CHAPTER VI

PARTY SYSTEM IN INDIA AND SWITZERLAND: AN EVALUATION

"The party system is a necessary equipment and an integral part of representative government. Hence, the structure of government is influenced by the nature of the party system. "The character of the political system of any modern state is substantially dictated by the manner in which political forces are organized by the manner in which political forces are organized in a party system".1

It is a common observation that the actual functioning of the federal system in any country does not depend on the written constitution and the general legal framework but on the various factors, which influence the political process in the country. Among these factors all writers have assigned an important place to political parties. Political parties are indispensable for proper functioning of democracy. In fact, the modern representative government cannot work without political parties. Nearly all the modern societies have some kind of party system, be it one-party, two-party or multi-party system. It is only means through which power is obtained and exercised in an organized way. The political parties thus appear to be the 'arteries of the body politics'.

A political party is primarily a group operating to secure the control of a government. The four requisites for the formation of a political party are organization principles, policies, and programmes; lust for power; and the object of national interest. Stephen Leacock who says "political party is more or less an organized group of citizens
who act together as a political unit"² gives the simplest definition of a political party. According to MacIver, "a political party is an association organized in support of some principle of policy which by constitutional means endeavours to make the determinant of government".³ Edmund Burke states that the body of men constituting a political party unite "for promoting their joint endeavours, the national interests upon some particular principles in which they agree".⁴ Gettel, it "consists of group of citizens more or less organized, who act as a political unit and who, by the use of their voting power, aim to control the government and carry out their general policies."⁵

There are several factors responsible for the formation of political parties. The basic human instinct or nature is responsible for the rise of political parties and the difference among them. Some people are conservative while others are progressive. Thus, due to inborn temperamental differences, an individual tends to attach himself to one party or the other. Conflicting economic interests also play a vital role in the origin of political parties. The vital forces, which help in the process, are differences in possessions, economic outlook and economic conditions of the people. The propertied group aligns itself to a party, which supports capitalism in view of economic security while the workers, and the proletariat support labour parties to further socialization and nationalization. Apart from these two factors, the pressure of environment and the group to which one belongs exerts certain influence on an individual. Race and religion and communal sentiments also act as the chief motive for the formation of political parties and in a country like India they play a very significant role.
CLASSIFICATION OF PARTY SYSTEM

In past the party systems were classified on the basis of the number of parties—whether one, two or more than two, which now has become highly inadequate. It is because all party systems except few come under the multi-party system. Therefore, Sartori points out that "one reaction to the party counting approach is simply to drop the numerical base, precisely "on the assumption that the traditional distinction between two party and multi-party patterns has not led to sufficiently meaningful insights". Today party systems are classified on the basis of more than one criterion. They are

1. Number
2. Strength
3. Competitiveness

It is a very difficult task to count or discount the parties on the basis of number criteria. But this task was very well done by Giovanni Sartori, who says "we can discount the parties that have neither "coalition potential" nor "blackmail potential" conversely, we must count all the parties that have either a governmental relevance in the coalition forming arena, or a competitive relevance in the oppositional arena". When we come to the question of measuring the strength of the parties, Maurice Duverger employs three different yardsticks to measure the strength of parties. They are members, voters and parliamentary seats. On the basis of strength criteria, Duverger classifies parties into 4 types:
1. Parties with majority bent

2. Major parties

3. Medium parties

4. Minor parties

Lastly, party competition can be gauged but not measured on the basis of five general criteria:¹⁰

1. Differences in fundamental views or orientations

2. Differences in concrete goals or in the rank order of goals pursued.

3. Differences in the means of striving for concrete goals;

4. Differences in the assessment and valuation of political personalities; and

5. Differences in the social composition of the parties or factions, particularly their class basis and extent to which they aggregate diverse force.

The political party system can be broadly classified into four types:

1. Two party system

2. Multi-party system

3. One party system

4. One party dominant system

¹. Two party system:

In the two-party system, there are two parties where one assumes the ruling position and the other assumes the role of
opposition. This type of party system is prevalent in the U.K. and the U.S.A. This system provides stabilization of democracy by an effective check on the government by the opposition and formation of alternative government if the ruling party loses credibility in the parliament; it sometimes assumes cabinet dictatorship and limits the choice of the electorate in selecting their representatives. Thus Dr. Finer says that the two parties: “are better for the happiness and duty of nations than many parties and two parties contesting seats everywhere. For the lies and error may be in all places challenged, while distribution of will and disintegration of outlook is reduced”.11

2. Multi-Party system:

In the multi-party system, there exist more than two political parties. This system is prevalent in France, Italy and India. Coalition governments are generally seen in this type of party system. The coalition government so formed is the result of compromise between heterogeneous groups and is sure to break down at the slightest pretext. Though it gives greater individual freedom and a wider choice, the system paves the way for instability, horse-riding and factionalism in the parties.

3. One Party System:

In the single-party, only one political party is officially recognized by the constitution. The best example is served by the erstwhile USSR, where the Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU) was recognized the only official party to govern the nation. The Fascist party under Mussolini and the National Socialist Party under Hitler also fall under this category. Though this type of party system
promotes greater national identity, total discipline, effective decision-making and absence of narrow party cleavages, it paves the way for totalitarianism and dictatorship, curtailing individual's basic freedoms and liberties.

4. One Party Dominant System:

A one-party dominant system does not preclude politics competition, because minor national or regional parties constantly pose a threat to the dominant party, it only makes competition unequal. India during congress rule was one of the classical example of one party dominant system. It is in this context Gopal Krishna Characterizes this system by pointing at "the continued dominance of one party (congress), claiming to represent the nation and holding the monopoly of power, internecine factional disputes within it, and a persistent tendency for it either to take over the programmes of the opposition parties or to make timely concessions on issues taken up by or to make timely concessions on issues taken up by them, so preventing them from acquiring much permanent strength. The role of the opposition parties has generally been restricted to influencing the politics of the ruling party rather than challenging its monopoly of power...."12

Therefore, one party dominant system is not the one party system, it is because it consists of more than one party and the same party will be in power continuously enjoying a comfortable majority. A strong, dominant party results from low competitiveness, and, if the competitiveness is low, it follows that the variable "ideological distance" does not carry much weight in the electoral arena.13 Due to
prolonged domination of one party, the opposition is reduced to impotence.

Whatever is the party system, political parties perform certain functions like formulations of general policies, contesting elections, acting as mediator between the government and the people, generating public opinion and being an integrative agency. There are certain merits of the party system. Such systems stabilizes democracy, infuses discipline, promote deliberation, checks despotism, promotes excellent legislation, simplifies the election procedure, accommodates wider interests in the state, educates the masses and, finally, is an expression of the basic human nature. There are also certain demerits of the party system. It promotes factions and spoil system, crushes individuality, deprives intelligence, lowers moral values and, finally, gives importance to party interests, undermining the national interest.

Many political scientists have emphasized that the party system is vital to the working of any federal government. In fact, the relationships between the two levels of the federal system are dependent on the kinds of relationships that the members of the parties at both levels establish with one another. Often in the federal system the party members operating the governmental structure at the federal level are co-partisans of those operating the structure at the regional level. In such instances, informal party relationships become important for the development and working of the federal system. Sometimes, the ruling parties at the regional level may be opponents of the party in power at the national level. The rivalry between the parties can be an important factor in determining
legislature, administrative and even financial relations between the two sets of government. According to W.H. Riker, "Whatever the general social conditions, if any, that sustain the federal bargain, there is one institutional condition that controls the nature of the bargain... This is the structure of party system, which may be regarded as the main variable intervening the background social conditions and the specific nature of the federal bargain". Thus, there is obviously a need for paying attention to the relationship between the party system and the federal system. In the light of these theoretical considerations and observations an attempt will be made in this chapter to have a fresh look at the working of the party system in Indian and Swiss federal system. At the first instance an attempt is made to discuss the Indian Party System and then the Swiss Party System.

