

Political Parties in Federalist Systems: Canada and Switzerland compared

Andreas Ladner and Laetitia Mathys, Idheap, University of Lausanne

(Paper presented at the 2015 ECPR General Conference in Montreal, August 26 to 29, first draft, please do not quote)

1. Introduction

This paper looks at fundamental characteristics of party organizations in the two federalist countries Switzerland and Canada. It addresses the question to what extent different forms of federalism directly affect the organization of political parties, and raises multi-dimensional questions such as: Do political parties in both countries operate the same way? To what extent are party organizations on national and on subnational level independent? How are candidates or party leaders on higher level selected? How is membership organized? Are there any financial transfers between the different layers of parties and how is party funding organized?

Following the work of Lorie Thorlakson (2001, 2003, 2007, and 2009), we organize our comparison along four institutional key dimensions: (1) the internal structure, (2) the allocation of resources between parties (or party funding), (3) the vertical integration referring to the organizational and strategic linkages between state and federal parties, and (4) the autonomy of the regional parties. Using these dimensions we are able to investigate how parties respond to or are modulated by the incentives and opportunities created by their institutional environment. Whether parties operate in a dualist form of federalism like in Canada or in a cooperative form of federalism like in Switzerland leads – we assume – to significant differences as far as their organization their degree of decentralization is concerned.

Thorlakson suggests a series of indicators to measure the four institutional dimensions mentioned above. Firstly, to examine the internal structure of party organization, we determine the prevailing party model and the mode of vertical partnership. Does it follow a bottom-up or a top-down hierarchy and to what extent are the different levels independent (stratarchical partnership)? Secondly, to measure the allocation of resources and transfers between state and federal party, we examine the degree of financial autonomy of each party level. Thirdly, to measure the vertical integration, we determine the degree of (de)centralization, the degree of resources, the type of membership (common or not), and the division of power. Finally, in order to assess the autonomy of the regional or local parties, we determine whether

there is a legal guarantee of federal non-interference or whether the regional parties are generally independent concerning the selection of candidates, the political program and financial expenditures. Additional characteristics which do not directly depend on federalism are also taken into account, such as the environment, the political culture or the size of the country. In this regard, the position of the parties within society, and the political professionalization are of special interest.

At the heart of our comparison is a neo-institutional approach which reflects the conditions under which the political players and processes are influenced by the organizational structures and the overall political design. In this instance, the two different types of federalism in Switzerland and Canada, which are commonly described as cooperative and dualist respectively, play a crucial role. Although federalism generally gives political parties on lower levels more autonomy and sites of competition with different electoral strength (Thorlakson, 2009), each type of federalism is likely to affect party organizations differently. The dual federalism of the Canadian political system means that the national government and the regional governments have sovereign power in their respective spheres of authority. There is a clear separation of power and competences, programs, and resources between the institutional levels, often illustrating by the nickname “layer-cake federalism” (Smith, 2010). Nevertheless, the relationships between the state and national governments are often marked by tension. One of the reasons is that the federal government sometimes attempts to impose its standards and conditions, especially in the fiscal federalism area (Cross, 2006). This dual federalism also has an impact on political parties, like for example a separated membership and the absence of affiliation between a national and a provincial political party. The cooperative federalism in the Swiss political system implies that national, regional and local entities undertake government functions jointly rather than exclusively. They cooperate and share powers by working out details concerning which level of government takes responsibility for particular areas and creating policy in that area. In brief, unlike Canada, in a cooperative federalism the national and state governments are partners in the exercise of governmental authority; this fragmentation was named "marble cake federalism", referring to multilevel arrangements and thus simulating a real mixture of cooperation, compromise, communication and negotiation vertically (Gunlicks 2005), leading to common membership or common governance structures.

We assume that these forms of federalism are determinant when it comes to explaining the difference of the allocation of competences between the institutional levels and the relationships between the national party and the regional units. We also argue that the types of federalism shape and influence the organization and the functioning of political parties. The overarching research interest can thus be summarized as follows: **To what extent do the different forms of federalism have an impact on the organization and the functioning of political parties?**

We start with some theoretical considerations based on an institutionalist approach. Then, we present a few general observations such as linguistic issues and characteristics of the electoral system which are likely to have an impact on the organization of political parties. The core analysis of party organization

is then made along the four institutional dimensions on the grounds of a series of indicators. We also look at the role and position of parties within society and the degree of professionalization of the politicians. Finally, concluding remarks are presented.

2. Theoretical considerations concerning federalism and political parties

The research framework is based neo-institutionalist theories which emphasize the importance of institutions but also leave room for actors' choices. Through these theories, we understand party organization as a reflection of society, "political phenomena as the aggregate consequences of individual behavior, action as the result of choices based on calculated self-interest, history as efficient in reaching outcomes, and decision making and the allocation of resources as the central attentions of political life" (March and Olsen, 1983). Such an approach elucidates how the decisions are taken within the political parties; to what extent decisions and strategies stem from calculations and preferences and what freedom of choices the actors have (Kuhlmann and Wollmann 2014; Lecours, 2002).

The idea that behavior and the strategy of parties are determined by federalism inheres with Thorlakson (2007) who develops an "institutional approach to party organization". The realization of a federal design in a state creates "multiple arenas of competition", each of them with different offices at stake and with distinct policies to make. This logic of the location of competition (Scharpf, 1995) distinguishes Switzerland and Canada. In a dual federalism like Canada, the two levels of party are in separate arenas of political competition. Flexibility on the level at stake is more useful than cooperation. Meanwhile, in a cooperative federalism, both levels of party are in the same arena of competition. This happens, for example, when representatives of the regional governments are represented in the federal upper house, as in Germany or Switzerland (Thorlakson, 2001). The institutional argument thus leads to the assumption that different forms of federalism will not produce the same political behaviors, procedures and party organization.

