
Varieties of Democracy: 'Proporzdemokratie', 'Consensus Democracy', Liberal Democracy and Direct Democracy

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Abstract

This contribution builds on the work of the group of comparativists, Gerhard Lehmbruch among them, who took up the challenge to study the various forms in which the normative principles of democracy have been implemented in the real world. More specifically, it builds on the basic distinction between majoritarian and proportional systems that has been at the core of their reflections ever since the late 1960s when this distinction has been systematically introduced for the first time. In replicating Arend Lijphart's original analysis for a larger set of countries, I first try to show that his focus on established democracies led him to neglect the liberal dimension of liberal democracy. Second, singling out the case of Switzerland, a case of particular interest to the distinction between majoritarian and proportional systems, it argues that Switzerland is special for reasons which have not been properly appreciated by the comparativists outside of Switzerland: as a matter of fact, it is not the paradigmatic case of a consensus democracy, but it is special because of its direct-democratic institutions in combination with its exceptional degree of federalism in a rather small country.

1 Introduction

My starting point for this discussion of the really existing varieties of democracies is Gerhard Lehmbruch's (1967) 'Proporzdemokratie'. Published at the time of an intense debate about the Grand Coalition in Germany, this slender book draws attention to a peculiar type of democracy, with apparently specific institutional regulations and behavioral patterns, as Gerhard Lehmbruch wrote in his

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introduction. In this type of democracy, the majoritarian principle was replaced by what has been called 'amicabilis compositio' in the Westfalian peace agreement, or what later became known as 'amicable agreement', 'politics of accomodation', 'consociational democracy', or, eventually, 'consensus democracy'. Lehmbruch's 'Proporzdemokratie' was a comparative study of two small Alpine Republics that had not been of much interest to the dominant anglo-saxon political science up to that point. Gerhard Lehmbruch not only drew the attention of the German public, but also of the comparative political scientists outside of Germany to the specific patterns of conflict regulation that these two countries had developed based on their past experience.

The anglo-saxon model of democracy had been enormously prestigious at the end of the war, given that it had resisted the onslaught of fascism, while the democracies on the continent had almost all collapsed. By the 1960s, however, European political scientists began to insist that there were alternative models to the anglo-saxon one. At the time that Gerhard Lehmbruch wrote his treatise on 'Proporzdemokratie', Jürg Steiner worked on his book about the Swiss case, and, Arend Lijphart was about to publish his enormously influential 'Politics of accomodation' based on the Dutch case. Even the anglo-saxon comparativists discovered other political cultures than their own, although they still thought that theirs was the exemplary 'civic' one.

As Kohler-Koch and Rittberger (2007: 3) have pointed out, different strands of democratic theory do not differ with respect to the basic normative assumptions about democracy's essence, but in their emphasis on different dimensions of democracy. Similarly, the different existing democracies constitute various attempts to implement these general underlying normative assumptions. They have implemented these principles through various formal institutional arrangements and informal practices and procedures. The challenge for the comparativist is to identify the key dimensions that allow us to bring some analytical order into the complex pattern of really existing democracies—a pattern that becomes increasingly confusing given the increasing number of countries which not only call themselves democracies, but have actually implemented the basic normative principles of democracy.

In my contribution, I would like to build on the work of the group of comparativists who took up the challenge to study the various forms in which the normative principles of democracy have been implemented, and of whom Gerhard Lehmbruch was certainly a leading figure. More specifically, I would like to build on the basic distinction between majoritarian and proportional systems that, as far as I can see, has been at the core of the reflection of the comparativists ever since the late 1960s when it has been systematically introduced for the first time. This distinction has not only informed the work of the 'consociationalists', but it has also given rise to the distinction between majoritarian and proportional visions of democracy among those who focused their study more closely on electoral systems (see, for example, G. Bingham Powell 2000).

For my empirical analysis, my point of departure is Arend Lijphart's (1999) pattern of democracy, which has, for a long time, probably constituted the most

elaborate attempt to bring some order into the empirical configuration of the variety of democracies. Lijphart covered 36 established democracies for the period 1945–1996. Since Lijphart has published his analysis, several datasets have been collected that allow the assessment of the quality of democracies—Freedom House, Polity IV, Vanhanen to name but the most well known ones—, but hardly any attempt has been made to extend his more analytical approach to a larger number of cases. It is thanks to the democracy barometer, a new data bank that contains a large number of indicators for the characterization of an increasing number of democracies across the world covering the period 1990–2007,¹ this has become possible now. The original intention of the democracy barometer, too, has been to assess the quality of democracies. However, its set of indicators can also be used for more analytical purposes. Together with Daniel Bochsler, I have already done so for a more limited set of 50 countries (Bochsler and Kriesi 2013). For the presentation in this volume, it is possible to extend this analysis to a set of 69 countries. In addition to the established democracies studied by Lijphart,² this set includes the newly democratized countries of the third wave in Latin America (including Central America), Central and Eastern Europe, and South-East Asia.

