3 Organisation

3.1 The Political Parties and the Party System

Andreas Ladner,
Institute of Political Science, University of Berne

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1 Research and Literature

Research on political parties in Switzerland

The Swiss political parties have long been treated as part and parcel of Swiss "exceptionalism", mainly for two reasons: the limited importance of elections under direct democracy; and the important role played by the cantonal parties due to the federalist structure of the Swiss political system. However, with respect to the functions of the political parties, such as the recruiting of officeholders, the aggregation of interests and the formulation of policy, there are few fundamental differences between Switzerland and other countries. The same can be said of the decades-old criticism of the political parties and the laments about the "crisis of the parties".

Since the work of Gruner (1969, 1977), the political parties of Switzerland have hardly been subject to scientific analysis. Research on parties, as it is known in Germany or Austria, is largely non-existent in Switzerland. As a consequence, also the profound effects of social changes on the political parties since the 1970s have hardly been taken up as a topic of research. Moreover, data on the parties at the national and cantonal levels is very inadequate.

Nevertheless, the overall conditions for the scientific treatment of the political parties have improved considerably in the last few years. Since 1967, "Année politique suisse" has been publishing an increasingly comprehensive annual review of events and developments in the Swiss party landscape. The UNIVOX studies now make it possible to trace the positions of the political parties as well as their support among the population. The pooled data sets generated by the VOX surveys permit thorough analyses over longer periods of time (see Kriesi 1993; Armingeon 1995). In this respect, the greatest progress has been made in the field of electoral research. The Federal Office of Statistics *(Bundesamt für Statistik)* has made great efforts retroactively to standardise the presentation of election results on national (Bundesamt für Statistik 1995) and on cantonal level, which allow for comprehensive studies of party system change (Vatter 2002, Ladner (2003). With the first studies of the 1995 National Council elections, conducted under the name "Selects" (Farago 1996, Kriesi et al. 1998), data has been collected which allows for rather ambitious analyses (Armingeon 1998; Kriesi 1998; Linder 1998; Nabholz 1998), including comparison between the cantons (see e.g. Klöti 1998). And, fortunately Selects found its succession in 1999 (Hirter 2000, Sciarini et al. 2003) and further studies are guaranteed for the years to come.

In Switzerland, the standard references on the subject remain the same as before: the second, revised edition of Gruner's *Die Parteien in der Schweiz (The Parties in Switzerland)* and the publication by Kerr (1987). The changes and problems of the political parties during the 1980s are discussed by the contributions to the

1986 *Jahrbuch der Schweizer Vereinigung für Politische Wissenschaft* (Yearbook of the Swiss Association of Political Science) under the heading "Movements and Parties", and by the article by Klöti and Risi (1988). For more basic scientific findings, it is also worth consulting the relevant chapters in the textbooks by Kriesi (1995) and Linder (1999). New studies that deal with more specific aspects of party research are Papadopoulos (1991) on the role of small parties in direct democracy; Hug (1996) on the creation of new parties; Geser (1997) on the influence of religion on the organisation and activities of local-level parties; Brändle (1999) on the electoral programs of the national parties; Ladner and Brändle (1999) on the influence of direct democracy on the political parties; and Brändle (2002) on party financing.

Recent broader empirical studies on the parties have concentrated on the party elites, including women (Ballmer-Cao and Wenger 1989), the "mid-level party cadres" (Ayberk et al. 1991; Finger and Sciarini 1991), and the party representatives in the federal parliament (Liebig 1997). A major project of the Swiss National Science Foundation (NF) examined local-level parties (Ladner 1991; 1996; 1997; Geser et al. 1994) at the end of the 1990s and found a follow-up study in 2003. And another NF project, based on the work by Katz and Mair (see the next section), analysed changes in the organisation of parties at the cantonal and national levels (Ladner/Brändle 2001). The most important results from this study are included in this overview.

Party research abroad

In recent decades, the international literature on political parties and party systems has grown tremendously. The comprehensive literature review by Bartolini et al. (1998) lists no less than twelve thousand references for the period between 1945 and 1994, of which at least seven thousand date from after 1980 (see also Camarini and Hug 1998). Despite this development, there is evidence that the lines of questioning of the ground-breaking classics[1] have consolidated paradigmatically:

* at the level of party systems, there has been a debate for thirty years about whether the conflict lines of the 1920s have been "frozen", as stated in the pioneering work of Lipset and Rokkan (1967), or whether the structural effects of these conflicts are receding and giving way to a re-orientation along new cleavages;
* at the level of party organisations, the main question remains that by Michels in 1925 of how organisational goals and claims to power develop in relation to political demands. In the wake of the discussion about the "end of ideology", Kirchheimer (1965) took up this idea and, by suggesting the model of a "catch-all party", predicted a shift in party activity away from clear ideological

positioning towards the maximisation of votes. The more recent concepts of the "professional electoral party" (Panebianco 1988) and the "cartel party" (Katz and Mair 1995) capture similar developments.

In recent years, major contributions to research on political parties have come from international comparative research projects, most of which have been undertaken without the participation of Switzerland.[2] These include the project on "mid-level leadership strata of political parties", which examined the socio-structural composition, career paths, political attitudes and activities of the mid-level party leadership (Reif 1978; Niedermayer and Schmitt 1983; Reif, Cayrol and Niedermayer 1980; Schmitt 1984), or the work of the "Manifesto Research Group" of the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), which focussed on the quantitative analysis of parties' electoral and political programmes (Budge, Robertson and Hearl 1987). An ECPR project on party organisations headed by Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair attempted to analyse changes in party organisations in comparative perspective (Katz and Mair 1992a; 1994). Finally, there is the European Science Foundation's "Beliefs in Government" project, which dealt with changes in the relationship between citizens and the state, as well as with the role of political parties (see above all Klingemann and Fuchs 1995).

The various and often frequently revised textbooks illustrate numerous interesting aspects of (mostly European) political parties and party systems in comparative perspective. These include Smith (1989), Kriesi (1994), Lane and Ersson (1994; 1996), and Gallagher et al. (1995).

2 The Swiss Party System

Two aspects of the Swiss party system are particularly salient, especially in international comparison: the large number of parties, and the relative stability of the distribution of power. This combination is of particular interest since the literature on party research, influenced by the experiences of the Weimar Republic, the French Fourth Republic, and post-war Italy, has long viewed multi-party systems as inherently unstable compared with two-party systems such as that of Great Britain (see Mair 1990:18).

A multitude of parties

Switzerland is characterised by a large number of parties. In 1995, 16 parties were elected to the National Council: the FDP, the CVP, the SVP, the SPS, the LPS, the CSP, the GPS, the GBS, the LdU, the EVP, the PdA, the FRAP, the EDU, the FPS, the SD and the Lega, in 1999, after the disappearance of the FPS und the LdU, still 14 parties remained represented on national level.[3] In the first

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proportional elections in 1919, aside from 7 seats for splinter groups, only six parties succeeded in being elected to the National Council: the FDP, the CVP, the SVP, the SPS, the LPS and the EVP (see Bundesamt für Statistik 1989:89). In addition to this "horizontal fragmentation", the parties are strongly segmented along the vertical axis (in the cantons and communes).

In the 26 cantons, there are currently over 180 cantonal-level parties. These consist in large measure of cantonal sections of national parties, which operate in relative independence of the federal parties and are often difficult to bring into line with a nation-wide position. This frequently leads to voting slogans that diverge from those of the federal party. Hug's (1994) analysis of national votes between 1970 and 1987 reveals that among the four governing parties, the SP shows the lowest incidence of contested party slogans and diverging positions within the party, and that the smaller parties show greater internal cohesion. Further, politics at the national level is not equally accessible or important to all cantonal-level parties. Many of them, while affiliated to a national party organisation, will, because of their voter strength and the number of seats allotted to their canton, have little or no chance of winning a seat on the National Council, or of playing an important role within their national party.

At the communal level, there are nearly six thousand local-level party organisations (see Ladner 1991:132). Approximately 70 percent of these are local sections of the four governing parties, 15 percent are sections of other parties represented at the national level, and the remaining 15 percent are voter and citizen groups, municipal and communal associations, green or alternative groups, and parties of regional significance. Those parties with links beyond the municipal level maintain similarly loose relationships to the cantonal party organisations as those between the cantonal and national-level parties. The communal parties do not at all see themselves as mere branches of the cantonal parties.[4]

This great fragmentation and segmentation of the Swiss party system is due to structural and cultural characteristics and peculiarities of the political system, which include the following:

- Linguistic, confessional, social and cultural *heterogeneity* has led to a fragmented party system. The fact that the party system has not been divided along linguistic cleavages as well can be seen as a great accomplishment.[5] Even though not all parties have been equally successful in expanding to other linguistic regions, there is nonetheless no political tendency for which separate party organisations exist for the different linguistic regions.[6]
- The *decentralised* structure of the state increases the importance and diversity of political systems at the sub-national level. As a consequence, party systems at the cantonal and communal levels have developed independently and with more attention given to local conditions.

- The electoral system is of great importance for the form and composition of the party system. As opposed to majority-based systems, *proportional electoral systems* guarantee not only a more exact reproduction of the distribution of political power, but also facilitate the creation of new parties.[7] The influence of an electoral system on the number of political parties, especially at the communal level, can be proven empirically. Overall, there are more parties in those communes that use a proportional system (see Ladner 1991:169ff).[8]

- The system of *direct democracy* has contributed considerably to the early development of the political parties in Switzerland (see Gruner 1977: 25ff). Still today, direct democracy favours the small parties in that it promotes both the creation of new parties and the survival of the old. The larger parties, too, have begun to make use of the instruments of direct democracy.[9] Finally, it can be shown that intensive use of direct democratic instruments goes hand-in-hand with more professionalized party organizations (see Ladner/Brändle 1999).

However, the mere number of political parties within the system alone does not say much about the extent of its fragmentation, since it does not take into account the parties' size and importance. What is important is the *"number of parties that count"* (Kriesi 1995: 133; Kerr 1987: 117). According to Sartori (1976), a party that "counts" is a party that is large enough either *to become a part of the governing coalition* or to oppose an effective *veto* to government decisions. The first criterion narrows the number of Swiss parties that "count" to the four that are represented in the Federal Council: the FDP, the CVP, the SPS, and the SVP. Sartori included the LdU among the "parties that counted" because of its relative strength as an opposition party. Occasionally, one can also include the Greens and the Freedom party in this category for the same reason. At the end of the 20th century, though, the LdU no longer "counts", as it has practically disappeared, and the Freedom party is close to face the same fate.

And yet, things in Switzerland are still more complicated: in the *cantons and communes*, a number of other parties are strong enough to win a seat in government (e.g. the LPS, the LdU, the EVP, the GPS, the PdA, and the SGA). Beyond this, direct democracy allows even the smallest opposition parties to wield a veto and to have an impact on the political system which far exceeds their proportional strength.[10]

In international comparative studies, the number of political parties is determined with the help of the "effective number of parties" index, which is based on the Rae Index (Rae 1967:53ff) and was further developed by Laakso and Taagepera (1979). This index weighs parties according to their relative size. A glance beyond its borders shows that during the period from 1948 to 1995,

Switzerland, with an index of 5.9, belonged to those countries with the highest effective number of parties. In countries such as Germany, England, Austria, Malta, Australia, New Zealand, and the USA, this number is less than three. In the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Finland, and Switzerland it is more than five. Only Belgium has a higher number than Switzerland, and this only since the beginning of the 1980s.