INDIAN PARTY SYSTEM AND FEDERAL PROCESS

In Indian democracy, the party system plays a crucial role in altering the environment of federalism. The party system in India originated in the late nineteenth century as a response to the British Colonial challenge. The beginning of the Indian party system can be traced to the formation of the congress in 1885 as a political platform. The growth and role of the Indian party system as such was conditioned by the divide and rule policy of British. The secular party system, as in the western countries, could not be achieved in India, as there was communalization of politics, fragmentation of national unity and weakening of solidarity on the basis of caste, religion and community. Thus, the character and structure of political parties in India differed much from that of parties in the western model.
According to Rashiduddin Khan, there were three factors, which played a vital role in determining the pattern of the Indian party system:\(^{15}\)

1. A major heritage of the National Movement was the building of a national consensus on certain essential issues of three significant dimensions of national interest, namely, national unity, political integration, national defence and security.

2. The other heritage of the national movement was its broad ideological base, coalescing the many strands from the radical left to the conservative, traditional right. The co-existence of the left, the centre and the right in the national movement during the freedom struggle not only gave it a wider support base and provided it with All-India legitimacy but also laid down a tradition of toleration and accommodation of different points of view.

3. The continental size of the country, comprising well-defined and distinct socio-cultural regions, with their own languages and dialects, specific patterns of caste community and tribal formations, provided the objective conditions for the rise of regional parties and groups.

CLASSIFICATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN INDIA

Political parties in India according to Nehru can be classified into four major groups. These are a) parties based on economic ideology, b) Communist party, c) Communal parties and d) Local parties. However, a more appropriate and up-to-date classification of
political parties would be: a) All India Political Parties b) Regional Parties c) communal parties and d) Adhoc parties.

a. **All India Political Parties:** All India political parties have been officially defined as those national parties with broad based political representation at the national level. They have broad based votes and are able to win a) a minimum of 4% votes or more than 3% seats in at least four legislative assemblies, or b) 4% of votes or 4% seats in Lok Sabha. Based on the 1989 election and 1991 mid-term poll, the main all-India national parties are Congress (I), Janata Dal, Bhartiya Janata Party, the CPI (M) and the CPI.

b. **Regional Parties:** The election Commission recognizes a party as a ‘national party or a ‘state party’. If a political party is recognized in four or more states, it is deemed to be a national party; a political party recognized in less than four states is a state party. Regional parties (or state parties) clearly represent sub-regional nationalism based on common languages, culture, and history of the region. Their power base and voting strength are confined to a particular geographical area. Among the best known regional parties are: DMK and AIADMK in Tamil Nadu, Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh, Assam Gana Parishad (AGP) in Assam and the National Conference in J & K.

c. **Communal Parties:** These parties are exclusive in their membership, for they accept as members only those who profess a particular religion or belong to an ethnic community. They seek to protect and promote the interest of that community alone.
They are basically non-aggregative in nature, and generally mobilize their supporters by appealing to their particularist sentiment. Ex. Muslim league, Akali Dal, Shiv Sena.

d. Ad hoc Parties: These parties are organized around powerful persons or local and state issues. Such parties may not survive for long. Some may appear for short periods and disappear completely afterwards, or merge into other parties. Bangla Congress, Kerala Congress are some examples

**EVOLUTION OF PARTY SYSTEM IN INDIA**

The framers of the constitution did not give importance to the development of party system in the country. It was thought that India would follow the British political ideas and political system. Being heterogeneous in character, India adopted a unique system. Political parties are central to Indian political life. Their role in political mobilization, governance, the formulation and implementation of economic and social policy, ethnic conflict, separatist movements, and the working of democracy has long been the focus of analysis. Following a number of studies in the late 1960's and 1970's, political scientist have paid little attention to mapping the growth and decline of parties. However, during the past decades, interest in democracy and electoral politics has grown enormously. As more and more people participated in the democratic process, competitive politics and the party system have undergone a major change over the past two decades. To understand the significance and implications of these
developments on the federal system many of which are spurred by
electoral and political change, it is useful to distinguish the important
i.e., a) One party dominance phase b) Institutionalization phase c) Hegemonic Dominance Phase d) Multi-party system and coalition era.

a) One Party Dominant Phase:

In view of Morris Jones and Rajani Kothari, the Congress party
-dominated the party system in India. It remained to be a dominant
amidst several other political parties. In the first period, India had a
party system characterized by ‘dominance co-existing with
competition but without a trace of alteration’, because opposition
parties had little hope of preventing the Congress from obtaining
sizable majorities in the legislatures despite the ruling party’s failure
on most occasions to gain a majority of the valid votes cast.\textsuperscript{16} The
ruling congress party was ‘a party of consensus and opposition parties
were ‘parties of pressure’. \textsuperscript{17} There were many factions within the
party, and outside the party. There was constant threat from the
several opposition parties, dissident groups from the ruling party, and
other interest groups and important individuals. This phase gave way
to a system of competitive dominance. Stanley Kochanek says that
this dominance was due to factors like its past political image;
integrative political style; strong and successful leadership; long
history marked by a high level of institutionalization; organizational
strength and capacity for renewal; ability to manage internal conflicts;
strategy of co-option and absorption of the opposition; and also the
continuing fragmentation of the opposition parties. Dominance by a
single party co-existed with inter-party competition, but the opposition
parties had little prospect of replacing the congress, except in a few
states. Its success was attributed to the elaborate party structure and
extensive patronage networks. This helped the congress to appeal to
the vast middle ground of interests and values. Internally, it was a
grand coalition of major social and political forces held together by its
image as the party that won Gandhi and Nehru, as well as a very large
number of provincial leaders who had managed the party organization
at the state level. Ideologically, party was centrist, committed to
democracy, minority rights, secularism, a centralized form of
federalism, and mixed economy. Institutionally, the congress system
was a hierarchical organization radiating downwards from the central
to the provincial and district levels, each level working in consonance
with the corresponding level of government.

Therefore one important feature that emerges from this is the
fact that this system has always rested on a delicate balance. Kothari
points out that the process of dissent in the system also throws light
on another peculiarity of Indian politics: "the vague and overlapping
differentiations between government dissident factions within the
ruling party, opposition parties, and dissident factions within the
opposition. Both the structure of authority and the structure of
opposition are found to be amorphous and fragmented, as such there
is no clear cut line between the government and opposition and seem
to dissolve into the "ruling class". This also makes the line between
"government and "party" difficult to draw". 17
Thus, one party dominant system reflects the power structure of the political system. The electoral system and the weak opposition have contributed to the dominance of the congress. Hence, a prominent characteristic feature of the Indian party system was the absence of effective opposition.

b) Institutionalization Phase:

The party system moved towards party institutionalization and there arose a possibility of emergence of the two-party system with the 1977 general elections in which 75.8% of the votes were cast in favour of only two parties, i.e., the Janata party, and the Congress. For the first time in the Indian party system, a non-congress party i.e., the Janata party came to power at the centre in the 1977 elections. However, the Janata party failed to capture the advantage of the situation and it fell prey to internal bickerings and factionalism. Thus the hope of a bi-party system was short-lived and the congress came back to power in the 1980 elections.

c) Hegemonic Dominance Phase:

The party system moved to another phase, the hegemonic dominance phase with the 1980 elections. Though the congress came back to power at the centre, the congress rule in this period was different from its dominance in the Nehru era. Its dominance after the 1980 elections began to be identified with the leader, i.e., Indira Gandhi, who led an authoritarian command over the party. The role of opposition was reduced in the light of insecurity and unwillingness to share power with other parties. Regional parties started playing an important role as in the case of Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and
other states. Thus, the dominance of the congress (I) was not based on politics of consensus but was hegemonic dominance due to lack of national-level non-congress parties and limited regional support bases of regional parties. Thus, in the hegemonic phase the party had become dependent on the leader as hegemony.

d) Multi-Party System and Coalition Era:

The Indian party system entered the phase of multi-party system and coalition era with the 1989 elections. The elections of 1991 and 1996 further consolidated this phase. The left and regional parties have gained greater importance and they often played a balancing role.

