformed data such that larger numbers indicate larger success by subtracting each success-value from the maximum success-value $\max(s)$ (Metz, 2017):

$$s_{i(\text{positive})} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^i \max(s) - |l_i - p_i|}{\text{Number of positions}}$$

To compare partial success for different instrument categories within and across groups, we performed t-tests in R Studio.

5. Results

5.1. Coalitions and Actor Constellations

Results for the cluster analysis of actors' policy core beliefs indicate that there are two distinct coalitions (Figure 2A). The first coalition consists of 14 actors that include three conservative political parties, seven farmers' organizations, the Swiss Trade Association and the cantonal authorities. These actors supported self-sufficiency and the provision of income for farmers. Many of the coalition members saw

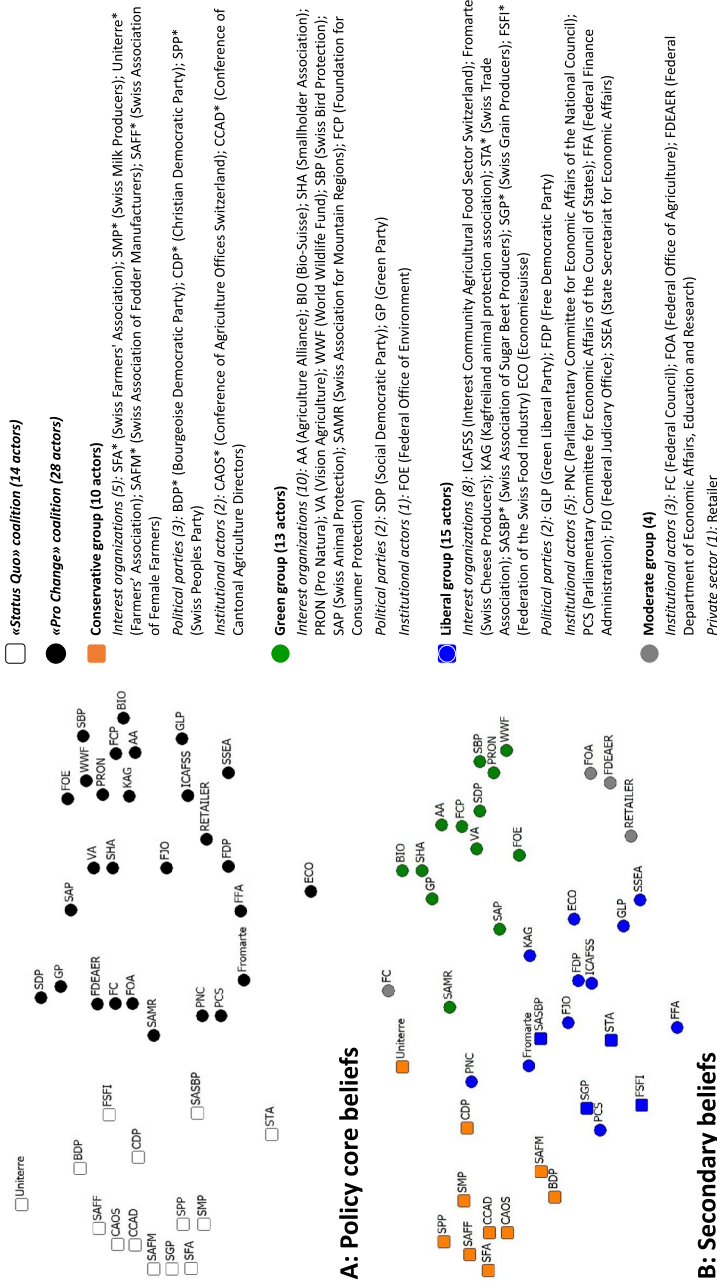


Figure 2. Distance plot based on (A) policy core beliefs dissimilarity (fit = -0.683, r-square = 0.466), displaying two coalitions in black and white and (B) secondary beliefs dissimilarity (fit = -0.649, r-square = 0.422), displaying groups in colors. Actors from the “status quo” coalition in the groups are marked with an asterisk*. The larger the distances between actors, the more dissimilar their beliefs (N = 42) [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

a trade-off between agricultural production and the provision of public goods or environmental protection. The members of this coalition strongly supported market protection. Since these policy core beliefs strongly comply with the existing policy, we label it the “status quo coalition.”