Figure 1 shows that the development of the number of effective parties in Switzerland parallels that of other European countries. The post-World War II period is characterised by a rise that begins in the mid-1960s, a decline in the 1970s, and another rise in the 1980s. Most striking in the Swiss case is the sharp increase in 1919, which followed the introduction of a proportional electoral system, and the relatively sharp rise during the inter-war period. The marked drop since the 1991 elections to the Federal Council represents a deviation from international developments.

Figure 1: Development of effective number of parties since 1903: Switzerland in European perspective
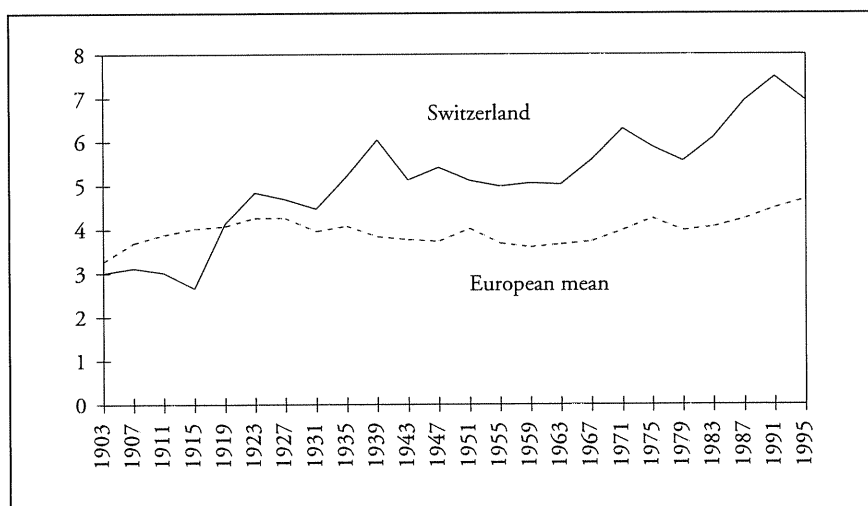
Source: my own calculations based on data from Mackie and Rose (1991; 1997) as well as from the European Journal of Political Research, Vol. 30, Nos. 3–4. The mean is composed of values for the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, (West) Germany, Finland, France, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

Apart from the number of parties, Sartori's (1976) controversial[11] but still dominant typology of party systems also draws on qualitative criteria. These include ideological distance between the parties, and the question of whether the parties strive towards the political centre or the extremes, that is, whether centrifugal or centripetal strategies prevail. The Swiss case shows that the practical application of this criterion can be problematic. For instance, there is an alternation between centrifugal and centripetal tendencies over time. Overall however, given the absence of strong anti-system parties, the Swiss party system – at least at the national level – represents an example of "moderate pluralism".[12]

The measurement of "spatial distances" between political parties is demanding, both methodologically and empirically. Beside the fact that political space is in reality multi-dimensional and thus irreducible to the simple left-right dimension[13], there is the question where and on what level to measure. Studies are usually based on polls of voters (VOX analyses of National Council elections, Farago 1986), party members, party leaders (Sciarini et al. 1994) or experts (see e.g. Huber and Inglehart 1995) as well as on the analysis of electoral and party programmes (Brändle 1997; Klingemann 1995: 189ff). The most common data used in international party research is often limited to the left-right dimension, since despite its shortcomings, the latter provides a useful simplification of actual political differences.

Table 1 ranks the Swiss parties at the different levels and allows comparison with international results. It is striking that, with a few exceptions, the positions of the parties along the left-to-right axis remain stable. Among the governing parties, the SP clearly positions itself on the left, while the bourgeois CVP, FDP and SVP are on the right. Further, it is noteworthy that the distance between the SP and the bourgeois party closest to it is considerably greater than that separating the extremes within the bourgeois camp. In terms of political blocks, the structure of the Swiss party system is clearly bipolar.[14]

It can also be shown that the electorate is generally located at the centre of the political spectrum, while the parties take up more extreme positions. For example, according to the local party presidents, the bourgeois parties are to the right of their electorates at all three levels, while the SP parties are located to the left of their voters. The only exception in the bourgeois camp is the self-assessment of the cantonal party presidents of the CVP. One can assume that this reflects the shift of the CVP towards the centre, while the party base tends, as before, to the right.

The electoral programmes of the SP and the FDP correspond to the assessment of the voters. The CVP also tends towards the centre, so that one could speak of centripetal competition. In contrast, the SVP has adopted a centrifugal strategy, and its electoral programme is to the right of its voters. Finally, in

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international comparison, it is conspicuous that Swiss FDP voters view themselves to the right of CVP voters, while internationally – according to Klingemann (1995:194) – liberal voters are generally to the left of their Christian Democratic counterparts.

Table 1: Various attempts at a left-to- right ordering of the Swiss parties and an international comparison

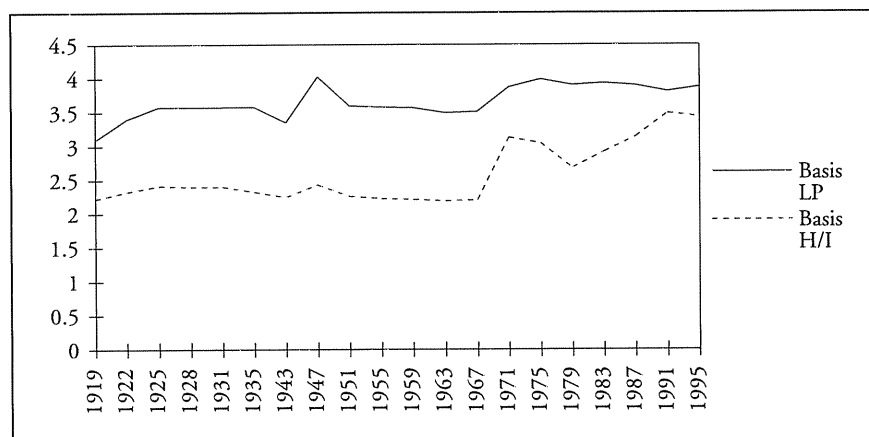| Estimation by:	PdA	SP	GPS	LdU	EVP	CSP	CVP	FDP	SVP	LPS	SD	FPS
local party presidents[1]												
own local party	1.4	3.3	3.3	4.8	5.5	5.6	6.3	6.9	7.0	8.0		
own cantonal party	1.3	3.2	3.5	4.9	5.2	6.0	6.5	7.2	7.3	8.2		
own national party	1.4	3.2	3.7	4.4	5.3	6.2	6.4	7.5	7.2	8.3		
cantonal party presidents[2]												
own cantonal party	1.0	2.6	2.3	4.6	4.7		5.4	6.8	7.3	6.8	7.8	8.4
own national party	1.0	2.6	3.2	5.2	5.9		5.4	6.8	7.7	7.6	7.6	8.2
mid-level party cadres[3]												
own national party		2.9	3.8				5.7	6.4	6.5	7.7		
voters/supporters												
Switzerland[4]		3.8	3.4				5.8	6.1	6.8	7.1		
int'l comparison[5]	2.8	4.2					6.6	6.1	7.0			
electoral programmes												
Switzerland[6]		4.3	4.2				5.5	6.1	7.0			
int'l comparison[7]	3.3	4.0					4.8	5.4	5.9			
experts												
Switzerland[8]		2.6					4.4	6.0	6.3			

*) Scales: left-right ordering is measured on a scale from 1 to 10: the sole exception is Klöti (1998), who uses an 11-point scale.
[1] 1990 poll of local party presidents (see Geser et al. 1994); [2] 1997 pool of cantonal party presidents (National Research Foundation Project by Ladner and Brändle); [3] 1988 and 1989 studies of mid-level party cadres (Sciarini et al. 1994: 110); [4] analysis of 1995 National Council elections (Klöti 1998); [5] Klingemann (1995: 194); time period: 1970s and 1980s; [6] Brändle (1997); time period: last 50 years, my own calculations based on Klingemann (1995 fn. 7); [7] Klingemann (1995: 189); [8] Huber and Inglehart (1995).

Concerning the polarisation of the Swiss party system, the data for European countries calculated by Lane and Ersson (1994:185) show that the Swiss system is characterised by a low degree of polarisations. The mean of 16 European countries shows a continuous increase in polarisation, after a phase of decline from 1955 to the mid-1960s. A detailed analysis of the Swiss case makes clear that such an undertaking is methodologically problematic.[15] Depending on how the parties are placed on the right-to-left axis, the graphs can vary (see *Figure 2*). If the calculations are based on expert estimates (Huber and Inglehart 1995), the period of decline between World War II and the establishment of the "magic formula" is followed by a rise at the end of the 1960s. The economic crisis of the 1970s

dampened polarisation, which begins to increase again in the 1980s, only to sta-
bilise with the onset of another crisis. The fluctuations are less pronounced, how-
ever, if the analysis is based on the assessments by the local party presidents. Here
too, there is evidence of a rise in polarisation since the mid-1960s, but this
increase begins to flatten in the mid-1970s.

Figure 2: Polarisation of the Swiss party system
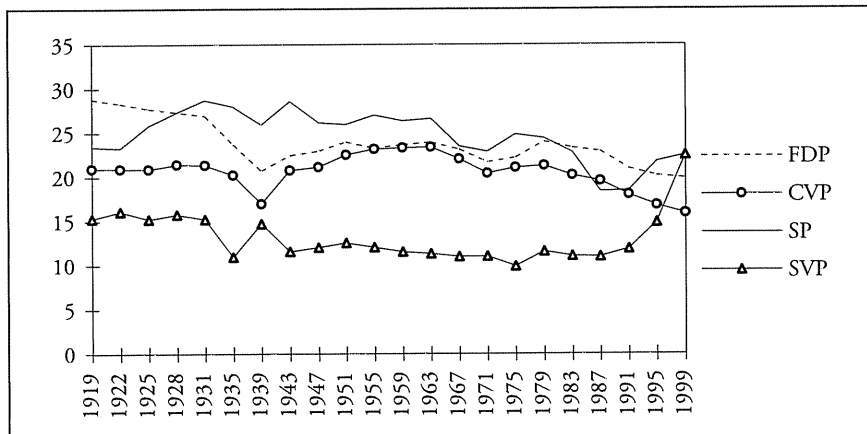
High stability
Given this multitude of parties, the pronounced stability of the parties' shares of
voters and seat during the 20th century is remarkable. *Figure 3* shows that the dif-
ference between the best and worst results of the SVP and the CVP from the
introduction of the proportional system until the 1995 election is less than seven
percent. For the FDP, this difference is nine percent; only the SP passes the ten-
percent mark. What is striking in the case of the FDP, is the marked decline after
the introduction of the proportional system in 1919 which continued until 1939.
The SVP also saw its share drop to around ten percent in the period preceding
the Second World War. It was only with the 1991 elections, and especially those
of 1995, that it again reached 15%. The 1999 elections brought for the SVP
another increase of almost 8%. Since the introduction of the proportional system
for elections to the National Council in 1919, such an important increase has
never occurred. The figures for the CVP show that there has been a marked
drop since 1963, and more particularly since 1979. Both the SP and the SVP
returned to the winners' column after the 1991 elections. The SP, however,

fell below the 25% mark before and immediately after the events of 1968, and below 20% in the 1987 and 1991 elections, which were strongly influenced by environmental issues.

