

Policy Evaluation in Parliament: Interest Groups as Catalysts

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Abstract:	Members of Parliament (MPs) request policy evaluations and use the resultant findings to inform law-making and hold the government to account. Since most elected representatives have developed strong ties to interest groups, one might wonder whether these privileged relationships influence MPs' parliamentary behavior. This study investigates how MPs' affiliations to groups affects their demand for policy evaluations. Empirical evidence shows that, regardless of respective party or individual characteristics, MPs are more likely to request evaluations in those policy domains where they have a group affiliation. This effect holds even when controlling for a classical measure of MP policy specialization, such as legislative committee membership. These findings suggest that ties between MPs and specific types of interest group should be considered when explaining parliamentary behavior across different policy domains.

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12 resultant findings to inform law-making and hold the government to account. Since
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14 wonder whether these privileged relationships influence MPs' parliamentary behavior.
15 This study investigates how MPs' affiliations to groups affects their demand for policy
16 evaluations. Empirical evidence shows that, regardless of respective party or individual
17 characteristics, MPs are more likely to request evaluations in those policy domains
18 where they have a group affiliation. This effect holds even when controlling for a
19 classical measure of MP policy specialization, such as legislative committee
20 membership. These findings suggest that ties between MPs and specific types of interest
21 group should be considered when explaining parliamentary behavior across different
22 policy domains.
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39 **Point for practitioners:** To influence the policymaking process, interest groups
40 participate in consultation procedures and parliamentary hearings, they lobby elected
41 officials and deliver policy expertise to decision-makers. These advocacy strategies are
42 well studied. This article innovates by showing that, in addition, interest groups foster
43 the development of policy evaluations. MPs affiliated to an interest group active on a
44 specific issue are likely to request policy evaluations in that policy domain. Interest
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9 groups strengthen the parliamentary demand for evaluation studies and, thus, may
10 potentially contribute to the accountability of government and public administration.
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13 **Keywords:** evaluation, citizen groups, economic groups, policy domains
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16 17 18 19 **Introduction**

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21 Elected Members of Parliament (MPs) are both legislators and controllers of the
22 government. MPs require information to fulfill these law-making and oversight
23 functions. MPs require information to fulfill these law-making and oversight
24 functions. Policy evaluation is one potential source of such information, since a policy
25 evaluation aims to deliver new insights about the quality of a policy design, the progress
26 of its implementation and its final impacts on economy and society. MPs are the
27 stakeholders *par excellence* of policy evaluations (Speer et al. 2015), whose results
28 should reduce MPs' uncertainty about policy effects and, furthermore, the information
29 asymmetry between the government and the parliament.
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33 Empirical studies have demonstrated that MPs activate different parliamentary
34 instruments (e.g. questions, interpellations, motions) to initiate an evaluation, to monitor
35 an evaluation process and to ask about concrete evaluation findings. In addition, MPs
36 directly use the knowledge provided to improve their own decision-making and to hold
37 government to accountable (Jacob et al. 2015; Speer et al. 2015; Bundi 2016; Zwaan et
38 al. 2016). Previous research delivered three findings on the factors explaining why an
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9 MP will demand or use a policy evaluation report. First, MPs' attention to evaluation is
10 unequally distributed between policy sectors (e.g. high attention in education or health
11 policy versus low attention in public finance or defense policy). Second, MPs belonging
12 both to the opposition and to the political parties forming the government (coalition)
13 request evaluations: the former need evaluative evidence to scrutinize and challenge the
14 government, and the latter instrumentalize evaluation to highlight and publicize the
15 policy activities and performance of their own ministers. Finally, socio-economic as
16 well as partisan characteristics of MPs (e.g. age, education, seniority in parliament,
17 party membership) seem to have little to no influence at all on an MP's evaluation
18 activity. In contrast, membership in an oversight committee as well as a positive attitude
19 towards evaluation in general increases MPs' motivation to request evaluation reports
20 (Bundi 2016).
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36 The role of interest groups as a factor explaining the parliamentary requests of
37 policy evaluations remains unexplored. This is an important research gap since
38 evaluation reports are by no means the only source of policy-relevant information for
39 MPs. Interest groups, which often represent the target groups or beneficiaries of the
40 policies to be evaluated, are a valued source of expertise. For instance, interest groups
41 deliver information through lobbying activities targeting individual MPs, actively
42 participate in official consultations procedures, and present testimonies during the
43 hearings organized by legislative committees. By means of these advocacy strategies,
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interest groups provide their expertise as an ‘exchange good’ to access the parliamentary venue (Bouwen 2002).

At the same time, interest groups also encourage MPs to evaluate specific policies. Evaluation might be highly rewarding for an interest group if the resulting evaluation allows for keeping an issue important to the group constituency on the parliamentary agenda, revising a law in a policy direction that better fits the group preferences, or (re)legitimizing the implementation tasks formally delegated to the group. Various motivations lead interest groups to get involved in parliamentary evaluation practice and this study considers the ties between MPs and groups to investigate the following research question: *What is the impact of interest groups on MPs’ behavior related to evaluation request?* This question is not only relevant from an empirical and theoretical point of view. It is also highly sensitive from a normative stance. If interest groups do have a significant impact on the parliamentary evaluation practice, then this could also have major implications for the democratic accountability of policy processes and elected officials.

