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Research Proposal

Urban Transformations and Local Political Elites. A Comparative Study among four Swiss Cities

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1. Summary of the research plan

Under the pressure of globalization and Europeanization, European States, including Switzerland, are experiencing an increasing transformation of sub-national forms of democratic life, enhancing the importance of local and especially urban political participation and governance (John 2001; Le Galès 2011; Mossberger et al. 2012). Whilst scholars and the public tend to suppose that the differences between now and the first decades after World War II are very strong, few systematic analyses are available. Our research project aims to contribute to a better knowledge of the profile of urban elected representatives over time in connection with the transformation of the urban context, and especially in the period since the 1980s. A number of questions arise: Who are these representatives in charge of local decision-making, both in legislative and executive power, and in what ways are they different from their colleagues of the past? Our main research questions are twofold: To what extent do social, institutional, and political changes affect the profile of the elected representatives? And is it possible to observe an increasing democratization and professionalization of the urban political elite? Assuming sub-national legacies are crucial in the evolution of urban political elites, our project simultaneously adopts a comparative approach and a prosopographic perspective able to take into account change and persistence over time in a detailed manner at the individual level.

Our research will focus on the evolution of four cities in Switzerland (Lausanne, Lucerne, Lugano, and Zurich), which represent different legacies among the main urban Municipalities, in terms of demographic, institutional, economic, and political points of view. For each of the municipalities, we will analyze the evolution of the elected representatives (age, education, profession, gender, and political longevity) in legislative and executive institutions in the period between 1946 and 2016, in relation to urban, institutional, and political transformations. More precisely, we want to verify the impact of demographic and socioeconomic settings, local party system changes, institutional and partisan rules, and the role of the municipalities in public policies on the evolution of the profile of local political elites.

The project will systematically collect data about every elected representative in each election year, data that is stored in municipal archives and so far remains largely unexploited. An initial harvesting of the data concerning Lausanne and Lugano has revealed the richness of these holdings and allows a systematic examination of the elected representatives, permitting a systematic quantitative analysis.

An important goal of the project is to support the recent revitalization of urban research on the political elite and thereby contribute to it catching up with national and international counterparts, where this sub-field has seen a considerable renewal in recent years, bridging with the statewide political elite studies. The organization of an international conference at the end of the research will give the opportunity to bring together leading scholars in the study of the urban political elite and to present the results of the research. Moreover, the research project integrates two PhD studies and therefore contributes to the advancement of young academic careers. Since questions about the political relevance of urban municipalities to Swiss governance, especially in the major cities, have excited more interest in Switzerland in recent years, the proposed research project also seeks to achieve the wide diffusion of its findings, and to reach out not only to the scientific community, but also to the general public.

2. Research Plan

2.1 Current state of Research in the Field

In order to focus on political elites in urban municipalities through a comparative and dynamic approach in Switzerland, our research project considers different sub-fields: local elected representatives, statewide political elites, and urban transformations. In the following sections, we will discuss the main results of these different research fields, while also underlining some of their limitations.

Urban changes and local political elites in the international literature

Scholars recognize the huge relevance of the transition from the industrial towards a post-industrial society and its impact on urban landscape and governance. Several studies of urban geographers and political scientists have shown how the new territorial and administrative planning of urban areas has led to a new governance of these areas by political actors, including elected representatives and their political parties (Jouve & Lefèvre 2004; Borraz & John 2004; Brenner 2004; Copus 2004; Hoffmann-Martinot & Sellers 2005; Heinelt & Kübler 2005; Kazepov 2005; Hambleton & Gross 2007; Le Galès 2011; Copus et al. 2012; Sellers et al. 2013; Pasquier et al. 2013). Local and urban governments have implemented many important institutional and administrative changes during the last forty years with regard to at least three domains: decentralization, political and administrative reforms, and participatory reform (Kersting et al. 2009). The transformation of urban contexts is not only reflected in terms of their institutional organization, but also in terms of social changes, such as the increase in residents with higher levels of education, a decrease in stable, permanent jobs in favor of flexible forms of employment, the increasing presence of the tertiary sector (i.e. business, services, high technology, and public administration), and demographic longevity (Crouch 1999; Crouch et al. 2001; Emerson 2002; Kazepov 2005). According to Hoffmann-Martinot and Sellers (2005), the processes of suburbanization, geopolitical fragmentation, and metropolitan segregation (i.e. urban gentrification, see also Smith 1996; Atkinson & Bridge 2005; Lees et al. 2008) already observed, especially in the United States, have now become widespread phenomena in post-industrial cities, and in particular in Western cities. It is difficult, however, to find systematic analyses of this trend that take into account both the institutional and the social changes in linking with the evolution of political elites.