Even though between 1919 and 1995, the voter share of the governing parties has dropped from approximately 90% to just above 70%, no other party has emerged to replace any of these on the basis of strong election results. The composition of the government with two seats for FDP, CVP and SP and one seat for SVP has remained unchanged since 1959, and with the exception of those who called for a transformation of the concordance system into a competition-based model of government, there had been little talk of changing.[16] In the 1999 elections the governing parties again received 80% of the votes. The 1999 National Council elections, however, have brought a completely new situation. The SVP has become the biggest party and claims a second seat in the Federal Council. Unwilling to change the "magic formula" the three other parties turned down the demands of the SVP.

As mentioned above, these figures should not obscure the fact that in some cantons, the smaller parties still play a much larger role than in other cantons. Nevertheless, at the end of the century the small parties have lost much of their attraction and given the success of the SVP, the notorious stability of the Swiss party system is clearly in danger.

Figure 3: Voter share of the parties represented in the Federal Council in National Council elections, 1919-1999


Source: Bundesamt für Statistik (1995).

This impressive stability over a very long period of time is a consequence of the principle of concordance. While the concordance system, together with the "magic formula", which has been in place since 1959, guarantees the large parties continuous participation in government, it has also led to a cartel-like blockage of political competition. Arrangements similar to the magic formula at the federal level had been established in numerous cantons and communes even before 1959. An additional reason for the fact that no other party has been able to establish itself to the same extent as the governing parties is the lack of support at the communal level (see Ladner 1997). On the one hand, local party sections are valuable recruitment pools for offices at higher levels; on the other hand, they help to establish and consolidate party ties. Recently, however, there has been a downward trend in this respect: the number of party representatives in communal governments is declining, and an increasing number of citizens' and voters' groups has been created (see Ladner 1996).

In comparative studies, the stability of political systems is usually measured on the basis of Pedersen's (1979) concept of *aggregate volatility*[17]. Aggregate volatility refers to the shift in voter share between two elections. *Figure 4* shows the development of volatility at the national level since 1920, and allows for comparison with other European countries during the post-war period. World War II disturbed the equilibrium of the party systems in practically every European country. The voters were required to orient themselves anew, which led to a high degree of volatility (Lane and Ersson 1994:189). By comparison, the 1950s were characterised by stronger party ties. In the late 1960s, volatility rose once again; since then, there has been a steady alternation between periods of high and low volatility.[18]

The average volatility value for the period since 1945 in Switzerland is 5.4; other countries with very low volatility include Austria, Sweden, and Great Britain. Conversely, the "new democracies" of Greece, Spain, and Portugal, as well as France and Denmark, show high volatility. These figures contradict the idea that political conditions are less stable today than they were in the past. This may be true of the calm 1950s, which ultimately led to the "magic formula", but it does not hold true for the elections held before, during and after World War II.[19] The Swiss party system experienced a period of greater dynamism in the second half of the 1960s. Right-wing parties such as the NA and the *Republicans* profited from concerns about immigration *("Überfremdungsfrage")*; the LdU and the parties of the extreme Left benefited from the demands of the social movements of 1968. The situation stabilised with the onset of the economic crisis of the 1970s. The creation of the Automobile Party and the Greens led to renewed turbulence, and in the 1990s, volatility has remained stable at a slightly higher level of about eight percent.

Figure 4: Aggregate volatility: Switzerland in international comparison
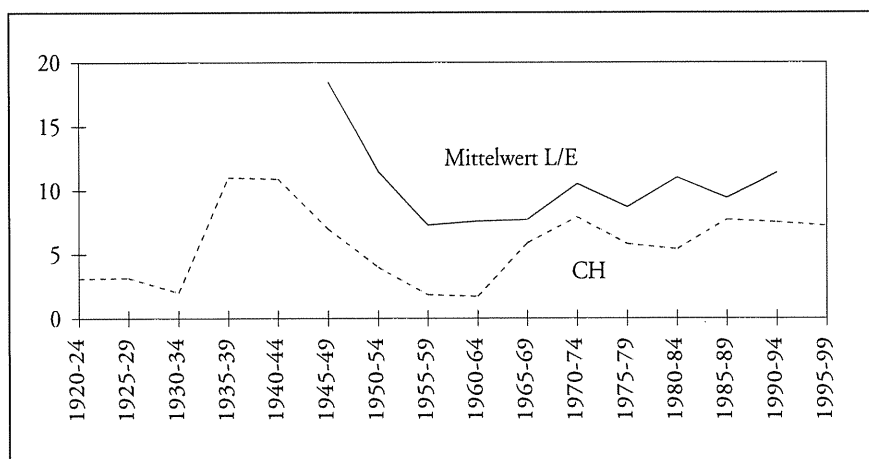
The Swiss party system in flux?

The Swiss party system is not only an example of a stable multi-party system, but it also seems to confirm the "frozen party system" thesis advanced by Lipset and Rokkan (1967), at least at first glance. Lipset and Rokkan found that, with very few, albeit important, exceptions, the western European party systems still reflect the central dimensions of conflict that were present at the granting of full suffrage at the turn of the century.[20]

Nevertheless, there have been considerable changes in and around the Swiss party system since 1960. The traditional parties have faced competition from re-emerging parties such as the LdU as well as from newly created parties (the NA, the POCH, the SAP, the GPS, the GBS, and the AP). New social movements (such as the anti-nuclear, women's, youth, peace, and ecological movements) have also entered the political stage, using unconventional forms of political participation to create unrest in the corridors of power.

The emergence of these new forms of interest representation has largely been the consequence of the dominant parties' inability to respond to new needs and demands. During the 1990s, however, at least some of the established parties seem to have succeeded in integrating the demands of these "opposition" groups, thus depriving them of their *raison d'être*.

Overall, the question remains how far one can extrapolate from the stability of election results to the general stability of the party system and, further, to the stability of the cleavages which structure society. Change and stability within the party system must be distinguished from change and stability at the level of the voters. Here, clear shifts have taken place in recent decades which cannot be apprehended through a rigid focus on the party system. One need only think of the critical attitude of broad sections of the population towards the political parties, or of the loosening of the party ties which previously were maintained through social origin. Even if these developments are not irreversible, they seem to have had a lasting impact on the party system. Nevertheless, the recent success of the SVP could also be the result of larger process of realignment which might change the Swiss party system considerably.

One further thought that must be added here relates to the actors themselves. Even though the number and name of the "political players" may have changed little over the years, this does not mean that the same people are still playing the same games at the same table. Not least in view of the thesis of the "frozen party system", we must remain focussed on the parties themselves – on the changes in their ideological orientations and, above all, of their organisations.

3 Origins and Development of the Swiss Parties

The development of the parties in the nineteenth century
The Swiss parties originated at the beginning of the 19th century. A number of relatively unstructured political movements, usually based on common ideas and centring around well-known political personalities, were the precursors of the political parties (Segesser et al. 1996: 234). The first parties were founded in those cantons which witnessed early and particularly fierce fights for democratisation.[21] The three main political ideologies of liberalism, conservatism, and socialism played a decisive role in their creation.

The *liberal movement*, inspired by the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, called for more political rights, freedom of trade, and the creation of a strong, centralised federal state. The *conservatives*, in contrast, were in favour of a loose confederation, and sought to preserve the hegemony of the Church (especially with regard to the education system) and the traditional feudal structures of Swiss society. This conflict gave rise to the war of the *Sonderbund*, which came to an end in 1848 with the foundation of the federal state. Within the newly established Federation, the bourgeois parties remained dominant until the end of the century.[22]

During the second half of the 19th century, the consequences of industrialisation began to manifest themselves. The bourgeois parties (Radicals and Liberals) not only dominated the political scene, but also profited from industrial

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expansion, which led to enormous concentrations of political power in the hands of individual groups as well as to considerable social inequalities. Although initially, the workers joined the radical wing of the liberals, they turned to the democratic movement in the 1860s. Their political demands centred on the introduction of popular rights (the initiative and the referendum), social reforms and the expansion of the education system. After 1870, under the influence of the Socialist Internationale, attempts were made to organise the working class into an independent Social Democratic party, which was eventually created in 1888. In response to this development, the Radical Party (FDP) and the Christian Democratic Party (CVP) began to strengthen their internal organisation; these parties established themselves at the national level in 1894 and 1912, respectively.[23]

A typical feature of the Swiss political parties is that they did not emerge from parliamentary factions or electoral committees, but directly from the voting population itself (Gruner 1977: 25ff) or from citizens' associations. The latter promoted the process of transformation and democratisation in many cantons, first by submitting petitions and requests, and then by initiating referenda and elections (see Linder 1999). Opinion differs as to whether the parties were created by the elites or whether they were organised "from below". Gruner (1977: 25ff), who has called the parties the "children of popular rights" ("Kinder der Volksrechte"), emphasises the important or even causal impact of universal suffrage, popular rights (the referendum), and voting campaigns. According to him, the emergence of the parties was a form of grassroots mobilisation that led directly to the creation of popular or mass parties, of the type that developed elsewhere only much later. Basing his argument on case studies, Jost (1986: 324) opposes this view by arguing that the parties emerged from already existing, non-political associations and noble societies. From this perspective, the actual trigger came from "above", and the mass movements were merely spontaneous eruptions, provoked and controlled by the bourgeois elite. The latter had already taken shape at the end of the 18th century and, together with the various noble societies, was able to set up a dense system of communication.

The cantonal and communal levels played a decisive role during the early phase of the evolution of the political parties. The local-level sections of the FDP and the CVP had been set up already at the turn of the century, while those of the Social Democratic Party (SP) were created between 1910 and 1920 (see Ladner 1996: 5).[24]

The Swiss parties in transformation
The transformation of the political parties is related to general processes of social change.[25] However, not all parties are equally responsive to social transformations; their different social origins and ideological orientations predispose them to react

differently to structural and cultural changes. Nevertheless, such events as post-war economic expansion, the Cold War, the protest movements of 1968, the recession of the 1970s, the emergence of environmental issues, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the question of European integration, globalisation and the economic crisis of the 1990s, have left their marks on all the political parties. In what follows, we will divide the post-war period into five successive phases.

From the 1950s to the early 1960s. The phase of stability (or, against the backdrop of the Cold War, of paralysis) of the Swiss party system reached its apogee with the introduction of the "magic formula" *(Zauberformel)* in 1959. During this phase, the strength of the governing parties remained relatively constant, and the party system was characterised by a low degree of polarisation.

From the mid-1960s to the early 1970s. In the mid 1960s, the party system began to experience some turbulence. While the three bourgeois parties, and especially the CVP, moved towards the centre, ideological conflicts and political polarisation generally grew more intense, and the system of concordance was thrown into question. The Independent Party (LdU), an opposition party, together with National Action (NA) and the Republicans, gained votes at the expense of the three largest governing parties. The demands of the protest movements of the 1960s were also taken up within the parties. The ensuing conflicts induced the parties to rethink their organisational structure in order to accommodate the "participation needs of the younger generation". An "extra-parliamentary opposition" emerged to the left of the SP, and various small leftist parties were created (Maoists, RML, POCH, PSA).

From the mid-1970s to the early 1980s. The economic crisis began to slow down the dynamism of the late 1960s. The polarisation of the party system levelled out and even receded in some degree. The governing parties consolidated their position. In 1983, after the victory of the Left in the 1975 elections, the Radical Party, with its slogan "more freedom and self-responsibility – less state", asserted itself as the strongest party for the first time since 1925.

