

Local Governments into the Era of Digital Governance?

Impacts of the Digitalization on Staff Members and Citizens

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1. Introduction

Current State/Problems of the German local PA (1/2)

- Ø **Digital Administration: Situation in Germany is disillusioning.**
 - § Unsuccessful attempts of implementation in the last 30 years.
 - § Germany ranks 25 out of 29 in Europe, comparing digital public services.
- Ø **A focused view on Digitalisation of local one-stop shops in Germany:**
 - § LOSS as a successful model, making available the most requested services for citizens at once, providing a single window access -> transfer of this model to the digital era?
 - § Promising more efficient, user-friendly and faster services for the citizens
 - § Citizens' expectations: partly complaining about unsatisfactory service provision.

Current State/Problems of the German local PA (2/2)

Ø **Employees partly dissatisfied work conditions:**

§ Work overload; fiscal constraints of local governments

§ complaints around high fluctuation

§ problems with recruitment of qualified staff (payment lower than in private sector)

Ø **Legislative acts on e-government implementation:**

§ so-called Online Access Act (Onlinezugangsgesetz – OZG) adopted in August 2017 – almost complete availability of e-services by the end of 2022.

Research Questions

- Ø What is the **current state of digitalization** and the level of “digital maturity”?
- Ø What is the **impact of digitalization on citizens** and to what extent do they actually **use** digital service offers?
- Ø What is the **effect of digitalization on administrative processes** and **staff members’ working conditions**?

Context: Ongoing Research Project "German LOSS"

Independent Variable:

Institutional reforms in LOSSs regarding:

- Labor organization
- Staff situation
- Digitalization in LOSSs

Impact

Dependent Variable:

LOSS performance changes regarding:

- Task fulfillment
- Service provision (efficiency, efficacy)
- Citizens/employees satisfaction (overload?)

Context factors

Local capacities/resources

Political preferences

Tasks characteristics

Legal rules

2. Analytical Framework and Methods

Analytical Framework

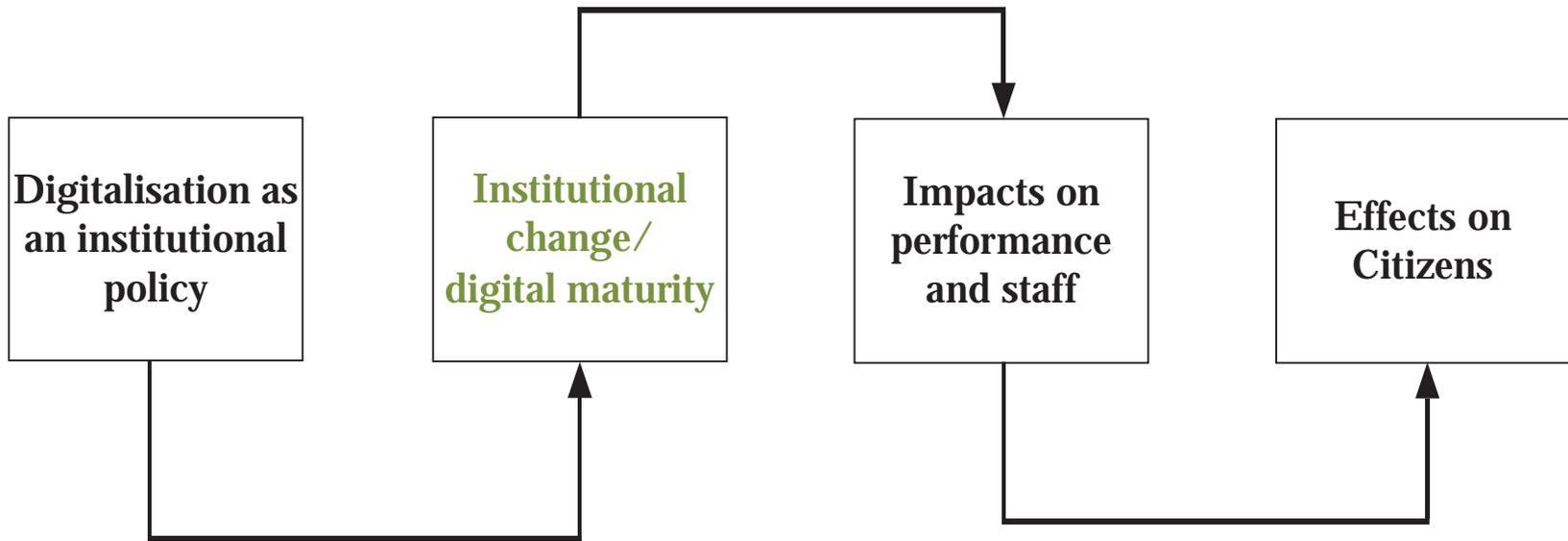
Ø Exploring the institutional changes and effects caused by current approaches of digitalisation in the public sector.