In my article, I shall try to replicate Lijphart's analysis for the larger set of countries, and I shall extend it in two respects: first, I shall show that his focus on established democracies led him to neglect the liberal dimension of liberal democracy. For the set of established democracies, this dimension was more or less a constant, which did not play a significant role in distinguishing between them. For the more recent democracies that have only been established in the course of the third wave of democratization, however, the liberal principle appears to be rather more difficult to implement than the democratic one, as has been documented by Moeller and Skaaning (2010). Second, I shall pay special attention to one of the two cases that Gerhard Lehmbruch has compared in his *Proporzdemokratie*—Switzerland. For comparativists, this case is of particular importance. Gerhard Lehmbruch is not the only comparativist who focused on this case. Together with Belgium, Switzerland was the paradigmatic case of a consensus democracy in Lijphart's analysis. As I shall show, Switzerland has, indeed, a very peculiar political system, which is of particular interest for comparativists, but it is special for reasons which have not been properly appreciated by the comparativists outside of Switzerland. As we shall see, the Swiss case is particular above all because of the combination of its direct-democratic institutions with a very pronounced federalism.

¹ http://www.democracybarometer.org/dataset_en.html

² Seven of the countries studied by Lijphart are not (yet) documented in the democracy barometer: Bahamas, Barbados, Botswana, Jamaica, Mauritius, Papua New Guinea, and Trinidad and Tobago.

2 Four Dimensions of Democracy

To draw his conceptual map of democracies, Lijphart (1999) used two dimensions of dividing power—the executives-parties dimension and the federalist-unitary dimension. I shall add two dimensions—one for the liberal principle and one for the distinction between the direct and representative democracy. I shall use 16 indicators for the operationalization of these four dimensions. Following Lijphart, I have calculated for each indicator the average for the entire period covered. Subjecting the 16 indicators to an exploratory factor-analysis, indeed, results in four factors—one factor each for the expected four dimensions, which I shall call

- the illiberal-liberal dimension
- the consensus-majoritarian dimension
- the federalist-unitary dimension
- the direct-representative dimension

Table 1 presents the factor loadings of the 16 indicators on the four dimensions. The *illiberal-liberal* factor is the first and most important one, i.e. it discriminates the most between our 69 countries. The indicators characterizing this dimension refer to what is called ‘Rechtsstaat’ in German: equality before the law, the submission of the state under the law (‘governing capacity’, itself the result of a bundle of indicators characterizing the state’s administration and its implementation capacity), and the guarantee of property rights and of other civil rights (here indicated by the freedom of the press).³ Lijphart’s two dimensions come second and third with the federalist-unitary dimension being somewhat stronger than the consensus-majoritarian dimension. The distinction between federalist and unitary states is characterized by three indicators—one each for the constitutional division of territorial power, the fiscal division of power and for bicameralism.⁴ The operationalization of the consensus-majoritarian dimension relies on five indicators—two intended to measure the proportionality of the electoral system—Gallagher’s disproportionality index and the effective threshold of representation, which is derived from the mean district magnitude—, two designed to measure

³ There are several other indicators in the democracy barometer which could have been used to characterize this dimension (e.g. the ‘freedom of speech’, the ‘adequate representation of women’, or the ‘effective unconventional participation’ as an indicator of the effective use of the freedom to associate, and of the effective use of freedom of speech), but they would not have added any greater precision to what it is intended to measure.

⁴ Following Vatter (2009), I add an indicator for fiscal federalism. Indicators for judicial review, central bank independence, and constitutional rigidity have been dropped, however. Central bank independence is not inherently related to federalism, nor is judicial review. The democracy barometer does not include a measure for constitutional rigidity.

Table 1 Results of exploratory factor analysis ($n = 69$)¹

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Uniqueness
	Illiberal-liberal	Consensus-majoritarian	Federalist-unitary	Direct dem-representat	
Equality before the law	0.94	-0.02	0.05	0.06	0.11
Governing capacity	0.96	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.08
Property rights	0.95	0.03	-0.01	-0.05	0.10
Freedom of press	0.85	0.11	0.02	-0.09	0.26
Federalism	0.02	0.86	-0.07	0.01	0.26
Bicameralism	-0.09	0.78	0.01	-0.10	0.37
Fiscal federalism	0.24	0.68	-0.01	0.24	0.43
Single party govt	-0.10	0.11	-0.66	-0.28	0.46
Number of parties in govt	0.18	0.17	0.57	0.15	0.60
Effective electoral threshold	-0.17	-0.16	0.62	-0.05	0.55
Gallagher index	0.17	0.17	0.40	-0.38	0.64
Parl control over executive	-0.09	-0.11	0.42	0.09	0.80
Availability of direct democracy	-0.08	-0.15	0.15	0.64	0.55
Effective use of direct democracy	0.10	0.27	0.21	0.57	0.55
Grand coalitions	0.01	0.18	0.28	0.46	0.68
Mean participation	0.38	-0.17	0.14	-0.40	0.65
EW	3.80	2.10	1.70	1.40	

¹the most important loadings per factor are in bold.