The competing coalition, which we refer to as “pro change,” counts twice as many members and is more heterogeneous. It comprises nine governmental actors, four political parties including liberal, green and left parties and diverse interests, for example, smaller farmers’ associations, animal and environmental protection groups, economic interest organizations, food industry and retail, and consumer organizations. The coalition comprises pro-ecology actors and pro-economy actors who did not consider self-sufficiency as an important goal in contrast to the status quo coalition.

The cluster analysis based on the secondary beliefs then reveals a more differentiated picture with groups of conservative-, green-, liberal-, and moderate actors (Figure 2B). The comparison of clusters based on policy core beliefs and secondary beliefs shows that most actors of the status-quo coalition are represented in the conservative group.

These actors argued that the instruments in the proposed reform focus too much on greening and neglect the actual goal of agriculture, that is, food production. They criticized the abolishment of animal premiums, fought for keeping domestic support instruments and opposed the new instruments like biodiversity payments, landscape quality payments or production system payments. In short, the policy core beliefs and secondary beliefs of the status quo coalition and the conservative group align.

In contrast, the pro change coalition is composed of three groups, each with their own profiles of secondary beliefs: a green-, liberal-, and moderate coalition. The green group was in favor of the reform and demanded increased payments such as biodiversity or production system payments. They criticized that still too much support was given to farmers with only very moderate requirements of environmental or social prerequisites. They demanded the integration of environmental targets into the Federal Act on Agriculture and stricter ecological and social preconditions to become eligible for the receipt of direct payments.

The liberal group criticized the same direct payment instrument as the environmentalists, namely the food sufficiency payments. In addition, many of the liberal group actors were against a tightening of the eligibility criteria for direct payments, that is, an increase in regulations. More importantly, many of the actors in the liberal group did not disclose their preference for many of the instruments. Especially with respect to the greening measures, actors of the liberal group did not reveal any preferences.

The moderate group consists of actors with balanced secondary beliefs including governmental actors who designed the reform and the retail companies, who supported the positions of the reform-designers. In contrast to the liberal group, these actors supported greening measures.

To illustrate the conflict lines between the groups, we present actors’ divergence and similarities with regard to selected categories of policy instruments (cf. Table 1), that is, greening measures, domestic support and eligibility of direct payments (Figure 3).