§ Digitalisation of public service delivery and administration as institutional policy or “polity policy” (cf. Wollmann, 2003: 4).

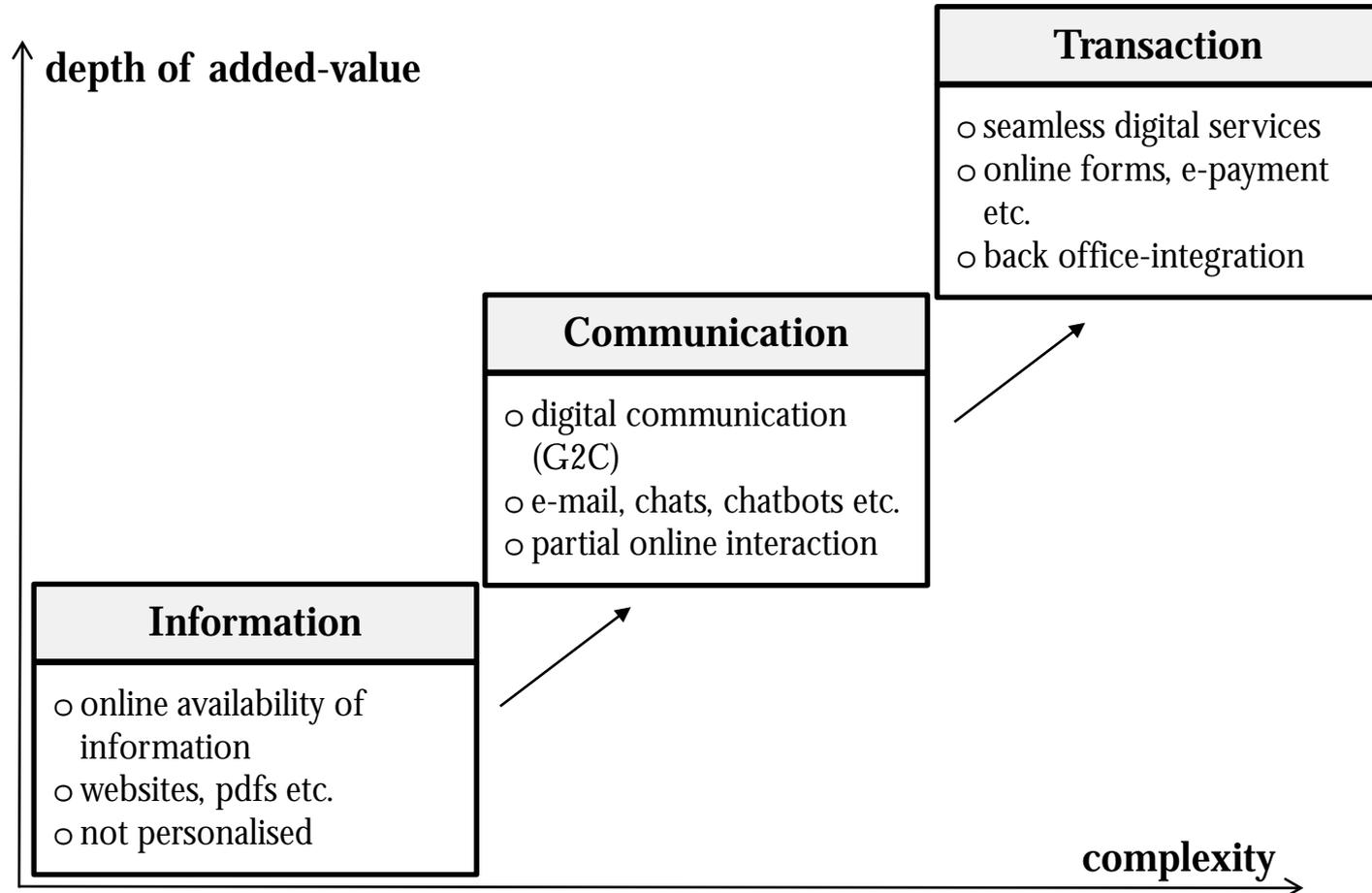
§ Application of the corresponding analytical framework (Kuhlmann and Wollmann, 2011):

