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Author(s): Charles D. Hadley, Michael Morass, Rainer Nick
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Federalism and Party Interaction in West Germany, Switzerland, and Austria

Charles D. Hadley
University of New Orleans

Michael Morass
European University Institute

and

Rainer Nick
Universität Innsbruck

The federalism established in the constitutions of the Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland, and Austria, in addition to the common language of these countries, distinguishes them from the other West European countries, which lean toward centrally organized states. After examining the historical foundation and development of the federal systems in the three countries, the article analyzes the segmentation, federal-state interaction, and intraparty effects of political parties in them. While federalism is strengthened by the heterogeneity and regional solidarity of the political parties in Switzerland, federalism has become a pure "party federalism" in the Federal Republic of Germany and Austria.

The Federal Republic of Germany, Republic of Austria, and Switzerland are federal nations. The federalism established in the constitutions of these states distinguishes them from other West European countries, which lean toward centrally organized states.¹ This apparent similarity of governmental systems, common language (German is the native language of almost three-fourths of the Swiss citizens), and geographic proximity tempt many observers to compare these three federal systems. The more highly developed *Land* authority in West Germany and canton authority in Switzerland are looked upon, especially by Austrian federalists, as possible models for adoption.²

AUTHORS' NOTE: We wish to thank Paul Fos for his work in translating the German text of this article into English. It is a better article because of the critical observations made by Paul, Susanne Rieser, two anonymous reviewers, and the editors. Ellen Mugavero worked beyond the call of duty wordprocessing both her native German language version and this English translation. The assistance of Ethel Llamas and Elizabeth A. Rickey is gratefully acknowledged.

¹With some equivocation, ethnically divided Belgium into French-Walloon and Flemish parts could be considered a fourth West European federal state, while Italy falls between the central and federal states since its introduction of regional government in 1970.

²Theo Öhlinger, "Schweizerischer und Österreichischer Föderalismus aus österreichischer Sicht," *Schweiz-Österreich Ähnlichkeiten und Kontraste*, eds. Friedrich Koja and Gerald Stourzh (Wien: Bohlau, 1986), pp. 139-154.

Nevertheless, just as their common language and geographic proximity do not form a political or cultural unity, West Germany, Austria, and Switzerland clearly stand apart from one another as nations. Their different governmental systems and political cultures produce different patterns of interest reconciliation.

From an international comparison of the proportion of the total tax receipts collected by the three national governments during the 1970s, Switzerland, with the national government's share at 41 percent, shows the highest degree of decentralization of all Western federal states. The national government in the Federal Republic follows with 51 percent, while the Austrian national government, at 70 percent, is closer to the centralized states of Western Europe.³ These results are not surprising, given the historical importance of provinces, degree of institutionalized federalism, and actual power of constituent state interest-representation in their national governments.⁴

Interest-intermediation in federal systems has two interrelated dimensions: policy formation and administrative implementation. Political parties in the national and regional arenas and the central and regional government administrations provide the principal mechanisms for federal "checks and balances." "Political parties are sometimes called great centralizers or decentralizers of a federal system."⁵ These two different effects reflect the double identification and double legitimation of political parties in a federal system. They stand for election in both national and regional parliaments, and so are legitimized in both arenas. Because they act as interest aggregators in both government arenas, they are linked to both.

Their effect as intensifiers of centralizing or decentralizing tendencies depends greatly on the vertical power distribution in the party systems. The degree of federal non-centralization essentially is determined by the mechanisms between and within the parties. In this respect, Klaus von Beyme's term, the *Parteienbundesstaat* (party federal state) catches the true nature of this interrelationship.⁶ Nevertheless, his conclusion that "parties in all federations are, along with interest groups, important vehicles of centralization"⁷ requires qualification.

While the political-regulatory dimension is based on the bipolarity of legitimation and identification in both the federal and regional arenas, the administrative-implementation oriented dimension has its origins in the

³Arend Lijphart, *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 178. The percentage for the United States is 57.

⁴Karl Weber, *Kriterien des Bundesstaates: Eine systematische Untersuchung der Bundesstaatlichkeit der Schweiz, der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Österreichs* (Wien: Braumüller, 1980).

⁵Ivo D. Duchacek, *Comparative Federalism: The Territorial Dimension of Politics* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970), p. 329.

⁶Klaus von Beyme, *Das politische System der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Eine Einführung* (5th ed.; Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1987), p. 104.

⁷"Parteien sind in allen Föderationen neben den Interessengruppen wichtige Vehikel des Zentralismus," *ibid.*, p. 204.

interrelated responsibilities of coordination and cooperation incumbent upon federal and regional executives. The term *Politikverflechtung*⁸ (the fact that political decisionmaking is a result of an amalgamation of decisions from many power centers) describes this federal relationship of coordination and cooperation. It is a federal relationship which was developed in the Federal Republic of Germany after long discussion and which now has entered the political debate in Switzerland and Austria.⁹

HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

Common to all three federal states is their origin in times of crisis. The 1848 Swiss federal constitution, which is the basis for contemporary Switzerland, came about at the end of a civil war between liberal and Catholic cantons (*Sonderbundkrieg*). This was a war to determine the form of the Swiss federation. Likewise, the Austrian and West German federal systems arose after the First and Second World Wars, respectively, which carried with them the complete destruction of the traditional territorial unity of these countries.¹⁰