In recent decades, increasing attention has been devoted to the local and urban elite in European countries, with a focus on both executive and legislative powers. On the one hand, the increasing power of the municipal executive, thanks to the reforms introducing directly elected mayors in several European cities, has attracted widespread scholarly interest (e.g. Bäck et al. 2006; Reynaert et al. 2009; Mouritzen & Svava 2002; Borraz & John 2004; Verheul & Schaap 2010; Le Galès 2011). On the other hand, several studies have investigated the role of local councilors, especially in relation to urban policies and the changing patterns of the executive (Jouve & Lefèvre 2004; Hoffmann-Martinot & Sellers 2005; Heinelt & Kübler 2005). Recently, the book edited by Egner, Sweeting, and Klok (2013), which deals with several aspects of local councilors, highlights how—according to the national context—different political and institutional factors can influence the profile of local councilors, in particular the social base of recruitment, the professional profile, the relations with the parties, and the councilors' perceptions of their office, etc. They also identified, like other scholars, an increasing professionalization favored by the direct election, the division of labor, and the evolution of remuneration (see Berg & Rao 2005).

Apart from a few exceptions (Guérin & Kerrouche 2006, 2008), the large majority of current studies on local

political elites adopt a synchronic approach. In other words, we observe a lack of comparative analyses on the evolution of the urban political elites. Even in France, where a long tradition of research on local and urban politics is provided, only a few studies have included a diachronic dimension (see: Agulhon et al. 1986; Linfort & Closset 1989; Souchon-Zahn 1991; Bergère 1996), while the comparative perspective tends to be excluded. Since the literature does not consider in a systematic manner the long-term evolution of local political and urban elites, it neglects to address the question of how the transformation of urban contexts has affected the sociological profile of local legislative and executive bodies.

Urban transformations and Swiss political elites

Regarding the urban transformations in Switzerland, many studies have illustrated the deep changes in the urban context characterized by the passage from urbanization to metropolitanization, the development of new forms of metropolitan governance (Kübler et al. 2002, 2005, 2013; Bassand 2004; Kübler & Scheuss 2005; Kübler & Schwab 2007; Vodoz et al. 2013). The latter create a new political environment, with its own procedures, practices, roles, and routines, which affects the urban political elites' identity, their notion of democracy, and the perception of their role behavior and their political influence (Plüss 2013, 2014, 2015). Some studies, focused on the profile of local councilors in a synchronic perspective and their political recruitment patterns, have also shown, on the one hand, the existence of divergent profiles (in terms of gender, age, and educational and professional background), according to the municipality's size or the language area in Switzerland to which it belongs (Geser 2010; Geser et al. 2012), and, on the other hand, the existence of significant differences in the respective political recruitment and political career patterns of female and male Swiss city councilors (Plüss & Rusch 2012).

These works are undoubtedly very interesting and their scientific contribution is also significant, but they don't really allow for historical depth. Thanks to these different studies we have somehow a "snapshot" of Swiss municipalities and the socio-professional features of their local councilors, especially the executive members, and their perceptions about the elective office. In other words, we have only limited information or no information at all about the evolution over time of the profile of urban political elites called to manage the urban changes. Finally, is it the case that the local political elites were first to change, or that the evolution of their profile is a result of the transformations that have affected the cities? What causal relationship can be established? In our opinion, current urban research does not provide a systematic answer with regard to these questions. Likewise, because of its essentially synchronic character, the literature on local political elites does not allow this to be answered in a satisfactory manner, though we are certainly informed on some current trends in Switzerland (Guéranger & Kübler 2004; Geser 2010; Geser et al. 2012; Plüss & Rusch 2012).

Considering the literature on local political elites in Switzerland, we should recognize that some advance has been made, but that there is also a lack of in-depth knowledge. We are lacking information providing a long-term perspective on the changes and continuities in the profile of local councilors. The few studies on the Swiss case that privileged a diachronic dimension were realized forty years ago and they were focused on a number of small Swiss municipalities and did not include the main Swiss cities. Some seminal works were realized in the 1970s by Bassand and Fragnière and were devoted to some municipalities in Western Switzerland (Bassand 1974, see chapter 9; Bassand & Fragnière 1976, see especially chapter 6; Bassand & Fragnière 1978, see chapters 5 and 6). Since the 1990s, influenced by new trends in the international literature, some studies have been published that have adopted a synchronic perspective on local elected representatives, even though sociological traits were not considered in great depth (Ladner 1991; Geser et al. 1994, 1996, 2012). We can also mention three studies that are characterized by a

comparison between a number of Swiss municipalities and their French or Italian counterparts. First of all, the works of Borraz (1994, 1996) focused on a comparison of the city government in two municipalities of the canton of Vaud (Lausanne and Yverdon-les-Bains) and two municipalities in the French region of Franche-Comté (Besançon and Pontarlier) during the period of 1977–1989. The study’s aim was to illustrate the impact of urban changes on the political and administrative institutions, on the political decision-making processes, and on the emergence of new urban elites in the four municipalities. Secondly, Guéranger and Kübler (2004) realized a comparison about the socio-political characteristics of elected representatives within the metropolitan areas and their neighboring municipalities in France and in Switzerland. Finally, the paper of McDonnell and Mazzoleni (2014) focused on the relations between the respective mayors and their parties in two cities in Italy and Switzerland (Genoa and Lausanne).

