

From Counter-Elite to Hegemon: The Access to Power of Left-Wing Politicians in the Three Major Swiss Cities in a Long-Term Perspective*

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Abstract

Nowadays, many cities in post-industrial societies are strongholds of left and progressive political forces. This urban left hegemony has not always been in place, however. Over the course of the 20th century, cities in Western countries have experienced different waves of left-progressive and right-conservative dominance. The aim of this paper is to trace these developments in more detail in the three largest Swiss cities over the course of the last 130 years to understand the evolution of left-progressive parties from counter elites to new urban hegemons.

We take two steps to understand these developments and to document these long-term changes and transformations of political elites in Swiss cities. First, we provide a periodization of the political strength of left-progressive parties in the three major Swiss cities (Basel, Geneva and Zurich) in identifying key moments for their affirmation, access to power and integration with local political institutions.

In a second step, we analyze the changes in the profiles of left-progressive political elites across these different periods. Based on a unique database including all political elites in the three cities for seven benchmark years (1890, 1910, 1937, 1957, 1980, 2000, 2020) we provide a prosopography highlighting the transformations of the educational and professional background of left-progressive elites in the three cities. While we expect left-progressive elites to have a working-class background and to be clearly distinct from right-conservative elites during their first phase of dominance (1920-1940), they will have a more middle-class and academic background in their second phase of dominance (1990-).

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Introduction

Until the 19th century, European cities were dominated by local “urban oligarchies”. But with the rise of the nation-state and growing urbanization, these local oligarchies progressively lost their dominance (Le Galès and Therborn 2010). The power of traditional urban families has been challenged since the end of the 19th century by the progressive organization of the labor movement in trade unions and social-democratic party -- in a context of growing urbanization and industrialization marked by the concentration of social problems in urban contexts. This led to the experience of “municipal socialism” in many European cities in the beginning of the 20th century.

In this contribution, we trace the long-term evolution of left political parties in urban context from the end of the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century. More precisely, we study different phases of left involvement in city politics as well as the evolution of the socio-demographic profiles of left politicians in the three biggest Swiss cities, Basel, Geneva, and Zurich. This allows us to show how left-wing political parties, initially excluded from local power positions, have become central, an even dominant, political actors in urban areas. Once in office, however, left-wing representatives have undergone profound changes in their educational and professional background. These changes are related to the socio-professional transformations of cities in a long-term perspective as well as the profound evolution of left-wing political parties.

Swiss cities are particularly interesting for at least two reasons. As a bottom-up political construction with a strong federalist structure, the Swiss political system grants a large autonomy to subnational levels of government. In international comparison, cantonal and communal/urban authorities have always maintained important implementation and decision-making competences. Second, Swiss national politics is and always has been dominated by right-wing parties, with the political left remaining in a minority position. At the local level, however, the major Swiss cities have undergone important power shifts between left and right for the period 1890 to 2020, with the political left gaining dominant positions in many Swiss cities.

In order to document the changing fate of the urban political left in the major Swiss cities since the end of the 19th century until today and to better understand its access to power, we proceed in two steps. First, on the basis of the general evolution of the European political left in urban contexts, we provide a long-term periodization of the political strength of left-progressive parties in the three major Swiss cities (Basel, Geneva and Zurich) in identifying key moments for their affirmation, access to power and integration into local political institutions. We distinguish four different phases. First, from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of World War I the three cities were largely dominated by local patrician families in the economic, cultural, and political sphere, but left forces were starting to challenge this hegemony. During the second phase, roughly between the end of World War I and World War II, the left challengers managed to seize power for some period of time in each of the three cities, experiencing “municipal socialism”. This phase was also characterized by strong, sometimes violent, confrontation. The post-war growth period, marked by a renewed domination of right-wing parties, is generally more consensual with left-progressives remaining important minoritarian actors. Finally, since the 1990s, left-progressive parties have become dominant political actors, and sometimes the new hegemons, in all major Swiss cities.

In a second step, we analyze the changes in the profiles of left-progressive political elites across these four periods. Based on a unique database including all political elites in the three cities for seven benchmark years (1890, 1910, 1937, 1957, 1980, 2000, 2020) we provide a prosopography highlighting the transformations of the educational and professional background of left-progressive elites in the three cities. While we expect left-progressive elites

to have a working-class background and to be clearly distinct from right-conservative elites during their first phase of dominance (1920-1940), they probably have a more middle-class and academic background in their second phase of dominance (1990-). In addition, we expect left-progressive politicians holding executive positions to constitute a “left super-elite” – with (upper) middle-class and academic profiles – compared to those in the legislative communal councils.

1. The European Urban Left in Historical Perspective: Four Distinct Phases

The evolution of the political left in cities is closely related to the success and loss of left-wing parties at the national level. In a synthetic article that documents the evolution of social democratic parties over the last 100 years in 30 European countries, Benedetto et al. (2020: 929) distinguish three waves of social democracy. A first wave, which roughly extends from the end of World War I to the beginning of the 1930s, is characterized by social democratic parties toning down their revolutionary approach and aiming at achieving socialism through parliamentary action, leading for a certain extent to the split between the social democrats and the communists which happen in 1921 in Switzerland. The second wave that started after World War II is characterized by a move from mass party to catch-all politics. Social democratic parties began to reach beyond their core constituency of industrial workers. They “downgraded class-based politics in favor of policies that appealed to public-sector employees, urban professionals, and agricultural laborers” (Benedetto et al. 2020: 931). In this period, we also see core developments in the welfare state which were often achieved in collaboration with christian democratic parties. The third wave started at the end of the cold war and extends to the present day. It is characterized by social democrats turn to “third way” politics. Pressured by the rise of neoliberalism as well as by new challengers on the left of the political spectrum, social democratic parties adapted their economic policies and expanded their platforms to include cultural and environmental issues (Benedetto et al. 2020: 931). While this reorientation initially brought social democratic parties back to power, they have substantially lost electoral support in many European countries since the new millennium and garner historically low levels of electoral support and parliamentary seats in many countries nowadays.

These different waves in the evolution of social democracy are useful for the study of the urban left. In some respects, the evolution of the latter mirrors the evolution of social democracy at the national level. Yet, we need to adapt this periodization by taking into account specific urban developments. In addition, the exact timing may differ according to countries and cities (see also Pinson 2020 who distinguishes different cycles of politization at the local level and Le Galès 1990).

First, it seems important to introduce a first and initial period where the political left was largely excluded from power and remained in a clear minority position, in relation to the traditional local bourgeoisie and notables holding power in the cities. As underlined by Katz and Mair (1995: 10), left parties were the first ones that explicitly claimed to represent the interests of only one segment of society, the working class and the labor movement, and promoting revolutionary changes to overthrow the capitalist bourgeois society. Including this first period thus allows us to document the emergence of the political left as an important structuring force of European politics in the 20th century. Moreover, at the local level, left forces were successful earlier than at the national level by seizing political power in some cities. Because of industrialization and urbanization during the second half of the 19th century, large cities have soon become strongholds of the labor movement, and in the United Kingdom, the labor movement already gained political majorities in some important cities at the end of the 19th century. This was also partly the case in France and Belgium, but only later in other European

countries (for an overview see Dogliani 2002; Leopold and MacDonald 2012; Lefebvre 2004; Chamouard 2014 on French experiences).

Even though left-wing parties already gained political majorities in some large cities since the end of the 19th century, the second phase in the evolution of the urban left, that we can define as the rise of “municipal socialism”, started later, after World War I, when left-wing political majorities become widespread in many European cities, with some famous examples such as “Red Vienna” (1918-1934). The debates about “municipal socialism” were characterized by important tensions among the political left on whether being in power at the local level without holding all the power in the state, was conducive or detrimental to the goal of transforming capitalist into socialist societies (for more details on these debates, see Dogliani 2002: 578). Ultimately, the conflict between radical and moderate socialists – of which the debate on municipal socialism was part – led to the split of the socialist movement into radical left or communist, and into social democratic parties.

These innovative experiences of “municipal socialism”, sometimes called “gas and water socialism”, were particularly focused on the development of local public services, such as education, hygiene and medical care, gas, electricity and water infrastructures, or targeted public policies to improve the social situation of the working class, such as housing, distribution of food and clothing. The general aim of these experiences was to use the local level as a lever to reduce social inequalities in a capitalist society.

The post-war growth decades were characterized by more consensual politics on the part of the moderate left, i.e. the social democrats, and a phase of depoliticization of the local level. Like at the national level, social democratic parties adopted more consensual politics and collaborated with right-wing parties in cities. At the same time, they had to differentiate themselves from radical left parties, which were seen as enemies of the state. This period also marks the transformation and opening of the left electorate from the core of industrial workers to public sector employees and professionals.

Finally, the next and last phase has already started in the 1970s, a period marked by a phase of repoliticization of the local level, with the emergence of a “new left” following the youth contestation of May 1968 and the emergence of “new social movements” (feminist, ecologist, humanitarian, etc.) in the context of the end of the post-war growth period. As underlined by Pinson (2020) on France and Le Galès (1990) on the United Kingdom, these changes led to the affirmation of new left-wing majorities in many cities during the end of the 1970s and the 1980s. The approach of this new left elite to city governance is different from the one of the left parties at the beginning of the 20th century. While the latter focused on top-down, technocratic, problem-solving, the former promoted a more participatory and bottom-up approach to government (Le Galès 1990: 719-720). This is partly rooted in new left ideology which emphasizes grassroots democracy and decentralization (Stavrakakis 1997).

