

# Conflict resolution and democratic stability in subculturally segmented political systems\*

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Recently I have shown that Switzerland is on the one hand subculturally segmented and on the other hand a more or less stable democracy (1).

Thus Switzerland is a deviant case to the well known hypothesis, formulated for instance by Gabriel Almond, that subculturally segmented democratic systems tend to be unstable (2).

Gerhard Lehbruch has shown that segmented democratic systems which are, contrary to the hypothesis of Almond, relatively stable, have a strong tendency to regulate political conflicts not by the majority principle but by the principle of amicable agreement (*amicabilis compositio*) (3).

From this observation the hypothesis may be derived that the predominance of cooperative versus competitive strategies in regulating political conflicts is an intervening variable that results in segmented democratic systems not tending to be unstable. To test this hypothesis we should classify a large number of segmented democratic systems according

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(1) Jürg STEINER, *Gewaltlose Politik und kulturelle Vielfalt. Hypothesen entwickelt am Beispiel der Schweiz*, Bern-Stuttgart, 1970. Also: Jürg Steiner, *Non-violent Patterns of Conflict Resolution: Switzerland*, in: *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. XIII, No 3, 1969.

(2) Gabriel A. ALMOND, *Comparative Political Systems*, in: *Political Behavior. A Reader in Theory and Research*, ed. by Heinz Eulau, Samuel J. Eldersveld, Morris Janowitz, Glencoe, 1956, p. 34 ff. Gabriel A. ALMOND and G. Bingham POWELL, *Comparative Politics. A Developmental Approach*, Boston and Toronto, 1966, p. 259 ff.

(3) Gerhard LEHMBRUCH, *A Non-Competitive Pattern of Conflict Management in Liberal Democracies: The Case of Switzerland, Austria and Lebanon*, Paper, Presented at the Seventh World Congress of the International Political Science Association, Brussels, September 1967. Gerhard LEHMBRUCH, *Segmented Pluralism and Political Strategies in Continental Europe: Internal and External Conditions of «Concordant Democracy»*, Paper Presented at the Round Table Conference on Comparative Politics of the International Political Science Association, Torino, September 1969.

to their predominant pattern of conflict resolution. This would be much more difficult than it may seem at first glance. In any case it would not be enough to take as an indicator the pattern of conflict resolution in forming a government. Though it is without doubt important whether cooperative or competitive strategies prevail in forming a government, these interactions are possibly only an unrepresentative part of all relevant interactions in the political system. Besides we should also take account of the interactions within and between political parties, pressure groups, public administrations, parliament committees, etc... Unfortunately research is not yet so far advanced that it would be possible to classify with a certain reliability a large enough number of segmented democratic systems according to their predominant pattern of conflict resolution.

For the time being I have chosen the research strategy to work empirically not on the level of whole systems but on the level of particular decision making processes. My question is, under what conditions political conflicts are regulated by the principle of amicable agreement and under what other conditions by the majority principle. The knowledge of these conditions should permit to add some intervening variables to the hypothesis about the connection between the predominant pattern of conflict resolution and the degree of democratic stability (4). The aim of this research on the level of particular decision making processes can of course only be to discover intervening variables for my general hypothesis. To test the relevance of these intervening variables I shall have to go back later to the level of whole systems, for hypotheses about the conditions of democratic stability presuppose for their testing comparisons of whole systems. I hope that such comparisons can be made more meaningful if we try beforehand, by analysing particular decision making processes, to discover intervening variables between the predominant pattern of conflict resolution and the degree of democratic stability.

At present I am studying for the case of the Liberal Party (*Freisinnig-demokratische Partei*) of the Berne Canton in Switzerland what are the independent variables of the conflict resolution by the principle of amicable agreement and the majority principle. Will these independent variables be the same for the conflict resolution in other subsystems of the national system of Switzerland, for instance in federal parties, in pressure groups, in the federal government, in the federal parliament, or for the conflict resolution between such subsystems? Probably the hypo-

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(4) It may be helpful for the reader to refer at this stage to figure 1 at the end of the article which gives a summary of my theoretical construction.

theses gained from the case of the Liberal Party of the Berne Canton will have to be modified for these other cases. But hopefully it will be possible to arrive finally at a general theory valid for all decision making processes in Switzerland. It should also be possible to extend this theory to decision making processes in other national systems.

I could base the starting hypotheses for the study about the Liberal Party of the Berne Canton on three other case studies that I have already finished (4a) :

- Decision of the Confederation to aid financially the cantonal universities.
- Decision of the Aargau Canton to found a new university.
- Decision of the Swiss Liberal Party about the programme for a federal election.

These case studies and general theoretical reflections have led me to the following hypotheses for the study of the decision making process in the Liberal Party of the Berne Canton :

### Primary hypothesis

Conflicts are regulated by amicable agreement, if the participant actors anticipate that with a decision by amicable agreement the gain resulting from the balance between rewards and punishments will be greater than with a majority decision (5).

### Secondary hypothesis

The probability that the gain anticipated for a decision by amicable agreement is greater than the gain anticipated for a majority decision is the greater :

1. The smaller the number of actors participating in the decision making process :

- for — with a small number of actors the probability of frequent interactions is increased,
- and with frequent interactions the probability that the individual norm systems come closer together increases,

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(4a) J. STEINER, *Gewaltose Politik*, *op. cit.*

(5) This hypothesis is derived from the theoretical work of Homans. See for instance : George Caspar Homans, *Social behavior. Its elementary forms*, New York, 1961.

