

The Europeanization of Parliamentary Attention in and out of the European Union

France, Spain, the Netherlands, and Switzerland Compared

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31.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the usefulness of Comparative Agenda Project data to study the Europeanization of parliamentary attention. Initially, the literature in the field has focused on the institutional and organizational responses to the challenges raised by European integration for national parliaments (Maurer and Wessels, 2005; Raunio and Hix, 2000; Raunio, 2009, 2005; Saafeld, 2005; Goetz and Meyer-Sahling, 2008; Auel et al., 2015b, 2015a; Finke and Herbel, 2015). More recently, scholars have started to look at the attitudinal and behavioral dimension, i.e., at what national members of parliaments (MPs) actually do in EU affairs. We join this literature and examine how and to what extent Europe is politicized in national parliaments. To answer this question, we rely on a longitudinal and comparative analysis of the Europeanization of parliamentary questions (PQs).

Our contribution is twofold. First, our chapter puts the findings of recent country studies on the Europeanization of PQs (Gava et al., 2017; Navarro and Brouard, 2014; Palau, 2012; Senninger, 2017) to a comparative test across four countries: Three EU member states (France, Spain, and the Netherlands) and a country that is not member of the EU but strongly influenced by it (Switzerland). In addition, the selection of countries includes cases with and without

strong Eurosceptic parties, which are said to contribute to the politicization of EU affairs in domestic politics. Second, we adopt a policy agenda perspective and analyze the distribution of MPs' attention on Europeanized policy issues, in comparison with domestic issues. We share the view that the amount of attention that political actors can devote to various policy issues is not unlimited. While this arguably holds especially so on EU-related issues, information about the policy issues that are addressed by national parliaments in their control activities about the European Union is still surprisingly scarce.

Section 31.2 presents the broader context of the study, which pertains to the Europeanization of parliamentary activities, and Section 31.3 the data and the coding. Based on that we then study variations in the Europeanization of PQs over time, across countries, and across issues. We formulate expectations and we test them with descriptive statistics on a rich collection of data covering two to three decades depending on the country, and including thousands of PQs. The concluding section summarizes the main findings and highlights their broader implications.

31.2 The Europeanization of Parliamentary Activities

In most Western democracies, there has been a shift in the balance of power between the government and the parliament with respect to legislation (Baldwin, 2004). The government initiates most laws (Strom et al., 2003) and dominates the legislative process more generally. As a result, the role of parliament has changed, and its control function, scrutinizing government actions, has become a crucial aspect of parliamentary activities (Green-Pedersen, 2010; Vliegthart and Walgrave, 2011). These changes hold even more true in Europeanized decision-making processes that are said to strengthen the government (Moravcsik, 1994) and to lead to “de-parliamentarization” (Goetz and Meyer-Sahling, 2008). However, parliaments have “fought back” and several institutional reforms have been implemented to achieve a better balance between the executive and legislative branches (Auel and Christiansen, 2015; Raunio, 2009; Winzen, 2013). National parliaments have obtained new opportunities for participation in EU-related affairs, new information rights, and extended oversight powers, in particular through their European Affairs Committees (EAC).

Accordingly, most authors have focused on these institutional innovations. For instance, Auel et al. (2015a, 2015b) have developed an index that captures the institutional strength of national parliaments in EU affairs. Their so-called OPAL score combines eleven indicators organized

along three dimensions: access to relevant and timely information about Europeanized policymaking processes, parliamentary infrastructure such as the role of EACs, and MPs oversight and influence rights. According to the OPAL score, among the three EU member states included in our study, the Netherlands has a strong national parliament in EU affairs, Spain has a weak parliament and France falls somewhere in-between (Auel and Christiansen, 2015). This international comparison is based on formal rules enabling MPs to scrutinize Europeanized policymaking processes, but not on the effective MPs scrutiny activities per se.

Furthermore, while EU scrutiny in EACs is an important part of democratic accountability in EU affairs, it nevertheless comes with some severe constraints (Senninger, 2017): Access to the EACs is limited to small groups of MPs, and the agenda of EACs is limited by the European Union's legislative agenda, which prevents MPs from adding issues to the agenda. In sum, we argue that formal scrutiny rules, parliamentary infrastructures and EACs activities do not reflect the whole spectrum of MPs strategies to exert their control on EU affairs led by the government, and to bring new Europeanized issues on the political agenda.