The article is structured as follows. The theoretical section introduces the research hypotheses. The methodological section explains why the Swiss parliament is selected as a most likely case to test these hypotheses and shows that the survey data collected are representative. It also presents the operationalization of the main variables. The results section focuses on one major empirical finding: MPs are more likely to

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9 demand policy evaluations in the policy domains of their interest group affiliations. This
10 effect holds even when controlling for a classical measure of policy specialization such
11 as legislative committee membership. Finally, the concluding section put this study into
12 a broader perspective and identifies the next research steps.
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21 **Theoretical framework**

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24 Both MPs and interest groups try to influence policy-making in order to realize the
25 policy preferences of their respective constituencies. However, one major difference
26 between them is that interest groups do not compete for office, they cannot make
27 authoritative decisions and must cooperate with MPs in order to influence legislative
28 outputs. By contrast, MPs hold formal decision-making power, but regularly interact
29 with interest groups to increase their information resources and secure their re-election.
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31 The MPs-group linkage is frequently understood as an exchange relationship. Groups
32 provide technical expertise about the policy issue at stake and political information
33 about the policy position of their constituency to elected MPs, or make contributions to
34 their electoral campaign. As a counterpart, MPs grant groups privileged access to an
35 institutional venue (e.g. a hearing at a legislative committee) where policy decisions are
36 made, or even commit themselves to actively supporting legislative proposals promoted
37 by groups (Berkhout 2013).
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Surveys of both interest groups (Rasmussen and Landeboom, 2013) and MPs (Wonka, 2017) indicate that such partnerships are reported as crucial by both sides. Previous scholarship has also demonstrated that the information transmitted by groups to MPs predominantly concern the feasibility and implementation of policies (Baumgartner et al. 2009:132-133). Furthermore, when groups deliver policy-relevant information, they target parties which share their ideological preferences and policy positions. Linkages are established between likeminded groups and MPs (Hall and Deardorff, 2006:75): business groups predominantly support the legislative activities of MPs belonging to right parties, while public interest groups primarily help MPs from left parties to design workable policies (Otjes and Rasmussen, 2015; Gava et al. 2016; Wonka 2017). The present study contributes to this literature by looking more deeply at the impact of MP-groups links on parliamentary evaluation practice. More concretely, we argue that interest groups foster parliamentary evaluation demand.

Interest groups as catalysts: Beyond providing their own policy expertise and political intelligence to like-minded MPs, interest groups also try to convince ‘their’ MPs to demand evaluations that will deliver additional policy-relevant information. Three main reasons motivate interest groups to advocate for policy evaluation. First, evaluation might be instrumentalized as a strategic tool to monitor all stages of the policy cycle. Evaluation requests concern the (*ex ante*) regulatory impact assessments of intended policies, the (*in itinere*) monitoring of implementation outputs or the (*ex post*)