- and if the individual norm systems are close together the probability of a strong mutual sympathy is increased,
- and with a strong mutual sympathy there increases the possibility that a majority decision will cause high punishments in the form of losses of sympathy.

2. The longer the actors participating in the decision making process have hold their roles :

- for (a) — with actors, who have hold their roles already for a long time, the probability of frequent interactions is increased,
  - (continuation as in hypothesis 1);
- for (b) — with actors, who have hold their roles already for a long time, there increases the possibility that they can compensate a loss in one decision making process with a gain in another decision making process,
  - if there exist such possibilities of compensation, the probability that losses are perceived only as temporary is increased,
  - if losses are perceived only as temporary, the probability increases that they are perceived as relatively unimportant.

3. The more the actors participating in the decision making process interact in other roles :

- for (a) — with actors, who interact also in other roles the probability of frequent interactions increases,
  - (continuation as in hypothesis 1);
- for (b) — with actors, who interact also in other roles, there increases the probability that they can compensate a loss in one decision making process with a gain in another decision making process,
  - (continuation as in hypothesis 2 b).

4. The more the actors participating in the decision making process have internalized the norm that a decision by amicable agreement is to be preferred to a majority decision (6) :

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(6) If we want to explain why in a political system a certain pattern of conflict regulation is the prevailing norm, we have to introduce the historical dimension, analysing how the system has regulated in important historical sequences its conflicts. If the conflict regulation was perceived as successful, there is a great probability that the pattern of conflict regulation in question was internalized and passed through the process of socialization to later generations.

for — with a majority decision this norm is broken, which means a punishment for the norm breakers in question.

5. The more complex the decision is :

for — with a complex decision the probability increases, that a loss in one element of the decision can be compensated with a gain in another element (continuation analog to the hypothesis 2 *b*).

6. The smaller the room for innovation in the decision making process is :

for — with little room for innovation it is considered only a slight punishment to retreat even from an extreme position of negotiation.

7. The more the process of innovation is based on informations from the past :

for — a predominance of informations from the past has the tendency to lead to little room for innovation (continuation as in hypothesis 6).

8. The more the process of innovation is based on homogeneous informations :

for — a predominance of homogeneous informations has the tendency to lead to little room for innovation (continuation as in hypothesis 6).

9. The more informal the process of innovation is :

for — it is considered a slighter punishment to retreat from a position of negotiation if the process of innovation is informal than if it is formal.

10. The lower the public visibility of the process of innovation is :

for — it is perceived as a slighter punishment to retreat from a position of negotiation if the process of innovation is not visible to the public than if it is visible.

11. The more mechanisms are employed so that differences of opinion appearing in the process of innovation are considered as relatively unimportant :

for — it is perceived only as a slight punishment to retreat from a position of negotiation if the differences of opinion are perceived as relatively unimportant.

12. The more the disputed elements of a decision are postponed for their solution to a later time :

for — in this way the possible punishments of the decision are reduced ; but the possible rewards of the decision are also reduced, which may be so important, that the hypothesis does not held.

13. The more the result of the conflict resolution is not clearly expressed :

for — this may mean that a part of the conflict resolution is postponed to a later time (continuation as in hypothesis 12).

14. The more the innovation process has already taken place in groups other than the group that has to take the final decision :

for — it causes fewer punishments to a group to bring different propositions together if the propositions were not articulated by the members of the group themselves.

15. The more the decision has only the character of a recommendation for another group :

for — it is perceived as a relatively slight punishment to retreat from a position of negotiation, if the decision has only the character of a recommendation for another group.

16. The more the group, that has to take the decision, considers that important groups of reference have a strongly different opinion :

for — in such a situation strong feelings of solidarity arise in the group that has to take the decision,

— and in a group with strong feelings of solidarity a majority decision could cause punishments in the form of a loss of solidarity.

17. The more the actors participating in the decision making process perceive the result of the decision as important :

for (a) — with a decision perceived as important strong punishments are anticipated for the case of a wrong decision,

— these punishments are perceived as less strong if all the members of the group support the decision ;

for (b) — with a decision perceived as unimportant the costs to gather all the informations necessary to arrive at an una-

nimous decision may be greater than the rewards anticipated for an unanimous decision.

(In opposition to hypothesis 17 one could also expect that with decisions considered as important the strategy is chosen to form a winning majority with the smallest possible number of persons, for in this case the members of the majority would have a maximum of rewards. But our research up to now shows that the hypothesis 17 formulated above seems to be more valid.)

18. The less incompatible the interests are perceived that the actors participating in the decision making process represent :

for — it causes relatively slight punishments to bring together interests that are perceived as compatible.

(For the time being I renounce to define more precisely the independent variable of the hypothesis 18. So I do not say what are the interests that are perceived in the Liberal Party of the Berne Canton as particularly incompatible. I expect an answer to this question from this research project. Because all the 18 secondary hypotheses are derived from the same primary hypothesis, it should be possible, if the other 17 hypotheses are more or less confirmed, to conclude for the hypothesis 18 from the dependent to the independent variable. That is to say that a conflict resolution by the majority principle should allow the conclusion that the interests separated by a majority decision are perceived as particularly incompatible. I hope that I can get in this way an idea of the cleavages in the party. I would be especially interested to know whether the most important cleavages go along regional, confessional, linguistic or professional lines.)

