Positions of stakeholders and revision proposals in the public consultation process: indications for stakeholder influence?

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Tobias Schulz
WSL
tobias.schulz@wsl.ch

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Revisions of the Swiss Forest Law

- Law on "Federal Superintendence of Forest Policy in the High Mountains" in 1876, Swiss Forest Police Law in 1902 (52 paragraphs), first revision into **Swiss Forest Law** 1993 with 126 paragraphs) (von Arb and Zimmermann, 2004).
- Forest sector has profited much from newly introduced subsidies (Baur, 2002).
- Subsequently pressure from international level to elaborate **National Forest Program**.
- New revision of forest law in about 2005 should be based on a National Forest Program.

From the National Forest Program to the "Forest Policy 2020"

- Very comprehensive National Forest Program elaborated between 2001 and 2004 (Zingerli and Zimmermann, 2004).
- Amongst others a more flexible protection of the forest surface $\rightarrow$ provoked popular initiative "Save the Swiss Forest".
- Revision of forest law (after consultation) was not even considered by the national parliament for deliberation (2006)
- Subsequently, **"Forest Policy 2020"** elaborated: much simpler but with new issues such as climate change etc.

More Flexible Forest Protection: Revision of Forest Law 2010

- Initiated by parliament: more flexible regulation of the protection of the forest surface:
  - **Compensation of clearances** should become more flexible but must now be provided in the same region.
  - Compensation **not necessary** if best agricultural land would be affected AND equivalent measures for nature and landscape protection are implemented.
  - Clearance of **"ingrowth"** on agricultural land (mountains) allowed without compensation AND **static** definition of forest border by cantons.

More Flexible Forest Protection: Revision of Forest Ordinance 2012

- Successful revision of the forest law in 2010/11 required a revision of the forest ordinance.
- This revision was also submitted to public consultation, although it does not imply a parliamentary decision and is not subject to public referendum.
  - How to **define** the areas with "increasing" forest surface (where static forest border would be allowed)
  - No compensation of clearance only on the most precious agricultural land (**"Fruchtfolgeflächen"**)
  - Closer **coordination/integration** with land use planning policy and related policies

"Forest Policy 2020": Revision of Forest Law 2014

- The subsequent revision of the forest law built more explicitly on the successful "Forest Policy 2020" strategy paper:
  - Rregulation regarding prevention of dangerous **invasive species**
  - Regulation regarding forest management for **adapting to climate change**
  - New measures/**subsidies** to increase timber production and cooperation of forest owners.
  - Some new tasks for the **cantons** (protection agains natural hazards), workplace security issues, formation/education ...

The pre-parliamentary process in Switzerland

- Amendments of the law by parliament → subject to **facultative referendum** → controling the political elite
- 50'000 signatures required: parties and interest groups with broad (passive) membership and/or financial resources.
- Not all issues are equally important. Also depends on what else is on the agenda at a certain time.
- **Pressure** from the beginning of the policy process for well **balanced** proposal (given the credibility of the "**referendum threat**").
- Pre-parliamentary process: phase of **close coordination** between the federal administration and the different interest groups / stakeholders (network-governance, neo-corporatism).

Expectations about influence

- Previous studies for other fields (Kriesi, 1980, Kriesi and Jegen, 2001, Fischer et al., 2010) and recent studies for forest policy (Zabel et al., subm) show that the core of the policy network is small (approx. 25 people).
- **Environmental NGOs** have very competent representatives, are well coordinated (Ulber, 2013) and their "referendum threat" is credible.
- **Forest owners**: not very homogenous but with active umbrella organization. Cannot trigger a referendum on their own.
- **Forest Industry**: not that active in past but with new coordinating organization ("task force"). Need support from general trade organizations, parties to trigger referendum.
- **"Conference" of Cantonal Ministers**: Multi-level coordination crucial for program formulation and implementation

The formal consultation process

- **Federal Office for the Environment** or **parliamentary commission** (but with help from administration) prepares the draft revision proposal.
- **Stakeholder organizations** are invited to comment.
- Many answers can be expected, approx. 50 (for revision of law on agriculture up to 500)
- National administration compiles an epublishes **report**.
- Draft will be amended and final revision proposal will be submitted to parliament by government.

Stakeholders, Interest Groups

- Environmental NGOs / "Alliance for the Environment": Greenpeace, Pro Natura, WWF, Stiftung Landschaftsschutz, Schweizer Vogelschutz
- Forest industry: Lignum, Forstunternehmer Schweiz, Holzindustrie Schweiz, Task Force Wald+Holz+Energie
- Forest owners: Waldwirtschaft Schweiz, Berner Waldbesitzer
- Other organizations of the forest sector: Schweizerischer Forstverein, Fachverein Wald,
- Representation of the sub-national level: FoDK, JDK, KoK
- Political Parties: Green Party and Social Democrats
- Agricultural organizations and trade organizations: Schweizerischer Bauernverband, Schweizerische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für das Berggebiet, Economiesuisse, Schweizerischer Gewerbeverband

Data

- **Reports** compiled by the national forest administration / the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) and not the original submisssions!
- Newer reports: collection of arguments with a list of actors that have expressed that argument.
- "Disassembling" of reports results in **short texts for each actor mentioned**, containing the arguments that had been attributed to that actor as summarized by the federal administration.