This new wave of left-wing urban majorities led to the adoption of innovative urban policies – stressing citizen participation, quality of life, and development of public transport. They triggered a new dynamism in the development of cities, which have become increasingly attractive and started to experience demographic growth during the last decade of the 20th century after previous decades of suburbanization and inner-city depopulation (Kübler 2007). Paradoxically, the relative success of left-wing policies, combined with more structural changes in the global economy (tertiarization, concentration of economic activities in cities) and in political decision-making (Europeanization and denationalization) contributed to the new attractiveness and revalorization of cities (Le Galès 2002). This also led to some changes in the political orientation of social democrat leaders in the cities (see Quilley 2000 on the example of Manchester documenting the switch from initial socialist experiment to the entrepreneurial

city between the beginning of the 1980s and mid-90s). A major issue for left-wing parties is now to combine attractiveness and competitiveness with social cohesion in the urban context (Ranci 2017).

Contrary to the periodization of Benedetto et al. (2020) on social democracy in general, which stresses that the period since 1990 and particularly the 20 years since the new millennium, marked by the social-liberal or third way turn of social democracy at the national level, have witnessed the sharp decline of social democratic vote shares in many European countries, this trend does not apply in cities and urban areas more generally. Left-progressive forces have been on the rise and, in some cases, have become the new hegemon in city politics. To a large part this is because in cities, left political parties often comprise a wealth of different political forces, from social democratic over radical to new left and green parties. Cities provide the testing ground for left-progressive parties to experiment with policies that concern cultural issues and the struggle over these issues increasingly structures political competition in European cities and urban areas (Sellers et al. 2013 and Pinson 2020).

1.1. The Urban Left in Major Swiss Cities

The Swiss federal political system and its three levels of government grants ample autonomy to cantonal and communal authorities legal, financial and political in terms. In European comparison, Swiss local governments enjoy large local autonomy, which provides municipalities with important responsibilities, both in terms of policy implementation as well as in terms of political decision-making (Ladner et al. 2019). This situation can be explained by the national integration process that followed a bottom-up dynamic, marked by the progressive aggregation of small units, the cantons, to form a national federation in 1848 with strong autonomy for the cantons. Although the situation can slightly vary from canton to canton, the communes, and particularly the cities, as old social structures, also enjoy important autonomy toward their cantonal authorities and the federal state. This decentralization of formal legal power makes it particularly interesting to investigate the local power structures and their evolution in Switzerland. Swiss cities have two main political organs: local executive councils, usually composed of 5 to 9 members who are responsible for the implementation of public policies, and local legislative councils, normally comprising between 30 and 130 members who are responsible for policy- and law-making.

How does the schematic periodization sketched above about the political left in cities apply to Switzerland and its major cities? If we look at the long-term evolution of the political left in Swiss cities, especially Basel, Geneva, and Zurich, the three major cities investigated here, it is possible to outline four major phases.

At the national level, the Swiss social democratic party was officially founded in 1888, but local organizations already existed before. At that time, the labor movement was weakly organized and divided into different often competing, local organizations, either trade unions or political parties. Swiss industrialization remained very decentralized with only moderate concentration in urban regions. However, during the end of the 19th century, numerous strikes were organized in urban regions. They were expressions of the grievances of the growing working class in a context of growing urbanization and industrialization (Walter 1994: 242 ff.). At that time, cities were largely dominated and governed by traditional patrician families controlling the most important local companies and dominating the composition of local communal councils (see Sarasin 1997 on Basel, Perroux 2006 on Geneva and Tanner 1990 and 1995 on Basel, Berne and Zurich). The leaders of the first labor movement organizations were excluded from the inner circles of power in the cities. During this period, social democrats elected in local city parliaments remained exceptional. They thus represented “pioneer figures” of Swiss socialism.

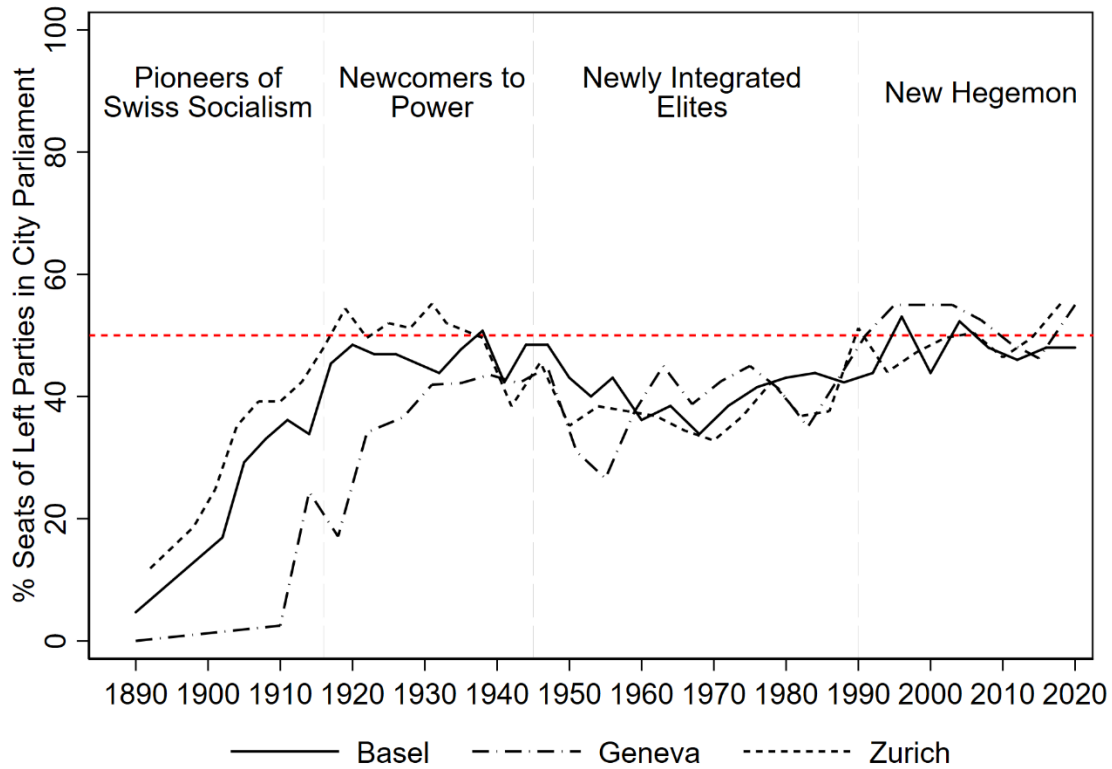
This progressively changed and the social democratic party started to engage in representative elections to gain seats in communal, cantonal, and national authorities. Social democrats were elected for the first time in executive communal or cantonal councils: in 1892 in the city of Zurich, in 1902 in Basel, in 1897 in the canton of Geneva, and only in 1914 in the city of Geneva (see Figures 1 and 2 below for an overview of the three major cities, Zurich, Basel and Geneva). Illustrative of the importance attributed to gaining political influence in urban authorities, the Swiss social democratic party started to organize in 1907 a regular “Kommunaltag” devoted to debate the experiences of “municipal socialism”.

It was mainly after World War I that real experiences of “municipal socialism” took place with the social democrats gaining political majorities in many cities¹. Already in 1907, a first social democratic mayor was elected in the small industrial city of Bienne, and left majorities were reached in La Chaux-de-Fonds in 1912. The left obtained a political majority in the communal legislative council of Zurich in 1919, and in the executive council in 1928, leading to the “Red Zurich” during the 1930s. This was also the case in Basel, and in other important Swiss cities such as Lausanne, Schaffhausen, and also in the canton of Geneva, but not in the city of Geneva (for more details, Walter 1994: 245 ff.). For the first time, social democrats governed cities with a clear majority or as a dominant partner in collaboration with right-wing parties (see Figures 1 and 2 below).

At the national level, the political left reached its peak during the 1930s, when the social democratic party obtained 29% of the vote in the 1931 general elections. However, the left remained constantly in a clear minoritarian position at the national level, where the bicameral parliament was always dominated by a right-wing majority. The introduction of proportional rule for the elections to the national council in 1919, an old demand of the left since the beginning of the 20th century, clearly favored the political left. Its representation in the federal parliament was strengthened substantially as a result. In 1943, for the first time, a social democrat was elected as a member of the federal government by the center-right dominated parliament. One seat out of seven in the federal government was thus granted the left by the center-right majority. The social democrats obtained a second seat in 1959, a period marked by the integration of the left.

¹ It is interesting to note that Edgar Milhaud (1873-1964), French professor at the University of Geneva since 1902, socialist and inspirator of the *Annales de la Régie directe*, that largely served as an international network and platform to discuss and document the experiences of “municipal socialism” from the beginning of the 20th century until the 1960s, explained the initial idea to found this new journal in the following way: “at that time Switzerland was busily engaged in transferring works hitherto entrusted to private companies into public services, whether at municipal, cantonal or federal level. As an economist from France, where the old anti-statist liberalism was a dogma generally observed with administrative rigor, I found this a most interesting area for research.” (Milhaud 1958, quoted in Dogliani 2002 : 582). Milhaud also recalled that his articles had brought him into close contact with politicians, local administrators, members of the Swiss federal parliament and even government ministers. He wanted his journal, and the research reported in it, to support a Europe-wide movement for municipalisation and nationalisation, and serve as a forum for discussion of current experiments. Articles from the *Annales* were used and directly cited in universities and in commissions to the French Chamber of Deputies by Jean Jaurès, Adrien Veber and Albert Thomas.

Figure 1. Strength of Left-Progressive Parties in City Parliaments, 1890-2020



After World War II, despite an electoral peak of the radical left parties in the immediate post-war years, the domination of left-wing parties in the major Swiss cities came to an end, and the right-wing parties regained their majority. However, the left still represented a very important political actor, often governing in coalition with right-wing political parties, but in a minority position. In a context of economic growth and more consensual politics, this third phase is marked by the integration of the social democratic party in the Swiss political institutions, both at the national and the cantonal/communal levels.

