

Switzerland

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Switzerland has a unique semi-parliamentary democracy in which parliament elects a seven-member executive council for four years. Though Switzerland can readily be characterized as a mixed regime (Fleiner et al. 2005; Stepan & Skach 1998; Lijphart 1999), we follow Cheibub et al. (2010) who code Switzerland as a presidential democracy. The presidency of the council rotates yearly among its members. The President of the council is first among equals; he/she heads the meetings of the Federal Council and performs ceremonial duties, but does not have any power greater than other members of the council. On the rare occasion that votes in the Federal Council do not lead to a majority the president's vote is decisive. Since this is a rotating system, we code no SOLS changes if the presidency rotates among a stable set of parties. If the composition of the parties in the council changes, i.e. some but not all parties leave/enter, this is a minor SOLS change. The council composition was constructed from data on individual council members on the official site for the Swiss Federal Council (Swiss Federal Council 2011).

The major parties in Switzerland during the pre '45 period are the: Freisinnig-Demokratische Partei (FDP); Christlich-Demokratische Volkspartei (CVP); Schweizerische Volkspartei (SVP); and the Sozialdemokratische Partei der Schweiz (SPS). The first President of the council in the data set is Gustav Ador of the Liberal Party (LP) that later merges with the FDP. The council further consists of the FDP and CVP. In the years thereafter the council consists of only the FDP and CVP and the presidency switches between them. From 12 December 1929 onwards, the SVP joined the council and occasionally held the presidency (minor SOLS change). On December 15 1943 the SPS joined the council as well and remained in the council until the end of the dataset (minor SOLS change) but does not provide a President in the remaining two years coded in the dataset (Swiss Federal Council 2011, woldstatesmen.org).

Switzerland is coded as a presidential democracy from 1945 until 2008. Switzerland has a system with rotating heads of state.¹ The president (or chairperson of the Federal Council) changes every year and is often affiliated with different parties. Yet these leadership changes are not SOLS changes if the leaders' parties are cooperating in the governing coalition. There are no leaders who come to power belonging to a party that does not participate in the rotations. Thus, for the time under review, there are no major SOLS changes.

However, one important issue is that not all parties participated in the rotation during the entire 1945-2008 period. In particular, the SP was in the rotation between 1945-1953, then dropped out 1953-1959, and then came back in 1959. The Social Democrats won their first seat in the council in 1943, but lost it in 1953 when council member Max Weber of the PS stepped down after his department lost a referendum on finance reform (Lehmbruch 1993). In 1959 they obtained two seats and from 1959 until 2003, the seat division was stable with two seats for the FDP, CVP, and SP and one seat for the SVP (Dardanelli 2005, Lehmbruch 1993). We code minor SOLS changes both in 1953 and in 1959, since the SOLS did change with the SP leaving the rotation systems.

After 1959, Switzerland had what was called the "magical formula" where each of the four parties had two federal councilors. Kriesi and Trechsel (2008) provide us with additional information on the magic formula. The magic formula of "progressive cooptation" arose in part

¹ Note that we diverge from the Archigos leader coding with respect to Friedrich Wahlen, who is listed by his first name Friedrich in Archigos and is listed as Wahlen in Chisols.

because of the referendum threat. As each party could initiate a referendum, there was an incentive to co-opt all four parties. Council members are elected by the parties in the joint houses of parliament and each requires an absolute majority to be elected. Parties therefore need support of other parties to get their councilmember elected (Kriesi & Trechsel 2008, Dardanelli 2005).

The magic formula of 2:2:2:1 broke down in 2003, when the SVP won one of the seats from the Christian democrats (Kriesi & Trechsel 2008). Hereafter there was increase struggle between parties over cabinet posts. However, the party composition of the council remained the same until 2008. In December 2007, Blocher, the controversial leader of the rightwing People's Party was voted out of cabinet in favor of outside People's Party candidate Widmer-Schlumpf. Widmer-Schlumpf accepted the position on December 13 2007 (Swissinfo 2007b). In response the People's Party announced it would leave the government coalition and would ban Widmer-Schlumpf from the parliamentary grouping if she would not step down (Bradley 2007, Swisinfo 2008a). Widmer-Schlumpf did not step down, however, and the People's Party withdrew recognition of both its cabinet ministers Widmer-Schlumpf and Schmid. Widmer-Schlumpf was officially removed from the party in Juli when the SVP banned her canton chapter. The divisions within the People's Party became formal with the establishment of the Conservative Democratic Party in November 2008 (Swissinfo 2008b). However, following the resignation of Schmid in November, the People's Party re-entered cabinet with the election of Mauer on 10 December 2008 ("Swiss far-right back in government" 2008, Swissinfo 2008c). The exit and re-entry of the People's Party are minor SOLS changes.

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