To test the 18 hypotheses just mentioned for the Liberal Party of the Berne Canton, I use the following methods :

- *Participant observation* : I observe from the beginning of 1969 till probably September 1970 all formal meetings of the party. Thanks to the understanding of the party I have also the possibility to observe a large number of the informal interactions. I am for instance invited to informal conversations of the president and the secretary of the party.
- *Interviews* : the actors participating in the decision making process are interviewed about their political and other social roles, about their norm systems, etc.

— *Study of documents* : all the documents of the party, letters, records, etc., are at my disposal.

I have not the space in this paper to enter into the problem of how I have operationalized the variables contained in the 18 hypotheses. In principle I have tried to find for each variable several operationalizations so that I get certain possibilities of control.

I want to come back now to the connection between theories on the level of particular decision making processes and theories on the level of whole political systems (7). How can we link a theory about the conditions of majority decisions and decisions by amicable agreement with a theory about the conditions of democratic stability? To answer this question I have to show at first how I operationalize the concept of democratic stability (8).

I define a democratic system as stable, if nobody with the exception of the formal decision makers uses violence or threatens with the use of violence in a political relevant way and if the formal decision makers use violence or threaten with the use of violence exclusively in cases that are perceived as legitimate from the quasi-totality of the members of the system. It seems to me important that this definition also takes into account the formal decision makers. Thus it includes in the concept of democratic stability that the formal decision makers use violence or threaten with the use of violence only in cases that are perceived as legitimate from the quasi-totality of the members of the system. Political espionage may be for instance such a case where the formal decision makers are legitimated from the quasi-totality of the members of the system to use violence or to threaten with the use of violence against the spies. On the other hand it would be incompatible with democratic stability if the formal decision makers would use violence against ordinary political opponents. Probably no quasi-totality of the members of a system, although under certain circumstances perhaps the majority, would perceive such measures as legitime.

The chosen operationalization of democratic stability is less narrow than it may seem at first glance. It contains also two elements that are

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(7) See also figure 1 at the end of the article.

(8) Operationalizations are not only a technical problem, for each operationalization has also normative implications. If Political Science does not want to become a mere technology, it has to question again and again its operationalizations. For the operationalization of democratic stability that I have chosen in this paper I ask myself whether I should have taken account also of the element of repressive tolerance. Because I have found no solution I leave the problem only as a question. I leave aside here the problem of how to operationalize further the concepts of « violence » and « threat of violence » ; see for this point : Steiner, *gewaltlose Politik*, *op. cit.*



often used to operationalize democratic stability : the protection of individual liberties and the absence of non-constitutional changes of government. Individual liberties (including the right of political participation) can probably not be violated to a higher degree if neither the formal decision makers nor other groups use violence or threaten with the use of violence (9). Nor does it seem possible that a non-constitutional change of government can take place without violence or at all events without a threat of violence.

Democratic stability is often also operationalized by the extent to which a change occurs between government and opposition parties. I reject such an operationalization because it refers too much to political systems with a predominance of a competitive pattern of conflict resolution. It does not take enough account of the fact that there may be stable democratic systems where conflicts are predominantly regulated by amicable agreement.

I just do not want to take the predominant pattern of conflict resolution as definition of democratic stability ; rather I want to inquire, what is the connection between the predominant pattern of conflict resolution and the degree of democratic stability. In order to do that I have introduced the following three intervening variables :

- the capacity of the system to compromise ;
- the learning capacity of the system (10) ;
- the functionality of the channels of communication for the articulation of dissent.

I formulate the hypothesis, that the probability of a high democratic stability in subculturally segmented political systems is the greater :

- the greater the capacity of the system to find compromises that are perceived as satisfactory by the members of the different sub-cultures ;
- the greater the learning capacity of the system ;
- the more functional the channels of communication for the articulation of dissent (11).

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(9) Here however the problem of the repressive tolerance mentioned in the foregoing footnote arises.

(10) By a high learning capacity of a system I understand with Karl W. Deutsch a combination of « a high degree of richness and originality — that is improbability — of new patterns, with a high degree of speed in their selection, and with a high probability of their relevance to the challenges offered to the organization by its environment ». See Karl W. Deutsch, *The Nerves of Government, Models of Political Communication and Control*, New York and London, 1966, p. 167.

(11) An important variable for the explanation of the democratic stability of a national system is probably also its position in the international system. Yet it does not seem that this variable is strongly influenced by the predominant pattern of

How are these three intervening variables in their turn influenced by the predominant pattern of conflict resolution? The situation is the least problematical for the capacity to compromise, for it is almost a tautology that compromises considered satisfactory by the members of the different subcultures are easiest attained if a strategy of amicable agreement is chosen. Yet I do not want to say that compromises considered satisfactory are not attainable with a strategy of competition. I only say that the possibility of attaining compromises is greater with a strategy of amicable agreement.

If we want to formulate a hypothesis about the connection between the predominant pattern of conflict resolution and the learning capacity of the system, we have to study in detail, how the independent variables of the predominant pattern of conflict resolution influence the learning capacity of the system. Of the 18 variables that increase according to our hypotheses the probability of conflict resolutions by amicable agreement, the following ones should have a negative influence on the learning capacity of the system :

A small number of actors participating in the decision making process (hypothesis 1).

*Explanation* : if only relatively few actors participate in the decision making process, the probability is small that in the sense of Deutsch « a high degree of richness and originality — that is improbability — of new patterns » is attained. It has also negative consequences for the learning capacity that it is rather difficult for a small number of actors to take in a large amount of feedback informations, what reduces the probability that decisions are made that are in the sense of Deutsch relevant « to the challenges offered to the organization by its environment ». On the other hand a small number of actors may increase the learning capacity in so far as the decisions are taken quicker than with a great number of actors. But this positive influence on the learning capacity is probably lower than the mentioned negative influences.