R² adj = .18, without Hungary = .24, without Hungary, US and Dominican Republic = .32

power sharing in government—an indicator for the number of parties in government as well as an extra dummy indicator for single party governments in particular—, and a fifth indicator for the constitutional control of the legislative power over the executive.⁵ Figure 1 shows the relationship between the consensus-majoritarian dimension and one of its components—Gallagher's index of disproportionality, which is a key indicator of proportionality. As we can see

⁵ With the exception of Gallagher's index of disproportionality, these indicators are not the same as the ones used by Lijphart. Partly, I try to improve on Lijphart (by replacing the much criticized measure of cabinet duration (Tsebelis 2002: 110) with an indicator for constitutional control of the executive by parliament, and by not including a measure characterizing the system of interest associations as critics (Roller 2005: 111f.) had suggested, too), partly I am constrained by the indicators available in the democracy barometer (no indicator for minimal winning coalitions, but indicators for the number of parties in the coalition and for their share of seats in parliament), partly the indicators Lijphart used did not appear to be part of the dimension in the larger sample analyzed here (the effective number of parties).

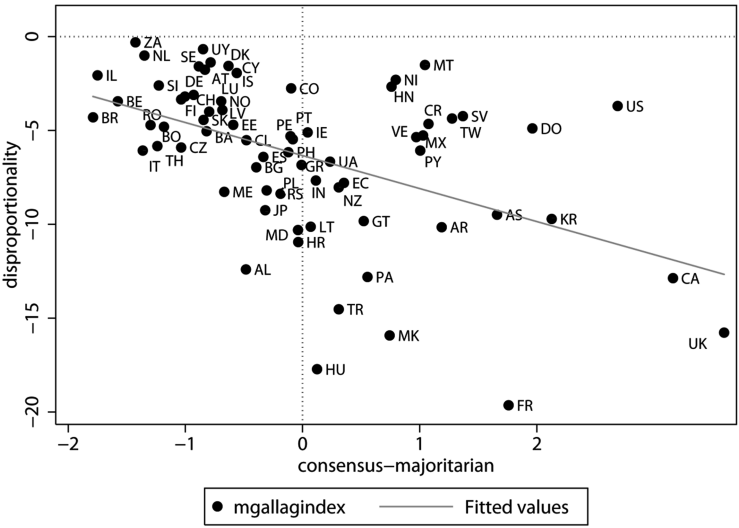


Fig. 1 Proportionality of representation and consensus-majoritarian democracies, all 69 countries

from this figure, the relationship between the two measures is far from perfect, which shows that the consensus-majoritarian dimension cannot simply be reduced to a measure for proportionality. ‘Consensus democracy’ as its precursor—‘Proporzdemokratie’—is more than an electoral system, it also refers to a system of conflict regulation that is not completely accounted for by the electoral rules, but which results from other institutional rules and informal practices. Thus, there are countries which appear as much more proportional than we would expect on the basis of their electoral systems—the US above all (see Powell 2000: 236), but also San Domingo, but also Taiwan, Malta, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, and Costa Rica. On the other hand, there are countries which are much more disproportional than we would simply expect on the basis of their electoral system—above all France, but also Hungary, Macedonia, Turkey, Albania and Panama.

The last dimension, indeed, refers to the distinction between direct-democratic and representative democracies. The existence of such an additional dimension confirms Vatter’s (2009) earlier findings, which were based on a set of 23 countries. This dimension is associated with the availability and the effective use of direct-democratic instruments, the mean electoral participation rate and, as already shown by Vatter, with oversized cabinets. As Leonhard Neidhart (1970) and Gerhard Lehmbruch (1967: 50) in his ‘Proporzdemokratie’ have argued long ago, the risk arising from optional referendums and popular initiatives can be limited by co-opting all those forces into the governing coalition who are capable of efficiently threatening with the use of these instruments.

3 The Configuration of Democracies in the Four-Dimensional Space

3.1 Lijphart's Conceptual Map

The configuration of democracies shall be presented in three steps. First, I reconstruct Lijphart's conceptual map on the basis of the new data set. Figure 2b presents the positioning in the two dimensional space created by combining Lijphart's two dimensions of the countries that were also part of Lijphart's analysis. The overall distribution of the countries onto the four quadrants of the graph largely corresponds to what Lijphart had found, in spite of the fact that I use different indicators and cover a different period. There is only one major difference with respect to Lijphart's configuration: the anglo-saxon democracies—the UK in particular, but also Canada and the US—turn out to be even more majoritarian here than in Lijphart's analysis. It appears as if, in comparative terms, these three countries had become more majoritarian than they had been before. Together with France, the traditional anglo-saxon models have become the real outliers in the configuration according to Lijphart.

It is particularly noteworthy that in this configuration, just as in the one found by Lijphart with a reduced set of countries for the earlier period, India lies at the border to the lower left-hand corner. This means that, as Lijphart (1996) had already observed some time ago, India, in spite of its anglo-saxon heritage of majoritarian institutions, does not in fact function as a majoritarian system. Given the regional concentration of Indian minorities, regional parties representing these minorities are able to obtain parliamentary representation and, since the decline of the Congress party in the late 1980s, are able to become pivotal elements in government formation. In addition to the Indian federalism, this particular feature of Indian politics makes for a strongly consensus-type functioning of the Indian political system.