Thus India developed a chaotic form of multi-party system, because of its peculiar social structure, political development, institutional framework and development processes on the whole.

PARTY SYSTEM AND ITS IMPACT ON FEDERAL SYSTEM

Changes in the party system have profoundly altered the working of our constitution over the last fifty years. They have transformed the functioning of state institutions. In fact, it is well recognized that the political process, which is principally animated by political parties, is a powerful instrument of constitutional change. Through the establishments of precedents and then conventions, political institutions are impacted by the behaviour of parties, their mobilization strategies, and their modes of internal functioning.

Political parties provide the dynamics of federalism. Buchanan accepts the view that: “the federal system has produced decentralized
and undisciplined parties, and one of the parties (not always the same one) has argued, for a change in the balance of power between the nation and the states". The Indian constitution in its origin and development is essentially a Congress document. The constituent assembly was overwhelmingly a congress-dominated body. It was not only the numerical majority, which mattered most. The ideological leadership was also provided by the congress. Whenever a controversy arose it was settled within the framework of the political leadership. Thus, India began as a federation with a centralized and disciplined party system. In the light of these theoretical considerations and observations an attempt will be made in this chapter to have a look at the interaction between the party system and the Indian federal system. Indian federalism is to be studied not as a legal or constitutional structure but eminently as a political process. Therefore, a study of the political environment of centre-state relationship is necessary for their understanding. In this connection several variables are crucial: the political party system in general terms, the power structure within the ruling party, the ideological orientation of political parties and their political strategy and social base. In order to have a better vision of the role played by the political parties in the federalizing process in India, B.L.Maheshwari has divided the various state governments into three types on the basis of inter state governments into three types on the basis of inter party relation:

1. Identical: i.e., the same party exists in the state government as that of the central government. Thus, here the central and state government can make use of the party for political bargaining and resolution of conflict.
2. Congenial: In this type the ruling party at the centre is either not in power at the state or when it joined a coalition of the parties. In this case, the ideological and interest gap is low between the central and the state governments.

3. Hostile: In this type, the party in power at the state level is radically different in its ideological and political orientations with the party in power at the centre.

The changing dimensions of federalizing process in India can be understood in the dynamic context of political parties. Let us study the impact of political parties on Indian federal system in two Phases:

I. First Phase:

a) One Party Dominance-1952 to 1967

b) Decline of Congress-1967 to 1971

c) Return of Congress under the leadership of Indira Gandhi-1971 to 1984

II. Second Phase:

Emergence of coalitions and Regional parties

I. FIRST PHASE:

a) Congress as a Dominant Party- 1952 to 1967

India began as a federation with a centralized and disciplined party system and especially with a “One Party Dominance” system starting in 1952 and continuing up to 1967. During this period, India’s central government congress party effectively dominated the
constituent states. The Indian Republic started with a contradiction. While the constitution established a federal system of government, all the political parties existing at that time came into force were unitary and highly centralized. This was particularly the case with the Congress. Not only was there one-party hegemony but the party structure of the congress was itself unitary. As Amal Ray has pointed out: "India's political power structure and the congress could, for all broad purposes, be identified during the period of constitution making, and the congress in its decision making could be equated with the national leadership. The congress evolved a graded organization with the high command possessing supreme decision-making authority. Actually, the powerful Nehru-Patel-Prasad trio constituted the most important inner ring, and all major decisions used to emanate from it. As India's federal structure was conceived and planned in a unitary political environment, so it was directed towards a powerful centre".

In the initial years relatively amicable relationship existed between the party organization and the government. The working committee, popularly known as the Congress High Command was the highest executive authority of the party and had as its members only those who commanded their confidence. This harmony between the party and government contributed much to the strength of the latter. All this stood in contrast to the situation in states where in general there was much friction between the party and the government. The two frequently quarrelled with each other and the centre had to intervene to resolve their difference. The result was a considerable
weakening of the capacity of state government to oppose and much less to defy the authority of the centre.

The greatest weakness of this period of India's political development was the failure to evolve sound conventions and the creation of an impartial image of feudal authority. The Nehru period left few guidelines for the federal system because conflicts between the union and the states were dealt with at the party level rather than through formally established agencies. Similarly Venkatarangaiya and Shiviah observe that, "Primarily it (congress party) weakened the will of state governments for autonomy. It created a feeling among the state leaders that it would be best for them to abide by the decisions of the central leaders who could be credited with having more knowledge and more ability and who commanded more prestige in a country as a whole. Those who became chief ministers in states occupied a lower rank in the congress hierarchy as compared to Nehru, Patel, Azad and Rajendra Prasad who were in power at the centre. It was but natural for them to abide by the directions issued by the leaders at the centre on all matters of policy even when they were concerned with subjects within the exclusive control of states. This also lightened their task very much".

The policies followed by the various political parties in respect of abolition of land revenue, non-parties in respect of abolition of land revenue, non-taxation of agricultural incomes, etc., hindered the growth of the states revenue and increased their reliance on the centre. The 'Setalvad Report' expresses this aspect of the evolution of the Indian federal system well: "where a single party has control over
affairs at the centre as well as in the states, an alternative and extra-constitutional channel became available for the operation of centre-state relations. In practice, this channel has been very active during congress party rule and has governed the tenor of centre-state relations. The political network connecting centre and state leadership was used amply to resolve conflict and ease tension or even to postpone consideration of inconvenient issues. In the process the constitution was not violated, at least not deliberately or demonstrably but was often by-passed.23

The framers of the constitution had clearly envisaged the evolution of a federal society through a process of bargaining and the possibility of a decline in the paramount position of the congress party was a matter of time. In 1953, Paul Appleby foresaw a time when different political parties would function at the different levels of the system. But for Nehru and other congressmen the thought of having to go into opposition was a frightful prospect. On the other hand, parties in opposition confronted by a well-trenched party in power with little or no possibility of coming to power tended to adopt an "agitational" approach or were content to function at the state level.24

The object of the congress was the establishment of a ‘Socialist India’ and a ‘socialist pattern of society’ through peaceful and constitutional means. It therefore, undertook the planned economic development of the country. Planning has helped to emphasize centralization and ‘superseded the federation and the country functioned almost like a unitary system in many respects. So far as the policy making was concerned, both the Planning Commission and
the National Development Council were dominated by the central government and the states had become subservient to the union. The states relied more and more on the centre for their financial resources. As all the states were heavily indebted to the union, they lost their independence so far as borrowing is concerned; they lost their financial autonomy substantially.

Indeed the monolithic rule of congress party influenced Indian federalism in its day to day working from 1951 to 1967 to say exactly.

**Congress Decline:**

Political change from the 1967 to the 1977 elections increased party competition. Particularly the 1967 general elections brought a revolutionary change in the political map of India by throwing off the monopolistic control of twenty years of uninterrupted congress rule in India. Santhanam wrote that “the political iceberg in India has melted and the real political evolution of the country has begun in earnest.”