The great length of time the political role holders are in office (hypothesis 2).

*Explanation* : actors holding their roles already for a long time, tend to take more account of informations from the past than of informations

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conflict resolution within the national system in question. So we do not have to take account of the position of the national system in the international system as an intervening variable between the predominant pattern of conflict resolution and the degree of democratic stability.

from the present and from the future. This diminishes the probability that original solutions are found.

Small room for innovation in the decision making process (hypothesis 6).

*Explanation* : it is almost a tautology that with a small room for innovation it is nearly impossible to find original solutions.

The process of innovation based predominately on informations from the past (hypothesis 7).

*Explanation* : if the process of innovation is predominately based on informations from the past there is a great probability of a small room for innovation (continuation as with hypothesis 6).

The process of innovation based predominately on homogeneous informations (hypothesis 8).

*Explanation* : if the process of innovation is predominately based on homogeneous informations there is a great probability of a small room for innovation (continuation as with hypothesis 6).

Tendency to postpone disputed elements of the decision (hypothesis 12).

*Explanation* : a high learning capacity implicates a quick selection of solutions.

Tendency to articulate unclearly the result of the conflict resolution (hypothesis 13).

*Explanation* : if the result of the conflict resolution is articulated unclearly, a part of the decision may be postponed (continuation as with hypothesis 12).

The tendency of the decision making process to pass successively through numerous groups (hypotheses 14 and 15) has consequences for the learning capacity that are difficult to judge. On the one hand this tendency delays the selection of solutions ; on the other hand it increases the probability that feedback informations are taken in and that original solutions are found. I formulate for the moment the hypothesis that the two influences countervail each other approximately.

The other variables contained in the 18 hypotheses should influence the learning capacity of the system neither positively nor negatively. This means that as a whole the conditions that increase the conflict regulation by amicable agreement, diminish the learning capacity of the system.

The question arises now whether the democratic stability of a segmented political system depends more on its capacity to compromise or

more on its learning capacity. According to our hypotheses it does not seem possible that both variables attain simultaneously a maximum, for they are influenced by the predominant pattern of conflict resolution in opposite directions. If conflicts are predominately regulated by amicable agreement, the consequence is a high capacity to compromise but a low learning capacity. If on the other hand strategies of majority decisions prevail, we have to expect a low capacity to compromise and a high learning capacity.

So the democratic stability of segmented political systems can not be increased without limits, but only to an optimum which is reached if a certain relation exists between the capacity to compromise and the learning capacity. This relation is probably not the same in all cases, but depends on the input of demands to the system. If the input of demands is low, the democratic stability should depend only to a low degree on the learning capacity, for in this case the system would have so much time to satisfy the demands that even with a very slow decision making process the risk of an overload of the system would be small. In such a case it is most important for the democratic stability of the system to attain compromises that are perceived as satisfactory by the members of the different subcultures.

The more the input of demands increases, the more the democratic stability depends on the learning capacity. It would however mean an oversteering of the system, if with a high input of demands the learning capacity would be increased onesided whereas the capacity to compromise would be neglected, for in a segmented political system democratic stability is not attainable if it is not possible, at least to a certain degree, to find compromises perceived as satisfactory by the members of the different subcultures. If the capacity to compromise would be neglected in favour of a high learning capacity, politics would become more and more a zero-sum game in which the loser would gain nothing and there would be a high probability that the members of certain subcultures would be almost ever among the losers.

Thus we come to the hypothesis that in a segmented political system, which has a high input of demands, a combination of a high learning capacity and of a low capacity to compromise does not lead to an optimum of democratic stability. Such an optimum is easiest attainable if the learning capacity as well as the capacity to compromise are on a middle level. The condition for this combination is that the variables that have opposite influences on the learning capacity and on the capacity to compromise are also on a middle level. That is to say :

- that the number of the actors participating in the decision making process is neither too high nor too low ;
- that the length of time, the actors participating in the decision making process are in office, is neither too long nor too short ;
- that the room for innovation in the decision making process is neither too large nor too small ;
- that the process of innovation is neither too much nor too little based on informations from the past ;
- that the process of innovation is neither too much nor too little based on homogeneous informations ;
- that the tendency to postpone disputed elements of the decision is neither too strong nor too weak ;
- that the tendency to articulate unclearly the result of the conflict resolution is neither too strong nor too weak.

We could further develop these hypotheses asking for the independent variables of the input of demands. For this the theory of structural and anomic tensions of Peter Heintz could be a fruitful approach (12), but I do not want to follow up this idea in this paper. It may be enough to say that the input of demands is a variable that has an important influence on the connection between the predominant pattern of conflict resolution and the degree of democratic stability. I summarize that in segmented political systems a strategy of amicable agreement has a great probability to lead to an optimum of democratic stability if the input of demands is low. The more the input of demands increases, the more the strategy of amicable agreement has to be mixed with a strategy of majority decisions if the democratic stability has to reach an optimum.

We have to consider now the functionality of the channels of communication for the articulation of dissent as the third variable that is intervening between the predominant pattern of conflict resolution and the democratic stability. Of the variables that increase according to our hypotheses the probability of conflict resolutions by amicable agreement, the following ones should have a negative influence on the functionality of the channels of communication for the articulation of dissent :

Small number of actors participating in the decision making process (hypothesis 1).