Neo-institutional theories comprise at least three different schools of thought: historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism, and sociological institutionalism. All have appeared over the past fifty years to elucidate the role institutions play with respect to social and political outcomes (Hall and Taylor, 1996). The rational choice neo-institutionalism is of lesser importance for our purpose and we shall concentrate on the other two approaches.

Historical institutionalists assume that strategies and choices of actors are predefined by the institutional arrangements established on a long term perspective (Peters 1999). They emphasize the importance of history in the development of institutions and the allocation of powers and stress out the effect of "path-dependency". "Path dependency" means that the same operative forces will not necessary generate the

same results everywhere. Following this conception, we examine through which hierarchical process the political architecture was shaped and established, whether it came from a bottom-up process or rather top-down.

The sociological institutionalism understands institutions as cultural phenomena that provide cognitive scripts and normative frames enhancing the legitimacy of the organization and its participants (March and Olsen, 1983). The politician's behavior is structured through the political culture, including symbols, ceremony and myth. Regarding reform processes and transformations, sociological institutionalists consider that formal organizational changes are accompanied by cognitive and socio-cultural adaptation processes and by an alignment of the qualification skills of the actors. In that context, we assume that the difference of party organizations between countries stems from the different political institutions and their cultural environment. Drawing on these approaches helps to understand diverging political characteristics in both countries.

3. Context

Switzerland and Canada are often compared because of their similarities. More than guaranteeing a high living standard, they are sharing numerous economic, political, cultural or social values. Both are federal and liberal countries. They have a strong open-market economy which encourages trades and investments. Likewise, both are plurilingual, multiethnic, and the level of trust in the institutions is relatively high, as is the participation of citizens in the political arena.

However, the organizational linkages and the political architecture between the state and federal levels of parties are fundamentally different. In first place, while Canada is a big country in terms of size, Switzerland is more than two hundred times smaller. Then, Canada is a constitutional monarchy and has a parliamentary democracy, whereas Switzerland is a Federal republic in which direct democracy spearheads the political system, giving extensive decision-making powers to the citizens (Obinger, 1998).

In Switzerland, seventeen political parties currently exist. The most important ones are: Swiss Evangelical Party (PEV); "Liberal Democrats" (FDP); Federal Democratic Union (UDF); Christian-Democratic Party (CVP); Social Democrats (SP); the Greens; Green Liberal Party; Democratic Union of the Centre or "Swiss People party" (UDC/SVP); Social-Christian Party (PCS); Conservative Democratic Party of Switzerland (PBD); Ticino League (LdT) (Ladner, 2014). In Canada, there are eighteen registered political parties. Among them, five are the most important in terms of number of membership and economic strength: the Conservative Party of Canada; the New Democratic Party; the Liberal Party of Canada; the Bloc Québécois and the Green Party of Canada. The two dominant parties

are the Liberal and the Conservative Party. In Switzerland, the strongest parties in the Council of States were, after the 2011 elections, the CVP with 13 seats, the FDP and the SP with 11 seats (Ladner, 2015). The strongest party in the National Council after the 2011 elections was the SVP with 54 seats, followed by the SP with 46 seats.

Unlike Switzerland, there actually is a party representing the French speaking community in Canada; the Bloc Québécois, which is devoted to the protection of Quebec's interests in the House of Commons. It has strong informal ties to the Parti Québécois, the provincial party that advocates for the secession of Quebec from Canada and its independence.

While Canada has ten provinces and three territories, Switzerland is defined as a federation in which the territory is divided into twenty-six cantons and the cantons themselves consist of 2324¹ municipalities. Both countries have to deal with multilinguistic and multiethnic issues. Canada is officially bilingual, with English and French as the official languages spoken by 67.1% and 21.5% of the population respectively. Since the 60s, the central government's methods have been to raise the status of the French language to parity with English (Esman, 1982). All laws of the federal government are enacted in both English and French and federal government services are required to be available in both languages.

In Switzerland, there are four official languages; German, French, Italian and Romansh. German is spoken by about 64%, French by about 23%, Italian by about 8%. Romansh is spoken by less than 1% of the total population. Linguistic groups are territorially concentrated and most cantons are monolingual. Only three cantons are bilingual (Valais, Bern, Fribourg) and the canton of Graubünden is trilingual. The Swiss constitution recognizes the rights of the various language groups to communicate in their own language. German, French, and Italian are full official languages of the Confederation – all laws and official documents have to be available in them – and Romansh is a “partial” official language for the purpose of communication with Romansh speakers (Linder and Vatter, 2001). Unlike Canada, the linguistic heterogeneity in Switzerland is not a challenge because the political system included all the official languages from the very beginning.

Regarding the political and electoral systems, we also find important differences. Canada is a parliamentary democracy following the Westminster model and Switzerland an ideal type of consensus democracy (Lijphart 1999). Unlike Switzerland, the use of direct democracy is relatively rare: over time, only three national referendums were launched and voted, regarding prohibition, conscription, and new constitutional arrangements (Cross, 2011). Canada's head of state is the British monarch, who is represented by the governor in Canada. He chooses the Canadian head of government, its Prime minister. The Canadian Parliament looks like the United States Congress; both are divided in two Chambers. The National Parliament is composed of a lower house “House of Commons” (308 members) and an upper

¹ As of January 2015.

house “Senate” (105 members). However, unlike the Congress, only the members of the House of Commons are publicly elected. Members of the Canada Senate are appointed by the governor general and service until their retirement.

In Switzerland, the fundamental instrument of direct democracy allows citizens to control government and parliament. Direct democracy is based on the sovereignty of the citizens and is directed against extending too much competence to the political authorities. Switzerland has a hybrid governmental system; between parliamentary and presidential systems. The parliament elects the Federal Government but the government does not need a stable majority in parliament throughout the legislature. The Parliament is constituted of two chambers with equal powers in all respects (Ladner, 2015): the National Council which represents the people, consists of 200 members who are elected under a system of proportional representation, and the Council of States which represents the cantons, has 46 representatives and the members are elected according to the mode of elections chosen by the cantons. Some of the cantons chose a majority system, whereas others (only Jura and Neuchâtel) prefer the proportional system. The composition of the Federal Council is the cornerstone of Swiss consociationalism (magic formula); based on a consensus decision-making. When it comes to cantonal and local elections, different systems of elections are applied. In general however, the parliaments are elected in a proportional representation system and the majorities of the executives in a majority system (Ladner, 2015).