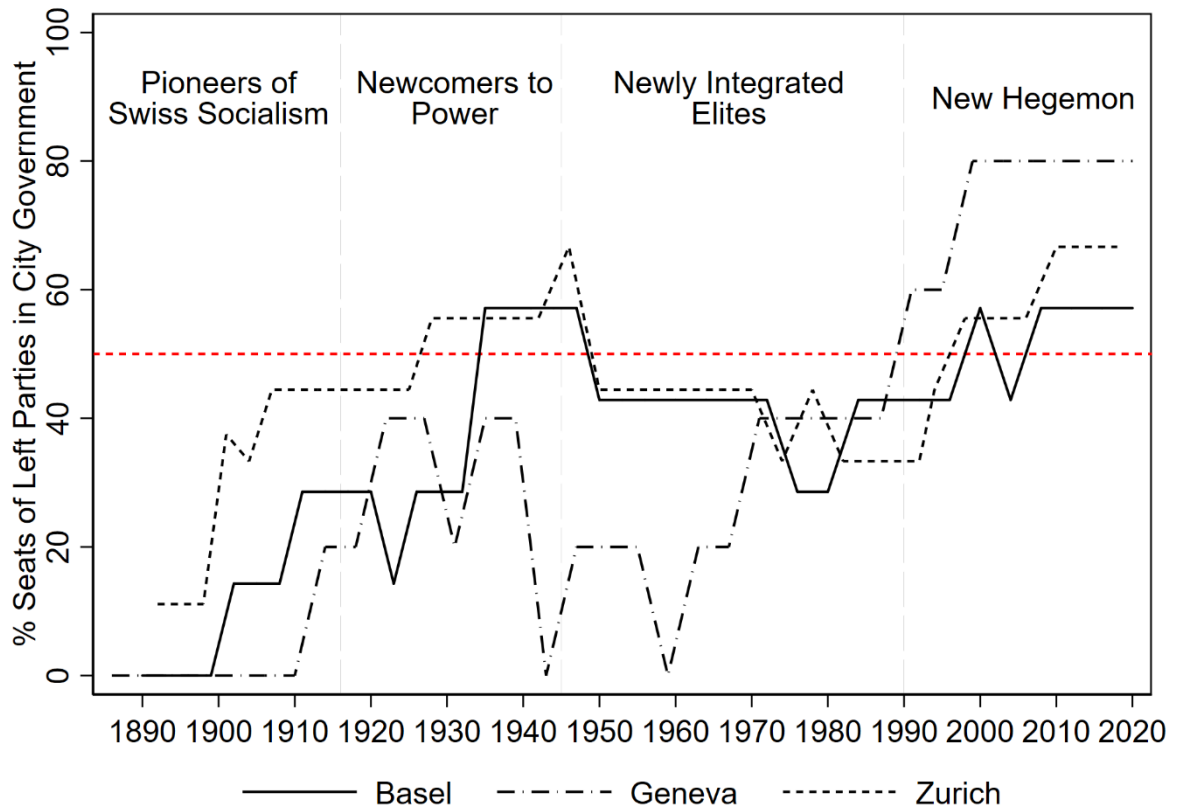
As in other European countries, the 1970s were marked by the emergence of “new” social movements and a new left following the youth movement of 1968, that contributed to renew the composition of left-wing parties, especially in major Swiss cities. These developments led to the formation of the green party and new radical left parties, which were different from the traditional communist party. The new left contributed to the diversification of the Swiss political left, which was historically dominated by the social democratic party and marked by tensions with the communist party².

However, in contrast to France and the UK, in no important Swiss cities, the left could gain new majorities during the 1970s and 1980s, decades during which they remained in minority positions. It was only at the beginning of the 1990s that the balance of power started to profoundly change in all major Swiss cities, with the affirmation of new center-left majorities, generally composed of coalitions between the social-democratic party, the greens and the radical left (see also Figures A.1 and A.2 in the appendix). Beginning with Lausanne in 1989, all the other major Swiss cities underwent a similar evolution (Zurich, Basel, Geneva, Berne

² The latter was created in 1921 in Switzerland as a scission from social democracy. In the French-speaking part of Switzerland, the split took place later, in 1939. Subsequently, after being banned in three cantons at the end of the 1930s and at the federal level in 1940, the radical left formed a new party in 1944, the Swiss party of labour.

and Winterthur), that remains uninterrupted until 2020. Left-wing parties have now become clear enduring dominant political forces in all major urban regions in Switzerland. Contrary to other European countries, the Swiss social democratic party has not followed the social-liberal turn promoted by Blair and Schröder and could maintain its positions at the national level and in urban regions -- despite some small electoral losses, mainly toward the green party. Center-left urban coalitions between social democrats, greens and radical left movements, enjoy large electoral majorities, based on a large electoral base ranging from progressive social-liberal middle classes to citizens from working-class backgrounds.

Figure 2. Strength of Left-Progressive Parties in City Governments, 1890-2020



In sum, the evolution of the urban left can be divided into four distinct periods. An initial period from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of World War I, where only first pioneers of left parties managed to enter urban political institutions. A second period comprising the interwar decades, where the urban left managed to seize power in many cities and established some form of “municipal socialism”. The third, post-war growth period, characterized by a renewed dominance of right-wing parties in urban politics, but with an integration of left political forces as important coalition partners in government. And a final period, starting in the 1990s, which is characterized by a renewed dominance – and indeed hegemony – of the urban left in city politics. In what follows, we shed a light on the evolution of the urban left’s socio-demographic profile in the cities of Basel, Geneva, and Zurich.

2. Different Phases, Different Elites? The Evolution of Urban Left-Wing Politicians' Socio-Demographic Profile in a Long-Term Perspective

As indicated above, it is possible to distinguish four major phases in the evolution of the urban left in Europe and Switzerland, corresponding to different figures of left-wing politicians. In what follows, we shed light on urban left elites' socio-demographic profile, how it has evolved, how it differs from the one of right-wing politicians, and whether left-wing legislative and executive politicians' profiles differ.

In the first phase from 1890 to World War I, marked by the affirmation of counter-elites or pioneers of Swiss socialism in urban context, we can expect that these left-wing politicians represent a kind of “avant-garde” of the labor movement with some distinctive features from the social basis of their party in terms of education and profession. During the interwar period, marked by the access to power of left-wing parties in a majoritarian position and the first real experience of “municipal socialism”, the left-wing newcomers to power had to impose themselves in conflictual confrontation against traditionally dominant right-wing parties. They probably differ in terms of education and profession towards their right-wing counterparts. During the post-war period, marked by economic growth and more consensual politics, we can expect that the newly integrated left-wing elites, especially social democrats, resemble more and more right-wing politicians in terms of education and profession. Finally, since the 1990s, left-wing politicians can be considered as new hegemonies in the urban context. They probably profoundly differ from their predecessors of the 1930s in terms of education and profession and resemble their right-wing counterparts to an even greater extent.

After presenting our data, we analyze the evolution of three dimensions of the urban left-wing politician in more detail: education background, main professions and the differences between left-wing executive and legislative body members.

2.1. Data and Methods

In order to carry out our analysis, we compiled a biographical database of 2100 members of the executive and legislative bodies of Basel-Stadt³, Geneva and Zurich. Among them, there are 928 left-wing elected representatives, including 700 members of the social democratic party, 144 members of the radical left parties⁴ and 84 greens. There are also 1164 members of the right-wing parties⁵. The data is separated into six cohorts from 1910 to 2020 (1910, 1937, 1957, 1980, 2000, 2020)⁶.

³ The political authorities of Basel-Stadt are simultaneously cantonal and communal authorities. Given that the city and the cantonal territory almost fully coincide (apart from two municipalities, Riehen and Bettingen), the city of Basel does not have its own political authorities.

⁴ The following political parties were considered part of the Radical Left Parties: Parti communiste suisse, Parti suisse du Travail, Parti progressiste, SolidaritéS, Progressive Organisationen, Alternative Liste, Frauenliste and Frauen Macht Politik!.

⁵ The following political parties were considered part of the Right Parties: Parti radical-démocratique suisse, Parti libéral suisse, Parti libéral-radical (since 2009), Parti démocratique, Union démocratique du centre, Landesring der Unabhängigen (Alliance des indépendants), Parti vert'libéral, Bürger- und Gewerbeartei, Parti démocrate-chrétien, Parti évangélique suisse, Parti chrétien-social, Katholische Volkspartei, Démocrates suisses, Union nationale, Vigilance, Mouvement citoyen genevois and Nationale Front.

⁶ Even though we have data for 1890, we have excluded them from our analysis because the number of left-wing elected representatives is marginal and the biographical data proved more difficult to complete.

Table 1. Datasets of elected representatives in Basel-Stadt, Geneva and Zurich for six cohorts between 1910 and 2020

	1910	1937	1957	1980	2000	2020
Basel-Stadt Government	7	7	7	7	7	7
Basel-Stadt Parliament	132	140	136	131	136	100
Geneva Government	5	5	5	5	5	5
Geneva Parliament	41	66	79	80	80	80
Zurich Government	9	9	9	9	9	9
Zurich Parliament	125	127	134	137	125	125
Total	319	354	370	369	362	326

The members of the legislative bodies of the three cities are elected according to proportional rule except for Geneva and Zurich until 1910 where majoritarian rule was used. The number of seats in city parliaments differs depending on the city and the year. In Basel-Stadt, the legislative body has 130 seats from 1910 to 2000, and 100 seats in 2020. In Geneva, the number of seats is 41 in 1910, 64 in 1937 and 80 thereafter. In Zurich, the number of seats is 125 throughout the period. Due to departures and arrivals in the course of the legislature, the number of people taken into account for each cohort sometimes differs from the number of available seats. The executive bodies of the three cities are elected according to the majoritarian rule. There are 7 members in Basel-Stadt, 5 in Geneva and 9 in Zurich throughout the period under scrutiny.