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(12) Peter HEINTZ, *Einführung in die soziologische Theorie*, Stuttgart, 1968, p. 280 ff. Peter Heintz, *Ein soziologisches Paradigma der Entwicklung mit besonderer Berücksichtigung Lateinamerikas*, Stuttgart, 1969.

*Explanation*: if only relatively few actors participate in the decision making process, there are correspondingly few channels of communication for the articulation of dissent.

Numerous role cumulations (hypothesis 3).

*Explanation*: if the actors participating in the decision making process cumulate a great number of roles, it is difficult to recognize in what roles they interact. Thus the process of decision making becomes relatively diffuse which diminishes the probability that dissent is functionally articulated.

Complexity of the decision (hypothesis 5).

*Explanation*: if the content of the decision is complex, the decision making process is perceived as relatively diffuse which also diminishes the probability that dissent is functionally articulated.

Little formality and little public visibility of the decision making process (hypotheses 9 and 10).

*Explanation*: if the decision making process is predominately informal and invisible to the public, it is difficult to recognize who is responsible for a particular decision. This also diminishes the probability that dissent is functionally articulated.

Tendency of the decision making process to pass successively through numerous groups (hypotheses 14 and 15).

*Explanation*: this tendency also increases the probability that the decision making process is perceived as relatively diffuse.

The other variables contained in the 18 hypotheses should influence the functionality of the channels of communication neither positively nor negatively. Thus as a whole the conditions increasing the conflict regulation by amicable agreement diminish the functionality of the channels of communication for the articulation of dissent.

The question arises now, to what degree the democratic stability of segmented political systems is depending on the functionality of the channels of communication for the articulation of dissent. This question can probably not be answered generally, but has to be differentiated according to the degree of the political participation of the members of the system. I formulate the hypothesis that democratic stability depends the more on functional channels of communication for the articulation of dissent, the more the simple members of the system participate politically.

In connection with the relevance of the learning capacity to the democratic stability I have introduced a few pages back the variable of the

input of demands. If we combine now the degree of political participation with the amount of the input of demands, we get four different models of conditions for an optimum of democratic stability in segmented political systems (table I).

TABLE I  
**Conditions for an optimum of democratic stability  
 in subculturally segmented political systems**  
 (taking account of the capacity to compromise, of the learning capacity  
 and of the functionality of the channels of communication for the articulation  
 of dissent)

	<i>Low input of demands</i>	<i>High input of demands</i>
Low political participation	<p><i>Model A</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— High capacity to compromise.</li> <li>— Low learning capacity.</li> <li>— Low functionality of the channels of communication for the articulation of dissent.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Model B</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Middle capacity to compromise.</li> <li>— Middle learning capacity.</li> <li>— Low functionality of the channels of communication for the articulation of dissent.</li> </ul>
High political participation	<p><i>Model D</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Empirically impossible.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Model C</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Middle capacity to compromise.</li> <li>— Middle learning capacity.</li> <li>— Middle functionality of the channels of communication for the articulation of dissent.</li> </ul>

In a recent study (13) I have seen that the model D is an empirically impossible case, for it is a necessary condition of a high political participation that the citizens perceive that they are strongly influenced in their personal life by political decisions. If the input of demands is low as in the model D, the citizens are objectively little influenced by political decisions what should have in general a corresponding effect on their perception of how they are influenced.

The three variables which describe the models of table I depend according to our hypotheses on the predominant pattern of conflict resolution. We have seen that cooperative strategies increase the capacity to compromise and that competitive strategies increase the learning capacity and the functionality of the channels of communication for the articulation of dissent. In the table II we describe the models of the table I with the help of the predominant pattern of conflict resolution. Because our research is not yet far enough developed, we can not give

(13) Jürg STEINER, *Bürger und Politik. Empirisch-theoretische Befunde über die politische Partizipation der Bürger in Demokratien unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Schweiz und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Meisenheim, 1969.

for each model a quantitative distribution of cooperative and competitive strategies. For the moment it must be enough to give a rank order for the three empirically possible models.

TABLE II  
**Conditions for an optimum of democratic stability  
 in subculturally segmented political systems  
 (taking account of the predominant pattern of conflict resolution)**

	<i>Low input of demands</i>	<i>High input of demands</i>
Low political participation	<i>Model A</i> Highest frequency in the use of the pattern of amicable agreement.	<i>Model B</i> Second highest frequency in the use of the pattern of amicable agreement.
High political participation	<i>Model D</i> Empirically impossible.	<i>Model C</i> Third highest frequency in the use of the pattern of amicable agreement.

In the table III we go a step further and describe the three empirically possible models with the help of the independent variables of the predominant pattern of conflict resolution. As a basis we take our hypotheses which say how the capacity to compromise, the learning capacity and the functionality of the channels of communication depend on the independent variables of the predominant pattern of conflict resolution. Let us take as an example the first line of table III: according to table I the model A must attain a high capacity to compromise, whereas the learning capacity and the functionality of the channels of communication are only of a low relevance for this model. To attain a high capacity to compromise for the model A the number of actors participating in the decision making process should be, according to our hypotheses, relatively small. If we take the model B, the capacity to compromise as well as the learning are of relevance. Because the number of the actors participating in the decision making process influences the capacity to compromise and the learning capacity in opposite directions, the optimum is attainable for the model B with a middle number of participating actors. I have treated in an analogous way all the variables contained in the table.

