

Multicultural Switzerland and the Challenge of Immigration

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- > Switzerland from an emigration to an immigration country
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Introduction

- > Switzerland: historically a “model” of political and multicultural integration
- > Last 50 years: strong immigration, engendering social, economic and political conflict
- > Immigration: part of the problems that today divide Swiss society and politics
- > Challenge for Switzerland I: can immigration be controlled?
- > Challenge for Switzerland II: “Core culture” and the question of integration

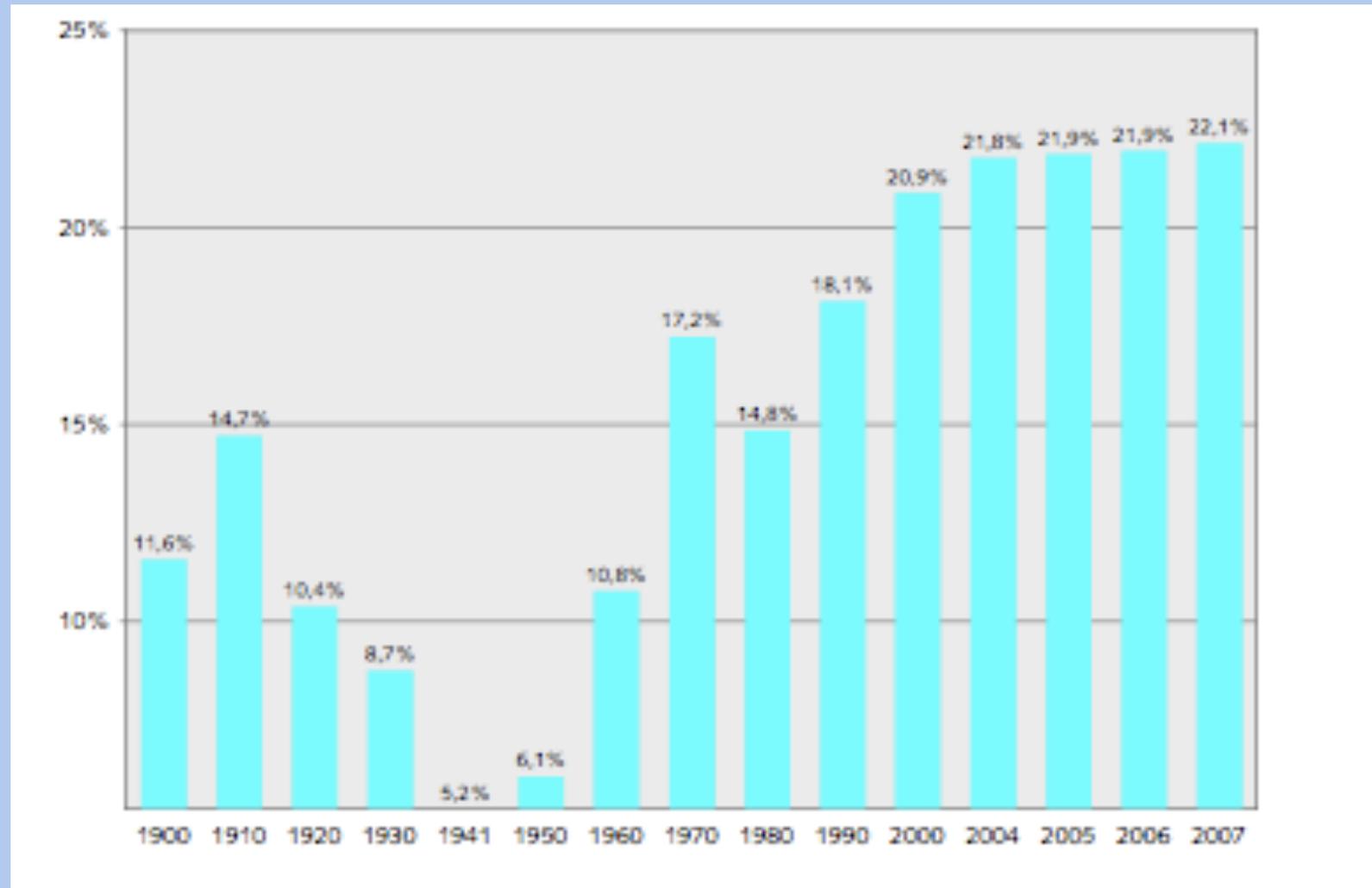
The multicultural heritage I: 1848: A federal constitution for 25 cantons

