The Half-Life of Election Pledges

What makes MPs change their positions?

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"Thou shalt not bear false witness," as we all know. Yet changing one's mind in case of respectable reasons seems to be allowed. Which is good news for politicians, but reduces the effectiveness of prospective voting, i.e. the focus on "the commitments of candidates to take actions that citizens desire to be taken" (Powell 2000: 9). This may be bad news for voters. By comparing pre-election commitments of Swiss members of parliament (MPs) with actual voting behaviour in the lower house of parliament, the following article explores the question how much confidence voters can have in prospective voting and what factors explain (non-)fulfilment of election pledges.

Background and research question

Elections claim that they forge "connections between the wishes of citizens and the behavior of policymakers" (Powell 2000: 14). They suggest that the elected representatives place the political preferences of their voters into the legislative realm. This "program-to-policy linkage" (Thomson 2001; Klingeman et al. 1994) constitutes an essential element of the mandate model (or responsible party model) of government, in which parties compete with different political programs and the

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winner receives the mandate (and bears responsibility) to implement it (Schattschneider 1942; Downs 1957). Periodic elections then give the electorate the opportunity to evaluate the performance of the incumbent government and, if necessary, to modify their voting decision next time (retrospective voting, or accountability). This ideal conception of parliamentary democracy has been criticised on various grounds.[4] The concept encounters more complex institutional arrangements in cases of political systems which are based on ideas of separation of powers or power sharing like pure presidentialism, mixed systems, or consensus democracies like the Swiss exemplar (Lijphart 1984, 1999; Linder 1994; Vatter 2008). In such systems the responsibility for policy enactment is not placed on the government party (or coalition) alone.[5] Dispersion-of-powers frameworks[6] often go along with a separation of purpose, i.e. the electorate is free to assign different kinds of "mandates" to different directly elected bodies, or hold separately elected institutions accountable on different grounds (Samuels and Shugart 2003). Because of the – to a greater or lesser extent – mutual independence of the executive and the legislative branches and federalistic state structures, dispersed-powers regimes are often accompanied by candidate-centered voting systems and weak party structures which altogether promote the cultivation of personal, party-independent candidate profiles (Carey and Shugart 1995; Mitchell 2000). This creates ideological diversity within parties, whereby personal election pledges of candidates gain in importance for prospective-voting voters, compared to central party platforms in centralised parliamentary systems (see also Mansergh and Thomson 2007).

Regardless of the specific institutional environment, the underlying theoretical assumption that voters can rely on explicit election pledges remains an indispensable part of the concept of prospective voting, and political representation in general. Two questions remain: Are MPs really committed to their pre-election promises and what factors do explain the (non-)fulfilment of election pledges?

Existing studies on the subject usually compare election pledges in party manifestos or public

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4 For instance, proponents of salience theory doubt if parties during election campaigns really provide directly comparable policy alternatives, instead they engage in a kind of indirect competition (Budge and Hofferbert 1990; Klingemann et al. 1994). Moreover, mandate theory in its basic form ignores (1) limited information processing capabilities of the electorate, both ex ante and ex post (see Lodge et al. 1995), (2) information asymmetries between principals and agents (agency loss problems; Strøm 2003), and (3) the fact that problems of preference aggregation prevent political actors from knowing what "the voters" want (Riker 1982).

5 That is, the chain of delegation (and accountability) is much more straightforward in parliamentary systems than in power-sharing settings. Strøm (2003: 65) sees a difference between "hierarchical" parliamentarism and "plurarchical" separation-of-powers frameworks.

6 This term, following Powell (2000), shall capture all regime types which do not follow a straight parliamentary logic and incorporate ideas of separation of powers, power sharing, presidentialism, etc.

speeches with governmental policy actions after the election. First studies focused on the United States and Britain, followed by Canada, Greece, the Netherlands, Ireland, and Sweden. Some of them take a comparative perspective, investigating the differences in the "effectiveness" (Royed 1996) of the various democratic systems in enacting policies as promised before elections.[7]

Quite contrary to the common public perception of politicians as a notoriously untrustworthy guild (see the results of the International Social Survey 2006 in table 1, as well as Gallagher et al. 2006; McDonald and Budge 2005), most studies find pledge fulfilment rates among government parties of 70 percent and more and consider them as astonishingly high.[8] This discrepancy between citizens' perceptions and the measured non-fulfilment rates are probably due to fact that for citizens the non-fulfilment of one single but particularly important pledge is reason enough to distrust politicians. As a general pattern, and hardly surprising, government parties in single-party governments like Britain show the highest rates of over 80 percent (Rose 1980; Rallings 1987; Royed 1996), while the effectiveness of the program-to-policy linkage in coalition governments and governments which operate in a dispersed-powers environment tends to be substantially lower at around 60 percent (Pomper and Lederman 1980; Pomper 1988; Royed 1996; Royed and Borrelli 1999).[9]

Table 1: Answers to the ISSP 2006 question "People we elect as MPs try to keep the promises they have made during the election" in four selected countries (unweighted percentages)

	(strongly) agree	**neither agree nor disagree**	**(strongly) disagree**	**N (100%)**
Germany	22.6	26.8	50.7	1561
Great Britain	22.8	31.3	46.0	880
Switzerland	36.9	33.5	29.5	942
USA	21.9	20.1	58.0	1499

Source: International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) 2006 "Role of Government IV", own calculations.

Yet, the current status of research suffers from a number of methodological problems. Most of them

[7] For the United States, see Pomper and Lederman (1980), Pomper (1988), Budge and Hofferbert (1990), Shaw (1998), Royed and Borelli (2002); Britain: Rose (1980); Canada: Rallings (1987); Greece: Kalogeropoulou (1989); the Netherlands: Thomson (1999, 2001); Ireland: Mansergh (2004), Costello and Thomson (2008); Sweden: Naurin (2007). Comparative studies comprise Rallings (1987), Royed (1996), Mansergh and Thomson (2007), as well as Costello and Thomson (2008).

[8] That such findings come as a big surprise to the general public is documented by Naurin (2007) who experienced hostile reactions towards her research project in Sweden after she published the results.