The compromises reached among the Swiss for intrapolitical reasons emphasize cantonal independence. This centrifugal tendency concentrates a high degree of autonomy for political processes in the cantons. The newly developing political parties originated in the cantons. The loose and uneven establishment of parliamentary factions became the basis for the formation of national parties. By the beginning of the twentieth century, most ideological groups had formed a national party, but "with much effort and many obstacles."¹¹ As we will show in the section on vertical organization patterns, these national parties, with the exception of the Swiss Social Democratic Party (SPS), are loosely organized in comparison to those in other West European states. The formation of the Swiss national party system was a process that started from the bottom and worked its way up.¹²

The formation of the German and Austrian federations took place during searches for national identity. In spite of federative precedents in the Ger-

⁸Fritz W. Scharpf, Bernd Reissert, and Fritz Schnabel, *Politikverflechtung I* (Regensburg: Scriptor Verlag, 1976); *Politikverflechtung II* (Kronberg/Ts.: Anthenäum Verlag, 1977).

⁹Raimund E. Germann, "Die Beziehungen zwischen Bund und Kantonen im Verwaltungsbereich," *Handbuch Politisches System der Schweiz*, vol. 3, *Föderalismus*, ed. Alois Riklin (Bern: P. Haupt, 1986), pp. 343-370.

¹⁰For a history of the Swiss federation, see Peter Stadler, "Der Föderalismus in der Schweiz: Entwicklungstendenzen im 19./20 Jahrhundert," *Federalism: History and Current Significance of a Form of Government*, eds. J. C. Boogman and G. N. Van der Plaats (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1980), pp. 177-188; George Arthur Codding, Jr., *The Federal Government of Switzerland* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), pp. 32-34. For Austria, see Theo Öhlinger, "Anmerkungen zu den Gründungstheorien des Bundesstaates," *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft* (Wien: Europaverlag, 1981), pp. 253-260. For Germany, see Gerhard Lehmbuch, *Parteienwettbewerb im Bundesstaat* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1976).

¹¹Erich Gruner, *Die Parteien in der Schweiz* (2nd ed.; Bern: Francke, 1977); Codding, *The Federal Government*, pp. 113-130.

¹²Gruner, *ibid.*, pp. 49-59; Jürg Steiner, *Gewaltlose Politik und kulturelle Vielfalt: Hypothesen entwickelt am Beispiel der Schweiz* (2nd ed.; Bern: P. Haupt, 1970), pp. 36-40.

man Empire of Bismarck and in the Weimar Republic, the federal character of West Germany must be viewed as a "curious reestablishment."¹³ It is curious because the constituent states were delineated by the Allies and had to reconcile themselves with a reduced country that practically was destroyed in every way.¹⁴ The intra-German negotiations leading to the Basic Law (Constitution) were influenced decisively by the leading provincial politicians because the parties were constituted in the regions first. This chronological process of building from the bottom up has to be viewed in light of the exceptional circumstances of the immediate postwar years. From the outset, centralization was the decisive factor in the formation of a new German nation; it also was an orientation transferred to the national political parties.

The search for national unity also characterized the beginning of the Second Austrian Republic, which adapted the 1921 Austrian Constitution (1929 edition) to its new Constitution and, with it, the federalism of the First Republic, which had existed during the interwar period. The tensions caused by the extreme ideological and regional polarization between socialist Vienna and the Catholic conservative *Länder* were moderated by the experiences of fascism and war. In contrast to the centrifugal effect of ideology on Austrian federalism in the First Republic, developments in the Second Republic took a decisively centripetal course.¹⁵ The founding of the Second Republic and the reestablishment of the two major parties (SPÖ and ÖVP) occurred practically simultaneously and, therefore, tended to support the forces of centralization. Despite the problems caused by the division of the country into occupation zones, the national party hierarchies began immediately to combine provincial party groups; that is, they started with a process working from the top down.

Because of their ideological outlook, socialist parties tended to favor highly centralized organization in both party and governmental structures. Christian-conservative parties, in contrast, tended to favor decentralized structures as a direct consequence of the Catholic social doctrine about society and the state.¹⁶ This easily can be seen by the historical development of parties in Switzerland and, especially, in the beginning of the First Republic of Austria. A similar development occurred in West Germany—the Christian Social Union (CSU) in Bavaria being a prime example. Nevertheless, the parties in all three federal states, rather than being sharply divided over ideological questions of federalism, more nearly reflect the political realities of their power situations.

¹³Thomas Nipperday, "Der Föderalismus in der deutschen Geschichte," *Federalism*, pp. 125–176.

¹⁴Several *Länder*, such as North-Rhine Westphalia and Lower Saxony, were new; hence, the development of any loyalty to them will take place over a long period in contrast to a *Land* like Bavaria where loyalty may be stronger than to the whole country.

¹⁵Rainer Nick and Anton Pelinka, *Bürgerkrieg und Sozialpartnerschaft* (Wien: Jugend und Volk, 1983).

¹⁶One of its major concepts, enunciated by Pope Leo XIII in 1891 and reformulated by Pope Pius XI in 1931, is "subsidiarity," which means that functions effectively performed by local organizations properly belong to them rather than to a dominant central organization.