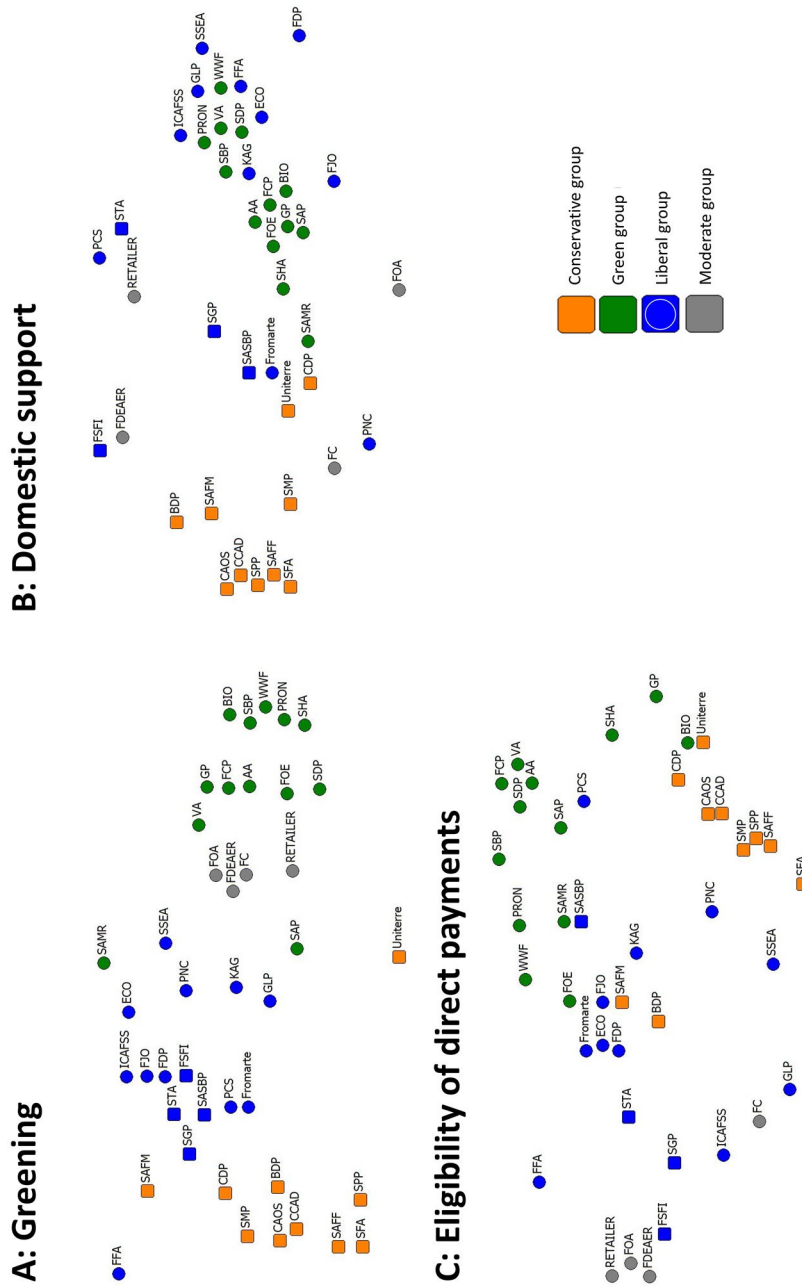


Figure 3. Distance plots based on dissimilarity of secondary beliefs regarding (A) domestic support, (B) greening and (C) eligibility of direct payments (cf. Table 1). Colors indicate groups. The larger the distances between actors, the more dissimilar their secondary beliefs (N = 42) [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

With respect to domestic support (Figure 3B), the green and the liberal groups opposed the conservative group. The green and liberal groups aimed to reduce domestic support not bound to specific achievements in terms of public goods, while the conservative group wanted to maintain support independently of farmers' contributions to public goods. Clusters change for the issue of greening (Figure 3A). In this regard, the conservative actors were against greening, and thus, opposed the green and the moderate groups. The undecided liberal group remains in between. For the eligibility criteria of direct payments (Figure 3C), the clusters change again. Conservative and green actors were in favor of maintaining restrictions, while the liberal and the moderate actors wanted less regulation. For example, liberal and the moderate actors supported the abolishment of caps for direct payments of larger farms.

The quality strategy (category D in Table 1) received moderate agreement from most of the actors, and thus, played a minor role for the compromise reached in the negotiated agreement (for a visualization of the secondary beliefs per instrument see Figure C in the Online Appendix C).

5.2. *Actors' Policy Success*

Our results show that the "pro change" coalition was less successful with respect to domestic support compared to the "status quo" coalition. In contrast, the "pro change" coalition was more successful with respect to greening (Table 4).

At the group level, we find that the conservative actors, which consists of members of the "status quo" coalition, was significantly more successful on the issue of domestic support than for the issue of greening (Figure 4A). The conservative group's success regarding domestic support resulted in the continuation of support for cheese production, the establishment of a standard contract for milk producers, a tighter regulation of the meat imports and the introduction of payments for ensuring food supplies. The only instrument of this category where the conservative group did not succeed was the upkeep of the animal premiums, which were abolished in the reform. Animal premiums were a key point of conflict in the AP14–17. The failure of the conservative group to prevent the abolishment was a partial success for many of the actors in the green and moderate groups. In addition, the conservative group failed to introduce the concept "food sovereignty" in the Federal Act on Agriculture.

While the conservative group was successful in pushing for domestic support, the green and even more so the moderate groups were significantly more successful when it comes to greening (Figure 4B). The process of AP14–17 introduced the new direct payment system including a higher share of payments for biodiversity conservation, landscape maintenance, and more sustainable production systems. The reason why the moderate group was more successful for greening than the green group itself is that the green actors wanted to strengthen the reform even further in the direction of greening. Consequently, the green group was not entirely able to

Table 4. Partial Success of Coalitions and Actor Groups

Level	Coalition				Group		
	Status Quo (N = 14)	Pro Change (N = 28)	Conservative (N = 10)	Green (N = 13)	Liberal (N = 15)	Moderate (N = 4)	
Mean partial success for domestic support	3.30	2.68***	3.51	2.86***	2.41***	3.23	
Mean partial success for greening	2.13	3.19***	2.24	3.04***	2.88	3.65***	

Note: Numbers are not meaningful as absolute values, but only in comparison to other values.