- > Nation-building “bottom up”: weak central government, most competencies rest with the cantons
- > Multicultural nation: different religions, four languages, different history of the cantons (Constitution: the Federation consists “of the peoples of the cantons”)
- > Separation between religion and state
- > Federalism

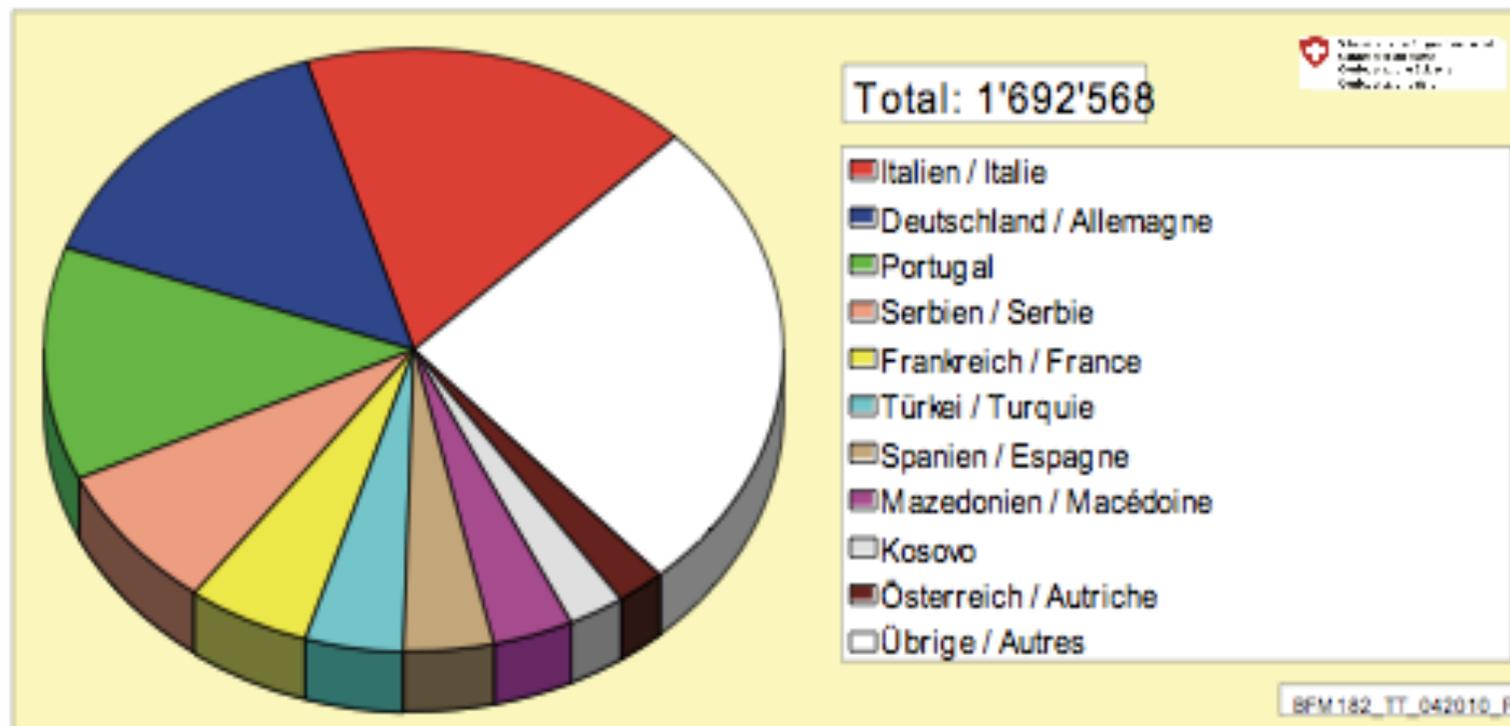
The multicultural heritage II: Political power sharing

- > Proportional representation of linguistic groups and political parties in the national institutions
- > Electoral system: proportionality rule
- > Direct democracy
- > Effects:
 - Permanent “Grand coalition” of Government
 - Cooperation between four governmental parties, conflict solution by negotiation and compromise
 - Protection of minorities and social integration through “Consensus democracy” (Arend Lijphart)