Positions in an urban legislative council are typical “militia” mandates, meaning that they are not professionalized and do not allow to earn a living from this mandate. This means that local politicians have a main profession besides their political mandate. By contrast, executive positions in a large city are a full-time occupation and are remunerated accordingly since the end of the 19th century (for an overview on political mandates at the three level of the Swiss federalist system, see Pilotti and Mazzoleni 2019). This explains why we provide different analysis for the executive and legislative elites (see below 2.4.).

Table 2. Datasets of left-wing elected representatives in Basel-Stadt, Geneva and Zurich for six cohorts between 1910 and 2020

	1910	1937	1957	1980	2000	2020
Basel-Stadt Government	2	4	3	3	4	4
Social Democratic Party	2	4	3	3	4	3
Radical Left Parties	-	-	-	-	-	-
Green Party	-	-	-	-	-	1
Basel-Stadt Parliament	43	63	59	57	72	48
Social Democratic Party	43	48	43	37	51	35
Radical Left Parties	-	15	16	20	8	-
Green Party	-	-	-	-	13	13
Geneva Government	-	2	1	2	4	4
Social Democratic Party	-	2	1	1	1	2
Radical Left Parties	-	-	-	1	2	-
Green Party	-	-	-	-	1	2
Geneva Parliament	1	29	26	33	44	44
Social Democratic Party	1	29	10	18	12	19
Radical Left Parties	-	-	16	15	22	7
Green Party	-	-	-	-	10	18
Zurich Government	4	5	4	4	5	6
Social Democratic Party	4	5	4	4	4	3
Radical Left Parties	-	-	-	-	-	1
Green Party	-	-	-	-	1	2
Zurich Parliament	48	65	50	56	60	69
Social Democratic Party	48	62	48	53	50	43
Radical Left Parties	-	3	2	3	3	10
Green Party	-	-	-	-	7	16
Total	98	168	143	155	189	175

Table 2 shows the distribution of government and parliament seats among different types of left parties. There are no members of radical left parties in 1910. Indeed, the Swiss communist party is founded in 1921, while the Swiss social democratic party is founded in 1888 at the national level. In general, and this is particularly true in Zurich, the dominant left-wing force is the social democratic party throughout the period. However, in Geneva in 1957 and 2000, the members of the radical left parties outnumber those of the social democratic party in the legislative body and even in the executive body in 2000. Since their emergence during the 1980s in the cantons and at the national level, green party members have never outnumbered social democratic party members in the three cities. However, in Geneva in 2020, they are almost on a par with the social democratic party in the legislative body. At the same time, in the most recent benchmark year, they exceed the number of elected members of the radical left parties which has fallen sharply in all three cities: they have even disappeared in the Basel-Stadt parliament in 2020. Although the main left-wing party throughout the period is the social democratic party, differentiating its members from those of the radical left parties and the greens seems important,

as their level of education, for example, varies at different times, and will be highlighted later (see below 2.2.).

To document the evolution of the profile of left-wing elected representatives of the three cities and to compare it with right-wing representatives, we collected data on the educational and professional background of all the city government and parliament members for the six cohorts⁷. Those data were collected from various sources in the municipal archives of the three cities, such as lists of candidates and elected representatives, as well as local newspaper articles. For the educational background, we distinguish whether an elected representative has obtained a university degree or not. In terms of professional background, we have coded the information according to the 6 categories and the 23 subcategories presented in Table 3 below. For the members of local executives, the profession corresponds to the main professional activity practiced just before their election. For members of local parliaments, it is the profession practiced at the time of the election and during their mandate.

Table 3. Professional categories and subcategories

Professional categories	Professional subcategories
Liberal professions	Lawyer/Notary Other Liberal Professions (for example architect, engineer, physician)
Entrepreneur	Large Company Owner Medium Sized Business Owner Farmer Small Merchant
Professional politician	Party Official Trade Unionist Public Interest Group Official Business Association Official Journalist (mainly political press)
Public employee	Public Manager Public Employee University Public School Teacher (primary, secondary) Public Health and Social Care Employee Public Non-Manual Employee Public Manual Employee
Private employee	Private Manager Private Non-Manual Employee Private Manual Employee
Renter	Retired Student Housekeeper

As we can see from Table 3, we put a particular emphasis on some professional categories that are expected to be very frequent among left-wing politicians: Public employee and Professional politician, which have more subcategories. Indeed, these are left-wing elected representatives' professional categories to which we will pay more attention (see below section 2.3 on Professional background). For public employees, without going as far as Oesch's class schema (2006) which makes it possible to design a detailed employment structure among public sector employees since the second half of the 20th century, we chose to distinguish managers from

⁷ Part of this data are accessible online via the website of the Swiss Elite Observatory (OBELIS): <https://www2.unil.ch/elitessuisses/index.php?page=accueil>.

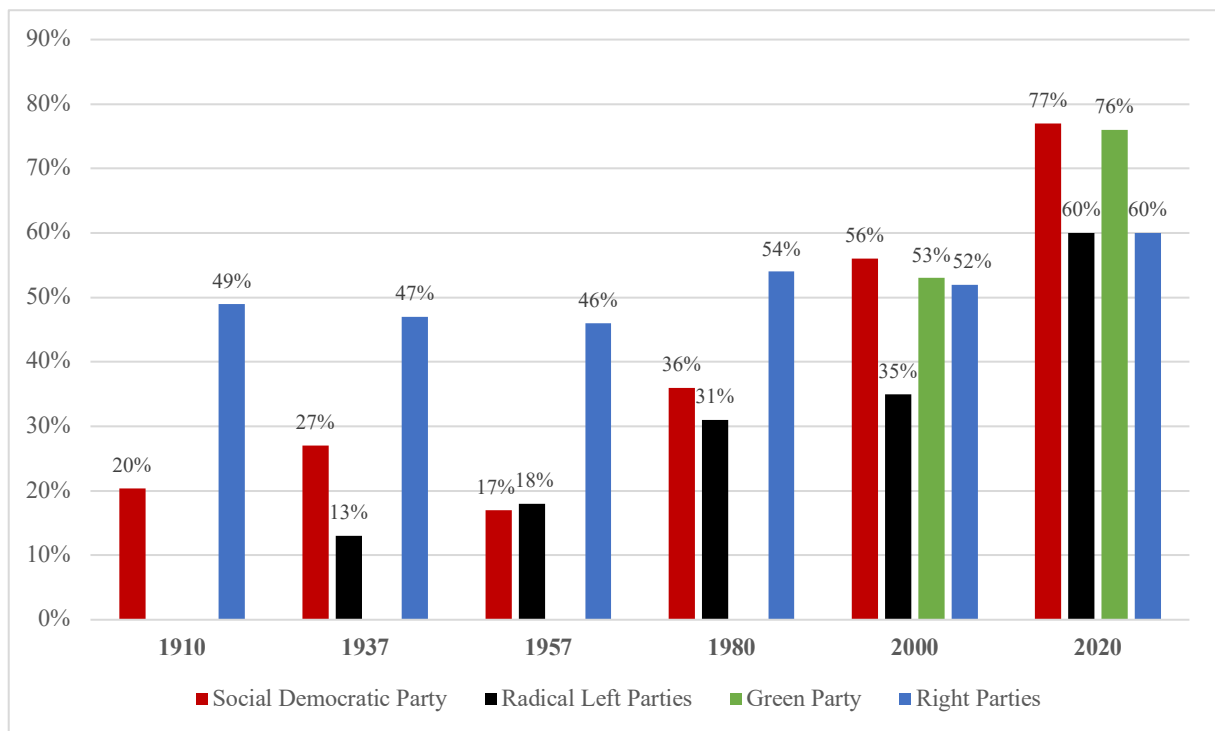
employees, themselves being divided into manual (mainly working in the public sector at the communal, cantonal or federal level) and non-manual workers (for example administrative employee, librarian); we also decided to differentiate university employees from teachers and health and social care employees.

For professional politicians, besides paid officials of local parties, we have included paid officials of trade unions and public interest group (like consumers, social, cultural or nature conservation associations), who have strong connections to the political sphere and are strongly involved in politics. Their counterpart for right-wing politicians are business association officials. Finally, we chose to include journalists. Indeed, during the first half of the 20th century, the political press played an important role in Swiss politics. Most of the journalists in our sample are therefore political journalists paid by political parties.

2.2. Education: The Academization of the Urban Left

Education represents an important resource for the occupation of a political mandate. Historically, politicians stemming from the labor movement with a working-class background could generally not rely on this resource to favor their political career, except for a few leaders of workers' organizations. This clearly changes during the 20th century with the growing proportion of the population following university studies (Cotta and Best 2007). How are these general trends linked to the educational composition of urban left-wing politicians?

Figure 3. Share of elected representatives in Basel-Stadt, Geneva and Zurich with a university degree (1910-2020), in %



N Total 1910=314, 1937=351, 1957=370, 1980=369, 2000=362, 2020=326.

N Social Democratic Party: 1910=98, 1937=150, 1957=109, 1980=116, 2000=122, 2020=105.

N Radical Left Parties: 1937=18, 1957=34, 1980=39, 2000=35, 2020=18.

N Green Party: 2000=32, 2020=52.

