Switzerland

Laurent Bernhard, Cecilia Biancalana, and Oscar Mazzoleni

Abstract

The aim of this chapter is to study the interactions between Switzerland's mainstream parties and the Swiss People's Party (SVP). Since 1999, the SVP has become the largest party in the country and it is currently the Western European populist radical right party with the largest vote share. An additional characteristic of the SVP is that it has never been a 'niche' party, nor an 'outsider'. Indeed, the party has been constantly represented in the federal government during the last decades, while continuing to exploit the tools provided by direct democracy for its own purposes. In this chapter, we cover a wide time span (1992–2018) and focus on the SVP's core issues: immigration, law and order, and European integration. Our results show that the traditional mainstream parties adopted a variety of different strategies vis-à-vis the SVP, thereby mixing cooperation, co-optation, clashing, and dismissive strategies. Whilst co-optation developed into the dominant approach as far as immigration and law and order were concerned, clashing strategies became increasingly important when it came to European integration. However, as a rule mainstream parties could not avoid collaborative strategies entirely, given that the SVP was their partner in government.

Introduction

Switzerland is one of the most affluent and politically stable democracies in the world, characterized by socio-cultural and institutional segmentation (McRae 1964; Lijphart 1984; Kobach 1993). The Swiss Confederation is built around four official languages and different religions and, consequently, it might be difficult to recognize something like a homogeneous people or a common heartland here, as populists always need to do (Canovan 1981; Mudde 2004; Taggart 2000). Since the government is based on power-sharing rules and all the main parties are also enduring government parties, it would be hard to identify a political actor that does not belong to the 'corrupt elite', too.

Switzerland also offers the paradigmatic case of a country relying heavily on direct democracy. Swiss citizens have the opportunity to express themselves in referenda and initiatives, thus making clear to whom sovereignty ultimately belongs (Canovan 1999). However, while some may see these features as impediments to the spread of populism in the country, they have in fact created conditions that have facilitated the growth of the most successful right-wing populist parties (RPP) in Western Europe: the *Schweizerische Volkspartei* (SVP – Swiss People's Party).[1]

The literature has already investigated several aspects of the SVP's success (e.g. Kriesi et al. 2005; Albertazzi 2008; Albertazzi and McDonnell 2015; Mazzoleni 2008, 2016, 2018). There is no doubt that the party's growth increased the competitiveness of the political system and its overall politicization, contentiousness, and polarization (Marcinkowski 2007; Skenderovic 2009b). However, the responses of the so-called mainstream parties to the challenges posed by the SVP, and how the party itself adapted to the new context in which it operated, have not been analysed in depth.

In fact, among the questions raised by the increasing success of populists in Western Europe, that of their relationship with mainstream parties is increasing regarded as important (Odmalm and Hepburn 2017). Do populists affect mainstream parties, making them change their policy preferences and discourses on key issues, such as immigration, law and order and European integration, or do they ultimately fail to do so? Several studies argue that, to some extent, populist parties have had an impact

---

[1] The name of this party is *Union démocratique du centre* in French and *Unione democratica di centro* in Italian. It is not the objective of this chapter to investigate the extent to which the SVP is 'populist'. For a definition of the term, see Chapter 1 of this volume, and for a detailed critical discussion of its uses in the literature, see De la Torre and Mazzoleni (2019: 94–95).

on their mainstream counterparts, making them shift position in the hope of seizing the ownership of certain issues (Bale et al. 2010; van Spanje 2010; Abou-Chadi and Krause 2018; Minkenberg 2001; Wagner and Meyer 2017). Moreover, it is also relevant to consider how populists perform in a context shaped by their own success and in reaction to mainstream parties. Inspired by recent attempts to analytically grasp this phenomenon (e.g. Taggart and Pirro 2018), we aim to study the interactions between Swiss mainstream parties and the SVP. Given that the SVP is currently the only Swiss nationwide party providing strong populist stances (Bernhard 2017), we do not address the aspect of inter-party populist competition in this chapter.[2]

The SVP represents a peculiar case in Western European democracies for several reasons. Since the beginning of the 2000s, it has become the most successful Swiss party at national elections, and the one with the biggest parliamentary group. The SVP is currently the Western European populist radical right party (PRRP) (Mudde 2007) with the largest vote share gained in national elections (Bernhard 2016). Moreover, the party has been continuously represented in the federal government during the last decades – apart from a brief period in 2008. At the same time, it has been able to systematically exploit the tools provided by direct democracy for its own purposes. The 'new' SVP, however, is a by-product of the 'old' – that is a party rooted in Swiss agrarian legacies since the first decades of the twentieth century (Mazzoleni & Skenderovic 2007). Finally, the mainstream parties that compete with it are also long serving members of the government, however the political culture and strength of the SVP dictate that they must govern alongside it (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2015; Mazzoleni 2018).

Considering this peculiar configuration, the analysis will focus on the interplay between the largest Swiss parties at federal level: the SVP, the *FDP.Die Liberalen* (FDP – The Liberals), the *Chistlichdemokratische Volkspartei* (CVP – Christian Democrats) and the *Sozialdemokratische Partei der Schweiz* (SP – Social Democrats).[3] As we will show, responses to the SVP by traditional mainstream parties (i.e. the other parties that form the national government) show a mix of cooperation, co-optation, clashing and

---

[2] Apart from the SVP, the *Lega dei Ticinesi* (LDT – Ticino League) and the *Mouvement citoyens genevois* (MCG – Geneva Citizens' Movement) can also be regarded as populist parties, but only operate in specific cantons.

[3] The respective names of these parties are *Parti radical-libéral*, *Parti-démocrate chrétien* and *Parti socialiste suisse* in French and *Partito Liberale Radicale*, *Partito Popolare Democratico* and *Partito Socialista Svizzero* in Italian.

dismissive strategies (see Chapter 3 in this volume). Whilst some co-optation tends to become dominant as far as immigration and law and order are concerned, clashing strategies tend to arise when it comes to European integration. However, as the SVP is far from a niche party, one might expect attempts to co-opt its proposals to fail (Meguid 2008). Moreover, mainstream parties can hardly avoid collaborative strategies, too, given that the SVP is their partner in government.

The period considered in our analysis covers a wide time span of almost thirty years (1992–2018), within which the SVP consolidated its success – including the period after the global financial crisis of 2007–2008, which did not impact greatly on the growth of the party (Bernhard, Kriesi and Weber 2015). Indeed, and by contrast to most West-European countries, the post-2007 recession only lasted for a year in Switzerland and did not affect the Swiss political agenda to a great extent, arguably not leading to a further strengthening of populism in its wake (see Kriesi and Pappas 2015 on what has happened elsewhere). Due to the absence of a long-lasting recession and the fact that the decision-making process covers many years, if not even decades, in the extraordinary stable political context of Switzerland, it is necessary to start from the early 1990s in order to fully understand the growth of populism in this country.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. After a brief overview of the structural factors that have facilitated the SVP's emergence and success, and a discussion of how the party took advantage of such a structure of opportunity (Kitschelt 1986), we will analyse the mainstream parties' strategies to cope with it by focusing on immigration, law and order, and European integration. The conclusion will summarize how such parties have related to a rising SVP.