4. Parties compared

As mentioned in the introduction we aim at providing a comparative analysis of party organization in Canada and Switzerland. Following neo-institutionalist theories, we assume that the two different model of federalism Switzerland and Canada explain why and how organizations and structures of parties differ. Our comparison consists of two analytical steps. In a first step we look at four institutional dimensions which be measured by a set of well-defined indicators. These dimensions are assumed to be influenced by the form of federalism. In a second step we discuss additional characteristics which do not depend on federalism, but rather on external factors such as the environment or the political culture. These “extra” dimensions are the position that parties have within the society and the respective practices of a political professionalization.

The four dimensions and the indicators suggested by Thorlakson (2001, 2003, 2007, and 2009) are:

Dimensions	Indicators
Internal Structure	Stratarchical partnership Bottom-up or top-down hierarchy
Fiscal transfers	Degree of financial autonomy Laws on Party funding
Vertical integration of the parties	Degree of (de)centralization Degree of resources Membership: common or not common Method of division of powers
Autonomy of the sub-central parties	Legal guarantee of non-interference Capacity to decide on political programs Capacity to select candidates or leaders
External dimensions	Position of the parties within the society Professionalization

4.1. Internal structures

We expect the internal structures of the parties to be shaped by the form of federalism of the respective countries. Regarding the Canadian case, we suppose that there is no interdependence of the party organizations on the two levels (*dualist model*), whereas in the Swiss case (*integrated or cooperative model*) an institutional cooperation is to be found.

More recent publications on party organization describe the relationship between national and local party organizations (Katz and Mair, 1995; Carty and Cross, 2006) as stratarchical. We assume that this new term, “stratarchy” which is one of the characteristics of the cartel party corresponds also to the Canadian and Swiss party organizations; it signifies an organizational model where each level of the organization operates to a large extent independently of other organizational levels. In such a model, hierarchy is largely absent and the levels remain independent from each other. According to Peters and Pierre, it is this new type of relationship that has replaced hierarchy in the multi-level context (Kovziridze, 2008).

In Canada, local and national party organizations enjoy considerable mutual autonomy. While, the national parliamentary party is relatively free to determine policy, the local party holds authority over the selection of candidates. With the exception of the New Democratic Party (NDP), Canadian political parties are not confederal in their organization, and provincial parties are organizationally distinct from federal parties sharing the same name (Carty and Kenneth, 2004; Coletto *et al.*, 2011). Carty (2004) argues that Canadian parties have accommodated geographic diversity through a bargain between national and local faces of the party, underpinning the stratarchical relationship. To what extent this stratarchical relationship persists if one level depends on the other to meet their financial needs (Smith, 2010) will be developed in the next section. Despite this stratarchical relationship, national party organization appear to enjoy considerable formal power over their local units through the *Canada Election Act* stipulating that party leaders sign the nomination papers of candidates. This gives party leaders a sort of veto over the electoral districts association's selection of candidates (Coletto *and al.*, 2011).

Although the cooperative type of Swiss federalism leads to an entanglement of the different orders of government and political issues frequently concern all three orders, the organization of the parties can also be described as stratarchical. In general, the national parties deal with national issues, the cantonal parties with cantonal issues, and the municipal parties with local issues. Each face of the party is increasingly autonomous of the others. However, strong autonomy does not necessary imply indifference; both the local office-holders and the national party are to a certain extent mutually interdependent (Katz and Mair, 1995). Considering the Swiss political parties, they seem like typical cartel cases at first sight, even if institutional features such as direct democracy and corporatism may weaken capacity of the party to act in its own-interest (Detterbeck, 2005).

Although the relationship can be considered as stratarchical in both countries their formation and historical development differs considerably. While in Switzerland the development of federalism shaped the organizations of parties in a bottom-up process, it followed a top-down process in Canada. The bottom-up development of Swiss federalism finds its analogy in the bottom-up organization of parties and interest associations along the principles of subsidiarity and the autonomy of the cantonal and local units (Ladner, 2015). This being the case, we expect relatively weak national party organizations. The high degree of autonomy of the two lower state levels forces the Swiss national party organisations to develop decentralized party structures. Accordingly, all Swiss parties are forced to develop territorially federalized party structures, and the institutional conditions “prevent” the development of strong and centralized party organizations at the national level (Ladner and Brändle, 2008). The bigger parties consist of party sections in almost all cantons, and the cantonal parties consist of local parties in an importance number of the municipalities (Ladner, 2015).

Conversely, because of a top-down development, the Canadian national party organizations are stronger and overlap with the prerogatives of the local parties (Coletto and Eagles, 2008). Provincial politics are

dominated by the same parties that stand at the federal level, but some provinces that have powerful political parties, are not even represented at the federal level. Furthermore, voters in Canada generally understand that the federal parties are not the same as the local versions, so it is not unusual to vote one way federally and another way provincially.

4.2. Fiscal transfers

Thorlakson (2007) draws attention to the importance of the allocation of resources between the federal and state levels of government to explain the congruence or similarity of party systems. Allocation of resources in a federation can be measured by the share of revenue and expenditures of each level of government. Switzerland and Canada are both decentralized and have a strong fiscal federalism, however they do not share the same vertical model of financial transfers between the national and regional parties. First, while the Canadian government has adopted party funding regulations, there is no regulation in Switzerland. Secondly, while Canadian national party organizations may transfer money to local electoral districts associations or help candidates during an election campaign, there are almost no vertical transfers of money from national to the cantonal parties in Switzerland.