From the mid 1980s to the early 1990s. The environmental issue, which emerged at the beginning of the 1980s, began to have a political impact. The main challenges to the governing parties now came from the Green Party and the Automobile Party. In 1991, the four governing parties' support fell below 70% for the first time since their accession to power. Moreover, the power of the extreme Left began to wane. At first, these parties formed a green-alternative alliance; later on, they were absorbed by either the GPS or the SP. The latter embarked on a more pragmatic political course.

Since the early 1990s. Two of the four governing parties have succeeded in reversing the downward trend. The SVP, under the influence of Christoph Blocher, with his defensive attitude towards European integration, has set itself

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on a clear and successful course, first towards the right end of the political spectrum and then in the direction of neoliberalism. The SP, in turn, under the leadership of National Councillor Peter Bodenman, has been able to establish itself as the sole political force of the left-green spectrum. By contrast, the small parties of the Right, as well as the Greens and the LdU, have all lost much of their importance. Nowadays, the polarisation of the party system is no longer driven by small extremist parties, but rather by two big poles, the SP and the SVP. The FDP, in contrast, finds itself in a less comfortable position. The fall of the Berlin Wall has deprived the party of its main enemy, and it seems incapable of presenting liberal solutions suitable for the changing circumstances of the future. Finally, the CVP's usual problems (great social diversity, tensions between conservatives, business circles and Christian-Socialists, the restriction of its membership to Catholics, and the process of secularisation) are continuously aggravating, threatening its position as one of the major political parties. By the end of the 1990s the SVP happens to be the strongest party as far as its share of the votes is concerned. The party tries to become the leading force among the bourgeois parties and strongly influences the political agenda.

The four governing parties
According to its own declarations, the Radical Party *(Freisinnig-Demokratische Partei [FDP])* advocates a free-market economy with a business-friendly framework. It supports low taxes, a cutting-back of the welfare state, an efficient educational system, and a well-functioning infrastructure. It is generally opposed to market interventions by the state.

In the aftermath of the 1968 protest movements, and in view of the success of the xenophobic parties in the 1971 elections to the National Council, the FDP redefined its position. A new basic programme was drafted and a reform of its statutes was initiated. The basic objective of these endeavours was to create a modern, centralised and membership-based party with democratic decision-making structures, an aim which to this day has not yet been implemented in full. Between the late 1970s and the early 1980s, the FDP, with its slogan "more freedom and self-responsibility – less state", again gained momentum. It achieved a great victory in the 1983 elections to the National Council, from which it emerged as the strongest party for the first time since 1925. Subsequently, the FDP modified its political course somewhat through the so-called "Rigi Declaration" *(Rigi-Thesen)*. According to this new programme, the FDP was still opposed to the expansion of the state, but it nevertheless called for the qualitative improvement of public services.

After the mid 1980s, the FDP's upward trend began to slow down. The question arose whether the party might have neglected new issues such as environmental protection or disarmament (see Klöti 1985). Consequently, the FDP

coined the concept of "eco-liberalism" *(Ökoliberalismus)* as a liberal response to the problem of environmental degradation (René Rhinow in *NZZ* of 16-17 May, 1987). However, the party was weakened by internal conflicts and problems with some of its leaders (e.g., the forced resignation of Federal Councillor Kopp in 1988), and it faced increasing competition at the fringes from the Greens on the one hand, and the Freedom Party on the other. Moreover, efforts to display more internal cohesion and to gain profile through the promotion of strong political personalities or by commenting on concrete political issues did not prove successful in increasing the party's popularity. Paradoxically, the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) and the "triumph of neo-liberal principles" did not provide the FDP with new dynamism. The position paper entitled "Perspectives on a Liberal Way of Life" (1995) reveals the problems of the party clearly. The paper was an attempt to enhance the party's popularity among the younger, urban, better educated, and more progressive parts of the population, which in recent years have increasingly turned to the SP. And at the beginning of the 21st Century the FDP finds itself under increasing pressure from the SVP, not knowing whether it should move towards the Right to prevent further losses to the SVP or move towards the centre to attract the more urban voters.

The *Christian Democratic Party (Christlich Demokratische Volkspartei [CVP])* professes the Christian Social doctrine and advocates the establishment of a social market economy, allowing for state interventions to protect workers, craftsmen, and agriculture. On ethical and moral issues, it adopts a conservative stance, and it attributes great importance to family values.

Since the mid-1960s, the CVP has been on a downward course, which was interrupted only temporarily in the elections of 1975 and 1979. In 1970, the party sought to transform the umbrella organisation of the cantonal parties into a federally organised membership-based party. These objective were not achieved, however, as is shown by the still-identical goals of the reform proposals of 1996. The fundamental problems of the CVP have barely changed over the last decades. The party has not been able to cast off its image as a confessional party, and thus continues to suffer from the still-ongoing process of secularisation, loosening the ties between the population and the Church. Moreover, the party's internal diversity prevents it from acquiring a more clearly defined political profile; there is little cooperation between the "sociological groupings" (Christian Socialists, "Working Group on the Economy and Society", Women of the CVP) within the party.[26]

The party's sustained efforts in the early 1990s to put an end to its loss of voters by creating a more attractive image have so far remained just as unsuccessful as the party's new marketing concepts and its declared transformation from a "dynamic party in the middle of the political spectrum" to a "modern party of

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the centre". Moreover, the CVP's initially open attitude towards the question of European integration turned into a stumbling block. This policy not only led to a loss of votes, but also allowed the SVP to penetrate into the traditional terrain of the CVP. With the losses in the 1999 elections the CVP has become the weakest of the four governmental parties, encountering increasing difficulties to justify its second seat in the Federal Council.

The *Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei, [SP])* generally stands for the protection of the socially weak and the environment. It is an advocate of subsidy programmes, active state intervention in the economy, and the creation of a strong social safety net that does not push the socially disadvantaged into the role of supplicants.

The rank and file of the SP has changed significantly since the 1960s. Due to the rapid expansion of the service sector, the labour force, from which the SP traditionally drew its supporters, has contracted considerably. However, the party largely succeeded in compensating for these losses by turning to the more educated social strata, especially to employees in the educational system or in social work. More than any other party, however, the SP has been challenged in its self-image and in its claim to represent certain segments of the population by other parties as well as by the new social movements. In the 1970s and 1980s, the SP faced competition mainly from parties of the extreme Left (POCH, SAP), while subsequent challenges have come mainly from the Greens.

During the second half of the 1980s, the lines of conflict within the party began to soften. Gradually, an intermediate position began to prevail, which focused less on fundamental questions of social organisation and favoured a more pragmatic and success-oriented policy. The basic objective of the party leadership was to achieve a red-green majority in parliament. In several cantons, the SP entered into an electoral alliance with the Greens, a strategy which in the German-speaking areas stood in sharp contrast to the party's traditional principles. Moreover, the party put more emphasis on the needs of the market economy so as to improve its image with business-friendly circles *(Wirtschaftsprogramm 1994)*. During the early 1990s, this strategy showed its first signs of success at the communal and cantonal levels. In the 1995 elections to the National Council, the SP obtained 15 seats, increasing its support by 3.3% to 21.8%, and again emerged as the strongest party. In 1999, the SP gained additional votes, but it nevertheless lost its leading position to the SVP. Under the leadership of Ms Koch, the party seemed to oppose new trends in social democracy, put forward, for example, by Tony Blair in Great Britain and Gerhard Schröder in Germany. Overall, however, the successes of the SP did not significantly strengthen the red-green camp as a whole, as the Greens were among the losers of the last two elections.

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The *Swiss People's Party (Schweizerische Volkspartei [SVP])* favours a free market economy, even though in agricultural policy, it tolerates massive state intervention. Domestically, the party puts great emphasis on the maintenance of law and order, and in foreign policy, it vehemently opposes Switzerland's accession to supranational organisations. Of the four governing parties, the SVP has arguably undergone the most profound transformation. It was founded in 1936 as the Farmers', Trade and Citizens' Party *(Schweizerische Bauern-, Gewerbe-, und Bürgerpartei [BGB])*. Large farmers' parties had, however, already existed since 1917 in the canton of Zurich and since 1918 in Bern. With the shrinking of its traditional membership base of farmers and merchants, the SVP, as well, was forced to reorient itself. The merger with the Democrats of the cantons of Grisons and Glarus in 1971 revived the petit bourgeois element of the party, which is also expressed by the change of the party's name from BGB to SVP (Klöti/Risi 1988: 723). By the early 1970s, the SVP had become a party of the political centre. It sought to strengthen its image as a true peoples' party and a party of the middle class by pointing to the large number of employees in its ranks. However, this strategy of "renewal" did not lead to political success. Neither the new party programme of the mid-1970s, which gave more attention to the concerns of employees, women, and the younger generations, nor the "dynamic opening", which was initiated in 1984, significantly increased its voter share.

In the early 1980s, an internal conflict broke out between the conservative Zurich section and the more liberal wing of the party, centred in Bern. One hotly debated issue was the question of European integration, on which the Zurich section, which was opposed to the EEA Treaty, eventually prevailed. The rejection of the EEA Treaty in a popular vote consolidated the Zurich section's internal predominance and strengthened the position of the SVP at the national level. Subsequently, SVP section were also set up in the traditionally Christian-Democratic or liberal cantons of Solothurn, Basle-Town, Zug, Lucerne, and St. Gall, which closely followed the course set by the Zurich section. In the 1995 national elections, the SVP's rightist course again met with broad approval. With an additional 5 seats and an increase in its electoral support by 3% (to 14.9%), it was clearly among the winners and recovered the position it enjoyed before the Second World War. Finally, the 1999 elections marked a real breakthrough. The SVP became the strongest party with 22.5% of the vote (+ 7.6). The party not only consolidated is position in the cantons of Lucerne, Zug, Solothurn, Argovia and St. Gall, where it had entered the national political arena in the 1995 elections, but also gained votes in "new" cantons like Basle-City, Appenzell Inner Rhoden, Valais, Geneva an Jura. Given this success, the SVP claimed a second seat in the Federal Council. This demand, however, was refused by the other parties at the end of 1999 in the re-election of the government following the election of

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the National Council. In the 1999 elections the SVP became the strongest party, gaining just a little bit more votes than the Social Democrats. Since then it has increased its efforts to attract voters especially in the catholic and the French speaking cantons, where it has been rather weak previously.

The other parties of national importance

In the 19th century, the Liberals formed the right wing of the Radical Party. The *Liberal Party (Liberale Partei der Schweiz [LPS])*, which between 1961 and 1977 carried the name Liberal Democratic Union, was established at the national level in 1913 under the name Liberal Democratic Party. This party pursues a conservative, anti-statist and anti-centralist policy (Klöti/Risi 1988: 725). During the last 30 years, the LPS has overall been able to maintain its electoral base, but in the 1995 elections to the National Council, it lost three seats in the National Council and one seat in the Council of States. The 1999 elections brought an additional loss of 0.4%; the party lost one seat in the National Council, and is no longer represented in the Council of States. The LPS remains confined to the French-speaking region (Geneva, Vaud, Neuchâtel) and the canton of Basle-Town. Attempts to widen its sphere of influence by expanding to Basle-Country, Valais, Fribourg, Jura, Bern or Zurich were largely unsuccessful. The LPS has thus not been able to reach the goal laid down in its new statute of 1977 of gaining more influence at the federal level.

