Robert Schuman Centre

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EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE, FLORENCE

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Example, Exception or Both?
Swiss National Identity in Perspective

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Abstract

To address future challenges, the institutional framework of the European Union needs to be firmly anchored in the European public and to rely on some kind of collective sense of belonging. But how can this be realised when the public is multicultural and has little in common? Switzerland has often been considered as a potential blueprint on the basis of three major points of convergence. First, both the Swiss and European experiences are cases where national identity cannot be based on a unique culture, but where different cultures have to be merged below an overarching sense of identity. Second, this overarching sense has to cope with a continuing sense of identity with the lower level entities – the cantons in Switzerland and the nation states in the European Union (EU). Third, in both cases the creation of common political structures has come prior to the existence of a common identity. The successful emergence of a national identity in Switzerland thus appears to be very encouraging for a future European identity. From this perspective, the article first highlights the reasons for the Swiss success story – the carefully crafted institutional mix of federalism, direct democracy and neutrality that has become the rallying point of a collective identity. However, the article also reveals the price of this success – the use of selected exclusionary tendencies to avoid dilution. In particular, we show how these tendencies have developed in the policy domains of foreign affairs, trade and immigration. The bottom line is that the Swiss case may be an example of successful integration but it may also be an historical exception. It clearly shows that constitutional patriotism is feasible but it also highlights that in the case of Switzerland this was achieved at the price of minimal participation in world affairs and inside a static polity.

> In Italy for 30 years under the Borgias they had warfare, terror, murder, and bloodshed, but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and the Renaissance. In Switzerland they had brotherly love – they had 500 years of democracy and peace, and what did that produce? The cuckoo clock.
> (Harry Lime (Orson Welles) in "The Third Man," by Orson Welles)

1. Introduction[1]

The European Union (EU) is currently at a critical juncture: it not only faces the challenges of enlargement and an expanding agenda, but is also simultaneously questioning its own destiny. A number of authors claim that the European Union can face these challenges successfully only if it gains the support of the European population behind its current and future projects. Instrumental in this appears to be the forging of some sort of commonly shared European identity, which, according to most scholars, is largely lacking at the present time. Although the problem of a lacking European identity is not new, it has raised increasing concern among its scholars and observers. Notions like "common political culture"[2] or "social legitimisation",[3] all reflect this quest for a more profound underpinnings of the process of European integration. It is necessary to ask, however, if the construction of this kind of overarching identity is realistic? Is it possible to establish a feeling of belonging between over 300 million citizens who speak different languages and come from different cultural backgrounds? A significant part of the difficulty derives from the resilience of well-established national identities, based on national cultural and political heritages. Given that these anchors are not likely to vanish, the only way of proceeding is to superimpose a wider sense of belonging. Although it might be possible to find a minimal common cultural denominator for all the members of the European Union, this would clearly be too shallow to ground the new identity firmly. Any future European society will be multicultural and thus its sense of common identity will have to be built upon non-cultural factors. The problem, of course, is how to achieve such a task.

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[1] We wish to thank Lars-Erik Cederman, Ernst Haas, Malik Mazbouri, Lorena Parini and Frederic Vandenberghe for their valuable comments on an earlier version of this paper.

[2] Habermas, Jürgen "Citizenship and National Identity." *Praxis International*. 12(1) (1992): 7-19 (p. 17).

[3] Weiler, Joseph H. "After Maastricht: Community Legitimacy in Post-1992 Europe." In Adams, William James (ed.) *Singular Europe*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press (1992), pp. 11-41.

To help address this challenge, decision-makers and scholars alike have started to look for blueprints in other similar processes of identity-building within multicultural societies. Back in the mid 1960s Etzioni[4], cited by Schmid,[5] took Canada, the Union of South Africa, Switzerland, Belgium, Nigeria and India as good examples of this.[6] In a more recent contribution Habermas[7] explicitly cites the United States and Switzerland as multicultural societies which have achieved some sort of "constitutional patriotism," that is, an identification with constitutional principles and not with the state as such or with common cultural origins.[8] In such cases, he argues that

> ... the political culture must serve as the common denominator for a constitutional patriotism which simultaneously sharpens an awareness of the multiplicity and integrity of the different forms of life which coexist in a multicultural society.[9]

He then goes on to propose them as examples for the construction of a European identity.[10] Is this a promising path to follow or – on the contrary – an illusory one? To answer this question, a detailed exploration needs to be made of already established cases of constitutional patriotism. This article addresses the Swiss experience and its limited implications for the future of European identity. It does so by focusing on the relationship between exclusion and dilution – the underlying theme of this volume.

The relevance of the Swiss experience for our understanding of identity formation in the EU seems indisputable. There are at least three strong parallels between the two cases. First, multiculturalism forms a part of this process. In Switzerland, four linguistic regions and two major religions lead to its being a truly multicultural society. Scattered over a small territory, but geographically separated partially by mountain chains, different cultural traditions have formed and continued to this day. Similarly, the European Union comprises a large set of different lin-

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[4] Etzioni, Amitai *Political Unification: A Comparative Study of Leaders and Forces.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston (1965), pp. 22, 35.

[5] Schmid, Carol L. *Conflict and Consensus in Switzerland.* Berkeley: University of California Press (1981), p. 1.

[6] Today we would perhaps disagree with Etzioni in several of these cases, not least, the case of Nigeria.

[7] op. cit.

[8] In the case of the United States, one might argue that the common language provided (at least to some degree) a common cultural denominator. This should, however, not obscure the fact that the cultural background of the immigrants in the United States has remained very diverse.

[9] Habermas, op. cit, p. 17.

[10] See also Howe, Paul "A Community of Europeans: The Requisite Underpinnings." *Journal of Common Market Studies.* 33(1) (1995): 27-46, and Delanty, Gerard "National and European Citizenship: Democracy, Culture and Identity in a Postnational Europe". In Lars-Erik Cederman (ed.), *Defining and Projecting Europe's Identity: Issues and Trade-Offs* (forthcoming).

guistic traditions, religious faiths and cultural backgrounds. Second, the hallmark of citizenship seems to be "harmony in diversity". Up to 1848, Switzerland consisted – with a short interruption during the Helvetic Republic – of a series of autonomous states (cantons), united in a Confederation. Even after the foundation of the federal state, individuals continued to become citizens of Switzerland in an indirect way. Every Swiss person is recognised as being a citizen of a commune, which automatically confers on her citizenship of the respective canton, and, as a result of this, national citizenship. This process of becoming a citizen is similar to that created by the Maastricht treaty. Article 8 of this treaty establishes the "citizenship of the Union" and stipulates that "[e]very person holding the nationality of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union." Third, one of the driving forces in the construction of the Swiss federal state was that of economic integration. Abolishing duties at the borders between cantons, setting up a common currency and other economic measures were at the centre in the building of the federal state. The parallel with the European Union is only too evident. Despite its undeniable underlying political aims, European integration proceeded by first forging economic co-ordination and integration.

Given these parallels, the emergence of a Swiss national identity in the second half of the last century, and its persistence since then, seems to be very encouraging for a future European identity. From this perspective, we will carefully analyse the key institutional elements that lay behind the process of identity formation in section 2 – the mix of federalism, direct democracy and neutrality. Success came at a price, however. The considerable achievement of overcoming cultural differences and in forming a national identity went together with exclusionary tendencies with respect to the outside world. We discuss these tendencies in section 3, and attempt to determine whether they are inevitably linked to a national identity in a multicultural society. In section 4, we show that the delicate balance between identity and exclusion is not easy to maintain under "constitutional patriotism". Since identity is so closely linked to the functioning of the institutions, perturbations in the latter can easily undermine the former. As a result, these perturbations can create tensions and manifest themselves in identity crises. The balance proves to be increasingly sensitive in a changing international environment, where outside pressure and influences are all the more pervasive.

How useful then is the Swiss experience for a future European identity? Should it be used as an example, as some argue? Whereas we do not dispute that Swiss national identity is a clear example of successful constitutional patriotism, we show that it offers a very specific blueprint for identity formation – one marked by selected exclusionary tendencies towards the external world. The inclusion of different cultures inside the same polity has required a very cautious external policy, in order to preserve the fragile domestic balance. Although some of the

exclusion might have derived from historical and geographical contingencies, the Swiss case tends to reveal that the formation of collective identity inside multicultural societies is a delicate act of balancing between inclusion and exclusion. Given this cautious and prudent assessment we carefully derive some tentative implications for a future European identity.

2. Identity formation in Switzerland

As in other countries, the emergence of a national identity in Switzerland is strongly linked to the creation of the nation-state in the 19th century. Up to the end of the 18th century Switzerland consisted of a loose Confederation of cantons. It was only during the military occupation by France and the establishment of the "Helvetic Republic" (1798-1802), followed by Napoleon's protectorate (1802-1813), that a unified state emerged. The new state did not survive the end of the protectorate, and the country reverted to a Confederation of cantons, although larger and more diverse than the previous one. The entity comprised Catholic and Protestant cantons, with populations speaking French, German, Italian and Romantsch. Their common decision-making instrument was the "Diete", which brought together the representatives of the cantons once a year. The main concerns of this body were to co-ordinate "foreign policy", which was still the responsibility of the cantons, and economic integration. In the latter domain, the reduction of duties levelled at the cantons' frontiers and other measures proved to be important steps towards the establishment of a common market. The completion of a unified economic market (suppression of trade barriers, introduction of a single currency, etc.) was as one of the prime achievements of the new federal state.

The loosely structured decision-making procedures of the Confederation only allowed sparingly for the emergence of a national identity. Nevertheless, signs of a common and persevering sense of belonging began to appear. Andrey[11] notes that three elements contributed strongly to this process. First, the Swiss Confederation remained vulnerable to foreign involvement in its internal affairs. In particular, foreign powers exerted strong pressure on the asylum policy, forcing the cantons to adopt a more restrictive policy. They argued that immigrants to Switzerland were engaged in subversive activities that threatened the security of these foreign powers. In addition, some foreign powers also forced some cantons to restrict the freedom of press to prevent the spread of political subversion. According to An-

[11] Andrey, Georges "Auf der Suche nach dem neuen Staat (1798-1848)." In Comité pour une nouvelle histoire de la Suisse (ed.) *Geschichte der Schweiz und der Schweizer*. Lausanne: Payot (1986), pp. 527-637.

drey[12], these various types of intervention against the cantons' sovereignty stimulated the affirmation of a national identity. In fact, the resistance against foreign oppressors does not date back to that particular period, but is a recurrent and central characteristic of Swiss history. Accordingly, it has had a strong impact on the characteristics of Swiss identity. The elite used the myth of the 1291 Confederal Pact between the three alpine cantons and the long fight for independence of the old Confederation to stimulate patriotism and national consciousness.[13] Focusing the Swiss inhabitants on a common enemy proved to be a successful strategy in raising a common sense of identity.