The SVP vs 'the elite'?

The rise of the SVP in the 1990s and 2000s is one of the most striking features of the Swiss party system since the Second World War. Moving largely away from its agrarian legacy, in recent decades the party adopted a sharp anti-establishment and anti-immigration stance. It devised a discourse focused on criticizing the political class and 'defending' the country's sovereignty and national identity (see its opposition to international treaties and organizations, allegedly to preserve Switzerland's isolation and neutrality) (Albertazzi & Mueller 2013; Mazzoleni 2008; Skenderovic 2009a),

while embracing liberal conservatism on economic matters. Along with (and arguably because of) its radicalization, the SVP also experienced increasing electoral success, hence becoming the largest party of government – compare the 11.9 per cent of the votes it gained in 1995 with the 29.4 per cent it won in 2015. The party electoral growth has been primarily achieved at the expense of the FDP and the CVP, with the SP largely managing to hold on to its share of the vote (Figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1: Electoral performance of Swiss government parties in lower chamber elections, 1991–2015 (%)
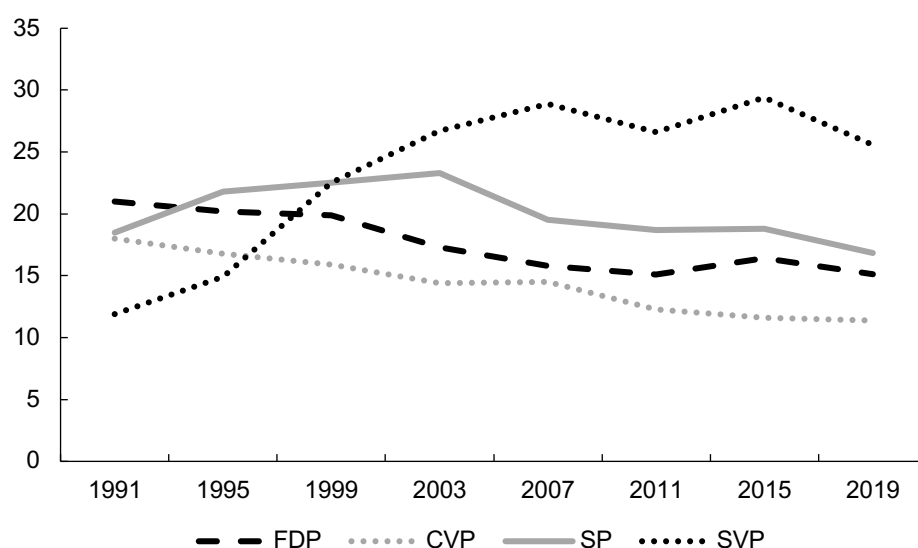
Source: Swiss Federal Statistical Office.

The SVP managed to take advantage of some contingent opportunities during the 1990s and the 2000s, as socio-economic changes fostered by globalization and growing European integration started to have an increased impact on the country (Mazzoleni 2008). A relevant role in the party's strategy was played by its grass-roots, financial resources, strong leadership and durable integration within federal institutions. In fact, the continuous participation of the SVP in national government before and after its ideological radicalization (e.g. Mazzoleni & Skenderovic 2007) is one of the features that differentiate it from most PRRPs in Europe. Having never experienced the life of the 'outsider' party, the SVP is a prominent example of a populist party that fully

belongs to the 'mainstream' (see Chapter 14 of this volume). Whilst being simultaneously in government and in opposition might seem bizarre, this is not the case in Switzerland, where even the mainstream media rarely even use the term 'populist' with reference to this party.

To a large extent, therefore, the SVP has always been part of the Swiss mainstream, although since the 1990s it has adopted strong nationalist and populist stances. Due to its close and enduring relationship with other government parties– namely the Liberals, the Christian Democrats, and the Social Democrats – it is hardly surprising that a *cordon sanitaire* has never been put in place against it. Against this backdrop, in order to succeed the party took advantage of its internal resources, as mentioned above, but also the opportunities provided by some peculiarly Swiss institutional settings, especially in the government and direct-democratic arenas.

The government arena

Among the institutional and political settings favouring the success of the SVP, electoral rules and the structure and functioning of the Swiss government deserve to be cited first. The Swiss government system is unique among contemporary democratic regimes (Lijphart 1984; Linder 2010), as there is no prime minister and each member of the federal executive (the Federal Council) take on the role of presiding over the government following a one-year turnover. An appreciation of electoral rules is also important to the understanding of how government parties can still play the part of the 'outsider' in certain circumstances.

Each member of the government is elected by MPs via a majoritarian system based on multiple rounds. According to the informal rule of *concordance*, the major political parties are represented in government according to their electoral strength. Members of government are expected to comply with the 'collegiality rule', implying that they have to defend the decisions of the government in public, even if they happen to disagree with them. Due to this rule, members of the Swiss Parliament usually elect moderate and compromise-oriented politicians to the Federal Council (Burgos et al. 2011).

Since 1959, the SVP occupied one seat in the Federal Council, which was consistently granted to moderate members of the party.[4] Since the 1999 federal elections, however (when the SVP went from being fourth to first party), it started claiming that it should be given an extra seat. Initially, the SP, CVP, and FDP refused.[5] However, things changed in 2003, when following yet another electoral victory at a federal election, the SVP could no longer be denied a second government seat, which it gained at the expense of the shrinking CVP (see Figure 8.1). Contrary to the informal rules of the game, the SVP imposed the man that had sparked the party's radicalization, Christoph Blocher, for the job, by threatening to leave government altogether had he not been elected (Church 2004). Thinking that Blocher's co-optation would help contain the SVP electorally and lead to a government's turn to the right that would ultimately also suit them, the Liberals of the FDP supported the move, which was opposed by the SP and the CVP.

In government, Blocher decisively contributed to the tightening of asylum policies, the lowering of government spending and the abandonment of Switzerland's strategic goal to join the European Union (EU). He also repeatedly violated the principle of collegiality by constantly interfering in the business of other Federal Councillors and criticizing government decisions in public. In addition, during a visit to Turkey in October 2006, Blocher criticized the Swiss anti-racism provision, which allows for the penal prosecution of racist discrimination as well as the denial of genocide. He also refused to tone down his provocative anti-establishment style. In a programmatic speech held in January 2006, for example, he described two Albanian refugees as criminals and in December 2004 he argued that the federal administration resembled a sheltered workshop for disabled people (*geschützte Werkstatt*).

At the end of Blocher's first term in office – at the 2007 federal elections – the SVP's vote share went up again. Despite this, a narrow majority of MPs decided to eject him from the Federal Council due to his unorthodox confrontational behaviour, by replacing him with a moderate member of his own party: Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf. While Blocher claimed that this coalition of MPs (built around the SP and the CVP)

---

[4] Since 1959, the cabinet was put together on the basis of what is known as the 'magic formula' granting two seats to the FDP, the CVP, and the SP, and one to the SVP.