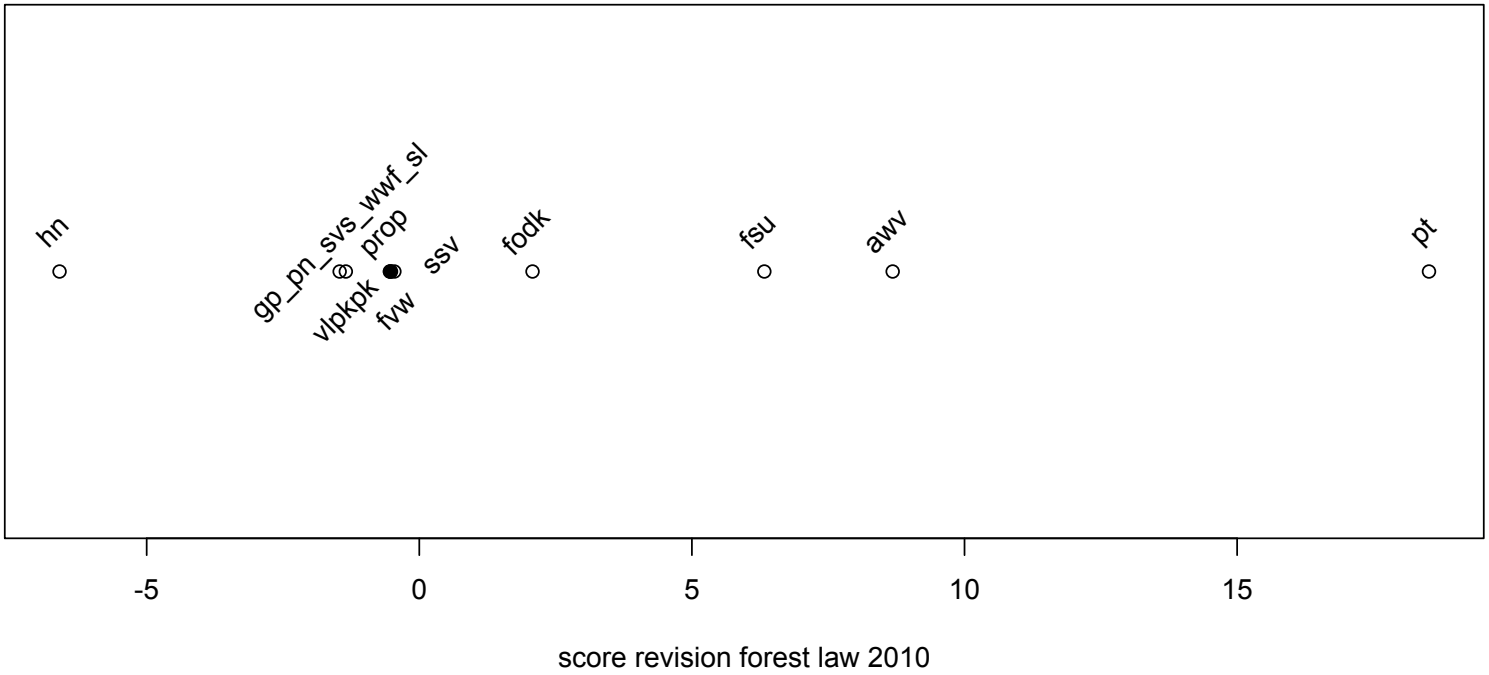
Methodology

- Semi-automated text analysis: `wordscores`.
- Developed for comparison of party manifestos (Laver et al., 2003).
- Dependent on identification of at least two rather long **"reference texts" from the poles** of the political dimension that should be uncovered.
- **"Virgin texts"** are then scored relative to the assigned reference scores of the reference texts based on word frequencies.
- **Revision proposal** is also scored in order to compare is position relative to that of the stakeholders.