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9 measurement of policy effects. Consequently, the political use of evaluation findings
10 support or hinder the agenda-setting of a new policy, and legitimate either the
11 continuation, revision or termination of an existing policy (Eberli 2017: 3). Interest
12 groups encourage MPs to request evaluation with the deliberate aim of preempting a
13 new policy that contradicts the group's preferences or, on the contrary, of supporting
14 policy outcomes that deliver benefits concentrated on their members (Wilson 1980).
15 The following evaluation demand illustrates this strategy: "Before taking any additional
16 measures to regulate the mortgage market and home ownership, the Federal Council
17 (i.e. the government) shall evaluate the effects of the measures taken in the last two
18 years in this field, and consult widely with interested parties." (Motion by MP O. Feller;
19 06.05.2014). This parliamentary request was introduced by a right-wing Swiss MP, who
20 was affiliated to several business groups active in the real estate market, as a tactical
21 move to delay any policy change towards more state regulation on the mortgage market.
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38 Second, likeminded groups and MPs often try to build 'iron triangles' with
39 public agencies sharing their policy preferences. If the consolidation of such policy
40 monopoly with a trustworthy agency is not feasible, then interest groups and MPs face a
41 classical agency problem. They have to delegate policy implementation to a public
42 administration whose positions may differ from their own preferences. This results in a
43 series of common agency problems for the interest groups and their MPs. The latter, as
44 principals, cannot be sure whether the government and its agencies implemented the
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9 policies in the way they were intended (McCubbins, 2014). Hence, MPs have strong
10 incentives to control the government. In doing so, evaluations seem to be an instrument
11 for MPs to oversee agencies and to provide accountability, since agencies have to report
12 about their activities and provide information to MPs during evaluations (Bundi, 2016).
13 As a consequence, MPs not only gather information about a certain policy, but also
14 about how it has been implemented by the administration. For instance, an MP
15 requested the government evaluate the legal basis of the placement of foster children, as
16 most of the placement companies are said to focus on their own profit rather than on the
17 children's benefit (Interpellation by MP J. Fehr, 15.12.2011). This evaluation request
18 was strongly influenced by a group committed to the interests of foster children. Both
19 the MP and the group feared that the well-being of the children would be in danger
20 without a sound implementation of the policy (Bundi, 2017:5).
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36 Third, performing a policy evaluation is costly. On the one hand, individual MPs
37 suffer from resource scarcity (i.e. time, money) when attempting to monitor all
38 developments in a policy field. On the other hand, groups do not always have the
39 resources or necessary access to public records (e.g. on policy outputs) to produce their
40 own expertise. Evaluation knowledge produced by the state has thus one clear appealing
41 characteristic for interest groups: by piggybacking on the public sector, groups can
42 outsource the cost of producing policy expertise. Furthermore, if the evaluation results
43 are eventually in line with the group's position, the policy expertise produced by the
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9 state can be presented as relatively authoritative and objective during policy struggles.
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11 Even if the evaluation results does not correspond with the interest group's position, MPs
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13 still have the possibility of misusing the evaluation findings, either by manipulating or
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15 intentionally misinterpreting them (Weiss 1979). In sum, interest groups encourage MPs
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17 to demand policy evaluation to assist 'their' MPs, as policy allies, in achieving their
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19 shared policy preferences. The first hypothesis reads as follows: *The more MPs have*
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21 *affiliations to interest groups, the more they demand evaluation requests (H1).*
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25 ***Economic versus citizen groups:*** We have to note, however, that interest groups
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27 are likely to differ in their incentives for relying on policy evaluations performed by the
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29 state. First, economic groups (e.g. peak-level business associations) are probably better
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31 endowed with financial resources and political staff than citizen groups (e.g.
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33 environmental or humanitarian groups). They are more likely to provide MPs with
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35 private expertise, whose content can be controlled by the group itself, privileging it over
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37 policy evaluations produced by the state. To counterbalance this comparative
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39 disadvantage, citizen groups may resort more often to the evaluation knowledge
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41 produced by the state. The incentives for piggybacking on state resources is higher for
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43 citizen groups than for economic groups.
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48 Second, evaluation reports are often discussed in the parliamentary arena and
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50 covered by the media as well. Evaluation reports thus contribute to raising public
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52 attention about policy effects, supporting the outsider lobbying tactics privileged by
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cause groups rather than by sectional groups (Binderkrantz 2005:706; Kriesi et al. 2007:66). Indeed, the value of private expertise provided by business groups declines as MPs, media and citizens care about the policy under evaluation (Culpepper 2011:178). In short, the second hypothesis postulates that *MPs with affiliations to economic groups demand less evaluation requests than MPs with affiliations to citizen groups (H2)*.

Policy specialization of groups and MPs: The two previous hypotheses may be further specified, since most MPs specialize in one or a few policy domains. Indeed, MPs are members of legislative committees focusing on specific policy issues and negotiate legislative proposals that are eventually adopted by the plenary assembly. Membership in a permanent legislative committee fosters the specialization of MPs (Gillian and Krehbiel 1987; Searing 1987; Strom 1998), who acquire a policy expertise that also grants them power and prestige among party peers and the media. Accordingly, policy specialists are more likely to request policy evaluation on their domain of competence than MPs who are not members of the relevant legislative committee.

Furthermore, interest groups prefer to lobby MPs sitting on the legislative committees that address the policy issues which directly concern the stakes of their group's members (Marshall 2015: 323; Bowler and Farrell 1995; Yordanova 2009). One might thus expect a topical congruence between the competence area of a committee and the domain of activity of the groups with which MPs are affiliated. Indeed, Eichenberger and Mach (2017) showed that, within the Swiss Parliament, MPs' formal

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9 ties to groups strongly reflect the policy responsibilities of the respective committee.
10 This substantive match is partially due to the strategic recruitment of legislative
11 committee members by interest groups, since many ties between groups and MPs
12 develop after MPs are assigned to specific committees.
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18 These privileged relationships between committee members and groups are
19 consequential. An MP who has accepted a seat in the board of a specific group arguably
20 has a strong incentive to be proactive, within the relevant legislative committee, on the
21 policy issues that are of interest for the constituency of 'their' group. In other words, we
22 argue that MP-group ties have an additional impact on parliamentary evaluation
23 requests, beyond the MP's policy specialization through committee membership, which
24 will be introduced as a control variable in the statistical models. Within a given
25 legislative committee, MPs with ties to groups will probably demand more policy
26 evaluations than MPs not affiliated to groups. The third research hypothesis stipulates
27 that *within a policy domain, MPs with more affiliations to interest groups are more*
28 *likely to demand policy evaluations than MPs with lesser or no affiliations to interest*
29 *groups (H3).*
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45 In a nutshell, the theoretical framework claims that interest groups do matter for
46 MPs' evaluation requests. However, citizen groups are more willing than economic
47 groups to encourage MPs to demand evaluation evidence and, furthermore, each group
48 concentrates on the policy issues that are of interest for their own members.
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Research design

The present empirical study is based on a survey of all federal MPs of Switzerland, who were asked to report on the importance of evaluation activities for their parliamentary work. This section discusses three issues raised by this research design: the selection of the Swiss case, the representativeness of the MPs survey, and the empirical measurement of the key variables.