***p-value < 0.001, that is, the difference in means between the status quo and the pro change coalition is not equal to 0. For the group level, ** indicate a p-value < 0.001 for the comparison of the green, liberal, and moderate group to the conservative group.

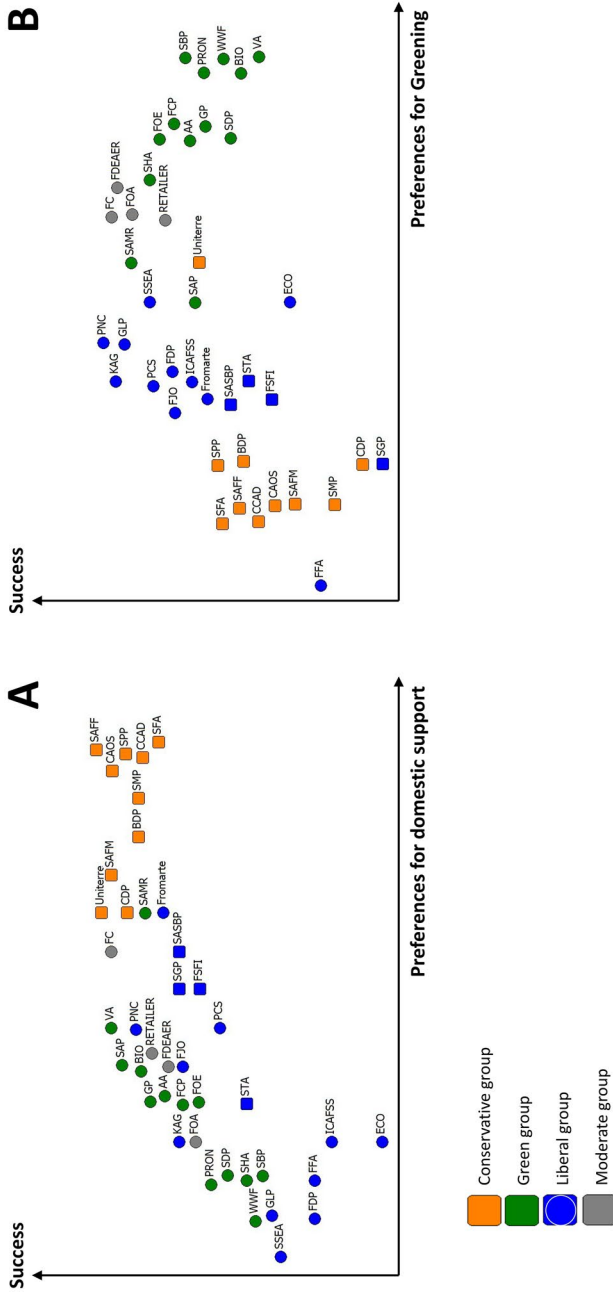


Figure 4. Actors' partial success regarding domestic support (A) and greening (B). Eight actors who did not take any position toward instruments of the greening-category were excluded from the graph (N = 43). X-axis: actors' secondary beliefs; y-axis: actors' success in translating their beliefs into the final legislation [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

assert its preferences. Moreover, the moderate group was also more successful than the liberal actors in terms of domestic support.

Since the liberal group did not reveal preferences for many of the instruments, their partial success was scattered depending on the individual secondary beliefs of the individual actors. The exchange of partial success consequently took place between the moderate, the green, and the conservative groups, while the liberal group was much more heterogeneous and individual actors achieved high or low success depending on their policy core beliefs rather than their secondary beliefs.

The moderate group seems to have been the overall winner of the reform. They expressed moderate beliefs for both instrument categories, domestic support and greening. This result can partly be attributed to the method of analysis, whereby moderate beliefs (coded as -1 or $+1$) result in smaller discrepancies between secondary beliefs and the final legislation than strong beliefs (coded as -2 or $+2$) (see Table 3). Members of this group are likely to express moderate beliefs in their role as federal agencies who are in charge of the policy reform. Moreover, success of the moderate group can be attributed to the fact that these agencies in charge had the official competence to draft the legislation into the direction they preferred.