Insights from statewide political elites

In order to enhance the study on urban and local political elites, and in an attempt to go beyond its weaknesses, we argue that literature on the statewide political elites would be useful. Since the 1920s and 1930s, an important amount of studies have been devoted to the members of legislative and executive powers in Western countries. Case studies and comparative studies on statewide political elites highlight several elements, such as the importance of certain resources (social and educational background, profession, etc.), the existence of some form of specific profile depending on the party affiliation of elected representatives, and the impact of historical conditions and constitutional changes on parliamentary recruitment. More recently, statewide political elites have continued to be the subject of many studies. Several of them have also included a prosopographic approach to elected representatives (Norris & Lovenduski 1995, mainly about Great Britain; Davidson et al. 2014, on the United States; Golsch 1998, and Bailer et al. 2013, about Germany; Costa & Kerrouche 2007, about France). These studies do not all adopt the same unique methodology: some of them favor a “societal” approach which considers Parliament as a reflection of society and tries to describe its composition; other studies focus on an approach that tries to take into account the impact of changes in the socio-institutional context on the recruitment process for MPs. The sociographical study of national MPs is a classical topic for field research at the international level (Costa & Kerrouche 2007; Rouban 2011, on France; Verzichelli 2010, about Italy; and Navarro 2009, about the MPs in the European Parliament; Verzichelli & Cotta 2014 and Best & Semenova 2014 about the European MPs). In addition to several case studies, the literature on statewide political elites provides some studies with a comparative approach (Patzelt 2002). Some studies made a comparison between two countries, such as that of Eliassen and Pedersen (1978) about Norway and Denmark, or that of Bermeo (1987), which analyzed the effects of the process of democratization on the composition of ruling elites in Spain and Portugal. Other research included more than two countries: Putnam (1976) examined the evolution of ministers’ social background in Germany, France, and the United Kingdom since the late-nineteenth century. Loewenberg and Kim (1978) present a typology of different relationships between MPs and their constituencies in six countries (Kenya, South Korea, Turkey, Belgium, Italy, and Switzerland). Loewenberg and Patterson (1979) focused on the functioning and the composition of the US, German, and English parliaments. More recently, Narud and Valen (1999) analyzed the social background of MPs in the countries of Northern Europe, while Loewenberg et al. (2002) made a comparison on the composition of different Western legislatures. Tavares de Almeida et al. (2003) focused on ministers’ recruitment in the countries of Southern Europe in the period of 1850–2000, and finally, Dowding and Dumont (2009) studied the recruitment of ministers in many European countries (see also Dumont & Verzichelli 2014).

Focusing on the question of political careers and recruitment, scholars have often highlighted the role of political parties. While Gallagher and Marsh (1988) provide an analytical framework based on the party system and internal

functioning of political parties that influence the choice of candidates for elections to the national parliament, and consequently the MPs' profile in Western countries, Norris (1997) emphasizes, among other dimensions, the role of the electoral system. Alongside these, the works led by Best and Cotta (2000a, 2007), which focus on the evolution of the composition of national parliaments in eleven European countries from 1848 to 2000, constitute the most ambitious attempt to improve the literature on the comparative study of statewide political elites. Best and Cotta identify two main processes involving parliamentary recruitment, namely democratization and professionalization. The two processes appear contradictory, since "while democratization refers to an opening of the channels for political participation and legislative recruitment to more social groups, professionalization refers to the process whereby those recruited tend to establish area-specific standards and routines which increase their own control over legislative careers, income, legal status, and social standing, thus restricting access to the parliamentary arena" (Cotta and Best 2000b: 495). The case studies and comparative analyses edited by Best and Cotta clearly show, on the one hand, how political recruitment cannot be interpreted in a linear and convergent manner and, on the other hand, that societal changes have only an indirect impact. With regard to the Swiss case, following some seminal studies in the 1960s and the 1970s (Frei 1966; Gruner 1970), in recent years and in connection with the SNF project "The Swiss Elites in the 20th century: an unachieved process of differentiation?" at the University of Lausanne, the study of Swiss MPs has experienced an important renewal both in terms of new theoretical issues (e.g. democratization and professionalization), new approaches (comparative and historical), and new empirical knowledge, in particular on national parliamentary elites (Mach & Pilotti 2008; Pilotti et al. 2010; Mazzoleni et al. 2010; Pilotti 2011, 2012). Unfortunately, this literature tends to exclude the local and urban scale.