Canada has adopted many rules to control the funding of political parties conversely to Switzerland. Federal elections and political parties in Canada first became subject to meaningful regulation in the 1970s. Since the 1974 reforms, a series of legislative changes has made the funding of parties and election campaigns subject to much more extensive regulation and state support. The most recent and important act that radically changes the system is *Bill C-24* which came into effect in 2004 and amended the *Canada Elections Act* and the *Income Tax Act*. The maximum amount that individuals may donate to political parties, candidates, constituency associations, and leadership and nomination contestants is \$ 5000. Unions and corporations are no longer permitted to make political contributions, except modest contributions to candidates, constituency associations and nomination contestants. Modest contributions mean \$ 1000. This contemporary regulatory regime limits both the size and source of contributions to political parties. About the period before the 2004 reform, Carty and Eagles note that the national party organization contributed very little to the local elections campaigns, showing a limited integration of the two campaign levels (2005). Today, these contributions are more significant, but remain measured.

National party organization may transfer money to local electoral districts associations as an incentive to engage in certain practices or to select candidates to increase the likelihood of winning a targeted seat (Coletto *and al.*, 2011). Likewise, the national party may tax candidates' election expense rebates or serve as a conduit for interregional transfers of funds. David Coletto and his colleagues suggested four models to examine the flows of money within parties; among them, we envisage the stratarchical relationship model. Local electoral districts associations and candidates raise sufficient funds to

maintain local party organization and contest election campaigns in the constituencies, and the national party is able to derive adequate income from either private or public sources. Transfers between the national and local levels would be small relative to party income. In this context, the absence of interdependence allows both levels genuine organizational autonomy. Coletto and his colleagues proceeded to an empirical analysis of aggregate data from 2004 to 2007 to reveal differences in the revenue sources and internal money flows among Canada's four main political parties. They found that Canadian parties are stratarchically organized, also in the two smaller parties of their sample (New Democratic Party and Bloc Québécois), despite a financial stratarchy less evident.

When it comes to the Swiss case, the political parties financing system is not regulated. Funding comes from their members and from external donors. Membership fees are generally paid to the local party organization, and some of these fees find their way up to the cantonal and national party organizations. The national and cantonal parties depend much more on donors, on voluntary contributions of party members, and on contributions of party members in public offices. The importance of the national party organization for the cantonal parties is partly reflected in the proportion of its resources the national party organization receives from its cantonal units (Ladner, 2007; 2015). The cantons are the electoral district for the national elections. This weakens the national party because the cantonal branches elect their candidates and do their own campaigning. The national parties only coordinate the campaigns. Therefore, the national elections mainly take place within the cantons, which further enhances the importance of the cantonal branches (Ladner and Brändle, 2008).

Usually citizens do not trust parties. The results of the *World Value Survey* show that this holds also true for Canada and Switzerland. Perhaps in Switzerland confidence in parties is slightly higher. This might be due to the Swiss system of power sharing. The result, however, is in so far interesting as the Swiss parties do not seem suffer from the lack of transparency when it comes to the funding of the parties.

Figure: Confidence to the Political parties

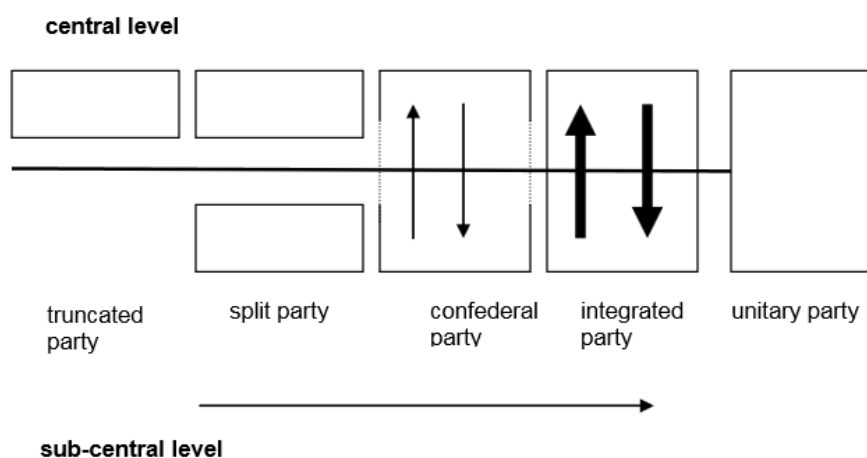
	TOTAL	Country/Region	
		Canada	Switzerland
A great deal	1.6	2.0	0.9
Quite a lot	21.6	20.2	24.0
Not very much	57.0	55.5	59.4
None at all	14.8	17.0	11.1
No answer	0.7	0.4	1.2
Don't know	4.3	4.9	3.3
(N)	(3,405)	(2,164)	(1,241)

Source: *World Values Survey 5: 2005-2009*

4.3. Vertical integration

Vertical integration refers to the strength of formal and informal linkages between state and federal parties (Thorlakson, 2009). How is the relationship between the party competing in the national arena and the party competing in the regional arenas organized, are they interdependent or strongly split? Thorlakson categorizes party organization as integrated, confederal, split, semi-integrated or truncated. Unlike Thorlakson who makes a distinction between the dimensions “vertical integration” and “influence”, we consider the influence as an extension of the vertical integration. Thus, we examine the influence of federal parties on the regional parties and *vice-versa* (Thorlakson, 2009). In order to analysis which type corresponds to the party organizations of Canada and Switzerland, we explore the membership structure and the representation of the regional party governing bodies on the national scene. We also determine which method of division of powers between the institutional levels is applied in both countries.