The attempt that we have made so far to explain the conditions of an optimum of democratic stability in segmented political systems is still too static. We have not yet taken account of the fact that the degree of the political participation and the amount of the input of



TABLE III

**Conditions for an optimum of democratic stability  
in subculturally segmented political systems  
(taking account of the independent variables of the predominant pattern  
of conflict resolution)**

<i>Independent variables of the predominant pattern of conflict resolution</i>	<i>Model A</i>	<i>Model B</i>	<i>Model C</i>
Tendency that a small number of actors participates in the decision making process . . . . .	Strong	Middle	Middle
Tendency that the actors participating in the decision making process have hold their roles already for a long time . . . . .	Strong	Middle	Middle
Tendency that the actors participating in the decision making process interact also in other roles . . . .	Strong	Strong	Middle
Tendency that the actors participating in the decision making process have internalized the norm that a decision by amicable agreement is to be preferred to a majority decision . .	Strong	Strong	Strong
Tendency that the decision is complex	Strong	Strong	Middle
Tendency that the room for innovation is small . . . . .	Strong	Middle	Middle
Tendency that the process of innovation is based predominately on informations from the past . . . .	Strong	Middle	Middle
Tendency that the process of innovation is based predominately on homogeneous informations . . . . .	Strong	Middle	Middle
Tendency that the process of innovation is predominately informal . . . . .	Strong	Strong	Middle
Tendency that the process of innovation is predominately of a low public visibility . . . . .	Strong	Strong	Middle
Tendency that mechanisms are employed so that the differences of opinion appearing in the process of innovation are perceived as unimportant . . . . .	Strong	Strong	Strong
Tendency that the disputed elements of a decision are postponed . . . . .	Strong	Middle	Middle
Tendency that the result of the conflict resolution is articulated unclearly . . . . .	Strong	Middle	Middle
Tendency that the process of decision making passes successively through numerous groups . . . . .	Strong	Strong	Middle
Tendency that the group that has to take the decision perceives that important groups of reference have a strongly different opinion . . . .	Strong	Strong	Strong
Tendency that the actors participating in the decision making process perceive the result of the decision as important . . . . .	Strong	Strong	Strong
Tendency that the interests that the actors participating in the decision making process represent are perceived as compatible . . . . .	Strong	Strong	Strong

demands may change (14). Such changes would mean a transformation from one model to another one. Table IV shows the possibilities of these transformations.

TABLE IV

Possibilities of the transformations among the models A, B and C				
Political participation	Input of demands			
	From low to high	From high to low	From low to low	From high to high
From low to high . .	From model A to model C	Empirically impossible	Empirically impossible	From model B to model C
From high to low . .	Empirically impossible	From model C to model A	Empirically impossible	From model C to model B
From low to low . .	From model A to model B	From model B to model A	No transformation	No transformation
From high to high . .	Empirically impossible	Empirically impossible	Empirically impossible	No transformation

Here too I consider a combination of a low input of demands and of a high political participation as empirically impossible. So we have six cases of possible transformations. We want to see now for these six cases what consequences we have to expect for the democratic stability.

### Transformation from the model A to the model B

Looking at table III we see that the following conditions must be fulfilled if with the transformation from the model A to the model B an optimum of democratic stability is to be maintained :

- Tendency that a small number of actors participates in the decision making process : from strong to middle.

(14) Such changes may be explained with the above mentioned theory of structural and anomic tensions developed by Peter Heintz. I hope that my already started collaboration with Peter Heintz will enable us to integrate our respective theories more thoroughly in the near future. Furthermore structural and anomic tensions may be explained by historical variables in the sense of Stein Rokkan. See for instance : Stein Rokkan, *The Structuring of Mass Politics in the Smaller European Democracies : A Developmental Typology*, in : *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. X, N° 2, January 1968. Stein Rokkan, *The Growth and Structuring of Mass Politics in Western Europe : Reflections of Possible Models of Explanation*, Paper Presented at the Round Table Conference on Comparative Politics of the International Political Science Association, Torino, September 1969. For the use of historical variables in theories of Political Science see : Jürg Steiner, *Die Bedeutung der Geschichte für die Theorienbildung in der Politischen Wissenschaft*, in : *Wirtschaft und Recht. Zeitschrift für Wirtschaftspolitik und Wirtschaftsrecht*, 21. Jahrgang, Heft 3, 1969. See also figure 1 at the end of the article.

- Tendency that the actors participating in the decision making process have hold their roles already for a long time : from strong to middle.
- Tendency that the room for innovation is small : from strong to middle.
- Tendency that the process of innovation is based predominately on informations from the past : from strong to middle.
- Tendency that the process of innovation is based predominately on homogeneous informations : from strong to middle.
- Tendency that the disputed elements of a decision are postponed : from strong to middle.
- Tendency that the result of the decision making process is articulated unclearly : from strong to middle.

I formulate the hypothesis that out of these seven conditions the two first are most difficult to fulfil, because an increase of the number of actors participating in the decision making process and a diminution of the length of time these actors are in office mean an attack on established positions of power. If these two conditions are once fulfilled, it should be relatively easy to fulfil also the other five conditions. If more actors participate in the decision making process and if the length of time these actors are in office becomes shorter, the process of innovation will be based almost automatically less on informations from the past and on homogeneous informations, what should also enlarge the room for innovation of the decision making process. With a greater number of actors participating for a shorter time in the decision making process, it will probably be also more difficult to regulate conflicts in such a way that the disputed elements of the decision are postponed or that the result of the decision making process is articulated unclearly.