Dimensions of Immigration I: Foreign population in Switzerland 1900-2007



Dimensions of Immigration II: Immigrants by nationality



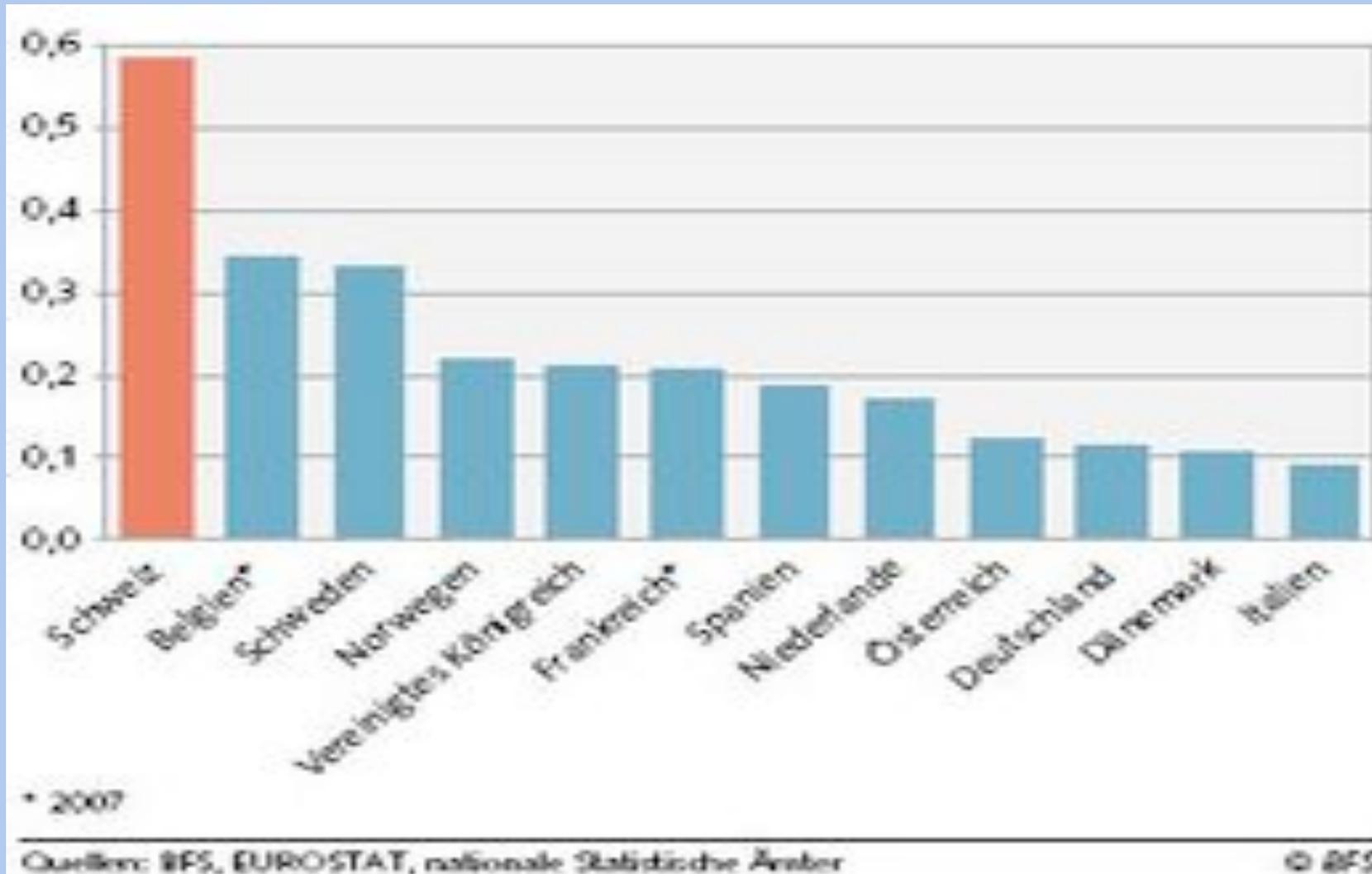
Dimensions of immigration III: Comparison of 16 European countries: percent of foreign population

Austria	9.4	The Netherlands	4.3
Belgium	8.3	Portugal	2.3
Denmark	5.0	Spain	6.6
Finland	2.0	Sweden	5.3
Germany	8.9	United Kingdom	4.7
France	5.6		
Greece	8.1	Luxemburg	38.6
Ireland	7.1	Switzerland	22.1