Indeed, MPs can also resort to the more classical toolkit of agenda-setting and scrutiny instruments to address EU-related policy issues. Asking questions to specific ministers or the cabinet as a whole is "the main instance of parliamentary control" (Vliegthart and Walgrave, 2011). Further to their control function, PQs also serve as information gathering and communication channels towards political parties, the media, and the public (Bailer, 2011). MPs may use PQs to voice the preferences of their electoral constituencies or interest groups, to draw attention to specific topics and to develop a competence reputation on these topics. Finally, it is worth noting that individual PQs, unlike EAC activities, have no limitations in terms of issue agenda. MPs can ask questions on whatever EU-related issues they wish to address. This, in turn, allows for the analysis of which EU-related issues MPs do actually address in their day-to-day scrutiny work, and for comparing the allocation of attention to policy issues in domestic versus Europeanized PQs.

In sum, we claim that PQs that MPs introduce to put EU-related issues on the parliamentary agenda help to assess the degree of Europeanization of parliamentary attention. Section 31.3 presents the empirical setting and how we have applied the classification scheme developed in the Comparative Agendas Project to code PQs in the four countries under study. We then investigate how the share of Europeanized PQs has evolved over time in the four countries, whether the EU integration process and Eurosceptic parties have contributed to the Europeanization of parliamentary attention and, finally, whether PQs on Europeanized issues cover a small or a broad range

of policy domains. This will eventually help us to assess whether some sort of “re-parliamentarization” is at work with respect to parliamentary scrutiny.

31.3 Coding of Parliamentary Questions (PQs)

Our dataset comprises PQs asked by MPs in France, the Netherlands, Spain, and Switzerland and covers two to three decades. We coded different types of PQs that can all serve as control activities with which the parliament monitors what the government is doing or not doing, or as information devices that MPs can use to communicate with their constituencies and the broader public. Research periods and types of questions differ somewhat across countries, depending on national institutional rules and data availability: For France our dataset includes oral questions to the government from 1988 to 2007; for Spain oral questions from 1986 to 2013; for the Netherlands written questions from 1995 to 2011; and for Switzerland written questions and interpellations from 1983 to 2013. Although the research periods are not identical, this should have limited effects on the results, given the simple descriptive statistics on which we rely. Similarly, procedures to ask PQs differ across countries, but in all four countries there is some kind of limitation to the number of questions that MPs can ask. The total number of questions varies from about 11,000 in France to 36,000 in the Netherlands (see Table 31.A.1 in the Appendix).

To identify whether a PQ is Europeanized or remains purely domestic, we relied on a computer-based keywords search in the question’s full text. The list of EU-related keywords comes from the cross-national “Delors’ Myth project” (Brouard et al., 2012b) and the terms include: European Union, European Community, European Economic Community, Common Market, Single Market, European Market, European Coal and Steel Community, European Atomic Energy Community, European Monetary Union and European Monetary System, European Directive, Community law, European law, and its acronyms.

To code the issue topic we have applied the coding scheme developed in the Comparative Agendas Project,¹ whereby we focus here on the twenty main issue topics. In France and Spain, the issue topic was coded for all domestic and Europeanized PQs, based on manual coding (Spain) or on a mix of manual and semi-automatic coding (France). In the Netherlands and Switzerland, a different approach was used: The issue topic was coded by hand for all Europeanized PQs, and for a subset of domestic PQs (all PQs for the years 1995–2003 in Switzerland, and a random sample of 500 questions per parliamentary year, i.e., roughly 30 percent of the total number of questions, in the Netherlands).

31.4 The Scope and Triggers of Europeanized Questions

31.4.1 *Evolution over Time and across Countries*

We first look at the evolution of Europeanization over time. The conventional wisdom is that each new step in the process of European integration increases the attention dedicated by national MPs to EU affairs. Two factors jointly contribute to this dynamic. First, the successive reforms of EU treaties (Single European Act in 1986, Maastricht in 1992, Amsterdam in 1997, Nice in 2001, and Lisbon in 2007) have redefined the overall architecture, balance of power, and policymaking competencies of EU institutions. National ratification processes of EU treaties reforms and, even more so, the resulting deepening of the European Union (expansion of authority to new policy areas and increased importance of EU political decision-making compared to domestic politics, (Börzel, 2005; Pollack, 1994)) have presumably fostered parliamentary attention to Europeanized issues. We may expect that the Europeanization of PQs has increased over time.