The Austrian Social Democrats of the First Republic also felt it necessary to reconcile the concept of federalism with the pragmatic need to gain power. At first, because of their ideological outlook, they supported centralized ideas in the preparation of the 1921 Constitution. However, because Social Democratic power was primarily in the *Land* of Vienna, the party changed its position in order to push its interests against the Christian-conservative national government.¹⁷ Likewise, the Christian-conservative Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), responsible for a series of centralizing measures during its participation in national governments during 1945–1970, stressed decentralizing positions while in opposition between 1970 and 1986.

In Switzerland, the 1888 Social Democratic Party (SPS) program demanded the elimination of “cantonal particularism” and, therefore, opposed a long-standing Swiss tradition.¹⁸ A moderate federative position first appeared in the 1940s and finally was established in the party program of 1959 through the recognition of a “democratic federative system of government.”¹⁹ In the same year, the SPS received its second seat in the *Bundesrat* (Federal Council) and, thereby, was fully integrated into the proportional representation system of the Swiss government.

Gerhard Lehbruch has examined the changed federative stance of the Federal Republic's parties in the wake of different governing combinations.²⁰ Even in Austria, where party conceptions of centralization are the most obviously polarized, the political reality of regional consciousness outweighs ideological views. Roughly equal numbers of voters from the two dominant national parties, for example, would vote for a regional party if it existed (see Table 1). As summed up in a similar study, Austrian “parties do not provide consistent or clearly distinct guidelines on federalism.”²¹

SEGMENTATION AND PARTY SYSTEMS

The effect of double legitimation and double identification of political parties in federal systems is primarily dependent on the structures and mechanisms of the various regional and national government systems. Elections for national and regional parliaments provide the basis for this legitimation. In this respect, both the national and regional distributions of power within individual parties are important, as are the voting systems.²² If

¹⁷Frederick C. Engelmann and Mildred A. Schwartz, “Perceptions of Austrian Federalism,” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 11 (Winter 1981): 81–94.

¹⁸*Handbuch Politisches System der Schweiz*, vol. 1, *Grundlagen*, ed. Alois Riklin (Bern: P. Haupt, 1983), pp. 57–58.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 59.

²⁰Lehbruch, *Parteienwettbewerb im Bundesstaat*.

²¹Engelmann and Schwartz, “Perceptions,” 93.

²²While not the focus of this article, one should note that the three countries have different methods of voting, which may have different impacts on the party structure in each country. Switzerland has a very individualistic choice in each canton; the Federal Republic of Germany uses the *Zweistimmen* approach in which each voter has two votes; and Austria uses a list system in which *Reststimmen* eventually are bartered from one *Land* to another. See, for example, William P. Irvine, “Measuring the Effects of Electoral Systems on Regionalism,” *Electoral*

TABLE 1
Voter Preferences and Regionalism in Austria (in percentages)

	Party voters		Total
	SPÖ	ÖVP	
Yes ^a	53	62	55
No	44	34	41
No answer	3	4	4
Total	100	100	100
N = 1500			

SOURCE: Rainer Nick, "Die Bundesländer und das Österreichische Parteiensystem," *Das Österreichische Parteiensystem*, eds. Anton Pelinka and Fritz Plasser (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1988).

^aTranslated question: "Given the opportunity, would you vote for a party whose primary goal is to represent the special interests of your *Land*?"

federalism means "segmental isolation along geographical lines,"²³ then it is necessary to examine the extent to which the party system reflects the segmentation within society.

In contrast to both West Germany and Austria, Switzerland shows a multidimensional segmentation. The linguistic, confessional, social, and regional cleavages all have nearly equal importance for Swiss society.²⁴ The German language group is 73.9 percent of the Swiss population in contrast to the French with 20.1 percent, Italian with 4.5 percent, and the Rhaeto-Romanic with 0.9 percent.²⁵ Protestants are a majority, 50.4 percent, although Catholics are close behind with 43.9 percent.²⁶ The "linguistic cleavage crosscuts almost perfectly with the party cleavage," but the religious cleavage coincides as shown in Table 2.²⁷

The territorial distribution of language and confessional segments in Switzerland is "not in accord with the norm of crosscutting theory, which prescribes rather than follows basic social cleavages."²⁸ Much more than the nation itself, the federal units (twenty-three cantons, of which three have two half-cantons) show a greater homogeneity along these two cleavages. The cantons have their own subculture,²⁹ which, through their distinctive

Studies 7 (April 1988): 15-26.

²³Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), p. 89.

²⁴Steiner, *Gewaltlose Politik*, p. 4.

²⁵Ernest Weibel, "Les rapports entre les groupes linguistiques," *Handbuch Politisches System der Schweiz*, vol. 3, *Föderalismus*, p. 222.

²⁶*Statistisches Jahrbuch der Schweiz* (Basel: Birkhauser Verlag, 1986), p. 27.

²⁷Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies*, p. 85.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 91.

²⁹Steiner, *Gewaltlose Politik*, p. 3.