Thus the increase of the number of actors participating in the decision making process and the diminution of the length of time these actors are in office is the threshold, that has to be crossed if with the transformation from the model A to the model B an optimum of democratic stability is to be maintained. If this threshold can not be crossed, the system shows an insufficient learning capacity to satisfy the increasing input of demands. The perception of an insufficient learning capacity may be the motivation for a higher political participation, what would mean a further transformation from the model B to the model C. So we come to the following hypothesis : if it is not possible with the transformation from the model A to the model B to increase the number of the actors participating in the decision making process and to diminish

the length of time these actors are in office, there arises the tendency for a further transformation from the model B to the model C.

### **Transformation from the model B to the model C**

Looking at table III we see that the following conditions must be fulfilled if with the transformation from the model B to the model C an optimum of democratic stability is to be maintained :

- Tendency that the actors participating in the decision making process interact also in other roles : from strong to middle.
- Tendency that the decision is complex : from strong to middle.
- Tendency that the process of innovation is predominately informal : from strong to middle.
- Tendency that the process of innovation is predominately of a low public visibility : from strong to middle.
- Tendency that the process of decision making passes successively through numerous groups : from strong to middle.

A diminution of the number of role cumulations means an attack on established positions of power what will cause also here a strong resistance. If this threshold is crossed, the decision making process will become almost automatically more formal and more visible to the public, for with less role cumulations the interactions become more structured what should increase also the formality and the public visibility of the interactions.

To reduce the tendency, that the process of decision making passes successively through numerous groups, is very difficult, if the input of demands remains high as is the case for the transformation from the model B to the model C. With a high input of demands the functions of innovation and of the intake of informations can no more be fulfilled only by one or two groups, for instance by the government and the parliament. It is necessary that these functions are distributed among numerous groups including groups of experts.

It will also be difficult to reduce with the transformation from the model B to the model C the complexity of the decisions, for with a high input of demands the decisions tend to be strongly interdependent.

### **Transformation from the model A to the model C**

If the members of the system react immediatly with a higher political participation to an increase of the input of demands, the model A is

directly transformed to the model C. Thus the difficulties mentioned for the transformation from A to B and from B to C are cumulated in one transformation.

### **Transformations from the model C to the model B, from the model C to the model A and from the model B to the model A**

For these transformations the conditions, that we have mentioned for the first three transformations, have to be fulfilled in an opposite direction. This should cause in general no difficulties. If for instance the political participation diminishes, it will be quite natural that the decision making process will become more informal and less visible to the public.

Of the six possible transformations that we have studied, the transformation from the model A to the model C is certainly the most risky for the democratic stability of subculturally segmented political systems. For this transformation, which is characterized by a simultaneous increase of the input of demands and of the political participation, twelve conditions should be fulfilled, if the democratic stability is to be maintained at an optimum. We have seen that it would be particularly difficult to increase the number of the actors participating in the decision making process, to diminish the length of time these actors are in office and to reduce the number of role cumulations, because these measures mean an attack on established positions of power. It would also be very difficult, perhaps even impossible, to diminish the complexity of the decision making process, if the input of demands is increasing. It seems to me that at present many subculturally segmented political systems are transforming themselves from the model A to the model C. Are not many of them in front of the difficulties that I have mentioned, if they want to become or to remain stable democracies ?

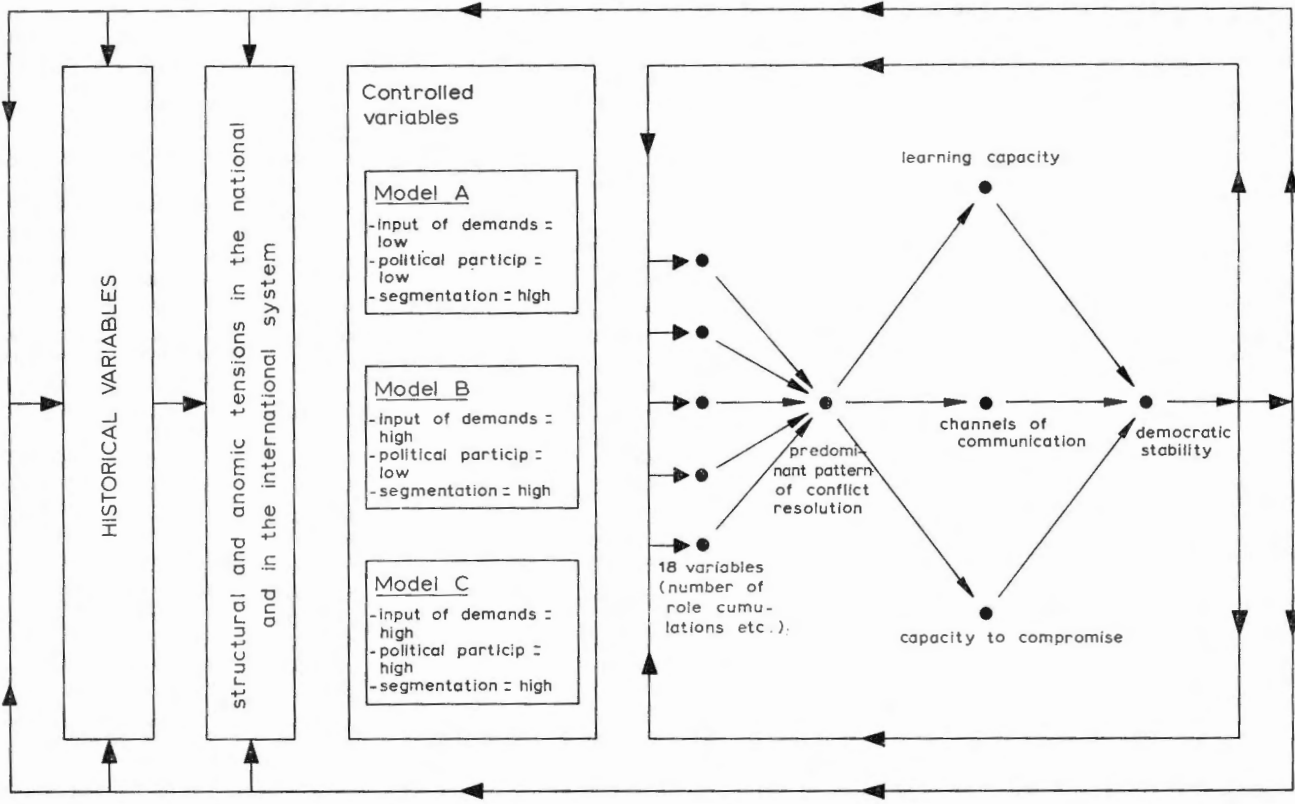
Contrary to the hypothesis mentioned on the first page of this paper we can not simply say that a pattern of amicable agreement leads to a stable democracy. The hypothesis of a positive interrelation between a pattern of amicable agreement and a stable democracy seems to hold in a full sense only for the model A, that is to say for political systems characterized by a low input of demands and a low political participation. With a transformation from the model A to the model B or even to the model C the pattern of amicable agreement has to be mixed more and more with a majority pattern, if an optimum of democratic stability is to be maintained.