1. **institutional changes within the public organization** (e.g. the implementation of new electronic tools regarding information, communication and interaction with citizens)
2. **consequences** of these institutional changes (e.g. effects on the staff situation and the performance of service provision)
3. more **remote impacts** outside the politico-administrative system (e.g. citizens’ reactions to these reforms, their satisfaction and acceptance)

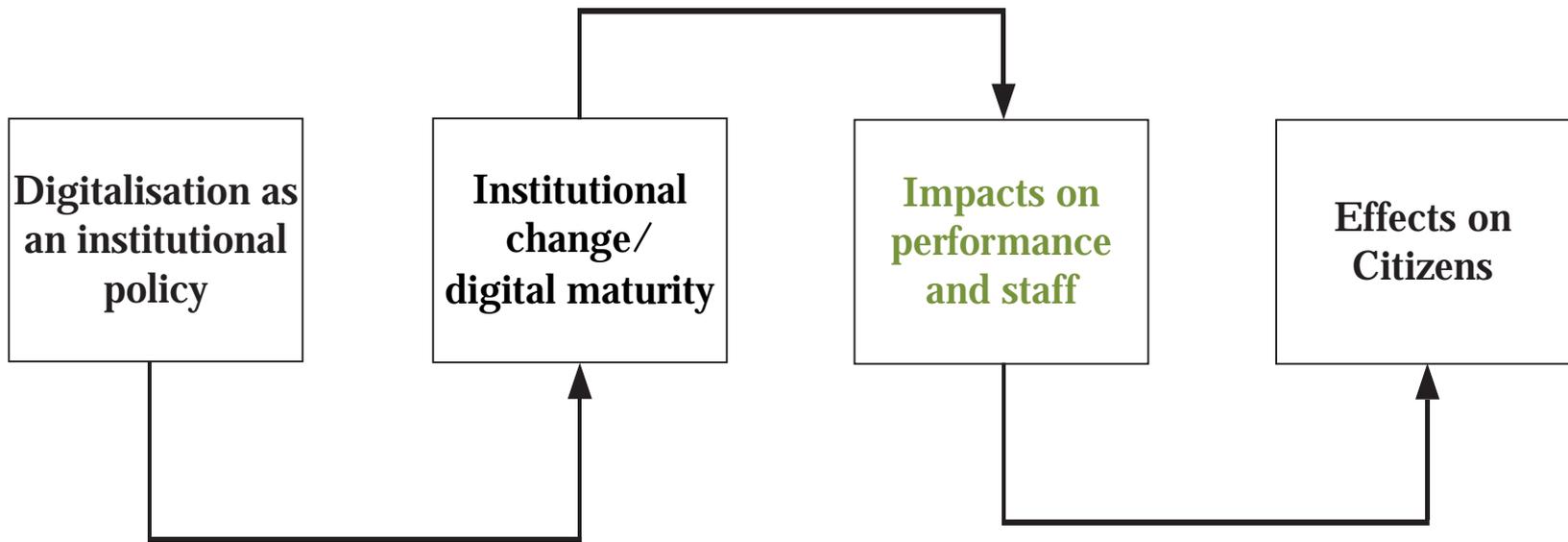
Reform process of digitalisation in the public administration