[5] Indeed, the SVP's attempts to take a seat away from the Social Democrats failed both in 1999 and 2002. In the 2000 replacement elections of the party's unique seat, Parliament elected a moderate MP (Samuel Schmid) to the Federal Council, despite the fact that the SVP had endorsed two representatives of its radical wing.

had no convincing reasons to vote him out, a narrow majority of them remained of the opinion that he could not be 'domesticated' via government participation (Church 2008). With most FDP MPs agreeing with Blocher and the SVP (although to no avail), the latter moved into opposition after expelling the cantonal section to which Ms Widmer-Schlumpf belonged, as she had refused to stand down from the government.[6] This led to the creation of the *Bürgerlich-Demokratische Partei* (BDP – Conservative Democratic Party), which attracted some former moderate members of the SVP, alongside Widmer-Schlumpf and also the second SVP Federal Councillor at the time: Samuel Schmid. Hence the newly created party immediately found itself with two seats in government, while the largest party in the country from which it had originated, the SVP, suddenly had none.

This situation was not sustainable in the long run and was resolved a year later, as Parliament appointed the SVP's Ueli Maurer as Minister after Samuel Schmid's retirement on health grounds. A long-serving party president (1996–2008), Maurer could undoubtedly be considered a representative of the radical right. However, contrary to Blocher, the newly elected Federal Councillor was immediately noted for complying with the principles of collegiality. As is usually the case for members of the Swiss executive, Maurer adopted a pragmatic and technocratic 'non-partisan' approach when addressing the public. In fact, he eventually managed to reshape his image, from the strong oppositional figure that he had been into a respected statesman who has to a large extent emancipated himself from the SVP's pronounced anti-internationalist positions. The same can be said of Guy Parmelin, the other representative of the SVP in government. Elected to the Federal Council in 2015 after Ms Widmer-Schlumpf's resignation following the disappointing electoral performance of the BDP in the federal elections of the same year (Bernhard 2016), Parmelin ended up publicly endorsing deepening relations with the EU despite his personal reservations.

Yet it is important to stress that the return to government of the SVP did not lead to the moderation of the party in the country at large. Absent a 'government program' in Switzerland, Blocher's party could continue to act independently from its own Federal Councillors and avoid being 'tamed'. Hence it continued to stick to its positions and mobilize citizens in support of its causes, without changing its ideological profile and mobilization strategy.

---

[6] Individual party members can only be expelled by the cantonal branches of the SVP, not the federal organization.

The parliamentary arena

By considering the linkage between government and parliament one can better understand why parties can afford to be autonomous from their government representatives. Although ministers are elected by MPs, neither them nor the government as a whole can be removed by Parliament. This makes the notion of 'coalition' unsuited to the country's politics. It also means that parties such as the SVP can vote differently from the other government parties in Parliament without necessarily causing government 'instability', as the government does not need to 'prove' that it enjoys the confidence of Parliament.

Because of the absence of a government program, ad hoc alliances formed on specific issues are widespread in Parliament. Studies of roll-call votes in the lower chamber show that in the 1970s and in 1980s there was a fair amount of convergence among all government parties, as a recurrent coalition pattern pitted the FDP, the CVP, and the SVP against the SP (Lüthi, Meyer and Hirter 1991; Lanfranchi and Lüthi 1999; Schwartz 2009). The period since 1996 has been characterized by new trends, as relevant changes in the distribution of seats within the party groups occurred. Figure 8.2 depicts the development of the most frequent coalitions in the National Council (lower house) from December 1995 to December 2018. Three major trends stand out.

Figure 8.2: Coalitions between government parties in the National Council (Lower House). One-year periods (in percentages)
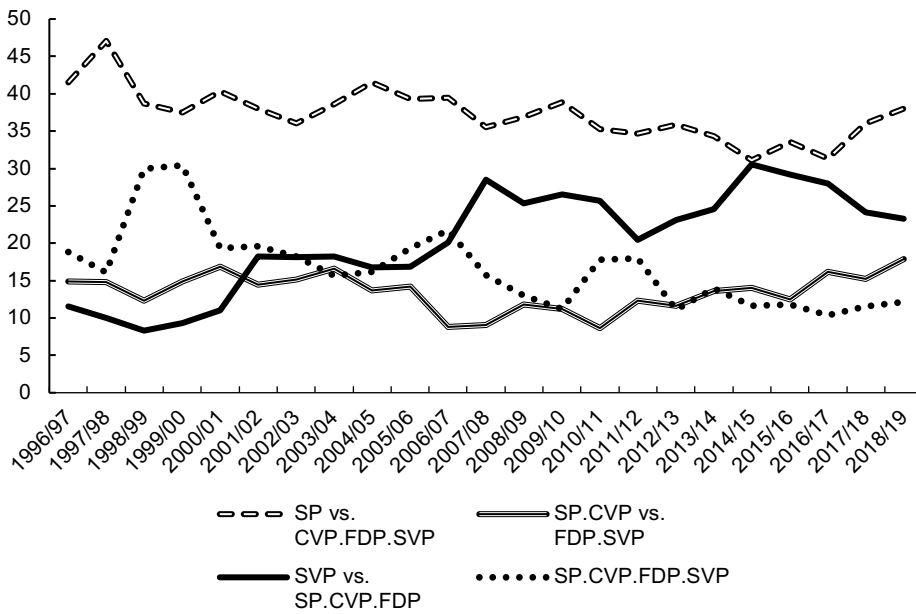
First, the percentage of parliamentary votes backed by all government parties went down from 19 to 11 per cent in the course of the full period considered. Second, it became slightly less frequent for all right-wing parties (i.e. CVP, FDP, and SVP) to vote as one against the SP (from 42 to 38 per cent). Third, votes that saw the FDP, CVP, and SP oppose the SVP went up (from 12 to 23 per cent) (Vatter 2018).[7] In other words, and as a consequence of the SVP's radicalization, the traditional left-right cleavage has been losing salience in the country, while clashes between populists (the SVP) and non-populists (the FDP, CVP, and SP) have become more common.

The SP, the second largest party, the only left-wing one in government and the one that was 'co-opted' last into it, has developed relatively strong links with civil society and trade unions, using referenda and initiatives relatively often in order to counterbalance the strength of the centre-right parties on social and economic issues. It

---

[7] See also https://smartmonitor.ch/koalitionen/koalitioncsbildung/, last accessed 2 October 2020.

is not surprising for this party to clash with the SVP, along with the traditional right-wing parties.

