Despite Switzerland's small size, its political system is one of the most complex and fascinating among contemporary democracies. The rich, complex mixture of centuries-old institutions and the refined political arrangements that exist today constitute a veritable laboratory for social scientists and their students. Often presented as the paradigmatic case of political integration, consensus democracy and multinational federalism, the Swiss model has become a benchmark case for analyses in comparative politics, political behaviour and other related fields. Written by two leading experts on Swiss politics, this book presents a definitive overview for scholars and students interested in Switzerland's political system at the beginning of the twenty-first century. By focusing on its intricacies but also taking in larger issues of general interest, the broad scope of this study will appeal to all those interested in contemporary European politics and democratic systems.