There are, however, also some shifts in detail: Switzerland no longer appears to be the quintessential consensus democracy. In fact, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy and Ireland turn out to be even more consensual than Switzerland. As a matter of fact, both Austria and Germany now appear to be just as typical cases of consensus democracy as their smaller neighbor. If anything, the electoral systems of both Germany and Austria appear to be more proportional than the Swiss one. This would certainly hold to an even greater extent, if the elections to the second Swiss chamber—the Council of States—had been taken into account as well: the second Swiss chamber is elected on the basis of a majoritarian system, given that only two seats are to be filled per electoral district. Switzerland is also less of a consensus democracy than Germany or Austria, since, because of its exceptional hybrid system of government, the Swiss parliament is less able to control the cabinet than its German and Austrian counterparts. On the other hand, what tends to make Switzerland more consensual than Germany or Austria is the fact that all four large parties, plus currently even a fifth party are part of the government. But note that oversized cabinets are less of a characteristic of a consensus than of a direct

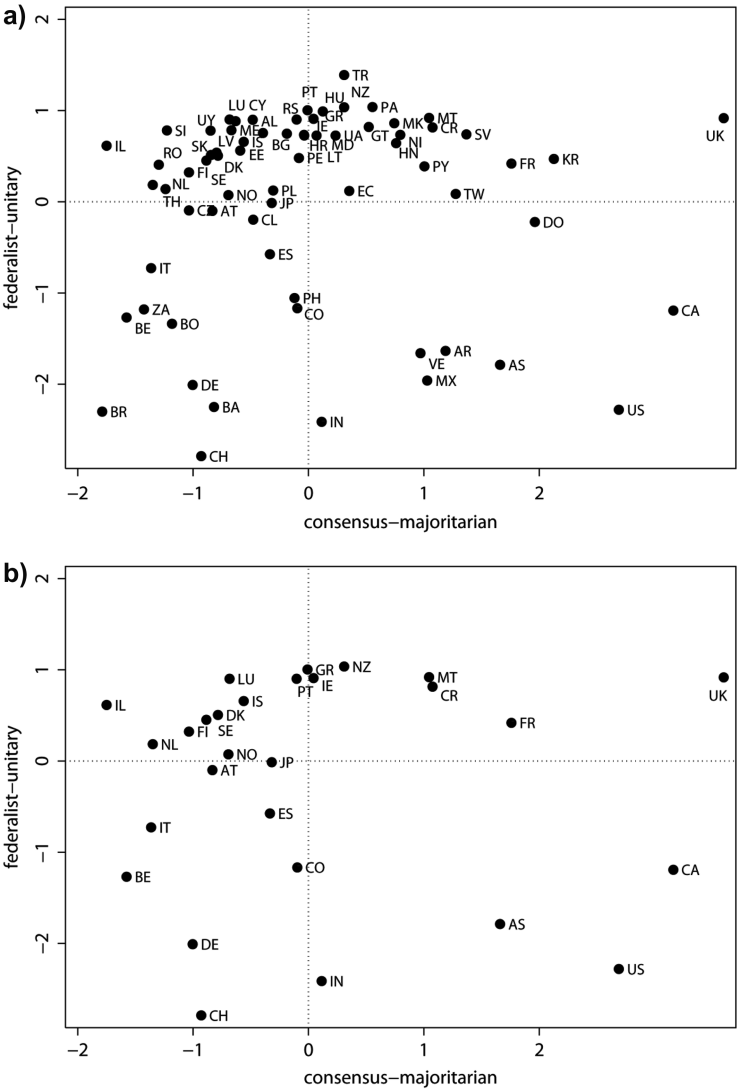


Fig. 2 Lijphart's typology—consensus-majoritarian vs. federalist-centralist democracies (a) with 69 countries, (b) with only countries that were part of Lijphart's analysis

democracy. Moreover, coalition governments (including grand coalitions) have always been a feature of German politics in the Federal Republic, and Austria has known long spells of grand coalitions. Switzerland and Germany also share a pronounced federalism. As pointed out by Gerhard Lehmbruch (2000), the German federalism has largely contributed to consensual practices in a country where party competition has been otherwise giving rise to clearly more majoritarian behavior than in Switzerland.

As for other shifts, we may note that Belgium, Italy and Colombia have become more federalist, while New Zealand, which, together with the UK, was once considered as the ideal typical case of a majoritarian democracy, has moved in the direction of a consensus democracy. These shifts can all be explained by institutional changes in the countries in question.

Turning to the configuration including the whole set of the 69 countries (Fig. 2a), we note a prevalence of the combination of moderately unitary and moderately consensual democracies. The part of the space for which the Scandinavian countries, Israel and the Netherlands have been typical among the established democracies is now also occupied by a host of Central- and Eastern European countries (AL, BG, CZ, EE, HR, LV, ME, PL, RO, RS, SI, SK). Additional Central- and Eastern European countries are to be found in the unitary-majoritarian quadrant, but rather close to the centre of the space (HU, LT, MD, MK, UA). Only one of the countries from this region—Bosnia-Herzegovina—is set apart in the federalist-consensus quadrant.