[9] Oppositon parties' pledge fulfilment is even in parliamentary systems above zero, because pledges may coincide with the the parliamentary majority (Costello and Thomson 2008), or the upper-house majority in bicameral systems may have a veto position in the lower house which forces the government to absorb the preferences of the opposition (Tsebelis 2002; Tsebelis and Money 1997).

have been put forward by Costello and Thomson (2008) and Gallagher et al. (2006): First, party manifestos only bring up those issues which are highly salient for the party concerned.[10] This results in a constrained choice of selected pledges because the salience of certain issues does not necessarily coincide between different parties. Second, party manifestos tend to be vague and they often stress "valence issues" (Stokes 1963), i.e. non-ideological statements which nobody is seriously opposed to because they merely assign a positive goal without saying how to achieve it.[11] Moreover, the vagueness of some statements often leaves researchers puzzled whether to classify them as explicit election pledge or not. Third, existing studies ignore different mechanisms of law making in legislative-executive relations.[12] They usually apply a parliamentary logic that government is identical to legislative majority, for which reason it seems fair to evaluate government actions on the basis of the party manifesto. As noted before, this assumption does not hold for countries operating in a context of dispersed powers (Powell 2000; Samuels and Shugart 2003). As soon as different parties are forced to govern together, the chances that they can stick to their electoral programs decreases. A compromise which is likely to find a majority is unlikely to be in line with the electoral programs of all parties involved.[13]

Switzerland's political system is a mixed regime type which incorporates elements both of parliamentarism and presidentialism (Kriesi 2001; Hertig 1978; Lijphart 1984, 1999; Linder 1994; Vatter 2008). The Swiss power-sharing system is characterised by highly dispersed powers not only in terms of federalism and direct democracy, but also in terms of a joint government of the most important parties and changing majorities within government and parliament (Schwarz 2009). Incentives to form a stable coalition – both in government and parliament – are low because the executive and legislative branches enjoy high mutual independence once the elections of the government members by the parliament are over.[14]

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[10] "In choosing their issues, parties act rationally, emphasizing the policy areas of their strength and neglecting the strong points of their opponents. They tend to be specific on these issues of direct, distributive benefit to the voters and to resort to rhetoric or vagueness where voters are unclear, uninterested, or divided" (Pomper 1988: 163); see also Budge and Hofferbert (1990).

[11] Accoring to Ostrogorski (1964: 138) a platform "represents a long list of statements relating to politics, in which everybody can find something to suit him, but in which nothing is considered as of any consequence by the authors of the document, as well as by the whole convention."

[12] An exception is the attention recent studies draw to the effects of coalition government (Mansergh and Thomson 2007; Costello and Thomson 2008) or minority governments (Naurin 2007), as compared to single-party governments.

[13] The following real-politics example, taken out of "faz.net" (online issue of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*) on 5 September 2006, further underscores this point: "'As coalition, we are pitted against what has been said in the election campaign. This is unfair.' This said [vice chancellor] Franz Müntefering, without being asked to do so, at the 'We are back' press conference [....]. It was none of his wisecracks – and anything but a joke. He wanted to get it off his chest, and Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel, who was sitting next to him, agreed" (own translation).

[14] Parliamentary or governmental rights to dismiss each other during the constitutionally fixed legislative period of four years are entirely lacking.

This article thus looks at a political system where the linkage between electoral promises of collective party platforms and legislative behaviour of individual MPs is supposed to be loose. Instable legislative case-by-case majorities and the powerful position of single MPs compared to the party leaders justify a change of the methodological perspective from party to the individual level. This is recently made possible by using data from web-based voting assistance applications (VAA). Instead of looking at party manifestos we use personal statements of MPs as recorded in the Swiss VAA "smartvote"[15] and compare them with legislative voting behaviour in the Swiss lower house, the National Council. Our focus therefore is not directed at the collective enactment of political programmes by fixed parliamentary majorities, but rather at the commitment of individual MPs to enact their own – sometimes party-independent – agenda.

Data and the dependent variable

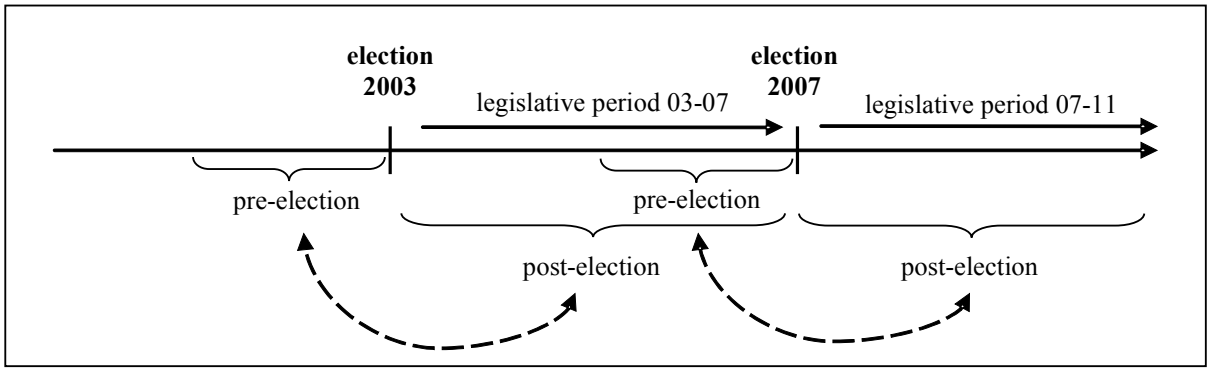
The article compares the answers given to the smartvote questionnaire with identical (or nearly identical) parliamentary votes. The smartvote application was launched in the run-up to the 2003 Swiss general elections and offered for a second time in 2007 (Thurman and Gasser 2009). The tool includes a broad-based questionnaire of 70 (2003) and 73 questions (2007) which allows for a reasonably precise analysis of the ideological positions of the candidates and parties (Ladner *et al.* 2008). In 2003, smartvote covered 69.5 percent of all elected MPs in the 200-seat National Council, in the 2007 elections this share mounted to 93.5 percent.

The inspection of the parliamentary debates 2003-2009 detected 34 roll call votes that match with an item in the smartvote questionnaire and cover several important policy dimensions (see listing in appendix 1). We took into account that pledges are submitted to a half-life and do not last forever; thus for the answers of the MPs to the 2003 questionnaire, we only inspected the 2003-2007 debates, for the answers to the 2007 questionnaire only the debates from 2007 onwards.[16] The maximum time span between the promise and the related parliamentary vote is therefore four years (see figure 1).

[15] http://www.smartvote.ch; the tool is operated by the non-partisan research network "Politools" in Bern, Switzerland (for details, see Thurman and Gasser 2009).

[16] There are five exceptions to this rule when we took into account parliamentary votes of the preceding term that are very close to the election day (items no. 1, 15, and 17-19 in appendix 1).

Figure 1: Pre- and post-election spheres 2003-2009 taken into account



The smartvote questionnaire provides for four answer options (fully agree, weakly agree, weakly disagree, fully disagree), while parliamentary votes allow for three options (yea, nay, abstention). Moreover, smartvote participants have to answer all questions whereas elected MPs have the possibility to walk out or abstain from the vote if they feel unable to make a decision. We therefore created a proximity matrix (the dependent variable) which matches the opinions given in the smartvote questionnaire and the legislative vote (see table 2; the value 1 means full election pledge fulfilment, i.e. no difference between pre- and post-election behaviour).[17] If an MP did not answer the smartvote questionnaire and/or did not take part in a related roll call, his or her pledge fulfilment rate has not been calculated for the concerned item; our data sheet is thus unbalanced which needs appropriate statistical correction in indivudual-level analyses.

Table 2: Proximity matrix (congruence) between smartvote answer and legislative behaviour (dependent variable, specification 1)

	legislative behaviour		
	yea	nay	abstention
smartvote answer			
fully agree	1	0	0.5
weakly agree	0.75	0.25	0.75
weakly disagree	0.25	0.75	0.75
fully disagree	0	1	0.5

[17] Table 2 presents the most refined specification of our dependent variable which can adopt five different values and which makes subtle distinctions between different constellations. In order to assess the dependency of our findings on the specification of the (latent) dependent variable we tested our models with alternative specifications as well (see appendix 2 and the estimated models in the multivariate analysis section of this paper, table 9).