2.2 Current state of our own research

Oscar Mazzoleni (main applicant), PhD in Modern History, is a Maître d'enseignement and recherche in Political Science (from 1.1.2016, professeur titulaire) at the Director of the Research Observatory for Regional Research at the University of Lausanne. He has been involved in several research projects on Swiss politics and he has published a large number of papers and books on the Swiss party system, political parties, and political elites at local, regional and national level, paying also attention to a diachronic and historical approaches (Burgos et al. 2011; Mazzoleni 1999, 2003, 2005, and 2016; Mazzoleni et al. 2011; Mazzoleni et al. 2010; Mazzoleni & Meuwly 2013; Mazzoleni & Wernli 2002). He has also published articles and books on Swiss urban and local political elites in changing institutional and social patterns, adopting a comparative perspective (Mazzoleni et al. 2013; McDonnell & Mazzoleni 2014). He currently co-directs a project funded by the SNF on Swiss political parties at the regional level. He is also an associated member of the Swiss Elite Observatory at the University of Lausanne (Obelis).

Andrea Pilotti (first co-applicant) is a senior researcher at the Institute of Political, Historical and International Studies, University of Lausanne. He is a political scientist specializing in the study of parliamentary recruitment (where he adopts a prosopographic approach), and in urban and regional politics. He has published different contributions about the study of the profile of political elites, especially on Swiss MPs, and their evolution over time (Mach & Pilotti 2008; Pilotti et al. 2010; Mazzoleni et al. 2010; Pilotti 2011, 2012, 2015). He is currently preparing a book based on his PhD thesis on Swiss parliamentary recruitment and the reforms of the Federal Assembly. He is a member of the Swiss Elite Observatory at the University of Lausanne (Obelis).

André Mach (second co-applicant) has an education in political science and is Associate Professor in comparative political economy and Swiss politics at the Institute of Political, Historical and International Studies, University of Lausanne. His areas of specialization include Swiss politics, organized interests, Swiss elites, Swiss corporate governance, industrial relations, competition policy, and more generally, the impact of globalization on national policies. He has published on these different topics in Swiss and international journals (Mach 2002; Mach et al. 2011; Bühlmann et al. 2012, 2015; David et al. 2012, 2015). He recently directed, in collaboration with Thomas David, the four-year research project funded by the SNSF, “Les élites suisses au 20e siècle: un processus de différenciation inachevé?” One important output from these research projects was a systematic database on Swiss economic, political, administrative, and academic elites through the twentieth century (see: www.unil.ch/elitessuisses).

2.3 Detailed Research Plan

As already shown in the state of the art, the Swiss literature on the profile of urban political elites in a dynamic (e.g. historic) perspective is very marginal, almost non-existent. Our goal is to show how it is possible to fill this gap focusing on the case of the members of the executives and legislatives in Swiss municipalities, in particular in urban areas. Our main research questions are the following: (1) Is it possible to observe a process of increasing democratization and professionalization of the elected representatives of Swiss urban municipalities since the Second World War? (2) To what extent do social, institutional, and political changes affect the profile of the elected representatives?

In order to answer the first question, our research project adopts a theoretical framework of analysis inspired by statewide political-elite research, based on the concepts of democratization and professionalization (Best and Cotta 2000a, 2000b). The concept of democratization helps us to analyze the degree of inclusiveness of various social groups (according to age, gender, education, profession) in the urban political elite. The concept of professionalization allows us to consider how local public office becomes a true remunerated profession that requires some specific resources. According to Borchert (2008: 273), these two processes are interrelated: “professionalization [is] both a result of democratization and a prerequisite for its further extension into the parliamentary sphere. The battle over legislative compensation [is] basically one about democracy and the social opening of the political sphere.” At the same time, the two processes show contradictory trends. Indeed, while democratization is an inclusive process, professionalization has a dual status. On the one hand, it is a necessary condition to ensure access to a political career to people from different social backgrounds, thanks to the payment of allowances and salary, while on the other, professionalization also refers to an exclusive process that creates a division between insiders and outsiders to the political field (Cotta & Best 2000: 523).