The Latin-American countries tend to be on the majoritarian side (AR, CO, CR, EC, DO, GT, HN, NI, PE, SV, PY, MX, VE), which is not surprising, given the predominance of presidential systems in this part of the world. Moreover, most of them are unitary, although the largest ones among them (BR, BO, CO, MX, VE) have federalist institutions. However, note that presidential systems do not always go together with majoritarian democracies. Given their fragmented party systems, some Latin-American presidential systems find themselves on the consensual side (BO, BR, CL, UY), and Brazil even appears to be the quintessential consensus democracy, given its combination of federalism and consensus-type governing structures. The strain that the combination of a presidential system with a federalist state structure and a fragmented multi-party system introduces into a democracy is graphically illustrated by the rampant corruption in the Brazilian system. Even a highly legitimate president as Lula had to take recourse to practices such as buying votes in Parliament in order to get his legislation passed (see the enormous *Mensalão* (a Portuguese expression that means something like 'large monthly payments')—scandal).

Finally, note that the only African country in this set, South Africa, also closely resembles a classic consensus democracy, given that it combines federalism and consensus-type governing structures. Contrary to Brazil, however, it does not have a presidential, but a parliamentary system—even if its prime minister is called president. The few Asian countries in this set are either typical unitary-majoritarian (KR, TW), or unitary-consensus (TH) democracies, with the Philippines (PH) being a federalist middle of the road in terms of the consensus-majoritarian divide.

3.2 The Liberal Dimension

As already pointed out, Lijphart had not taken into account the liberal dimension of liberal democracy. He was mainly interested in the trade-off that exists between consensus and majoritarian democracies. This is easily explained by the fact that,

with one exception (CO), all the democracies he had in his sample had quite a respectable record in terms of the liberal principle (see Fig. 3b). Once we consider the whole sample of the 69 democracies, however, we see that most of the new democracies that have been added to the established set find themselves in the illiberal part of the conceptual map (see Fig. 3a). The only exceptions are CZ, EE, LV, HU, SI in Central- and Eastern Europe (with HU in the meantime having made a decisive turn in the illiberal direction), CL in Latin-America, and the two South-East Asian tigers (KR, TW).

The illiberal state of many new democracies has been heavily criticized by Zakaria (2007), who painted a bleak picture about the current relationship between the liberal and the democratic principles: they are, he maintained ‘coming apart across the globe. Democracy is flourishing; liberty is not’. The two principles are coming apart, however, not because liberty is declining, but because the democratic principle is making headway. Liberty is falling behind in relative, not in absolute terms. Even Zakaria (2007: 56f.) conceded that we should not judge the new democracies ‘by standards that most Western countries would have flunked even 30 years ago’. I would like to add that some established democracies still seem to have a difficult time to live up to these standard—IT and GR are just at the midpoint on the illiberal-liberal dimension.

Moeller and Skaaning (2010) have provided a typology of democracies, which uses the fact that rule of law and civil rights tend to be introduced after the establishment of electoral procedures in a newly democratizing country for the construction of a hierarchical typology of democracies. In their typology, the most basic form of democracy is a ‘minimalist democracy’ (a system with elections that are exclusive to the extent that they do not provide the right to vote to all citizens). Next in their scheme comes ‘electoral democracy’ (a system with universal suffrage), which is followed by what they call ‘polyarchy’ (electoral democracy plus the rule of law) and ‘liberal democracy’ (electoral democracy, plus the rule of law, plus civil rights). Almost all their empirical cases ($n = 122$) neatly fall into one of these hierarchically ordered categories, i.e. there are virtually no cases of countries today with the rule of law or full civil rights, but which are not electoral democracies. The development of the European democracies has, of course, followed a different sequence. As Marshall (1963) has famously argued, civil rights have been guaranteed before political rights in Europe—in many cases universal suffrage has, indeed, been introduced in the established democracies long after the civil rights.

Moreover, note that Moeller and Skaaning’s typology is working well empirically, because it does not differentiate between different types of electoral democracy, i.e. because it neglects the point that has been crucial for the discussion among those who have challenged the anglo-saxon majoritarian view of democracy. It is only when we do not take into account that there are trade-offs between the different ways to implement the democratic (electoral) principle that we can stick to the idea of a uni-dimensional scale of more or less liberal democracy.