In the case of an interdependence between the national and regional levels, the party is vertically *integrated*. In such case, the membership is generally common, the regional party governing bodies are represented in the national party, they may share a common office and there is a subsequent informal cooperation, such as campaigning assistance or, more commonly, a close relationships between leaders at the two levels. If the party is organized and competes at both the state and federal levels but shares neither a common governance nor a common membership structure, it is classified as *non-integrated* (Thorlakson, 2009). A *split party* is one that competes at both levels of government, but with few or no organizational linkages between them and with a low degree of cooperation. Finally, a *truncated party* occurs when no counterpart to the party exists at the other level of competition – parties only compete at the central electoral level (Thorlakson 2001).



Source: Thorlakson, L. (2001, April). Federalism and party organisational adaptation: a cross-national comparison. In *Paper presentado en el ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, Grenoble, Francia, Abril* (pp. 6-11).

We assume that the parties in Switzerland are integrated, whereas in Canada there are mostly split parties. There are, however, also some exceptions. Like for example the New Democratic Party which is Canada's most integrated party. When an individual joins a provincial wing of the NDP, the membership in the federal party is granted automatically. In addition, provincial party offices service both levels of the party which ensures continued and frequent contacts between the multiple branches (Dyck, 1996). Additionally, as outlined in the federal NDP Constitution, two officers from each provincial party have a seat in the federal council, ensuring provincial representation at the federal level (Pruysers, 2013). Unlike the NDP, each provincial wing of the other parties retains autonomy and control over their own affairs and are not automatically represented in the national scene. However, Dyck (1996) notes that there is probably weekly communication between national and provincial parties, at least for Liberal Party. Consequently, it is most likely to be classified a semi-integrated party type. Finally, the other parties like the Conservatives do not have formal organizational ties to their provincial counterpart. Former events showed that the national party embraced a truncated organizational structure and made no efforts to form provincial wings of the party. As such, the party operates at a single level and remains organizationally distinct from the existing parties in the provinces (Pruysers, 2013).

Membership

Being a party "member" in Canada refers to someone who holds an active, fee-paying, card-carrying membership in a political party. In Canada the membership to a political party is not common but separated. Some of the parties (Liberal Party or Conservative) are so loosely coupled that they have actually two different membership organizations; one for the national and one for the regional party (Thorlakson, 2001; Katz and Crotty, 2006). Some voters belong to the same party at both levels, others to a party at one level and not the other, and still others belong to different parties at the provincial and federal levels. Even when a party level exists at both the provincial and the federal level, it may represent different places on the ideological spectrum. In recognition of the federal-provincial dichotomy parties with the same name often operate completely independent of one another at different level (Young, 2008).

In Switzerland, the membership structure reveals the autonomy of the regional branches. In the Swiss parties, the cantonal level is clearly the most important in this respect. Members generally join a party at the local level and then become automatically a member of the cantonal and the national party. Only if there is no party at the local level, they might directly join the cantonal or sometimes the national party. The central party sometimes does not even have access to the membership lists of the cantonal parties (Thorlakson 2001).

Method of division of power

In accordance with Thorlakson (2001), the form of power division in a federation is often used to explain the pattern of party organization. It is thus closely related to the determination of the strength of organizational linkages between the state and federal levels of parties. The power division applied in the federation allows examining whether the different levels of government exercise their power jointly, in the same arena, or independently, in separate arenas (Thorlakson, 2001).

Criteria for the division of powers have been deeply affected by the tensions between Canadian nation-building; having on one side the Quebec independent perspective and the province-building on the other side. The way the powers are divided is a consequence of the dual federalism. It illustrates a high degree of autonomy for the provincial governments, which are very interdependent. Canada, such as the Swiss case, combines high levels of cooperation in specific areas of public policy with considerable competition among governments in other areas (articles 91, 92, 94a and 95 of the Constitution). The constitution does not provide any power to local governments, which are under the full responsibility of provincial governments. Local governments can include a broad range of functions, however, the extent of expenditure delegation to local governments and the structure of local governments vary significantly across provinces.

The division of powers has some similarities in Switzerland with the existence of exclusive and joined competences. Nevertheless there are arguably also divergences: While the Canadian Constitution assigns the residual power to the federal level, this power remains in the hands of the Swiss cantons. Moreover, Canada does not officially and legally apply the principle of subsidiarity in contrast to Switzerland (Brouillet, 2011). Over these last years, the reformers of Canadian federalism wanted to consider a stronger decentralization and the principle of subsidiarity, but challenges arise with the federal government who remains too powerful (Rocher and Rouillard, 1998). For this reason, the main official criteria for the allocation of competences is efficiency rather than subsidiarity.

Power sharing and joint political competences are crucial characteristics of Swiss politics (Ladner, 2001). Throughout the historical development of the federation, the cantons retained important competences which led to a non-centralized distribution of responsibilities. All new powers are vested with the cantons and when the division of powers is changed, cantons enjoy a kind of veto power. The distribution of powers and the attempt to solve issues at the lowest possible level – known as the subsidiarity principle – are the cornerstones of Swiss federalism. The articles 54 to 125 of the 1999 Constitution guarantees the allocation of tasks between the institutional levels. Municipalities have exclusive powers in local service delivery such as gas, electricity or building of schools. Cantons retained powers that are important for their identity; culture, education, religion and also issues related

to social policy; health or social services. The federal level has exclusive powers in every matter concerning national sovereignty; army, external relations or requires special coordination such as social security or energy and infrastructure. All three levels have the right to raise taxes and have a certain level of financial autonomy (Linder and Vatter, 2001).

4.4. Autonomy of regional parties

Autonomy measures the freedom of the state level of the party to conduct its affairs without interference from the federal party (Thorlakson, 2009); conversely, we can also measure the legal power of the federal party to intervene in various aspects of state party affairs. The more autonomy the regional units of the party have, the greater flexibility they have to select candidates and leaders, and to formulate and adjust their policy without the intervention of the central party. The highest degree of autonomy appears in split parties, where the regional units' party organizations exist separately. In integrated parties, the autonomy varies depending on the degree of (de)centralization. "A decentralized party is one in which the local organizational units are the most structured and in which the balance of decision-making power resides, while a centralized party is one in which the balance of power lies with the national executive committee at the top of the party hierarchy" (Thorlakson 2001).