N Right Parties: 1910=216, 1937=183, 1957=227, 1980=214, 2000=173, 2020=151.

In general, there has been a clear increase in the share of left-wing elected representatives with a university degree. In the case of members of radical left parties, this evolution has been linear

even if it is only in 2020 that most elected representatives have an academic degree (60%). This is however not the case in the first half of the century for the members of the social democratic party. Indeed, the proportion of academics among the pioneers of socialism at the beginning of the century and the newcomers to power during the interwar period is higher than among the elected representatives of the social democratic party in 1957 who are fully integrated into the institutions. An explanation could be found in what Gaxie and Godmer (2007: 116) have called a process of “proletarianization” of left-wing party elites in Europe in the first half of the 20th century. Indeed, according to them, theorists within the social democratic parties and the communist parties felt that the working class should represent itself and that parliaments saw an overrepresentation of the bourgeois intellectual class even within left-wing parties. The aim was therefore to recruit candidates from the working class within the left-wing parties.

In the second half of the 20th century until 2020 there is a steady increase in the number of university graduates within left-wing parties. For members of the social democratic party, between 1980, 2000 and 2020, the proportion of university graduates increases by 20% at each date: from 36% in 1980, they are at 56% in 2000 and at 77% in 2020, which represents more than three quarters of the party's elected members. It can therefore be said that most of the new hegemonies have a university education. This is in line with the trend observed for the Swiss national parliament, where in 2000 the social democratic parliamentary group had the highest proportion of academics among its members, whereas in 1980 it was the group with the lowest proportion (Mazzoleni et al. 2010: 343-344). In the case of elected representatives of radical left parties, the increase occurs later, between 2000 and 2020, when the percentage of university graduates increases from 35% to 60%. As for the Greens, who in 2020 are the main coalition partner of the social democratic party in the three cities, their proportion of university graduates is almost like theirs.

Until 1980, the proportion of right-wing politicians with a university degree is clearly above the one of left-wing politicians. This situation is reversed in 2000 and 2020, where left-wing elected representatives with a university degree exceed that of right-wing elected representatives, when they regain control of the cities. While the proportion of right-wing elected representatives with a university degree is relatively stable between 1910 and 2000, with an average of 49% over the first five cohorts, it also increases between 2000 and 2020, reaching 60%. It can be estimated that this increase is slowed down by the rise of the Swiss people's party, most of whose members do not have a university education.

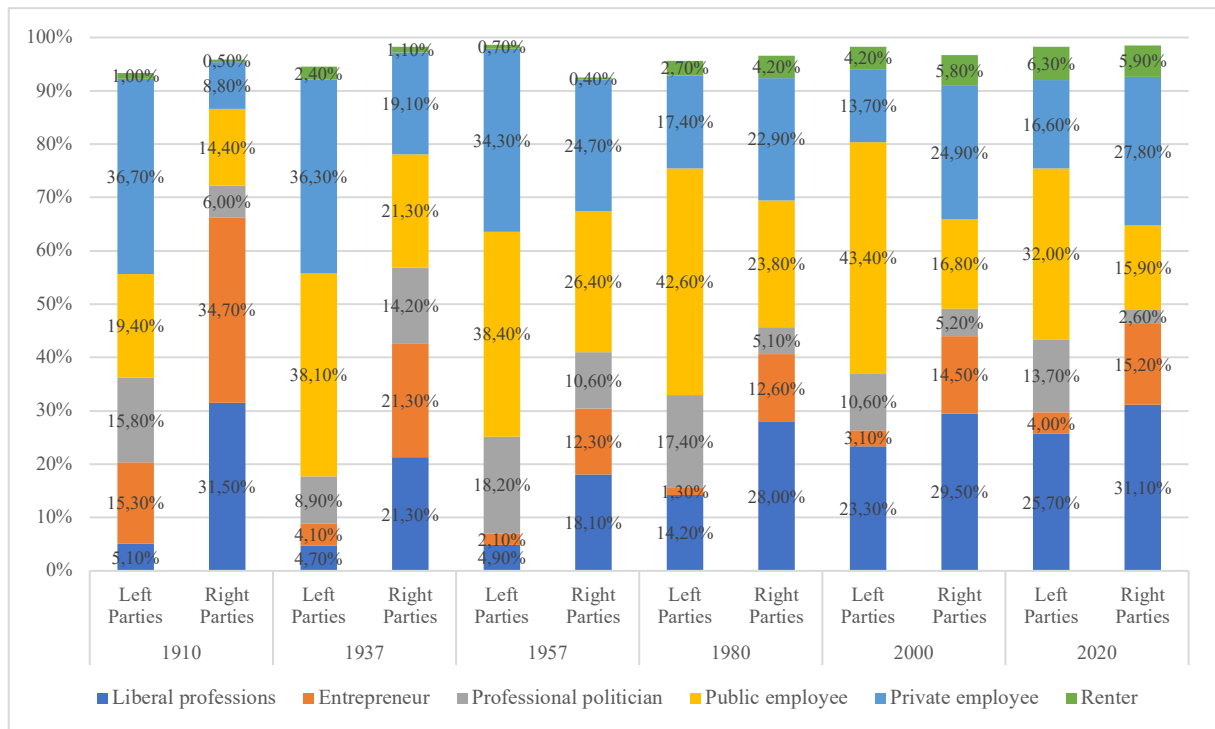
We can therefore clearly see a change in the profile of urban left-wing politicians over the period, with a very high proportion of members with a university degree nowadays. Whereas the pioneers of socialism and the newcomers to powers had a higher level of education than the left elected representatives integrated into the institutions in 1957, the increase has been very great since 2000, when the proportion of university graduates among the new hegemonies is greater than the proportion of non-graduates, even exceeding the elected representatives of the right.

2.3. Professional Background: A Dynamic of “Similarization” with Right-Wing Politicians?

Documenting the professional background of political elites is a classic dimension in their analysis. It allows to better understand which main professions make it easier to access a political mandate at the local or national level, and which types of professions are overrepresented among elected politicians.

More specifically concerning left-wing politicians in large cities in a long-term perspective, the professional background allows to show the differences with right-wing politicians, and to document the transformations of the main profession exercised by left-wing politicians.

Figure 4. Professional categories among the Left Parties elected representatives in Basel-Stadt, Geneva and Zurich (1910-2020), in %⁸



N Left Parties: 1910=98, 1937=168, 1957=143, 1980=155, 2000=189, 2020=175.
 N Right Parties: 1910=216, 1937=183, 1957=227, 1980=214, 2000=173, 2020=151.

When it comes to the evolution of the professional background of left political elites, several trends that were found at the cantonal and federal level by Pilotti et al. (2021) can also be observed at the local level. First, except for 1910, public employees are the largest professional category over the whole period, although they decline from 43.4% in 2000 to 32% in 2020. Second, while it is the most important professional category in 1910 and still represents 34.4% in 1957, private employees drop significantly from 1980 onwards where they are at 17.4%. This decrease is partly compensated by a rise in the number of elected representatives practicing a liberal profession. Still marginal until 1957, where they represent 4.9% of left-wing elected representatives, they gradually rose from 14.2% in 1980, 23.30% in 2000 to 25.7% in 2020. In this respect, the professional profile of the new hegemony looks more and more like that of right-wing elected representatives – among the latter 30.1% exercise a liberal profession in 2020. Nowadays, the major difference between left- and right parties lies in the proportion of private and public employees, whose proportions are practically reversed, and in the marginal rate of professional politicians among right-wing politicians. This is part of a process of “similarization” of left-wing elected representatives to their right-wing counterparts highlighted by Ilonszki (2007) in European parliaments.

Thirdly, a stable presence of professional politicians can be observed throughout the period. They fall below 10% only once in 1937 but they are more than 15% in 1957 and 1980 during the period of cooperation with the right. Finally, the slight increase in the number of renters is due to the increasing presence of students among the elected members since 2000.

With respect to the four phases that we have identified above, we can state that the pioneers of socialism in 1910 had a rather distinct profile – a higher share of entrepreneurs (among which small shop owners) and a lower share of public employees – than their successors in 1937. The

⁸ Percentages missing at 100% represent missing data.

interwar and the first post-war cohort were dominated by public and private employees. From the 1980s onwards, the professional profiles of the emerging new hegemony started to move away from this working-class domination, with the strong proportion of public sector employees and the growing share of liberal professions.