The *Protestant Party (Evangelische Volkspartei [EVP])*, which represents the counter-pole to the Catholic Conservatives, was set up in 1919 at the national level with the explicit aim of promoting Christian and social values. As a small centre party, the EVP has frequently been confronted with a choice between different potential allies. In the early 1970s, the possibility of merging with the CVP was hotly debated. At the same time, the SP attempted to take over the party. The 1971 parliamentary alliance with the Liberals was terminated after the 1979 elections and replaced by an alliance with the LdU. The EVP's fundamental ethical and moral conservatism seems to have helped the party maintain its internal cohesion. Even though the party is composed of adherents of both the state Church and the Free Church, it has not experienced irresolvable internal conflicts. During the last thirty years, the EVP has been able to maintain its share of votes at the national level, which, however, is rather low, at 2%. Finally, given the decline of the LdU, the EVP had to look for a new partner to form a parliamentary group after the 1999 elections. Together with a former LdU and a representative of the EDU, the EVP created a mini parliamentary group.

The *Independent Party (Landesring der Unabhängigen [LdU])* was created during the economic crisis by the *Migros* founding father, Gottlieb Duttweiler. In 1935, it entered the political arena with an immediate electoral success, obtaining

7 seats in the National Council. Ideologically, the LdU was based on a combination between the belief in social capital and in free enterprise. Since the 1970s, the ties to Migros have weakened considerably. Between 1951 and 1983, the LdU attracted members from the most diverse parties and established itself as the strongest opposition party. However, since the mid 1990s, it has experienced a steep decline in support. In the 1995 elections to the National Council, the LdU obtained less than two percent, and in 1999 less the one percent of the votes. Subsequently, the party was dissolved.

The LdU has been forced to change its ideological outlook more than once. While in the early 1970s the party was dominated by neo-Marxist ideas, Green tendencies have become more influential since the 1980s. This reorientation did not have the desired effect, however, since the "green votes" were pocketed mainly by the Green Party. In 1992, an attempt was made to put the party on a more moderate course, and in 1996 it again turned to environmental issues.

In the early 1970s, the first Green groupings entered the political scene in the French-speaking parts of Switzerland (Neuchâtel, Vaud), where they won some seats in the local parliaments (Rebeaud 1987: 138). A Green party was founded in 1978 in the canton of Zurich. Up until the 1980s, the Greens were still split into two different camps: the "cucumber Greens", that is, the more moderate "Federation of Green Parties" (GPS) on the one hand, and the "watermelon Greens", represented by the left-green "Green Alternative" (GRAS) on the other. Both groupings participated in the 1993 national elections (see Ladner 1989). Towards the end of the 1980s, there was a gradual rapprochement in many cantons (especially Lucerne, Basle-Country, and St.Gall) between the GRAS, which was composed of former members of the extreme Left, and the Green Party. By the mid 1990s, the "merger" was almost complete.

While the GRAS kept a more local focus, the "green Greens" intensified their efforts to establish themselves at the national level. In 1986, the Federation of Green Parties adopted the official name Green Party *(Grüne Partei der Schweiz [GPS])*. They achieved their greatest success not, as expected, in 1987, but only in 1991, when they gained 14 seats and 6.1% of the votes. However, this result was to a large extent a consequence of the merger with cantonal sections which previously belonged to the Green Alternative. Initially, the Greens were also supported by some bourgeois voters, but the incorporation of large parts of the former Green Alternative strengthened the leftist element within the party, turning the Green Party into a left-Green party. The ensuing loss of potential voters, together with the re-emergence of the SP and the deteriorating economic situation, were arguably the main reasons for the GPS's loss of popularity in the 1990s. In the national elections of 1995, the Greens lost almost half of their seats in the National Council. In 1999, however, they able to maintain their remaining share of votes.

In 1985, the so-called Automobile Party, created in reaction to the Greens, began to attract attention in the region of Zurich. Its basic philosophy was to apply the notion of individual freedom to the freedom of the car driver, and the party's principle target was the "red-green" policy of environmental protection. In the late 1980s, the Automobile Party achieved an extraordinary increase in votes at the expense of the bourgeois parties. With largely unknown candidates, it gained seats in various cantonal (St. Gall, Schaffhausen, Thurgovia, Argovia, Solothurn) and city (Bern, Biel, St. Gall) parliaments, where it formed its own parliamentary groups. In order to shed its image as a single-issue party and increase its appeal with additional segments of the population, the party changed its name in 1994 to *Freedom Party (Freiheits-Partei der Schweiz [FPS])*. In the national elections of 1995, the Freedom Party achieved only meagre results, and subsequently it suffered severe losses at the cantonal level as well. While the victories of the Automobile Party were closely linked to the emergence of the Greens, its decline was a consequence of the rise of the SVP. In 1999, the FPS fell below the one percent mark, and its existence became now seriously threatened and it almost disappeared.

The evolution of the parties to the left of the SP was rather turbulent. In 1965, the *Left Opposition* (China-oriented groupings, SAP[27], POCH[28]) gained prominence, but towards the mid-1980s it was almost entirely absorbed by the different Green groupings and the SP. Only the PdA (see Fischer 1988) was able to preserve its independence.

The *Labour Party (Partei der Arbeit [PdA])* is the successor of the Communist Party, which was banned by the Federal Council in 1939. It was founded in 1943 under the name *Workers' Party (Arbeiterpartei/partie ouvrier)* in Geneva, and a year later it changed its name to PdA. After the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, a discussion within the PdA was launched on the future orientation of the party. A new party programme was drafted which included several new elements. The notion of class struggle (the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat had already been dropped) was replaced by the motif of a "movement for socialism" *("Bewegung für den Sozialismus")*. New issues, such as gender equality, the reduction of North-South disparities, and environmental protection, were given more importance. The basic objective of the party is to introduce democratic principles into all spheres of life by uniting the reform-minded segments of the population in a popular socialist movement (Année politique 1990: 337). During the 1990s, the PdA was able to strengthen its position somewhat. However, the party remains largely confined to the French-speaking areas, where it nevertheless has scored some astonishing results.

The development of the political Right has been characterised by considerable turbulence and internal quarrels. The *National Action (Nationale Aktion für Volk und Heimat [NA])*, which successfully launched two anti-foreigner initiatives

(Überfremdungs-initiativen) in 1970 and 1974, together with the Republicans (founded by James Schwarzenbach), obtained 7,5% in 1971 and 5,5% in 1975. Subsequently, however, the *Republicans* proved unable to achieve similar results, and the party was dissolved in 1989. The NA, in contrast, recovered from its 1979 setback during the 1980s, benefiting from the growing anti-foreigner sentiment among large parts of the population, which was related to the rising number of refugees and asylum seekers (Klöti/Risi 1988: 725). In the mid-1980s, the NA and its ally, "Vigilance", scored spectacular results in some cities, as well as in the cantons of Lausanne and Geneva. These achievements were largely undone by the next elections, however. In 1990, the party changed its name to *Swiss Democrats (Schweizer Demokraten [SD])* and turned to issues other than that of *Überfremdung*. Since the mid-1990s, the main challenges to the SD have come from the right wing of the SVP, which on many issues (e.g. Europe, asylum, drugs policy) pursues practically the same course.

In September 1975, the former Republicans and the Zurich and Vaud sections of the National Action merged to form the *Swiss Democratic Union (Eidgenössich-Demokratische Union [EDU])*, a party that advocates a "synthesis of patriotism and socialism". The Union was joined by dissidents of the Berne EVP, who opposed the lifting of the ban on Jesuits *(Jesuitenverbot)* (Année politique 1975: 179). According to its own declarations, the EDU supports the creation of a social order based on biblical principles, but in reality it professes essentially right-wing and conservative values. While the EDU was long confined to the canton of Berne, where it has held one of the National Council seats since 1991, towards the end of the 1980s, it also gained a foothold in other cantons. In the National Council elections of 1999, the EDU obtained votes in six cantons (Zurich, Berne, St.Gall, Argovia, Thurgovia, and Vaud), but at the national level its share remains low, at a mere 1,3%.

In the early 1990s, the rightist camp was also joined by the Lega dei ticinesi. In the 1991 National Council elections in Ticino, in which it obtained 23.5% of the votes and two seats, the Lega asserted itself as the third political power of the canton. The Lega is a populist protest movement, which simultaneously represents the interests of pensioners, car drivers, the transport businesses and building contractors. Overall, it expresses a diffuse anti-statist sentiment.

4 The Party Organisations

The "weak" Swiss parties
The political parties in Switzerland are generally considered to occupy a weak position within the political system (see, e.g., Rhinow 1986: 105; Longchamp 1994: 25; Rickenbacher 1995: 13). Most analysts point to the lack of formal recognition by the state[29], as well as the parties' handicap vis-à-vis interest

groups and social movements as a consequence of the pre-parliamentary consultation procedure and direct democracy. Other explanatory factors have more to do with the internal organisation of the parties, for instance, the small and largely non-professional party apparatus, limited financial resources, and the lack of centralisation and internal homogeneity. These features of the political parties can be largely explained with reference to the special characteristics of the Swiss political system.

- Given Switzerland's *small size*, the potential of recruitment is low; together with the country's strong *social and cultural diversity*, this makes it difficult for the parties to achieve internal homogeneity. Moreover, the *Milizsystem*, which is in part a consequence of the country's small size, but is also seen as an element of Swiss political culture, generally weakens the position of the parties. Even though the *Milizsystem* has some advantages in that if favours the combination of roles across the social and political sub-systems (Neidhart 1986: 42), it also implies that most political work is done by after-hours politicians in a largely unprofessional manner. Finally, as the parties are unable to offer their members paid positions, party clientelism does not significantly enhance the attractiveness of the political parties.

- The very *decentralised* structure of the Swiss political system hampers the creation of powerful parties at the national level. In comparison to the national parties, the cantonal parties are generally much stronger (Fagagnini 1978; Hug 1994: 86; Neidhart 1986: 41; Seiler 1987: 119). In the various cantons, the parties are confronted with different party systems and configurations of power. Moreover, they are not backed by the same segments of the population in all cantons. Indeed, it is tempting to view the Swiss party system not as a single system, but as composed of 26 different systems. Obviously, this poses great coordination problems for the national-level parties. At the same time, however, a decentralised party structure enhances flexibility in dealing with local and regional particularities (Kriesi 1986: 337) and offers more opportunities for voter identification with the parties. Thus, in cases where the cantonal party deviates from the national party, the party members can choose with which part of the party to identify.

- Even though, originally, the system of *direct democracy* promoted the formation of political parties in Switzerland (see Gruner 1977: 25ff), most analysts argue that, at the end of the 20th century, direct democracy actually weakens their position (see Gruner 1984: 150). During voting campaigns, the financially strong interest groups and the social movements with their mobilising capacities clearly outpace the political parties. In addition, given the possibility of correcting unfavourable decisions by the popular vote, elections are generally less important. Recent studies have shown, however, that

in those cantons where initiatives and referenda are frequent, the parties
tend to be better organised (Ladner/Brändle 1999). A large number of direct
democratic votes tends to force the parties to engage in constant political
activism, and this might lead them to professionalise their internal organisa-
tion. It must be said, however, that the better organised parties also tend to
resort more often to direct democratic instruments.

In legal terms, the Swiss parties are organised as associations *(Vereine)*, according
to Articles 60-79 of the Civil Code (ZBG). Their purpose, means and internal
organisation are laid down in their statutes. The political parties tend to tailor
their internal structure to the political system and especially to their electoral dis-
tricts, if their resources allow them to do so. Accordingly, one can find neighbour-
hood parties, local parties (which as a rule comprise one or more municipalities,
district parties, cantonal parties, and national parties. In general, however, only
the big parties have such a differentiated internal structure.