A relatively new trend is one whereby SP and CVP face the SVP *and* the FDP together (this indeed happened in almost 30 per cent of the votes held in the last one-year period considered), something that is reducing the SVP's isolation in the Lower Chamber. This is a consequence of the two parties sometimes working together on the election of a government (including in 2013, when Blocher became a Minister), but also of ideological convergence between the two. In fact, the SVP's radicalization on economic issues coincided with a similar trend within the FDP, as the SVP adopted a more obviously neo-liberal, anti-tax philosophy (Otjes et al. 2018; Mazzoleni 2018). Also traditional mainstream parties must have believed that the 'new' populist SVP would resign itself to signing up to the Swiss culture of compromise which, after all, the party adhered to in the past. However, this has not happened so far. When crucial foreign and international issues have been at stake (e.g. European integration), the party has increasingly differentiated itself from traditional mainstream parties.

Looking more specifically at the strategies used by traditional mainstream parties to 'contain' the SVP (see Chapter 3 of this book), the idea of dismissing their competitor would only have been feasible in the 1990s, as the SVP started to grow. This is true especially for the SP, which, as we will see below, tried to diminish the relevance of law-and-order and immigration issues. However, it also applies to the FDP and CVP, when it came to discuss EU-related matters. During the 2000s, it became much harder to adopt this strategy of dismissal, hence even the SP had to start talking about issues such as security and foreign criminals, as these were obviously salient for the electorate, given the success of the SVP. Moreover, in some cases, SP and SVP even started collaborating to an extent vs FDP and CVP, for instance on issues such as the 'defence' of public pensions (Mazzoleni 2013).

Hence, overall, the three strategies that traditional mainstream parties tended to favour when facing the SVP in the parliamentary arena were cooperation (especially on economic and fiscal issues – see the behaviour of the FDP), co-optation, and all-out clashing (see in particular what happened as the issue of Switzerland's relation with supranational institutions came up, particularly the discussion of bilateral agreements with EU). The two 'centre-right' parties, the FDP and the CVP, which were also those that had been badly damaged by the electoral success of the SVP, often adopted a mixture of co-optation and cooperation. Consequently, they made alliances with the SVP on many issues, while sometimes being divided in the parliamentary arena, and

also when referenda were on the cards (Bühlmann et al. 2012; Schwartz 2009). The frequency of legislative coalitions that included *all* government parties declined between 1990s and 2013, because the SVP pursued its own strategy on controversial issues such as immigration and welfare (see Afonso and Papadopoulos 2015; Traber 2015; Mazzoleni 2018). In the next section, we will consider the policy-making interactions between the SVP and the three major mainstream parties (FDP, CVP, and SP), by focusing on issues that are core for the radical right, such as asylum/immigration, law and order and the country's relations with the EU.

Interactions across arenas and the impact of direct democracy

When considering the relationship between traditional mainstream parties and the SVP one should not focus exclusively on what happens inside representative institutions. The main goal of the SVP in the last decades has been to become the most important right-wing party in Switzerland, so as to shape politics in a nationalist and conservative direction. In order to achieve this, the SVP has made large use of the means provided by direct democracy, more so than any other government party (except the SP), and in fact usually in opposition to them. The opportunities provided by direct democracy have therefore allowed the party to fulfil the role of 'outsider' and government party at one and the same time, particularly when focusing on the issues it cares about: immigration, law and order and EU integration.

Referenda can virtually be called on any law adopted by Parliament, while popular initiatives allow people to seek partial amendments to the Constitution. As is well known, referenda and initiatives can have a profound impact on the decision-making process in Switzerland. Even simply the fact that any new law *could* be put to a referendum obliges the legislator to consider the interests of veto players, which include the main national parties. Thus, direct democracy is often mentioned as one of the main culprits behind the 'consensual' Swiss political culture, also due to the difficulty of excluding from government any large party that would be able to challenge it via the means offered by direct democracy. On the other hand, however, no member of the executive is expected to resign whenever referenda or initiatives are passed against the advice of the government. In this sense, direct democracy influences voting mobilization and policy-making, but obviously does not affect the stability of the government.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, federal referenda and initiatives have been deployed by the SVP, allegedly as an expression of popular sovereignty, but also as the main means through which to challenge the 'political class'. Hence the party developed an innovative cross-arena strategy of mobilization on its core issues, by forcing government and parliament to include its key issues in the national agenda and to take position on them. Mobilization preceding referenda helped to organize electoral mobilizations before national elections and reinforced the SVP's ownership of certain themes, with the party investing a lot in terms of communication and marketing. It might therefore be possible to distinguish different types of interplay between the SVP and traditional mainstream parties across different arenas.

In what follows, we will consider the three core policy domains of PRRPs in Western Europe (Biard, Bernhard and Betz 2019): immigration, law and order and European integration, by focusing on some of the specific initiatives the SVP has embarked on in recent years concerning asylum, the deportation of foreign criminals and bilateral relations between Switzerland and the European Union. A discussion of these themes will allow us to consider the interplay between the SVP and the traditional mainstream parties across the arenas of direct-democracy, parliament and government. This section is based on a systematic reading of the coverage of the three already mentioned themes by the German-language daily newspaper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ)* from 1992 to 2018 as well as selected official documents, such as the Explanations of the federal government regarding the referenda and popular initiatives we deal with in the empirical part of this chapter.[8] For the latter, the number of documents amounts to 13. The decision to focus on the NZZ relates to the fact that it is the only Swiss newspaper of record that was available for the entire period under investigation. We selected all articles published in the section on Swiss politics that dealt with asylum politics, deportations and European politics. More specifically, we used the following search criteria: asylum law (*Asylgesetz*), deportation (*Ausschaffung**) and European politics (*Europapolitik*). This procedure resulted in a sample of 3,450 newspaper and online articles.

---

[8] These are documents that the government prepares in view of a consultation. They contain the information relating to the topic at stake, the positions of those in favour and against, and the official position of the Federal Council.

Clashing and co-optation strategies on asylum matters

Considering the introduction of legislation on asylum is very useful for our purposes, this being an important topic for the SVP. Since its first introduction in 1981, the federal asylum law has been subject to no less than 11 major revisions, including a root-and-branch one in 1999. The guiding principle has been to make the law ever more restrictive (under pressure by the SVP). Two popular initiatives launched by the party in the 1990s contributed to this process of continuous tightening of asylum procedures. Despite the fact that these arguably radical proposals were defeated by voters, the wide support they gained encouraged traditional right-wing parties to make substantial policy concessions to the SVP. By contrast, the SP and its allies from the left and civil society actively opposed the introduction of more restrictive asylum legislation and challenged it via referenda. However, their 'clashing' strategy ultimately proved unsuccessful.

In January 1992 the SVP launched the first popular initiative in the party's history, which it called: 'Against illegal immigration' (AII). The aim was to establish the principle that asylum applications lodged by illegal immigrants should not be dealt with at all. In addition, this initiative demanded a shortening of the period during which failed applicants could lodge an appeal. In order to reduce the economic attractiveness of Switzerland, it also stipulated that the income of working asylum seekers would be managed by the federal authorities so that they could cover the costs incurred while hosting refugees. Proposals of this kind had no chance to be approved by Parliament, and were in fact only supported by some minor radical right parties and the SVP. On 1 December 1996, citizens narrowly rejected this initiative, which was opposed by 53.7 per cent of voters. A post-referendum survey caused quite a stir, as it showed the FDP electorate to be deeply divided on this matter (Hardmeier 1997).