This expectation also applies to Switzerland, which has reached a situation of “customized quasi-membership” in the European Union (Kriesi and Trechsel, 2008). During the 1990s and 2000s, Switzerland and the European Union have concluded more than fifteen bilateral agreements in various fields (Afonso and Maggetti, 2007; Dupont and Sciarini, 2001; Dupont and Sciarini, 2007). In addition, Switzerland has unilaterally adapted to EU rules (Fischer and Sciarini, 2014; Gava et al., 2014; Sciarini et al., 2004; Sciarini, 2014). This said, the scope of EU influence remains (far) lower in Switzerland than in EU member states. Therefore, the share of Europeanized questions is likely to be lower in that country.

As a first step, we calculate the overall share of Europeanized PQs in the four countries during the 1995–2007 period. The degree of Europeanization of PQs ranges between 7.3 percent in France, 7.6 percent in Spain, 8.3 percent in the Netherlands and 8.5 percent in Switzerland. The overall share of EU-related PQs is thus similar across countries, and it is rather low. In any case, it is lower than the degree of Europeanization of legislative acts: In their comparative study of eight countries, Brouard and colleagues (2012b; König and Mäder, 2012) found that between 1988 and 2007 the average degree of Europeanization of legislation amounted to 14 percent in France (Brouard et al., 2012a), to 12 percent in the Netherlands (Breeman and Timmermans, 2012), and up to 35 percent in Spain (Palau and Chaqués, 2012). The corresponding figure was comparatively far lower in Switzerland (6 percent) (Gava and Varone, 2012). The weak share of EU-related questions in national parliaments is compatible with Auel et al.’s (2015b: 286) statement that “parliaments that spend long hours scrutinizing EU affairs in the EAC are not systematically as active when it comes to debating EU issues in the plenary.”

Figure 31.1 shows the evolution of the share of Europeanized PQs over time in the four countries. Unlike expected, one does not see any increase in Europeanization. In the three EU member-states, the share of questions dealing with EU affairs fluctuates from one year to the next, but the overall picture is that of stagnation. In Switzerland, there was a sudden increase in attention to EU matters at the beginning of the 1990s, but the share of Europeanized PQs has since then stabilized on a moderate level. In fact, European integration remained a non-issue in the Swiss parliament until the late 1980s, i.e., up until the 1992 Single Market project (Sciarini, 1991).

Thus, the deepening of the European integration process has not resulted in an increase of parliamentary attention for EU-related issues over time. Alternatively, we may assume that MPs' attention to EU-related issues varies as a function of the stops-and-go of the integration process and/or as a function of the electoral cycle on the EU level (Chaqués-Bonafont et al., 2015; Boomgarden et al., 2010; Guinaudeau and Palau, 2016). If this holds, then one should witness an upsurge of Europeanized questions in years with a treaty reform, when European elections are looming, or when a member state holds the Council presidency.

Figure 31.1 provides some support for this view, and more especially for the important role played by treaty reforms and EU presidencies. In France, the first (and major) peak in attention took place in 1992 with the Maastricht