The transformation of party organisations

In recent research on political parties, it is generally accepted that, in order to pro-
vide a thorough analysis of the parties which also takes into account changes over
time, one cannot proceed from the assumption that the parties constitute "homo-
geneous entities" (see Daalder/Mair 1983: 21ff). Katz and Mair (1993), for
example, distinguish between "three faces" of the political parties: the "party in
public office", which comprises mainly the political office holders; the "party on
the ground", which includes the members, activists, donors and regular voters;
and finally, the "party in central office", consisting of the party leadership and sec-
retariat at the national level.

There is a broad consensus among the most diverse of authors (Duverger
1959; Neumann 1956; Kirchheimer 1965; Epstein 1967) that the parties have
passed through different stages of development during the 20th century
(Katz/Mair 1990: 5). Three forms of political parties are usually distinguished,
which also correspond to different phases in their development. Until about
1920, the parties were mainly *"cadre or elite parties"*. With the consolidation of
the Western democracies between 1920 and 1960, actual *"mass-membership parties"*
emerged. Since 1960, the parties have become dissociated from their membership
base and turned into "catch-all parties" *("Allerweltsparteien")* (Kirchheimer 1965)
or into *professional electoral parties* (Panebianco 1988). Neither of these two are
committed to "grand ideologies" or to a particular segment of the population;
rather their main objective is to increase their votes and gain access to political
offices.[30] Katz and Mair (1995) add a further party type, the *"cartel party"*, which
has developed since 1970. This new form of party has moved closer to, and is in
part subsidised by, the state.[31]

The transformation of the Swiss party organisations

In the aftermath of the event of 1968, which led to a loss of confidence in the political establishment and the emergence of the new social movements, the Swiss political parties initiated a "participatory revolution". In the 1970s, the three main bourgeois parties in particular made attempts to adapt their internal structures to changing needs and circumstances.[32] The principal aims of these endeavours were to open the parties to larger segments of the population[33], to professionalise and centralise the party organisations, to introduce the principle of membership, and to render the parties internally more democratic.[34]

In retrospect, it can be argued that the parties have largely failed to achieve these goals. The bourgeois parties in particular can hardly be said to show more internal cohesion. As before, dissenting party slogans and quarrels between internal factions abound. The membership principle has not been introduced neither by the CVP nor by the FDP, and professionalisation has progressed only to a very limited extent. As far as internal democratisation is concerned, the 1990s have even witnessed a "backlash". Politics is increasingly dominated by the media and driven by strategic calculations and the management of events. As a consequence, the party leadership must be able to manoeuvre in relative independence of the party base. Moreover, since politics itself has changed, the need for participation at the party base has declined as well.[35]

Professionalisation

In the mid 1970s, the parties of the medium-sized and larger cantons began to staff their secretariats with full-time employees (Fagagnini 1978: 91). Polls conducted by the author in 1996/97 show that the cantonal parties have about 90 full-time positions in total (see *Figure 2*). Added to the roughly 50 positions of the national party organisations, this amounts to a total of between 140 and 150 posts. Since the 1970s, the number of full-time employees has doubled at most. In international comparison (see Mair 1994: 5), the increase of professionalisation in Switzerland is below average. Only Great Britain and the Netherlands have lower rates of increase, but in absolute terms these countries have a generally higher level of professionalisation. Moreover, in Switerzerland, full-time employees are usually engaged in the administrative apparatus of the parties, and therefore the degree of professionalisation of the parties' purely political activities is probably even lower. According to information provided by the parties themselves, about 72% of the cantonal parties have increased their level of professionalisation in their administrative, and 60% in their political work, during the last 10 years. It is noteworthy that especially the two most successful parties, the SP and the SVP, claim to have raised their degree of professionalisation in their political activities.

The conclusion reached by Fagagnini in the mid 1970s that the party organisations in Switzerland are based on the *Milizsystem* (Fagagnini 1978: 91) is still valid today: the number of individuals who deal professionally with politics remains very small. Professional politicians are to be found mainly among representatives of interest groups as well as persons who otherwise deal with questions that lie at the basis of political decisions. These are usually parliamentarians (see Wiesli 1999). The party organisations themselves employ only a small number of politically experienced collaborators.

Figure 2: Full-time positions in the Swiss parties*

Party		1960	1970	1980	1990	1996/97
FDP	Switzerland	3.5	7.0	9.5	13.5	10.1
	cantonal parties	5 (7)	12.4 (11)	23.4 (15)	24.5 (18)	28.2 (22)
CVP	Switzerland	**	**	**	**	12.0
	cantonal parties	2.8 (2)	8.1. (7)	8.6 (11)	17.0 (16)	17.1 (17)
SVP	Switzerland	**	**	5.5	6.0	8.1
	cantonal parties	6.0 (4)	5.7 (5)	6.0 (5)	7.6 (6)	7.8 (8)
SP	Switzerland	**	**	**	**	7.9
	cantonal parties	3.9 (5)	5.8 (6)	10.1 (11)	19.1 (17)	21.9 (20)
other	Switzerland	**	**	**	**	6.0
	cantonal parties	5.6 (5)	7.0 (7)	13.4 (11)	18.3 (20)	15.4 (18)
Total	Switzerland	**	**	**	**	38.1
	cantonal parties	23.3 (23)	39.0 (36)	61.5 (53)	86.5 (77)	90.4 (85)

*   One has to be very careful with the figures of this table, since the parties are often unable to provide accurate information on the degree of professionalisation in earlier years. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that overall the figures give a reasonably accurate account of the degree and the development of professionalisation over time. The numbers in brackets represent the number of cantonal parties that have reported professional positions. If such an indication is absent, this is for one of two reasons. It is likely that at the time, the cantonal parties did not have any positions, but it is also possible that the number of posts could not be determined. The higher the number, the higher its reliability. The posts in the secretariats of the parliamentary groups are not always indicated. In 1996/97, the FDP had two, the CVP one, and the SP four full-time posts, whereas the SVP does not distinguish between the party secretariat and the secretariat of the parliamentary group.

**   Data is missing or could not be computed.

Source: 1998 poll of the cantonal parties, in the context of the NF-research project on the transformation of the Swiss parties (NF 12-41891.94, Ladner/Brändle); my own calculations.

Financial resources

Recent years have witnessed a slight change in attitude among the parties as concerns the transparency of their financial situation. Nowadays, the parties are more willing to provide information on their finances. In comparison with parties of other countries, the Swiss parties have only limited resources, in absolute terms, as well as in terms of growth rates over recent years. At the end of the 1980s, the total budget of the four governing parties amounted to 5.6 million francs

(SP: 1.7 million; CVP: 1.6 million; FDP: 1.4 million; SVP: 0.9 million; see *Journal de Genève* of 5 July, 1989). For 1995, the four governing parties reported a total budget of 9.2 million francs (FDP: 2.1 million; CVP: 2,1 million; SP: 3.4 million; SVP: 1.6 million). This is still considerably less than what Greenpeace, for instance, receives in donations. Or to take another example, the 1983 budgets of the three biggest parties in the Netherlands was 6 to 10 times higher than the budgets of the Swiss parties (see Kriesi 1995: 150).

Where does the money of the parties come from? In the literature, it is often pointed out that the SP is funded almost exclusively by membership fees, while the bourgeois parties survive mainly on donations. However, this conclusion should be qualified in the light of the results of our analysis of the cantonal parties. As is shown in *Figure 3*, almost half of the receipts of the SP come from membership fees; for the bourgeois parties this rate lies between 30 and 40%. The SP and the CVP receive significant contributions from office holders, whereas the FDP and the SVP rely more on donations. Overall, however, the differences are much smaller than expected. Analyses conducted at the local level have shown similar results. Here, the differences between the parties are similarly small, and the parties show similar preferences with regard to their mode of financing (see Geser et al. 1994: 235ff).

The picture looks somewhat different at the national level, where membership fees amount to almost 60 percent of the receipts of the SP, while for the other governing parties they make up a mere 20 percent. At the national level, the three bourgeois parties are funded mainly by donations of party members, non-members, private companies and organisations.

Figure 3: Finances of the cantonal parties (average share of individual budget items)

	FDP	CVP	SVP	SP
membership fees	38	31	44	48
donations	23	20	25	13
contributions of office holders	16	32	25	34
other	23	17	6	5
	100	100	100	100
N=	21	18	19	20

Source: polls of cantonal parties 1998 in the context of a NF project on the transformation of the Swiss parties (NF 12-41891.94, Ladner/Brändle); my own calculations.

Presumably, these figures account for only a small portion of the "costs" of political activities in Switzerland. For instance, they do not include indirect contributions to electoral or voting campaigns, which do not show up in the "operative

budgets" of the parties. If these contributions were taken into account, it could probably be shown that the bourgeois parties, because of their connections with financially strong business circles, have more funds at their disposal than other political parties.

The Swiss parties: a special case?

Social change since the 1960s has confronted the party organisations with new challenges which have been met in different ways. With varying degrees of success, the parties have attempted to introduce the membership principle, open themselves to larger segments of the population, render internal decision-making more democratic, streamline their decision-making processes, and professionalise and centralise their organisational structures.

Despite many similarities in the development of the political parties, it is not possible to discern a uniform pattern. The Swiss parties, especially if the cantonal parties are also taken into account, cover almost the entire spectrum of party types discussed in the literature. Still today, it is possible to find cantonal-level parties that are best characterised as "cadre parties", especially in central Switzerland. Some parties, such as the SP, are based on the principle of membership, while others – such as the former LdU or, at a lower level of professionalisation, the SD and the FPS – come close to the model of an electoral party. Finally, there is at least some evidence that the Swiss parties have moved closer to the state, a development that is typical of "cartel parties". In particular, the increasing funds allocated to the secretariats of parliamentary groups have rendered the "party in public office" more important.

The most important tasks confronting the Swiss political parties are to professionalise their political activities, and to establish and consolidate closer ties to the population that go beyond short-term electoral support. As far as the degree of professionalisation is concerned, Switzerland is clearly lagging behind other European countries, but with regard to the problem of party loyalty, its siutation is comparable.

5 The Parties' Membership Base

If there is a general pattern common to all Western European party systems, it is the decline of party loyalty. However, there is great variation between countries, as well as between different political parties (Schmitt/Holmberg 1995: 212). Surveys conducted in Switzerland have shown that an ever decreasing percentage of the population identifies closely with a political party (Longchamp 1994: 74). While in the early 1980s, after a period of decline, about 50 % of the voters identified with one of the governing parties, this figure dropped to one third by 1995

(see Longchamp 1994: 21; Nabholz 1998). In 1995, more than half of the voters declared not to identify with any political party. Concurrently, the number of floating voters has increased significantly, particularly between 1971 and 1987 (see Nabholz 1998).

A political party can be depicted graphically as a series of concentric circles. The outermost circle contains the floating voters; moving inwards, the next small circles represent the regular voters, actual supporters and followers of the party; the following circles comprise the party members and activists; and finally, the innermost circle represents the party leadership and office-holders. To what extent do changes at the fringes of the party have an effect on the inner circles? For instance, does a loss of votes translate into a loss of members?

In reality, the distinction between these different circles is anything but simple. What distinguishes regular voters from mere followers? Is a voter who has voted for the same party four out of five times a floating voter? Under what conditions can someone be considered as a member of a party? These questions are compounded by the fact that for the different parties, these categories have different meanings. A member of the Communist Party, who pays an annual fee equivalent to almost a month's salary and who participates weekly in meetings of the party, can hardly be compared to a member of a bourgeois party whose financial contribution is of a more symbolic nature and who attends only two or three meetings per year.