This point is also related to the widely known indices measuring the quality of democracy. These measures work reasonably well, because they are mainly

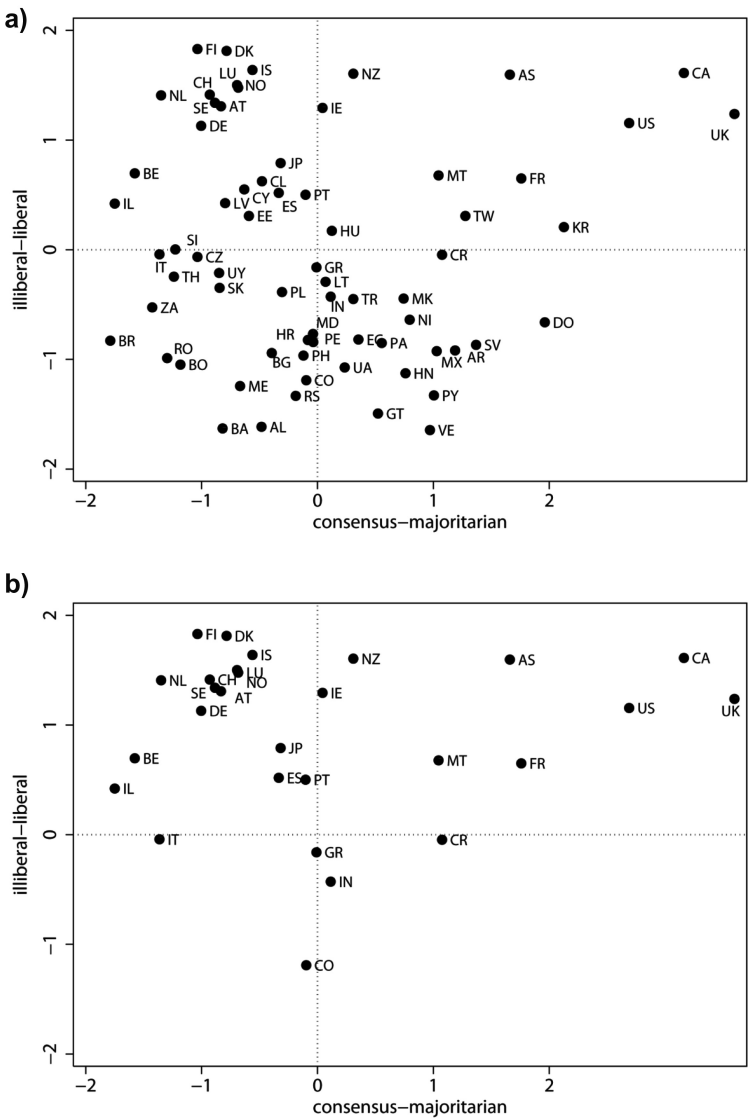


Fig. 3 Illiberal-liberal vs. consensus-majoritarian, (a) all 69 countries, (b) only countries in Lijphart's analysis

measuring the liberal dimension, while they are largely unrelated to the various trade-offs involved in the implementation of the democratic principle. This is shown by the regression analyses presented in Table 2, which attempt to explain the quality assessments of the Polity IV index, of the two components of the Freedom House index (civil liberties and political rights) and of the Vanhanen

Table 2 The quality of democracy as assessed by the Polity IV, Freedom House and Vanhanen indicators, explained by the four factors, unstandardized regression coefficients, significance levels and *t*-values, for average values during the period 1990–2007 (*n* = 29–69)^a

	b/t	Polity	FH civil lib	FH polit rights	Vanhanen
Illiberal-liberal		1.010*** (4.356)	−0.839*** (−9.585)	−0.821*** (−7.502)	3.430* (2.279)
Consensus-majoritarian		0.091 (0.507)	−0.135 (−1.894)	−0.068 (−0.763)	1.794* (2.133)
Federalist-unitary		−0.159 (−0.866)	0.055 (0.782)	0.095 (1.071)	−1.629 (−1.606)
Direct-representative		0.163 (0.973)	−0.063 (−0.960)	−0.059 (−0.720)	−0.754 (−0.858)
Regime type		0.525 (1.084)	−0.454* (−2.422)	−0.451 (−1.920)	−5.094 (−1.625)
_cons		8.560*** (27.665)	2.058*** (17.555)	1.998*** (13.621)	29.623*** (13.882)
R-sqr		0.27	0.62	0.50	0.61
N		65	69	69	29

^aContrary to other indicators, the Freedom House indicator has low values for democratic systems and high value for non-democratic systems. Significance levels: ***=,001, **=,01, *=,05

index by the countries' factor scores for the four dimensions of democracy, as well as an additional indicator for the regime type. The latter just distinguishes between parliamentary systems (including Switzerland) and (semi-) presidential systems. For the first three scales, only the illiberal-liberal dimension has a highly significant effect. In the case of the Vanhanen-index, the effect of the illiberal-liberal dimension is still significant, although weaker, and the consensus-democracies get an overall higher index value. Note, however, that the Vanhanen index exists only for 29 out of the 69 countries.