The congress majority in the Lok Sabha was greatly reduced and in many of the states it failed to secure absolute majority. Many contradictory and significant trends, having wider implications for the federalizing process in India, were unfolded by the election results, those were

1. Firstly, the congress was successful in gaining majority in the Lok Sabha and keeping its hold on many states. Even in the states and union territories, it captured 1672 seats as against 1440 by all the other parties put together and 375 by the independents. According to one writer, “the wound, though grievous, is not yet
fatal. Perhaps it is a shock administration to the party and in right time"."26

2. Secondly, no clear picture of the voter's preference was available in the states in which the congress lost: except in Madras, no single party could form government in these states.

3. Thirdly, there was a shift from the national to regional parties considerably.

4. Fourthly, as many parties had achieved electoral success by exploiting local issues or grievances, the awareness of regional demands became extremely articulate and vocal.

Thus, this was the political environment of India after the election, which made C.Rajagopalachari exclaim, "A true Federal union is in the offing".27 Coalition governments were formed in Kerala, West Bengal Orissa, Bihar and Punjab, whereas U.P and Madras had Congress and DMK ministries respectively to being with. Congress governments took over in the states, where the party had secured absolute majority. But, due to some defections from the Congress, states like U.P., Haryana and Madhya Pradesh also entered coalitions. Defections and counter-defections led to instability in the states.28 In many of the states coalition ministries were formed by coming together of heterogeneous political parties with dramatically opposite ideologies and programmes with the aim of capturing power and resulted in lack of consensus among the coalition partners.

After the split in the congress in 1969, the position further worsened and the Indian political system reached its low water mark. The congress lost its majority at the centre too and Shrimati Gandhi
headed a minority government. Its strength in the Lok Sabha was down to 225 and it needed a minimum of 35 votes from among the opposition for survival in any show down vote. The Government had to rely on Communists, DMK, Akali and other pledged and undeclared support. In the beginning, non-congress ministries adopted a pragmatic approach and received co-operative response from the centre, Kerala Chief Minister, E.M.S.Namboodripad stressed the need for the congress government at the centre and non-congress governments in the states to “function in a spirit of co-existence”. Thus Mrs. Gandhi assured to treat them as “full partners with the centre in the exciting enterprise of building a new united prosperous India...”. The period of 1967 also witnessed a unanimous demand for greater state autonomy and C.N.Annadurai even demanded the transfer of the residuary powers to the states as the leadership had moved from the centre to the states.

Relations between the centre and states, by their very nature, are a source of tension and whether a state is under a congress or non-congress governments only wanted that the disputes should be settled through a constitutional mechanism than through the consensus technique. The major issues raised during this period related to the appointment of the governor, and his role in appointing the Chief Ministers and recommending president’s rule in the state. Deploying the Central Reserve Police in a state without consulting the state governments; carrying out the instructions given by the central government under Article 256 and 257, allocation of financial resources between the centre and the states; and setting up of an inter-state council. During this period, observed Madhu Limaye, “a lot
of controversy and heat was generated over the question of centre-
state relations. But no chief minister or state government sought to
raise any issue of principle and take a determined stand on it. Most of
the time, the Chief Ministers were engaged in wooing the centre and
simultaneously sniping at it to gain and retain regional support. This
only befogged the real issue, exacerbated regional feelings and
generally resulted in confused thinking".32 However certain changes
did take place. The states managed to secure a greater degree of
financial autonomy. The states were successful, though only to an
extent in making inroads into the centre's authority and interpret
their constitutional right in the political sphere: there was a definite
swing in favour of the states.

**Return of Congress under the leadership of Indira Gandhi:**

The trend towards state autonomy was reversed in the general
elections to the parliament in 1971 and to the state assemblies in
1972. The Congress party returned to the Lok Sabha with a two-thirds
majority. This development led to the weakening of the parties in
opposition. The election of the state assemblies in March 1972
restored to the congress the kind of control it enjoyed before 1967 in
all states except Tamil Nadu, Orissa and to some extent in Kerala. By
this time Mrs. Gandhi became a charismatic leader and under her
leadership the Congress was transformed into a more monolithic
organization than what it was before. Ad hoc congress committees
with members and presidents dominated the governance at the state
level. Nominations for elections to state assemblies were made under
her direction. State units of the party, the congress legislature parties
in states, and chief Ministers came much more directly under central control.

Attempts were made to weaken regional parties since 1971 but in vain. During the period 1971-75, a strong congress government at the centre undertook the task of augmenting the power of the Indian state by taking steps to bring the areas of security, resources mobilization and control of labour, increasingly under Central command with the result that the power of the states was diluted. Mrs. Indira Gandhi herself emerged during this period as the chief architect of centralization in India's development. Further, the imposition of national emergency (1975-77) provided a useful opportunity for her government and the party to take the theme of centralization a step further by launching a serious effort to dilute the federal constitution by entering the jurisdiction of the state government in the name of unity ad solidarity of the nation as well as its overall economic and political development. Thus the federal balance which had tilted a little towards the states in the years 1967-71 once more tilted away from them. However, from 1977 onwards, a chorus of different political voices rose throughout India demanding decentralization of political power at all levels, and in all dimensions. In mid 1979, the centre state relation again entered a chaotic phase. This led to the paralytic condition of the Janata rule at the centre and which consequently led to its fall. However, 1977 elections can be said to have three changes in the nature of political competition Ram Joshi and Kirtidev Prasad posed:
“Firstly, they produced a shift from intra-party to inter-party Competition;

Secondly, they produced a much higher degree of competiveness in the polity than before and

Finally, they introduced a sharp bipolarity into it”.

Again in general elections in 1980, Mrs. Gandhi came to power with a thumping majority and once again unitarism gained strength. Under Mrs. Gandhi leaders were trained at the centre and sent to the states. This policy created instability and inner party conflict in the states. The leader of the state enjoyed the support and confidence of the leaders at the centre than the party legislators. This made the chief minister to depend on the central leadership on policymaking issues. This enabled the national leaders to centralize powers, while the states lost the initiative and ability to undertake the welfare programmes and solve local problems. Even Indira Gandhi played a dictatorial role in toppling the state governments by unconstitutional manipulation of federal system.

Since, the assassination if Indira Gandhi in 1984 ushered a new era of coalition politics in the context of fragmented politics.

II PHASE:

Transformation of Party System

The main Characteristic features of this phase was

1. Congress dominance became the thing of the past.

2. It is the phase of coalition governments at the centre.
3. Regional parties aroused strong.

4. The central government became weak.

The Indian party system underwent a dramatic change in the year 1989 elections. Because the 1989 election results were not just another repeat of the broad front anti congressism of the Janata party, but signified a more far reaching shift in the party system which was rooted in the shifts in party organizational strength and support base at the state level in an increasing number of states, and in India's political economy and changing patterns of social mobilization. The big story of 1989-99 is the relative decline of the congress and the rise of the BJP and regional and state based parties.

The congress that once commanded overwhelming majorities in the Lok Sabha has lost its hegemonic position. The rule of one party system was replaced by multiparty system. The intensification of competitive politics has changed the party system from being rivalry between national parties into one between alliance and coalitions of national and state parties. The nineties have witnessed a succession of minority or coalition governments. The governments formed in 1989, 1990, 1991, 1996, 1998 and 1999 were coalition of several parties. This accounts the changing nature of the multiparty coalitions, raising the possibility that a future government may largely be a coalition of state-based parties. With the coalition governments, the regional parties came to play a decisive role in forming government at the centre. This was the beginning of regional parties' experiments with federal polity. Political community got aware of states rights and centers responsibilities towards developments, welfare and
responsible governance of the states. All these developments prompted regional-local leaders to be assertive in regional politics alternative to the Congress party together with their model for better, effective and close relationship between state and society for welfare at the grass root level. In the words of James Manor: “the rise of regional parties should not be seen as a natural development and party as a symptom of the fundamental system: over centralization by national leaders and governments.” Untill 1989, the regional parties formed government either by their own or with the coalitions at the state level. And finally, in the period following the eclipse of congress party in the 1996 elections, the regional formations came to share the political power not merely in the states but way, the rapid withdrawal of the congress party from the political scene in the 1990’s was co-terminus with the rise of the regional parties which were literally stepping into fill up the space created by the decline of congress throughout 1980’s. Ironically, 1980 and 1984 Lok Sabha elections had also marked the decline of the party, because neither of these two elections restored the congress dominance.