Second, a series of military, cultural, religious, scientific and historical associations were formed at the federal level in the 1820s and 1830s.[14] Formed of members of all cantons, irrespective of language or religion, they favoured exchanges and various forms of collaboration across cantons and cultures. According to Andrey,[15] they played a significant role in the emergent feeling of belonging to some new entity. Together with the liberal ideas of the time, they increasingly showed the need for more centralised institutions. The process of setting up these institutions and their specific design formed the third key element in the nascent national identity.

The questions regarding types of institutional structure and the distribution of powers between the federal level and the cantons were very controversial issues in the 1830s and 1840s; they proved to be enough controversial to cause a short civil war in 1847 (the so-called "Sonderbund" war), which opposed radical Protestant cantons against conservative Catholic cantons. The former believed that Switzerland needed a political system with a common government that could impose identical policies on all cantons. Accordingly, they favoured national centralisation or, at least, a federal government strong enough to further common interests. The conservative Catholic cantons, by contrast, were hostile to centralisation and created an alliance, the "Sonderbund", to oppose the creation of a central state. The radicals won the war but did not exclude the losers from the subsequent process of state-building. Thus, the creation of the Swiss federation

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[12] ibid.

[13] In this Pact the three founding cantons committed themselves to a defensive alliance against foreign oppressors. Interestingly, the existence of the 1291 Confederal Pact was ignored until the late 19th century. This Pact was first mentioned in 1887 by Johannes Dierauer in his book on the "History of the Swiss Confederation". Moreover, the national holiday celebrating the 1291 Pact (1st August) was introduced by the Federal Council in only 1891.

[14] It is worth noting that despite the early market integration, federal economic associations appeared only much later in the 19th century.

[15] op. cit.

reflected an institutional compromise: the radicals conceded to the Catholics a system that provided the cantons with a considerable level of autonomy.

More generally, the federal structure allowed for the combination of two antagonistic principles, namely, unity and diversity. This feature has often been considered as the most typical element of the Swiss political system and political culture.[16] Through the principle of subsidiarity, federalism left sufficient policy areas under the control of the cantonal authorities. In addition, any change in the distribution of competencies between the federal state and the cantons is subject to a dual ratification procedure. The introduction of any new jurisdiction at the federal level requires a constitutional amendment, which has to be approved by the double majority of people and cantons. The double majority principle ensured the Catholic cantons some degree of control over the size of the federal state. Together, the two factors explain why even the losers of the civil war could identify with the newly created institutions. The latter enabled the Catholic cantons to pursue a separate development without too many constraints being imposed on them from the federal level. On the other hand, the more progressive cantons were free to experiment with their more progressive ideas. The federalist structure thus defused the potential for conflict between cultural subgroups. Since this institutional arrangement allowed sufficient leeway for the different cultural entities to manage their internal affairs, it became a positive factor of integration and identity formation. Hence, while allowing different developments at the lower levels, it fostered at the same time a common sense of belonging.

The second main institution introduced in the 1848 constitution, that of direct democracy, also has old historical roots, starting from the direct democratic or collective "self-government" of the local communities prevalent in the middle ages. In the 19th century, many cantons had already introduced semi-direct democracy devices into their jurisdictions (popular initiatives and referendums which typically applied to amendments to the constitution) while others still relied on a 'true' direct democracy (i.e. on popular assemblies or "Landsgemeinden"). The development of direct democratic practices at the federal level occurred in three steps during the early years of the federal state. The mandatory referendum for consti-

[16] e.g. Bergier, Jean-François *Europe et les Suisses. Impertinences d'un historien*. Carouge-Genève: Editions Zoé (1992), p.160; Deutsch, Karl W. *Die Schweiz als ein paradigmatischer Fall politischer Integration*. Bern: Haupt (1976); Linder, Wolf *Swiss Democracy. Possible Solutions to Conflict in Multicultural Societies*. London: MacMillan (1994). While being a characteristic element of the Swiss institutional set-up, one should not forget that federalism was a direct import from the USA (Linder, ibid). When setting up the constitution in 1847/8, the founding fathers of the Confederation drew inspiration from the American Constitution, especially with respect to the federal elements, most visible in its bicameral legislature.

tutional changes was introduced immediately in the first constitution in 1848,[17] while the optional referendum was added in 1874,[18] and the popular initiative in 1891.[19]

The instruments of direct democracy contributed to internal political stability and consequently fostered a stronger national identity. First, by offering to citizens the means by which to intervene directly in public affairs, they strengthened identification with decisions made at the national level. Second, the instruments of direct democracy strongly influenced the executive and the legislative. In the early years of the federal state, they forced a monolithic government – formed exclusively of radicals – to respect the wishes of minority groups. Optional referendums, skilfully used by the Catholics, kept the government at bay. Their obstruction tactics proved successful as the catholic opposition was ultimately bought off by the radical majority and given a seat in the government. The opening of the executive sphere, coupled with the requirements of a collegial executive,[20] resulted in greater consensual policy making. The threat of the optional referendum also forced the government and the elite in the parliament to cooperate more closely and to search for compromises well before the final stages of the legislation procedure.[21] Finally, by favouring the emergence of the citizens in the role of a potential opposition, the instruments of direct democracy increased the attention paid by the elites to the different subcultures in Swiss society.

Although neutrality was not given a prominent place in the federal constitution,[22] it nevertheless played a crucial role in setting up the institutions and in the successful formation of a national identity. The defeat of Swiss troops in Marignan 1515 put an end to military involvement abroad, and opened the era of neutrality – a foreign policy instrument with both internal and external functions. Internally, it was a factor of balance and peace between the different subcultures and cantons. Externally, the Congress of Vienna in 1815 recognised its role for peace and

[17] In this case, any group may call for a final decision by the electorate on a bill adopted by parliament. In order for this to take place, the group has only to collect a certain number of signatures from citizens.

[18] The mandatory referendum automatically takes place without popular impulsion. It applies, for instance, to any amendment to or revision of the Constitution.

[19] By collecting a certain number of signatures, a group can place an issue on the political agenda and force the elite – and then the electorate – to vote on a constitutional amendment, whatever the subject.

[20] Fleiner-Gerster, Thomas "Le Conseil fédéral: Directoire de la Confédération." *Pouvoirs* 43 (1) (1987): 49-63.

[21] Neidhart, Leonard *Plebiszit und pluralitäre Demokratie, Eine Analyse der Funktionen des schweizerischen Gesetzesreferendum*. Bern: Francke (1970).

[22] Neutrality was simply referred to as a means of achieving independence.

stability in Europe.[23] At a time when militarised nation-states dominated Europe, this reliance on neutrality helped to create a perception of a special destiny and thus strengthened the identification of individuals with the nation. Facing expansionist-minded neighbours, the Swiss elite felt a strong need for internal strength in conjunction with the pursuit of neutrality in external affairs. In particular, the elite favoured the development of a strong centre that would be useful not only with regard to the military dimension but would also give more power for managing economic relationships with the external world.[24]

Neutrality was especially useful in crisis situations. During the First World War significant tensions appeared among the different linguistic regions, but these were reduced through the pursuit of a strict neutrality.[25] In the Second World War the role it played as an integrative factor was even more important. At the same time, as on previous occasions, the country's neutrality allowed also for economic advantages by providing safe havens and a stable environment. This applied to war situations – trade was possible with both sides – and to situations of world economic sanctions against specific states (e.g. South Africa). In other words, neutrality provided Swiss businesses with a convenient excuse for picking up lucrative business opportunities abandoned by foreign competitors due to economic sanctions.

In the absence of a common culture, the three institutional cornerstones have made up an integrative framework which has allowed for the successful emergence of a national identity. The influence of political institutions has not only played a central role in this process, but has helped to keep it stable ever since. The elite has always underlined the specificity of the Swiss federal democratic state, born out of a political will and in opposition to foreign powers, which has created the myth of Switzerland as a "nation of will" ("Willensnation").[26]

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[23] Earlier on, the Wesphalia Treaty in 1648 had recognised the Confederates' sovereignty and declared its independence from the Empire. The Congress of Vienna officially rooted a nationally chosen principle in international law.

[24] Bergier, op. cit., p.120.

[25] That one of the Federal Councillors was forced to step down for an obvious breach of neutrality illustrates that this institution kept its integrative force even during these difficult times (Jost, Hans Ulrich "Bedrohung und Enge (1914-1945)." In Comité pour une nouvelle histoire de la Suisse (ed.) *Geschichte der Schweiz und der Schweizer*. Lausanne: Payot (1986), pp. 731-820).

[26] According to the historian Messmer, this interpretation guaranteed the continuity of the political-historical nationality: Switzerland was a "Willensnation", a constitutional state, built over a century long period on federalist and democratic principles; a free Alpine republic that managed to protect its independence thanks to a commitment to neutrality (Messmer, Beatrix, *Domaine public* 1187, 20.10.94, p. 4.).

3. Exclusionary tendencies

Neutrality, federalism and direct democracy provided the ingredients for a peaceful, economically successful and politically stable development of Swiss society. This success significantly enhanced the identification of the Swiss population with the institutional mix of its federal state. In this slow process, taking around a hundred years from the foundation of the Swiss state, it was the Swiss institutions that became the rallying point of the national identity. The emergence of this identity was, however, partly premised on the existence on an ongoing list of common enemies, as we showed above, starting with the Habsburg empire, continuing with Napoleon and perhaps coming to an end with the fall of the Soviet empire. This dependence on common enemies points to an identity which is defensive in nature as one scholar has recently commented:

> "Consequently I propose to consider [the Swiss national identity] as an identity that finds its form mostly in a process of demarcation and in profound experiences of defence in common against superior enemies"[27]

How has this defensive behaviour materialised? Has it simply remained present in the minds of the Swiss citizens from the early glorious days of military battles against external powers? Or did it come into existence through the various exclusionary tendencies in different policy domains? In this section we seek to answer this question and focus on three policy domains: foreign involvement, trade, and immigration policy. These three areas are key interfaces between any sovereign entity and its external environment, and as a consequence should be natural domains for the exercise, if there is any, of exclusionary practices.

A. Foreign involvement

The prime example for such exclusions appears to stem from the hesitant involvement of Switzerland in affairs beyond its borders. Constitutional referendums held in Switzerland have recently attracted attention abroad for their surprising outcomes on several foreign affairs issues. In particular, the rejection by the Swiss people of the treaty on the European Economic Area (EEA) between the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and European Community (EC) countries has largely contributed to depicting Switzerland as an isolated island in a European-wide movement towards economic and political unity. If one adds the

[27] Kriesi, Hanspeter *Le système politique suisse*. Paris: Economica (1995), p. 16 (our translation).

fact that Switzerland is one of the few countries which is not a member of the United Nations, the overall impression is that it has been extremely exclusionary in terms of its foreign involvement. The commonly accepted argument states that these exclusionary tendencies can be explained by the mythical notion of neutrality, which is one of the cornerstones of Swiss identity. From this perspective, it is better to be Europe's odd-man-out and the world's archetype of a political fearful foreign actor than to possibly endanger national identity.