Case selection: The Swiss Parliament is a most likely case to test the research hypotheses. First, and in comparative perspective, the Swiss parliament enjoys a strong institutional position *vis-à-vis* the government in terms of agenda-setting power, competences of parliamentary committees, decision rights and instruments to control the executive (Döring 1995; Lüthi 2014; Siaroff 2003). Switzerland is, together with the Scandinavian countries, a political system where parliament's co-decision rights are strong and the government's control of the legislative agenda is weak (Vatter 2014: 298-299). Therefore, the demands of policy evaluation are highly relevant for Swiss MPs and, more generally, for the balance of power between executive and legislative venues.

Second, policy evaluation is strongly institutionalized in Switzerland (Varone et al. 2005). A general evaluation clause was introduced in the constitution fifteen years ago: "The Federal Assembly shall ensure that federal measures are evaluated with

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8 regard to their effectiveness." (Article 170 of the Federal Constitution of April 1999).
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10 Sector-specific evaluation clauses can be found in primary or secondary legislations and
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12 urge MPs to request evaluations in various policy domains. Furthermore, parliamentary
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14 Control Committees commission the Parliamentary Control of the Administration to
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16 evaluate the legality, expediency and effectiveness of selected public policies. The
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18 Federal Audit Court is also habilitated to compare the costs and benefits of policy
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20 measures. The Swiss parliamentary evaluation culture is among the most advanced in
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22 all OECD countries (Jacob et al. 2015: 145).
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27 Third, the Swiss parliament is an interesting case due to its 'militia character'.
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29 For decades, the Federal Assembly was basically "composed of amateurs who combine
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31 their professional activities with their parliamentary duties" (Kriesi 2001: 60). The lack
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33 of MP resources resulting from this militia system increases MPs' dependence on
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35 interest groups (Bailer 2011; Bütikofer 2013). In fact, the information resources that
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37 Swiss MPs have at their disposal are limited from a comparative perspective (Schnapp
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39 & Harfst 2005; Vatter 2014). However, permanent legislative committees have been
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41 institutionalized since 1992 and MPs have become increasingly competent in those
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43 policy fields covered by the specialized committees to which they belong (Pilotti 2012).
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45 If MPs are more professional nowadays, then interest groups could be expected to
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47 invest more intensively in the parliamentary venue to influence them (Eichenberger &
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49 Mach 2017; Christiansen et al. 2016).
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Finally, Swiss MPs are requested to declare their formal ties (i.e. seating in a group's board) with interest groups. The register of interests is a rich source of observational data showing that the average number of interest ties per MP has more than doubled over the last decade, from 3.5 in 2000 to 7.6 in 2011 (Gava et al. 2016). In sum, the Swiss parliament offers an ideal setting for investigating the influence of interest group advocacy on MPs' evaluations requests.

Survey: The second methodological issue concerns the representativeness of the survey that we conducted in 2014 amongst the 245 federal MPs (Eberli et al. 2014). With 112 MPs answering the survey, the response rate (45.7%) is relatively high for legislative surveys in Switzerland and abroad (Bütikofer, 2014; Deschouwer and Depauw, 2014; Strelbel, 2014). Table 2 (in the Appendix) compares the participants of the survey with all invited MPs regarding different characteristics. The four major parties (Swiss People's Party, Social Democrats, Liberals, and Christian Democrats) are reasonably represented in the survey (i.e. 80.4% in the survey to 80.8% in the parliament). Concerning MP's gender, language and age, the sample is relatively balanced as well. MPs with parliamentary seniority between eight and 11 years are underrepresented in the survey sample (13.4% to 18.0%). In contrast, almost no differences can be observed regarding the committee memberships and the number of parliamentary interventions, which were submitted by the MPs. Hence, no self-selection bias invalidates the empirical analysis (Bundi et al. 2016).