Data for 2004/2007

Dimensions of immigration IV

Naturalisation, per 100 inhabitants



The politics of immigration I: 1960-80

- > Reasons for high immigration after World War II
- > Characteristics of the first period:
 - “Guest workers”; immigration without integration
 - “Cheap workforce”: low qualification
 - The winners neglect social costs
- > The opponents
 - Their interests and arguments
 - Outsiders of the grand coalition
 - Heterogeneous; organising in parties called “xenophobic”
 - Popular initiatives against immigration mobilise but fail
- > (Ineffective) attempts of the government for global restrictions

The politics of immigration II: 1980-95: The opposition becomes strong

- > Refugees: a new and controversial issue
 - Sri Lanka, ex-Yugoslavia....
 - From a few hundred to 40'000 asylum seekers per year
- > The rise of the “Swiss People’s Party”
 - 1992: SPP’s success against the EEA-Treaty
 - The new SPP: against Europeanisation, the welfare state and immigration
 - The (populist) conservative Right of the SPP becoming the strongest political party
- > Issues of growing polarisation
 - Immigration in general (social stress, population growth, ecology)
 - Refugees (immigration, integration, stress of welfare system)
 - Integration, especially of immigrants from non-European countries

The politics of immigration III: 1995- The globalisation of migration

- > Refugees and asylum seekers: despite some restrictions, controls of immigration fail
- > European politics: liberalisation of immigration
 - 2000 and 2005: The Swiss people accept bilateral treaties of the government with the EU
 - Part of the treaties: free movement of labour with the 27 EU members
- > Polarised political situation today:
 - Immigration stronger than ever (70-100'000 persons per year), about 15'000 asylum seekers, a good part of them from African countries.
 - Centre parties: satisfied with liberalisation, restrictions for refugees
 - Left/Greens: better integration
 - Conservative right: against refugees, against free movement of labour

Political analysis I

The protest of the people

- > Swiss voters: victims of propaganda, xenophobic, or rational?

Popular initiative
forbids construction
of minarets and is
Accepted in 2009



Political analysis II: Reasons of protest Immigration as part of globalisation

- > For the Swiss: Globalisation= Europeanisation. Means liberalisation, privatisation, opening of the economy. Growing inequality, new hierarchisation
- > Winners: export industries, (educated) people working in international services
- > Losers: farmers, domestic craft, unskilled labour
- > Deepening cleavages between labour and capital, between urban and rural
- > Immigration adds to these conflict potentials
- > Loss of autonomy of national policies especially felt in immigration policy

Political analysis III: Why conflict persists

- > The pitfalls of the past:
 - The “Guest worker” concept: hiring and firing without integration
 - Underestimation of social costs of immigration
 - The illusion of “control” of immigration
- > The pitfall of the present:
 - The main cause of global migration: Inequality of life chances between the First (capitalist) and the Third World (and reducing this inequality would require other policies than those of immigration...)

Political analysis IV: Success of integration against all odds

- > Switzerland: a “xenophobic” country?
- > Integration: Far from perfect but a forerider in comparative perspective (employment, educational chances of second generation etc.)
- > Reasons:
 - The multicultural heritage: multilingualism
 - Not federalism as such but the non-centralised polity and the autonomy of local authorities
 - Integration of Non-Europeans: a new problem. Solved by trial-and-error, exchange of local experience and evaluation
 - Strong role of civil society and its organisations
 - The shadow: unequal chances (for instance: naturalisation is easy at some places, very difficult in other places).

Political analysis V: From an emigration to an immigration country

- > The instruments of classical immigration countries (Canada, US, Australia)
 - Effective national legislation regulating access and selection of immigrants
 - A (decentralised) set of integration policies
- > The first condition is not given for Switzerland because
 - Free movement of labour with EU countries (consider proportion of population Switzerland-EU!)
 - Asylum-seekers: principle of “non-refoulement”
 - Control possible only for legal immigrants from non-European countries
- > Swiss politics is constrained to improving integration!