There is indeed some truth in such a vision. It does summarise in just a few words the exclusionary tendencies that are associated with the Swiss identity. It is, however, too simplistic and does not give credit to the less publicly well-known side of Swiss foreign involvement, which started with its participation in the Latin Monetary Union in the nineteenth century, continued with its entry into the League of Nations after the First World War, proceeded after this with efforts towards the European economic reconstruction after the Second World War, and which can now be seen in its current membership in almost all the international economic institutions. The question thus moves to focus on the degree to which Swiss foreign involvement has been exclusionary, and to what extent this can be linked to the specific institutions of the country. To address this question, we will consider briefly some developments in the nineteenth century, before moving to the participation of Switzerland in the League of Nations. This description will show us that Switzerland was active on the international scene, participating in numerous international agreements. We will then analyse its foreign involvement since 1945 and examine the regional and global dimensions of this. This will instead suggest a picture of a much more cautious actor in the international arena.

Before 1848, when the new Constitution gave power to the federal state in this domain, there was virtually no Swiss foreign policy. From this date on, Switzerland's behaviour has been driven by some key concerns. First and foremost, foreign involvement has been guided by the overarching goals of preserving and strengthening national sovereignty. This implies a quest for political independence. Second, foreign involvement has traditionally been marked by a willingness to promote the economic development of the country. Third, involvement has gradually been widened from issues involving neighbouring territories to world wide concerns, aiming at the largest possible opening on the world. How have these aims been implemented? The main instrument has been the concept of neutrality, which has helped to take advantage of the prevalent international environment while managing to avoid upsetting the country's delicate internal cultural balance. Economic involvement and political restraint already characterised the first 50 years of Swiss foreign policy. Starting in the 1850s, Switzerland carefully refrained from participating in the unification movements occurring at its borders and retreated from any major political initiative. By contrast, economic involve-

ment in both trade and monetary matters were quite important during that period, maybe more important than they ever were afterwards (at least regarding the monetary domain).[28]

The outbreak of the First World War signalled the onset of a difficult era for Swiss sovereignty and its internal stability. The invasion of neutral Belgium by German troops showed the Swiss on how precarious their position at the heart of a continent at war was. The most damaging consequence was the suspension of normal trade flows, leading to a situation where the external trade of Switzerland slipped largely out of the hands of the Federal Council and into those of the Swiss Society for Economic surveillance, which was closely monitored by the Allies. This surveillance, coupled with the atrocities of the war, strengthened the hand of pacifist movements inside the country. In addition, the different linguistic communities felt divergent attractions towards the warring factions. The Swiss-Germans had more sympathy for the cause of the German Empire, while the Swiss-French tended to support the Allies. Neutrality could only partly prevent these internal conflicts and unity clearly came under stress.

At the end of the war, the government attempted to increase its political involvement in world affairs, including participation in the emerging idea of a future League of Nations. However, given that there was no public willingness to abandon neutrality, the government had the difficult task of achieving more under the same domestic constraints. In practice, this consisted of becoming a member of the League of Nations while preserving neutrality, and it proved hard to convince the Allies of its viability, even though the Swiss had several personal friendships among the Allies' top decision-makers.[29] The result was, however, the recognition

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[28] With respect to economic issues, in 1864 Switzerland joined the Cobden-Chevallier bilateral network of trade liberalisation and the Latin Monetary Union in 1865 (on the network of trade, see for instance Bairoch, Paul "European Trade Policy, 1815-1914." In *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1989) and Condliffe, John B. *The Commerce of Nations*. New York: W.W. Norton (1950); for short accounts of the Latin Monetary Union, see Yeager, Leland B. *International Monetary Relations*. New York: Harper and Row (1966). In reference to technical issues, Switzerland became a member of the Telegraph Union in 1869, of the Word Postal Union in 1874, the Office of Patents in 1883, the Union for Intellectual Property Rights in 1886 and the Railroad Union in 1890.

[29] Rappard, William *L'entrée de la Suisse dans la Société des Nations*. Genève: Sonor (1924); Ruffieux, Roland "L'entrée de la Suisse dans la Société des Nations (1918-1920)." In Ruffieux, Roland (ed.) *La démocratie référendaire en Suisse au XXème siècle*, Fribourg: Ed. de l'Université (1972), pp. 39-118; Dupont, Cédric "Succès avec la SDN, échec avec l'EEE? Résistances internes et négociation internationale." *Annuaire Suisse de Science Politique* 32 (1992): 249-272; Dupont, Cédric "Domestic Politics and International Negotiations: A Sequential Bargaining Model." In Allan, Pierre and Christian Schmidt (eds.) *Game Theory and International Relations*, Cheltam: Elgar Publisher (1994b), pp. 156-190.

of a permanent Swiss military neutrality. Participation in economic sanctions was, however, not exempted, and constituted a major break with the previous conception of full political independence. In the context of the Versailles settlement, this change in the neutrality status caused deep domestic resentment in the German-speaking part of the country. Swiss-Germans largely felt that the economic conditions imposed by the Allies on Germany were unfair and they resented participation in a system that would enforce them. Attitudes were different in the French-speaking part, both because there was no sympathy for Germany and because there was a wider agreement over dealing with world affairs norms and ideals. The ratification campaign reflected this deep cultural cleavage and strained internal integration and stability to a dangerous extent.[30] The government managed the situation skilfully by playing upon the economic implications of joining the League to convince the reluctant Swiss Germans of the benefits of doing so. It argued that some restrictions on neutrality were necessary to secure the prosperity of the country and its long term independence. Despite the ultimate success of the government in pushing the country into the League of Nations, the episode highlighted the limits of political activism at the external level. Subsequent behaviour inside the League was therefore guided by as much restraint as possible. Mostly, the idea was to participate while avoiding any political commitment. When this became impossible after the sanctions against Italy, Switzerland chose to leave the organisation.

After the episode of the League, the pendulum of Swiss foreign involvement reverted back to extreme restraint and a strict and comprehensive neutrality. Obviously, such an attitude was motivated by the unravelling of peace through Europe and the urgent necessity to avoid being swallowed by the subsequent wave of violence and horror. The consequence of this was a conception of neutrality revolving around the notion of the "réduit," that is, of retreat into the alpine regions in the case of war. Strict neutrality was the cornerstone of Swiss domestic stability and external "survival" during the Second World War. It is unclear what this meant in practice except for the fact that it probably wiped out much of the ethical capital that the country had gained over the past decades. The Swiss were willing to pay a very high price to preserve their unity and well-being. From this perspective, neutrality swung from strongly exclusionary behaviour, e.g. the policy toward Jewish refugees (see below), to the continuation of business as usual to defuse outside pressure and keep internal divisions at bay.

[30] The vote for the League of Nation was exceptionally close, especially with respect to the vote of the cantons (56.3% of the citizens and 11 1/2 out of 23 cantons accepted joining the League). The best accounts of the campaign can be found in Rappard, op. cit, and in Ruffieux, 1972, op. cit.

This strict conception of neutrality did not change after the war. Contrary to its behaviour after the First World War, Switzerland refrained from any active foreign involvement in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. The main reason for this was that this neutrality, coupled with a strong military defence, was perceived to have saved the country from involvement in the conflict. Moreover, in contrast to the situation that prevailed during the First World War, neutrality helped to maintain Swiss internal unity successfully. In other words, there was no reason to replace this winning policy. Accordingly, Switzerland did not take an active part in the political institutional set-up that took place in San Francisco. Neither did it join the economic institutions designed in Bretton-Woods, because participation in the International Monetary Funds (IMF) and the World Bank was also perceived as a potential erosion of sovereignty.[31] The first sign of more activism appeared in the wake of the Marshall Plan and the creation in 1948 of the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC). After much hesitation, Switzerland accepted this organisation's invitation to join it, mostly because its independence was guaranteed by specific provisions.[32] Relying on this safety net, Swiss authorities played an active role in establishing the economic agenda of the OEEC.

A basic divergence on how to address the issue of tariffs with third countries ultimately led to the split into two camps within the OEEC. The Six of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) argued in favour of exploiting Article 24 of the GATT to build a European market on the basis of regional discrimination. The others, including Switzerland, generally preferred to stick to non-discrimination vis-à-vis external actors. As a consequence, the Six of the ECSC took the lead and decided in Messine in June 1955 to build a common market, free of any restriction on trade. Any Swiss participation in the emerging European Communities was out of question, given the political commitment that this would have implied.[33] However, Switzerland feared the economic implications of the new grouping, which included its two historically major trading partners, France

[31] As Lautenberg argues, this had to do with the specific situation of the Swiss franc. It qualified as a rare currency and such a currency could, according to the terms of the IMF, lead to restrictive practices by member states (Lautenberg, Alexis. "La Suisse et les institutions de Bretton Woods." In Riklin,. Aloïs et al. (eds.) *Neues Handbuch der schweizerischen Aussenpolitik*. Bern: Haupt (1992), pp. 863-875).

[32] Article 14 of the Organisation was often referred to as the Swiss clause. According to this article, decisions would be binding only to members that accept them without endangering the functioning of the whole organisation. The Swiss authorities could therefore enjoy an opting-out privilege. On the Swiss entry into the OEEC, see Bauer, Gérard F. "L'adhesion de la Suisse a l'Organisation européenne de coopération économique: ses conditions principales." *Relations internationales* 30 (1982): 209-219.

[33] This mostly amounted to the fear that such an endeavour would put limitations on neutrality, direct democracy and federalism.

and Germany. To help prevent discrimination, the Federal Council became an active supporter of British attempts to create a wide free-trade area zone between all the members of the OEEC.[34] When the talks finally collapsed in November 1958, Switzerland proposed a second-best alternative, that is, the idea of a more limited free-trade area between selected non EC-members. Endorsed by the British, the idea resulted in the creation of EFTA in January 1960.

The episode of the OEEC can be seen as the archetype of Swiss foreign involvement at both the regional and global levels until the end of the Cold war. It features a kind of *à la carte* participation in economic institutions and strict avoidance of any participation in politically constraining organisations which might endanger its own fundamental institutions. When *à la carte* participation was not an option, the Swiss would try bilateral solutions repeatedly before turning to multilateral avenues. Its entry into the GATT in the mid-sixties and its policy regarding European economic and political integration both reflect this attitude. Although GATT was created in 1947 as a temporary replacement for the failed International Trade Organisation (ITO), Switzerland did not join it until it received a formal guarantee that its farm policy would be left untouched.[35] The way was then safe for participation, given both the fact that the scope was limited to merchandise trade and that the GATT charter provided many loopholes and safeguard mechanisms that could be used where there might be some danger for its national sovereignty. On matters of European integration, the driving axiom was that of remaining economically as close as possible, while falling short of any actual political commitment. The route toward this goal was both bilateral – association attempts in 1962-63 – and multilateral inside the EFTA. Switzerland actively played the EFTA card in the 1960s, leading to the removal of all tariffs on industrial goods. Playing the EFTA card also meant making continuous efforts to keep close economic links with EC countries. Both the multilateral and bilateral options converged in the signing of the free trade agreement in 1972 on industrial goods, and continued to influence the course of Swiss European policy throughout the 1970s and early 1980s.