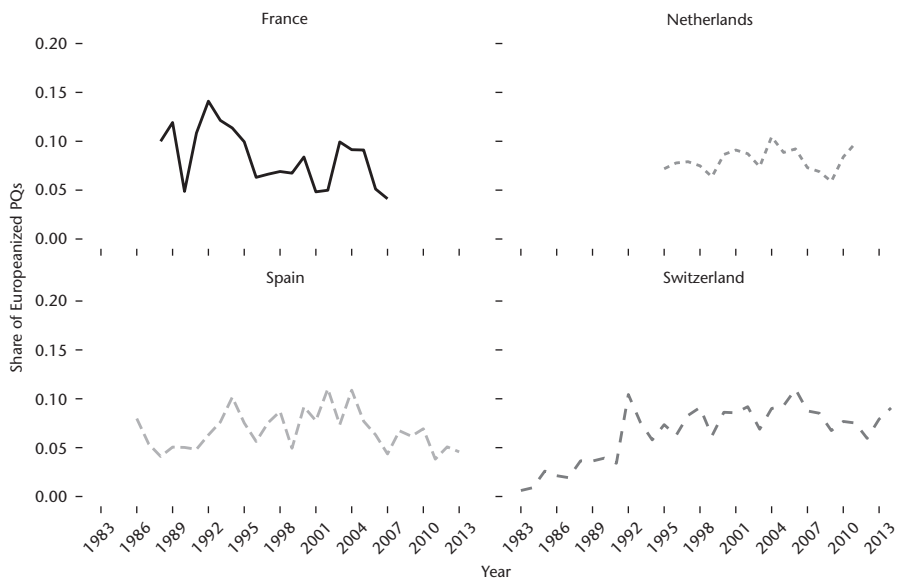


Figure 31.1. Share of Europeanized parliamentary questions

Source: Comparative Agendas Project

Treaty and related ratification referendum, a second—less marked—peak occurred in 2000 with the French presidency and the Nice summit, and a third in 2003–5 with the negotiation and ratification of the European Constitution (see also Navarro and Brouard, 2012: 102–3). While fluctuations in attention have been of a lower magnitude in Spain, we nevertheless see some peaks of attention in relation to the occurrence of relevant EU events, such as the Spanish Council presidency in 1995 and 2002 (which was also the year of the introduction of the euro currency), and the negotiation of the European Constitution in 2004—see also Chaqués-Bonafont et al., (2015). In the Netherlands, the share of Europeanized questions also reached a high at the time of negotiation and ratification of the European Constitution. Finally, in Switzerland, parliamentary attention first peaked in 1992, the year when the agreement on the European Economic Area was signed and submitted to popular ratification, and again in 2005–6, in the context of three direct democratic votes on bilateral agreements concluded with the European Union.²

Coming back to the differences across countries, contrary to expectations the Europeanization of PQs is not lower in Switzerland than in EU member states. This surprising result suggests that EU membership is not a decisive factor in accounting for the degree of Europeanization of MPs attention. Both the low level of Europeanization of PQs in the four countries and the comparatively higher level of Europeanization of PQs in Switzerland are compatible with the salience of EU-related issues in the media coverage of election campaigns in six European countries (Kriesi, 2007). According to this study, in the 1990s issues relating to European integration made up less than 7 percent of all issue-related statements in electoral campaigns, in these six countries. In addition, the increase of salience of EU-related issues between the 1970s and 1990s has been most substantial in the two most Eurosceptic countries included in Kriesi's (2007) study, namely Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Turning to partisan politics, studies seeking to explain the salience of European integration in the electoral arena emphasize the proactive role of Eurosceptic parties (de Vries, 2007). Similarly, according to Kriesi and colleagues (2006, 2008) European integration is a crucial component of the new globalization cleavage introduced and/or articulated by radical right parties. Accordingly, it has been argued that MPs from Eurosceptic parties are more prone to Europeanize the parliamentary agenda. So doing, they are able to demarcate themselves from other (governmental or opposition) parties and to follow a promising vote-seeking strategy. This argument resonates with the argument of the issue ownership literature (Petrocik, 1996) that parties emphasize those issues on which they are seen as more active and competent than their rivals in their electoral manifestos and/or in their parliamentary interventions.

Scholars looking more specifically at the parliamentary scrutiny of EU issues have also stressed the role of political contestation over European integration,

in particular from Eurosceptic parties, for the intensity of parliamentary control in EU affairs (e.g., Holzacker, 2002, 2005; Senninger, 2017). Therefore, we may expect that MPs from Eurosceptic parties introduce a higher share of Europeanized questions than MPs from other parties. The main Eurosceptic parties under consideration are the National Front in France, the Freedom Party in the Netherlands and the People's Party in Switzerland—there was no true anti-EU party with parliamentary representation in Spain during the period under study (Rodríguez-Aguilera de Prat, 2013).³

The results (not reported here) are mixed. In France and Switzerland, the share of Europeanized questions has, as expected, been higher among Eurosceptic parties than among non-Eurosceptic parties since the early 2000s. However, the opposite pattern prevails in the Netherlands, where the share of EU-related questions is smaller among anti-EU parties than among mainstream parties. The latter result suggests that Eurosceptic parties are prone to politicize European integration, but not everywhere.