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9 **Measurement of variables:** The survey data measure MPs' activities related to
10 policy evaluation. As MPs may have a broad understanding of what policy evaluation
11 is, the survey introduced an explicit definition: "In this survey, evaluations are
12 interpreted as studies, reports or other documents, which assess a state's measure in a
13 systematic and transparent way with respect to their effectiveness, efficiency or fitness
14 for purpose." The dependent variable investigated is *the demand for policy evaluations*.
15 MPs were asked to report whether they have requested policy evaluations in different
16 policy domains by means of parliamentary interventions during the last four years (i.e. 1
17 March 2010 – 20 June 2014).
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29 To capture relationships between MPs and interest groups, we exploit the
30 official register of MPs' interests: Swiss MPs have been required since 1985 to declare
31 all their mandates (e.g. executive boards seats) with companies and interest groups. For
32 the period 2012-2014, the year-based 'raw' inventory of the register allows us to
33 identify 602 dyads between the 112 MPs who participated to the survey, and 544
34 interest groups. We capture two distinct but complementary dimensions of interest
35 groups. First, we assess the diversity of interest groups by means of two main types
36 (Binderkrantz et al. 2015): (1) Economic groups encompass private firms, business
37 associations (e.g. Industry and Trade Association), occupational groups (e.g. Swiss
38 Medical Association) and unions at the sector and peak level (e.g. Federation of Trade
39 Union). (2) Citizen groups correspond to public interest groups, whose members focus
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9 on the attainment and protection of common goods (e.g. environmental groups or
10 humanitarian organizations) and identity groups (e.g. representing women, tenants,
11 drivers, etc.), leisure groups (e.g. Scout groups, orchestras' support associations, Swiss
12 Olympics, etc.), religious groups (e.g. Swiss Evangelical Alliance or abbeys' support
13 associations) and associations representing institutional actors, such as Swiss cities.
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21 Second, we rely on the twenty policy domains of the *Comparative Agendas*
22 *Project* (<http://www.comparativeagendas.net>) to code the main sector of activity for
23 each interest group. We then aggregate these data in ten broader categories of policy
24 domains in order to match those areas with the policy domains of the parliamentary
25 interventions: Foreign Affairs and Security, Public Finance, Welfare, Economy,
26 Education, Energy, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure, Health, Justice and Migration,
27 and State Affairs. For example, the first evaluation request presented above showed that
28 an MP affiliated to interest groups active in the real estate market demanded an
29 evaluation of the regulation of the mortgage market. In this case, both the policy content
30 of the evaluation request and the main area of activity of the interest groups affiliated to
31 the MP concern the same policy domain, namely 'economy'. It is worth noting that the
32 policy domains do not overlap with the two groups types. For example, within the
33 health policy domain, economic groups such as business associations representing
34 private health insurances, or occupational groups representing medical professions,
35 cohabitate with citizen groups such as public interest groups representing all patients, or
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9 identity groups representing people with specific disabilities. Table 3 in the appendix
10 provides an overview of the policy domains.

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13 Finally, information about the control variables stems from the MPs survey and
14 include gender, age, education, language region, occupational backgroundⁱ, party
15 affiliation, Lower and Upper House, professionalization, membership in oversight and
16 legislative committee, and parliament experience. Table 4 in the Appendix presents the
17 operationalization of all variables.
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25 In order to assess the impact of group affiliations in specific policy domains as
26 formulated in H3, the survey data set has been stacked in a matrix that derives from a
27 normal one, as the units of analysis do not represent a single MP, but an MP x Policy
28 domain combinations (Van der Eijk et al. 2006). Hence, each MP is represented by as
29 many cases as there are policy domains (i.e. ten domains in this case). An entry was
30 generated for every policy domain that indicated whether a MP has submitted a
31 parliamentary request in a certain policy domain. By using this approach, we can
32 estimate the influence of groups in different policy domains. Since the data is nested in
33 two different levels (MP, policy domain), the study uses a multi-level analysis in order
34 to estimate the models. Moreover, we assume that the variance of the second level is
35 varying, which is why we use random intercept model to test variables on the two
36 levels. As the outcome of the endogenous variable is binary, we use a logistic regression
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model. The following model is used to estimate the MP's likelihood to submit a parliamentary request:

$$Y_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + u_{0ij} + e_{ij} \quad (1)$$

Where Y is likelihood of an MP (i) to demand an evaluation in a policy domain (j), while γ_{00} stands for the random intercept and u_{0ij} for the overall regression slopes. e_{ij} refers to the random residual error term at two levels.

Results

More than 50% of the 112 MPs participating in the survey demanded an evaluation in the four years prior to the survey (i.e., between 2010 and 2014). About 20% of the MPs submitted one parliamentary request to demand an evaluation. One third of MPs even submitted several requests. However, the evaluation demand is unequally distributed amongst the policy domains. While the MPs frequently demanded an evaluation in the policy domains Welfare and Economy, the areas Education, Energy, and Public Finances were less often targeted by parliamentary requests.

Table 1 about here

Model 1 tests the whether the number of interest groups linked to a MP has an influence on the general evaluation demand. Results indicate that the amount of ties to