The provinces are recognized under the Canadian Constitution as being constitutionally autonomous. In practice, provincial and federal parliamentarians of the same party are not guaranteed to share similar policy priorities. While the provinces are an important level of government in Canada, there are, however, limits on their powers and jurisdictions. The Constitution provides for several federal controls over the provinces: the declaratory power and the powers of disallowance and reservation. They allow the federal government to review and reject legislation passed by provincial legislatures (Makarenko, 2009). The first of these allowed the federal government to assume control over local works that were deemed to be in the national interest or in the interest of two or more provinces, regardless of whether it fell within exclusive provincial jurisdiction. Another limit on the provinces is the federal government's spending power. While the Constitution forbids federal and provincial governments from passing laws in areas that are under the other's exclusive jurisdiction, it does not prohibit them from spending money in these areas (Bolleyer, 2006). The federal government has actively used its spending power to influence provincial policies and programs, particularly in the areas of health care and social services. For instance, it transfers billions of dollars annually to provinces to support their public health systems under certain conditions (Makarenko, 2009).

Compared to the national parties, cantonal parties play a more important role in Switzerland's political system. While article 47 of the 1999 Constitution guarantees the autonomy of the cantons, article 50 guarantees it for the municipalities. They not only have a high degree of autonomy over their own affairs,

but also have a great deal of influence over the confederal parties (Thorlakson 2001). Cantonal parties regularly defend different positions than the national party on referendum issues (Sciarini and Hug 1999). Moreover, when members of the Swiss federal government are to be elected both the national party organization and some cantonal organization often propose and defend different candidates. Unlike Canada, the cantons in Switzerland are the founders of the State. The territorial units had equal competences and autonomous municipalities offered far-reaching political rights to citizens. A symmetric federalism was thus present from the very beginning. Because of the disparities of the cantons, the national parties sometimes face with an important amount of coordination work and often have difficulties in keeping all cantonal parties on a common track (Ladner, 2007). More than that, former experiences showed that the policy line taken by the cantonal parties differs sometimes from the federal one. “Between 1949 and 1964, approximately 20 percent of the cantonal parties from the four major parties pursued a policy line that differed from the national party” (Thorlakson 2001).

Candidates ‘selection

Candidate nomination in Canadian political parties is almost not regulated. Political parties are left on their own to decide how they nominate their candidates. They can choose to elect a candidate through a vote of their local membership; they can allow their leader to unilaterally select candidates; or they determine all of the procedures including the timing, venue and the eligibility requirements both for voting and for standing as a candidate for nomination (Cross, 2006). The way candidates are nominated is problematic because of a dramatic variance. Nomination contests are often left to provincial committees and can vary significantly from one region to another, while in other parties significant discretion over candidate selection is vested in the central campaign. In this last case, the central campaign’s involvement is typically unequal, leaving the electorally poor boroughs on their own while closely scrutinizing, sometimes orchestrating, the nomination process in constituencies that are electorally important to the party. Consequently, numerous criticisms are formulated on the candidate nomination process. More and more political players want the candidate nominations more subject to the same democratic standards of openness, fairness and transparency (Cross, 2006).

The major parties almost have a monopoly in selecting the members of Parliament. It is extremely rare for a candidate to be elected as an independent. Few members of the federal political class follow a ladder from municipal to provincial to federal service. Few members come with municipal experience and even fewer with provincial training (Bolleyer, 2006). One of the reasons is the lack of organized party politics at the local level in Canada. Few cities and towns are organized politically along party lines. In addition, federal legislation prevents individuals from running for national office while serving provincially. In Canada, the only path to the House of Commons is through a party nomination contest. If communities do not have their own political party (not for the Francophones in Northern Ontario or

the Anglophone in Quebec), voters of that community need to focus on the party nomination process to ensure that an equitable number of candidates from their community are chosen. On the contrary, in Switzerland the politicians can directly be elected at the federal level. They don't need to start from the lower level, waiting to go to the national level.

The local party members decide who to send to Ottawa and once arrived there the local representative is expected to follow orders from the central party elite. The reality shows that in no instances are the local members able to select a candidate completely unfettered from interference from central party dictates (Cross, 2006). The influence of the central party on local party is often criticized. Tensions also arise due to the lack of communication between central party officials and both the local party association and would be nominated candidates. Candidates often complain that the rules are changed or deadlines are imposed without giving them adequate notice.

In Switzerland, the selection of candidates is generally made by the citizens. First, in the local parties, the politicians are in charge of the recruitment of new members. These members can be then elected by the people through a majority voting system in the executive power, which is the municipal Council. In the cantonal arena, the members of the council are elected by the people every four or five years. The elections start with a first round of elections applied through the proportional majority. Unlike the federal level, there are no party votes but only candidates' votes. At the federal levels, the nomination process starts with the acceptance of the candidate by the electoral authorities, normally recommended by its party situated in the lower levels. The citizens vote this time for parties not candidates.