TABLE 2
Party Preference by Religion in Switzerland (in percentages)

Religion	CVP	FDP	SPS	SVP
Protestant	8.3	60.4	61.0	90.7
Catholic	90.7	35.7	29.6	6.9
Other	1.0	3.9	9.4	2.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

SOURCE: Erich Gruner, "Wahlen," *Handbuch Politisches System der Schweiz*, vol. 2, *Politische Prozesse*, ed. Alois Riklin (Bern: P. Haupt, 1984), p. 146.

identity (canton spirit, *Kantonligeist*), distinguishes them from the constituent states within West Germany and Austria.³⁰ This also is evident in the regional distribution of the parties. While the three medium-sized parties remain relatively equally represented in the national arena, the strongest party within approximately half of all the cantons receives over 40 percent of the votes.

Even if the dominant position of the strongest party in the various cantons has weakened over the years because of a greater intermingling of Swiss society, party strongholds clearly remain. The 9.7 percent average difference in election results between the strongest and second strongest party in the cantons is even more significant given the multiparty system and the lack of one dominant party. The election results in individual cantons are compared to those for the national government for the same party in Table 3. Clearly there is a greater polarization of results between the national and regional arenas in Switzerland than in either the Federal Republic or Austria. The greater number of regional parties is an additional factor separating Switzerland from its neighbors. In many cantons, small regional parties get enough votes to gain seats in the canton parliament. In this respect, one must keep in mind Switzerland's small size in both area and population as well as its cantonal political cultures. This small size facilitates the organization of such regional party groupings.

On the other hand, all three federal states have institutionalized new political currents from the bottom up. The Green-Alternative parties, which developed out of the new "post-material" cleavage, have used the regional arenas of the federal state as springboards for entry into the national parliament. As the situation in the Swiss urban cantons and the *Land* of Hessen in West Germany shows, the chances for new parties to acquire a share in government are greater in the regional arenas. In Austria, the probability of this happening has been markedly smaller until recently. The idea of work-

³⁰Blaise Knapp, "Etapas du federalisme suisse," *Handbuch Politisches System der Schweiz*, vol. 3, *Föderalismus*, p. 50.

TABLE 3
Regional Polarization of the Party System in the Federal Republic
of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland (in percentages)

<i>Land/Canton</i>	Dominant party^a	A^b	B	C
Federal Republic of Germany, national elections, ^c 1962-1987				
Bavaria	CSU ^d	55.3	22.4	1.19
Baden-Württemberg	CDU	50.9	17.2	1.10
Rhineland-Palatinate	CDU	48.9	9.6	1.05
Schleswig-Holstein	CDU	47.6	6.1	1.03
Lower Saxony	CDU	45.4	2.8	0.98
Saarland	CDU	44.2	0.6	0.95
Hessen	SPD	45.9	7.4	1.11
North-Rhine Westphalia	SPD	47.4	3.7	1.15
Hamburg	SPD	49.0	10.9	1.19
Bremen	SPD	50.8	20.5	1.23
		Average	10.1	1.10
Austria, national elections, ^c 1962-1986				
Tyrol	ÖVP	62.6	32.4	1.43
Vorarlberg	ÖVP	53.9	26.3	1.23
Lower Austria	ÖVP	51.6	8.0	1.18
Styria	ÖVP	50.8	9.4	1.16
Upper Austria	ÖVP	49.2	7.0	1.12
Salzburg	ÖVP	45.7	7.3	1.04
Burgenland	SPÖ	50.3	5.3	1.07
Carinthia	SPÖ	51.9	20.3	1.10
Vienna	SPÖ	56.6	25.3	1.20
		Average	15.7	1.17
Switzerland, national election, ^c 1983				
Valais ^e	CVP	57.2	33.4	2.78
Nidwalden	CVP	53.0	15.4	2.57
Schwyz	CVP	49.4	20.4	2.40
St. Gallen	CVP	48.8	19.4	2.37
Lucerne	CVP	48.1	15.2	2.33
Zug	CVP	44.7	11.0	2.17
Fribourg	CVP	41.8	16.5	2.03
Jura	CVP	31.8	5.5	1.54
Zürich	CVP	24.7	4.8	1.20
Aargau	CVP	24.6	0.5	1.19
Geneva	SPS	25.4	1.5	1.11
Basle Land	SPS	25.9	0.0	1.14
Basle Town	SPS	26.5	5.5	1.16

TABLE 3 (cont.)
Regional Polarization of the Party System in the Federal Republic
of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland (in percentages)

<i>Land/Canton</i>	Dominant party ^a	A ^b	B	C
Schaffhausen	SPS	30.9	8.9	1.36
Neuchâtel	SPS	37.6	10.3	1.65
Vaud	FDP	30.7	2.8	1.32
Ticino	FDP	38.7	5.2	1.65
Solothurn	FDP	43.8	13.1	1.88
Thurgau	SVP	25.8	1.7	2.32
Glarus	SVP	28.6	0.9	2.58
Berne	SVP	37.3	11.4	3.36
		Average	9.7	1.91

NOTE: A = percentage share of the vote received by the dominant party in provincial elections; B = percentage difference between the dominant party and the second strongest party in the *Land/canton*; C = relationship between results of provincial elections and the national average in parliamentary elections for the dominant party (national result = 1).

^aParty with the highest share of the respective regional vote.

^bThe data in columns A, B, and C refer to the *Landtag* elections in the Federal Republic of Germany and Austria, 1962-1987, and canton elections in Switzerland, 1980-1983.

^cCSU and CDU are considered one political party.