Once we control for the four dimensions, regime type has no significant effect on the quality assessments, except for the civil liberties dimension of Freedom House, which is shown to be significantly higher in presidential systems. This weak, but significant tendency of presidential systems to have a higher quality than parliamentary systems is somewhat surprising for comparativists, who mostly tend to be suspicious of presidential systems (e.g. Linz and Valenzuela 1994). To explore the unexpected higher quality of presidential systems, I have checked the factors that account for a country's liberalism. I took my cues from Mainwaring and Shugart's (1997: 53), who contend that the generally poor record of presidentialism may not be attributed to institutional factors, but rather to the lower levels of development and nondemocratic political cultures of countries with this kind of system. As shown in Table 3, a country's value on the illiberal-liberal dimension at the end of the period covered (in 2007) can, indeed, to a considerable extent be explained by the *age* of its democracy. I use a dummy indicator for the older, established democracies from Lijhart's sample, and add an indicator for the quality of democracy—according to the three scales which cover most of our data (FH-civil and

Table 3 The positioning of a country on the illiberal-liberal scale in 2007, as a function of age of democracy, regime type and its first scale value in the period 1990–2007, unstandardized regression coefficients, significance levels and *t*-values ($n = 63–67$)^a

	Illiberal-liberal		
	b/t		
Established democracies (Lijphart)	0.917*** (5.169)	0.794*** (4.120)	1.035*** (5.010)
Regime type	−0.464** (−3.010)	−0.524** (−3.363)	−0.453* (−2.576)
FH-civil liberties 1990	−0.252*** (−4.759)		
FH-political rights 1990		−0.292*** (−4.693)	
Polity IV 1990			0.060 (1.911)
_cons	0.425* (2.062)	0.572* (2.459)	−0.636* (−2.435)
R-sqr	0.702	0.699	0.608
N	67	67	63

^aContrary to other indicators, the Freedom House indicator has low values for democratic systems and high value for non-democratic systems. Significance levels: ***=.001, **=.01, *=.05

political rights, Polity IV)—at the beginning of the period covered by our data (1990). For each one of the three scales, in 2007, the established democracies are significantly more liberal, and, in addition, the democracies with a higher democratic quality in 1990 still tend to be more liberal in 2007. Moreover, once we control for the age of democracy, presidential systems turn out to be less liberal according to all three scales. In other words, indirectly, presidential systems tend to have a lower quality of democracy than parliamentary systems because of their younger age and their comparative lack of liberalism. But, once we control for their more limited liberalism, presidential systems no longer fall short of parliamentary systems with respect to their quality of democracy.

3.3 Direct and Representative Democracy

Let me finally introduce the fourth and last dimension of the four-dimensional democratic space—the contrast between direct and representative democracy. On this dimension, Switzerland is an extreme outlier. No other country even approaches the Swiss position on this dimension. This is a result of the fact that Switzerland has a maximum value on every one of the four indicators constituting this dimension: it has by far the highest values on the effective use of direct-democratic instruments (.86, followed by Italy with .38, Slovenia and Slovakia with .13, and Ecuador and Lithuania with .12), on the share of grand coalitions (94 %, followed by South Africa with 64 %, Austria and France with 50 %), and, together with three other countries (Slovenia, Lithuania, Uruguay), on direct-democratic access, while it has the lowest value on electoral participation (43.5 %, followed by Colombia with 43.7 %, Guatemala with 45.9 % and the US with 50.3 %).

Given the extreme position of Switzerland on this dimension, the overall solution for the 69 countries is heavily influenced by the Swiss case. If we drop this case, there still are four factors, and the first two of them are hardly affected at all. But the meaning of both the consensus-majoritarian and the direct-representative democracy dimension becomes less clear: without the Swiss case, both of these dimensions are to some extent associated with the availability of direct-democratic instruments and with the indicators of proportionality. This is not to say that we should drop the Swiss case from the analysis. On the contrary, including this case clarifies the structure and makes it very clear that direct democracy has been implemented at the national level only in Switzerland so far. Except for Switzerland, the effective implementation of direct democratic procedures still constitutes a potential innovation.

The Swiss direct-democratic institutions, moreover, are particularly attractive, because they cannot simply be instrumentalized by the political elites, as in the case of the plebiscitary use of these institutions in some countries. Nor are these institutions completely divested of elite control, as in the case of the populist version of initiatives in the member states of the US. In the version of direct democratic institutions that has been institutionalized at all levels of the Swiss

political system, there exists a promising interplay between direct and representative forms of democracy. The Swiss case illustrates that, under conditions of contemporary 'party democracies' and with an appropriate institutional design, direct-democratic procedures are guided and controlled by political parties and related political organizations. In fact, the intermediary form of 'party-based direct democracy' discussed by Budge (1996: 51ff.), where the representative institutions do not disappear but are only modified by combining them with direct-democratic elements, is nothing else but the 'semi-direct democracy' that has been institutionalized in Switzerland for more than a century. The Swiss case shows that there is, however, also a price to pay for this innovation—in terms of participation, in terms of inclusion, and in terms of efficiency. Thus, as already pointed out, in Switzerland, the extension of the direct-democratic participation rights go hand in hand with a reduction of electoral participation, with a highly unequal participation in terms of social and economic status, as well as with the exclusion of a large part of the resident population (foreign residents) from political participation. The very citizens who enjoy a large number of direct-democratic participation rights have not been willing to extend these rights to the foreign residents of the country. Finally, as Gerhard Lehmbruch (1967: 51) has observed in his 'Proporzdemokratie', the direct-democratic element of Swiss democracy has limited the maneuvering space for majority decisions, for innovation and long-term structural reforms.