A cautious and functional foreign involvement in external affairs enjoyed very high domestic political support not least because it did not endanger the main in-

[34] Enz, Annette "Die Schweiz und die Grosse Europäische Freihandelszone." *Studien und Quellen, Zeitschrift des Schweizerischen Bundesarchivs* 16/17 (1991): 157-261; Hurni, Bettina "The Failure to Establish the Large Free Trade Area." In Du Bois, Pierre and Bettina Hurni (eds.) *EFTA From Yesterday to Tomorrow*. Geneva: EFTA (1987), pp. 27-35.

[35] Jacobi, Klaus "Die Schweiz als Mitglied internationaler Wirtschaftsorganisationen (GATT und OECD)." In Riklin, Aloïs et al. (ed.) *Handbuch der Schweizerischen Aussenpolitik*. Bern: Haupt (1975), pp. 761-781; Aebi, Peter "Das GATT und die Schweiz." *Schweizer Monatshefte* 11 (1959): 901-913. See also below.

stitutions, and also because it simultaneously helped increase national welfare. Entry into the GATT was not put to the popular ballot and the free-trade agreement with EC was endorsed enthusiastically (approval by 72.5 % of the voters). On the contrary, the Swiss people massively rejected in 1986 the government's only attempt to join the United Nations (rejection by 73.5 % of the voters). There was thus no reason in the mid-eighties to change course on its policy of foreign involvement.

To sum-up, the Swiss attitude on foreign involvement has been significantly marked since 1945 by political restraint and economic opportunism, or, in other words, by selected exclusionary practices. This has proved to be an effective way of strengthening the political stability and enhancing economic prosperity for most of this period. Neutrality without question has played a central role in achieving this goal of Swiss foreign policy. In addition, the Swiss political elites have repeatedly emphasised the considerable achievement of the policy of neutrality, even when its real contribution has not been so obvious[36] or glorious in terms of international solidarity.[37] In other words, they have constantly overemphasised the achievement of neutrality and minimised its drawbacks. As a result, an attachment to and identification with neutrality has grown sharply among citizens.

B. Trade

The Swiss economy is commonly perceived as a liberal non-interventionist free-market system. The term liberal mainly applies to three areas.[38] First, Switzerland is a model of "liberal evolution",[39] which implies a low profile economic policy on the part of the government. In accordance with the subsidiarity principle, state intervention was called for only in cases of emergency, i.e. when civil society

[36] For instance, several historical studies have cast doubt on the real achievement of neutrality during the Second World War. More especially, the fact that Hitler's troops did not invade the Swiss territory might have had nothing to do with Swiss neutrality, but be due to other reasons, such as the role played by Switzerland as a financial centre, or even to historical coincidence.

[37] Sometimes, the Swiss authorities have even exaggerated the actual extent of neutrality itself. Thus, in most international crises of the 20th century, a policy of full economic neutrality (i.e. no participation in economic sanctions) has in fact been impossible to implement (Gabriel, Jürg Martin *Schweizer Neutralität im Wandel. Hin zur EG*. Frauenfeld: Huber (1990)): Switzerland has had to comply with pressures exerted by one of the warring factions or by the international system.

[38] Rentsch, Hans *Cartels and Wealth: A Paradox in the Swiss Economic System*. Zug: Forschungsinstitut für Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitik (1989).

[39] Hotz, Beat *Politik zwischen Staat und Wirtschaft*. Diessenhofen: Rüegger (1979).

could not solve the problems itself. Second, the Swiss economy is liberal in its low tariffs for industrial goods. As a small economy, with no raw materials, Switzerland has had no choice but to support free trade in international negotiations like the GATT.[40] Foreign economic relations have been the main source of the country's prosperity and the Swiss economy is still of one of the most open with respect to many criteria.[41] Third, Switzerland, due to the absence of regulation of capital movements, is an important financial centre and one third of the earnings of Swiss banks is due to activities or services abroad. Therefore, it is not surprising that Katzenstein[42] characterised Switzerland as the paradigmatic case of 'liberal corporatist' pattern of adaptation to international economic changes.[43]
Katzenstein[44] points out, however, that two different economic sectors have developed in Switzerland: one externally-oriented and competitive, the other internally-oriented and protected. While the degree of economic openness is, overall, considerable in Switzerland, the internationalisation of the economy has focused on only some branches of industry and services. Other sectors, in contrast, are mainly oriented toward the domestic economy, with high degrees of sheltering against international market forces.[45]

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[40] Exports of goods and services make up half the national product (one third only for the export of products – machinery, electronics, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, textiles, watches). The Swiss openness with respect to the trade of goods is, however, not exceptional among the small European states.

[41] In 1990, Switzerland was the fifth largest exporter of services in the world. Moreover, it has been a leading country in foreign direct investments since the beginning of the 20th century (Bairoch, Paul "La Suisse dans le contexte international aux XIXe et XXe siècles." In Bairoch, Paul et M. Körner (ed.) *La Suisse dans l'économie mondiale*. Genève: Droz (1990), pp. 103-140).

[42] Katzenstein, Peter J. *Corporatism and Change: Austria, Switzerland, and the Politics of Industry*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press (1984); Katzenstein, Peter J. *Small States in World Markets: Industrial Policy in Europe*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press (1985).

[43] Interestingly enough, Katzenstein (op. cit.) identifies economic vulnerability as a central determinant of Swiss consensus politics. His argument can be summarised as follows: Because of its size, Switzerland – and the other small European states – is dependent on world markets and is accordingly more open to the international economy than larger states; while protectionism is not an option, its small size increases its vulnerability to exogenous changes. In this context, internal conflicts are a luxury that it cannot afford. Rather, openness and vulnerability favour national consensus through corporatist arrangements. In turn, the permanent cooperation between public and private actors allows for a flexible adaptation to international changes. A discussion of both Katzenstein's theoretical framework and its application to the Swiss case can be found in Sciarini, Pascal *La Suisse face à la Communauté européenne et au GATT. Le cas-test de la politique agricole*. Genève: Georg (1994).

[44] 1984, op. cit., p. 91 and 1985, op. cit., p 84.

[45] While the existence of a dual economy is an empirical evidence, there are still many overlaps between the two sectors of the economy. While talking of a 'division' of the economy is admittedly a simplification, it is justified by analytical purpose.

The most conspicuous example of this is agriculture, which is broadly supported and protected by numerous state measures.[46] The history of Swiss agricultural policy has been strongly linked to and influenced by the policy of neutrality. In the strict conception of neutrality that has prevailed in Switzerland since the late 1930s, a neutral state should prepare for possible wars or import crises by securing a high degree of food self-sufficiency. Accordingly, farm production should be stimulated (i.e. subsidised) and sheltered from international competition in time of peace. The preference for a traditional agriculture consisting of small-sized and family-based enterprises constituted a second powerful justification for protection and state intervention.

Counter to the overall principle of freedom of trade and industry, the state was explicitly allowed to support agriculture. As a result of this, a series of legal provisions were introduced to support every kind of farm product. In addition, Swiss farmers also benefited from a sophisticated system of import controls that function very much like a protective dike. Without it, the domestic support regime would have been ineffective, and cheaper foreign products would have overflown onto the local market. While Switzerland was obviously not the only country sheltering its agriculture from international competition, the level of protection was very high compared to international standards. In the late 1980s, OECD studies showed that Swiss agriculture was the most heavily subsidised in the world. According to the OECD's PSE (production subsidy equivalent) measure, four fifths of Swiss farm production relied on state support, with a total cost of 7 billion Swiss francs per year.[47] The Swiss farm policy appeared as a special case even when compared to the highly subsidised and protectionist European agriculture under the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy). As a result, the prices of Swiss farm products were usually twice the price of those in EC countries.

Behaviour towards the outside reflected this willingness to insulate agriculture from world trade. While the Swiss authorities were strong advocates of free trade in most industrial products, they took constant care that agriculture would be exempted from any international agreement, be it at the European or international level. As discussed above, Switzerland gained special treatment for its agriculture when joining the GATT in 1966, and farm products were consistently left out of any regional agreement within EFTA or with the EC.

Direct democracy contributed largely to maintain these exclusionary practices. Thanks to having an almost complete power of veto, the farm lobby contributed

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[46] Sciarini, 1994, op. cit.

[47] OECD. *Politiques nationales et échanges agricoles. Etude par pays: Suisse*. Paris: OCDE (1990).

to the inertia of the political system in the agricultural area, i.e. to its very limited ability to reform.[48] More precisely, the Swiss agricultural policy is an example where the indirect effects of the institutions of direct democracy are clearly visible: supporting Neidhart's[49] hypothesis, this policy arena saw the development of concertation in the pre-parliamentary phase, the inclusion of all actors who might threaten to call for a referendum in the decision-making process, the elaboration of partial compromises and a parliament reduced to the role of a "rubber stamp",[50] at least until the mid-1980s.[51] One should add that there was a broad consensus, also among Swiss citizens, that agriculture should be supported, mostly because of the non-economic functions that it performed. In turn, the attachment to the rural way of life, traditions and cultures became a significant part of the Swiss identity. Peasants saw themselves as the "heart of society".[52] This vision found its most visible expression in the years of the Second World War. While the army defended Swiss independence at the frontier, the peasants waged a "plantation war"[53] inside the country. Such powerful analogies explain to a large extent the persistence of a mythic image of the peasant:

> The mythic image of the peasant is strongly influenced by the romantic and idealistic tales of the last centuries. . . . Even though one looks at these pathetic images, which make the peasant an incarnation of freedom, of direct democracy and of an intact nature, in a much more critical way nowadays, these mythic images persist at a more or less conscious level.[54]

Exclusionary practices also applied to other sectors. Regulation either by the state or by private contractual arrangements (cartels, price maintenance and monopolies) to eliminate competition was also the rule in various areas of the secondary and tertiary domestic sectors,[55] even though the situation has evolved to some extent over the last few years. Switzerland thus represents a case of 'selective lib-

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[48] Swiss agriculture policy was costly not only for consumers, but also for the state budget and the environment. Moreover, it favoured surplus production and income disparities.

[49] op. cit.

[50] Rüegg, Erwin *Neokorporatismus in der Schweiz. Landwirtschaftspolitik*. Zürich: Forschungstelle für Politische Wissenschaft (KSZPW Nr 249) (1987), p. 21.

[51] Halbherr, Philip und Alfred Müdespacher *Agrarpolitik - Interessenpolitik?* Bern: Haupt (1985), pp. 28-30.

[52] Ruffieux, Roland. Die Schweiz des Freisinns (1848-1914). In Comité pour une nouvelle histoire de la Suisse (ed.) *Geschichte der Schweiz und der Schweizer. Lausanne:* Payot (1986), pp. 639-730 (p. 688).

[53] Jost, op. cit., p. 796.