E-government functions in Local One Stop-Shops – maturity levels



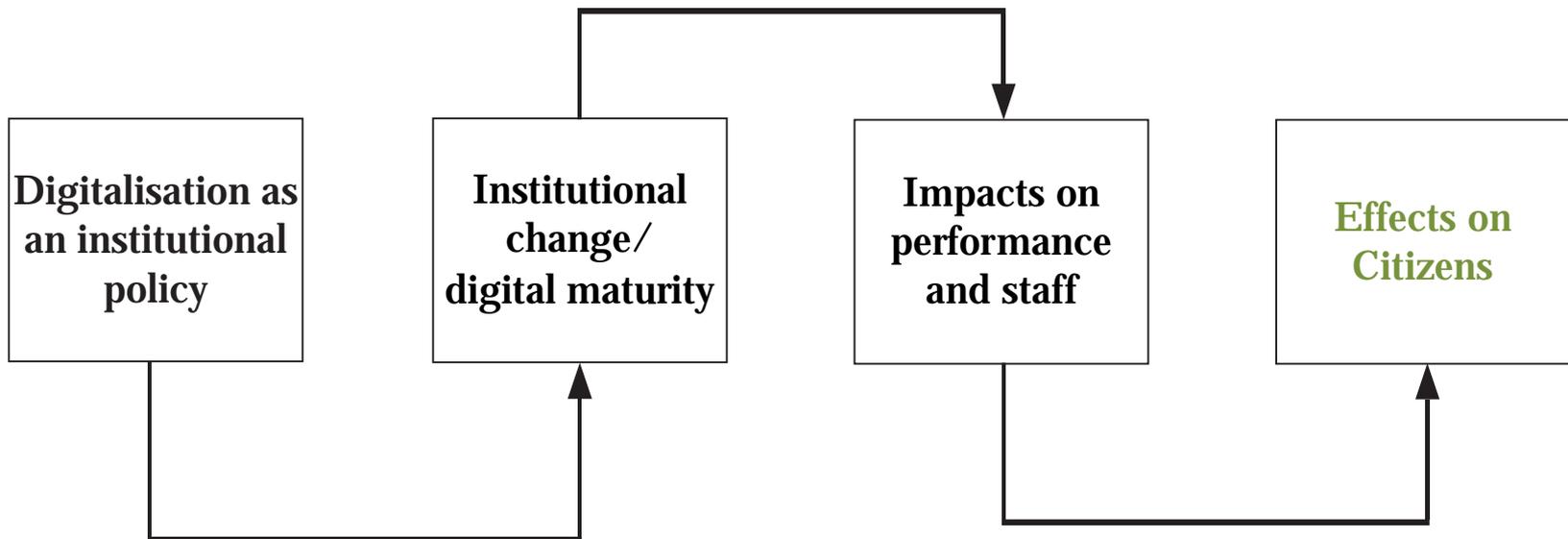
Reform process of digitalisation in the public administration



Impacts on performance and staff

- Ø **Staff situation: particularly working conditions, job pressures and reliefs.**
- Ø **Performance: specifically processing times.**

Reform process of digitalisation in the public administration



Effects on Citizens

- Ø Comparing the **citizens' expectations** regarding digital service provision with their **attitude towards the actual service offers**.
 - § Two main factors outlined in the technology acceptance model, TAM (Davis et al., 1989): perceived usefulness and perceived usability
- Ø Assuming that **good functionality improves the usage of e-services** (Zheng, 2017) we examine the **citizens' assessments of e-service functionality and their usability**.
 - § Digital services are easy to use, without barriers (usability)?
 - § To what extent do citizens consider digital services as something with an added value (i.e. saving time or money)?