Non-congressism brought many regional parties together in the National Front formed in 1989. These included the TDP, DMK, AGP and Congress(s), apart from the newly formed Janata Dal. But in the elections in 1989, these regional parties did not meet with success. In the 9th Lok Sabha, 45 members belonged to regional parties but the regional allies of National Front had only two seats (TDP). In spite of their disastrous performance these regional parties became partners in the National Front 1989. In 1991, the strength of regional parties in
Lok Sabha was at 56 but this time TDP had a fair share (13 seats). The AIADMK, Janata Dal, Indian Union Muslim league, Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP) and Kerala Congress supported the Congress government of Narasimha Rao. However, these parties were not part of the government. In any way, both in 1989 and 1991, regional parties were playing an important role at the national level in making and unmaking government at the centre.

Since 1996, regional parties have become indispensable in the formation of the government at the national level. They have been important partners in the coalitions that came to power after 1996. In 1996 Lok Sabha election, 137 members of parliament belonged to various regional parties. Thus 95 out of 137 MPs were belonging to regional parties. This coalition government was functioning on the basis of the document finalized by the constituent regional parties called as the "Common approach to major policy matters and a minimum programme" or as it was commonly called the Common Minimum Programme. According to the programme, the state should have greater say in determining their priorities in developmental programmes, greater freedom to draw their plans within the broad framework of the national five-year plans. But this coalition government was short lived. Soon, many regional parties switched over to BJP-led National Democratic Alliance in 1998. The Lok Sabha included 161 MPs belonging to regional parties; 92 of these were part of NDA. The TDP joined NDA, which proved crucial for the survival of the government. Another regional party, AIADMK, played a decisive role in defeating the NDA government. The 13th Lok Sabha (1999) had 168 MPs who belonged to regional parties that ever came together to
form a government in India. This was one of the successful coalition government. Thus the participation of many regional parties in the new coalition government at the centre shows the significant shift of federal set up of India. Rajni Kothari said in one of the Seminars (New Delhi) on March 28th, "issue of federalism is gaining importance after a long period of ups and downs. For the first time, the BJP seems too eager to accept the reality of growing regionalisation in politics." It was a sort of revolution when the major governmental policies and decisions were to be decided by the regional parties.

The 14th Lok Sabha election was again a turning point because this time congress with the help of some regional parties came to power. Never before had the congress party entered into prepoll alliances at the national level, and numerous analyst attributed congress’s success to precisely this new tack of arrangements with the Bihar based Rashtriya Janata Dal and Tamil Nadu’s Dravida Munnetra Kazhgam. The influences of large and smaller regional parties, alike are seen to be reflected in the UPA’s ministerial appointments, and in its professed attention to rural issues and centre-state relations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indian National Congress + Allies (UPA)</th>
<th>21 seats 35% of total vote</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bhartiya Janata Party + Allies (NDA)</td>
<td>185 seats 35.9% of total vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left Front (UPA Supporters)</td>
<td>62 seats (8.3% of total vote)</td>
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The only thing is to wait and see how far this congress led United Progressive Alliance coalition government works.
Thus, the rise of regional parties as seen by scholars is related to democratization in three aspects. It has been argued that politics in the 1990's is characterized by a democratic upsurge involving greater participation by women, tribals, dalits, lower castes and rural voters. Regional parties are seen as carriers of this democratic upsurge. Second, the issue of regional parties is seen in the context of federal polity. It is argued that established opinion has always seen regional parties and regionalism with suspicion because the congress system of politics placed heavy emphasis on the nation as the unit of political action rather than the states. However, both on grounds of plurality and democratic principle, the federalization of the polity has been seen as a positive development. It is further argued that although regional parties are not self-consciously working in the direction of rewriting centre-state relations, this is precisely what will result over states. The third dimension is related to the discourse shift taking place in Indian politics to the discourse shift taking place in Indian politics. It is said rise of regional parties suggests that established discourse on nation and nation building is being challenged.

As no single political party gained majority, the role of regional parties in making the government at the centre have made coalitions inevitable. But the coalition governments from 1989 to 1999 were unstable and also failed to follow any clear-cut policies. Most of the time these governments continued to make compromises on various principles and failed to take any definite steps or actions because they were more concerned with their existence and survival rather than carrying out set principles or policies. The internal bickerings and political strife's between the members of the coalition contributed to
the instability of their government and adversely affected the efficiency of administration. But the coalition government of BJP led NDA (1999) proved that if the parties are based on concrete programmes, then it can greatly contribute to the smooth working of democratic and representative government in India. This coalition was stable because it was a "surplus majority" coalition with more parties than were necessary for a majority. Even 2004 Lok Sabha elections proved to be a coalition government led by Congress and its allies (UPA). But its stability is yet to be seen in forthcoming days.

An Indian scholar who has made a special study of coalition politics in India observes, "One of the major effects of coalition politics has been that it has promoted compromise in politics and checked radicalism. It also relieved the government of the restraints and responsibilities which are imposed on the ruling party by the opposition benches under the party system".40

After examining the impact of political parties on functioning of Indian federalism. It has led to two conclusions.

1. One is that the fact of the same party-congress party ruling at the centre and in the states has not resulted in states becoming mere tools at the hands of the centre in normal situations. Even in the period of one party dominance, state governments, have been able on occasions to assert themselves and the central government had to yield to pressures which had their source in the states. This is perhaps most clear when even a charismatic leader like Nehru was compelled to create states on a linguistic basis though personally he was against it. But here also,
situations may arise when the central party organization develops dictatorial and monolithic tendencies, then it may result in the erosion of state autonomy. From this, it is possible to draw the generalization that for the maintenance of a balanced federal set up, systems of decentralized parties in which regional tendencies have opportunities than a system of highly centralized parties.

2. A secondly is that a proper federal balance can be more easily and effectively maintained if there are regional parties in the states, which are strong enough to form governments like DMK, TDP and AIADMK. The power of the states to bargain with the centre and get their demands conceded would be greater if regional parties rule the states, instead of by the same party, which is in power. Federalism may be good or bad political system but in countries like India where it has been introduced it will function better for purpose of maintaining a better balance between the centre and the states if regional parties control the states.

At this juncture, it is our attempt to examine the party system in Switzerland.

**PARTY SYSTEM IN SWITZERLAND**

Till now we have outlined the evolution and sketched the working of the government of Switzerland, i.e., we have sought to give an idea of the history and working of the federal system by means of which the Swiss people administer their public affairs. If we conceive government as a static structure, then the task would be thus
accomplished. But government is a dynamic process. By government we understand not only the anatomy of the state, which is the special object of constitutional law, but also its physiology, as studied by the more ambitious science of politics. Switzerland is a democracy. In Switzerland, as in all other democracies, the individual is a master of the state. But even in a liberal democracy the individual alone is inevitably impotent. In order to exercise his authority, he must join forces and combine with similarly minded fellow individuals, which results in political parties, and which is one of the tools of democracy.