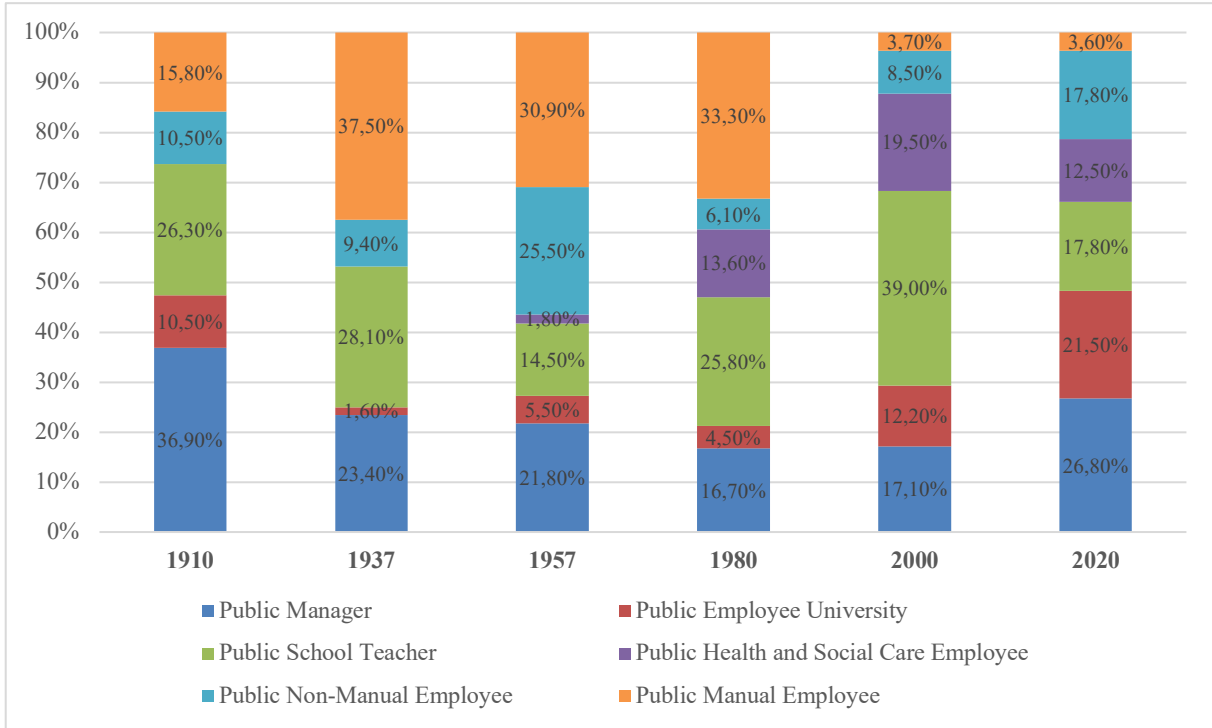
These different phases can be further illustrated if we look in more detail at the composition of two professional categories. First, public employees since they are the largest professional category among the left urban elite over the whole period. Second, professional politicians are often the most active elected representatives in parliament. This will allow us to further illustrate some inherent transformations in the profile of the three cities' left-wing elected representatives.

Public employees: winners and losers of cities' tertiarization

As we can see in Figure 3 below, for the public employees, the most striking development is the near disappearance of manual employees in the public sector in 2000 while they still represented 33.3% of the public employees in 1980. To some degree, the manual employees are replaced by the health and social care employees which, after appearing at 1.8% in 1957, reach 13.6% in 1980. As Di Capua (2019, 2020) has shown in the case of the cities of Lausanne and Zurich in particular, the socio-economic transformations within cities in the second half of the 20th century are linked to the changing profile of elected representatives. Indeed, while the manual employees belonged largely to the former federal companies and to local public service providers (Swiss Post, Swiss Federal Railways, Local Public Transport Companies, etc.), the process of cities' tertiarization of employment during the second half of the 20th century favored the emergence of health and social care employees⁹ as well as those of the three cities' universities which are also experiencing strong growth (from 12 to 21%). This last point is related to the very large increase in the number of elected representatives with a university degree.

⁹ Women are particularly overrepresented in this category. In general, women are much more represented among left-wing elected representatives than among right-wing parties since the introduction of the right to vote for women (in 1971 at the national level, and earlier in our three cantons): 20% in 1980 for the left (and 17% for the right), and almost 50% in 2020 against 25% for the right.

Figure 5. Professional subcategories among the Left Parties elected representatives' Public employees in Basel-Stadt, Geneva and Zurich (1910-2020), in %



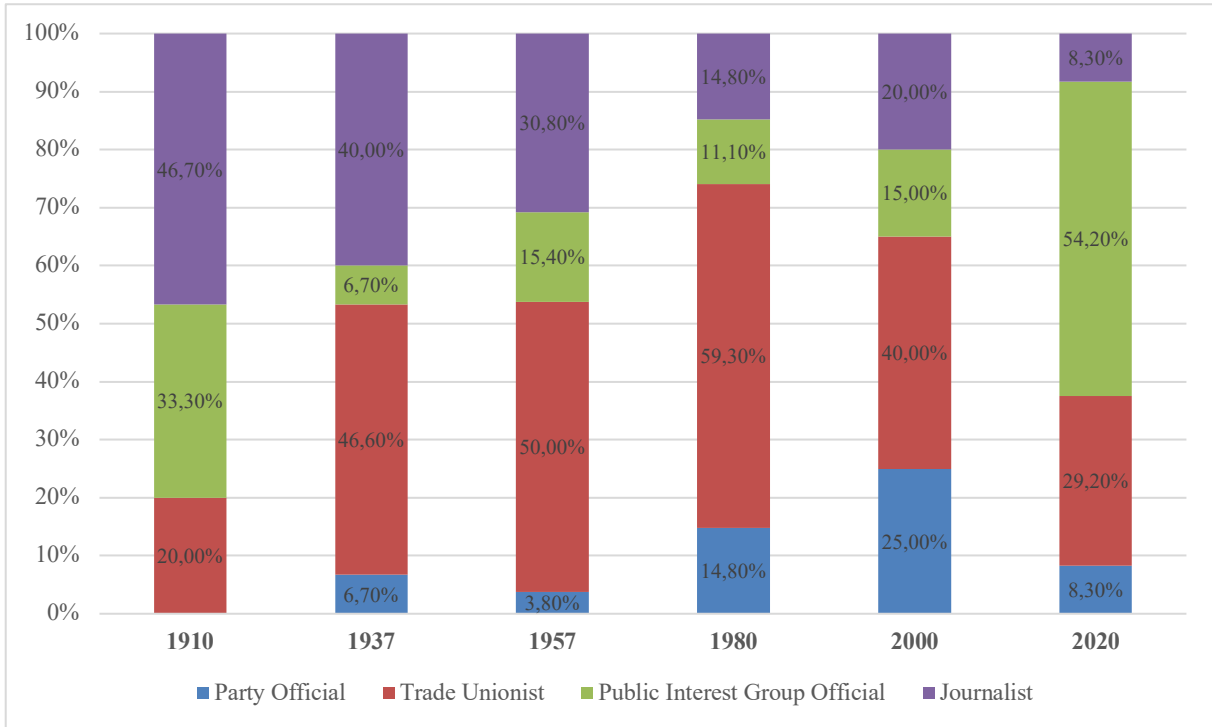
N Total: 1910=19, 1937=64, 1957=55, 1980=66, 2000=82, 2020=56.
 N Public Manager: 1910=7, 1937=15, 1957=12, 1980=11, 2000=14, 2020=15.
 N Public Employee University: 1910=2, 1937=1, 1957=3, 1980=3, 2000=10, 2020=12.
 N Public School Teacher: 1910=5, 1937=18, 1957=8, 1980=17, 2000=32, 2020=10.
 N Public Health and Social Care Employee: 1957=1, 1980=9, 2000=16, 2020=7
 N Public Non-Manual Employee: 1910=2, 1937=6, 1957=14, 1980=4, 2000=7, 2020=10.
 N Public Manual Employee: 1910=3, 1937=24, 1957=17, 1980=22, 2000=3, 2020=2.

Another interesting development is the evolution of the public manager rate which follows a u-shaped curve. Very present among the pioneers of socialism, where they reach 36.9%, their rate declined thereafter to reach 16.7% in 1980. While their presence increases very slightly in 2000, they are at 26.8% again in 2020. Whereas in 1910 the majority were judges, in 2020 the majority are high civil servants of the public administration, either communal or cantonal. This can be explained by the left-wing takeover of the cities since the 1990s and the subsequent employment of ideologically left persons in key positions of the local public administration. The substantive share of primary and secondary school teachers among left elected representatives that are public employees over the whole period is also worth noting. During the 20th century, teachers are a strong group among social democratic political parties in Europe. For example, in France, between 1950 and 1980, Bacot (1979) has shown their strong presence in the leadership of the French social democratic party and among its elected officials: in 1972, almost one out of three socialist mayors in towns with more than 15,000 inhabitants is a teacher or a retired teacher prior to its election. In Switzerland, at the federal level, this is not the case. Pilotti (2017: 239, 359) indicates an increase of teachers in the social democratic party's group in the Swiss parliament between 1957 and 1980 (from 3.4% to 22.6%) but shows that this is only a temporary phenomenon (12.1% in 2000 and only 5.5% in 2016). It is therefore interesting to note that at the local level, the rate of teachers is slightly higher, they even reach 39% of the share of left-wing public employees in 2000.

Professional politicians: The persistence of trade unionists, the fall of journalists and the rise of public interest group officials

Concerning the detailed profile of professional politicians among the urban left, two points are worth emphasizing. First, as we can see in Figure 4 below, although they represent the smallest subcategory of professional politicians in 1910 with 20% (3 individuals), from 1937 to 2000, trade unionists are the most important subcategory, even reaching 59.3% of them in 1980. The figures for 1910 are understandable: although they were born in the second half of the 19th century, trade unions became important only in the first two decades of the 20th century in Switzerland. The high percentages thereafter are not surprising as the links between the social democratic party and the trade unions are historically very strong in Switzerland (Siegenthaler 1975) and several MPs at the federal level have held leading positions in the main trade union organizations (Mach and Widmer 2004; Widmer 2007). However, it is interesting to note that in 2020, although they are still important representing nearly 30% of left parties’ professional politicians, trade unionists are by far outnumbered by public interest group officials in 2020. These were already once more numerous in 1910. At the time of pioneers of socialism, they were mainly leaders of local consumer associations (very present in Basel with close connections with the social-democratic party), whereas in 2020 the professional politicians of the new hegemony are mainly heading social, cultural, or environmental associations such as the WWF regional office.