[54] Meyer, Leo and Esther Bräm "L'agriculture et la politique agricole." In Hugger, Paul (ed.) *Les Suisses. Modes de* vie *traditions mentalités* (tome 3). Lausanne: Payot (1992), pp. 975-1002 (p. 990, our translation).

[55] e.g. Rentsch, op. cit.

eralism'.[56] As in agriculture, direct democracy has allowed interest groups of the domestic sector to oppose policy reforms favouring deregulation or liberalisation. For instance, until recently, powerful interest groups successfully opposed the adoption of a competition policy. The perverse effects of the third fundamental institution, namely federalism, are also worth noting in this context. Federalism stimulated cantonal as well as communal protectionism, for instance, in public procurement in the construction sector. Due to "regional preference," access to public procurement was severely restricted for "non-local" firms, implying that mostly local firms gained contracts from the communes and cantons. These distortions to free market forces prevented the creation of a truly unified economic market. Moreover, federalism caused barriers to the free movement of persons, typically because of the limited recognition of studies and diplomas.

Overall, a careful look at Swiss trade policy shows evidence of both economic openness and closure. Switzerland is not as liberal as might appear at first glance. As in foreign policy, selective exclusionary tendencies seem to be at work, here in the sense of a selective form of liberalism.

C. Immigration

Switzerland is often viewed as a country with a strong tradition of humanitarian aid and open frontiers for refugees. This view is linked to the fact that several humanitarian organisations like the International Red Cross (founded by the Swiss Henry Dunand) and the High Commission for Refugees have their headquarters in Switzerland. In addition, the rather considerable share of foreigners in the resident population – around 25%– tends to suggest a relatively liberal immigration policy. As we will show, this was true in the last century, but has become increasingly questionable toward the present time.

The foreign population started to increase mostly at the end of the 19th century. During the religious wars in the 16th century Switzerland accepted significant numbers of refugees.[57] De Capitani[58] on the other hand, notes that in the 18th century the figures for immigration were rather low in Switzerland, the notable

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[56] Danthine, Jean-Pierre and Jean-Christian Lambelet "The Swiss Recipe: Conservative Policies Ain't Enough." *Economic Policy* 5 (1987): 149-179. These authors argue that it is mainly the absence of an effective anti-trust policy, which can in turn be considered as an adverse effect of the Swiss 'laissez-faire', that has allowed all sorts of cartels to flourish.

[57] Bergier, op. cit., p. 60.

[58] De Capitani, François "Beharren und Umsturz (1648-1815)." In Comité pour une nouvelle histoire de la Suisse (ed.) *Geschichte der Schweiz und der Schweizer*. Lausanne: Payot (1986), p. 450.

exception being the influx of Huguenots after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. At that time between 10,000 and 20,000 refugees sought protection in Switzerland.[59] In the 19th century the share of foreigners was still rather low (2,5 % in 1837 and 3 % in 1850), but these foreigners were heavily concentrated in certain regions: Basel and Geneva had 21.5 % and 20.1 % respectively of foreigners on their territory.[60] According to Hoffmann-Nowotny,[61] this was partly due to the rather limited economic attraction of Switzerland, but also to the stringent immigration policy adopted by most cantons and communes.

With the foundation of the modern state in 1848, immigration policy shifted to the federal authority which throughout the 19th century concluded treaties with other countries, leading to very open borders. Together with the demands from the economy, which was attempting to catch up on its late industrialisation, this resulted in a sharp increase in the share of the foreign population, reaching around 15 % at the beginning of the 20th century. The immediate post-war period and the economic crisis of the twenties caused a significant drop in the share of foreign residents. Through the Second World War the share of foreign residents only rose slightly. This marginal increase through the war years might surprise, but Switzerland practised a rather restrictive refugee and immigration policy throughout those difficult years. An official report issued in 1957 by Karl Ludwig (member of the cantonal government of Bale) first broke the ice on this sensitive question. According to him, 10,000 Jewish refugees were rejected at the Swiss border between June 1942 and April 1945. This figure underestimates considerably, however, the true number. According to a recent study, Switzerland denied entry to 30,000 asylum seekers, among which one finds a majority of Jewish people.[62] Another study has also shed some new light on the widespread anti-semitist attitudes among Swiss high civil servants and officials.[63]

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[59] Hoffmann-Nowotny (p. 206) notes that "[b]etween 100,000 and 150,000 Huguenots rushed to Switzerland . . , but only about one tenth remained there permanently." (Hoffmann-Nowotny, Hans-Joachim "Switzerland." In Hammar, Tomas (ed.) *European Immigration Policy. A Comparative Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1985), pp. 206-236). This might be linked to the fact that most cities in that time adopted a very stringent immigration policy (Hoffmann-Nowotny, ibid. and Bergier, op. cit.). The size of the population exceeded 1 million in the course of the 17th century and at the beginning of the 18th century, 1,2 million and towards the end of the century, 1,7 million.

[60] op. cit, p. 538.

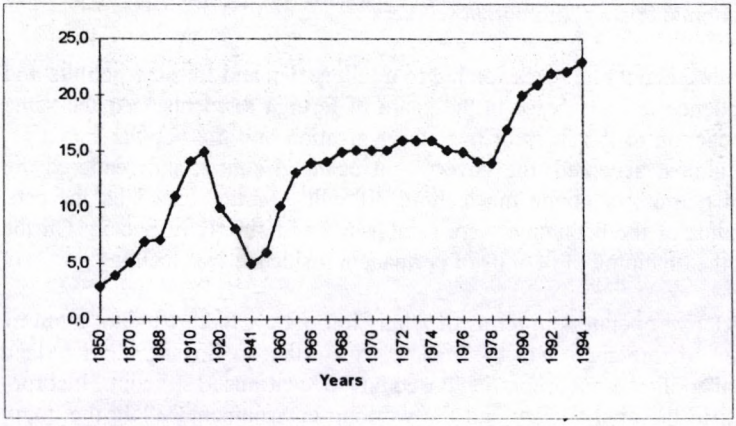
[61] Hoffmann-Nowotny, op. cit, p. 206.

[62] Koller, Guido "Entscheidungen über Leben und Tod. Die behördliche Praxis in der schweizerischen Flüchtlingspolitik während des Zweiten Weltkrieges." *Studien und Quellen* No.22 (1996). In addition, one should not forget that the "J-stamp" in Jewish passports was the result of a demand by the Swiss authorities. Conversely, 230,000 refugees were allowed to enter Switzerland (among which 22,000 Jews).

[63] Roschewski, Heinz in *Studien und Quellen* No.22 (1996).

Following this, the economic recovery of the fifties resulted in another increase in the share of the foreign population. The large share of the foreign population together with the economic crisis of the 1970s led to fears of an over-foreignization. Several popular initiatives attempted to limit drastically the number of foreigners admitted. One of these was almost passed and gave rise to a significant "course-correction" of the official immigration policy.

Figure 1: Share of foreign population in Switzerland



Source: Hoffmann-Nowotny, 1985:209 and Annuaire statistique suisse, 1987-1995

The legal foundation of the current immigration policy is a constitutional article adopted in 1925 and the derived law adopted in 1931.[64] The main instrument of this policy is the distribution of three types of permits: a permit of abode, a permit of permanent residence or a seasonal permit. Permits of abode are limited in time (renewable) and allow foreigners to take up a particular job. Permits of permanent residence give a similar status to foreigners as to the Swiss, except for political rights. Seasonal permits, finally, are given to migrant workers in jobs such as construction, tourism, etc., and are limited to a maximum of nine months with a three-month leave requirement.

[64] Parini, Lorena "Politica di immigrazione e politica di asilo in Svizzera: Due aspetti di una stessa logica." In Cesari Lusso, Vittoria, Cattacin, Sandro and Cristina Allemann-Ghionda (ed.) *I come . . . identità, integrazione, interculturalità*. Zürich: Federazione delle Colonie Libere Italiane in Swizzera (1996), pp. 83-95.

The distribution of permits was fairly liberal until the seventies, especially for the permits of temporary residence (abode). The administration of permits depended mostly on the demands of the economy for additional workers. Regarding permits of abode, the main idea was to allow for some kind of rotation among foreign migrants. This policy failed, since most migrant workers decided to stay on in Switzerland. Firms saw no reasons to hire new migrant workers every year or so, and the latter saw no reasons why they should leave their workplace to fellow foreign workers. Permits of residence, and even more so citizenship through naturalisation, were more difficult to obtain and submitted to important conditions on residence and employment. This allowed for a flexible influx (and also outflow in times of economic crises)[65] of migrant workers.

In the seventies, economic recession led to a falling demand for new permits and as a consequence to a decrease in the share of foreign residents.[66] At the same time, as a reaction to the fears of over-foreignization and the popular initiative, which was almost accepted, the government changed course and rendered the obtaining of permits of abode much more difficult. Quotas, based on the estimated demands of the economy, were established and strictly respected. On the other hand, the obtaining of permits of permanent residence was facilitated.[67]

Despite a relative openness in terms of admission policy, there was not a strong incorporation of foreigners into the society. According to Soysal,[68] Switzerland has a "liberal" policy of incorporation based on a decentralised structure. Incorporation is left to the civil society and the working environment. While the immigration rules are largely an affair of the federal state, the incorporation and especially naturalisation occurs or is supposed to occur at the level of the communes and the cantons. For the naturalisation process this division of competencies often adds an additional hurdle to the process, since each canton and commune is free to impose additional residence requirements. While a foreigner has to reside for at least ten years in Switzerland to be able to apply for naturalisation, sometimes longer periods are required. Some cantons require certain periods of stay on their

[65] See King, Russell "European International Migration 1945-1990: A Statistical and Geographical Overview." In King, Russell (ed.) *Mass Migration in Europe. The Legacy and the Future*. London: Belhaven Press (1993), pp. 19-39.

[66] The outflow of migrant workers was also due to the fact that they were not covered by social security (Cattacin, Sandro "'Il federalismo integrativo.' Qualche considerazione sulle modalità di integrazione degli immigranti in Swizzera." In Cesari Lusso, Vittoria, Cattacin, Sandro and Cristina Allemann-Ghionda (ed.) *I come . . . identità, integrazione, interculturalità*. Zürich: Federazione delle Colonie Libere Italiane in Swizzera (1996), pp. 67-82).

[67] Hoffmann-Nowotny, op. cit, p. 219 shows that in 1970 a majority of the foreign population had permits of abode, while from 1975 the majority had permits of permanent residence.

[68] Soysal, Yasemin Nuhoglu *Limits of Citizenship. Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1994).

territory which limits the mobility of foreigners and creates an additional hurdle to naturalisation. Consequently, the federalist structure has exclusionary effects at this level.