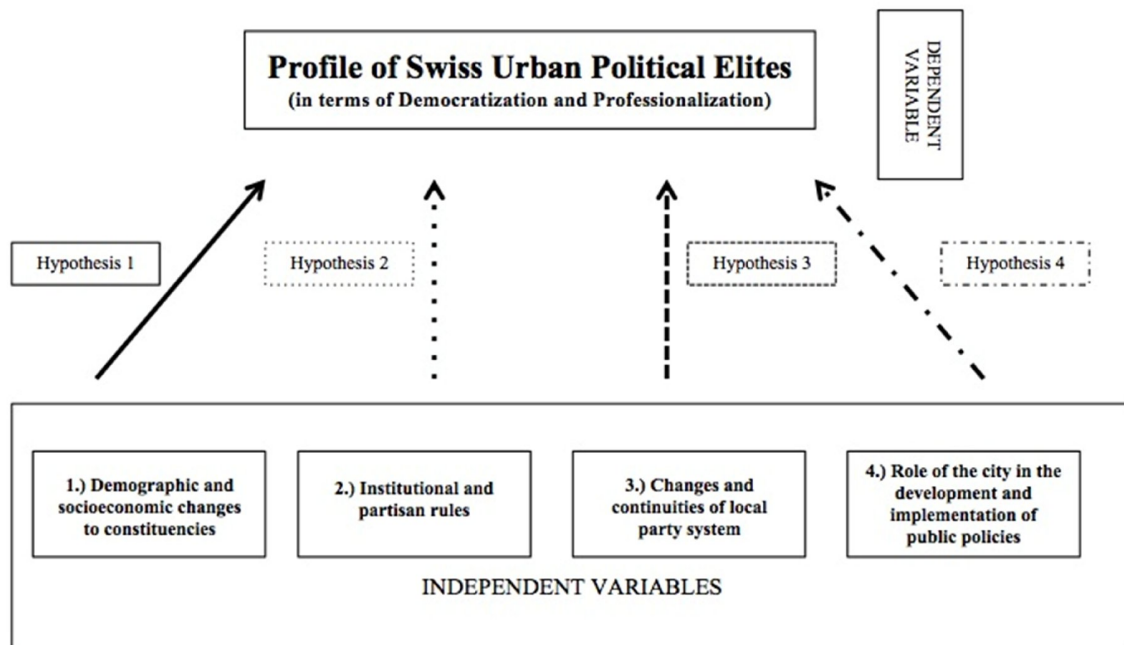
The two-fold analytical concept of Best and Cotta can be very useful and relevant for our study on local political elites in the Swiss cities. The realization of a study of local councilors in a diachronic perspective allows us to illustrate the presence (or not) of some social, cultural, political, and economic resources among local representatives and their evolution over time. In order to analyze these evolutions, the concepts of democratization and professionalization are also perfectly suitable for the study of members of executives and the legislatives of Swiss cities. Our framework for analysis allows us to investigate in depth whether and how the urban transformation undergone by Swiss cities has had an impact on the sociological profile of their elected representatives. Thanks to the diachronic approach, we will be able to analyze the continuities and changes that have taken place over a very long period.

From a methodological point of view, we operationalize the concepts of democratization and professionalization thanks to a prosopographic approach (i.e. one of collective biography), rather common in elite research, which implies a

systematic collection of biographic information, allowing us to identify the changes and continuities in the profile of local political elites over time (Lemerrier & Picard 2011). Four indicators allow us to measure the evolution of the profile of local elected representatives in terms of democratization: (a) *age* allows us to verify which category is predominant and to what extent the political authorities of Swiss cities were and are representative of the entire population; (b) *gender* permits us to understand to what extent the introduction of women’s suffrage at the local level has or has not changed the profile of local political elites; (c) *education*, particularly since a university degree is a more or less decisive pre-requisite for being elected to the executive or legislative councils; and (d) *professional background* allows us to verify if there are one or more professional groups that seem to “dominate” the local elected representatives.

Regarding the process of the professionalization of elected representatives, especially the members of executives, the four indicators identified by Guérin and Kerrouche (2008: 191ff.) will provide inspiration, namely the time spent in the exercise of office, the abandoning of the primary profession in favor of elected office, the highest level of education in connection with the growing complexity of duties, and the political longevity. Although, the mayoral power in Swiss municipalities remains relatively low (Ladner 2005; McDonnell & Mazzoleni 2014), we seek to demonstrate the extent to which the empowerment of executives, which is observable as a regular trend in many Western countries (Mouritzen & Svava 2002; Berg & Rao 2005), does or does not favor the increasing professionalization of Municipal executives, especially in terms of education, professional background and political career. The indicator of *political longevity*, i.e. the ability to continuously fulfill a political function for a period of several years will be useful for observing whether or not there is also a process of professionalization based on the acquisition of specific knowledge and specific skills related to elective office. Moreover, thanks to this indicator, we can verify the impact of the changes in the local party system on the length of political careers.

Figure 1 A model of Recruitment to Swiss Urban Political Elites



As our second question is focused on the grounds of change and persistence, our project will combine a sociological and institutional perspective. In particular, three issues are in stake: To what extent do the profiles of local political elites reflect the social transformations in the urban electorate, changing party system, and new institutional rules (i.e. direct election of mayors, eligibility of women and foreigners, and public-office remuneration). In this regard, we distinguish four categories of independent variables that can affect the evolution in the profile of local representatives. For every category, we can also make at least *four hypotheses* about the impact of these variables that we want to verify in our research project (see above Figure 1).

Hypothesis 1) Demographic and socioeconomic impact to constituencies

The third independent variable in our research project refers to the impact of demographic and socioeconomic transformations that affect the population of Swiss cities and consequently their constituencies. In this regard, we assume that:

The profile of Swiss urban political elites reflects the changes of the society from which the local elected representatives have emanated. For instance, we expect that the transformations that affect the economic structure (decrease of the primary sector, the processes of industrialization and de-industrialization in the period after the second world war, the growth of the service sector, and increasing state intervention) may have an impact on the composition of executive and legislative bodies (i.e. the presence of blue-collar workers, entrepreneurs, and public employees). We also expect that social changes, such as, for example, the democratization of access to higher education, or the increasing role of women in society, may affect the profile of urban political elites in the main Swiss cities (Hypothesis 3).