In sum, the degree of success of the different groups of actors across the two coalitions shows that actors saw parts of their preferences reflected in the final policy output. The two coalitions have been partially successful in terms of some of their preferences (Table 4).

6. Discussion: Characteristics of Negotiated Agreements

According to the ACF, negotiated agreements are contingent on participatory policy processes with repeated interactions and the inclusion of various interests (Heikkilä et al., 2014; Sabatier & Weible, 2007). The Swiss policy reform process that we have analyzed entirely fulfilled these participatory conditions (full details of the level of participation in this process are given in Online Appendix D). Diverse policy actors have been involved in the negotiations at different stages of the policy process. The pre-consultation stage of the process included a wide spectrum of actors of the administration, interest groups, and the parliament. The lead agencies met with interest groups face-to-face and thereby may have established trust in a fair reform process. The federal administration coordinated the consultation, which holds a key role as mediator who has to gain an overview about actors' interests. Through all stages, the policy process provided policy actors with ample opportunities to participate formally and informally. Actors could exchange and express their preferences. These repeated opportunities to interact may have fostered actors' perception of a fair process, their willingness to negotiate and agree to the reform (Leach & Sabatier, 2005).

6.1. *Measuring Secondary Beliefs Across Coalitions*

While the analysis of policy core beliefs shows two opposing coalitions, the secondary beliefs reveal a more differentiated picture with four groups, where a degree

of agreement was possible due to the exchange of policy successes. These results support characteristic 1, according to which negotiated agreements are crafted around secondary beliefs rather than policy core beliefs. This is in line with Kukkonen et al. (2017) who conclude, in the case of US climate policy, that opposing coalitions find agreement at the level of policy instruments rather than core beliefs.

This result should also be seen in the context of the debate on the role of consensual and conflictive policy domains (Gronow, Wagner, Ylä-Anttila 2020.; Weible, Heikkilä, Pierce, 2018). In Switzerland, there seems to be societal and political agreement at a fundamental level, that the agricultural sector needs support. Based on this consensus, policy core beliefs might matter less and the negotiable component in this policy domain is at the level of secondary beliefs. This is in line with the ACF notion, that the focus of negotiated agreements is on empirical and not on normative matters (Heikkilä et al., 2014; Sabatier & Weible, 2007).

We also find that the policy actors reached an agreement despite a pro status quo coalition that advocated against policy changes based on their policy core beliefs. This is notable because farmer organizations are potentially very powerful in democratic settings (Swinnen, 2018). In Switzerland, farmers' interests are very well represented in the Swiss parliament⁴ resulting in a strong farmer lobby support. In addition, the pro status quo coalition in Switzerland has the power to organize a referendum. This veto-like power is reflected in the organizational capacity and the reputational power of the coalition to effectively run a national referendum campaign (Hirschi et al., 2013). Indeed, after the reform the Farmers Union, the central actor in the status quo coalition was able to collect 150,000 signatures for a popular initiative in less than three months⁵. (Künzler, Salathe, & Ziehli, 2018). In this context, our analysis showed that, beyond the participatory nature of the process, the institutionalization of the AP14–17 reform process also created a favorable condition for a negotiated agreement. Revisions of the Swiss federal agricultural policy are institutionalized as they are legally mandated every four years, which leads to a political recognition of the process. When the periodic revision of the agricultural policy is on the political agenda, actors commit to the reform process and sufficient funding exists to push the process forward. As actors are committed to the process, alternative venues also appear unappealing. In addition, a parliamentary motion that instructs the Federal Council to act lead to high legitimation of the process. The motion, asking to revise the direct payment system, forced the status quo coalition into negotiations. We conclude that this institutionalization of agricultural policy revisions contributed to the move away from the status quo. Or put differently, the institutionalization of AP14–17 in combination with the submission of a motion forced the status quo coalition to engage in a negotiated agreement.

