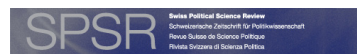


**BOOK REVIEW****Die Grünen in der Schweiz: Entwicklung – Wirken – Perspektiven/Les Vert-e-s en Suisse: Évolution – action – perspectives**

Sarah Bütikofer and Werner Seitz (Eds.) Zurich, Seismo Press (2023), 228 p., ISBN 978–3–03777-271-3 (German)/ISBN 978–2–88351-118-7 (French)

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This edited volume, published in both German and French, examines the evolution and impact of the Swiss Green Party. The Swiss Green Party has contested elections in Switzerland since 1979 and is one of the most long-standing and electorally successful examples of its party family in Europe. This book was written with the 2019 election in mind, when both the Green and Green Liberal parties did exceptionally well. The 2023 elections, instead of solidifying this progress, proved a setback for both parties, yet both parties remain core elements of the Swiss party system.

The book's 14 chapters cover a lot of ground, studying the party from a variety of perspectives, including the party's history and development, its voter base, its parliamentary behaviour, and the key social groups and movements it is linked to. After a historical introduction to the party's development by Werner Seitz, several chapters examine the party's voter base, especially in comparison with two other ideologically proximate parties, the Social Democrats and the Green Liberals (Sciarini/Petitpas) as well as by linguistic region (Lutz) and urban–rural area (Schneider). Four chapters examine how the Green Party campaigns in elections and referendums (Stadelmann-Steffen/Ingold, Wenger/Gilardi, Bütikofer, Leemann/Odermatt). Finally, a set of chapters examine the party's links to key social groups and social movements: young voters (Haus), women (Fuchs), the peace movement (Schweizer), and the ecology movement (Gisler). A final chapter places the Swiss Green Party in a European perspective (Dolezal).

This book will be important for anyone interested in Swiss politics and Green parties. It will be a particularly useful resource for students and researchers seeking to learn more about the background and evolution of a key European Green party. Politicians, practitioners and journalists in Switzerland and abroad will find this book to be a helpful guide to the Green Party in Switzerland. Interestingly, it is an intriguing companion volume to the book on the Swiss Social Democrats recently published by Häusermann et al. (2022), which has a similar ambition of providing an understanding of the role of an important left-wing party within the Swiss party system. Similar volumes on right-wing parties such as the Swiss People's party would be welcome.

Overall, the book provides an insightful account of the party's development over time. This is particularly evident in the book's chapters on its voter base as well as those on key social groups and movements, specifically the young, women, the peace movement and the ecology

movements. These chapters provide a useful summary history of the links between the groups and the Greens, providing important quantitative results and case details.

Today, it is easy to forget that Green parties were often radical innovators in European party systems. The chapters in this book nicely highlight how the party in Switzerland has to a certain extent moved away from its roots in the peace and ecology movements, origins that were well described by Kitschelt (1988). The roots of this and other Green parties in these social movements have become almost forgotten as the parties have progressively joined the political mainstream.

Specifically, two changes in political style and content become immediately apparent when reading this book, especially the chapter on the ecology movement (Gisler): first, Green parties generally pursue power within established structures rather than allying themselves very closely with extraparliamentary protest, and second, the chapter by Seitz shows that Green parties have given up some goals, for instance decentralization and anti-technocracy, instead often privileging arguments that favour government regulation based on scientific research.

At the same time, the book focuses on the programmatic evolution of the Green party, i.e., how the priorities and positions of the party have changed over time, only intermittently. It would have been interesting to read a broader analysis of how and when the party has engaged in ideological moderation, and of how and when the party can focus on its own issues or rather feels the need to talk about issues that are more broadly salient among voters. There is an important debate on how Green parties and mainstream parties interact (Meguid, 2005; Abou-Chadi, 2016), and how the Green party in Switzerland fits into these debates is not addressed in detail.

This volume provides clear insight into two interesting aspects of the left half of the Swiss party system. On the one hand, the Green Party and the Social Democrats share almost the same voter base in terms of ideological preferences and socio-demographic make-up. This is likely to be unusual compared to other European countries, where the Social Democrats may still have a more unique voter profile (see, e.g., Rennwald & Evans, 2014). The chapter by Dolezal could also have addressed this. On the other hand, the book clearly shows that the electoral overlap between the Greens and the Green Liberals is far less pronounced than the overlap with the Social Democrats, despite the common name. The Green Liberals position themselves much more clearly at the centre, and appeal to a more typically liberal, affluent clientele. Bütikofer also shows that collaboration in parliament is more likely to be with the Social Democrats than with the Green Liberals.

Nevertheless, some readers might be left wanting more in terms of the analysis of electoral competition and the broader party system. For instance, those wanting to find out more about the Green Liberal party will be somewhat disappointed, as the focus is squarely on the Green party itself. It would have been interesting to read more about the distinct developments and origins of these two parties, and how the Green Liberal party compares with other parties in European party systems.

Finally, the chapter by Dolezal nicely illustrates that the voters of the Swiss Greens are rather typical of those of Green parties elsewhere, although the Swiss Greens are comparatively economically left-wing. As elsewhere, the Swiss Greens are more likely to be young, female, highly-educated and live in cities. Similar findings, with greater longitudinal granularity, are also shown in the chapter by Sciarini and Petitpas. The analyses in this chapter are particularly insightful as they show what kind of people vote for the Swiss Greens from two perspectives: what kind of voters make up the Green electorate, and what kinds of voters in the electorate as a whole are more likely to vote Green. The important distinction between these two types of analyses is often ignored, but Sciarini and Petitpas provide a clear account of this.

This book fills a clear gap in the literature, as no recent volume has examined the party in such detail. The insights presented are also the kind of findings that generally do not find a home in journal articles, as they capture descriptive patterns and developments. There is a

need for more books of this kind, and the book fulfils its purpose excellently. The chapters in this book are generally short and pithily written, providing essential information and key insights. The figures in this volume are particularly useful: they are well-designed, and the clever use of Green in each figure helps the reader focus on the key elements. As such, the book will be of much interest to international researchers contemplating writing a similar volume about a party in other countries.

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