^dIn the Federal Republic of Germany, excluding Berlin, the average percentage share of the vote for the CDU/CSU and SPD respectively is 46.4 and 41.2; in Austria for the SPÖ and ÖVP respectively is 47.2 and 43.9; in Switzerland for the FDP, CVP, SPS, and SVP respectively is 23.3, 20.6, 22.8, and 11.1.

^eCantons with a majority system are not considered.

ing from the “grass roots” up is important to the ideological conception of these new parties and could bring a new dimension to federalism in these countries.

Austria traditionally was divided into two political groups, Christian-bourgeoisie and socialists. Socioeconomic and religious cleavages separate one from the other. The socialists are represented by the Socialist Party (SPÖ), and the Christian-bourgeoisie by the People’s Party (ÖVP). The Freedom Party (FPÖ) is a much smaller third party and an Austrian peculiarity, which carries on the tradition of German nationalism.³¹ These group/party cleavages permeate all levels of the Austrian federal state. “Each political and social ‘pillar’ of such a system possesses a large amount of vertical control over its following.”³² From this primarily horizontal competition, Arend Lijphart concludes that the Austrian “segmental autonomy is mainly non-territorial and, hence, unrelated to (its) federalism.”³³

³¹Anton Pelinka, *Windstille: Klagen über Österreich* (Wien: Medusa Verlag, 1985). The third camp gradually eroded, beginning in the early 1970s. On this point, see Anton Pelinka and Fritz Plasser, eds., *Das Österreichische Parteiensystem* (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1988).

³²Sidney Tarrow, *Between Center and Periphery: Grassroots Politicians in Italy and France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), p. 249.

³³Arend Lijphart, “Non-Majoritarian Democracy: A Comparison of Federal and Constitu-

Nevertheless, an examination of the regional vote distribution for the two major Austrian parties shows the regional polarization of their strongholds. Three types of *Länder* are differentiated: (1) those in the West with ÖVP majorities higher than 50 percent in regional as well as national elections (Tyrol, Vorarlberg); (2) those with constant ÖVP dominance in regional parliaments but with some SPÖ majorities in national elections (Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Styria); and (3) those with clear SPÖ dominance in both regional and national elections (Vienna, Carinthia, Burgenland).

As can be seen in Table 3, Type 1 and Type 2 *Länder* are considerably more homogeneous in terms of the group/party cleavage than the rest of the nation. The endurance of the regional party system, traced through the entire Second Republic, is of great importance.³⁴ The continued supremacy of one party produces the possibility of combining party identity with that of the *Land*. The regional party, then, becomes an amplifier of regional issues. Although the fundamental cleavages in Austria are horizontal, they are being transformed because of differential regional party strength disseminated through the regional party systems. Thus, the regional parties have a federative effect.

The Federal Republic of Germany has the most homogeneous society of the three countries. The initial strong confessional tension within the parties has long since been moderated and was eliminated by the Christian Democratic Union, which integrates both Catholics and Protestants. The Federal Republic does not have the pillar-like segmentation along the socioeconomic/ideological cleavages found in Austria. Nevertheless, it also has clear regional party strongholds.³⁵ In striking deviation from its two neighboring states, West Germany has experienced a definite fluctuation in individual *Land* election results during the last twenty-five years.

Several German *Länder* have seen party majorities change. This was true even in some *Länder* with traditionally strong majorities for a specific party (e.g., Hessen, Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein). Until recently, the phenomenon was not associated with a change in government because the weakened traditional majority parties formed coalitions with the Free Democratic Party (and recently, too, the Greens). The ever present possibility of party majority changes in many *Länder* increases the power of each *Land* vis-à-vis the federal government because *Land* governments determine the composition of the *Bundesrat*.³⁶ For example, in 1986–1987 the CDU/CSU went from a near

tional Theories," *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 15 (Spring 1985): 6.

³⁴Rainer Nick, "Die Bundesländer und das Österreichische Parteiensystem," *Das Österreichische Parteiensystem*.

³⁵See the empirical data from Michael Bretschneider, *Mitgliederzahlen der Parteien und ihre räumliche Verteilung 1977* (Berlin: Deutsches Institut für Urbanistik, 1978); the figures in Table 3 resemble those for Austria.

³⁶Bavaria, with the special case of the Christian Social Union (CSU) as a regional party with federal power, as well as Baden-Württemberg, Bremen, Hamburg, and Rhineland-Palatinate are dominated by a single political party. On Bavaria, see Alf Mintzel, *Die CSU: Anatomie einer konservativen Partei, 1945–1972* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1975).

two-thirds majority in the *Bundesrat* to a bare simple majority, thus strengthening the relative influence of the Bavarian CSU.

The importance of regional politics in the federal arena is not just the result of regional autonomy and an institutionalized framework. It also is a result of the varying party constellations in the regions themselves.

FORMS OF FEDERAL INTERACTION

A comparison of federal interaction in these three nations might make one pause to examine their institutional frameworks. The second (federal) chamber of the national legislature, characterized as an essential "yardstick to federalism,"³⁷ is, in Switzerland, vested with powers almost equal to those of the first chamber. It has relatively strong powers in the Federal Republic but only a suspensive veto in Austria. Nevertheless, "federalism is as much a matter of process as of structure."³⁸ In this respect, the ways in which parties adapt to the structure of the political system is of great interest. In all three countries, political parties are represented simultaneously in both chambers of the national and regional parliaments and form governments in both.