In the following two tables basic information is given on the number of MPs included in the dataset and the number of roll call votes analysed.[18]

Table 3: Number of MPs per party in the dataset

	2003-2007	**2007-2009**	**total**
SVP	46	55	61
SP	55	42	62
FDP	35	29	44
CVP	31	30	38
GP	16	21	27
others	17	14	22
total	**200**	**191**	**254**

Table 4: Number of roll call votes per party in the dataset

	2003-2007	**2007-2009**	**total**
SVP	561	739	1300
SP	759	576	1335
FDP	349	379	728
CVP	359	388	747
GP	198	285	483
others	178	173	351
total	**2404**	**2540**	**4944**

A first glance at the data reveals that – contrary to common perception but in line with findings from other research cited above – MPs usually stick to their promises. As can be seen from table 5 MPs do fulfil their pre-election pledges in 84.5 percent of the cases[19]. There are however quite large differences between parties. The highest congruence between pre- and post-election positions can be found among the leftist parties – the Social Democrats (SP) and the Greens (GP) – with rates of over 90 percent, and the right-wing national-conservative SVP whose MPs stay with their pledges in 85 percent of the cases. The lowest positional congruence show the two centrist parties, the Christian Democrats (CVP) and the liberal Free Democrats (FDP): their rates lie between 76 and 80

[18] It should be kept in mind that table 3 lists all MPs included in the analysis, also those that replaced a previous MP. This means that the total number of 200 (2003-2007) is merely a coincidence with the number of seats in the National Council.

[19] Here we consider values of 0.75 and 1 according to the proximity matrix in table 2 as fulfilment of an election pledge. For a complete table which also shows the number of observations per question and party, see appendix 3.

percent. Interesting differences can also be found between issues taking into account all parties. The positional congruence ranges from 71.4 (disclosure of salaries of board members and CEOs) to 93.3 percent (naturalization of 2nd/3rd generation).

Table 5: Positional congruence (in %) by party and issue

	SVP	**SP**	**CVP**	**FDP**	**GP**	**all parties**[20]
Simplified naturalization 2nd/3rd generation	89.5	100.0	92.3	83.3	100.0	93.3
Adoption by homosexual couples	82.8	88.4	75.0	50.0	100.0	79.5
Higher military spending	92.6	100.0	57.1	81.0	90.0	87.5
EU membership	100.0	100.0	84.2	76.2	90.9	92.5
Radio/TV fee splitting	80.8	61.1	94.4	77.8	40.0	72.4
Network of post offices	86.7	97.8	59.1	95.0	100.0	86.9
Higher remuneration for MPs	85.7	73.8	36.4	73.7	81.8	71.5
Higher spending for agriculture	95.8	69.2	75.0	85.7	77.8	78.9
Disclosure of salaries	23.1	100.0	62.5	61.5	100.0	71.4
Standstill agreement on genetically modified organisms	75.0	100.0	77.8	100.0	100.0	91.5
Special VAT for tourism	89.7	81.6	90.0	94.7	90.9	87.4
Free choice between military and civilian service	86.2	100.0	60.0	80.0	100.0	86.7
Privatization of “Swisscom”	82.8	97.6	84.2	100.0	100.0	87.4
Higher spending for child care and crèches	89.3	100.0	65.0	64.7	100.0	85.4
Teaching English as the first foreign language	75.0	73.8	100.0	40.0	100.0	72.6
Health insurance coverage for alternative medicine	86.1	97.4	56.5	90.0	100.0	86.7
Storing soldier’s weapons in the armoury	94.9	100.0	76.2	85.7	100.0	92.3
Deployment of the army to support civilian units	80.6	90.0	100.0	95.5	90.9	89.4
Ban on smoking	87.5	92.5	65.2	81.0	100.0	85.4
Legalization of cannabis	100.0	89.5	95.7	70.8	90.0	91.6
Naturalizations by using the ballot box	98.0	100.0	77.8	80.0	100.0	92.9

[20] Including parties not separately listed in this table.

Toughening of juvenile criminal law	98.0	95.0	55.2	51.9	95.0	79.8
Associations' right of appeal	96.1	100.0	64.3	92.9	100.0	92.3
Introduction of a finance referendum	82.0	97.6	89.7	48.0	73.7	80.2
Free movement of peoples from Bulgaria and Romania	94.2	100.0	88.9	79.2	100.0	92.5
Introduction of road pricing	95.7	91.9	74.1	76.9	100.0	88.6
Higher spending for development aid	95.7	94.9	58.6	83.3	100.0	87.6
Introduction of voting age 16	93.8	94.9	88.5	100.0	94.1	92.5
Permission of parallel imports	76.5	100.0	64.0	66.7	95.0	80.5
Preventive monitoring	54.5	87.2	69.2	70.8	94.7	72.6
Ban on the construction of minarets	92.3	100.0	89.7	85.2	100.0	92.6
Introduction of a minimum wage	98.0	100.0	77.8	91.7	94.4	92.6
Direct election of Federal Council (executive)	46.8	97.1	96.3	100.0	88.2	81.4
Retail price maintenance on books	71.7	85.0	71.4	92.9	80.0	76.2
Party mean	**84.6**	**92.8**	**75.7**	**79.6**	**93.2**	**84.5**
(Range of n per question)	(19-53)	(34-45)	(13-29)	(12-28)	(7-20)	(90-181)

In the party mean values reported in the bottom row of table 5, an MPs who participated more frequently in the 34 selected parliamentary votes automatically receive a higher weight in the calculation. Table 6 corrects for this distortion and depicts the average positional congruence per MP and party. The results, however, do not change dramatically compared to the previous table. The figures also show the range within each party: While among Green MPs the lowest mean positional congruence score is as high as 0.75, the lowest mean score within the two centrist parties is at 0.5 which means that on average these MPs change their minds in 50 percent of the selected items.

Table 6: Value range and mean positional congruence per MP and party

	Min.	**Max.**	**Mean** (Std. dev.)	**N** (no. of MPs)
SVP	0.68	0.94	0.841 (0.060)	61
SP	0.71	1.00	0.907 (0.061)	62
CVP	0.50	0.86	0.725 (0.090)	38
FDP	0.50	0.94	0.772 (0.081)	44
GP	0.75	0.97	0.894 (0.067)	27

Legend: 0 = no congruence over all items, 1 = full congruence over all items.

In reference to the title of this paper, these results can be positively interpreted: On average, election pledges survive the subsequent legislative term. But the commitment is obviously contingent on factors like party and political issue which shall be further examined in the following section.

Explaining factors

Why do some MPs stick to their electoral promises and others do not? In explaining pledge fulfilment rates existing research is limited on party- and system-level factors, like the status as government or opposition party, the existence of a single-party or coalition government, the allocation of ministerial portfolios among coalition partners, the congruence of pledges between government/opposition parties as well as between coalition partners, the type of pledge (keeping status quo or implementing new policies), media coverage of the pledges, and so on. The present article combines individual and party- or system-level explanations. The following sections deduce and describe the independent variables used in the multivariate model.