Figure 6. Professional subcategories among the Left Parties elected representatives’ Professional politicians in Basel-Stadt, Geneva and Zurich (1910-2020), in %



N Total: 1910=15, 1937=15, 1957=26, 1980=27, 2000=20, 2020=24.
 N Party Official: 1937=1, 1957=1, 1980=4, 2000=5, 2020=2.
 N Trade Unionist: 1910=3, 1937=7, 1957=13, 1980=16, 2000=8, 2020=7.
 N Public Interest Group Official: 1910=5, 1937=1, 1957=4, 1980=3, 2000=3, 2020=13.
 N Journalist: 1910=7, 1937=6, 1957=8, 1980=4, 2000=4, 2020=2.

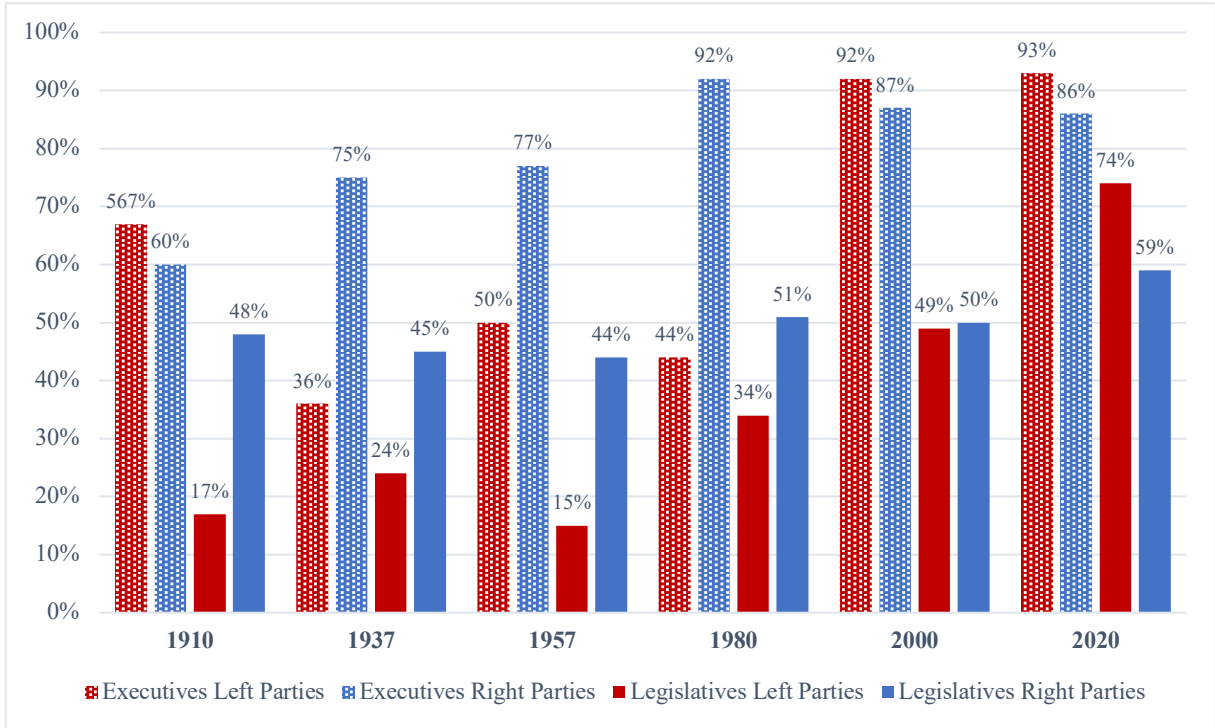
A second important point is the great importance and subsequent decline of partisan journalists. In the first half of the 20th century, the political press played a very important role in the political organization of the labor movement. As such, in 1910, they represented 46.7% of professional politicians. These partisan journalists also often occupied political mandates in local, cantonal or federal parliament. Several local newspapers either edited by the trade unions or left-wing parties were published, and the editors were also often key figures of left-wing political parties. The decline of journalists during the second half of the 20th century is thus related to the progressive disappearance of the political press at the same time in favor of the news press (Clavien 2017).

We can state that the profile of public employees and political professionals among left-wing elected representatives differs across the four phases that we have identified. Indeed, most of the public employees among the pioneers of socialism are public managers (mostly judges) and the professional politicians are mainly political journalists. The newcomers to power, on the other hand, are mostly manual workers or teachers in the public sector, while the professional politicians are either trade unionists or political journalists. During the period of integration and cooperation with right-wing elected officials, the share of manual public employees and teachers remains high, but the emergence of health and social care employees can be noted. For professional politicians, this is the golden age of trade unionists. Finally, the era of the new hegemony is marked in the public sector by the disappearance of manual workers and the affirmation to the forefront of managers, mostly high civil servants of the public administration. For professional politicians, this marks the end of trade union hegemony and the rise of public interest group officials.

2.4. Executive Politicians: a “Super-Elite” Among Left-Wing Urban Politicians?

As indicated above, the executive and legislative positions in urban political authorities are very different in terms of remunerations and political professionalization. Whereas executive functions are full time jobs, members of urban communal councils, even in Zurich, occupy part-time political mandates, that can reach a 30-50% workload maximum. This raises the question about the differences between the individuals holding these different types of political mandates. Do executive members represent a kind of “super-elite” among left-wing urban politicians, that differ from legislative politicians?

Figure 7. Share of elected representatives in Basel-Stadt, Geneva and Zurich with a university degree, in executives and legislatives bodies (1910-2020), in %

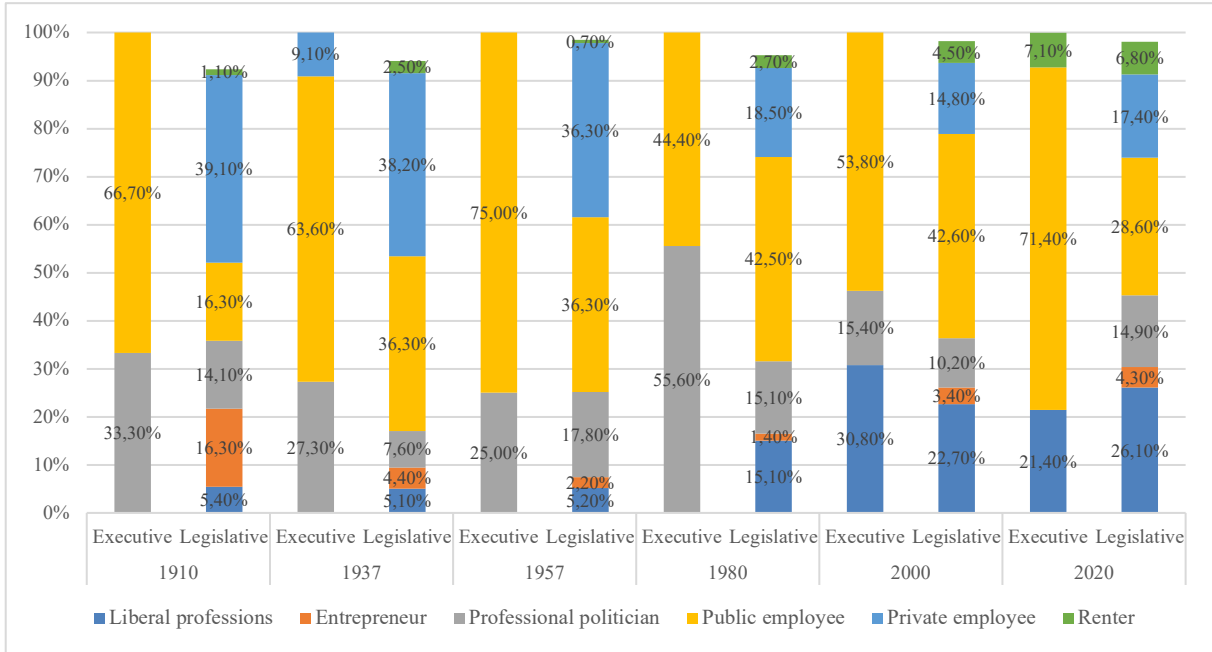


N Total: 1910=314, 1937=351, 1957=370, 1980=369, 2000=362, 2020=326.
 N Executives Left Parties: 1910=6, 1937=11, 1957=8, 1980=9, 2000=13, 2020=14.
 N Executives Right Parties: 1910=15, 1937=10, 1957=13, 1980=12, 2000=8, 2020=7.
 N Legislatives Left Parties: 1910=92, 1937=157, 1957=135, 1980=146, 2000=176, 2020=161.
 N Legislatives Right Parties: 1910=201, 1937=173, 1957=214, 1980=202, 2000=165, 2020=144.

What is striking, at first sight, is the marked difference in the level of university education between legislative bodies’ members and those of the executive bodies throughout the entire period. The level of education of executive’s members is much higher over the whole period. This is also true, but to a lesser extent, for right-wing politicians. We can therefore speak of a better-educated left-wing super-elite present in the executive bodies, while until 2020 those elected to legislative bodies are more representative of the social base of left-wing parties. However, this assertion can be qualified by noting that for left-wing elected representatives, except for the high rate of socialist pioneers with a university degree in the executive bodies in 1910 (67%, 4 out of 6), academic rates are relatively low even for members of the executive bodies until 2000. This is not unique to local political institutions. Indeed, like for most European parliaments, Pilotti (2017: 218-220) has shown that the Social Democrats in the Swiss parliament are the group with the lowest rate of academics between 1937 and 1980. In this respect, the institutions at the local level do not differ from those at the federal level.

A first major turning point comes in 2000, when in the executive bodies the share of left-wing party members with a university degree exceeds that of their right-wing counterparts, increasing significantly from 44% to 92%. The same happens in 2020 for left-wing elected representatives in legislative bodies when they also overtake their counterparts from right-wing parties, going from a share of university graduates of 49% to 74%. It can be said that in 2020, most new hegemonies, whether they are present in the executive or legislative bodies, have a university degree.