This conclusion is in line with observations made by Bandelow et al. (2017, p. 9) stating that “negotiated agreements (...) aim at optimization of policies. Negotiated agreements seem particularly likely when long-term persistent and stable advocacy coalitions dominate a policy sector.” For our case of the Swiss agricultural policy, we can confirm both aspects highlighted by Bandelow et al. (2017): First, coalitions have been rather stable throughout time when comparing our results with the ones from Hirschi et al. (2013). Second, we confirm that the Swiss AP14–17 reform took

place with the goal to optimize agricultural policy. Actors optimized by discussing policy options on empirical grounds, that is, policy instruments, rather than normative ones. Avoiding normative conflicts was possible, because the reform was not a response to acute problem pressure, but institutionally mandated. Such a periodic reform process can be regarded a smart institutional design for a policy domain as politicized as Swiss agriculture. It avoids normative conflicts and promotes the optimization of policies in the form of negotiated agreements.

In this context, it is also worth discussing that changes in the problem framing and agenda setting of agricultural policies may also influence the direction a periodic reform takes. In the last two decades, environmental aspects of agricultural policy have become much more prominent in Switzerland (Huber & Finger, 2019), and also in other regions worldwide (Pe'er et al., 2019; Swinnen, 2018). A recent analysis using data from Google Trends, for examples, exemplifies how reports from national and international organizations as well as domestic political pressure sensitized the Swiss public for negative externalities of agricultural production (Schaub, Huber, & Finger, 2020).

6.2. Partial Policy Success

We analyzed the policies on which actors agreed upon and found a carefully drafted compromise-like agreement rather than a winner-takes-it-all sort of policy output. While conservatives materialized their policy preferences on domestic support, green actors achieved some improvements in greening. The moderate and liberal actors contributed to this negotiation by strategically aligning with the green actors in a manner to foster policy change. Thereby actors negotiated an agreement, which distributed benefits and, therefore, may have been perceived as fair by the majority of actors even though it reflected specific preferences only partially. These results support characteristic 2, according to which negotiated agreements represent a partial success to a majority of the involved actors.

The analysis of different secondary beliefs highlights a constellation of coalitions with multiple groups that helps us to understand in more detail how they reached an agreement. The distance plots in Figure 3 imply some different constellations of the four groups and highlight reoccurring constellations in terms of a conservative and a green group opposing each other, which were similar in size. The very large liberal group was heterogeneous and changed sides depending on the topic (domestic support or greening), which significantly reduced its decision making power. In the end, it was the rather small moderate group and individual actors from the liberal group that enabled the agreement. The moderate group is mostly composed of governmental actors who are in charge of the reform process. As designers of the reform, those actors wanted to avoid a situation where the reform would be rejected completely. Therefore, it is likely that they were strategically acting with moderate positions to increase the chance for an agreement. In search for an agreement, the moderate actors aligned with the green ones and, thereby, the policy output achieved some major achievements in terms of greening of agriculture. These results highlight

the importance of mediators who facilitate negotiations. In our case, these mediators were predominantly governmental actors from the federal administration.

The Swiss democracy with its consensus-based decision rules promotes actors' willingness to accept partial policy success. Switzerland is a typical example of a consensus democracy where consensus-seeking is deeply entrenched in the political system and guides Swiss politics (Fischer, 2014). Due to these shared norms, the actors' goal is to find an agreement that accommodates diverse interests as well as possible. Consequently, actors seem to accept partial success as fair. Based on this observation, it is not surprising that the ACF focuses attention on negotiated agreements as a pathway to policy change in order to render the ACF more suitable to consensus and corporatist political systems (Sabatier & Weible, 2007, p. 205). While our analysis exemplifies empirically how different coalitions achieved (at least) partial success, we did not focus on the explicit mechanism of finding an agreement. The compromise could, for example, result from enhanced learning and the recognition of mutual benefits among actors over time.

7. Conclusion

Negotiated agreements are, given certain process characteristics, a promising pathway to policy change. Our in-depth case study of the Swiss agricultural policy reform shows how, in a participatory policy process, members of opposing coalitions make compromises at the level of secondary beliefs rather than policy core beliefs and we show how this leads to partial success. The context of a participatory policy process within a system of consensus-oriented policymaking on an empirical rather than normative case was conducive for a carefully drafted compromise that distributed benefits across opposing coalitions and, thereby, seems to have fostered the perception of a fair solution. In this setting, we find that compromise at the level of secondary beliefs formed the basis for policy change. Secondary beliefs clustered differently depending on the issue at hand.