Positional incongruence with party group majority

Pledge fulfilment by an MP is more likely if the majority of the party group takes up the same stance on the issue. If an MP finds out after the election that the majority of his or her fellow party colleagues take another position the propensity increases that he/she will conform to the majority position, most likely due to peer-group pressure as Swiss party group leaders do not have strong instruments at hand to discipline their group members (Hertig 1978; Lanfranchi and Lüthi 1999). We therefore hypothesise that positional incongruence between an MP's pre-electoral position and

the majority position in the party group reduces the likelihood of pledge fulfilment.

Positional centrality of the party

Without digging too deeply into the Swiss multiparty system, we can roughly separate the parties into three groups: left-wing parties (like SP and the GP), right-wing parties (like the SVP), and moderate centrist parties like the CVP and the FDP (see Ladner 2007; Hug and Schulz 2007; Kriesi 2001). Although these parties, with the exceptions of the Greens (and other smaller parties), are all part of the government, they do not form a permanent coalition, due to the mutual independence of the legislative and the executive branch: There is no right to dissolve the parliament (not even by the parliament itself), nor is the parliament allowed to dismiss the government or individual ministers before the end of the legislative period (Lüthi 2007). Legislative majority building is based on case-specific ad hoc coalitions, mainly driven by the political issue at stake (Schwarz and Linder 2006; Schwarz 2009). This has two consequences of interest here: First, the centrist parties regularly play the role of legislative majority builders by deciding whether they ally with the parties at the right or the left side of the council and thus are the most "successful" actors in parliament (Kriesi 2001; Schwarz et al. 2009; Hug and Sciarini 2009). As the results of the previous section suggest, the legislative success of central players comes at least partly at the expense of positional congruence (which is also our hypothesis). Thus the positional centrality of an MP's party in parliament is taken into account as an independent factor. In the multivariate analysis, the CVP, FDP/Liberals, and some smaller moderate parties[21] are considered as centrist parties in the Swiss parliament.[22]

Size of the electoral district and candidate-centredness

In national elections, the electoral districts are the 26 Swiss cantons. Their size varies between 1 and 34 seats, according to population figures. The voting system is first-past-the-post (FPTP) in the 6 single-member districts (SMD), and proportional representation (PR) in the 20 multi-member districts (MMD). According to theory, the electoral connection is closer in small districts (Carey and Shugart 1995; Cox 1997; Bowler and Farrel 1993), mainly because it is easier to keep track of just a few MPs. We would therefore hypothesize that the propensity to disregard election pledges is higher in larger districts than in smaller ones.

[21] Mainly the Evangelic People's Party (EVP) and the Green-Liberal Party (GLP).

[22] This classification between centrist and non-centrist parties can also be based on repeated analysis of voting behaviour with multidimensional scaling technique (e.g. Hermann/Jeitziner 2008; see also http://www.parlamentsspiegel.ch).

In MMDs, an open-list system is applied with the possibility to modify any party list by vote-splitting (panachage) and cumulation (putting a preferred candidate twice on the list). Carey and Shugart (1995) thus classify the Swiss voting system as relatively candidate-centered within the variety of PR systems. For the operationalisation of candidate-centredness we use the actual rate of modified party lists in each electoral district in the 2003 and 2007 elections, which ranges between 29.4 (canton of Geneva in 2007) and 78.0 percent (canton of Valais in 2003). For SMDs the value is set to 100 percent by default. As with the size of the electoral district we can hypothesise that the less candidate-centred (or the more party-centred) the election is the less committed to pledge fulfilment the MPs are.

Issues and issue dimensions

According to salience theory (see above), party manifestos mainly highlight issues which are salient to the party in question, whereas the smartvote questionnaire is composed of the full range of political areas. It seems safe to assume that election pledges concerning issues which are more important to an MP (or his or her party) are more often respected than issues which are quite irrelevant. Since we have neither individual nor party-level data about the importance attached to specific issues, we try to detect the core issues of each party by looking at the homogeneity of the responses to the smartvote questionnaire by all candidates of a party, assuming that the candidates of a certain party show higher agreement on the party's core issues.[23]

We proceed in the following way: For each party and each of the two smartvote surveys we calculate the mean standard deviation of the responses to all issues belonging to one of the following eight policy dimensions (according to the classification made by smartvote): Foreign policy, migration, law and order, society and ethics, economy, finances, social welfare, and environment. This leaves us with a mean standard deviation per party and dimension. From these we select those three dimensions with the lowest standard deviation and consider them as the core dimensions of the respective party (see table 7 below). This listing decides if one of 34 selected issues for the present paper is classified as a party's core issue or not (the policy dimensions of the 34 questions are indicated in appendix 1).

[23] Alternative procedures would be (1) to ask directly the parties about their core issues in the 2003/07 elections, (2) to conduct an expert survey among political scientists, or (3) to extract the core issues by ourselves from the party manifestos.

Table 7: Core dimensions per party and election year

	SVP		SP		FDP		CVP		GP	
	2003	2007	2003	2007	2003	2007	2003	2007	2003	2007
foreign policy	X	X			X		X			
migration	X	X	X	X					X	X
society & ethics			X							
economy					X					
finances	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
social welfare			X			X	X		X	
environment				X		X		X	X	X
law & order								X		

Relevance of the vote

Not all roll calls are equally significant within the legislative process. Some votes may have a direct law-making effect (e.g. votes concerning drawn-up bills which were introduced by the government or the parliament itself), others merely charge the administration to consider the introduction of a law-making proposal (e.g. parliamentary motions). Recent research has shown that the importance of a vote affects legislative behaviour of Swiss MPs (Hug and Sciarini 2009; Schwarz 2009). Out of the 34 selected items 20 are government bills which are assigned a high relevance and 3 are parliamentary motions which are assigned low relevance. 11 items concern parliamentary initiatives which may have a different status, depending on whether the vote is related to the initial phase (low relevance in 5 cases) or to a bill drawn-up and introduced by a legislative committee (high relevance in 6 cases). The effect on pledge fulfilment is theoretically ambiguous: On the one hand, it can be argued that the fulfilment rate is higher when less relevant votes are concerned because they are safe for position-taking and of little consequence, no matter what the result of the roll call is. On the other hand, the publicity of more relevant votes is broader, and MPs could feel more obliged to stick to their pre-election promises.

Visibility of the vote

All votes in the Swiss lower chamber are electronically recorded, but only some of them – roughly one third – are made visible to the public (Schwarz 2005; Hug 2005). Up to date, unpublished votes are only available for research purposes. MPs know in advance which votes will be published so they could at least theoretically adapt their behaviour (Carey 2009). We thus hypothesize that we

will see higher pledge fulfilment rates in published votes.

Incumbent status

The effect of incumbent status on pledge fulfilment is ambiguous: On the one hand, incumbents know how the wind blows; unlike freshmen, they are more consolidated in their political positions and thus less prone to changing their pre-election positions. On the other hand, incumbents might be more detached, both from their party and their voters. They have gained self-confidence from the fact that they have been re-elected at least once which could make them rather feel like trustees than delegates.