Given how much support the defeated initiative had enjoyed, the SVP kept focusing on its objective of tightening asylum legislation. While their MPs failed to incorporate demands from the AII into legislation, they nonetheless managed to tighten the rules and to fight abuses thanks to the support of the FDP. In June 1998, both chambers of Parliament enacted an encompassing revision of the federal asylum law. Apart from some specified rules about the protection of war displaced persons, the introduction of time limits regarding asylum procedures at airports and increased incentives for persons who return to their home countries, this reform included an extension of the obligation of asylum seekers to cooperate with Swiss authorities,

dismissals of applications in the case of abuses (such as illegal stay, deception over one's identity and non-presentation of identity documents) and the detention of people who entered Switzerland despite a ban. The revision of the asylum law as well as its measures on fighting abuses, which immediately entered into force by means of an urgent federal decree, were unsuccessfully challenged by the left and civil society organizations in the framework of a referendum held on 13 June 1999 in the context of the Kosovo War. Indeed, 70.8 per cent of voters came out in favour of the urgent federal decree and 70.6 per cent in favour of the revision.

In May 1999, in the run-up to the federal elections, the SVP launched another popular initiative on the topic, called: 'Against asylum abuses' (AAA). It called for lowering welfare payments to asylum seekers, the dismissal of asylum applications by those who had already made their application in a safe third country, as well measures against airlines that were regarded as not fulfilling their security commitments concerning their passengers. As this initiative was discussed, SP, CVP, and FDP all came out recommending rejection. In fact, on 24 November 2002 49.9 per cent of voters endorsed the initiatives, again showing that the SVP was arguably speaking on behalf of many supporters of the other parties. In a survey conducted after the referendum had taken place, over 90 per cent of those who had voted in favour indicated as their main reason for doing so their dissatisfaction with the country's asylum policy and political authorities (Hirter and Linder 2003). In addition to this, it emerged that many FDP and CVP voters had in fact supported the initiative against the advice of their own parties (2003).

In Switzerland, one does not necessarily need to win a referendum in order to push a specific agenda. A combination of the minority-oriented political culture and fear to lose a fresh referendum on a topic may justify the adoption of a strategy of co-optation, whereby government-sponsored policies basically resemble what had originally been proposed by a failed initiative (Linder 2010). This can be seen in this case, as the Federal Council (i.e. the executive) conceded that a tightening of the federal asylum law was in fact ultimately necessary.

As the government put forward its proposal, FDP and CVP backed it, while the SP expressed scepticism, and the SVP said that it did not go far enough. As it happened, the law was further tightened by parliament, with the SVP leader Christoph Blocher, the newly elected Minister for Justice, arguing it should be made stricter and most FDP and CVP MPs also backing the idea. The most significant measures of the bill adopted by both chambers in December 2005 included denying assistance to asylum seekers

whose applications had been rejected, adopting more restrictive rules for those who could not provide proof of identity, and introducing a series of coercive and restrictive procedures. The bill also stipulated that applications for asylum received by those who had already dealt with the authorities of countries regarded as safe would no longer be heard by the Swiss authorities. Adopting a clashing strategy, left-wing parties (including the SP) and some dissidents from the right opposed this revision of asylum legislation after it was adopted by Parliament, with the support of the SVP and many FDP and CVP MPs. However, the referendum the left managed to call was lost in September 2006, as 67.8 per cent of voters supported the revised law following a long campaign.

Revising the law on asylum matters in 2012, a parliamentary majority made up of SVP, FDP, and CVP introduced some 'urgent measures' that resulted in a further tightening of the procedures (Bernhard and Kaufmann 2018). Political actors from the left and civil society organizations (but without the SP) launched another referendum to repeal what had been approved, and this again was unsuccessful. On 13 June 2013, these measures were finally approved by a two-third majority of voters, namely 66.8 per cent. In the end, as we have seen, the SVP achieved its goal of tightening asylum legislation, by taking advantage of divisions within other parties, and by making good use of the opportunities provided by direct democracy.

To sum up, on matters concerning asylum we have clearly seen that, while the FDP and the CVP mostly co-opted the ideas of the SVP, as they felt the pressure of public opinion, the SP decided to clash with it and lost.

Co-optation on the issue of 'foreign criminals'

As we have seen above, the SVP is skilled at using federal popular initiatives to reshape the national agenda. Exactly the same strategy was adopted in June 2007 – a few months before the federal elections took place – when a referendum was launched on a different topic, albeit one having again to do with 'migration': the initiative for the deportation of foreign criminals (DI). The issue was new, and opened the way for the party's mobilization in the period leading up to the elections. What is again worthy of comment is the capacity of the SVP to push the traditional mainstream parties in its own direction, using referenda as a crucial pressure tool.

The DI represented a major challenge for the traditional mainstream parties. In February 2008, the SVP deposited 200,000 signatures – twice the number required to qualify a popular initiative to the ballot. Trying to co-opt this issue while also toning down the legislation, the FDP lodged a parliamentary initiative which accepted the principle that foreign criminals had to be thrown out, but proposed that deportation should only be dished out to those committing very serious offences. However, in the Lower Chamber this parliamentary initiative was rejected, with SP and the SVP representatives voting against it for opposite reasons, given that the former judged it too harsh and the latter too lenient. After long discussions, a majority of the representatives in both chambers rejected the DI and agreed that a more moderate counter-proposal should be submitted to voters in addition to the popular initiative.[9] While the counter-proposal *did* take up the initiative's main concern of not allowing foreigners who had committed crimes to stay in the country, it aimed to comply with the principles of the Federal Constitution and international law by targeting only the most dangerous offenders. The FDP and CVP voted in favour of this counter-proposal, alongside a majority of SP representatives. However, during the referendum campaign, the SP was internally divided, and eventually recommended rejecting both the DI and the counter-proposal.

On 28 November 2010, the initiative was adopted by the electorate and the counter-proposal rejected. This was a great victory for the SVP, as its initiative was supported by both a majority of voters (i.e. 52.9 per cent) and cantons (14 cantons plus a half canton voted in favour, out of 23). Importantly, the text of the initiative forced parliament to guarantee implementation within five years. However, as experts consulted by the executive recommended implementing the initiative in ways that the SVP saw as diluting it (in order to comply with the rule of law and international law), in 2012 the SVP decided to launch yet another initiative. This was called the 'enforcement initiative' (EI) and was aimed primarily at putting pressure on mainstream parties so that they would finally accept a stricter implementation of the original proposal. This new initiative listed many offences that would lead to deportation, including inflicting bodily injury, kidnapping, public incitement to crime or violence, counterfeiting currency or committing sexual offences against children.