Our results also show that a negotiated agreement is possible even with strong support for the status quo by one coalition. Despite diverging preferences, opposing coalitions successfully crafted an agreement around secondary beliefs. ACF scholars have considered an unbearable status quo a characteristic of negotiated agreements. Our results, however, indicate that is not necessarily the case: the conservative group of actors specifically advocated the status quo, that is, maintaining domestic support for agriculture. In our case, not all parties perceived the status-quo as unacceptable, and yet, a reform took place. These results indicate that empirical testing is necessary on a larger scale in order to refine the role of status-quo biases in negotiated agreements in the ACF. Institutions matter to explain our case: the Swiss agricultural policy must be revised every four years, which creates impetus for change even though the status quo might not be unbearable. Hence, we found actors' commitment to the reform process because of an institutionalized periodic reform. Beyond institutional design, the implication of our case study for agricultural policy changes

is that the process to encourage negotiated agreements should include a set of policy instruments that allows different coalitions to achieve at least partial success. We argue that our approach of measuring shared and conflicting secondary beliefs across coalitions and groups is an important advancement in the ACF literature in order to understand the crafting of negotiated agreements.

Our analysis of partial success also provides an avenue for cross-fertilization of the ACF with the broader policy process literature such as the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF). For instance, recent MSF literature addresses the concept of actors conceding on some aspects of a policy reform in order to make it more digestible for a broader spectrum of actors (Zohlnhöfer, Herweg, N., & Huß, 2016). The MSF also sets forward the idea of “package deals,” which nicely connects to our analysis of partial success: when a decision window opens, crafting a “package deal” that includes different “pet projects” from a policy stream can foster adoption by a wider range of actors who see their ideas reflected in the deal (Zohlnhöfer et al., 2016, p. 251). Further research could explore this linkage between package deals and the idea of partial policy success in negotiated agreements more in-depth.

To pave the way for sound future research, we also share some of the difficulties related to data gathering and research design. With regard to our belief data, the reliability of data relates to the question of whether text sources fully reflect actors’ beliefs. We are confident that our sources of information reflect a relatively unfiltered view of actors’ beliefs, because we coded actors’ consultation responses. However, getting information about the lead agencies’ positions (i.e., the FC, FOA, and FDEAER) was more difficult and we had to revert to the reports they published (BLW, 2011b; Bundesrat, 2012). Reports may provide a more filtered view of beliefs due to the hierarchic position of those agencies and their responsibility for the reform. Text sources may thus also be an explanation for those actors’ moderate beliefs. Moderate beliefs of administrative agencies have been widely observed. In their review, Weible, Sabatier, and McQueen (2009) find that administrative agencies typically advocate more moderate positions than interest associations or parties.

While we have studied an insightful case of processes through which negotiated agreements come about, it remains one case study. Swiss consensus democracy serves as an exemplary case to study negotiated agreements due to its high participatory and consensus-oriented nature. However, it is noteworthy that negotiated agreements have been observed also in the majoritarian context of the US (Heikkilä et al., 2014; Sabatier & Pelkey, 1990).

Our contribution is to revive the concept and initialize a research agenda on negotiated agreements as an enabler for policy change in domestic policymaking. Further research is necessary to show whether negotiated agreements can support continuous policy change across countries and policy fields and which characteristics and mechanisms promote such agreements in a more quantitative fashion. Such research would be particularly useful to advance policy fields in which reforms are urgently needed, but politics suffer from blockades.

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Notes

1. The ACF lists four possible pathways to policy change, including policy-oriented learning, external shocks Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993), internal shocks (e.g., re-elections) and negotiated agreements Sabatier and Weible (2007).
2. Sabatier and Weible (2007) record a sub-category of policy core beliefs that they term *policy core policy preferences*. Unlike subsystem-wide policy core beliefs, policy core policy preferences deal with only a territorial or substantive subcomponent of a policy subsystem (e.g., the use vs. protection of a resource in a specific place).
3. For example, market-liberal actors may generally exhibit a preference for market solutions, but some may recognize market-failures when dealing with specific issues such as pollution, and, therefore, may be willing to accept government intervention in this policy area
4. 35 parliamentarians (14 percent of the parliament) have a direct relation to agricultural producers. Note that the share of persons working in the agricultural sector is below 3 percent of the total population.
5. This popular initiative was withdrawn after the Federal Council made a counter proposal, which suggested an additional article on agriculture in the Federal Constitution. The change was accepted in a public vote in 2017. The new article, however, had so far no effect on agricultural legislation.

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