Our analysis further controls for the effects of *language* (German-speaking majority vs. French- and Italian-speaking minority), *age*, and *sex*.

Multivariate analysis and discussion of the results

In order to test the hypotheses we estimated in a first step an ordered logit model on the basis of individual-level data with cluster-corrected standard errors (see results in table 8).[24] The dependent variable is the behavioural congruence according to table 2 above, which constitutes a ordinal variable with 5 categories. Apart from the rather low Pseudo-R2 values, which is quite usual for clustered data on repeated social behaviour and should not given too much attention (King 1986; Goldberger 1991), the estimated model performs fairly well. Our main criteria for the evaluation of the model are the plausibility of the estimated parameters with regard to theoretical expectations and the robustness of the effects when modifying either the list of integrated independent variables or the definition of the dependent variable (for alternative specification of the dependent variable see appendix 2).

We first tested the **"full" model 1-1** with all proposed independent variable integrated (see table 8). Beginning with socio-demographic and socio-cultural factors, the model does not show any significant effects on MPs' pledge fulfilment. The same is true for candidate-centeredness of the voting system and district size. Most effects have the theoretically expected direction, but they

[24] We used the *ologit* procedure with *cluster* option in Stata 10.1. We are aware of the issues that lately arised about the incorrect calculations of robust standard errors in Stata. In order to cross-check our results we additionally estimated a multilevel model (mixed-effects logistic regression using the Stata *xtmelogit* command) with the binary dependent variable according to specification 4 in appendix 2 (for details see explanations to table 9 below). The predictions of the multilevel model are shown in appendix 4.

clearly drop behind of those explaining factors which capture the nature of the roll call and party-specific characteristics. One major exception is the incumbency status which significantly furthers positional congruence: The positional reliability of old stagers appears to be higher than that of newcomers.

Pledge fulfilment is significantly higher if individual voting behaviour is published and the lower the relevance of the entire bill is. What at first glance seems contradictory can be explained in two ways: First, with higher party pressure in highly relevant bills that forces the MPs to change their mind according to the majority position of the party. MPs enjoy a higher leeway for personal position-taking in "irrelevant" votes which carry lower or no risk for the party leaders. Moreover, published votes on less relevant bills usually comprise published votes *on demand* by a certain party group, aiming at sending out position-taking signals to their constituents in a core policy area.

Pledge fulfilment also increases if the topic of the vote belongs to a party's core dimensions. The political positions of party members are more consistent in those policy areas which belong to their party's core issues. Again as theoretically expected, pledge fulfilment of an MP is significantly less likely if his or her pre-election statement is in disagreement with the majority position of fellow party members. The model indicates for this factor by far the biggest effect of all variables taken into account.

Moreover, positional centrality of a party (i.e., if the majority of the party group regularly shares the opinion of the legislative majority) affects the congruence between pre-election statements and post-election behaviour negatively. This theoretically expected result means that party members from the political centre (CVP, FDP, EVP, GLP) change their attitudes more often than MPs of other parties.

Compared to 1-1, models 1-2 and 1-3 are much more parsimonious. **Model 1-2** only takes into account the three socio-demographic and socio-cultural factors which all remain non-significant, and the overall model becomes insignificnt (Wald-χ^2 statistics). M**odel 1-3** captures all variables that are invariant within MP clusters. The only slight difference can be detected with male MPs becoming (weakly) significantly less prone to pledge fulfilment than females.

Table 8: Predictions for pledge fulfilment (positional congruence between pre- and post-election sphere; dependent variable according to specification 1)

		Model 1-1	Model 1-2	Model 1-3	Model 1-4
Minority language		-0.159 (0.122)	-.0817 (.1042)	-0.0893 (0.0971)	-.157 (.0981)
Age		-0.00361 (0.00531)	-9.40e-06 (.00516)	0.000991 (0.00459)	-.00353 (.00522)
Male		-0.0654 (0.105)	-.191 (.128)	-0.174+ (0.0969)	-.0654 (.104)
Incumbent		0.341*** (0.0892)			.346*** (.0870)
Published vote		0.390*** (0.0904)			.376*** (.0905)
Relevance of bill		-0.253*** (0.0795)			-.237** (.0788)
Core issue		0.328*** (0.0743)			
Candidate-centeredness of voting system		-2.38e-05 (0.00364)			
District size		-0.00696 (0.00476)		-0.00471 (0.00405)	-.00693 (.00431)
Disagreement with party group majority		-3.061*** (0.131)			-3.072*** (.132)
Positional centrality of party		-0.628*** (0.0879)		-0.894*** (0.0816)	-.587*** (.0853)
	/cut1	-4.467 (0.407)	-3.126 (0.316)	-3.508 (0.283)	-4.551 (.304)
	/cut2	-3.220 (0.409)	-2.243 (0.312)	-2.610 (0.282)	-3.305 (.302)
	/cut3	-3.032 (0.410)	-2.139 (0.313)	-2.504 (0.283)	-3.117 (.305)
	/cut4	-1.556 (0.415)	-1.150 (0.313)	-1.481 (0.284)	-1.644 (.311)
N		*4332*	*4558*	*4558*	*4332*
No of clusters (MPs)		*214*	*218*	*218*	*214*
Pseudo R2		*.1788*	*.0012*	*.0226*	*.1766*
p > chi2 (Wald)		*.0000*	*.3995*	*.0000*	*.0000*
Log pseudolikelihood		*-3423.3*	*-4396.1*	*-4301.9*	*-3432.7*
VIF (mean/max.)		*1.17/1.53*	*1.07/1.08*	*1.08/1.10*	*1.08/1.16*
Method		*ordered logit*	*ordered logit*	*ordered logit*	*ordered logit*

*Notes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05, + p<.10 (two-tailed tests). Entries are logit coefficients (MP cluster-corrected robust standard errors in brackets).*

The last **model 1-4** is based on the full model 1-1 with the core issue and candidate-centredness variables removed. The rationale consists in possible multicollinearities (1) between the core issue variable and the disagreement with party group majority, and (2) between the candidate-centredness of the voting system and district size. Although there is no evidence form model 1-1 that multicollinearity problems might occur, we are cautious enough to remedy possible concerns. The results in model 1-4 back our previous findings.[25] Thus the estimated models and the calculated predictions are quite robust.

Since the article operates with a latent dependent variable, alternative ways for its definition are conceivable. Appendix 2 lists three more feasible specifications; two of them narrow down the number of variable categories from five to three (1, 0.5 and 0). The last specification generates a binary variable. The underlying rationale is that the five ordinal categories of our original dependent variable might contain too many subdivisions that are indistinguishable in reality. The alternative specifications shall remedy these concerns which reduces the variance and eliminates possible "noise".