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9 distinct interest groups does not influence an MP's likelihood to request an evaluation.
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11 The first research hypothesis is thus not supported by empirical evidence. In contrast,
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13 some socio-economic characteristics influence MPs' likelihood to submit parliamentary
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15 requests in order to evaluate a policy measure. Women are more likely to demand
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17 evaluations than men, so are MPs from the minoritarian French and Italian speaking
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19 regions. Moreover, MPs with an independent work logic (e.g. farmers, company
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21 owners) are less likely to demand evaluations than MPs with dependent work logic
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23 professions. By contrast, parliamentary characteristics (i.e. professionalization,
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25 experience, oversight committee, party affiliation) do not affect evaluation demand.
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30 Model 2 investigates the impact of MP ties to economic groups versus citizen
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32 groups. The estimates of model 2 show that ties to economic or citizen groups do not
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34 influence whether an MP demands an evaluation. This result does not provide evidence
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36 for the second hypothesis.
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40 Finally, model 3 presents the results of impact of interest affiliations in specific
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42 policy domains. In comparison to policy domains in which MPs do not have any ties to
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44 interest groups, MPs with the maximum ties of interest groups (n=15) have almost a
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46 53.8% higher probability to demand an evaluation in this very policy field. Figure 1
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48 illustrates this empirical finding. The horizontal axis refers to the number of ties in a
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50 policy domain, while the y-axis shows the predicted probability to demand an
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52 evaluation regarding different policy fields. In order to control for the legislative
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9 committee effect, a traditional measure of MP policy specialization, we distinguish
10 between MPs who are member in legislative committee of a policy domain (dashed
11 line) and those who are not (full line). Within policy domains, MPs with affiliations to
12 interest groups have a 30%, respectively 50% higher probability to demand evaluations
13 than MPs with no affiliations. Although legislative committee members have a higher
14 probability to demand an evaluation, the effect also increases with the number of ties to
15 groups in a specific policy domain. Ties to interest groups in a certain policy field thus
16 have a positive effect on evaluation requests in this specific policy domain, even though
17 the effect of committee membership is more substantial. The committee effect confirms
18 previous studies showing that MPs want to build a reputation in their area of legislative
19 specialization (Proksch and Slapin 2010). However, the interest group effect provides
20 new evidence about the motives and incentives driving legislators' demand for policy
21 evaluations. Bundi (2017) shows that MPs' motives to demand policy evaluations is
22 strongly linked to committee membership. While oversight committee members more
23 often demand evaluations in order to obtain information on a policy, legislative
24 committee members seek to change policy outcomes. Our findings suggest that, through
25 their ties with MPs, interest groups may influence the policy agenda by means of policy
26 evaluations. The evidence indicates that the parliamentary behavior of MPs is shaped by
27 their links with interest groups. To sum up, the analysis provides strong support for the
28 third hypothesis.
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Figure 1 about here

To sum up, the empirical analysis shows that MP-group ties influence parliamentary behavior. However, it is the specialization of groups in specific policy domains that is crucial for the relationship between MPs' affiliations to groups and evaluation demand. As expected by the third hypothesis, MPs demand more evaluations in those policy domains which are most relevant for their groups. Contrary to the first theoretical expectation, the number of ties to different groups does not determine whether a MP will demand an evaluation. Moreover, the type of group (economic vs. citizen groups) to which MPs are affiliated does not seem affect the demand of policy evaluations by MPs.

Conclusion

Previous scholarship on the parliamentary evaluation practice showed party politics does not explain why some MPs are more likely than others to ask for policy evaluations (Speer et al. 2015, Bundi 2016). The present study corroborates this finding. Furthermore, it has the added value of proposing an innovative explanation of MPs' motivation to submit an evaluation request, namely the linkages between interest groups and MPs. It is argued that MPs interact with groups sharing their political priorities and

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9 policy preferences. Both partners focus on the same policy domain and, accordingly,
10 monitor the legislative developments that affect their respective constituencies. Groups
11 assist MPs to request policy evaluation in specific policy domains and, thus, to perform
12 their oversight function. They provide policy expertise and political intelligence as well
13 as financial resources to MPs who, as their counterpart, introduce evaluation requests
14 about policy issues that are important for the groups' constituencies. This claim is
15 supported by empirical evidence from the Swiss Parliament. The positive effect of
16 linkages between MPs and interest groups on evaluation demand in specific policy
17 fields remains present even when controlling for committee membership.
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29 Some policy domains are characterized by the strong presence of economic
30 groups, while citizen groups populate others (Coen and Katsaitis 2013). The very nature
31 of policy domains affects the density and diversity of MP-groups ties and, eventually,
32 that parliamentary behavior related to policy evaluation. The importance of
33 systematically comparing policy domains has been acknowledged by scholars working
34 on the 'ecology of groups population' (Gray and Lowery 1996) or on "Chameleon
35 pluralism" (Richardson and Coen; 2009: 348); it should also be put on the research
36 agenda of parliamentary evaluation studies. This research avenue is also relevant for
37 normative debates on the quality of democratic representation, policy responsiveness
38 and accountability. Indeed, the electoral delegation chain might be broken if, for
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9 instance, MPs are closer to the policy preferences of ‘their’ interest groups than those of
10 their electoral constituency (Giger and Klüver 2016).
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13 This exploratory article has three limitations that could be overcome by
14 upcoming studies. First, it was argued that Switzerland is a most likely case to test the
15 three research hypotheses since the parliament is institutionally strong *vis-à-vis* the
16 government, non-professional MPs interact intensively with interest groups, and the
17 policy evaluation culture is well developed. Swiss institutions are an enabling context
18 for the impact of MP-group ties on parliamentary interventions asking for policy
19 evaluations. To assess the external validity of the empirical results presented here, this
20 study should be replicated in Westminster systems, highly professionalized parliaments
21 and countries with a less developed policy evaluation practice.
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35 Second, interest groups are one information source among many for MPs. The
36 policy expertise provided by parliamentary committees, MPs' party staff and civil
37 servants is also relevant for the law-making and oversight functions that MPs fulfill.
38 The influence of interest groups on the parliamentary evaluation practice should thus
39 not be overestimated before these additional information sources are also taken into
40 consideration.
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49 Finally, this study has investigated under which conditions MPs rely on
50 parliamentary instruments to initiate a policy evaluation process. The next logical step
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9 would be to scrutinize if these parliamentary requests translate into concrete evaluation
10 mandates and, eventually, if MPs use the findings of the produced evaluation reports to
11 improve legislation and/or to increase the government's accountability. MP-group ties
12 could also play an important role to foster – or, on the contrary – hinder such policy
13 feedback loops. If the policy recommendations from an evaluation report run against the
14 preferences of an interest group, then one can reasonably expect this group to develop
15 an advocacy strategy with counter-arguments to pre-empt the use of evaluation results.
16 So, it would make sense to compare the relative strength of interest groups as evaluation
17 entrepreneurs versus veto players trying to block policy-making based on empirical
18 evaluation evidence.
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For Peer Review