Evidence for similar effects of the federalist structure can be found in the low level of expenditure for foreign migrants. Soysal[69] notes that for vocational training the Swiss governments (federal and cantonal) spent about 2 Sfr (1.4 $) per worker in 1982. At the same time a worker in the Netherlands could count on 80.5 Fl (42 $) on average. Similarly, Soysal[70] also links the rather low naturalisation rates in Switzerland (1.5 % of the foreign population in 1976; 1.8 % in 1980 and 0.8 % in 1990) to this liberal incorporation policy. Other consequences are the lack of civil rights, even at the local level (except in two cantons), and the little effort that is made in the school system to facilitate the integration of the children of migrant workers.[71]

Direct democracy has also tended to nurture exclusion. For instance, in some communes the local assembly of all the citizens has to vote on the attribution of Swiss citizenship.[72] Instruments of direct democracy have more generally been well-suited to channel anti-foreigner expressions. They explain why resentment against foreigners emerged much earlier in Switzerland than in most other developed countries. Following the near adoption of a very severe constitutional amendment in the late sixties, direct democracy strongly influenced the change of course that occurred in the 1970s. The relative closure of the borders for potential immigrants throughout the Second World War, on the other hand, is closely linked to the third institutional cornerstone of Switzerland. Neutrality and the fear of being overrun by powerful neighbours resulted in a very restrictive handling of refugees. As figure 1 clearly shows, the share of the foreign population hardly increased during that time.

In short, the picture of Switzerland as a country with a strong humanitarian tradition describes accurately the situation of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Since that time, however, the immigration policy has become more restrictive in nature. The Swiss immigration policy is "liberal" not in the sense that it offers free access for immigrants or refugees, but because it provides the private economy with a flexible management of the labour policy.

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[69] ibid, p. 56.
[70] ibid, p. 25.
[71] Cattacin, op. cit.
[72] Hoffmann-Nowotny, op. cit.

4. The difficult nexus between identity and exclusion

In the previous section we highlighted how exclusionary practices went together with the creation and the strengthening of Swiss national identity. The key to success was the continuous role of political institutions as identification magnets. Through selective exclusion and skilful redistribution, these institutions were able to absorb the shocks coming from the external environment. Their task has, however, become more difficult in the last decade, and the first signs of failure have uncovered dangerous internal strains. In this section, we turn to a discussion of these recent developments

Two major events have had far-reaching consequences for Swiss institutions and hence for Swiss identity, namely, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the globalisation process. The former has strongly challenged the *raison d'être* of a policy of neutrality. Balancing behaviour has become ill-adapted to a less polarised world. The latter has highlighted both the limits and costs of exclusionary practices. Switzerland is largely integrated in an increasingly interdependent world, characterised by multiple channels of interactions between and among domestic societies. Consequently, the maintenance of exclusionary practices faces an increasing number of obstacles.

In sum, changes in the external environment require increased economic and political openness – in other words, lower levels of exclusion – notably in the three arenas discussed above: foreign involvement, trade and immigration. External pressure is, however, not sufficient to ensure domestic change, especially given that the institutional set-up was designed to privilege stability rather than innovation. The institutions provide powerful veto tools to those who oppose lowering the level of exclusion. As such they have been seen as responsible for current difficulties by those favouring change. The net result has been an erosion of the role played by the institutions in rallying the Swiss population around their national identity, and thus a loosening of the feeling of belonging. Coupled with the impact of economic recession, these developments have led to a kind of identity crisis. We develop these points and highlight how and why Swiss national identity is affected by external changes in the domains of foreign involvement, trade, and immigration.

A. Foreign involvement (or the difficulty to include oneself)

The collapse of the Berlin wall and the subsequent democratisation process in Eastern Europe had deep repercussion on Swiss identity. First, these dramatic changes abruptly diluted a powerful cement, that is, a clearly identifiable external

threat. The shock was all the more sudden since the Swiss conception of the outside world, and its policy implications, had hardly changed since the 1930s.[73] External threats, among others the Habsburg empire, Napoleon, the Third Reich, and the Communist block, had been carefully cultivated by political and economic elites as a justification for both external behaviour and internal cohesion. The sudden disappearance of the Soviet Union and its communist satellites ruined decades of efforts to build the image of a common enemy and thus deprived the Swiss citizens of a significant part of their national identity. The absence of a common enemy – an "Other" that served as a reference to which every member of the society could rapidly contrast her differences and thus recognise her equals – makes the process of collective self-definition much more problematic.

Second, the end of the East-West division in Europe was a blow to the external function of neutrality. The significance of neutrality had already been altered at the beginning of the 1960s by the reconciliation of West European states and the creation of the European Community, but the end of the Cold War was the decisive element in this.[74] Among all the European neutral states, Switzerland was the most affected by this change both because it had the strictest neutrality, and because neutrality was at the heart of the national identity. The definition of a new course has thus been difficult and politically sensitive. The government favours a more active involvement in foreign affairs and a loosening of the conception of neutrality.[75] This is based on the main idea that in the era of globalisation a country like Switzerland can no longer defend its independence by a strategy of insulation from the outside world. Traditional sovereignty becomes an illusion, because Switzerland is increasingly forced to adopt decisions made by others. International co-operation is the only route to defend national independence. From this perspective, the Swiss federal government envisions a definition of Swiss neutrality that would limit itself to its core elements – rights and obligations in time of war – but would leave room for manoeuvre in other situations, including

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[73] Kreis, Georg "La question de l'identité nationale." In Hugger, Paul (ed.) *Les Suisses. Modes de vie, traditions, mentalités (2)*. Lausane: Payot (1992), pp. 781-800 (p. 791).

[74] e.g. Bütler, Hugo "Der europäische Aufbruch und die helvetische Identitätskrise." *Europaische Rundschau* 19 (2) (1991): 3-9. Some experts also point to the fact that neutrality is useless to cope with new forms of threat such as terrorism, environmental damages, or drug flows. Quite the contrary, it prevents Switzerland from fighting efficiently against these threats since it restricts the possibilities for taking part in international co-operation efforts (e.g. Brunner, Hans Peter "L'importance de la neutralité comme moyen d'affirmer l'indépendance suisse dans une Europe intégrée." In Ruffieux, Roland (ed.) *La Suisse et son avenir européen*. Lausanne: Payot (1989), p. 112).

[75] See the report on "the Swiss foreign policy in the 1990s" (Conseil fédéral "Rapport sur la politique extérieure de la Suisse dans les années 1990." Berne: Rapport du 29 novembre (1993)).

that of economic sanctions.[76] In other words, the Swiss government suggests maintaining neutrality for the "case of emergency",[77] and giving priority to solidarity with the international community and co-operation in supranational institutions. This conceptual change led the government to suggest that Switzerland join the United Nations and the European Union.[78] These proposals have found little support among the population: Swiss citizens have still a strong attachment with the traditional neutrality.[79] Only a minority of these would be ready to admit that neutrality has lost its *raison d'être*.

The disagreement between the elite and the people on the reorientation of neutrality is only one aspect of a growing gap between different definitions of foreign policy. Proposals from the elites that are subject to referendums have faced a higher risk of being rejected in this field than in other policy domains since the 1970s.[80] This is all the more problematic given that direct democratic institutions will play a significant role in future definitions of Swiss foreign policy – contrary to past practices. This change comes from two main factors: the increasing pervasion of domestic politics by international affairs through the process of globalisation, and the partial revision of the Swiss constitution in 1977 that greatly enlarged the scope of direct public scrutiny on foreign policy affairs.

The gap between the government's agenda and people's beliefs has also been striking on matters of European integration. The popular vote against the EEA on December 6, 1992, constitutes a case in hand. This vote divided the Swiss electorate along a new dimension of the level of openness versus closedness of the

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[76] This means a return to the "differential neutrality" of the period of Switzerland's participation in the League of Nations (see above).

[77] Gabriel, Jürg Martin "Neutralität für den Notfall: Der Bericht des Bundesrates zur Aussenpolitik der Schweiz in den 90er Jahren." *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Politische Wissenschaft* 1 (2-3) (1995): 163-191.

[78] Conseil fédéral *Rapport sur la question d'une adhésion de la Suisse à la Communauté européenne*. Berne: FF IV (1992); Conseil fédéral (1993), op. cit.

[79] There is a huge gap between the "objective" conception of neutrality, i.e. its function as a tool to achieve independence, and the subjective conception of it, i.e. the opinion and feeling that every citizen has developed towards Swiss neutrality, (Brunner, op. cit.).

[80] Papadopoulos, Yannis "Les votations fédérales comme indicateur de soutien aux autorités." In Papadopoulos, Yannis (ed.) *Elites politiques et peuple en Suisse. Analyse des votations fédérales: 1970-1987*. Lausanne: Réalités sociales (1994), pp. 113-160; Sciarini, Pascal "Opinion publique et politique extérieure." *Revue d'Allemagne* 28 (3) (1996a): 337-352. On the other hand, foreign policy is the field where the optional referendum has been the least employed in the decades following the Second World War (Sciarini, 1996a, op cit.; Trechsel, Alexandre and Pascal Sciarini "Direct Democracy in Switzerland: Do Elites matter?" *European Journal of Political Research* (forthcoming)).

country.[81] According to a survey poll, half of the arguments given by the "no" side in response to an open-ended question reflect a defence of Swiss traditions,[82] i.e. the fear of a threat to the existence of traditional Switzerland through integration in the EEA (loss of sovereignty, fear of the EU system, etc.). Cultural motives have also been decisive on the "yes" side: arguments regarding the fear of isolation, the desire to open the country up to the outside world account for more than half of the "yes" arguments. In other words, whereas supporters of the EEA wanted to loosen the exclusionary tendencies and promote an open Switzerland, opponents wanted to defend the traditional Switzerland that defends its myths and venerates the courage of remaining alone.

Problematic for the country's unity was the fact that the different linguistic regions held strongly opposing views on this dimension. The French-speaking cantons supported openness while the German-speaking cantons – and more especially the small rural ones – and the Italian-speaking canton supported closedness.[83] This has led several analysts to argue that the country is experiencing an identity crisis. To improve relations between the linguistic communities, an official report

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[81] Kriesi, Hanspeter, Longchamp, Claude, Passy, Florence and Pascal Sciarini "Analyse de la votation fédérale du 6 décembre 1992 (EEE)." Genève/Berne: Département de Science Politique/GfS-Forschungsinstitut, Analyse-Vox No 47 (1993); Sciarini, Pascal and Ola Listhaug "Single Cases or a Unique Pair? The Swiss and Norwegian 'No' to Europe." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 35 (3) (1997); Vatter, Adrian "Der EWR Entscheid: Kulturelle Identität, rationales Kalkul oder Struktureller Kontext?" *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 20 (1) (1994): 15-42. First identified in the analysis of the structural and cultural cleavages of Swiss politics that emerged on national referendums during the 1980s on issues relating to the army, labour and foreigners (Sardi, Massimo and Eric Widmer "L'orientation du vote." In Kriesi, Hanspeter (ed.) *Citoyenneté et démocratie. Compétence, participation et décision des citoyens et citoyennes suisses*. Zürich: Seismo (1993), 191-212), this conflict seems particularly salient in referendums on foreign policy (Sciarini, 1996a, op. cit.). For instance, it expressed itself in the popular vote against the creation of a Swiss blue helmets corps in 1994 (Wernli, Boris, Sciarini, Pascal and José Barranco "Analyse-VOX des votations fédérales du 12 juin." Zurich/Genève: GfS/Département de science politique (1994)).

