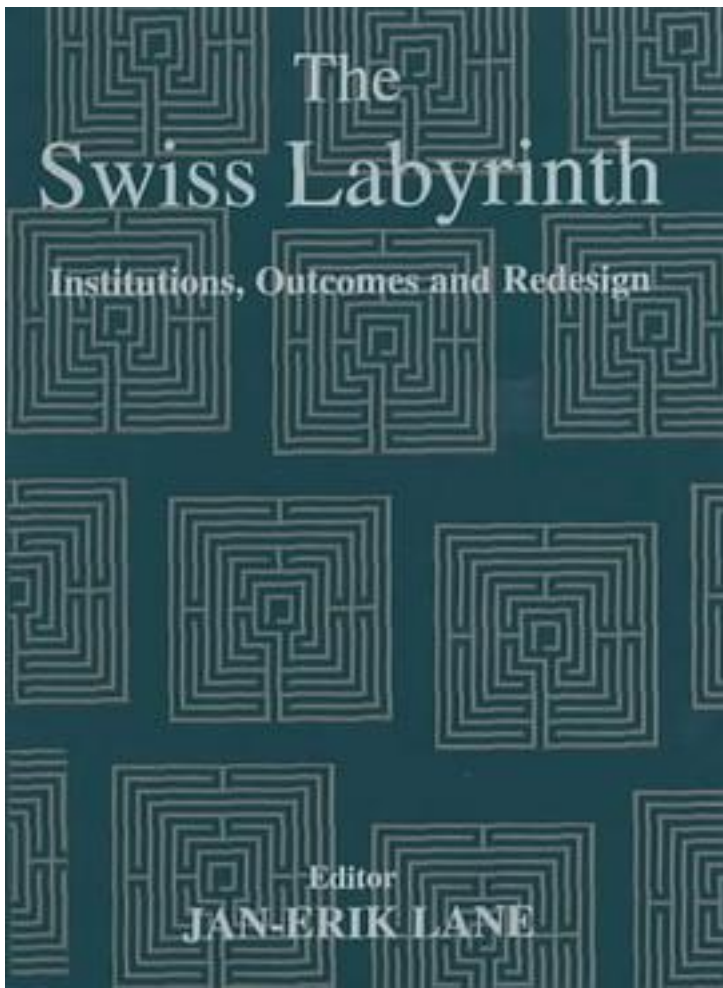


The Swiss Labyrinth



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It can be argued that Switzerland has a peculiar set of political institutions, including, for example, decentralized federalism, active referendum democracy, and La formule

magique (grand coalition). Analzing how these institutions operate in the 1990s, this volume focuses upon the political and social outcomes of these institutions. The book also examines the possibility of institutional reform in Switzerland. Key questions discussed include: what have been the results of these institutions? and is political behaviour - from both elites and ordinary citizens - at the federal, cantonal and communal levels an outcome of these institutions? Outcomes suggested include: the fragmented party system, the low participation in elections, the quasi-corporatist framework, splendid isolation on the international scene, the high level of affluence and the considerable income inequalities, the low level of judicialization of politics and the public sector expansion. In considering possible reform, this book addresses various questions including: do these political institutions work well today; and do the institutions need to be changed? In addition, this book focuses on how these political institutions have worked out and how they have impacted upon the political system and society.

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