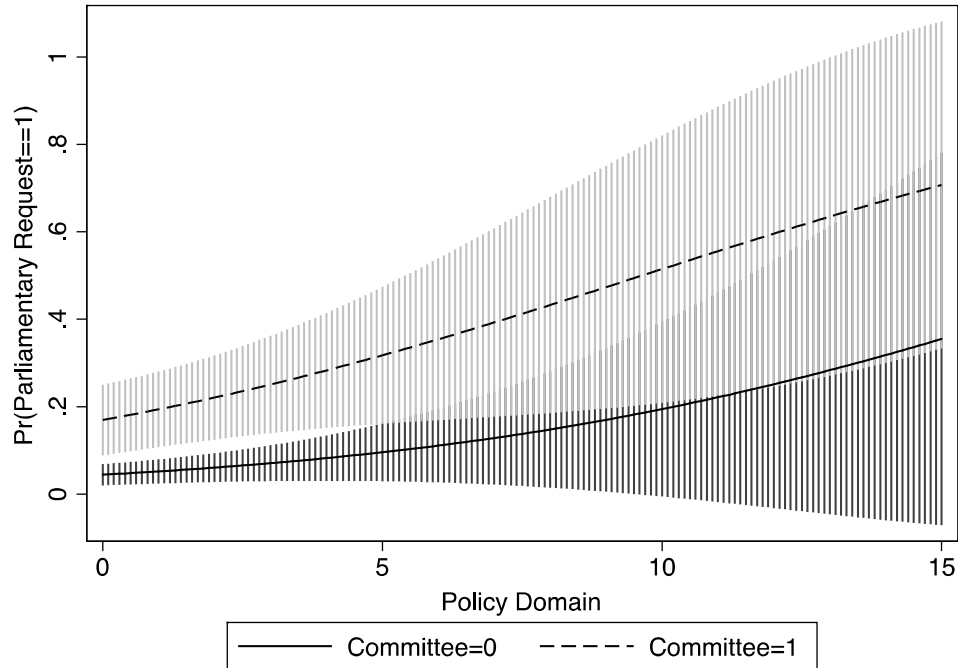
Figures and tables

Table 1: Individual and Policy Domain Random Effects Models

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Women	1.280** (0.532)	1.257** (0.538)	0.619** (0.251)
Age	0.006 (0.024)	0.002 (0.026)	0.004 (0.012)
Education	-0.028 (0.111)	-0.029 (0.111)	-0.001 (0.055)
Latin	1.030* (0.533)	1.014* (0.537)	0.529** (0.248)
Independent Work Logic	-0.920** (0.461)	-0.924** (0.463)	-0.303 (0.228)
Center-Right Party	0.445 (0.488)	0.466 (0.502)	0.256 (0.243)
Upper House	-0.492 (0.739)	-0.474 (0.750)	-0.708* (0.400)
Professionalization	-0.367 (1.536)	-0.433 (1.535)	-0.565 (0.770)
Parliament Experience	-0.026 (0.052)	-0.029 (0.053)	0.001 (0.026)
Oversight Committee	0.034 (0.495)	0.093 (0.507)	0.382 (0.249)
Committee			1.480*** (0.230)
Total Interest Group	0.069 (0.055)	0.089 (0.068)	-0.016 (0.030)
Economic Group		-0.332 (0.661)	0.067 (0.321)
Citizen Group		-0.164 (0.745)	0.388 (0.425)
Policy Domain			0.165*** (0.064)
Constant	-0.692***	-0.198	-3.370***

	(1.717)	(1.954)	(0.988)
Residual Variance			
Between ϕ (Policy Fields)			0.237
Observations	95	95	950
Log Likelihood	-57.532	-57.360	-298.741
LR χ^2	16.54	16.82	
Pseudo R ²		0.128	
Wald χ^2			65.12***

Figure 1: Predicted Probabilities to Demand an Evaluation for the Policy Domain



Note: Predicted probabilities to demand an evaluation with a parliamentary request, as a function of the policy domain and members of a legislative committee (dashed line) and non-member of a legislative committee (full line). The values are calculated for MPs with the following attributes: men, Center-right party, German-speaking, independent work logic, non-oversight committee, and Lower House. All other variables are at the median.