[82] Kriesi et al. 1993, op. cit., p. 44.

[83] According to opinion polls, French-speaking citizens have felt more European than German-speaking citizens for several years (Kriesi et al. 1993, op. cit., p. 11), and the priority given to European integration is significantly higher among the former (Widmer, Thomas and Christophe Buri "Brüssel oder Bern: schlägt das Herz der "Romands" eher für Europa?" *Annuaire suisse de science politique* 32 (1992): 363-387 (p. 367)). One reason for this could be the fear of Germany. The French-speaking community, conversely, might conceive of Europe as a way to "free" itself from the domination of the German-speaking cantons. More generally, a study of the linguistic cleavage in Switzerland shows that foreign policy is one of the fields where the opposition between the French-speaking and German-speaking regions is the strongest (Kriesi, Hanspeter, Wernli, Boris, Sciarini, Pascal et Matteo Gianni. *Le clivage linguistique: problèmes de compréhension entre les communautés linguistiques en Suisse*. Berne: Office fédéral de la statistique (1996)).

issued by a group of Committees of the Swiss Parliament has suggested relying on the leeway offered by federalism. Given the prior contributions of federalism in terms of "management of differences" (see above), this recommendation is hardly novel. In addition, it is unlikely to offer a convincing solution in the current era characterised as it is by increased interdependence.[84] Solutions based on an autonomy of the cantons would seem to be inappropriate. Instead of relying on the federalist structure it might be necessary to reconceptualise the role it is playing presently in the current Swiss institutional arrangements.

Federalism gives also rise to tensions in another guise. In requiring a double majority for constitutional amendments it has lead to an increasing number of friction between the votes of the citizens and the votes of the cantons. This has particularly been the case on issues of involvement in European affairs. The requirement of the majority of cantons gives a strong blocking power to the conservative rural Swiss-German cantons and thus impedes any change of course, despite the growing public support for such a move. The referendum on entry into the EEA reflected this worrying development. The popular vote was almost perfectly split, whereas the vote of the cantons was largely against the proposal. Given that the core of small conservative cantons shows no sign of changing their stance, there is little prospect for a more open-minded attitude toward European integration in the next few years.[85] And the corollary will presumably be a further erosion of the identity cement.

Lowering the level of exclusion in foreign policy, especially towards the European Union, proves to be a source of conflict both between the elite and the people and among the citizens.[86] The three fundamental institutions are either the object of the struggle (especially that of neutrality, but also those of federalism and direct democracy due to the globalisation process) or else act as channels for voicing any opposition to changes (especially those of direct democracy and federalism).

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[84] Kriesi et al., 1996, op. cit.

[85] Accordingly, various proposals aiming at reforming the double-majority rule in the sense of a reduction of small cantons' veto power have been elaborated. For a summary and discussion of these proposals, see Vatter, Adrian and Fritz Sager "Federalismusreform am Beispiel des Ständemehrs." In Hug, Simon and Pascal Sciarini (eds.) *Staatsreform - La réforme des institutions - Institutional Reforms*. Zürich: Seismo (1996) (Special issue of the Swiss Political Science Review 2(2)): 165-200.

[86] Hug, Simon and Pascal Sciarini "Switzerland: Still a Paradigmatic Case?" In Schneider, Gerald, Weitsman, Patricia A. and Thomas Bernauer (eds.) *Towards a New Europe: Stops and Starts in Regional Integration*. Westport: Preager (1995), pp. 55-74.

B. Trade

With respect to trade, strong pressures towards lowering the level of exclusion arose from the international arena in the late 1980s. The rising international competition highlighted the need for internal structural adjustments that would improve the situation of the externally oriented sector. However, these adjustments challenged the dual economic policy, because they required the progressive deregulation of the internally-oriented sector. Thus, external opportunities for the export-oriented sector became threats for the internally-oriented sector. This division applied both to regional developments – the road toward a single European market – and to global ones – the expanding agenda of the GATT.[87] The two cases have led to different results regarding the change in the levels of exclusion.

The Uruguay round of talks in the GATT brought about a lowering of the barriers in the Swiss agricultural policy. Thanks to external pressure, state actors were able to build a strong coalition with the export-oriented sector and overrode the opposition of the farm lobby.[88] Both external economic and political developments had weakened the position of farmers. In particular, a major blow for them was the diminishing relevance of a strict neutrality, and of its requirement to maintain independence in food supplies. In this particular case, direct democracy did not impede the reform process, but instead stimulated it: the rejection on March 12, 1995, by Swiss citizens of a constitutional amendment in the field of agriculture, which was seen as not pushing sufficiently towards liberalisation and ecology,[89] led to a strengthening of the reform.[90] It paved the way for the adoption

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[87] According to an official study the largest share of the expected 0.4 to 0.6 percent additional economic growth per year due to the integration into the common market would have been due to the liberalisation of the so far protected domestic sectors of Swiss economy (Hauser, Heinz *Traité sur l'EEE. Adhésion à la CE. Course en solitaire. Conséquences économiques pour la Suisse*. Berne: Office fédéral des questions conjoncturelles (1991), pp. 48-52).

[88] As a result of the veto power of the farm lobby, Switzerland took refuge in a position that was primarily defensive during the first four years of the Round. Taking advantage of international pressure, the State authorities, supported by the export-oriented sector, skirt the agricultural veto when the GATT offer was being drafted in October 1990. Although modest, this offer put the Swiss agricultural policy on the path to liberalisation. This case shows the limits of internal solidarity: In hard times, the externally-oriented sectors no longer agreed to subsidising the domestic economy. See Sciarini, 1994, op. cit.; Sciarini, Pascal "Réseau politique interne et négociations internationales: le GATT, levier de la réforme agricole suisse." *Revue suisse de science politique* 1 (2-3) (1995): 225-252; Sciarini, Pascal. "Elaboration of the Swiss Agricultural Policy for the GATT Negotiations: A Network Analysis." *Swiss Journal of Sociology* 22 (1) (1996b): 85-115.

[89] Sciarini, Pascal, Marquis, Lionel and Boris Wernli "Analyse-VOX des votations fédérales du 12 mars." Zurich/Genève: GfS/Département de science politique (1995).

[90] Conseil fédéral. *Politique agricole 2002*. Berne (1995).

of a much more progressive constitutional article accepted by referendum in 1996.[91]

The government has been less successful in lowering economic barriers with the European community. When the EEA talks started, the Swiss wanted the four freedoms of movement (goods, capital, services and persons) to apply wherever and whenever this would prove to be beneficial. More precisely, Switzerland demanded the exclusion of some sectors from liberalisation efforts, in order to protect them from European competition. The EU, however, opposed any permanent derogation to the "acquis communautaire" that would threaten the "homogeneity of the European space". The bargaining turned out to be a bitter experience for the Swiss government, which realised that there was no way it could obtain *à la carte participation*. Under the Swiss Presidency, the EFTA countries tried to trade some of requests for permanent derogations to the four freedoms against a right of codecision for future choices regarding the EEA. This strategy, however, failed,[92] and the EEA negotiation process ended in a major diplomatic defeat for Switzerland.[93] A sense of defeat pervaded the general public, and nurtured a strong movement against participation in European affairs and in favour of continued isolation. The end result was the public rejection of the EEA treaty in December 1992.

C. Immigration

Like many other countries, Switzerland faces the challenge of increasing migration. This shift takes mainly two forms: first, the increase of immigration from the southern to the northern hemisphere, in particular of asylum seekers. Second, Switzerland has been repeatedly asked by the European Union to loosen its immigration policy, if not to actually take part in the completion of the free movement of workers on the continent. This issue was at the heart of the EEA negotiations and is again the cornerstone of the ongoing bilateral talks between Switzerland and the EU.

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[91] Hug, Simon, Marquis, Lionel and Boris Wernli "Analyse-VOX des votations fédérales du 9 juin 1996. Berne/ Geneve: GfS/Département de science politique.

[92] Dupont, Cédric *Domestic Politics, Information and International Bargaining. Comparative Models of Strategic Behaviour in Non-Crisis Negotiations*. Ph.D. dissertation: Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva (1994a); Sciarini, Pascal "La Suisse dans la négociation sur l'Espace économique européen: de la rupture à l'apprentissage." *Annuaire suisse de science politique* 32 (1992): 297-322.

[93] See Sciarini, 1992, op. cit., for an argument that Swiss elites learned from the initial deadlocks, in the sense that they intended to use the EEA as a leverage for the necessary restructuration of the domestic economy. Dupont (1994a), op. cit., demonstrates that this learning did not lead to any major change in the negotiation tactics until late in the process.

Access to the Swiss labour market has been a special concern for EU southern countries (Italy, Spain and Portugal), the most important providers of the Swiss foreign workforce.[94] In the initial phase of the EEA negotiations, Switzerland tried to escape from the implementation of the free movement of persons and asked for a permanent derogation to this rule. This request was not compatible with the EU intransigence regarding the "homogeneity of the European space". Switzerland ultimately gained only a temporary derogation (seven years) during which any barrier to the free movement of persons should be progressively removed. Fear of an uncontrolled inflow of foreign workers that would threaten Swiss jobs was a major issue during the referendum campaign. Accordingly, the free movement of people was an important argument for Swiss citizens who wrote a no on the ballot on December 6, 1992.[95] After the rejection of the EEA agreement, talks with the EU have been renewed on a bilateral basis. The free mobility of persons has again been a central issue – the cornerstone of the talks together with the issue of transportation.[96] Whereas the EU insists that the final agreement should include provisions for the complete freedom of movement for persons, the Swiss authorities argue that this goal will certainly lead to a rejection in a popular vote and do not agree to removing the system of permits and quotas.[97]

Besides being challenged by European demands, the Swiss immigration policy is more generally at the centre of the domestic political scene. Swiss attempts to

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[94] Together with agricultural trade or Swiss participation in the structural funds, the EU has often justified its demands in this field on the grounds of the so-called "cohesion" concept, i.e. the idea that Switzerland's access to the European market for goods and services (and the related benefits it gains) should be paid by a contribution to EU actions towards enhancing the standard of living in the poorer countries of the Union.

[95] Opposition to the free movement of people was the argument mentioned by one no-voter out of ten to justify their choice (response to an open-ended question, see Kriesi et al. 1993, op. cit., p. 44).

[96] Given the experience with the EEA, the EU wanted to protect itself against a possible new popular rejection . Therefore, it insists on the "parallelism of the talks", i.e. that any agreement on a given topic is dependent on the acceptance of an agreement in another issue area. The implicit EU desire is to avoid Swiss citizens saying yes to an agreement on an issue in which Switzerland has an interest, but vetoing any agreement on a sensitive issue, typically on the free movement of persons.