Methods

- § Case studies on digitalisation: Freiburg, Mannheim, Karlsruhe
- § Case studies on Local One-Stop-Shops: Bochum, Mannheim, Karlsruhe
- § In total 27 expert interviews
- § Quantitative surveys:

	Target group	Overall population	Response rate
Administration survey (every city >15.000 inh.)	Mayors	N = 721	n = 221, 30,7%
	Staff councils	N = 746	n = 263, 35,3%
Staff survey (Bochum, Karlsruhe)	One-Stop-Shop staff, Bochum	N = 75	n = 40, 53,3%
	One-Stop-Shop staff, Karlsruhe	N = 135	n = 70, 51,9%
Citizens survey (Bochum, Karlsruhe, Mannheim)	Citizens Karlsruhe Citizens Bochum Citizens Mannheim	Random sample 6000 Random sample 2000	n= 1171, 19,5% n = 418, 21% n= 201

3. Assessing Impacts of Digitalization in Local Governments

Institutional Change: Digital Maturity

Service	Information available online	Partially processed online (forms, emails)	Fully processed online	N
Passports	87%	21%	2%	210
Certificates (birth / marriage)	67%	44%	10%	101
Criminal record	75%	26%	23%	205
Registration of residency	80%	39%	3%	205
Authentication of certificates	96%	8%	1%	178
Dog tax registration	80%	33%	6%	118
Residents parking perming	81%	27%	8%	84
Parking permit for people with disabilities	91%	18%	0%	87
Housing benefits	85%	30%	0%	54
Vehicle registration (only county-free cities)	83%	33%	10%	48

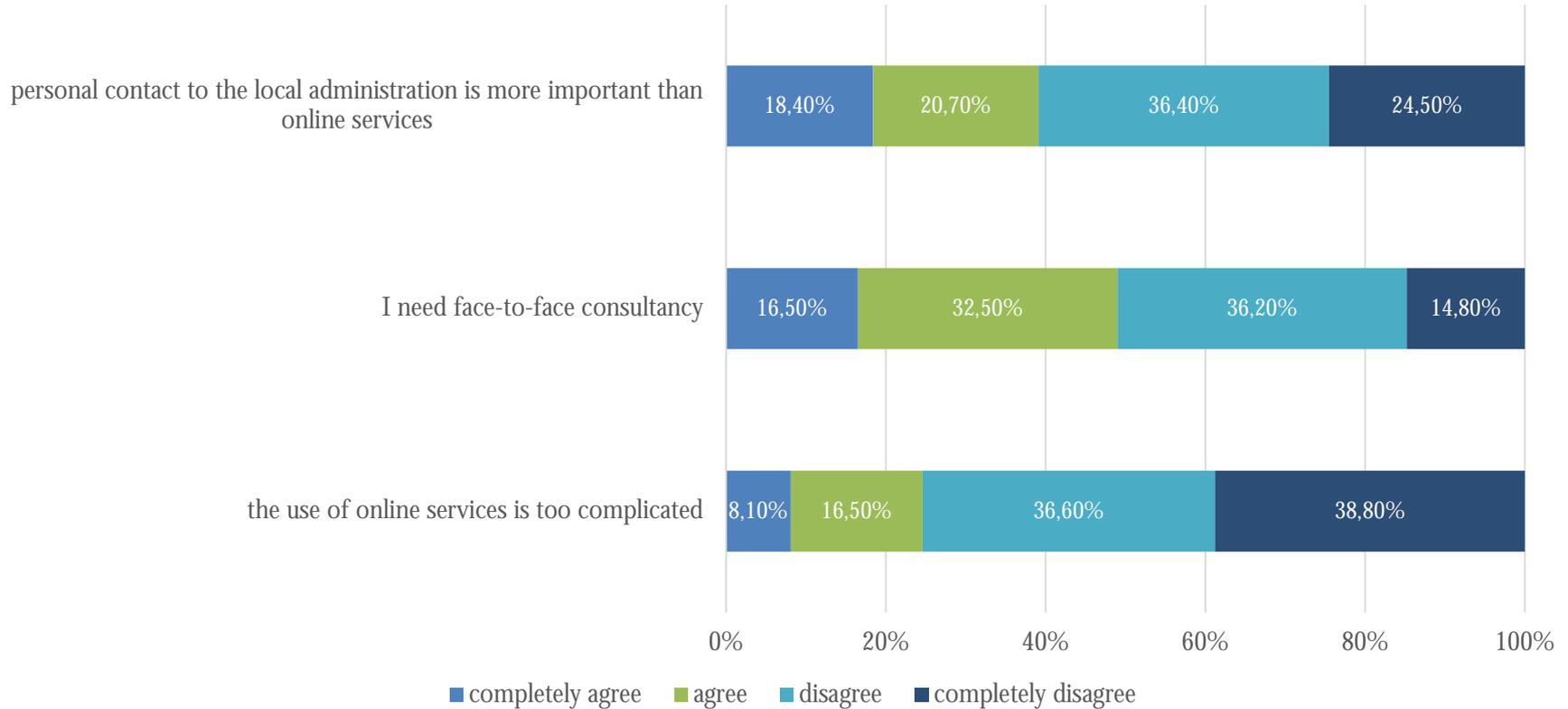
Source: city survey (mayors). Question: “Which services of your local one-stop shop are online available and to what extent?”