4.5 External dimensions

Position of political parties within state society

One of the core responsibilities assigned to parties is to serve as a bridge between civil society and government (Young, 2008). Nevertheless, the Swiss parties are generally considered to have a weak position in state and society. "It is usually pointed out that, for a long time, parties lacked formal recognition by the Constitution, and that they are handicapped *vis-à-vis* interest groups and social movements as a consequence of the pre-parliamentary consultation procedure and direct democracy" (Neidhart 1970; Ladner, 2007). Significant signs for the weak position of the parties are found at the level of their organizations. They are small, they do not command a professional party apparatus, and they have limited financial resources, as Switzerland does not have public funding for parties. Lack of centralization and little party-internal homogeneity can be added to this. Various factors of the Swiss political system explain the weakness of the parties:

a. *The social and cultural heterogeneity*; the existence of four language groups and two religious denominations, and differences due to settlement patterns and economic structure confront the parties with major integration tasks.

b. *The smallness of the country* narrows the recruiting potential and further promotes the “*Milita system*”. Consequently, a large part of the political work is made by amateur politicians in an unprofessional manner. The parties can offer their members only unpaid posts, which make them less attractive.

c. *The political landscape is strongly decentralized*; the pronounced federalism and the autonomy of the municipalities impede the formation of strong and centralized party organizations at national level. The structure of the party landscape is strongly subdivided; correspondingly we find district and ward parties, local, regional, cantonal and federal parties. The vertical segmentation provokes 26 different party systems and patterns of competition, i.e. small cantons with two-party-systems and large cantons with multiparty systems (Ladner and Brändle, 1999).

d. *The political system is highly fragmented*: A bit more than 8 Mio people live in 26 cantons and about 2320 municipalities. This increases the difficulties for local and cantonal party organizations to reach a minimal size within a constituency. As a result, we find a large number of parties at all levels.

Unlike in Switzerland, political parties hold a great deal of power in the Canadian system of government (Makarenko, 2009). Indeed, the party with the most seats in the Canadian House of Commons can form the Government of Canada and pick the prime minister and his cabinet. The party with the second-largest number of seats forms the Official Opposition. There is always a single “leader” at the top who is basically boss of the party. The leader formulates party policy and determines where his party stands on the issues of the day, and all party members below are expected to respectfully support him.

Additionally, as we will see in the next section, while in Switzerland, political players are not “professional”, in Canada they are full-time public employees, supposed to generate a legitimate and efficient decision-making process. Secondly, regarding the autonomy of the provincial and local parties, the political landscape in Canada is less decentralized than in Switzerland. The Canadian national parties are much more powerful and dispose of more financial resources than the Swiss ones. Thirdly, the fragmentation of the political architecture in Canada is less important, essentially being extended on 10 provinces, only.

Professionalization

While members of the Canadian Parliament today are “well-paid political professionals” (Borchet and Zeiss, 2003), the Swiss politicians are generally part-time politicians. In Switzerland this is referred to as the “Milizsystem”.

Holding the federal elected office in Canada did not develop into a full-time professionally paid position until the late 50s and early 60s (Borchet and Zeiss, 2003). Prior to this, most of the elected individuals were considered as political amateurs: not professional politicians, they did not see politics as a life’s calling and had little experience with political affairs. The members of the executive were the exception since they were engaged for a full-time percentage during and after the Second War. In the latter part of the 50s, the House of Commons began to increase both its number of sitting days and its remuneration to members; the system was metamorphosing from part-time legislators to full-time, professional politicians. At the same time, the federal legislature itself moved forward with the introduction of professionalization into the law. More authority was given to non-cabinet members (Jackson and Atkinson, 1980).

One of the features that characterize Swiss politics is the Milita ideal. The Federal Assembly is not a professional Parliament. The Milita principle was historically formed through citizens. Fundamentally, there is no contrast between the state and the society; the state’s administration is taken care of by citizens as a secondary occupation and the people’s sovereignty is the political maxim. This system brings more opportunities for democratic participation and prevents the development of an independent political elite (Wiesli, 2003). However, some limits emerge when political issues get more and more complex and demand special knowledge and professional expertise. Then, the formulation and implementation of political solutions requires more time and energy which volunteers can hardly provide anymore. Finally, the scarcity of compensation of the individuals leads to a lack of interest.

5. Concluding remarks

No doubt, history, social structures and political institutions shape the organization of political parties. Swiss and Canadian party organizations show considerable differences which can be explained by diverging patterns of nation building, the size of the countries and their parliamentary system. Bottom-up nation building in Switzerland, the small size of the country and the well-established practice of power sharing leads to weak national parties, lowly professionalized politicians and rather powerful cantonal parties. The parliamentary democracy in Canada, the royalist heritage with the residual power

at the top and the large size of the country produces stronger and more powerful organizations and leadership.

Most important when it comes to explaining the differences between the two countries, however, are the different modes of federalism, the more dualist form in Canada and the more cooperative form in Switzerland. The stratarchical model is much stronger in the Canadian and results in a split party model. There is also quite some autonomy of the local and cantonal parties in Switzerland, but in addition to this, it is the lower units which constitute the party organization of the higher level.

Without hesitation we can thus conclude, the organization of the parties follows the organization of the state. This is, of course is not astonishing, since the parties organized along the decisions to be taken and the issues at stake. It remains, however, not without consequences when we discuss reforms concerning the allocation of tasks and the territorial structure of the state.

The aim of this paper was to outline a comparative approach to analyze political parties in Canada and Switzerland. For the empirical evidence we relied on secondary sources and on the literature. For a more comprehensive treatment of the questions addressed, a coordinated data gathering would be indispensable and it would most probably be rewarding not only to look at structures and formal rules but also the take into account the most important intra-party processes in use.