Table 9 compares the full model 1-1 as already stated with the models 2-1 to 4-1 (the first digit of the model number indicates the definition of the dependent variable, the second digit the specification of the independent variables). Again, the comparison shows quite similar results in all models. Models 1-1 and 2-1 as well as 3-1 and 4-1 are nearly identical in their predictions, except for one major difference concerning the relevance of a bill: the effect of the relevance becomes insignificant in models 3-1/4-1, whereas the incumbency status, the publication of a vote, the presence of a party's core issue, the positional centrality of the party in the legislative process and – above all – the question of disagreement with fellow party group members remain significant throughout the comparison.[26]

[25] By the way, if we remove the factor with the biggest effect on the likelihood of pledge fulfilment (disagreement with party group majority) from the model, all other effects remain stable, too.

[26] As already mentioned in a previous footnote, we further estimated model 4-1 assuming a multilevel setting in order to cross-check our results. The predictions of the multilevel model given in appendix 4 basically confirm the hitherto calculated estimations.

Table 9: Predictions for pledge fulfilment (positional congruence between pre- and post-election sphere; varying dependent variables according to specifications 1-4)

		Depvar spec.1	**Depvar spec. 2**	**Depvar spec. 3**	**Depvar spec. 4**
		Model 1-1	**Model 2-1**	**Model 3-1**	**Model 4-1**
Minority language		-0.159 (0.122)	-0.157 (0.124)	0.00634 (0.165)	0.0302 (0.166)
Age		-0.00361 (0.00531)	-0.00402 (0.00520)	-0.00785 (0.00759)	-0.00665 (0.00768)
Male		-0.0654 (0.105)	-0.0872 (0.106)	-0.0136 (0.142)	-0.0514 (0.142)
Incumbent		0.341*** (0.0892)	0.345*** (0.0910)	0.292* (0.128)	0.305* (0.132)
Published vote		0.390*** (0.0904)	0.370*** (0.0978)	0.535*** (0.138)	0.514*** (0.143)
Relevance of bill		-0.253*** (0.0795)	-0.277*** (0.0801)	0.0359 (0.116)	0.0412 (0.118)
Core issue		0.328*** (0.0743)	0.343*** (0.0759)	0.354** (0.132)	0.337* (0.135)
Candidate-centered voting system		-2.38e-05 (0.00364)	-0.000226 (0.00367)	0.00414 (0.00555)	0.00402 (0.00562)
District size		-0.00696 (0.00476)	-0.00742 (0.00476)	0.00119 (0.00634)	3.83e-05 (0.00637)
Disagreement with party group majority		-3.061*** (0.131)	-2.573*** (0.112)	-3.845*** (0.134)	-3.828*** (0.135)
Positional centrality of party		-0.628*** (0.0879)	-0.637*** (0.0914)	-0.347** (0.119)	-0.358** (0.121)
	/cut1	-4.467 (0.407)	-4.206 (0.402)	-2.994 (0.598)	
	/cut2	-3.220 (0.409)	-1.638 (0.409)	-2.799 (0.601)	
	/cut3	-3.032 (0.410)			
	/cut4	-1.556 (0.415)			
	_cons				2.832*** (0.607)
N		*4332*	*4332*	*4332*	*4332*
No of clusters (MPs)		*214*	*214*	*214*	*214*
Pseudo R2		*.1788*	*.1750*	*.3828*	*.4180*
p > chi2 (Wald)		*.0000*	*.0000*	*.0000*	*.0000*
Log pseudolikelihood		*-3423.3*	*-2737.0*	*-1213.9*	*-1035.3*
Method		*ordered logit*	*ordered logit*	*ordered logit*	*logit*

*Notes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05, + p<.10 (two-tailed tests). Entries are logit coefficients (MP cluster-corrected robust standard errors in brackets).*

How should the results be interpreted? First of all, pledge fulfilment has nothing to do with socio-demographic or socio-cultural characteristics of the individual MP. Furthermore, there is no reason to believe that district properties like its size or the effort voters take in modifying party lists (as a proxy variable for the candidate-centeredness of the voting system) make a difference for pledge fulfilment.

Among the factors that have a significant effect on pledge fulfilment there is one major explanation which outshines everything else: If an MP's smartvote position contravenes the majority position of his or her party group, it is quite unlikely that this MP adheres to his or her pre-election statement. Put in simple figures, if the smartvote position contradicts the party group position, in roughly two thirds of the cases MPs adopt during the legislative vote the majority opinion of their fellows (see table 10). However, if pre-election pledge and majority position of the legislative party group correspond, a switch of position is seen in only 4 percent of the cases. Analysed by parties, the table reveals that MPs in moderate parties (CVP and FDP) tend to change their opinion more often when disagreement exists between their smartvote anwer and the party group majority than MPs of right- or left-wing parties do. In the multivariate models this is mirrored in the fact that the positional centrality of a party, as theoretically expected, shows a negative effect on pledge fulfilment.

Table 10: Pledge non-fulfilment rate depending on the (dis-)agreement between MP smartvote answer and party group position

	disagreement of positions		**agreement of positions**	
	n (%)	**N (=100%)**	**n (%)**	**N (=100%)**
CVP	156 (68.1)	229	25 (4.9)	514
FDP	122 (67.4)	181	20 (3.8)	526
SP	70 (63.6)	110	23 (1.9)	1185
SVP	133 (59.9)	222	53 (5.1)	1038
GP	26 (65.0)	40	6 (1.4)	431
All parties[27]	553 (65.2)	848	140 (3.6)	3911

The parliamentary group has either a strong socialising effect on its MPs or social pressure is strong enough to bring deviant MPs back on the party line. As for the center parties FDP and CVP where their MPs enjoy traditionally more leeway than in the case of the Social Democrats and the SVP the coercion argument is less convincing. Here it might also be the case that MP of the more centrist formations have on a bigger number of issues weaker preferences which make opinion changes

[27] Including parties not separately listed in this table.

easier.

Three more factors have a constantly significant effect in our models. First, incumbent MPs are either more consolidated in their political positions than newcomers or they are in a position which allows stronger resistance against party pressure, or both. Second, MPs stick to their pre-election promises more frequently if the individual voting behaviour is published and thus visible to the media, pressure groups, and interested voters. The causality, however, remains not so clear, because there are two types of visible votes: those automatically published by statute, and those published on demand of at least 30 MPs. In the latter case, MPs may demand a visible vote because they know that they will keep their promise, for instance if saliency is high. Or they force themselves in line in an automatically published vote because they know that the media and pressure groups will keep an eye on them. Only in this case roll call voting makes the MPs stick to their promises.

This leads to the third significant factor, the question of core issues, i.e. the political content of a vote. We defined this variable pragmatically as those policy areas with the lowest variance among all party members in the smartvote questionnaire. The empirical results confirm that a such defined pre-electoral unity in specific policy areas coincides with higher pledge fulfilment rates. This makes theoretically sense and shows that pledge fulfilment depends on policies, too, although one can argue that our definition of the core issues does not take into account the saliency a party actually attaches to an issue. This may be an issue for future research.

Conclusion

The present article analyses the positional congruence between pre-election statements in the Swiss voting assistance application “smartvote” and post-election behaviour in the Swiss lower house in the period 2003-2009. For this purpose, we selected 34 smartvote questions which subsequently came up in parliament in identical or nearly identical form and compared the positions of individual MPs. Unlike previous studies which assessed the program-to-policy linkage of governments or party groups the present paper examined the question at the level of individual MPs. This seems appropriate for political systems that follow the idea of power dispersion between executive and legislative branches and multi-party government with case-by-case coalitions in parliament, thus creating a political environment in which individual MPs before and after elections enjoy substantial leeway to express their own views.