Figure 4, which combines the federalist-unitary dimension with the direct-representative one, allows to really appreciate the very special character of the Swiss democracy: Switzerland is at the same time the country with an extraordinary amount of direct-democratic participation rights and the most federalist country. Not only its position on the direct-democratic dimension is extraordinary, but also its degree of federalism. With the exception of Belgium, the other federalist countries are all large very large—either in terms of territory or population or both. However, as in the case of its direct-democratic institutions, Switzerland also pays a price for its highly elaborate federalism in a small territorial space: the member states of the Swiss Confederation often meet capacity problems, i.e. they are too small to acquit themselves of the tasks they are supposed to fulfill in the framework of the federalist decentralization of administrative tasks. Moreover, the smallness of the space tends to set the wrong incentives for both citizens and member states in the framework of fiscal federalism.

4 Conclusion

In my attempt to reconstruct the empirical map of the varieties of democracy, 'Proporzdemokratie', the model of democracy of Austria and Switzerland and a precursor of Lijphart's 'consensus democracy', has constituted a crucial reference point. This model has allowed me to distinguish the anglo-saxon cases from the bulk of the really existing democracies. However, as I have also tried to show, the prevalence of this model among comparativists has tended to induce them to

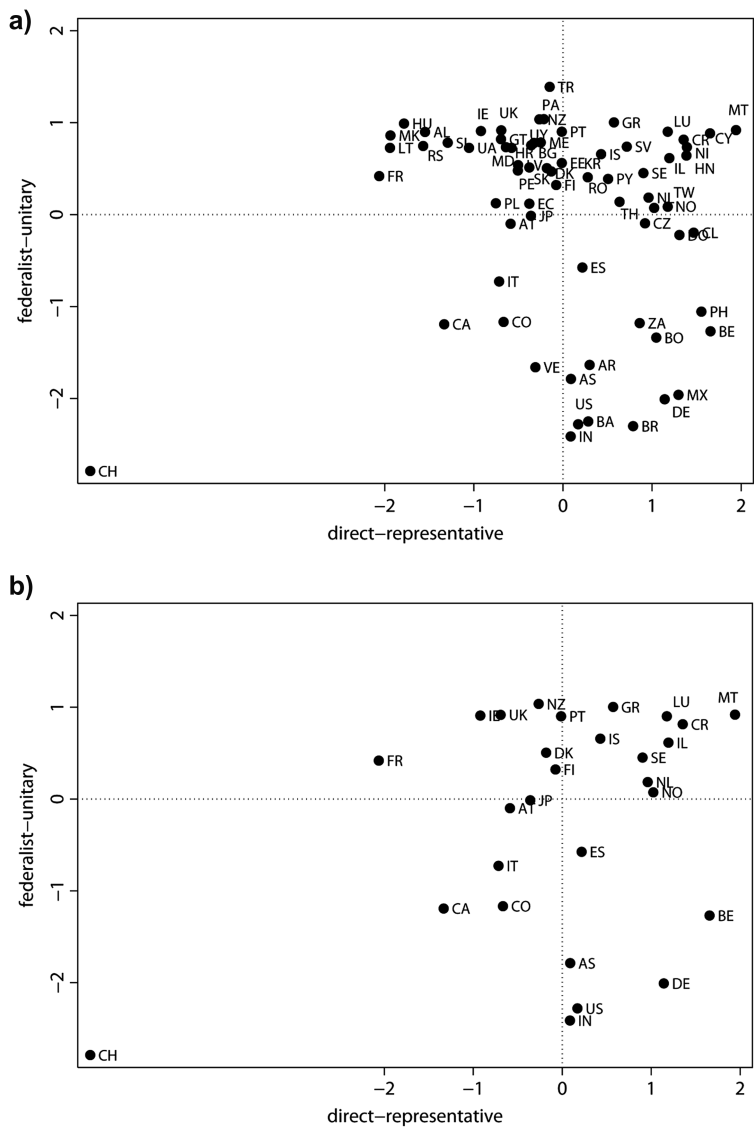


Fig. 4 The exceptional status of Switzerland: federalist-centralist vs. direct-representative, (a) all 69 countries, (b) only countries from Lijphart's analysis

misperceive to some extent the specificities of one of its paradigmatic cases—Switzerland. In fact, this country became the ideal type of ‘Proporzdemokratie’ and of ‘consensus democracy’ without much reference to one of its key institutions—direct-democracy. Almost as an afterthought, Gerhard Lehmbuch (1967: 50) introduced a reference to the referendum in his ‘Proporzdemokratie’, conceiving it as intimately related to the consensus democratic modes of conflict regulation.

But, as has been shown by Adrian Vatter (2009) before and as has been confirmed here for a larger set of cases, the direct democratic element tends to constitute a separate dimension of the conceptual map of democracy. While, with respect to the consensus-majoritarian dimension, the Swiss case hardly differs any longer from Germany or, for that matter, from the majority of really existing democracies, it is above all its direct-democratic institutions (in combination with its exceptional degree of federalism in a rather small country) which make it exceptional today. In fact, today, the Swiss case stands for a paradigmatic case that might again serve comparativists as a point of reference for the conceptualization of democracy—not only for democracy as we have come to know it, but especially for democracy as it may develop over the time to come.

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