Whether a party functions as the opposition or the governing majority in the federal or regional governments determines its concept of federalism. Opposition parties in the federal government often push highly federative policies. Ruling parties are more likely to push centralized policies. The opposite is true in the regions. Opposition parties tend to favor centralized policies, while ruling parties tend to favor federative policies.

Switzerland is the only governing system in which the federal form corresponds completely to the concept of a consociational system.³⁹ The understanding of concordance is as deeply ingrained in the Swiss political culture as is the belief in federalism.⁴⁰ The Swiss system assures the inclusion of the four major political parties in all cantons, including those with an absolute one-party majority. Consequently, all relevant social elements in the Swiss political system are represented in the canton.⁴¹ The selection

³⁷Duchacek, *Comparative Federalism*, p. 244. For a comparison of the role of second chambers in federal states, see Lijphart, *Democracies*, pp. 100, 174.

³⁸Daniel J. Elazar, "Federalism and Consociational Regimes," *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 15 (Spring 1985): 22.

³⁹Thomas O. Hueglin, "Yet the Age of Anarchism?" *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 15 (Spring 1985): 125; Lijphart, "Non-Majoritarian Democracy," 6.

⁴⁰Alois Riklin and Silvano Mockli, "Werden und Wandel der Schweizer Staatsidee," *Handbuch Politisches System der Schweiz*, vol. 1, *Grundlagen*, ed. Riklin, p. 62. The entrance of Green political parties in cantonal contests is considered a possible first sign of a breakdown in Swiss consociationalism. On this point, see Anton Pelinka, "A Farewell to Consociationalism?: The Cases of Austria and Switzerland" (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, September 1987).

⁴¹As Hueglin points out, this does not necessarily mean that all minorities are taken into consideration, especially those who criticize "basic Swiss values." "Yet the Age of Anarchism?" 101-112. Individual citizens, moreover, frequently feel allegiance to their local community and canton first and only afterwards to the Federation.

of the *Bundesräte* (the members of the Federal Council) not only roughly reflects the party spectrum (respectively, two FDP, CVP, SPS members and one SVP member) but also takes into consideration the cantonal distribution of linguistic and confessional groups. As such, the Swiss national government is a reflection of the diversity of the Swiss nation.

The use of a *Proporz* (type of proportional representation) system in government brings with it the fact that the four major parties exercise a constant governing function in both the federal and cantonal governments. Therefore, the safe participation in power in both government arenas reduces the amount of party loyalty required of politicians. Consequently, it is relatively easy for politicians to stress specific cantonal interests and to introduce them in federal government debate. Because cooperation among Swiss parties in the federal process exists on a consensual basis, interest conflicts between the canton and federal governments are minimized.

Conversely, in the Federal Republic of Germany, parties are placed in horizontal confrontation parallel with the vertical organization of the system.⁴² Political parties live with the simultaneity of governing and opposition functions. In this sense, the two major parties in West Germany are governing and opposition parties at the same time.

The regional governments in West Germany are a reflection of the current state of federal politics. Because regional and national politics are closely intertwined, gains made by a regional party affect the federal government in at least three ways: (1) the *Länder* governed by the national opposition can undercut the general policies of the federal government on their own *Land* government authority; (2) approximately 60 percent of all national legislation must be approved by the *Bundesrat* (second chamber) which, like the U.S. Senate, can be controlled by the opposition party, the *Bundesrat* having a suspensive veto for the remaining 40 percent; and (3) the *Politikverflechtung*, or intergovernmental sharing, over common policy areas requires mutual policy agreement. This mutual feedback requirement creates another system of party competition.⁴³ Institutionalized conflict between the regional and federal governments is partially transformed by the parties into a system of horizontal cooperation and confrontation.

The Austrian model has some characteristics of both Switzerland and the Federal Republic. During the SPÖ/FPÖ Coalition (1983–1986) and the single-party governments (1966–1983), Austria tended toward the German pattern. Nevertheless, the absence of a true second parliamentary chamber noticeably weakened the possibilities for the national opposition. On the other hand, the unique Austrian concept of “social partnership” based on socioeconomic elite consensus continued to have a consociational effect.⁴⁴ The Austrian

⁴²Lehmbruch, *Parteienwettbewerb im Bundesstaat*.

⁴³Uwe Thaysen, “Mehrheitsfindung im Föderalismus,” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 35 (August 1985): 16.