The Swiss political parties have often been called the offspring of popular rights. Even more than the associations and unions, the political parties developed into organizational bodies of direct democracy by implementing the instruments of direct democracy i.e., the elections to the legislative assemblies and the political rights of referendum and initiative. Like other western democracy in the European continent, Switzerland has a multi-party has a somewhat different function from that which it performs in the two party system. Where there are many parties each one tends to represent an idea; party members are loyal to a philosophy even to the point of non-cooperation with other parties. In such a system of practicalities of creating stable governments are often sacrificed to the exigencies of the purity of the party ideal. Thus the party becomes more than a group for political action, or a pressure group. Perhaps, Switzerland is one of the example where the multiparty system has functioned so smoothly. In Switzerland there have been a large number of political parties. The factors that explain the multi-party system are:
1. Plural Society

2. Election System

3. Federalism

4. Direct Democracy

**1. Plural Society:** As we know that Switzerland is a plural society and divided along several cleavages. This factor has resulted in multidimensional character of the party system. The religious cleavage divides the Christian Democrats, mainly supported by practicing Catholics, from the Social Democrats and Radicals, who drew most of their support from the Catholics. The socio-economic cleavage divides the social democrats, backed mainly by the working class, from the radical democrats, who have more middle-class support. The Swiss people party used to be especially strong among protestant farmers. Today, they receive support from large group of people all over Switzerland, which can be categorized as “the losers of the globalization”.

**2. Election System:** the second factor for the emergence of the multiplicity of political parties in Switzerland is that the Swiss proportional electoral system has not inhibited the translation of societal cleavages into party-system cleavages. The basic aim of proportional representation is to divide the parliamentary seats among the parties in proportion to the votes received. The Swiss lower house, the national council, is elected by proportional representation. The electoral system of proportional representation is often found in democracies of consensus.
3. **Federalism:** A new political power is striving to enter the Swiss political scene, which faces different conditions depending on the canton. Cantons with large number of population and in big cities, the barrier for entrance into the National Council is low (Proportional Representation). This explains the creation of a large number of parties' in these areas. Sometimes, such parties manage to establish themselves at the national level.

4. **Direct Democracy:** The popular initiative provides a social movement with the possibility to put a certain subject constantly onto the political agenda, by recurring several times on the popular initiative. Thus this allows the party to remain in the head of the voters as a political organization and to require nation wide publicity. Therefore new parties can develop from formerly "one subject-movements": Ex. are the Green party, automobile party or anti-racist movements.

Though Switzerland developed a multi-party system, the Swiss political life is remarkably stable. This has been possible because the Swiss political parties do not differ in their social composition and there is no fundamental ideological difference among them. Moreover, the love for order and the spirit of compromise are as strong in politics as they are elsewhere. Naturally, in Switzerland sudden shifts in party positions, break-ups regroupings and spectacular victories are unknown. Political parties are there with vigour, strength and influence. Yet political life is quiet and free from bitterness. Bryce has said: “Nowhere in Europe might here appear to be more abundant materials for the emergence of many parties and for their frequent
regroupings or transformations, for where else can be found so many diversities of racial character, of religion, of speech, of forms of industry and of the conflicting economic interests to which such forms give rise? Yet nowhere has the ship of state been so little tossed by party oscillations".42

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF PARTY SYSTEM IN SWITZERLAND

It is the political parties, much more than the citizens, who constitute the immediate environment of the federal assembly. In Switzerland, since the cantons existed before the confederation, there were cantonal parties before they came to organize themselves at the federal level. It was the cantonal parties that had prepared from the days of the regeneration, the elections of the great councils: it was they also who took part in the first manifestations of the direct democracy and who first introduced veto procedures.43

Until the cantonal revolution of 1830, before which one could hardly speak of actual democracy in Switzerland, the opposition was between the governing classes, who wished to defend their political privileges, and the common people, whose leaders demanded the abolition of these privileges. This historical tradition continued in Switzerland, according to which a very loose confederacy of sovereign cantons, and as they gave rise to similar complaints in all parts of the country, the conservatives wished to conserve and the progressives to remove, not only privileges within the cantons, but also barriers between them. Thus from the very outset of their evolution, the Swiss political parties present a dual character, cantonal and federal, which they inherited from the dual nature of the country.
Before 1848 there were only three Swiss political parties, the liberals, the radicals and catholics. The liberal party was the creation of a group of intellectual workers and farmers who were dissatisfied with the restoration of feudal privileges by the pact of 1815. The activities of the liberal party reached their climax with the great satisfaction of individual and political liberties in a majority of the cantons in the 1830's. In 1832, the "liberal wing" of the liberal party broke away and organized the radical party to carry the revolution with new goals like: establishment of a strong democratic national state that would guarantee liberals principles throughout Switzerland. In 1830, the catholic party was organized to oppose the liberals and the radicals. The catholic party did not want any change in the pact of 1815 for fear of interference in cantonal affairs and by implication, in religious affairs. But the fear grew so strong that resulted in Sounder bund War. After the war the liberals and the radicals pooled their resources to create the constitution of 1848.44

In the federal assembly liberals and radicals formed a coalition which in spite of occasional conflicts between individuals and groups, retained control of the legislature for half a century. The parliamentary opposition to the liberal-radical coalitions steadily grew in number as years went on. Immediately after 1848, National Council was represented by not less than ten catholic conservatives out of a total one hundred and eleven members of the house. For nearly fifty years, all the seven members of the federal council were radicals or liberals, for former gradually outnumbering the latter.45 When, in 1891 the last liberal left the executive, the place was occupied by the catholic conservative party. This event implied and accentuated a
change, which had gradually been coming about in the relations between radicals and conservatives. The catholic party became more co-operative by retaining its complete independence and it sometimes even opposed governmental measures. In 1919, when a second catholic member was elected to the federal council the radicals and liberals, as a rule supported together the common governmental measures and constantly voted for each other's candidates in all important elections. This political reconciliation was mainly due to the emergence of new opposition parties.

In 1890, was also a key year for the first appearance of the socialist party in the national political arena. Socialism had made its appearance in Switzerland in the 1830's and had been organized as a political party for the first time in Zurich in 1870. In 1890, only six of the hundred and forty members of the National Council were socialist.

In 1917, i.e., two years before the institution of proportional representation, radicals maintained a majority of 108 out of 109 members of the National Council. The Catholics held only 39 seats and the socialists 18. The liberals had only 13 and the remaining eleven were distributed among minor parties. Perhaps the two most important groups that the radicals had failed to satisfy were the farmers and the city labourers. The workers had begun to band together in syndicates in the 1870's and the farmers had created an Agrarian party in 1897. Nonetheless, emergence of widespread dissatisfaction was not reflected in the major federal organs. The radicals were still powerful enough, until 1919, to achieve a strong plurality in a majority of the elections for the National Council.
The introduction of proportional representation in 1919 brought the radical party down from the majority. Before 1919 the radicals defeated twice proportional referendum initiatives, both in November of 1900 and in October 1910, but failed in October, 1918, when 299,550 voters and 191/2 cantons voted in favour and only 149,035 voters and 21/2 cantons voted against. The other parties supported the successful initiatives from the viewpoint of a genuine desire to end the radical's one-party rule. The new rule of proportional representation was implemented in 1919 elections, which took on to a multi-party system, which has endured till today. The heaviest loser was the radical party, which took on to a multiparty system, which has endured till today. As a heaviest loser the radical party, lost forty-five of its 108 seats in the National Council. The greatest gainer was the socialist party, which jumped from eighteen to forty-one. The catholic party was not severely affected. The old liberal party emerged with only nine representatives. The farmers, artisans and citizens party, a new one dedicated to the welfare of the Swiss farmers and made up of former members of the radical party, entered the new multi-party epoch with twenty five National Councillors.