[97] Accordingly, they initially suggested only qualitative improvements of the immigration policy. In the meantime, a compromise has been reached (but is still dependent on an agreement on the whole package). It envisions a sophisticated system of safeguard clauses that Switzerland could use during a (long) temporary period. The final goal of free movement is maintained, but will be implemented only in 2004 and with a right for Switzerland to reintroduce quotas in 2005 and 2006 in the case of high levels of immigration. The free movement of people without restrictions will not be implemented before 2014. (Journal de Genève, 15.10.1996, 6.12.1996).

control the inflow of foreign workers with the help of the system of permits and quotas is in fact a failure, since 80% of the immigrants are not concerned by the quotas and hence escape any control today.[98] In addition, the reunion of families has resulted in a significant increase of foreigners of second and third generations. As a solution, the Swiss authorities have suggested providing them with a facilitated naturalisation procedure. This proposal was, however, rejected in a popular vote in 1994.

Recent official proposals in the field of immigration include the so-called "model of three circles".[99] According to this, foreign workers would be divided into three categories: the interior circle would provide free access to the Swiss labour market to workers of the EEA space (EFTA and EU countries); the middle circle envisions only a limited recruitment of workers from the US, Canada, and in the future possibly from Eastern Europe; the exterior circle, with no possibility of recruitment (apart from a few exceptions), would apply to the rest of the world. What is new in this model is the fact that in addition to the economic criteria, on which immigration policy has been based so far, a distinction is introduced concerning the cultural origins of the migrant worker. In that sense, the Swiss immigration policy would be driven by explicitly ethnic-cultural considerations.[100]

This proposal, which is the direct response to an inquiry by a committee of the National Council, has not yet been debated in parliament. The idea is to introduce this "model of three circles" into the law of abode and residence for foreigners ("Loi sur le séjour et l'établissement des étrangers"). Given the uncertainty due to the current negotiations with the European Union and some recent pending initiatives, the government has refrained from submitting the revised law to the parliament. Despite this lack of a legal foundation, some elements of the "model of three circles" have found their application in executive ordinances.[101]

This seems to suggest that since discrimination against citizens from other European countries is now more difficult to maintain, the discrimination has shifted to other geographical areas. In some sense, this shift results in a redefinition of the Other, which has become geographically more distant. The process of identification, however, still seems to require this reference to the Other. Evidence of this tendency can be found in recent popular initiatives concerning immigration. One

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[98] Chambovey, Didier "Politique à l'égard des étrangers et contingentement de l'immigration. L'exemple de la Suisse." *Population INED* 2 (1995): 357-384.

[99] Conseil fédéral *Rapport du Conseil fédéral sur la politique à l'égard des étrangers et des réfugiés du 15 mai 1991*, Feuille Fédérale III, 27 (1991).

[100] Parini, op. cit.

[101] Foreigners with a seasonal work-permit from outside the EFTA or EC countries, for instance, cannot obtain a permit of abode after five years.

of them envisions a reduction in the share of the foreign population to 18 % of the total population, while another, rejected in December 1996, proposed cracking down on illegal immigrants. This is an additional illustration of the role of direct democracy in the expression of exclusionary tendencies.

5. Conclusion

What are the main features of the process of national identity-building in Switzerland? First, and foremost, the cornerstones of this have been provided by the political institutions, in particular the triad consisting of federalism, direct democracy, and neutrality. The resulting institutional framework has gradually become the rallying points of collective feeling in belonging to Swiss society. Patriotism is thus primarily "constitutional",[102] and the Other is someone who does not share the public sphere delimited by these three key institutions. Second, the strengthening of collective identity has been compounded by exclusionary practices in the policy domains of foreign involvement, trade and immigration. The policy of neutrality has accounted for the extreme restraint shown in international political affairs and has helped justify high levels of protection to several sectors, in particular, agriculture, on the grounds of national independence and self-sufficiency, just as it also cultivated a very restrictive refugee policy during the difficult times of the Third Reich. Immigration policy, by itself, appears very liberal, in that the search for adequate regulations has been largely left to economic actors. However, neither direct democracy nor federalism, which generated a very decentralised decision-making process in several domains, have favoured an active incorporation policy.

Put together, these features imply that the process of identity formation in Switzerland has not escaped the trade-off between exclusion and dilution. As the Swiss case seems to suggest, even a national identity based on "constitutional patriotism" needs some barriers to protect itself. The current problems that Switzerland is facing confirm this conclusion. Demands from the outside concerning exclusion levels – which are closely linked to the main institutional features of Switzerland – have upset the delicate balance inside the country. Changes in the institutional set-up appear to be necessary and these changes question the very bases of the Swiss national identity. Interestingly, Gottfried Keller, a Swiss author of the 19th century, envisioned the Swiss political institutions as a bulwark against the authoritarian regimes surrounding the country. He even considered that the Swiss institutions, and Switzerland in itself, would become obsolete if the

[102] Habermas, op. cit.

surrounding regimes turned democratic.[103] This argument was echoed in the slogan "700 years are enough" that Swiss intellectuals created for the 700th anniversary of Switzerland in 1991. Again, this seems to suggest that the exclusions that Switzerland has practised over the period of its existence as a nation-state were intimately linked to the successful formation and maintenance of a common multicultural identity.

Thus, the Swiss case seems to suggest promising avenues for the construction of a European identity, but at the same time it also signals possible dangerous consequences. The main positive insight appears to be that "constitutional patriotism" is not simply a theoretical construct but that it has been successfully implemented. The Swiss case provides some support to those who argue that an European constitution and a popular ratification, leading to a social legitimisation of the European Union, are a necessary step.[104] However, the view that European citizens will acquiesce to being part of a new "nation" as soon as the constitutional and political structure is put in place[105] is too simplistic. Contrary to Marquardt,[106] who seems to suggest that a constitution matters irrespective of its content, the Swiss case shows that the specific institutions chosen play a crucial role. Constitutional patriotism requires an institutional set-up which allows for loyalty and the voice of the lower units and their citizens. In Switzerland, managed subsidiarity and direct avenues of influence for citizens have helped to build-up a convergence of expectations and ultimately resulted in a collective feeling of belonging. On the negative side, the Swiss experience shows how difficult it is to avoid exclusionary tendencies in the process of strengthening identification with the collective. There seems to be a need for an Other and for high levels of exclusion to preserve the multicultural balance.

What does this tell us for the future of a European identity? Can the European Union pick only the raisins of the Swiss cake, as some scholars suggest?[107] First, the Swiss case points to the necessity of designing central political institutions that can become the rallying point of a collective identity. Constitutional patriotism cannot emerge without a constitution and its structural apparatus. In Switzerland, this has meant moving from a loose confederation of cantons to a true federal state with a clear hierarchy of power and responsibilities. It is highly unlikely

[103] Muschg, Adolf "Wieviel Identität braucht die Schweiz?" *WeltwocheSupplement* (April 1996).

[104] e.g. Weiler, op. cit. and Marquardt, Paul D. "Deficit Reduction: Democracy, Technocracy, and Constitutionalism in the European Union." *Duke Journal of Comparative and International Law* 4 (2) (1994): 265-290.

[105] Howe, op. cit. p. 34.

[106] op. cit., p. 284.

[107] See Delanty, op.cit.

that the EU is ready to make such a move, at least in the short and medium terms. A widespread position is that the Union will remain a kind of "objet politique non identifié," a mixture of confederation, federation, or even medieval forms of political organisation. Without claiming that the specific institutional design elaborated in Switzerland is the only one that can serve as an anchor for a collective identity, the question remains whether an opaque political construction such as the EU (at the present or as it is likely to become in the future) will be able to achieve this goal.

Second, the Swiss experience casts doubt on the possibility of furthering both widening and deepening efforts. The two can go together when widening does not extend to the existing Other, or at least goes together with a redefinition of the Other.[108] The latter possibility implies that subsequent rounds of widening must allow for restive periods during which images of the Other have to be reconstructed. In more concrete terms, internal consolidation seems to require external caution. Recent developments inside the European Union tend to confirm this view. The Single European Act gave birth to the idea of a "Fortress Europe" where the common enemy was implicitly viewed as the competition from South East Asian countries (and the US), although decision-makers have tried to tone down this defensive posture in the meantime. Still on the issue of trade, active participation in world liberalising trends has fostered internal strains, in particular regarding farm products. Aggressive behaviour and the bitter row with the United States during the Uruguay Round of talks ended in a division between France and its partners.[109] Similarly, expansion to the Central and Eastern European countries has been strongly opposed by those who consider the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to be a cornerstone of the Union. From this perspective, the likely dismantling of the CAP that would follow an enlargement to the East would be a blow to the cement of the Community.

On foreign involvement, there have been few signs of any movement being made toward an active common foreign and security policy. More important, the few efforts which have been made in this direction have revealed dangerous strains. Germany's push for a common recognition of Slovenia and Croatia triggered a major crisis and has since then relegated the Union to a secondary role in the Balkan crisis. Similarly, the Union has been very reluctant to take the lead in de-

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[108] Neumann, Iver B. "Self and Other in International Relations." *European Journal of International Relations*. 2(2) (1996): 139-174, Neumann, Iver B. "European Identity, EU Expansion and the Integration/Exclusion Nexus", In Lars-Erik Cederman (ed.), *Defining and Projecting Europe's Identity: Issues and Trade-Offs* (forthcoming)..

[109] Dupont, Cédric and Pascal Sciarini "La négociation agricole Etats-Unis - Communauté européenne au GATT: une difficile convergence." *Revue suisse de science politique* 1 (2-3) (1995): 305-352.

signing new security arrangements for Central and Eastern Europe. It has also left participation in humanitarian actions to the discretion of individual members.

On immigration and internal security, the Schengen agreement is the first example of the institutionalisation of a multitiered Union with variable exclusion levels. More significantly, the agreement reflects the need for exclusion, in particular vis-à-vis Mediterranean neighbours. Finally, the case of the Economic and Monetary integration (EMU) reveals exclusion both internally and externally. On the one hand, decision-makers have gone back to the exclusionary message that was highly present in the late 1960s when the early plans for monetary integration emerged. A single European currency is supposed to upgrade the role of Europe vis-à-vis the United States in the conduct of international monetary affairs. The image of a common enemy is thus used to foster more integration and help people identify with the supranational collective. On the other hand, there is an intensive debate inside the Community on the limits of internal exclusion. Who will be the ins and outs?[110] Too much exclusion or too little will both erode support: too much will dilute the original cement of solidarity, whereas too little will weaken efficiency and thus its appeal for the public.

In sum, our analysis of the formation of Swiss national identity offers few easy recipes for the construction of a European identity. In particular, Switzerland appears as both an example and an exception. It is an example of successful integration and identity creation in a multicultural society. But at the same time it is an exception in the sense that this successful identity formation is not unrelated to the particular historical period in which it occurred. In addition, its association with exclusionary tendencies toward the external world makes it less popular for imitation. Thus, there seems to be little prospect of an easy road for the European Union toward the elusive emergence of a collective identity, as has been confirmed by some of its recent policy developments.

[110] On this debate, see the special contributions in the *Swiss Political Science Review* (vol. 2:1, 2:3, 3:1 and 3:2).

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