

ECPR/EURA SUMMER SCHOOL 2019:

Is Local Always Better? – In Search of Adequate Governance Structures for Decision Making and Service Delivery

6-12 July, 2019, Winterthur, Switzerland

Globally, local authorities are significant players in the provision of public services. In recent decades, decentralization has become an important reform strategy in many countries, usually with the support of international organizations. Traditional arguments suggest that efficiency and quality gains in the provision of public services are achieved through decentralization along with greater expectations for accountability and responsiveness. However, some scholars warn that there are also dangers involved in decentralization. For example, local administrations could be understaffed, financially weak, or might be captured by local political elites, which can potentially lead to poorer public service provision. There is also a risk of differentiation between poorer and richer municipalities. Local democracy is interlinked with closeness to citizens and an apprenticeship for democracy at other levels. Therefore, also parties and elections, leadership, participatory and direct democracy and the like at the local level are crucial topics in this context.

The aim of this Summer School is to discuss the extent to which local government might be considered the most suitable tier of government for public service delivery and where the limitations are. Potential topics will include the following:

- What functions should be performed at the local tier of government?
- Do managerial and territorial reforms improve service delivery at the local level?
- How might local governments be better organized in order to provide effective and efficient public services?
- What role should a per equation system play in order to decrease unequal capacities between local governments?
- What are the key elements for effective inter-governmental relations between national, state/provincial, and local governments in order to improve service delivery at the local level?
- Does decentralization lead to a better input legitimacy?
- How can we measure local autonomy?

The lecturers will present the state of the art of the discussion, theories which help to understand and structure the topic and comparative studies that for example compare local service delivery across different policy fields or tiers of government, organizational contexts or countries. Besides lectures by experienced scholars, PhD students are invited to present short papers.

Last but not least, the hosts of the Summer School will organize social activities in Winterthur and Zurich and visits to local governments.

Organizer and Venue of the Conference: ZHAW School of Management and Law, Winterthur/Zurich

Lecturers and Organizing Committee: Will be announced at the beginning of 2019

Responsible Chairs of the Hosting Institution: Prof. Dr. Reto Steiner, Dean and Dr. Claire Kaiser

Date: Saturday 6 - Friday 12 July 2019

Application Deadline: 1 April 2019 – Procedure will be announced at the beginning of 2019