The period from 1919 to 1959 witnessed no significant change. The catholics, radicals and socialist achieved a party of representation. The radicals lost their plurality, but no other party rose to replace it. Two new parties came into existence i.e. communist party and the independent party. The independents devoted to the elimination of government control over the economy and achieved fifth position. But communist party and the independent party devoted to the elimination of government control over the economy and achieved
fifth position. But communist party devoted opposite to the independents and made a poor showing. The only change in the 1919-1959 period was that of the radical's loss of plurality to the catholics. In 1929 farmer's party replaced one radical member. Till 1943 socialist had been as strong as catholics, but after that socialist vacated seat was given to catholic party. In 1954 the federal council was made up of three radicals, three catholics and one farmer. In 1959, socialist party put up two candidates, when four members of the council announced their resignations. Mr. Willy Bretscher, editor-in-chief of the Radical Newspaper New Zurcher Zeitung stated: "... the catholic-conservatives some time ago had committed themselves, in a burst of bad temper caused by a petty quarrelw with the radicals, to the formula of proportional representation of all the major parties in the government, and they seized the opportunity to put this scheme into effect with the avowed purpose of cutting the radicals-their historical adversaries at and since the time of the founding of the modern Swiss federal state-down to size. Thus it came to pass that the Federal Assembly, in which the Catholic-Conservative and the Socialists muster nearly one-half of the members, filled the four vacancies in the government according to the 'magic formula' 2:2:2:1, that is to say by introducing tow socialist into the federal council".49

Apart from social and cultural cleavages, the electoral system, the competitiveness encouraged by the federal state and direct democracy can be seen as responsible for party proliferation in Switzerland.50 Political stability stems from the integrative force of consociationalism, which has its roots in the small size of the country, its political culture and the system of direct democracy. In Switzerland
the most important parties are continuously represented in government, and there is no change of power between the parties in government and the parties in opposition. The composition of the national as well as all cantonal governments quite often remains unchanged over a long period. Since 1959, the national government, for example, has consisted of two members of the Radical Democrats (FDP), the Christian democrats and the social democrats and one of the Swiss people's party (SVP). This composition is commonly referred to as the 'magic formula'. This formula was not changed since 1959, it is because if a radical member of the federal council resigns, the assembly has to replace him by a radical (1961,1984); if the outgoing member is a democrat of the centre must be elected (1979); if two Christian democrats resign it elects two Christian democrats (1986); if three federal councilors resign simultaneously, it elects three new members of the same affiliation (1973). One thing to remember is that this constraint is self-imposed and will last as long as it is deemed useful. It will be abandoned when the assembly realizes that the inconveniences outweigh the advantages. Given the massive general stability of Swiss politics and the absence of direct relationship between elections and government formation, commentators of federal elections are often tempted to overplay any signs of change. At the outset, that there were no earthquakes or landslides till October 1991, stability continued with the four main parties maintaining their leading positions. But in 1995, right-wing groups within the Radical Democratic Party tried to change the Magic formula and throw the social democrats out of government, but this attempt was a failure. In the 1999 federal parliamentary election, the Swiss people's party made
large gains, becoming strongest party in terms of the percentage of the votes in the process. The party accordingly claimed a second seat in government. In 2003 election produced a dramatic developments, i.e., there was another exceptional surge by the right-wing Swiss People's Party. This advance changed the balance of the political system. Thus the success of Swiss people's party since 1990's is probably the most striking in the whole electoral history of the Swiss party system. Twenty five years ago, the Swiss people's party fell below ten percent and was almost doomed to disappear. It was only with the 1991 elections that this downward trend stopped and, in the elections of 1995, the party reached an unexpected 15%. The 1999 elections finally marked a real breakthrough. The SVP became the strongest party with 22.5 % of the vote. It is the first time since the National Council was first elected by means of proportional representation in 1919 that such an important shift has occurred. In addition to its traditional strongholds, the party not only consolidated its position in cantons, where it entered the national political arena in the 1995 elections, but also gained votes in 'new' cantons. The success of this party formerly agrarian party is due to profound transformation, as it was forced to reorient itself because of the shrinking of its traditional membership base of farmers and merchants. It now favours a free-market economy and a reduction in state expenditure; however, its agricultural policy still tolerates massive state intervention. Domestically, the party puts great emphasis on the maintenance of law and order, is strongly anti-immigration, and in foreign policy it vehemently opposes Switzerland's accession to supernational organizations.
The Radical party, which advocates a liberal economic order with a business friendly framework, has been the biggest and most important party for a long time and was considered as the founding party of the Swiss nation state; it had already experienced a decline following the introduction of the proportional system in 1919 and lasting till 1939. After a period of ups and downs, a downward trend started after the elections of 1983. With the 1999 elections, the FDP for the first time lost its leading position among the three bourgeois parties.

The Christian Democratic Party (CVP) professes the Christian social doctrine and advocates the establishment of a social market economy, allowing for state intervention in order to protect workers, craftsmen and agriculture. On ethical and moral issues, it adopts a conservative stance, and it attributes great importance to family values. The CVP marked a drop since 1963, particularly since 1979. it is now the smallest of the four governmental parties.

The Social Democratic Party (SPS) stands for the protection of the socially weak and the environment. It is an advocate of subsidy programmes, active state intervention in the economy, and the creation of a strong social safety net that does not push the socially disadvantaged into the role of supplicants. This party fell below 25% immediately after the events of 1968 and below 20% in the 1987 and 1991 elections, which were strongly influenced by environmental issues. In 1995 it recovered and even became the second strongest party in 1999 with more than 22%.

The smallest parties lost much of their attraction towards the end of twentieth century. The Ldu (Landesring) disappeared; the anti-
ecologist automobile party (Freedom Party(FPS)) was on the line of disappearance. The Greens (GPS) were able to hold their share of the votes, but suffered a reduction of 1.1% in the 1995 elections. The right-wing anti-immigration parties (Swiss Democrats) also suffered quite important losses, whereas the shares of Evangelicals (EVP) and confederates (EDU) remained unchanged. Thus, with the 1999 elections, the four governmental parties again controlled more than 80% of the vote: however, the clear winners in last decade of the twentieth century were the parties at the poles of the left-right dimension, the SVP and SP.

The 1999 elections brought a new situation in regard to the composition of the national government. The success of SVP was followed by the claim for a second seat in the federal council, which was refused by the other parties at the end of 1999 in the re-election of the government following the election of the national council. However, the magic formula has lost much of its enchantment and changes are more probable then ever.

In light of these developments, the question is whether the Swiss party system has lost its famous stability. There is obviously a reduction in the number of parties and an increase in volatility. This is not completely new. Long-term analyses reveal that the Swiss party system had ups and downs as far as volatility and the numbers of parties are concerned. But altogether the Swiss party system seems-apart from a few exceptions-to be moving towards a four-party system with the four governmental parties being even more dominant. This was supported by Sujnour Lipset and Stein Rokkan's thesis of the
frozen party system. Their cleavage theory explains the emergence of the four parties. However the success of SVP also threatens the very essence of the Swiss four party coalitions. Especially the two parties in the middle, FDP and CVP, are under enormous pressure and a reorganization of the Swiss party system has become more probable than ever. And finally, the Lipset-Rokkan thesis only holds as long as the four parties still represent the same cleavages and stand for the same political ideologies. It is on the level of the parties and their organizations that the answer to this question of stability is to be found.