Impacts on Staff and Performance

	Fully & quite relevant	Rather not & not at all relevant	n
Rather positive impacts			
Increasing transparency in processing status	67.2%	32.8%	64
Following usual opening hours and work days is less relevant	65.7%	34.4%	67
Shortening time	62.3%	37.7%	69
Improving administrative practices	61.2%	38.8%	67
Reducing work load	38.8%	61.2%	67
Rather negative impacts			
Constant availability	86.9%	13%	69
Technical problems	84%	15.9%	69
Issues with software. esp. due to poor quality service providers such as data centres, Länder or federal state	77.6%	22.4%	67
Additional processing time per case	76.4%	23.5%	68
Feeling of being controlled through digitalization	72.3%	27.7%	65
Shifting working time from front to back office	67.7%	32.4%	68

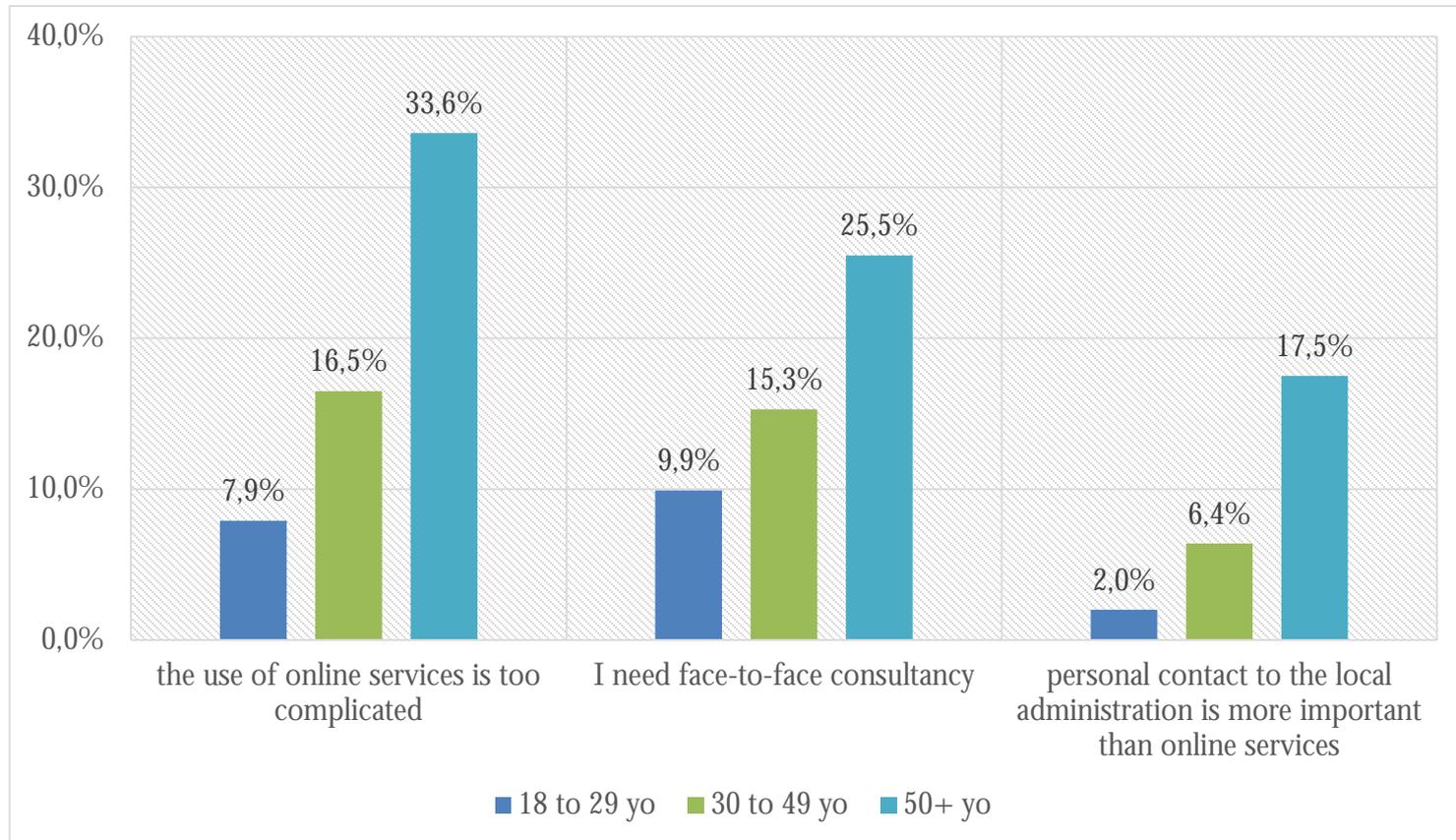
Source: staff survey Karlsruhe

Effects on Citizens (1/3)