31.4.2 *Issue Attention*

We now turn to the analysis of the Europeanization of PQs from a policy agenda perspective (Jones and Baumgartner, 2005). In order to better understand how parliaments work, we need to delve into the policy issues MPs deal with in their daily activities (Vliegenthart and Walgrave, 2011). The amount of attention that MPs can devote to various policy problems (e.g., macroeconomy, defense, public health, environment, etc.) is not unlimited. Their resources are scarce (i.e., limited expertise) and the parliamentary agenda is not expandable (i.e., fixed question time). MPs have to set priorities and their questions can only address a few policy issues. This holds true for both Europeanized and non-Europeanized policymaking processes. However, whereas domestic policies may potentially concern all issues, the formal EU competencies and related legislations do not cover the full range of policy domains (e.g., there is no EU policy on pensions). In addition, lots of EU directives fall under the regulatory responsibility of the executive and are thus transposed in domestic law through secondary legislation, such as governmental decrees (Grossman and Sauger, 2007; Gava and Varone, 2014). Similarly, and as already mentioned, EACs may play an important role as institutional gatekeeper of the parliamentary agenda on EU-related issues and control for the range of policy issues discussed in plenary sessions. Therefore, we expect that issue concentration of PQs is higher on EU-related (or “Europeanized”) issues than on non-EU related domestic policies. Turning to the temporal perspective, with the deepening of European integration, new issue topics are put on the EU agenda of national

parliaments. Accordingly, the issue dispersion of Europeanized questions has presumably increased over time.

To assess the degree of issue dispersion on Europeanized issues and on domestic issues we calculate Shannon's H, a measure of information entropy (Jennings et al., 2011). As our study is based on twenty policy topics codes, entropy scores may range from 0 to the natural log of 20 (2.997). Lower entropy scores indicate that attention is concentrated on a few policy issues and higher scores that attention is more equally distributed across issues. We calculate the entropy score for the six sub-periods mentioned above. Figure 31.2 supports the intuition that issue concentration is higher for PQs dealing with EU affairs than for PQs on domestic issues. In all countries and for all available data periods the entropy score is higher for questions on non-Europeanized issues than for questions on Europeanized issues. In other words, issue attention is more evenly balanced between the twenty issue categories in the former case than in the latter. Except in France, the difference in issue concentration is fairly substantial. The fact that European integration does not cover the full range of policy issues arguably explains this relatively high concentration of MPs' attention on EU-related matters. Note that issue concentration of Europeanized PQs is lower in Switzerland than in Spain and France, and not higher in Switzerland than in the Netherlands. To account for this result, one may point to the far-reaching scope of both Switzerland–EU bilateral agreements and Switzerland's unilateral adaptation

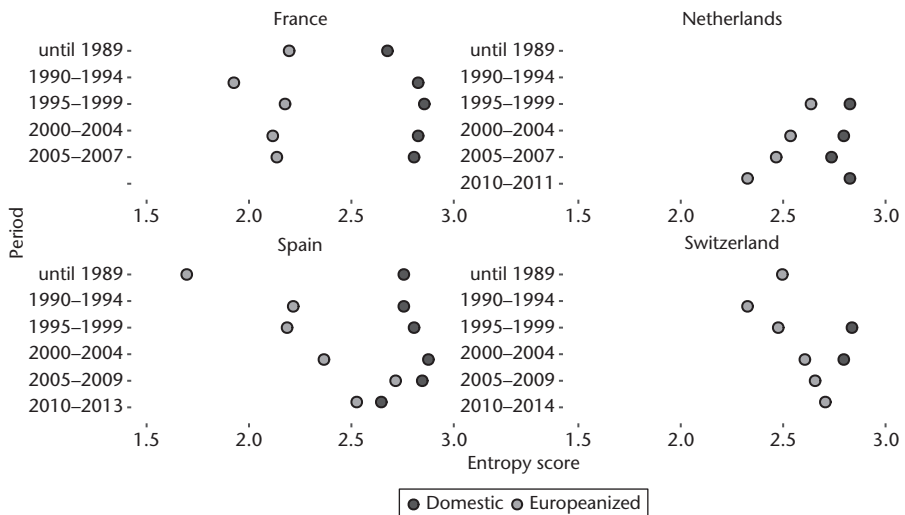


Figure 31.2. Issue concentration across countries and over time (entropy scores, Shannon's H)

Source: Comparative Agendas Project

to EU rules, and to the strong politicization of European integration in Swiss politics (Kriesi, 2007, Gava et al., 2014, Sciarini et al., 2015).