---

[9] Parliament can submit counter-proposals to popular initiatives. Such proposals usually take up the main concerns of the latter, however are usually less radical in terms of content.

Feeling the pressure, Parliament eventually rejected the government's approach to implementation and agreed to take a harder line at the request of the FDP president, Philipp Müller. However, the Council of States (i.e. the higher chamber) chose a middle course between the proposal tabled by the government and that approved by the lower chamber. It therefore introduced a 'hardship clause', whereby the courts were given the power to refrain from deporting people in exceptional circumstances. This compromise solution was eventually adopted by Parliament, however the SVP came out against it. With large majorities of representatives in both chambers voting to reject the EI initiative sponsored by the SVP, the electorate eventually opposed it, too, in February 2016, with a majority of 58.9 per cent.

While this was a defeat for the SVP, it had ultimately managed to take control of the political agenda by forcing other parties to debate an issue of its choice for a long time. In the end, the SVP's competitors (the FDP, CVP and, initially, also the SP) felt they did not have a choice but to co-opt the SVP's approach, while trying to soften its proposal a little. Hence, while the initiative was defeated, tougher legislation on the matter was indeed passed. The added bonus for the SVP was that this whole saga had exposed divisions within the SP on an issue that could be framed as being essentially about the safety and security of Swiss citizens.

In summary, the SVP's success in tightening legislation regarding the deportation of foreign criminals was a result of a co-optation by mainstream parties. This especially applied to the CVP and the FDP, given that the SVP's popular initiatives put them under a lot of pressure. The SP, for its part, turned out to be internally divided, thus vacillating between co-optation, cooperation and clashing strategies.

Relations with the EU: constant clashing and the growing radicalization of the SVP

Switzerland is one of the few Western European countries still outside the EU. However, since the 1990s its relationship with it has been a main preoccupation for both traditional mainstream parties and the SVP. The latter party certainly opposed EU membership – in fact any kind of supranational integration, as this was perceived as a danger for national sovereignty – however it looked divided on the issue at times. Winning a referendum opposing the idea that the country should join the European

Economic Area (EEA) in December 1992, albeit narrowly (i.e. with 50.3 per cent of the vote), represented a first important victory for the radicalized SVP headed by Christoph Blocher. This referendum is generally regarded as the most important of the Swiss post-war period, and the SVP was the only government party that actually opposed EEA membership. Having said this, however, the SVP was not always consistent on these issues, mainly due to internal factionalism (see below).

Following the vote rejecting EEA membership, the traditional mainstream parties focused on finding alternative ways to cooperate with the EU, which is a key economic partner for the country. Therefore, the federal government negotiated with the EU what will be known as the 'Bilateral Agreements' (on free movement, technical trade barriers, government procurement, agriculture, land transport, air transport and research), with support by all mainstream parties. Parliament approved these agreements in 1999, with only 11 MPs (five of whom from the SVP) voting against. This decision was challenged via a referendum launched by two small populist radical right-wing parties, the Ticino League and the Swiss Democrats, and opposed by all government parties. Interestingly, however, the SVP split on this issue, as 14 out of 26 of its cantonal branches decided to ignore the official party line and actually supported the referendum. In May 2000, the electorate overwhelmingly backed the Bilateral Agreements by a two-thirds majority (67.2 per cent), and the country signed nine additional agreements with the EU in 2004. Of these, the Schengen Association Agreement was opposed by the SVP, which launched a referendum (opposed by SP, CVP, and FDP), allegedly to safeguard national sovereignty. In June 2005, the majority of participating citizens accepted the Schengen Association Agreement by a margin of 54.6 per cent, thereby inflicting a defeat on the SVP. Three months later, Swiss citizens also agreed that the free movement of people should be extended to the ten Eastern European states which had joined the EU, with 56 per cent backing the proposal. A similar vote occurred in February 2009, when 59.6 per cent of voters supported the idea that freedom of movement should also be extended to Bulgaria and Romania, which had also joined the EU. These referenda were also launched by the SVP, although divisions within it meant that mobilization was not as effective as it could have been.

On 9 February 2014, a political earthquake occurred in the country, as 50.3 per cent of voters and a majority of cantons accepted the popular initiative 'against mass immigration' (AMI), again launched by the SVP and opposed by the SP, CVP and FDP. The initiative called for limitations to be imposed on immigration, but contradicted what stated in the just mentioned Bilateral Treaties. The SVP's competitors responded

by adopting a clashing strategy, as Parliament implemented the initiative in December 2016 in such a way as not to breach the Bilateral Agreements. Hence the bill, supported by large majorities in both chambers and opposed by the SVP, gave priority to Swiss-based job seekers in industries with high levels of unemployment (currently at least 8 per cent), but without introducing immigration quotas. To add salt to the SVP's wounds, the Federal Council also proceeded to sign an agreement with the EU which extended the free movement of people to Croatian citizens.

However, the SVP has clearly not abandoned plans to oppose the deepening of relations with the EU in recent years, via the means afforded to it by direct democracy. Hence in February 2015, the party launched an initiative in favour of 'self-determination', aimed at making sure that national laws could override international agreements. Opposed by all other major parties, the initiative ended up failing in 2018, having been supported by a mere 33 per cent of voters. In January 2018, the SVP launched another initiative to limit immigration, claiming that Switzerland should be in charge of its own immigration policy. If the initiative is accepted by the people – the vote is expected to take place in September 2020 – the government would have one year to negotiate the matter with Brussels. Meanwhile, after a long negotiation, in late 2018 the EU asked Swiss authorities to approve the so-called 'Framework Agreement', which consolidates the Bilateral Agreements, and confirms the principle of freedom of movement. On this issue too, the SVP is likely to mobilize, despite the problems this could cause Swiss companies working in the EU common market.

The radicalization of the SVP on EU issues was not affected by the withdrawal of the application to join the EU by the Swiss government in 2016. By doing so, the FDP and the CVP were trying to partially co-opt the SVP's Eurosceptic attitude, however it is very doubtful that they have managed to defuse the issue of EU-Swiss relations. Originally submitted in 1992 when the EU was still the European Community, during the 1990s SP, CVP and FDP had been in favour of eventually joining, despite the reservations to the idea of some on the right (Fontanellaz 2018). However, after the Bilateral Treaties came into force at the turn of the millennium, approval for the idea of EU accession significantly decreased among party elites.