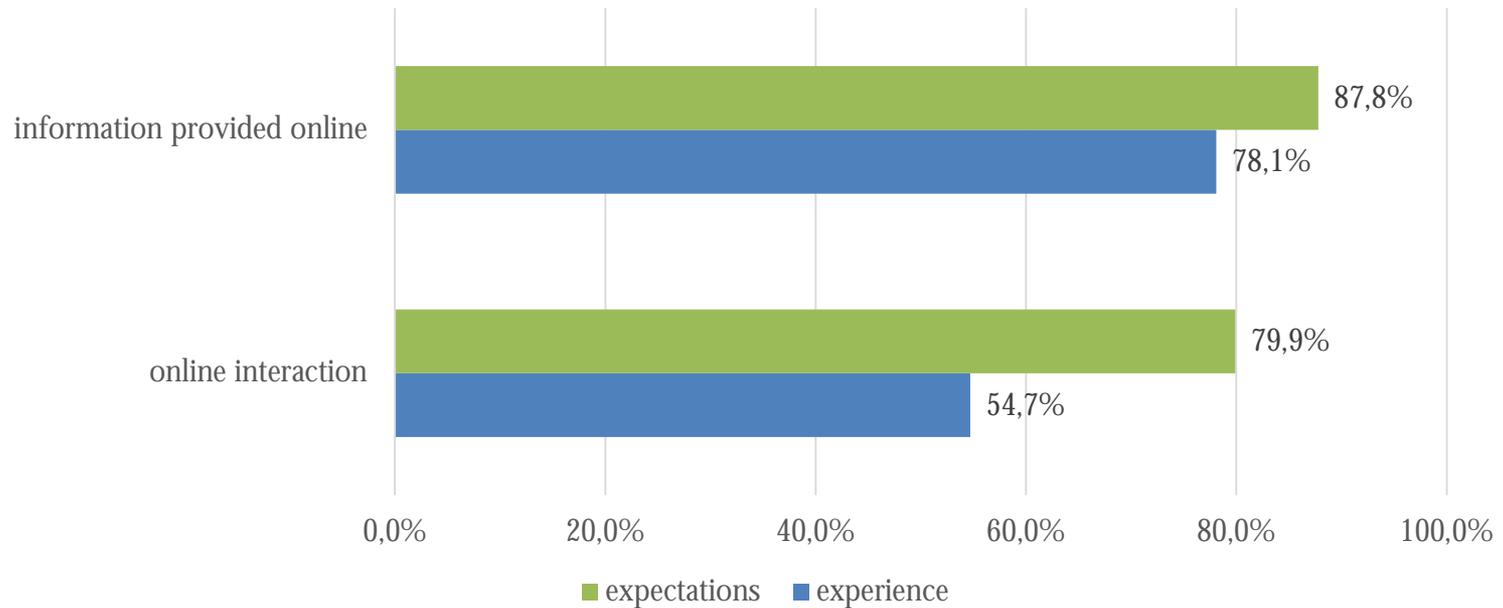
Reasons for citizens not to use online administration services. Source: authors' own diagram; citizen survey Karlsruhe; n = 1,120 to 1,140

Effects on Citizens (2/3)



Reasons against expanding the online offer across age groups. Source: citizen survey Karlsruhe. Values for the category “very important”; n = 1,103 to 1,121

Effects on Citizens (3/3)



Citizens' expectations and experiences regarding e-government functions. Source: citizen survey Karlsruhe; n = 1,054 to 1,099

4. Summary

Summary (1/2)

- Ø **Only the information function** of e-government has achieved a certain success at German LOSS
 - § Marginal progress concerning the communication function
 - § The transaction function, including the finalization of procedures without media discontinuities, is virtually non-existent.
- Ø The **work relief** that should have come along with digitalization did **not actually happen** from the employees' point of view.
 - § Growing burdens, such as permanent availability for managers via email, higher work density, and additional time to process each case.
 - § Feeling of being controlled through digital features.

Summary (2/2)

- Ø The **staff** still recognizes and appreciates the **positive effects**, such as **reduction of error rates** and **shorter waiting times** resulting from electronic appointment scheduling.
- Ø **Citizens** in general are **interested in strengthening their use of administrative services online**, provided they are user-friendly and costs and time can be saved.
 - § They still lament different faults in the digital offer and the media discontinuities, as well as issues with accessibility and the user-friendliness of the procedures.
 - § A generational divide has become apparent, which partially explains different levels and frequencies of IT-interaction with local government according to age groups.

Implications

Ø For one, the federal and *Länder* levels in Germany need to **create the legal, procedural and financial conditions** to make digitalization work better on the local level and in direct contact with citizens.

§ Legislation needs to work towards drastically dismantling written form requirements as well as documentation and physical presence obligations.

Ø It is necessary to **strengthen cooperation and coordination** across the various political and administrative levels in the federal system in order to steer digital policies more effectively.

§ Several individual solutions might bring along the risk for fragmentation, confusion and incompatibility.

Questions / Discussion