6. Literature

- BOLLEYER, N. (2006). Federal dynamics in Canada, the United States, and Switzerland: How substates' internal organization affects intergovernmental relations. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 36(4), 471-502.
- BORCHERT, J., & ZEISS, J. (Eds.). (2003). *The political class in advanced democracies* (pp. 142-163). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- BROUILLET E. (2011). Canadian Federalism and the Principle of Subsidiarity: Should We Open Pandora's Box? *Supreme Court Law Review*, 54
- CARTY, and CROSS, W. (2006). "Can Stratarchically Organized Parties be Democratic? The Canadian Case." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 16 ~2: 93-114.
- CARTY, R. KENNETH. (2004). "Parties as Franchise Systems: The Stratarchical Organizational Imperative." *Party Politics* 10 ~1: 5-24.
- COLETTI, D., and EAGLES, M.. (2008). "The Implications of Canada's New Regulatory Regime for Local Party Organization in Canada." In *Money, Politics and Democracy: Assessing the Impact of Canada's Party Finance Reform*, ed. Lisa Young and Harold Jansen. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- COLETTI, D., JANSEN, H. J., & YOUNG, L. (2011). Stratarchical party organization and party finance in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 44(01), 111-136.
- CROSS, W. (2006). Candidate nomination in Canada's political parties. *The Canadian General Election of*, 171-195.
- CROSS, W. (2011). *Canada: A Challenging Landscape for Political parties and Civil Society in a Fragmented Polity*. Klaus Detterbeck, Wolfgang Renzsch, and John Kincaid, eds., *Political Parties and Civil Society in Federal Countries*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.
- DETTERBECK, K. (2005). Cartel Parties in Western Europe. *Party Politics*, 11(2), 173-191.
- DYCK, R. (1996). "Relations between Federal and Provincial Parties." In *Canadian Parties in Transition*, ed. B. Tanguay and A. Gagnon. Scarborough: Nelson, 1996.
- ESMAN L. M. (1982). The Politics of Official Bilingualism in Canada. *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 97, n°2, pp. 233-253
- GUNLICKS, A. B. (2005). German federalism and recent reform efforts. *German LJ*, 6, 1283.
- HALL, P. A., & TAYLOR, R. C. (1996). Political science and the three new institutionalisms*. *Political studies*, 44(5), 936-957.
- JACKSON, R. J., & ATKINSON, M. M. (1980). *The Canadian legislative system: politicians and policymaking*. Macmillan of Canada.
- KATZ, R. S., & CROTTY, W. J. (Eds.). (2006). *Handbook of party politics*. Sage.
- KATZ, R. S., & MAIR, P. (1995). Changing models of party organization and party democracy the emergence of the cartel party. *Party politics*, 1(1), 5-28.
- KOVZIRIDZE, T. (2008). *Hierarchy and interdependence in multi-level structures: foreign and European relations of Belgian, German and Austrian federated entities*. ASP/VUBPRESS/UPA.
- KUHLMAN, S. and WOLLMANN, H. (2014) *Introduction to Comparative Public Administration: Administrative Systems and Reforms in Europe*, Cheltenham and Northampton, MA, Edward Elgar,
- LADNER, A. (2001). Swiss political parties: Between persistence and change. *West European Politics*, 24(2), 123-144.
- LADNER, A. (2007). Political Parties. In: Kriesi, Hanspeter et al. (Eds.) *Handbook of Swiss Politics*, 2nd edition. Zürich: NZZ Verlag, Chapter 4.2, 309-334
- LADNER, A., & BRÄNDLE, M. (2008). Switzerland: the Green Party, Alternative and Liberal Greens. *Green parties in transition: the end of grass-roots democracy*, 109-128.
- LADNER, A., (2015). Switzerland: Bottom-up Parties and Interest Groups with Strong Integrative Tendencies. *Forthcoming*

- LECOURS, A. (2002). L'approche néo-institutionnaliste en science politique: unité ou diversité?. *Politique et sociétés*, 21(3), 3-19.
- LIJPHART, A. (1999). *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty- Six Countries*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press.
- LINDER, W., & VATTER, A. (2001). Institutions and outcomes of Swiss federalism: The role of the cantons in Swiss politics. *West European Politics*, 24(2), 95-122.
- MAKARENKO, J. (2009). Federal Campaign Finance Laws in Canada. *Elections & Political parties*. Canada
- MARCH, J. G., & OLSEN, J. P. (1983). The new institutionalism: organizational factors in political life. *American political science review*, 78(03), 734-749.
- NEIDHART, L. (1970). Plebiszit und pluralitäre Demokratie. Eine Analyse der Funktion des
- OBINGER, H. (1998). Federalism, Direct Democracy, and Welfare State Development in Switzerland. *Journal of Public Policy*, 18, pp 241-263
- PETERS, B. G. (1999) *Institutional Theory: The "New Institutionalism" in Political Science*, London: Cassells.
- PRUYERS, S. (2013). Party Linkages in Federal States: An Examination of Elections and Parties in Ontario and Canada. Paper for presentation at the Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Victoria
- ROCHER, F., & ROUILLARD, C. (1998). Décentralisation, subsidiarité et néo-libéralisme au Canada: lorsque l'arbre cache la forêt. *Canadian Public Policy/Analyse de Politiques*, 233-258.
- SCHARPF, F. W. (1995). Federal Arrangements and Multi-Party Systems. *Australian Journal of political Science* 30: 27-39
schweizerischen Gesetzesreferendums. Bern: Francke.
- SCIARINI P., and HUG S. (1999). "The odd fellow. Parties and consociationalism in Switzerland", in Kurt Richard Luther and Kris Deschouwer (eds.). *Party Elites in Divided Societies: Political Parties in Consociational Democracy*. London, New York: Routledge, pp. 134-162
- SMITH D. E. (2010). *Federalism and the Constitution of Canada*. University of Toronto Press, London
- THORLAKSON, L. (2001, April). Federalism and party organisational adaptation: a cross-national comparison. In *Paper presentado en el ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, Grenoble, Francia, Abril* (pp. 6-11).
- THORLAKSON, L. (2003). Comparing federal institutions: Power and representation in six federations. *West European Politics*, 26(2), 1-22.
- THORLAKSON, L. (2007). An institutional explanation of party system congruence: Evidence from six federations. *European Journal of Political Research*, 46(1), 69-95.
- THORLAKSON, L. (2009). Patterns of party integration, influence and autonomy in seven federations. *Party Politics*, 15(2), 157-177.
- WIESLI, R. (2003). 20 Switzerland: The Militia Myth and Incomplete Professionalization. *The Political Class in Advanced Democracies: A Comparative Handbook: A Comparative Handbook*, 374.
- YOUNG, L. (2008). The Regulation of Political Finance in Canada: A Democratic Audit. *Comparing the Democratic Deficit in Canada and the United States: Defining, Measuring, and Fixing*