The results prove that in a notably high number of 85 percent of the cases MPs stick to their pre-election pledges. Although methodological differences (individual-level va. party-level perspective) make direct comparisons to similar research projects in other countries difficult, the average rate in Switzerland appears to be considerably higher than in the U.S. system and almost reaches the heights of single-party governments like Britain.

Much more interesting than these figures is the identification of the factors which have an effect on the pledge fulfilment rate. Our multivariate model estimations show that individual pledge fulfilment is neither driven by personal attributes of the MP nor is it contingent on the organisation of the electoral district. The results indicate that MPs that belong to parties with a central legislative majority building position more frequently depart from what they considered true in the pre-election sphere: Majority building in a multi-party bicameral legislature without fixed government coalition has to rely on MPs willing to compromise and adapt their opinion. Moreover, the advantage of incumbency, the importance of political issues for a party and the visibility of the individual voting behaviour to the public (media, pressure groups, voters) play a prominent role in preventing MPs from switching their positions.

However, the paramount factor for the propensity to keep or break a promise is (dis-)agreement with the majority position of the own party group: If a pre-election statement contradicts the majority of the party in parliament, a change of mind becomes very likely. On the one hand, this sheds light on peer pressure mechanisms in Swiss parliamentary groups. On the other hand, with a view to online voting assistance applications like “smartvote”, the results confirm that explicit pledge statements in online surveys that include political issues which are either “hot potatoes” or absolutely non-salient to the respondents should not be put on a level with actual legislative behaviour. MPs are given more leeway before than after elections, also in the Swiss political system. Thus the analysis of smartvote data may give a better account of the “true” political position of a candidate, but actual legislative behaviour can deviate from it, particularly if an MP belongs to a centrist party. Nevertheless, between 76 and 93 percent of the examined votes (depending on the party) are in agreement with the pre-election statement which attests a fairly high usefulness of VAAs in the Swiss case.

Some issues are left open for future research. First, one might be interested in the political direction of the positional changes (position-taking at the political poles or movement to the center?). Second,

the precise relation between positional changes within the centrist parties and actual majority building is still underexplored.

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Appendix 1: Description of the 34 smartvote statements / legislative votes

No.	Issue	Policy area(s)	smartvote version	Date of legislative vote
1	Simplified naturalization of 2nd and 3rd generation of immigrants	migration	2003	03.10.2003
2	Adoption of children by homosexual couples	society & ethics	2003	03.12.2003
3	Higher spending for the armed forces	law & order finances & taxes	2003	09.12.2003
4	EU membership	foreign policy	2003	16.12.2003
5	Splitting TV/radio licence fees between public and private TV/radio stations	--	2003	03.03.2004
6	Keeping a nationwide network of post office branches	economy, finances & taxes	2003	19.03.2004
7	Higher remuneration for MPs	--	2003	08.10.2004
8	Higher spending for agriculture	economy, finances & taxes	2003	01.12.2004
9	Disclosure of the salaries of board members and CEOs in companies listed on the stock exchange	economy	2003	02.03.2005
10	Standstill agreement on genetically modified organisms in agriculture and food	economy, environment	2003	17.06.2005
11	Freedom of choice between military service and alternative civilian service	law & order, society & ethics	2003	14.12.2005
12	Keeping reduced VAT rate for tourism services	economy, finances & taxes	2003	14.12.2005
13	Privatisation of the national telecommunication supplier "Swisscom"	economy	2003	10.05.2006
14	Higher spending for day care and crèches	social welfare, society & ethics	2003	07.06.2006
15	Storing soldiers' service weapons in the armoury	law & order	2007	22 Mar / 27 Sept 07
16	Introduction of English as the first foreign language in schools	--	2003	21.06.2007

17	Basic health insurance coverage of complementary medicine (alternative medicine)	social welfare	2007	19.09.2007
18	Deployment of the army to support civilian units	law & order	2007	27.09.2007
19	Ban on smoking in public buildings, restaurants and bars	society & ethics	2007	04.10.2007
20	Legalising the possession and consumption of cannabis	law & order, society & ethics	2007	10.12.2007
21	Granting nationality at communal level by using the ballot box or a communal assembly	migration	2007	17.12.2007
22	Toughening the criminal law for juveniles	law & order	2007	19.12.2007
23	Limitations on the environmental associations' right of appeal	economy, environment	2007	20.03.2008
24	Introduction of a finance referendum at federal level	finances & taxes	2007	20.03.2008
25	Extending the free movement of peoples between Switzerland and the EU to Bulgaria and Romania	foreign policy, economy, migration	2007	28.05.2008
26	Introduction of road pricing	environment	2007	03.06.2008
27	Higher spending in the field of development aid	foreign policy, finances & taxes	2007	10.06.2008
28	Giving young people the right to vote from the age of 16	--	2007	24.09.2008
29	Permission of parallel imports of items protected by patent	economy	2007	15.12.2008
30	Extending the powers of the security authorities to include the preventative monitoring of postal, telephone and email traffic	law & order, society & ethics	2007	17.12.2008
31	Ban on the construction of minarets	society & ethics	2007	04.03.2009
32	Introduction of a minimum wage	economy, social welfare	2007	11.03.2009
33	Direct election of the Federal Council (executive)	--	2007	30.03.2009
34	Retail price maintenance on books	economy	2007	27.05.2009

Appendix 2: Alternative specifications of the dependent variable (congruence matrices)

Specification 2

	legislative behaviour		
	yea	nay	abstention
smartvote answer			
fully agree	1	0	0.5
weakly agree	0.5	0.5	0.5
weakly disagree	0.5	0.5	0.5
fully disagree	0	1	0.5

Specification 3

	legislative behaviour		
	yea	nay	abstention
smartvote answer			
fully agree	1	0	0.5
weakly agree	1	0	1
weakly disagree	0	1	1
fully disagree	0	1	0.5

Specification 4 (binary variable)

	legislative behaviour		
	yea	nay	abstention
smartvote answer			
fully agree	1	0	0
weakly agree	1	0	1
weakly disagree	0	1	1
fully disagree	0	1	0

Appendix 3: Positional congruence (in %) by party and issue, including the number of observations