⁴⁴Bernd Marin, *Die Paritätische Kommission: Aufgeklärter Technokratismus im Österreich* (Wien: Internationale Publikationen Gesellschaft, 1982); Anton Pelinka, *Modellfall Österreich?: Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Sozialpartnerschaft* (Wien: Braumüller, 1981).

model nonetheless is centrally oriented and, as such, reflects party competition in the federal arena. Yet when the ÖVP was in national opposition, the ÖVP *Länder* tried to increase their strength as opposition to the socialist federal government. They did it by reviving a national discussion of federalism.⁴⁵ If the result justifies the statement, "federalism operates in Austria without a high degree of supportive consensus from the voters,"⁴⁶ then Uwe Thaysen's conclusion that the parties use federalism for their own purposes in the Federal Republic applies equally to Austria. In contrast to Switzerland, federalism functions "from above."⁴⁷

During periods of "Grand Coalition" (1945–1966 and then 1987–continuing) structural conditions in the national arena in Austria correspond to the Swiss pattern.⁴⁸ Moreover, parallel to the federal government formed by the SPÖ and ÖVP were *Proporz* governments in most *Länder*. With the exception of Vienna and Vorarlberg, all other Austrian *Land* constitutions require the distribution of *Land* government positions to reflect the strength of parties within the regional parliament. In contrast to the Swiss model of "amicable composition,"⁴⁹ this regional *Proporz* is partially qualified by the lack of a requirement for unanimity. However, what most decisively separates Austria from the Swiss model is its distinct national and regional party traditions. Unlike Switzerland, the Austrian regional party system corresponds roughly to the national party system.

Austria, like Switzerland, is a consociational democracy.⁵⁰ Despite the consistent consensus in principle among her segmented elites, especially the Social Partnership, the actual weightings within government remain dependent upon election outcomes. This form of consociationalism with a competitive underpinning emphasizes its actual legitimation more strongly than in Switzerland. The vertical solidarity of the party system is such that regional elections can be seen, to a certain extent, as signals for political change in the federal government. The comparison between Austria and Switzerland demonstrates the importance of considering vertical intraparty politics in shaping federal interaction.

INTRAPARTY EFFECTS

Model of Vertical Differentiation

The Swiss national parties, with the exception of the centrally organized SPS, have been described as large umbrella organizations of cantonal parties in which unity must be constantly re-won.⁵¹ The Swiss party system is

⁴⁵See the "Föderalismusberichte" of the Institut für Föderalismus, Universität Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria.

⁴⁶Englemann and Schwartz, "Perceptions," 93.

⁴⁷Thaysen, "Mehrheitsfindung," p. 14.

⁴⁸Gerhard Lehmbuch, *Proporzdemokratie* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1967).

⁴⁹Steiner, *Gewaltlose Politik*, p. 31.

⁵⁰Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies*.

⁵¹Gruner, *Die Parteien in der Schweiz*, p. 29.

a result of the vertical differentiation of the federal system and has its actual basis in the regional units. A noticeable sign of this tendency is cantonal party opposition to the unification efforts made by their national party. Cantonal parties, for example, have refused to use the national party name.⁵² Behind this refusal are true ideological differences and a corresponding voter loyalty within the cantons.⁵³ Even the CVP and SVP efforts since 1971 to achieve a cohesiveness in their respective national leadership organizations by installing new central institutions that create homogenization in the cantonal organizations have not overcome this unique feature of the Swiss party system.⁵⁴

As a result of cantonal/federal intraparty federalism, this uniqueness has both external and internal effects. The Swiss model of conflict regulation, with its double concordance, offers the possibility of "occasional opposition."⁵⁵ The dual regional/federal role of members in the national parliament is seen more clearly here than in the other two federal states.⁵⁶ The low party discipline in Switzerland is not just a consequence of a highly refined consociational democracy. It also reflects the impact of interest groups on members of parliament. Nevertheless, it is the most obvious indicator of the loose relationship between the national and cantonal party organizations.⁵⁷ Another possibility for taking intraparty disharmony to the public is the referendum, an instrument of no small significance in Switzerland. Analysis of the election slogans of individual cantonal parties shows a very large deviation of views within the same political current.⁵⁸

The relative independence of cantonal party organizations is also evident in the internal relations of the parties. As such, candidate recruiting is still essentially a function of the cantonal party organizations, and the nomination process remains a monopoly of the cantonal party.⁵⁹ A further example is the relative autonomous electioneering by the cantonal parties. Erich Gruner, for example, reported that cantonal parties spent, on average, three times as much as their national party during the 1975 national election.

In summary, the Swiss party system has been decisively shaped by federalism. At the same time, it contributes to the further strengthening of federalism.⁶⁰

⁵²Ibid., p. 312.

⁵³See Carol L. Schmid, *Conflict and Consensus in Switzerland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 93.

⁵⁴Gruner, *Die Parteien in der Schweiz*, p. 308; Erich Gruner, "Parteien," *Handbuch Politisches System der Schweiz*, vol. 2, *Politische Prozesse*, ed. Alois Riklin (Bern: P. Haupt, 1984), p. 157.

⁵⁵Gruner, *Die Parteien in der Schweiz*, p. 33.

⁵⁶Steiner, *Gewaltlose Politik*, p. 76.

⁵⁷For the data on legislative sessions between 1971 and 1975, see Gruner, "Parteien," p. 155.

⁵⁸Steiner, *Gewaltlose Politik*, p. 45; Gruner, *Die Parteien in der Schweiz*, p. 33.

⁵⁹Erich Gruner, "Wahlen," *Handbuch Politisches System der Schweiz*, vol. 2, *Politische Prozesse*, p. 235.

⁶⁰Gerhard Schmid, "Föderalismus und Ständerat in der Schweiz," *Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen* 3 (1977): 334-350. Further information about Swiss elections and referenda are included in *Schweizerisches Jahrbuch für Politische Wissenschaft* 27 (1987).