Finally, party membership is associated with different costs and benefits (see Scarrow 1994), at the level of the members as well as of the party organisations. If the main purpose of the party is seen as the maximisation of votes, there is virtually no reason to increase the number of members, since this might hamper decision-making within the party. By contrast, if the aim of the party is to represent interests, the number of members will be much more important.

Party members

According to an ideal typical conception, the memberless elite and noble parties have over time transformed themselves into membership-based parties, whereby the principle of membership spread from the social democratic parties to the other political parties (co-called "contagion from the left"). In the age of mass media and party fatigue, however, the party members are again becoming less important.

In Switzerland, the principle of party membership developed relatively late and only partially, as evidenced by the largely unsuccessful attempts of the FDP and the CVP to introduce this principle in the 1970s and the 1990s.[36] One possible explanation of this can be found in the party press, which until 1970 played a rather important role. The parties were organised mainly through the party

press, that is, the readers represented the party members and followers, and, as a consequence, there was no need to develop clear criteria for membership nor to establish organisational structures for such a task (Gruner 1964: 285f).

According to Gruner's estimates, 38% of active voters were party members in 1963/67. In his view, the introduction of female suffrage has reduced this number by half. In the 1970s, it amounted to 11% of eligible voters (Gruner 1977: 218), which corresponds to approximately 390'000 party members. At the time, Gruner considered the Swiss parties' level of organisation to be relatively high in international comparison. According to indications given by the parties themselves, they had approximately 400'000 members in the mid 1990s, just as in Gruner's time. If we take into account the fact that during these 20 years the number of voters has increased by 900'000, this implies that the percentage of party members has declined, a development which is confirmed by recent polls. According to the studies by Longchamp (1994: 22), between 1983 and 1994, the share of party members among eligible voters declined from 18 to 12%.[37] Thus, the loosening of party ties at the "fringe" has had an impact on the number of members as well.

It is likely that during the last decades, new party members have mainly been women, who in part have compensated for the declining number of male members. A large number of local and cantonal parties have reported an increase in women among their members, while the number of male members has stagnated or even declined (see Geser et al. 1994: 65ff). The use of a more restrictive concept of membership, which eliminates those entries that (due to the lack of the principle of membership) were based on the more encompassing notion of "followers", lowers the percentage of party members even further, to 7% of the voters. From this perspective, the Swiss parties had only about 300'000 members in 1997. In international comparison, Switzerland then occupies a position in the middle; in Germany, Holland and England, the parties have considerably fewer, in Sweden and in Austria considerably more members (Katz/Mair 1992b: 334).

According to these calculations, the party with the most members is the FDP with 90'000 members, followed by the CVP and the SVP (see *Figure 4*). With its 40'000 members, the SP clearly lags behind the other governing parties. However, the SP is more selective in accepting new members, and it requires stronger personal and financial commitments. In 1995, the SP became the strongest party in terms of votes, but it was not able to increase its membership base. However, the experience of the Zurich SVP shows that an increase in votes during the 1990s was not necessarily related to a decline in members. The party witnessed an increase in both votes and members.

Figure 4: membership of the Swiss parties

	corrected figures based on« our survey * (1998)	official » indications *
FDP	87'000	150'000
CVP	74'000	80'000
SVP	54'000	80'000
SPS	38'000	40'000
LdU	2'500	5'000
Greens	6'000	8'200
EVP	3'500	4'000
Liberal Party	10'000	15'000
Freedom Party	6'000	12'500
SD	5'000	6'000
Labour Party	2'000	4'000
Total governing parties	258'000	350'00
Total other parties	35'000	54'700
Total all parties	293'000	404'700

* due to inadequate data, the figures have been corrected and do not correspond to the data reported in the original version of this contribution

Source: 1998 poll of the cantonal parties in the context of the NF project on the transformation of the Swiss parties (NF 12-41891.94, Ladner/Brändle); my own calculations.

It is noteworthy that, in spite of the late introduction of women's suffrage at the federal level (1971), the percentages of female party members and party activists has increased to about 35 and 30 %, respectively. This brings Switzerland close to the Scandinavian countries (Norway, Sweden and Denmark) and places it ahead of countries such as Germany or Italy, where these figures lie at about 20 percent (Geser et al. 1994: 65).

Professional activities of party activists

Unfortunately, data on how the parties are anchored in the different segments of Swiss society is highly unsatisfactory. In particular, the changes in occupational categories cannot be analysed carefully over several decades.

The survey of the local parties (Geser et al. 1994) provides information on the professional activities of almost 90'000 party activists. It shows that, in 1990, the parties were still attached mainly to their original segments of the population. The SVP has many farmers among its members, the FDP is mainly supported by leading executives and the self-employed; the SP, in turn, is backed by workers, civil servants and pensioners. By contrast, the CVP as a confessional party shows a more balanced picture (see *Figure 5*): housewives and employees represent the

largest group among its activists (16% each), followed by farmers, merchants, high-rank executives, and pensioners (10% each).

Figure 5: Swiss party activists according to occupational groups

Occupational group	Total	FDP	CVP	SVP	SPS
Self-employed	4	5	4	3	3
Farmers	10	6	12	27	1
Merchants	10	13	9	16	3
Industrialists	2	3	1	2	0
Housewives/ -men	16	17	17	12	17
Executives	10	14	9	9	8
Employees	16	16	16	11	20
Workers	8	6	10	5	14
Civil servants	7	6	7	4	11
Students	2	2	2	1	1
Teachers	4	3	4	2	8
Pensioners	10	9	10	9	13
Other	2	1	1	2	1
TOTAL percent	100	100	100	100	100
N	89343	23810	23926	13288	14724

	LdU	EVP	LPS	GPS	PdA
Self-employed	4	3	10	9	0
Farmers	0	2	11	1	0
Merchants	5	5	12	5	4
Industrialists	0	0	5	0	0
Housewives/ -men	18	21	6	23	6
Executives	20	13	17	9	4
Employees	19	18	12	17	19
Workers	5	5	2	2	16
Civil servants	6	8	4	4	11
Students	4	1	1	11	6
Teachers	8	6	4	15	11
Pensioners	7	17	10	3	20
Other	3	2	6	3	5
TOTAL percent	100	100	100	100	100
N	749	1343	1561	612	239

Source: poll of local parties, 1990, see Geser et al. 1994; my own calculations.

Even though the Swiss parties, in part through their names[38] but also in their declarations, give the impression that their voters and members come from all parts of the population and that they are actual people's parties, they are nevertheless not representative samples of the Swiss population. Research on participation has shown clearly that the underprivileged are politically less active.

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6 Conclusion and Prospects

Even though, at the end of the 20th century, no alternative to the parties is in sight and the smaller parties outside the cartel of the four governing parties, FDP, CVP, SVP and SP, are declining in importance, it cannot be taken for granted that the political scene will remain as stable as in the past. Party loyalty seems to have weakened, the parties are much less connected to the local level, party membership is decreasing, and the parties' capacity for political mobilisation is in decline. However, at present, it is hardly possible to foresee how power will shift between the political blocs and what a possible new party landscape would look like.

The political parties themselves are in a dilemma. On the one hand, the party followers, who constitute the actual party base and who are organised mainly at the local level, have high expectations vis-à-vis the parties and show increasingly less willingness to serve the parties' purpose without some form of compensation. Thus, the followers and especially the members often demand that their individual interests be taken into account in return for their loyalty and their engagement for the party. The political parties, for their part, are no longer able to provide sufficient incentives that would render party membership more attractive. In addition, as providers of political information the parties have largely lost their formerly privileged position to the media, and as political actors their influence is declining due to the rising power of interest groups.

On the other hand, given the increasingly complex and interdependent problems of "modern-day politics", the parties need to increase their level of professionalisation. Due to the dominant role of the media, the political parties are often compelled to comment immediately on the political problems of the day, thereby circumventing the process of internal opinion formation. Moreover, the modern mass media make it possible to build up popular candidates, without having them go through the painstaking internal selection process. As a consequence, the lower levels of the party are becoming less important for the recruitment of candidates, just as party offices at the lowest level of the hierarchy are losing in appeal. Politics increasingly takes the form of a contest between individual personalities, which can be portrayed by the media to great effect, whereby the ultimate decision on victory and defeat remains with the voters.

The rapprochement between the parties and the state, as highlighted in recent research on parties, can so far be observed only to a very limited extent in Switzerland. Especially salient here is the lack of public funding of the parties. Thanks to the *Milizsystem*, which also applies to the highest levels of the political system, politicians have been able to maintain a certain degree of independence. The system of concordance and the multi-party system seem to ensure that a considerable

number of public sector positions are not allocated on the basis of party membership alone. However, given the high density of political offices in Switzerland, the parties have always had relatively easy access to political decision-makers.

The success of a given party depends to a large extent on how well it is able to take up important problems and point out possible solutions. Moreover, it is extremely important that the ties to population remain intact and that the party remains receptive to the general mood among the voters. Thus, the parties must pursue a double strategy. Professional appearance, a high degree of competence and rapid reactions are just as important as the securing of firm support among the voters. It would be short-sighted to concentrate on the voters alone and seek to maximise votes through populist behaviour. The adoption of comprehensible and well-explained political positions, as well as strong party loyalty, are the prerequisites for long-term political success. This requires not only operative freedom at the level of the party leadership, but also the achievement of internal legitimacy at the level of the party base. Finally, the ability of the parties to tap sufficient financial resources allowing them to raise their degree of professionalisation is likely to be of crucial importance.

1   The classics include Michel's (1925) studies on oligarchical tendencies in political parties; the "first step towards a general theory of parties" by Duverger (1951); Kirchheimer's (1965) essay on changes in the western European party system; Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) groundbreaking analysis of the development and consolidation of party systems; and Sartori's (1976) conceptual framework for the analysis of political parties.

2   In some cases, considerable efforts have been made to answer the same questions in follow-up projects in Switzerland (see Ayberk et al. 1991, Brändle 1999, and Ladner/Brändle 2001).

3   Appendix I includes a list of abbreviations.

4   On the complex relationship between local and cantonal party sections, see Geser et al. (1994:341ff).

5   In contrast, in the 1960s, Belgium saw the development of a linguistically segmented party system (Deschouwer 1994); in Canada, there is also evidence of segmentation along linguistic lines.

6   The situation is somewhat different in the bilingual cantons of Fribourg, Valais, and Berne, where the FDP, CVP and SP are in part divided into French- and German-speaking sections.

7   As in many other countries (see Nohlen 1990:247), in Switzerland proportional representation was only introduced after the First World War, in 1919. In some cantons, this occurred much earlier (see Lutz et al. 1998). The first national elections held under this system led to massive changes in the distribution of political power. The Radicals (today's FDP) lost 46 of their 104 seats. Among those who benefited were the Social Democrats (SP), with 41 seats (a gain of 22), and the Peasants' Party, which gained 31 seats (see Kriesi 1995:142).

8   This correlation holds above all for the smaller communes. In larger communes, there are a number of other factors (such as heterogeneity of population, a larger number of offices to be filled, a communal parliament, stronger politicisation by the media) which favour the creation of political parties.

9   In 1987, the FDP launch its first popular initiative on "a federal tax that does justice to families and married couples". The SVP's first national initiative "against illegal immigration" came in 1993. It also took the GPS a long time to produce an initiative at the national level. Its "tandem initiative" for a flexible age of retirement after the age of 62, and taxes on non-renewable sources of energy, dates from 1996.