Figure 8. Professional categories among the Left Parties elected representatives in the executive and legislative bodies in Basel-Stadt, Geneva and Zurich (1910-2020), in %¹⁰



N Executive: 1910=6, 1937=11, 1957=8, 1980=9, 2000=13, 2020=14.
 N Legislative: 1910=92, 1937=157, 1957=135, 1980=146, 2000=176, 2020=161.

In terms of professions, the members of the executive bodies are mainly divided into two categories: former public employees and professional politicians. We just count two private employees (one in 1937 and one in 2020) and very few liberal professions in the recent period. For public employees, contrary to the trend in legislative bodies where they are decreasing, their rate is the highest over the whole period reaching even 75% in 1957, except for 1980 when they are supplanted by professional politicians. Furthermore, their profile is different from left-wing public employees who sit in a legislative body. Between 1937 and 1980, most of them are teachers, but in 2000 and 2020, they are mainly public sector managers who, over the whole period, constitute the largest group among public sector employees in the executive bodies. Moreover, there is only one manual worker over the whole period in 1980 in Geneva. These elements point to a left-wing super-elite sitting in the executive bodies.

As for professional politicians, the second largest group in the executive bodies from 1910 to 1957, even becoming the largest in 1980, its rate drops in 2000, from 55.6% to 15.4%. They even disappear completely in 2020. Significantly, their decrease is compensated from 2000 by the arrival of elected representatives practicing a liberal profession. As we have seen, the increase in the number of left-wing elected representatives who performs a liberal profession is a significant feature of the profile of the new hegemony who took control of the cities in the 1990s.

In addition to their specific professional background, executive members also very often hold multiple political offices, as they simultaneously sit in cantonal or federal parliament, at least until 2000. Multiple office holding was very common among Swiss politicians until the end of the 20th century when the professionalization of the Swiss parliament and the growing burden of political mandates have made it much more difficult to maintain multiple office holding (for more details, Di Capua et al. 2020). We can therefore speak of a left-wing super-elite which stands out during the whole period and sits in the local executive bodies. This super-elite has a

¹⁰ Percentages missing at 100% represent missing data.

higher level of education and professionally, it is marked by elected representatives who work mainly in the public sector, and more particularly as managers, most notably in the case of the new hegemons.

Conclusions

In his detailed analysis of the power structure in the city of Basel during the end of the 19th century, Sarasin (1997) used the term “patrician structure of domination” to describe the hegemony of local traditional patrician families, which held dominant positions in the economic, political and cultural spheres of the urban life of Basel. More than hundred years later, the balance of power – at least in the political sphere -- has profoundly changed (see also Strebel et al. 2021). These long-term changes in the composition of urban political elites are illustrative and related to the profound economic and socio-professional transformations of cities. These changes have triggered a process of elite renewal, where representatives of the labor movement, initially largely excluded from positions of power, have progressively accessed leading positions in urban political authorities.

From conflictual confrontation during the first half of the 20th century, the relations of left-wing politicians with right-wing parties and regional business elites have evolved towards of logic of political integration and power-sharing where left-wing politicians had to collaborate with their traditional political enemies.

As shown in our analysis, it is possible to distinguish four major phases in the evolution of the urban left in Switzerland, which also correspond to different central figures of left-wing political parties, from the “pioneers” of Swiss socialism to new hegemons of cities in the most recent period. For the pioneers of socialism, although they have a higher level of university education than their counterparts in the 1950s, very few have a university degree (about one in five elected representatives). In terms of occupation, they stand out with a very high share of private sector employees and entrepreneurs (especially small shops owners). As for the left-wing newcomers to power, about one in four elected representatives has a university degree. Professionally, they are usually either private or public sector employees, the majority of whom are manual workers. During the period of cooperation with right-wing parties, the rate of elected representatives with a university degree reached its lowest point in 1957. Professionally, there has been a gradual decline in the number of employees in the private sector and a gradual increase in the number of elected representatives in the liberal professions. While in some ways the profile of elected representatives is beginning to resemble that of their right-wing counterparts, the share of public employees remains the largest with a majority of manual public employees and teachers. It is also the era with the highest amount of professional politicians, a category where trade unionists overwhelmingly dominate. There is a major shift in left-wing elected representatives’ profile in parallel to their renewed accession to power in the cities. The rate of new hegemons with a university degree is more than 3 out of 4 in 2020. Although still predominantly working in the public sector, there has been a near disappearance of manual workers and more than half of public employees are managers or university employees. In addition, almost one in four left-wing elected representatives now works in a liberal profession, bringing them ever closer to the profile of their right-wing counterparts. Finally, a distinction can be made between the profile of left-wing elected representatives sitting in an executive body and those sitting in a legislative body. Indeed, throughout the period, the former have a much higher rate of university education, and the majority are managers in the public sector.

We can observe some important differences between the two periods where the political left accessed political power in Swiss cities. When they first were in a majoritarian position during

the 1920s and 1930s, left-wing parties often had to fight conflictual electoral campaigns to gain political majorities. Their representatives were also largely composed of individuals without higher education and occupying subordinated professions. By contrast, during the 1990s, when left-wing political parties again took power in the major Swiss cities, they already had important executive experience in each city, even if in minoritarian positions. Today, urban left-wing political elites mainly come from the new urban middle-class, with high cultural capital (university degree), working mainly in the public sector, but also sometimes in the private sector. Such urban upper middle-class are largely inclined to vote for center-left or green party (Andreotti et al. 2015: 49). In the context of the affirmation of the neoliberal city (Pinson and Morel Journal 2017), Swiss urban left-wing parties have succeeded to form new hegemonic center-left coalitions, composed of different components ranging from extreme-left to center-left political forces. These profound changes in the composition of the left-wing political elites are illustrative of the economic and socio-professional transformations of cities, as well as the resultant evolution of the left-wing political parties.

Some interesting points of investigation have not been developed in our paper and would need further analysis. First, we did not address the evolution of the political program and priorities of left-wing parties over time. For sure, the changing composition of left-wing political parties and their elites, as well as the transformations of cities, have impacted the political priorities of these parties as well as their contribution to the transformation of the city. Second, a more detailed qualitative analysis of the interactions of left-wing parties with right-wing parties during the different phases highlighted in the paper would provide a better understanding of the evolution from intense conflictual relations to more consensual politics in the governance of cities. Third, we have mainly stressed the common general trends affecting the three cities and their left-wing political parties. However, it would be interesting to look in more detail at the differences between the three cities. Finally, the differences and the forms of cooperation between the different components of the left would also need further investigation.

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Appendix

Figure A.1. Type of Left-Progressive Parties in City Governments, 1890-2020

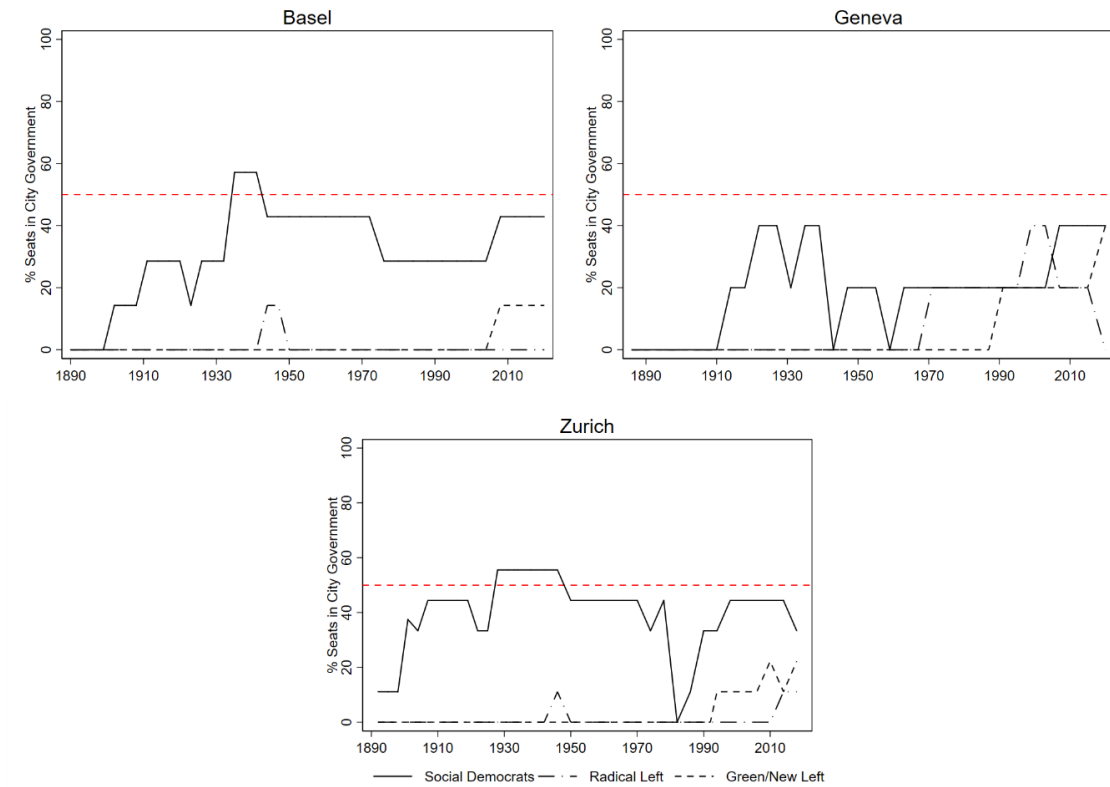


Figure A.2. Strength of Left-Progressive Parties in City Governments, 1890-2020