Immigration and the challenge of multicultural conflict

- > Immigration brings new dimensions of multiculturalism- and multicultural conflict
- > Only a matter of “lifestyle” (the saris of a Tamil, the headscarf of a Muslim woman)?
- > How about arranged marriage, or a young Muslim forced to comply with a religious rule against his/her own will?
- > The concept of “core culture” (Verena Tobler):
 - Core culture defines the set of essential institutions and binding social norms of production, social solidarity, security and education of a society
 - They differ fundamentally between industrial and pre-industrial societies

Main institutions in industrial and pre-industrial societies

Function	Industrial society	Pre-industrial society
Production	Capitalist enterprise, technical skills of manpower	Subsistent family and/or clans, gender/age division of labour
Distribution	Global market, purchasing power	Family, traditional rules and local markets
Social solidarity	Welfare state, guaranteed by fiscal revenue	Family, according to social status and need
Education	State, qualifications for labour market	The Elder, introducing into traditional norms and skills
Security	Strong monopoly of State (national law, enforced by justice, police, army)	Weak monopoly of State (local informal law, enforced for instance by “wise old” (justice) or young men (police))

Immigration and the challenge of multi-cultural conflict II: Core cultures differ!

- > The core culture of the industrial society consists of:
 - A constitutional order of democracy, fundamental rights, separation of religion and state
 - Public Welfare, protecting against individual risks of health, age, unemployment
 - A social contract (willingness to work for personal revenue and to contribute to public expenditure by taxation)
- > Main differences of pre-industrial societies are or can be:
 - Mere subsistence economy without fiscal revenue and weak factual influence of the state and its law
 - Most economic functions rest in the family, social solidarity organised within family or clan
 - No separation between religion and state

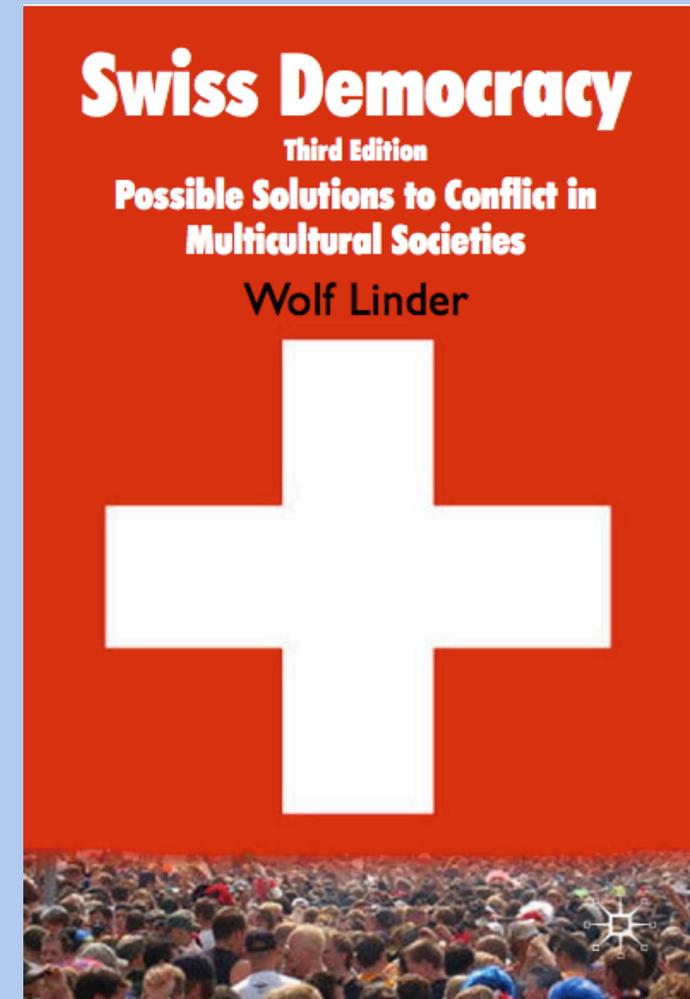
Consequences for the practice of integration

- > Migrants coming from pre-industrial societal context are confronted with a difficult task: integrating into a core culture and a social contract which is entirely different from their own
- > Some of their practices, which are functional in their society (for instance arranged marriage or gender discrimination) are forbidden in the industrial society (where these practices are no longer functional)
- > Migrants have to learn to participate actively in the core culture of their host society (language, labour skills, education, welfare in exchange of participation in the labour market)
- > Assimilation in core culture, but utmost liberty of life style
- > Need for an active and coherent integration policy!

For those interested in Swiss institutions and politics

*Wolf Linder, Swiss Democracy
Palgrave Macmillan 2010
Houndmills, Basingstroke
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www.wolf-linder.ch*



Thank you