By contrast, Figure 31.2 does not support the expectation that issue concentration of PQs on Europeanized issues has reduced over time. A slight downward trend shows up only in Spain and, to some extent, in Switzerland. Pearson’s correlation between the distribution of attention across policy domains on Europeanized questions between a given period and the subsequent period confirms this view: Correlations are overall high, which means that Europeanized issues that receive high (low) attention in a given period also receive high (low) attention in the subsequent period.⁴ In other words, the agenda of Europeanized questions does not display any major punctuation, i.e., no surge of attention to new issue topics.⁵ In spite of the successive extensions of EU authority to new policy areas over the last three decades, national MPs still tend to concentrate on the same policy issues.

Interestingly enough, Pearson’s correlations between the Europeanized agendas of each pair of countries and for each of the three periods with available data (1995–9, 2000–4 and 2005–9) are high (Pearson’s R from 0.51 to 0.84), which suggests that the distribution of issue attention is fairly similar across countries. The analysis of issue convergence between the countries’ agendas, for the same three periods, tells a similar story (Table 31.1). The measure of issue convergence was first put forward by Sigelman and Buell (2004) in the US two-parties context, and adapted by Green-Pedersen and Mortensen (2009) to a multiparty system. We use it by analogy to assess the degree of convergence between the distributions of MPs’ attention to Europeanized PQs in the four countries under study. For each country, we first calculate the average distribution of attention existing in the other three countries—for a given time period (see equation 1). Then, for each country we sum the numeric distance to the agenda of the three other countries (equation 2). Based on that, we finally calculate the issue overlap between countries (equation 3).

$$AA_{cj} = \sum_{i=1}^n (A_{c1,i} + A_{c2,i} + A_{c3,i})/3 \tag{1}$$

$$D_{cj} = \sum_{i=1}^n |AA_{cj,i} - A_{cj,i}| \tag{2}$$

$$C_{j,o} = 1 - \left(\sum_{i=1}^n D_{cj,i} \right) / 2 \tag{3}$$

where *n* is the number of issue categories (*n* = 20); *AA_{cj}* denotes the average agenda for country *j*, calculated as the means of the agendas in the other three countries *c₁*, *c₂* and *c₃*; *D_{cj}* is the difference between the agenda of country *j* and the average agenda in the other three countries; and *C_{j,o}* represents the

Table 31.1. Convergence in the distribution of issue attention on Europeanized PQs across countries

	1995–9	2000–4	2005–7
France	0.72	0.70	0.69
Spain	0.73	0.70	0.73
Netherlands	0.66	0.69	0.72
Switzerland	0.75	0.72	0.72

Source: Comparative Agendas Project

degree of issue overlap between country j 's agenda and that of the other three countries. So defined, convergence ranges from 0 (convergence is nil) and 100 (convergence is maximal). Table 31.1 presents the results.

Convergence amounts to about 70 percent, which is a fairly high degree, and it is also very stable across time. A closer look at the data shows that two issues tend to dominate PQs on Europeanized issues: International affairs and, to a lesser extent, agriculture. Attention devoted to international affairs (i.e., to issues relating to European integration policy in general) ranges from 21 percent of total MPs' attention in Spain and Switzerland, on average for the available years, to 26 percent in the Netherlands and up to 35 percent in France. Agriculture has attracted only 6 percent of parliamentary attention in the Netherlands and 10 percent in Switzerland, but up to 21 percent in France and 28 percent in Spain.

On the one hand, the strong concentration on international affairs suggests that MPs address EU matters mainly from the perspective of EU integration policy in general, rather than from the perspective of specific public policy issues, i.e., from the perspective of "about EU" policies rather than of "through the EU" policies (Hertner, 2015). This framing of PQs in general "EU policy" terms is arguably due to the strong power and information asymmetry that still exists in EU affairs between the executive and the legislative, and to the importance of secondary legislation to translate the (highly technical) EU regulations into domestic law.

On the other hand, the high overlap between the Europeanized parliamentary agendas across countries is presumably a sign of the importance of vertical Europeanization (Bulmer, 2007), and more specifically of the top-down influence of the European integration process on the distribution of MPs' attention on the national level. In that sense, the policy agenda addressed in PQs is very much influenced by the scope of EU authority, i.e., by the range of policy areas to which EU law applies, with agriculture being a case in point in that respect. Finally, it should be noted that the share of Europeanized questions on immigration-related issues has increased over time in both the Netherlands and Switzerland, the two countries with the strongest Eurosceptic and

anti-immigrant parties in the national parliament. No comparable trend is observable in France or Spain.