I hope that the empirical work that I do at present in the Liberal Party of the Berne Canton will show more clearly what are the independent variables of the predominant pattern of conflict resolution. I have shown in this paper how I want to link this work on the level of particular decision making processes with hypotheses on the level of whole systems. These hypotheses on system level should evidently also be tested empirically. The difficulty here is to find representative data about the predominant pattern of conflict resolution in each system. At first I have thought it possible to take a sample of all decision making processes within a system. But I have seen that most decision making processes are so interdependent that it is very difficult to determine the unit of the sample. Secondly we should know of a decision making process already before it starts whether it belongs to our sample, because our observations of the decision making process should begin as early as possible. Finally it is not possible to take account of the large field of non-decisions, if we take the decision making process as the unit of the sample.

I think that the best solution is to take the time as the unit of the sample and to observe at random intervals. This could mean concretely that the Liberal Party of the Berne Canton should be observed all the ten years for two years or perhaps every year for two months. If other subsystems like parliaments, pressure groups, etc. could be included in the research project, it should be possible to get little by little representative data about the predominant pattern of conflict resolution in a whole system. At the beginning it is not necessary to take the nation as the system level. In order to get as early as possible provisional results we intend in Switzerland to take for the time being the canton as the system level. If we have for some of our cantons representative data about the predominant pattern of conflict resolution, we can begin to test also those of our hypotheses which are on the system level. With the Swiss cantons we have the further advantage that we can vary the degree of segmentation, because for instance the language and the confessional composition differs very strongly among the 25 cantons.

I hope that it will be possible to establish also at the international level a data bank about political decision making processes. Such a data bank would perhaps stimulate political scientists to use in their theories more political variables. I have the impression that at present unpolitical input and output variables are stressed too much. With this I do not want to say that variables like education, income, urbanisation, etc., are of no help for the explanation of political phenomena. But I object to the tendency to consider most political variables as belonging to a black box, for in this way we risk to forget politics in the Political Science.

Figure I: Summary of the Theory Developed in the Article



## Summary

*This is an attempt to link theories on the level of political systems with theories on the level of decision making processes. On the system level I try to formulate hypotheses about the connection between the predominant pattern of conflict resolution and the degree of democratic stability in subculturally segmented political systems. On the level of decision making processes I try to find out the conditions on which it depends that political conflicts are regulated by the principle of amicable agreement or by the majority principle. The empirical basis for this research on the level of decision making processes are different case studies undertaken in Switzerland.*

*I have linked the two theoretical levels by introducing the independent variables of the predominant pattern of conflict resolution as intervening variables in the hypotheses on the system level. The hypotheses on the system level shall be tested by defining the Swiss cantons as the system level. Hopefully it will be possible to test later on the hypotheses also for national systems.*

## Résumé

*Le présent rapport est une tentative d'adaptation des théories relatives aux systèmes politiques et des théories des processus de décision politique. En ce qui concerne le système, j'essaie de formuler des hypothèses sur le rapport existant entre le modèle dominant de solution des conflits et le degré de stabilité démocratique dans les systèmes politiques pluralistes.*

*Au niveau des processus de décision politique, j'essaie de déterminer les conditions selon lesquelles les conflits politiques sont réglés, soit sur base du principe de l'accord tacite, soit d'après le principe de la majorité. J'ai pris comme base expérimentale de cette recherche au plan des processus de décision politique diverses études de cas réalisées en Suisse.*

*J'ai associé les deux plans théoriques en introduisant les variables propres du modèle dominant de solution des conflits comme variables influentes dans les hypothèses relatives au système.*

*Ces dernières hypothèses seront vérifiées en prenant comme système les cantons suisses. Avec l'espoir qu'il sera possible ultérieurement de les tester également dans les systèmes nationaux.*