We made this third hypothesis by taking into account the results of many studies on political elites, especially the members of national parliaments, that have shown the existence of a connection between, on the one hand, the loss in importance of the primary sector and the development of the industrialization process and, on the other hand, the presence of farmers and blue-collar workers among the elected representatives (Best & Gaxie 2000: 124ff.; Best et al. 2000: 149ff.; Rush & Cromwell 2000: 471ff.). Moreover, other studies have clearly demonstrated how the development of state intervention and the democratization of access to universities have had an impact regarding the presence, among European MPs, of a higher rate of public servants and elected representatives with a university degree (Cotta & Tavares de Almeida 2007; Gaxie & Godmer 2007).

Hypothesis 2) The institutional and partisan rules

Our second independent variable concerns the impact of the institutional rules that may (directly or indirectly) affect the recruitment of the local elected representatives. In this regard, we can assume that:

The profile of Swiss urban political elites changes in connection with the legal context in which the municipal elections are held. Therefore, we expect that the reforms of the institutional rules (i.e. introduction of women's suffrage, introduction of the direct election of the mayor, division of labor in favor of executive members, and evolution of remuneration), the electoral system chosen for municipal elections (majoritarian vs. proportional), the professionalization of parties and their

internal rules (limitation of elective mandates and the limitation of the accumulation of elective mandates, female quotas) affect the sociological composition of the executive and legislative bodies of Swiss municipalities (Hypothesis 2).

This second assumption is especially based on at least three different findings. First of all, some recent studies have shown the existence of a divergent profiles for female elected representatives in Switzerland, both on Federal Parliament (Pilotti 2012) and in the Swiss municipalities (Geser 2010; Geser et al. 2012). Considering this remark and given the increasing presence of women in the Swiss municipalities (Ladner 2008: 68; 2011: 77ff.; Geser 2010), we therefore expect that the profile of Swiss urban political elites is becoming a little more differentiated. Secondly, Guérin and Kerrouche (2006, 2008) highlighted a trend toward an increasing professionalization of local elected representatives in Europe favored, among other things, by the adoption of the direct election of the mayors, a more important division of labor among the members of the executive bodies, and a significant improvement in the remuneration for the elective functions. It will be interesting to verify what occurs in Switzerland (which was not included in Guérin and Kerrouche's analysis), a nation historically characterized by the extent to which laymen are directly engaged in policymaking (Geser et al. 1996; Ladner 2005). However, despite this specific feature, we also observe in Switzerland an enhancement in recent decades of the mayoral role and an increasing professionalization in the biggest municipalities (Ladner et al. 2000; Ladner 2005). Finally, Geser (2012) finds that election rules (majoritarian vs. proportional) have a significant impact on the local party systems and the recruitment of members of executives.

Hypothesis 3) Changes and continuities of local party system

The first independent variable refers to the stability of the political balance in the composition of executive and legislative bodies. In this regard, we can hypothesize that:

The profile of Swiss urban political elites changes when the balance of power between the main political parties faces important transformations (i.e. the change from a majority of right-wing parties to a majority of left-wing parties). By contrast, the changes are minor when the balance of power between the main political parties remains stable (Hypothesis 1).

This assumption is based on the finding that many studies about parliamentary recruitment have already shown, namely that the profile of elected representatives varies depending on their party affiliation within the European national parliaments (Best & Cotta 2000a; Cotta & Best 2007), including the Swiss Parliament (Gruner 1970; Pilotti 2012), for instance, in terms of professional background and education. This finding is also true for the members of Swiss municipalities (Geser 2010; Geser et al. 2012). Our analysis will also allow us to verify whether or not and in which way the increase in the extent of polarization in local elections and in the local party system in the Swiss municipalities (Ladner 2008: 57; Geser 2011) has had an impact on the profile of local elected representatives. At the same time, we want to verify the nature and extent of change in the balance of power in the main Swiss cities, characterized by the passage from a center-right-wing majority at the executive and legislative to a left-wing majority (Socialdemocrats and Greens) (Seitz 2006: 13–14).

Hypothesis 4) Impact of the role of the city in the development and implementation of public policies

Our fourth independent variable concerns the impact of the role played by the city in the development and

implementation of public policies. With regard to this variable, we assume that:

The profile of Swiss urban political elites changes in connection with, on the one hand, the development and the strengthening of the role of local public administration and, on the other hand, with the increasing complexity of local government over time. We expect that these evolutions favor the recruitment of elected representatives with a professional and educational background that allows them to have the skills to face more complex and technical issues that affect the city governance (Hypothesis 4).

This fourth assumption is based on some findings about the increasing specialization and professionalization of the local public administration in European cities (Guérin & Kerrouche 2006, 2008), including the Swiss municipalities (Geser et al. 1996; Ladner 2005). Gaxie and Godmer (2007) have also shown how the new types of state regulations require new types of skills among the European MPs in order to handle them adequately. It will be interesting to verify whether and how the diversification of the issues in the Swiss city governance (i.e. economic, financial, cultural, social, or spatial planning issues) favor the emergence of local elected representatives with more specific knowledge (in terms of educational and professional background).