31.5 Conclusion

Relying on a rich collection of data we have analyzed whether and to what extent MPs in three EU member states and neighboring Switzerland use PQs to gather information on, to scrutinize government activities concerning, or to communicate to the public about EU affairs. Contrary to expectations, our data does not show an increase in the share of Europeanized PQs over time. In spite of the growing scope and extent of EU authority, national MPs do not address EU-related issues in their PQs in the 2000s more frequently than they did in the 1980s or 1990s. Similarly, we do not see the expected decrease in issue concentration over time on EU-related PQs. Finally, our results provide only partial support for the view that Eurosceptic parties proactively address EU-related issues as part of their vote-seeking strategy and, therefore, contribute to the politicization of EU integration. This holds to some extent in France and Switzerland, but not in the Netherlands.

Both the low share of Europeanized PQs and the high level of issue concentration of those questions tend to underscore the durable apathy and/or structural weakness of national MPs on EU matters. National MPs seem to be still mostly interested in domestic politics, and the “re-parliamentarization” trend observed in European policymaking does not seem to have spilled over to the specific instrument of PQs. Moreover, if they address EU affairs in their PQs, national MPs mainly ask questions about European policy in general, or they strongly focus on some specific issues such as agriculture, thus conforming to a top-down logic.

All in all, our results are thus not really good news with respect to the contribution of national parliaments to the democratic quality of the European integration process. In contrast to recent work arguing that national parliaments actually use the new procedural rules and organizational resources at their disposal to scrutinize European affairs (Auel et al., 2015b, 2015a; Finke and Herbel, 2015), we find that national MPs do not resort intensively to PQs to scrutinize government activities or to communicate with the public in EU-related affairs. This would of course be a necessary—but not sufficient—condition to improve their involvement in the European integration process and, therefore, to counter the so-called “democratic deficit.”

That said, we wish to underline the illustrative and preliminary character of our results, which are based on four countries only. In future work we might attempt to extend the empirical scope of our study and to include additional EU member states. This would allow for a more robust test of cross-country differences in the degree of Europeanization across issues. The empirical data

generated by the national partners of the Comparative Agendas Project offer a very rich basis to expand this line of comparative research, across policy issues, across political systems, and over time.

Appendix

Table 31.A.1. Country data

	Type of questions	Time period	No. of questions	No. of Europeanized questions	Coding of issue topic
F	Questions to the government	1988–2007	10,555	850	All domestic and Europeanized questions
NL	Written questions	1995–2011	38,068	3,040	All Europeanized questions and subset of domestic questions (sample 30 percent; N = 9,240)
SP	Oral questions	1986–2013	14,318	982	All domestic and Europeanized questions
CH	Written questions and interpellations	1983–2014	25,074	1,776	All Europeanized questions and subset of domestic questions (1999–2003; N = 7,182)

Source: Comparative Agendas Project

Notes

1. See <http://www.comparativeagendas.net>.
2. Switzerland's participation in the Schengen-Dublin agreement was submitted to voters' ratification in June 2005 (55 percent of yes votes), the extension of the agreement on the free movement of persons to the ten new EU member states in September 2005 (56 percent of yes votes), and Switzerland's financial contribution to the EU's Cohesion Fund in November 2006 (53 percent of yes vote).
3. To identify the Eurosceptic parties, we rely on the Chapel Hill expert survey. We code as Eurosceptic all parties that receive an average score of less than 4 on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly opposed to European integration) to 7 (strongly in favor), with 4 being the "neutral" category. Given that Switzerland has been included only very recently in the Chapel Hill expert survey we rely on our own assessment of the EU profile of Swiss political parties. While Swiss parties have all become less supportive of Switzerland's European integration in recent years, only a few parties have explicitly taken an anti-EU stance: the Greens did so at the beginning of the 1990s, the Swiss People's Party from the early 1990s on, and the small radical right parties (Swiss Democrats, Freedom Party, Lega dei Ticinesi) all along.
4. Pearson's coefficient (N = 20) ranges from 0.71 to 0.92 in Switzerland, from 0.83 to 0.96 in France, from 0.91 and 0.96 in the Netherlands and, if one excludes the most recent period, from 0.86 to 0.96 in Spain.

5. The only exception is Spain, where there was a surge of attention to macroeconomic and labor/social policy issues during the most recent period, in the context of the financial and economic crisis (see also Chaqués-Bonafont et al., 2015: 181).

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