Model of Vertical Integration

As already shown, the “party state” both in West Germany and Austria experienced a shift from a vertical conflict pattern to a horizontal consensual one through partisan competition—though under somewhat different conditions. How well both federal systems fulfill particular demands depends to a great extent on the vertical intraparty structures and processes. The intrinsic dynamic of interest articulation from the bottom up stands in direct contrast to national parties structured from the top down.

The Federal Republic and Austria have strong central party organs (party chairman, presidium, secretariat). Intraparty processes run mainly in a hierarchical channel down to the grass roots. The regional parties are encouraged to follow policies set down by the national party. As such, coalition patterns in the *Länder* follow those of the federal government in most cases. National party influence in the candidate selection process of the regional party is another example. Regional parties are encouraged by the national parties to nominate vital national party politicians.

Nevertheless, regional party organizations still have room to maneuver because of their own legitimation through regional elections. The ambiguity of the parties’ double legitimation reflects an ambiguity among regional party elites. They are both “sons of the party” and “fathers of the *Länder*.” The former is derived from their connection to the party hierarchy; the latter is based on their own legitimation. “Fathers of the *Länder*” are elected in regional elections by “their people.” In most cases, minister-presidents (Germany) or *Land* governors (Austria) can appeal to a special legitimation above and beyond the simple fact of having produced a *Land* majority.⁶¹

As shown in Table 4, the ruling regional party (with three exceptions) gets a higher vote in regional elections than the national party does in national elections. These differences are noticeably higher on average in Austria than in the Federal Republic. The difference between the two countries can be explained partly by the often charismatic, folksy personality of Austrian regional governors, or as an expression of the stronger influence that national politics has on *Land* elections in Germany. West German *Land* elections often are considered to be a barometer of the national mood. The influence of regional party leaders in the national party is related directly to their electoral victories. Their input decisively influences the principal decisions of the federal government, especially those regarding personnel.

Land party participation in essential processes within the national party organization is institutionalized through the membership of regional party elites in the highest federal party councils. The multiple functions performed by regional elites in both the regional and national arenas helps to create a unity in party policy.⁶² In Germany, the rotation of top politicians

⁶¹Thaysen, “Mehrheitsfindung,” p. 7; Nick, “Die Bundesländer.”

⁶²Empirical evidence for the Federal Republic of Germany is included in Heino Kaack, “Zur Struktur der politischen Führungselite in Parteien: Parlamenten und Regierung,” *Handbuch des deutschen Parteiensystems*, vol. 1, *Parteistruktur und Legitimation des Parteiensystems*,

TABLE 4
National and Regional Election Results by *Land* in
the Federal Republic of Germany and Austria (in percentages)

<i>Land</i>	National elections ^a	<i>Land</i> elections ^a	Difference	Strongest party in regional elections
Federal Republic of Germany				
Schleswig-Holstein	42.4	46.6	4.2	CDU
Hamburg	46.8	46.2	-0.6	SPD
Lower Saxony	42.3	47.9	5.6	CDU
Bremen	49.2	50.4	1.2	SPD
North-Rhine Westphalia	44.3	48.5	4.2	SPD
Hessen	42.2	43.6	1.4	SPD
Rhineland-Palatinate	46.8	49.0	2.2	CDU
Baden-Württemberg	49.3	54.0	4.7	CDU
Bavaria	57.4	57.7	0.3	CSU
Saarland	45.2	45.5	0.3	SPD
		Average	2.4	
Austria				
Burgenland	51.3	50.8	-0.5	SPÖ
Carinthia	52.1	52.3	0.2	SPÖ
Upper Austria	47.6	52.1	4.5	ÖVP
Lower Austria	42.3	50.5	8.2	ÖVP
Salzburg	43.3	47.6	3.3	ÖVP
Styria	41.6	51.5	9.9	ÖVP
Tyrol	55.3	62.8	7.5	ÖVP
Vorarlberg	56.1	55.3	-0.8	ÖVP
Vienna	56.6	57.6	1.0	SPÖ
		Average	3.8	

^aAverage of the last three elections up to 1986.

between the regional and national party organs is quite common. Such a federal *cursus honorum* is not typical in Austria. However, one increasingly can see regional leaders replacing representatives of interest groups in the top organs of the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP).

CONCLUSION

Even though federalism in Switzerland is characterized by a stronger institu-

eds. Heino Kaack and Reinhold Roth (Opladen: Leske & Budhirsch, 1980); for Austria, in Pelinka and Plasser, eds., *Das Österreichische Parteiensystem*.

tional framework and a long tradition, it is strengthened further through the heterogeneity and regional solidarity of the political parties. In a political system like that of Switzerland, where the majority principle is often disregarded in favor of consensus, the original idea of federalism as an instrument to protect the minority retains its importance.⁶³ In contrast, federalism in the Federal Republic of Germany and Austria has become a pure “party federalism.” It is less a protection mechanism for minority interests than an additional possibility for party elites to participate in the political process. The democratic majority principle is undermined through federalism for the benefit of party elites; federalism surely has become an instrument of the “party state.”

⁶³Heidrun Abromeit, “Mehrheitsprinzip und Föderalismus,” *An den Grenzen der Mehrheitsdemokratie: Politik und Soziologie der Mehrheitsregel*, eds. Bernd Guggenberger and Claus Offe (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1984), pp. 137-140.