To sum up, we can say that on the issue of the relationships between the EU and Switzerland, the SVP's competitors usually adopted a clashing strategy, leaving the SVP alone to oppose EEA membership and freedom of movement. While the action of traditional mainstream parties in the parliamentary arena softened the hardest provisions contained in the initiatives launched by the SVP, it is clear that the party

managed to shift Switzerland (a country traditionally hostile to supranational integration) to an even more 'Eurosceptic' position by using the means provided by direct democracy – see the withdrawal of the application to join the EU by the Swiss government.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the interplay between the SVP and the other Swiss parties, by considering the peculiarities of Blocher's party within the context of the country's institutional setting. First, we have mentioned that the SVP is in fact a radicalized mainstream party, with a history as a member of the Swiss political system and its federal executive. In other words, it has never been a 'niche' party, nor an 'outsider' (see Chapters 1 and 3 of this volume). Second, in the 2000s the party became the largest Swiss national party with almost 30 per cent of the vote and has therefore been able to interact with the other major governing parties – the FDP, CVP, and PS – from a relative position of strength. Third, thanks to the peculiar rules of the Swiss political system, whereby the members of government do not need to share a common program before joining the executive, the SVP parliamentary groups have enjoyed great freedom of manoeuvre to create coalitions with different parties depending on the topic at hand. Finally, the Swiss political system provides strong opportunities to any group or party willing to counter parliamentary decision-making or affect the political agenda via the means of direct democracy, and the SVP has exploited this extensively.

Since the 1990s, when it started radicalizing and growing, the SVP has both exploited and challenged these institutional settings via its adversarial strategy towards the other parties. The distribution of seats in government, unchanged since 1959, was eventually altered in the SVP's favour in 2003. This is proof of the other parties' willingness to collaborate with the SVP when the latter shows it is willing to do so. In contrast, the SVP is increasingly isolated in parliament, although this trend has been partially reversed during the last legislature, as it has cooperated more with the FDP on economic and fiscal issues. As for the referendum arena, as we have seen, the SVP has often been opposed by one, two or even three traditional mainstream parties at once. In fact, the direct-democratic arena remains of strategic importance for the SVP, not only

to help mobilizing its supporters before elections, but also as a means to shape the agenda and pressurize government and parliament on the issues it cares about.

How have the other major parties reacted to the success of the SVP? They appear to have adapted their strategies and policy orientations to the changing context to an extent, by adopting a variety of different strategies. When it came to the SVP's core issues (i.e. immigration, law and order, and European integration), the FDP and CVP have sometimes co-opted the SVP's approach, while the SP has tended to clash with it. In some cases, namely reform of the asylum system, the SVP has managed to modify governmental and parliamentary policy-making thanks to the means afforded to it by direct democracy. Regarding the relations between Switzerland and the UE, the SVP has deployed a two-fold strategy during the 1990s: it has opposed joining the EEA and the EU, however it has generally agreed to ratify bilateral agreements. This strategy was devised after the referendum of 1992 regarding EEA membership had failed, and received a boost after the country withdrew its application to join the EU.

During the 2010s, however, polarization around EU issues has increased, with Blocher's party consolidating its anti-establishment, anti-EU image, thanks to referenda and initiatives in which issues having to do with immigration, law-and-order and international relations were all addressed. In this more recent phase, whilst the SP has remained in favour of EU membership, and has clashed with the SVP on issues such as asylum, the right-wing CVP and FDP have embraced a more ambivalent strategy. For instance, the approval of the law on the deportation of criminal foreigners mentioned above has shown the willingness of the moderate right to sometimes co-opt the SVP ideas (or at least accept its priorities), albeit sometimes also clashing with it.

In sum, the developments of the last decades have made the Swiss political landscape more receptive to populist appeals, as migration and the EU provided new opportunities for mobilization for the self-proclaimed defenders of national sovereignty. Regarding the future, it is unlikely there will be fundamental changes in these trends. Of course, in the last national elections, held in October 2019, the SVP achieved 'only' 25.6 per cent of the votes (-3.8%), due to the relevance acquired by environmental issues and the success of the *Grüne Partei der Schweiz* (GPS – Green party). However, the SVP remains the biggest party in the Lower Chamber and it is ready to mobilize again on migration and EU issues.

References

Abou-Chadi, Tarik, and Werner Krause. 2018. "The Causal Effect of Radical Right Success on Mainstream Parties' Policy Positions: A Regression Discontinuity Approach." British Journal of Political Science. Cambridge University Press: 1–19. doi:10.1017/S0007123418000029.

Afonso, Alexandre, and Yannis Papadopoulos. 2015. "How the Populist Radical Right Transformed Swiss Welfare Politics: From Compromises to Polarization". Swiss Political Science Review 21, no. 4: 617–635. doi:10.1111/spsr.12182.

Albertazzi, Daniele. 2008. "Switzerland: Yet Another Populist Paradise." In Twenty-First Century Populism, edited by Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell, 100–118. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Albertazzi, Daniele, and Duncan McDonnell. 2015. Populists in Power. London- and New York: Routledge.

Albertazzi, Daniele, and Sean Mueller. 2013. "Populism and Liberal Democracy: Populists in Government in Austria, Italy, Poland and Switzerland. " Government and Opposition 48, no. 3: 343–371.

Albertazzi, Daniele. 2008. "Switzerland: Yet Another Populist Paradise." In Twenty-First Century Populism, edited by Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell, 100–118. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bale, Tim Christoffer Green-Pedersen, André Krouwel, Kurt Richard Luther, and Nick Sitter. 2010. "If You Can't Beat Them, Join Them? Explaining Social Democratic Responses to the Challenge from the Populist Radical Right in Western Europe." Political Studies 58, no. 3: 410–426. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9248.2009.00783.x

Bernhard, Laurent. 2016. "The 2015 Swiss Federal Elections: The Radical Right Strikes Back." West European Politics 39, no. 4: 879–889.

Bernhard, Laurent. 2017. "Three Faces of Populism in Current Switzerland: Comparing the Populist Communication of the Swiss People's' Party, the Ticino League, and the Geneva Citizens' Movement." Swiss Political Science Review 23, no. 4: 509–525.

Bernhard, Laurent, and David Kaufmann. 2018. "Tightening and Streamlining Policies in Western Europe." Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 44, no. 15: 2506–2523.

Bernhard, Laurent, Hanspeter Kriesi, and Edward Weber. 2015. "The Populist Discourse of the Swiss People's Party." In European Populism in the Shadow of the Great Recession, edited by Hanspeter Kriesi and Takis S. Pappas, 123–137. London: Rowman & Littlefield, ECPR Press.

Biard, Benjamin, Laurent Bernhard, and Hans-Georg Betz, eds. 2019. Do They Make a Difference? The Policy Influence of Radical Right Populist Parties in Western Europe. Colchester: ECPR Press.

Bühlmann, Felix, Céline Schmid-Botkine, Peter Farago, François Höpflinger, Dominique Joye, René Levy, Pasqualina Perrig-Chiello, and Christian Suter, eds. 2012. Rapport social 2012: Générations en jeu. Zurich: Seismo.

Burgos, Elie, Oscar Mazzoleni, and Hervé Rayner. 2011. La formule magique. Conflits et consensus dans l'élection du Conseil fédéral. Lausanne: Presses Polytechniques et universitaires Romandes.

Canovan, Margaret. 1981. Populism. New York: Harcourt Brace Yavonovic.

Canovan, Margaret. 1999. "Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy.v Political Studies 47, no. 1: 2–16.

Church, Clive H. 2004. "The Swiss Elections of October 2003: Two Steps to Change?" West European Politics 23, no. 3: 518–534.