Case selection and data availability

Assuming that Swiss urban political elites follow different paths of evolution, our project needs to adopt a comparative approach involving a set of cities based on various characteristics. Taking into account a combination of 4 different dimensions referring to demographic and economic indicators, electoral system, and party system, we select four cities: Zurich, Lausanne, Lugano and Lucerne:

1) demographically, Zurich (1st), Lausanne (4th) and Lucerne (7th) are historically among the seven biggest Swiss cities. Since the early 2000s, Lugano have undergone an important growth in population (becoming the 9th biggest city) that is largely explained by amalgamation reforms (Mazzoleni et al. 2013; Mazzoleni & Pilotti 2014);

2) as the financial and economic capital of Switzerland, Zurich is the place of two major academic institutions (university since 1833 and Swiss Federal Institute of Technology since 1855) and large corporations. Lausanne is the second main city in the French-part of Switzerland with also two academic institutions (university since 1890 and Swiss Federal Institute of Technology since 1969) and with international business. Lucerne which is located in the central Switzerland has a large sector machine and also an important tourism and travel-related services; the city has a new university since 2000. Lugano since the 1960s has been the third financial center in Switzerland living an important economic growth, thanks also a new university (since 1996);

3) in all four cities, as is usual in Switzerland, there are direct elections of the legislative and executive; this occurs according to two different electoral systems: majoritarian (Zurich, Lausanne, Lucerne) and proportional (Lugano); in the past, the executive was elected by the legislative (Lausanne);

4) party systems are characterized by some convergences and many divergences over time. For instance: Zurich and Lausanne had a similar party system in the period between the 1950s and the 1970s (with the FDP and SP as the main parties). Today, these cities represent the main trend within Swiss urban municipalities towards left-wing majorities (Seitz 2006: 13-14). Meanwhile, Lugano shows a very significant stability (FDP and CVP). More in details, since the 1980s, these four party systems have shifted in divergent ways:

- From a multiparty city government and a left-wing majority in the city parliament, to a left-wing majority at the executive (5 out of 9) and a majority of center-right parties (FDP, SVP, Green Liberals) in the legislative (*Zurich*);
- From a “small” left-wing majority at the executive (4 out of 7) and at the legislative (53 out of 100, SP, Greens and POP) in the 1990s, to a “large” left-wing majority at the executive (6 out of 7) and at the legislative (62 out of 100) (*Lausanne*);
- From a phase of marked stability to one that sees the rise and the success of localist and regionalist party, namely the Lega dei ticinesi, which contributes significantly to changes in the local party system (*Lugano*);
- From a center-right-wing majority at the executive (FDP and CVP) in the 1990s to a multiparty government in the 2000s; at the Legislative: from a center-right-wing majority based on two main parties (FDP and CVP, 27 out of 40), to a more fragmented party system (FDP, CVP, SVP, and Green Liberals, 29 out of 48) (*Lucerne*).

In order to answer our research questions and verify our hypothesis, we want to build a systematic database on the urban political elites of four Swiss cities since the second postwar period until today. As our project includes the whole of the period after the Second World War until today, the members elected since 1946 include 469 members of the executives and 5650 from the legislatures (see table 1).

Table 1 *Members of executive and legislative bodies in four Swiss cities since 1946/1948*

	Period	Executive	Legislative	TOTAL
Zurich	1946–2014	162	2,250	2,482
Lausanne	1949–2016	119	1,700	1,819
Lugano	1948–2016	98	940	1,038
Lucerne	1948–2016	90	760	850
TOTAL		469	5,650	6,119

The evidence relating to these locally elected representatives will be collected from a variety of existing sources and databases, which are in large extent never analyzed by scholars. The main source will be the official city archives which provide legislative documents, electoral lists, and biographical files for each member of the executive and the legislative bodies of Zurich, Lausanne, Lugano, and Lucerne (*Archives communales de Lausanne*, rue du Maupas 47, 1002 Lausanne), Lugano (*Archivio amministrativo Città di Lugano*, via Trevano 129, 6900 Lugano), and Zurich (*Stadtarchiv Zürich*, Neumarkt 4, 8001 Zürich), and Lucerne (*Stadtarchiv Luzern*, Industriestrasse 6, 6005 Luzern). We will also take data, especially for members of executives, from the *Swiss Elite Database* (The Swiss Elite Observatory, IEPHI, Université de Lausanne, Géopolis, 1015 Lausanne).

Although our sample size may represent a challenging issue in terms of the feasibility of the project, it is important to underline that the Research Observatory for Regional Politics at the University of Lausanne (Ovpr-Unil), of which the first two applicants for this proposal are members, are already collecting biographical data of all executive and legislative members of Lausanne and Lugano (except obviously for those members who will be elected in 2016). Secondly, a certain proportion of locally elected representatives have been in office in more than one legislature, which will also reduce the total sample. Thirdly, as the members of executive and legislative bodies were (and are) also public figures it is comparatively easy to find data. In order to reach our research goals, we will apply some statistic

procedures, such as multivariate regressions, that will allow us to identify more precisely which variables have the main impact on the profile of Swiss urban political elites.