Results Consultation Forest Law Revision 2010

actor	uniquesw	ts	tse	tws	ptscd
awv	74	8.6823	3.6546	149	58.0
fodk	29	2.0769	5.8562	50	54.3
fvw	67	-0.5186	3.5268	127	55.9
gp_pn_svs_wwf_sl	130	-1.3474	1.9151	461	55.3
hn	64	-6.5981	3.3876	127	49.6
pt	69	18.5189	4.0931	123	60.3
fsu	71	6.3285	3.0905	175	63.2
ssv	78	-0.4569	2.9487	173	58.4
vlpkpk	65	-1.4607	3.7392	126	56.0
prop	90	-0.5378	2.9151	194	65.8

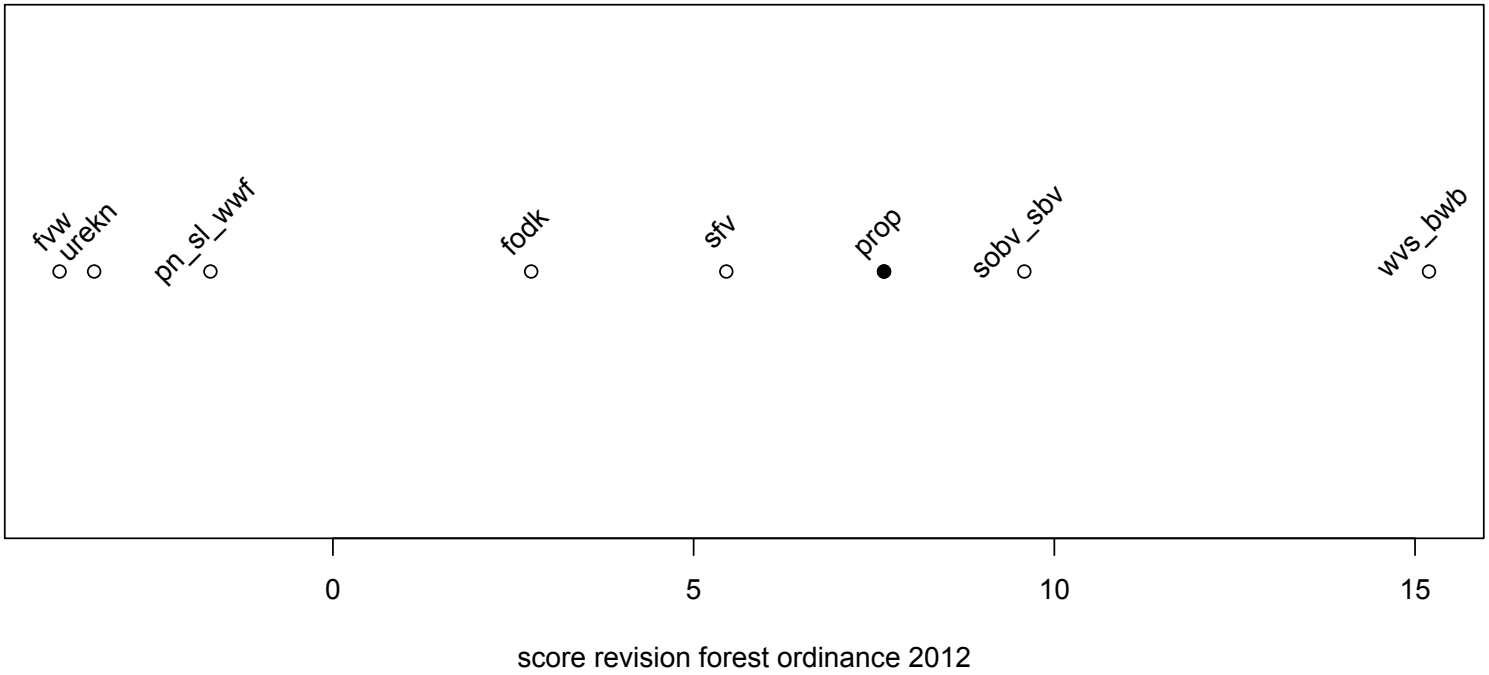
Results Consultation Forest Law Revision 2010



Results Consultation Forest Ordinance Revision 2012

actor	uniquesw	ts	tse	tws	ptscd
fodk	104	2.7487	6.7997	290	61.6
fvw	105	-3.7895	7.0092	253	60.2
pn_sl_wwf	124	-1.6981	5.2355	462	61.8
sobv_sbv	73	9.5841	8.8902	173	62.7
sfv	82	5.4531	8.4966	198	61.3
urekn	73	-3.3100	9.1706	159	66.5
wvs_bwb	38	15.1934	12.3218	63	60.0
prop	75	7.6394	8.6728	179	63.5