	SVP	SP	CVP	FDP	GP	All parties[28]
Simplified naturalization 2nd/3rd generation	89.5 (n=19)	100 (n=34)	92.3 (n=13)	83.3 (n=12)	100 (n=7)	93.3 (n=90)
Adoption by homosexual couples	82.8 (n=29)	88.4 (n=43)	75 (n=20)	50 (n=20)	100 (n=11)	79.5 (n=150)
Higher military spending	92.6 (n=27)	100 (n=39)	57.1 (n=14)	81 (n=21)	90 (n=10)	87.5 (n=162)
EU membership	100 (n=30)	100 (n=43)	84.2 (n=19)	76.2 (n=21)	90.9 (n=11)	92.5 (n=149)
Radio/TV fee splitting	80.8 (n=26)	61.1 (n=36)	94.4 (n=18)	77.8 (n=18)	40 (n=10)	72.4 (n=166)
Network of post offices	86.7 (n=30)	97.8 (n=45)	59.1 (n=22)	95 (n=20)	100 (n=11)	86.9 (n=145)
Higher remuneration for MPs	85.7 (n=28)	73.8 (n=42)	36.4 (n=22)	73.7 (n=19)	81.8 (n=11)	71.5 (n=130)
Higher spending for agriculture	95.8 (n=24)	69.2 (n=39)	75 (n=16)	85.7 (n=14)	77.8 (n=9)	78.9 (n=109)
Disclosure of salaries	23.1 (n=26)	100 (n=39)	62.5 (n=16)	61.5 (n=13)	100 (n=11)	71.4 (n=112)
Standstill agreement on genetically modified organisms	75 (n=28)	100 (n=43)	77.8 (n=18)	100 (n=20)	100 (n=11)	91.5 (n=129)
Special VAT for tourism	89.7 (n=29)	81.6 (n=38)	90 (n=20)	94.7 (n=19)	90.9 (n=11)	87.4 (n=127)
Free choice between military and civilian service	86.2 (n=29)	100 (n=37)	60 (n=20)	80 (n=15)	100 (n=11)	86.7 (n=120)
Privatization of "Swisscom"	82.8 (n=29)	97.6 (n=42)	84.2 (n=19)	100 (n=21)	100 (n=10)	87.4 (n=131)
Higher spending for child care and crèches	89.3 (n=28)	100 (n=40)	65 (n=20)	64.7 (n=17)	100 (n=9)	85.4 (n=123)
Teaching English as the first foreign language	75 (n=28)	73.8 (n=42)	100 (n=15)	40 (n=15)	100 (n=8)	72.6 (n=117)
Health insurance coverage for alternative medicine	86.1 (n=36)	97.4 (n=39)	56.5 (n=23)	90 (n=20)	100 (n=12)	86.7 (n=143)
Storing soldier's weapons in the armoury	94.9 (n=39)	100 (n=38)	76.2 (n=21)	85.7 (n=21)	100 (n=12)	92.3 (n=143)
Deployment of the army to support civilian units	80.6 (n=36)	90 (n=40)	100 (n=20)	95.5 (n=22)	90.9 (n=11)	89.4 (n=141)
Ban on smoking	87.5 (n=40)	92.5 (n=40)	65.2 (n=23)	81 (n=21)	100 (n=12)	85.4 (n=151)
Legalization of cannabis	100 (n=50)	89.5 (n=38)	95.7 (n=23)	70.8 (n=24)	90 (n=20)	91.6 (n=166)
Naturalizations by using the ballot	98	100	77.8	80	100	92.9

[28] Including parties not separately listed in this table.

box	(n=49)	(n=37)	(n=27)	(n=25)	(n=20)	(n=170)
Toughening of juvenile criminal law	98 (n=50)	95 (n=40)	55.2 (n=29)	51.9 (n=27)	95 (n=20)	79.8 (n=178)
Associations' right of appeal	96.1 (n=51)	100 (n=41)	64.3 (n=28)	92.9 (n=28)	100 (n=20)	92.3 (n=181)
Introduction of a finance referendum	82 (n=50)	97.6 (n=41)	89.7 (n=29)	48 (n=25)	73.7 (n=19)	80.2 (n=177)
Free movement of peoples from Bulgaria and Romania	94.2 (n=52)	100 (n=38)	88.9 (n=27)	79.2 (n=24)	100 (n=20)	92.5 (n=173)
Introduction of road pricing	95.7 (n=46)	91.9 (n=37)	74.1 (n=27)	76.9 (n=26)	100 (n=18)	88.6 (n=166)
Higher spending for development aid	95.7 (n=47)	94.9 (n=39)	58.6 (n=29)	83.3 (n=24)	100 (n=18)	87.6 (n=170)
Introduction of voting age 16	93.8 (n=48)	94.9 (n=39)	88.5 (n=26)	100 (n=21)	94.1 (n=17)	92.5 (n=160)
Permission of parallel imports	76.5 (n=51)	100 (n=39)	64 (n=25)	66.7 (n=27)	95 (n=20)	80.5 (n=174)
Preventive monitoring	54.5 (n=44)	87.2 (n=39)	69.2 (n=26)	70.8 (n=24)	94.7 (n=19)	72.6 (n=118)
Ban on the construction of minarets	92.3 (n=52)	100 (n=38)	89.7 (n=29)	85.2 (n=27)	100 (n=19)	92.6 (n=176)
Introduction of a minimum wage	98 (n=49)	100 (n=35)	77.8 (n=27)	91.7 (n=24)	94.4 (n=18)	92.6 (n=162)
Direct election of Federal Council (executive)	46.8 (n=47)	97.1 (n=35)	96.3 (n=27)	100 (n=25)	88.2 (n=17)	81.4 (n=161)
Retail price maintenance on books	71.7 (n=53)	85 (n=40)	71.4 (n=28)	92.9 (n=28)	80 (n=20)	76.2 (n=181)
Party mean	**84.6**	**92.8**	**75.7**	**79.6**	**93.2**	**84.5**

Appendix 4: Multilevel model predictions for pledge fulfilment (positional congruence between pre- and post-election sphere; binary dependent variable according to specification 4)

		Multilevel	Multilevel	Logit
		null model	**full model 4-1**	**full model 4-1**
Fixed-effects parameters:				
Minority language			0.0300 (0.165)	0.0302 (0.166)
Age			-0.00667 (0.00725)	-0.00665 (0.00768)
Male			-0.0476 (0.139)	-0.0514 (0.142)
Incumbent			0.309* (0.128)	0.305* (0.132)
Published vote			0.517** (0.173)	0.514*** (0.143)
Relevance of bill			0.0403 (0.135)	0.0412 (0.118)
Core issue			0.344** (0.130)	0.337* (0.135)
Candidate-centered voting system			0.00401 (0.00513)	0.00402 (0.00562)
District size			4.26e-05 (0.00651)	3.83e-05 (0.00637)
Disagreement with party group majority			-3.851*** (0.126)	-3.828*** (0.135)
Positional centrality of party			-0.366** (0.129)	-0.358** (0.121)
	_cons	1.840*** (.056)	2.842*** (0.598)	2.823*** (.607)
Random-effects parameters:				
MP identifier	var(_cons)	.2781*** (.0670)	-1.589* (0.791)	
N		*4963*	*4332*	*4332*
No of clusters/groups (MPs)		*254*	*214*	*214*
Pseudo R2				*.4180*
p > chi2 (Wald)		*.*	*.0000*	*.0000*
Log (pseudo-)likelihood		*-2042.0*	*-1035.0*	*-1035.2*
Method		*xtmelogit (mixed-effects logistic regression)*	*xtmelogit (mixed-effects logistic regression)*	*logit*

*Notes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05, + p<.10 (two-tailed tests). Entries are logit coefficients (standard errors in brackets. For logit model: MP cluster-corrected standard errors).*