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF SWISS PARTY SYSTEM

The 1848 federal constitution, which is the basis for contemporary Switzerland, came about at the end of a civil war between liberal and catholic cantons. This was a war to determine the form of the Swiss federation. The compromise reached among the Swiss for intra-political reason emphasized cantonal independence. 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". The formation of the Swiss national party system was a process that started from the bottom and worked its way up. We shall concentrate on a few party characteristic, describing some features of the ideal types such as professionalisation and financial resources of party organizations, party ties, membership figures and composition, the balance of power within the parties and the political orientation.
Professionalisation:

Professionalism in politics or the dabbling of dilettantes and demagogues, finds no favour with the Swiss people. The art of administration has attained in this country a stage of business-like efficiency, not only in the federal, but also in the cantonal governments. The Swiss Parliament sits for only ten to twelve weeks. This period is too short to give much encouragement to the talkers and fighters. Flamboyant speeches, long debates, hot exchange of words, are very rare in Swiss Parliament. In the mid 1970's the parties of medium sized and larger cantons began to staff their secretariats with full-time employees. A survey conducted in 1996/97 showed that the cantonal parties of the four governmental parties had 74 full-time positions in total. Since the middle of the 1970's, the number of full time employees has thus increased by 40% at the best. Compared to developments in other countries, the increase of professionalisation in Switzerland is below average. Moreover, in Switzerland full time employees are typically engaged in the administrative apparatus of the party and therefore the actual level of professionalisation of the party's purely political activities probably even lower. According to information provided by the parties themselves, about 72% of the cantonal parties have become more professional in their administrative work, and 60% in their programmatic and substantive activities, during the last ten years. It is noteworthy that especially the two most successful parties, the SP and SVP, claim to work professionally with regard to substantive issues.

Financial Resources: No State Funding:

In Comparison with parties of other countries, the Swiss parties have only limited financial resources; it is due to the lack of state
funding on the national level there is only a modest contribution to the parliamentary groups of about 5.5 million Swiss francs. In 1975 the ordinary budget of the four governmental parties on national level was 2.5 million francs. In 1999, the governing parties amounted to a total budget of 9.4 million francs. But when we compare it to other countries, the budgets of Swiss parties are very small. In the last three decades the four parties have in real terms roughly doubled their budget on national level is striking when compared to other parties, this is because of their connection with financially strong business circles.

The national parties' lack of financial resources is a matter of constant concern. In the last 30 years, there have been unsuccessful attempts to introduce state financing. In 1999, for the first time all four governmental parties jointly tried to re-start the discussion. The financial situations of the cantonal parties are now slightly improved.

Party Membership:

The principle of party membership developed late in Switzerland, one possible explanation of this can be found in the party press, which until 1970 played a relatively important role. The parties organized themselves through the party press i.e., the readers represented members and followers, and as a consequence, there was no need to develop clear criteria for membership and to establish organizational structures for such a task. According to Erich Gruner’s estimate in 1963-67.38% of active voters were party members. In 1970's it amounted 11% of the eligible voters. According to indication given by the parties themselves, they had approximately 400,000
members in mid 1990's. If we take into account the fact that during these 20 years the number of voters has increased by 900,000, this implies that the percentage of party members has declined, a development which is confirmed by recent surveys.

In Switzerland only the social democrats have the possibility of showing a plausible trend in their membership figures, whereas the other parties depend at the very best on estimations. About 40% of the cantonal sections of the four governmental parties claim to have increased their membership figures in recent years, only about 24% admit that they have fewer members. In regard to the members and voters of the different parties, most striking is the shift in the social basis of the social democrats and the Swiss people's party. The social democrats have lost part of their traditional membership to the Swiss people's party. Yet they have gained a considerable number of better educated people earning high salaries. In 1975 only seven percent of their voters had a university degree.57 Whereas in 1999, the SP had 51 percentage of voters having a high level of education.57 the Swiss peoples party, in contrast, moved into the cities and into predominantly catholic area. In 1875 only eight percent of their votes lived in urban areas it was 38% in 1999.58

**Balance of Power:**

The balance of power between the different faces of party organizations and intra-party decision-making are other important features of political parties. Professional electoral parties and cartel parties have a strong bias towards the party leaders (Party in Central
Office) and the office holders (Party in public office). In the 1980's with the rise of green parties, grassroots democracy was very popular but this changed in 1990's. There has been a shift towards more-operative freedom for the party leaders within the Swiss parties. About two-thirds of the cantonal sections of the four important than co-determination of the party members and almost half of them claim that there has been a shift in the priorities in this direction within the last few years. This change has been especially strong for the social Democrats and the Christian Democrats (CVP).

To sum up, despite many similarities in the development of the Swiss parties, it is impossible to discern a uniform pattern. The Swiss parties, especially if the cantonal parties are also taken into account, cover almost the entire spectrum of party types. It is possible to find cantonal-level parties that are best characterized as elite parties, especially in central Switzerland. Some parties, such as the SP, are clearly based on the principle of membership, while others—such as the former Ldu or at a lower level of organization, the SP and FPS come close to the model of an electoral party. Finally, there is little evidence that Swiss parties have moved closer to the state, a development, which is typical of cartel parties. The system of concordance and the multi-party system seem to ensure that a considerable number of public sector positions are not allocated on the basis of party membership alone. However, given the high density of political offices in Switzerland the parties have always had relatively easy access to political mandates.
SEGMENTATION AND PARTY SYSTEM IN SWITZERLAND

The effect of double legitimation and double identification of political parties in federal system 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. If federalism means 'segmental isolation along geographical lines', then it is necessary to examine the extent to which the party system reflects the segmentation within society. Switzerland shows a multidimensional segmentation. The linguistic, confessional, social, religious cleavages all have nearly equal importance for Swiss society. The "linguistic cleavage crosscuts almost perfectly with the party cleavage", but the religious cleavages all have nearly equal importance for Swiss society. The "linguistic cleavage crosscuts almost perfectly with the party cleavage", but the religious cleavages coincide as shown in the table below.

Party preference by Religion in Switzerland (in percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>CVP</th>
<th>FDP</th>
<th>SPS</th>
<th>SVP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>90.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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. 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, which through their distinctive identity, distinguishes them from the constituent's states. This also is evident in the regional distribution of 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% of the votes.

Even if the dominant position of the strongest party in the various cantons has weakened over the years because of greater intermingling of Swiss society, party strongholds clearly remain. The 9.7% 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. There is great polarization of result between the national and regional arenas in Switzerland than in either the Federal Republic. The greatest number of regional parties is an additional factor separating Switzerland from its neighbours. 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 is small in size in both area and population as well as its cantonal political cultures. This small size facilitates the organization of such regional party groupings. The working 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.

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

PARTY INTERACTION AND FEDERALISM

"Federalism is as much a matter of process as of structure."61 in this respect, the ways in which parties adapt to the structure of the political system is of great interest. 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 favour centralized policies, while ruling parties tend to favour federative policies.

Switzerland is the only governing system in which the federal form corresponds completely to the concept of a consociational system. The understanding of concordance is as deeply ingrained in the Swiss political culture, as is the belief in federalism. 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 cantons. The selection of the *bundesrat* (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 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.

**Intra-Party 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. The Swiss party system is 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. Behind this refusal are true ideological differences and a corresponding voter loyalty within the
Even the CVP and SVP efforts since 1971 to achieve 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.

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..." the dual regional/federal role of members in the national parliament is seen more clearly here than in the other two federal states. 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. 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 very large deviation of views within the same political current.

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. 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 the national party during the 1975 national election.
Lastly to conclude, the Swiss party system has been decisively shaped by federalism. At the same time, it contributes to the further strengthening of federalism. Even though federalism in Switzerland is characterized by a stronger institutional 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 favour of consensus, the original idea of federalism as an instrument to protect the minority retains its importance.
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