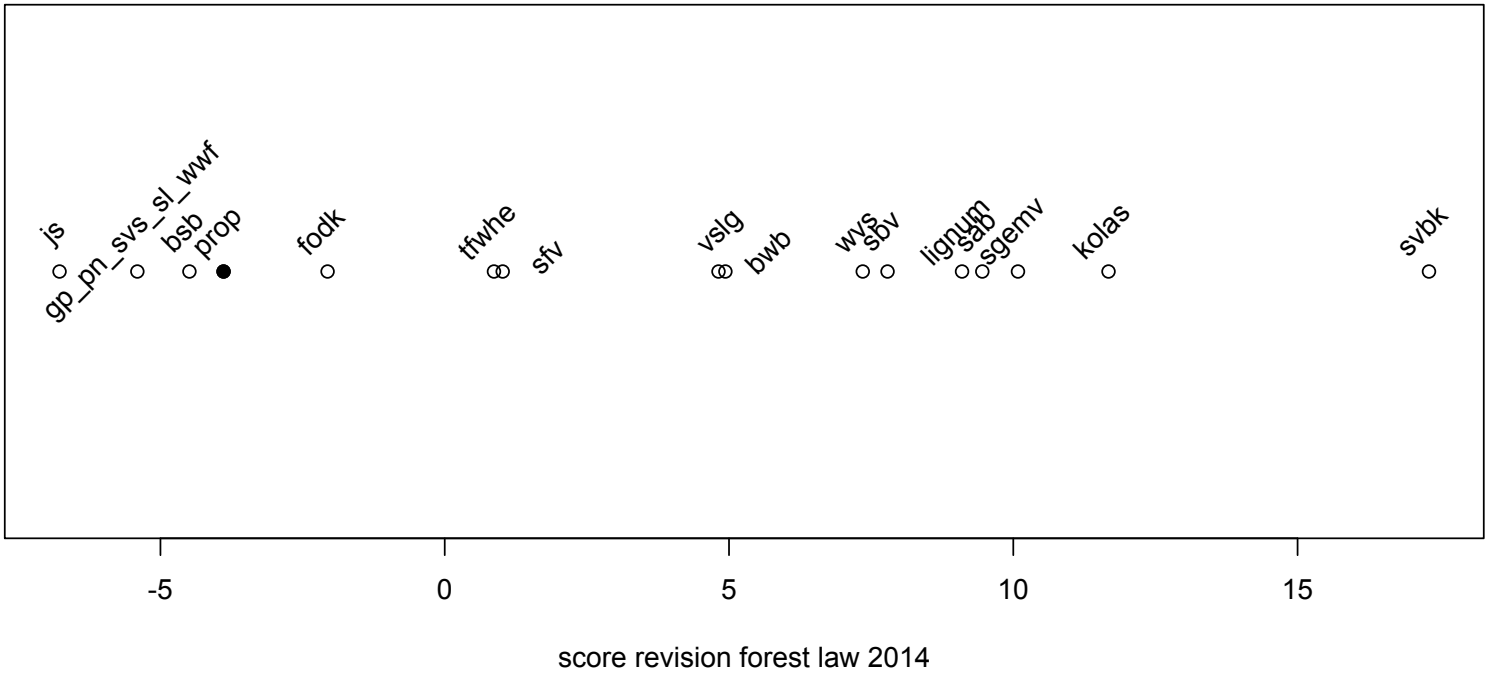
Results Consultation Forest Law Revision 2012



Results Consultation Forest Law Revision 2014

actor	uniquesw	ts	tse	tws	ptscd
bsb	164	-4.4903	0.9592	547	62.4
bwb	116	4.8152	1.5392	279	72.7
fodk	251	-2.0605	0.5937	1410	66.6
gp_pn_svs_sl_wwf	518	-5.4062	0.4562	2498	82.3
js	113	-6.7746	1.3732	286	61.4
kolas	128	11.6749	1.7570	248	79.2
lignum	154	9.0986	1.3288	359	73.3
sab	155	9.4548	1.2569	411	79.2
sfv	207	1.0196	0.9583	670	68.0
sgemv	160	10.0823	1.3217	395	79.2
sbv	150	7.7882	1.3330	372	71.0
svbk	182	17.3113	1.2556	447	85.3
tfwhe	211	0.8661	1.0487	566	68.5
vslg	143	4.9365	1.3653	373	69.6
wvs	396	7.3523	0.5824	1833	72.8
prop	186	-3.8900	0.7162	912	66.7

Results Consultation Forest Law Revision 2014



Discussion / Conclusion

- Revision proposal is located between positions of **FoDK** and **E-NGOs** for amendments of the law (referendum)
- For amendment of ordinance, **revision proposal** is located between positions of **FoDK** and **forest ownwers (WVS)**.
- More such scoring would be needed to confirm this as a more systematic result.
- **Real submissions** or report compiled by administration?
- Scoring of **status quo** would also be needed.
- Looking at contents and positions is complementary to SNA.
- Reduction to one dimension possibly an advantage but should be complemented by qualitative assessment of positions: Reduction plausible? Are there **more dimensions**?
- Possibly Swiss situation with data from public consultation process in an early stage of policy process is **unique**?

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