2.4. Schedule and Milestones

Two doctoral students will be employed as part of the proposed research project. The first PhD student will concentrate on the study of the urban political elite recruitment for legislative bodies. The second PhD student will focus on the urban political elite recruitment in executive bodies. In addition to their close collaboration in the cities' archives, the researchers in the two sub-projects will meet regularly and exchange their research results and experiences, as well as presenting their findings in the four planned internal workshops, in which the applicants will also take part.

Research Schedule and Milestones **First phase (April 2016 – July 2016)**

- Consolidation and evaluation of existing studies; conceptual and theoretical clarification
- Overview of the historical transformations (demographic, economic, and political) in the 4 Swiss cities
- First internal workshop in June 2016 (positioning in current research debate, adaptation of research-guiding hypotheses)
- Workshop with external experts in July 2016 (integration with current Swiss and international research)

Milestones: Fine-tuning of concepts and methodology, workshop with external experts

Research Schedule and Milestones **Second phase (August 2016 – July 2017)**

- Field work I: city archives in Zurich, Lausanne, Lugano, and Lucerne
- Field work II: exploration of media sources at the Swiss National Library in Bern
- Establishment of a comprehensive inventory of sources and documents
- Second internal workshop in April 2017 (exchanges of preliminary findings)

Milestones: Comprehensive body of sources, exchanges of preliminary findings

Research Schedule and Milestones **Third phase (August 2017 – June 2018)**

- Creation of a complete database of urban political elites and systematic analysis of main political changes and continuities in local party systems
- Systematic analysis of main demographic and economic changes and continuities in the four cities
- Third internal workshop in April 2018 (exchange and evaluation of findings; starting preparations for an international conference)
- Workshop with external experts in June 2018 (review and discussion of findings)

Milestones: Creation and systematic analysis of a complete database of urban political elites; systematic analysis of main political, economic and demographic transformations in the cities; workshop with external experts

Research Schedule and Milestones **Fourth phase (July 2018 – December 2018)**

- Integration of complementary sources and data (additional field work, refinement of source collection)
- Fourth internal workshop in November 2018 (comparative evaluation of the four case studies)

Milestones: Comparative evaluation of the four case studies

Research Schedule and Milestones **Fifth phase (January 2019 – March 2019)**

- Integration of assessments relevant to cross-national perspectives
- International conference in February 2019 (presentation of research papers, validation of findings for comparative research)
- Completion of final report

Milestones: International conference, final report, preparation of conference volume

2.5 Importance and impact

We expect that the project will have a significant impact in the scientific community, especially amongst scholars and researchers specialized in Swiss political elites and urban studies. We also expect a broader impact of our results upon political parties and other political actors and policy-makers. We will also seek to address the general public, and the media will therefore play an important role in the diffusion of our research findings.

Scientific Importance and Impact

The scientific importance of the present research project contains two basic dimensions. First, the project is a contribution towards recent efforts to enrich historical research on political elites in Switzerland. Second, the academic background of the three applicants will make it possible to join various debates in the international research community and to bring together various scientific cultures and traditions. We will also enrich the existing networks of scholars in the field, aiming in this way to pursue collaboration and knowledge exchange with scholars from Switzerland and abroad. Experts in local political elites will be solicited to review our results and research output (e.g. research papers, conference papers, journal articles). We will also organize two workshops with external experts at which the approaches and findings of our research in progress will be discussed (see milestones in the first and third phase). The workshops will be an important opportunity to evaluate and test the approaches and findings of our research.

We will attend conferences and contribute articles to peer-reviewed journals in order to ensure the dissemination of our results among international scholars. At the end of our research, we will organize an international conference and apply for funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation (see milestones in fifth phase). The conference will focus on a variety of questions related to the history of political elites and political elites recruitment, and bring together leading scholars in the field. It should provide, furthermore, an overview of the current state of research, including that which is focused on the Swiss case. This conference will give us the opportunity to present the final results of our project. We will also edit and produce the papers presented at this conference as a scholarly volume and we will submit them to high-ranking peer-review journals (e.g. *Local Government Studies*, *European Urban and Regional Studies*).

Finally, by integrating two doctoral theses into our research, the project will contribute to the advancement of young academic careers. Moreover, the scholarship achieved through the present project will be integrated into the teaching courses and academic work of the three applicants at the institutions at which they are teaching. This unity of research and teaching ensures effective knowledge transfer via seminars, lectures, and the supervision of term papers and masters' theses.

More broadly, our project will allow empirical evidence helping practitioners, including political representatives, to reflect on their own activities and careers. Moreover, it will allow citizens and media to consider the significance and implication of the transformation of the local political landscape, as a crucial part of the Swiss political

system. Beyond the media coverage generally focused on national trends, our project may contribute to highlighting the importance of local dynamics and the role of political representatives in particular.

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