Church, Clive H. 2008. "The Swiss Elections of 21 October 2007: Consensus Fights Back" West European Politics 27, no. 3: 608–623.

De la Torre, Carlos, and Oscar Mazzoleni. 2019. "Do We Need a Minimal Definition of Populism? An Appraisal of Mudde's Conceptualization." Populism 2, no. 1: 79–95.

Fontanellaz, Blaise. 2018. "Les partis helvétiques et l'Europe: de l'intégration à la désintégration?' Relations internationales 175, no. 3: 137–152.

Hardmeier, Sibylle. 1997. Analyse der eidgenössischen Abstimmungen vom 1. Dezember 1996. Bern: GfS.

Hirter, Hans, and Wolf Linder. 2003. Analyse der eidgenössischen Abstimmungen vom 24. November 2002. Bern: GfS.

Kitschelt, Herbert P. 1986. "Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest: Anti-nuclear Movements in Four Democracies.' British Journal of Political Science 16, no. 1: 57–85.

Kobach, Kris William. 1993. The Referendum: Direct Democracy in Switzerland. London: Dartmouth Pub Co.

Kriesi, Hanspeter, Romain Lachat, Peter Selb, Simon Bornschier, and Marc Helbling. 2005. Der Aufstieg der SVP: Acht Kantone im Vergleich. Zurich: NZZ Verlag.

Kriesi, Hanspeter and Takis S. Pappas, eds. 2015. European Populism in the Shadow of the Great Recession. Colchester: ECPR Press.

Ladner, Andreas. 2007. "Political Parties.' In Handbook of Swiss Politics, edited, edited by Ulrich Kloeti, Peter Knoepfel and Hanspeter Kriesi, 309–334. Zurich: NZZ Libro.

Lanfranchi, Prisca, and Ruth Lüthi. 1999. "Cohesion of Party Groups and Interparty Conflict in the Swiss Parliament: Roll Call Voting in the National Council.' In Party Discipline and Parliamentary Government, edited by Shaun Bowler, David M. Farrell, and Richard S. Katz, 99–120. Columbus, OH: Ohio State Ohio State University Press.

Lijphart, Arend. 1984. Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-one Countries. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Linder, Wolf. 2010. Swiss Democracy: Possible Solutions to Conflict in Multicultural Societies. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lüthi, Ruth, Meyer Luzius, and Hans Hirter. 1991. "Fraktionsdisziplin und die Vertretung von Partikulärinteressen im Nationalrat". In Das Parlament. Oberste Gewalt des Bundes? Festschrift der Bundesversammlung zur 700-Jahr-Feier der Eidgenossenschaft, 53–71, Bern/Stuttgart: Paul Haupt.

Marcinkowski, Frank. 2007. "Media System and Political Communication." In Handbook of Swiss Politics, edited by Ulrich Kloeti, Peter Knoepfel and Hanspeter Kriesi, 381–402. Zurich: NZZ Libro.

Mazzoleni, Oscar. 2008. Nationalisme et populisme en Suisse: la radicalisation de la "nouvelle" UDC. Lausanne: Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes.

Mazzoleni, Oscar. 2013. "Des convergences inhabituelles: l'Union Démocratique du Centre et le Parti Socialiste dans l'arène parlementaire fédérale." In Voisinages et conflits. Les partis politiques suisses en mouvement, edited by Oscar Mazzoleni and Olivier Meuwly, 89–108. Geneva: Éditions Slatkine.

Mazzoleni, Oscar. 2016. "Staying Away from the Mainstream." In Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe: Into the Mainstream?, edited by Tjitske Akkerman, Sarah L. de Lange and Matthijs Rooduijn, 193–207. London: Routledge.

Mazzoleni, Oscar. 2018. Political Achievements, Party System Changes and Government Participation: The Case of the "New' New" Swiss People's Party."

In Absorbing the Blow: Populist Parties and their Impact on Parties and Party Systems, edited by Steven Wolinetz and Andrej Zaslove, 83–102. Colchester: ECPR Press.

Mazzoleni, Oscar, and Damir Skenderovic. 2007. "The Rise and Impact of the Swiss People's Party: Challenging the Rules of Governance in Switzerland." In The Extreme Right Parties and Power in Europe, edited by Pascal Delwit and Philippe Poirier, 85–116. Bruxelles: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles.

McRae, Kenneth Douglas. 1964. Switzerland: Example of Cultural Coexistence. Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs.

Meguid, Bonnie M. 2008. Party Competition between Unequals: Strategies and Electoral Fortunes in Western Europe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Minkenberg, Michael. 2001. "The Radical Right in Public Office: Agenda-setting and Policy Effects." West European Politics 24, no. 4: 1–21.

Mudde, Cas. 2004. "The Populist Zeitgeist" Government and Opposition 39, no. 4: 541–563.

Mudde, Cas. 2007. Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Odmalm, Pontus, and Eve Hepburn, eds. 2017. The European Mainstream and the Populist Radical Right. London- and New York: Routledge.

Otjes, Simon, Gilles Ivaldi, Anders Ravik Jupskas, and Oscar Mazzoleni. 2018. "It's not Economic Interventionism, Stupid! Reassessing the Political Economy of Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties." Swiss Political Science Review 24, no. 3: 270–290.

Pirro, Andrea L.P., and Paul Taggart. 2018. "The Populist Politics of Euroscepticism in Times of Crisis: A Framework for Analysis." Politics 38, no. 3: 253–6262.

Schwarz, Daniel. 2009. Zwischen Fraktionszwang und freiem Mandat. Eine Untersuchung des fraktionsabweichenden Stimmverhaltens im Schweizerischen Nationalrat zwischen 1996 und 2005. Norderstedt: Books on Demand.

Skenderovic, Damir. 2009a. "Campagnes et agenda politiques. La transformation de l'Union démocratique du centre." In Les partis politiques suisses: traditions et renouvellement, edited by Oscar Mazzoleni and Hervé Rayner, 378–409. Paris: Michel Houdiard.

Skenderovic, Damir. 2009b. The Radical Right in Switzerland: Continuity and Change, 1945–2000. New York: Berghahn Books.

Taggart, Paul. 2000. Populism. London: Open University Press.

Traber, Denise. 2015. "Disenchanted Swiss Parliament? Electoral Strategies and Coalition Formation." Swiss Political Science Review 21, no. 4: 702–723.

Van Spanje, Joost. 2010. "Contagious Parties: Anti-immigration Parties and their Impact on Other Parties' Immigration Stances in Contemporary Western Europe." Party Politics 16, no. 5: 563–586.

Vatter, Adrian. 2018. Das Parlament in der Schweiz. Macht und Ohnmacht der Volksvertretung. Zurich: NZZ Libro.

Wagner, Markus, and Thomas M. Meyer. 2017. "The Radical Right as Niche Parties? The Ideological Landscape of Party Systems in Western Europe, 1980–2014." Political Studies 65, no. 1: 84–107.