10 For example, the 1ˢᵗ August holiday is the result of a 1993 initiative by the Swiss Democrats (SD).

11 For a critical engagement with Sartori's typology see, for example, Reif (1984:147ff); Gross and Siegelmann (1984:478, fn 1); and Ware (1996:168ff).

12 The situation in the cantons, however, is different. In cantons of central Switzerland, such as Uri, Obwalden, and Nidwalden, where the main dividing line is between the CVP and the FDP, political space is quite narrow. The political system is much broader when there is a PdA or a Green party on one side, and a Freedom Party or the Swiss Democrats on the other. Cantons with polarised political systems include Geneva, Zurich, Berne, both half-cantons of Basle, and Neuchâtel.

13 Possible alternative dimensions include green vs. anti-green, materialism vs. anti-materialism, and Gemeinschaft vs. Gesellschaft, with respect to attitudes toward concrete political issues.

14 This contradicts the thesis of the "new tripolarity" of the Swiss party system (see Longchamp et al. 1995), which was advanced coincidentally with the 1995 elections for the National Council.

15 The most commonly used formula for polarisation is to be found in Lane and Ersson (1994:178f). Aside from the left-to-right ordering of the parties, the main difficulty with the calculation of polarisation stems from the changing positions of the parties over time. Thus, a plot should be made for every measurement point (election year). Since no such data is available, as a rule the current estimate is taken as a basis.

16 In 1967, the LdU achieved 9.1%, coming within 1.9% of the SVP. This difference increased to 3.1% in 1971, and to 3.8% in 1975. Nowadays, the LdU controls less than two percent of the votes. National Action (3.2 percent) and the Republicans (4.3%) were behind the SVP by 3.6% in 1971 and by 4.4% in 1975. In both cases, the LdU did even better. The Greens were also still quite behind the weakest of the governing parties when they began to think aloud about a seat on the Federal Council after coming within 5.8% of the SVP, at 6.1%. The former Automobile Party, today's Freedom Party, was only able to broach the 5% barrier in 1991.

17 Independently of the fact that aggregate volatility need not necessarily coincide with changing voter sympathies at the individual level, the time period under analysis remains an important consideration, especially if conclusions are to be drawn about trends in the party system as a whole.

18 It is problematic that average values, as they are presented here for the European countries, can only be taken to represent broad trends. Even if the same developments were to take place in all countries, these would not occur simultaneously, and the curve would be "smoothened out".

19 In 1935, the FDP (-3.2%) and the SVP (-4.3%) suffered major losses, while the LdU (+4.1%), the Young Peasants (+3.1%), and the *Frontisten* (+1.5%) scored major gains. In 1939, there were silent elections in many cantons, and the resulting shifts are thus contaminated by "structural distortions". The losers included the FDP (-3.0%), the CVP (-3.3%), and the SP (-2.1%); the winners, the SVP (+3.8%) and the LdU (+2.9%). The 1943 elections, at least in so far as the four major parties were concerned, corrected the distortions caused by the silent elections. To this one must add the losses of the Communist Party, which resulted from it being declared illegal (-2.6%). In 1947, the newly founded PdA gained 5.1%, while the SP lost 2.4% and the Young Peasants 2.1%.

20 This thesis has been criticised from various sides. Critics have pointed to the instability of voter behaviour (Dalton et al. 1984) and, thus, the rise in volatility at the beginning of the 1970s (Pedersen 1979); the successes of newly-founded parties, especially the Greens (Poguntke 1987; Müller-Rommel 1989), as well as other forms of interest mediation and representation (Lawson and Merkl 1988). Bartolini and Mair (1990) and Mair (1993), however, show that since the 1970s, volatility has been considerably less than it was in the inter-war period. And if one looks not only at the individual parties, but at entire blocs, one can discern, at least in the case of the Left, not only great stability but a slight decline in volatility.

21 The first canton in which parties appeared was St. Gall, followed by Basle-Country, Lucerne, Valais, Vaud, and Berne (Gruner 1964: 275).

22 The first representatives of the Catholic Conservatives were elected to the Federal Council in 1891.

23 A list of the foundation dates of the Swiss parties can be found in Annex II.

24 The governing parties witnessed a second wave of party foundations between 1970 and 1990. More than 20% of the presently existing local sections were set up in the 1970s (CVP: more than 30%; SVP: more than 20%; FDP: 20%; SP: more than 10%). This pattern continued through the 1980s, though at a slower rate than in the preceding decade (Ladner 1996: 5). Since the beginning of the 1990s it is mainly the SVP which is able to found new parties in municipalities and cantons not represented yet.

25 On the creation and development of the Swiss parties, see especially Gruner (1977), Pieth (1978), Gruner (1981), Klöti/Risi (1988), Jacobs (1989), Tschäni (1990), Schneider (1994). The relevant chapters of the "Année politique suisse" since 1966 are also very useful.

26 The Christian Socialists exist as independent party groups within the CVP (for instance, Upper Valais, Obwalden) which link their lists of candidates to the lists of the CVP, and as Christian-Socialist parties which openly distance themselves from the CVP (for instance, CSP Jura, CSP Fribourg, CSP Grisons, CSP Zurich) (see Bundesamt für Statistik 1995: 12). Already in 1976, largely unsuccessful efforts were made to establish the CSP at the national level. In 1997, a similar attempt was made with the participation of the cantonal CSP sections of Lucerne, Fribourg and Jura as well as of the CSP of the city of Zurich.

27 In 1969, excluded members of the PdA set up the "Revolutionary Marxist League" *(Revolutionäre Marxistische Liga [RML])*, which was a member of the Trotskyist Fourth Internationale. Initially, the rather dogmatic RML refused to participate in the elections of executive bodies. In the wake of the youth riots in the 1980s, the party began to open up and attempted to create a Socialist opposition movement left of the SP. However, the party itself increasingly lost in importance and was dissolved in 1989. Since the mid-1990s, former activists of the SAP are again attracting attention in the French-speaking areas (Geneva, Vaud) under the name "solidarité". Together with other leftist dissidents, labour unions and some Green-alternatives, they have scored some relatively important electoral results.

28 In the early 1980s, the ideologically less dogmatic POCH, which was founded at the beginning of the 1970s, was able to assert itself as the party of the social movements. The progressives attempted to establish an alliance between the different Green and alternative movements (Année politique 1982: 205f). Nevertheless, in the mid-1980s, the Greens surpassed (Bern, Zurich) and then gradually absorbed POCH. The last section of POCH (Basle) was dissolved in 1993.

29 The Swiss parties were granted formal recognition not before the acceptance of the new Constitution of 18 April 1999.

30 The "professional-electoral party" has many elements in common with the "catch-all party". However, the former did not develop according to Kirchheimer's prediction that West European party systems would inevitably evolve into two-party systems.

31 It is a matter of dispute whether the "cartel party" actually constitutes a new party type (see Koole 1996)

32 The CVP played a pioneering role. The course it took with the reform of its statutes in December 1970 inspired the other parties to follow suit (see Gruner 1977: 308).

33 This is also shown by the names that were given to the parties. In 1971, the Conservative Christian Socialist Peoples' Party *(Konservative-Christlichsoziale Volkspartei der Schweiz [KCVPS])* and the Farmers' Trade and Citizens' Party *(Bauern-, Gewerbe – und Bürgerpartei [BGB])* adopted the simpler name Swiss Peoples' Party *(Schweizerische Volkspartei [SVP])*.

34 Since 1977, FDP is spelt with a capital "D", which is supposed to underline the democratic character of the party (Dietschi 1979: 404).

35 The presidents of the cantonal parties confirm this conclusion. Roughly 60 percent give priority to operative freedom of the party leadership over participation and co-decision of the party base. The cantonal-level parties of the SP in particular have witnessed a change in emphasis in this regard.

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36 Only slightly more than 40% of the local sections of the CVP and about 60% of the local sec-
    tions of the FDP had formal members in 1990. The figures are considerably higher for the SVP
    (three quarters) and the SP (more than 80%) (see Geser et al. 1994: 141).
37 These figures are slightly too high, since the more active and politically interested citizens usu-
    ally participate more readily in surveys of this kind.
38 See footnote 31.

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Anhang I: *Abkürzungsverzeichnis*

AP	Autopartei (ab 1994 FPS)
CSP	Christlich-soziale Partei
CVP	Christlichdemokratische Volkspartei der Schweiz
DACH	Die andere Schweiz
EDU	Eidgenössisch-Demokratische Union
EVP	Evangelische Volkspartei der Schweiz
FDP	Freisinnig-Demokratische Partei der Schweiz
FGA	Feministische und grün-alternative Gruppierungen
FPS	Freiheitspartei der Schweiz (bis 1994 AP)
FRAP	Frauen macht Politik!
Front	Nationale Front - Frontisten
GBS	Grünes Bündnis Schweiz
GPS	Grüne Partei der Schweiz
Grüt	Grütlianer
JungB	Bauernheimatbewegung (Jungbauern)
LdU	Landesring der Unabhängigen
Lega	Lega dei Ticinesi (nur Kanton TI)
LPS	Liberale Partei der Schweiz
LSOZ	Liberalsozialisten - Freiwirtschafter
NA	Nationale Aktion (ab 1990 SD)
PdA	Partei der Arbeit
POCH	Progressive Organisationen der Schweiz
PSA	Partito socialista autonomo (nur Kanton TI)
Rep.	Republikaner
SD	Schweizer Demokraten (bis 1990 NA)
SGA	Sozialistisch-Grüne Alternative
SPS	Sozialdemokratische Partei der Schweiz (häufig auch nur kurz SP)
SVP	Schweizerische Volkspartei

Anhang II: Gründungsdaten der Schweizer Parteien auf nationaler
Ebene, Auflösungen und Umbenennungen

SP	1888	Sozialdemokratische Partei der Schweiz
FDP	1894	Freisinnig-Demokratische Partei
CVP	1912	Konservative Volkspartei, Katholische Volkspartei (KK)
	1957	Konservativ-Christlichsoziale Volkspartei der Schweiz (KCVPS)
	1970	Christlichdemokratische Volkspartei
LPS	1913	Liberale Demokratische Partei
	1961	Liberal-Demokratische Union der Schweiz (LIDUS)
	1977	Liberale Partei der Schweiz
EVP	1919	Evangelische Volkspartei
PdA	1921	Kommunistische Partei der Schweiz (1939 verboten)
	1943	Arbeiterpartei/Parti ouvrier
	1944	Partei der Arbeit
SVP	1936	Schweizerische Bauern-, Gewerbe- und Bürgerpartei (BGB)
	1971	Schweizerische Volkspartei
LdU	1936	Landesring der Unabhängigen (aufgelöst 1999)
SD	1961	Nationale Aktion (NA)
	1990	Schweizer Demokraten
Rep	1971	Republikaner (aufgelöst 1989)
SAP	1969	Revolutionäre Marxistische Liga (RML)
	1980	Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei (aufgelöst 1989)
POCH	1971	Progressive Organisationen (aufgelöst 1993)
EDU	1975	Eidgenössisch-Demokratische Union
GPS	1983	Föderation der grünen Parteien der Schweiz
	1986	Grüne Partei der Schweiz (GPS)
	1993	Grüne – Grüne Partei der Schweiz
FPS	1985	Autopartei (AP)
	1994	Freiheits-Partei der Schweiz (FPS)
Lega	1991	Lega dei Ticinesi