Appendices

Table 2: Representativeness of the MPs survey

	MPs invited to the survey (N=245)	MPs participated to the survey (N=112)
<i>Party</i>		
Swiss People's Party	58 (23.7%)	21 (18.8%)
Social Democrats	57 (23.3%)	32 (28.6%)
Liberals	41 (16.7%)	18 (16.1%)
Christian Democrats	42 (17.1%)	19 (17.0%)
Other	47 (19.2%)	22 (19.6%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	174 (71.0%)	74 (66.1%)
Female	71 (29.0%)	38 (33.9%)
<i>Language</i>		
German	177 (72.2%)	77 (68.8%)
French	57 (23.3%)	28 (25.0%)
Italian	11 (4.5%)	7 (6.3%)
<i>Age (in years)</i>		
< 35	15 (6.1%)	8 (7.1%)
35-49	62 (25.3%)	29 (25.9%)
50-64	141 (57.6%)	60 (53.6%)
> 64	27 (11.0%)	15 (13.4%)
<i>Parliament Seniority (in years)</i>		
< 4	91 (37.1%)	45 (40.2%)
4-7	61 (24.9%)	29 (25.9%)
8-11	44 (18.0%)	15 (13.4%)
> 11	49 (20.0%)	23 (20.5%)
<i>Committee</i>		

Legislative	152 (62.0%)	68 (60.7%)
Oversight	93 (38.0%)	44 (39.3%)
<i>Parliamentary Interventions</i>		
< 10	47 (19.2%)	23 (20.5%)
10-19	65 (26.5%)	31 (27.7%)
20-29	45 (18.4%)	20 (17.9%)
> 30	88 (35.9%)	38 (33.9%)

Reading example: 71 female MPs were invited to the survey, which refers to 29.0% of all contacted MPs. 38 female MPs have participated in the survey, which refers to 33.9% of all contacted MPs. Hence, female MPs are slightly overrepresented in the survey sample (29.0% < 33.9%)

Table 3: Policy Domains

Policy Domains	CAP Domains
Economy (Labor, Services, Industry, Trade, Craft, Agriculture, Forestry)	Domestic Commerce, Foreign Trade, Agriculture
Security/Foreign Affairs (Military, Civil Defense, Police, International Relations)	Defense, Foreign Affairs
Public Finances (Taxes, Subsidies, Cuts)	Macroeconomy
Welfare (Family, Social Insurance, Social Assistance)	Social Welfare
Education (School System, Sciences, Research, Culture)	Education, Technology, Culture
Energy (Electricity, Water Power, Nuclear Energy, Renewable Energy)	Energy
Infrastructure (Building, Housing, Environment, Telecommunication Private and Public Transport, Spatial Planning)	Environment, Transportation, Housing, Public Lands
Health (Healthcare Provision, Food, Veterinary, Health Promotion and Prevention)	Health
State (People, Political Institutions, Cantons, Municipalities, Church)	Government operations
Justice/Migration (Civil and Criminal Law, Immigration, Asylum, Integration, Naturalization)	Civil Rights, Law and Crime, Immigration

Table 4: Operationalization of the Variables

Variable	Operationalization
Dependent Variable	
Evaluation Demand	"How frequently did you propose a parliamentary request in order to examine a state measure with regard to implementation and impact?" Dummy: 0 (never) - 1 (at least once)
Independent Variable	
Ties to interest groups	Self-reported affiliation to interest groups Dummy for group type: Economic (Trade, Unions, and Professional associations) and Citizen (Public interest and others) Categorical scales for policy domain: Economic (Foreign Affairs and Security, Public Finance, Welfare, Economy) and Social Issues (Education, Energy, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure, Health).
Economic Group	Tie to an economic interest group Dummy : 0 for no, 1 for yes
Citizen Group	Tie to a citizen interest group Dummy : 0 for no, 1 for yes
Gender	Gender of the MP Dummy: 0 for male, 1 for female
Age	Age of the MP Continuous Scale
Education	MP's highest degree of education Ordinal scale (1-8): Compulsory school, vocational school, vocational baccalaureat, higher vocational education, professional education and training college, pedagogical university, university of applied sciences, university
Language	Spoken Language of the MP Dummy: 0 for German, 1 for Latin (French and Italian)
Occupational Background (Oesch-Index)	Occupational Background of MP Categorical scale: Self-Employed, Technical work logic, organizational work logic, and interpersonal work logic. Classification based on employment situation, number of employees and occupational position.
Parliamentary Group	Parliamentary Group of the MP

	Dummy: 0 left parties (Social Democrats, Green Party) 1 for center-right parties (Liberals, Christian Democrats, Green Liberal Party, Conservative Democratic Party, Evangelical People's Party, Christian Social Party, Swiss People's Party, Ticino League, Geneva Citizens' Movement, Independent)
Upper House	Membership in the Swiss' Upper House Dummy: 0 for yes, 1 for no
Professionalization	Over the last year, what is the amount of time spent for your parliament mandate, in percentage of a full-time job? Continuous scale
Parliament Experience	Years of a MP in a federal parliament Continuous scale
Oversight Committee	Membership in an oversight committee (control committee, finance committee) Dummy: 0 for no, 1 for yes
Committee	Membership in a legislative committee of the policy domain Dummy : 0 for no, 1 for yes

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ⁱ Oesch (2006) distinguishes four different types of work logics: Independent (self-employed), technical work logic (work process determined by technical production), organizational work logic (bureaucratic division of labour), and interpersonal work logic (service-based on face-to-face exchange).

For Peer Review