



A German View on Switzerland

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A German View on Switzerland: What we have in common

- Federalism, decentralization, elements of direct and concordance democracy, Rule of Law culture
- Limited hierarchical powers of the central state
- Strong local governments; significant degree of local autonomy (G < CH)
- Both regarded as successful models of state and PA with low levels of corruption; high standards of legal correctness and proximity to citizens
- Both are scoring high in terms of economic strength, well-being, stability and growth
- Generally, quite high levels of citizen satisfaction with public services and administration, specifically regarding incorruptibility, non-discrimination, proximity to citizens, professionalism of PA, trust in authorities



A German View on Switzerland: Where Germany is different



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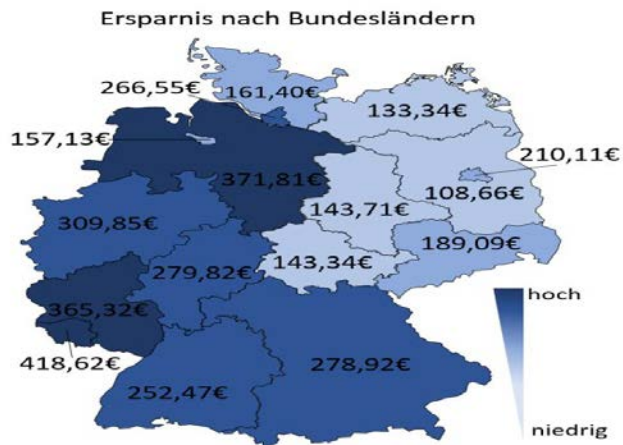
- Germany's population and area exceed CH by a factor of 9/10 → bigger jurisdictions = bigger problems
- Cooperative federalism: institutionalized obligation to cooperate in the intergovernmental setting
- Direct democracy rather limited in practice; predominance of the representative model
- Administrative federalism: centralization of legislation at the federal level; decentralization of law execution/administration at Länder/local levels
- Creation of large-scale local units by way of mergers and far-reaching territorial reforms (-80%)
- Significant extension of LG's functional responsibilities through decentralization
- More emphasis on efficiency, productivity, performance regarding local governments

A German View on Switzerland: Where Germany is different

Policy Challenges and Pressures



- Severely affected by transformations and crises (re-unification, fiscal crisis, refugee crisis)
- Growing divides in society (e.g. East-West; urban-rural; rich-poor regions)
- GDP/inhabitant lower than in CH (45 vs. 80 USD)
- More critical views on government/administration; more disenchantment with politics
- Institutional overload and increasing populism due to recent migration issues

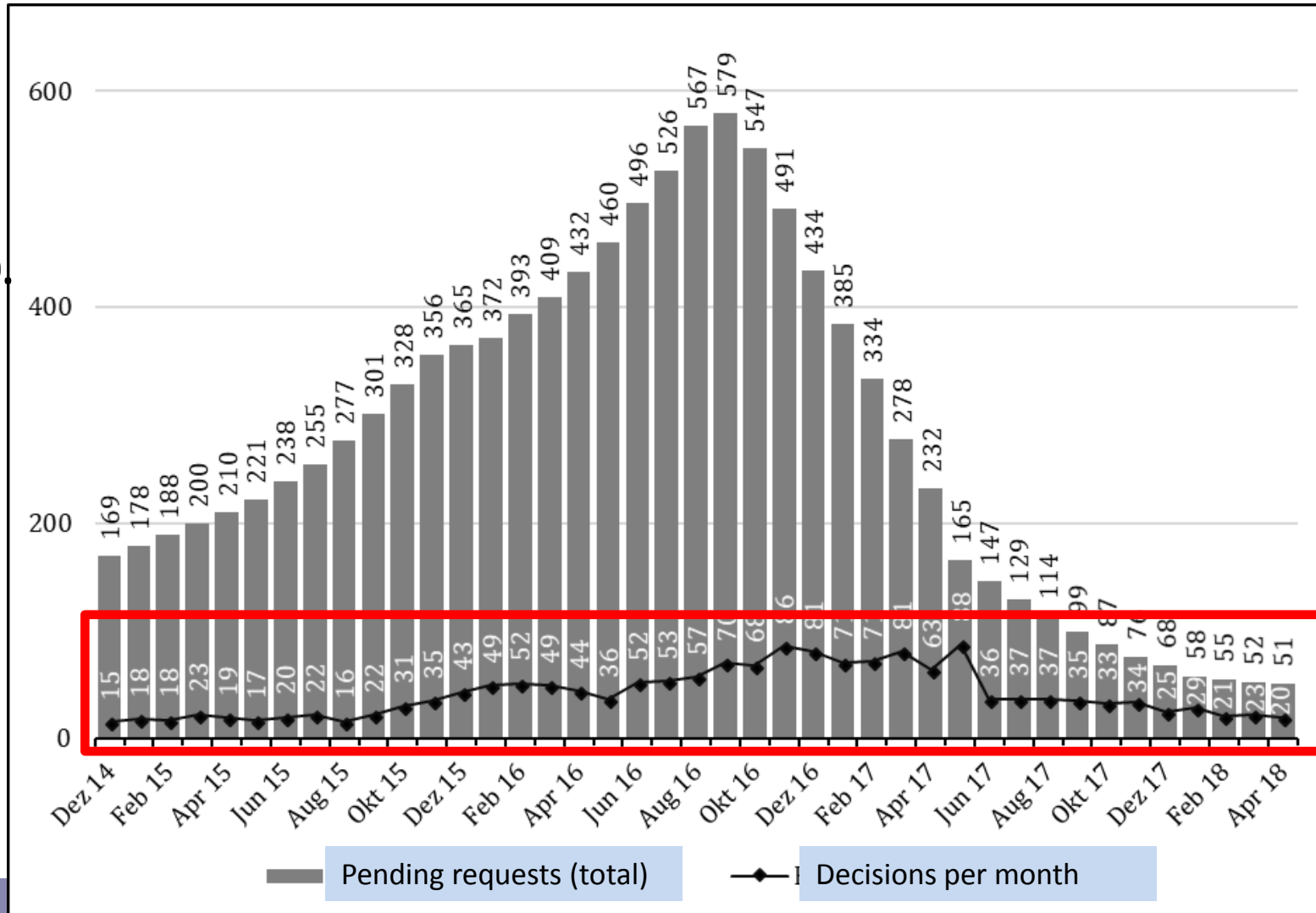


A German View on Switzerland: Where Germany is different

Policy Challenges and Pressures

In 2015 840,000 refugees arrived in Germany; in 2016 they were 280,000.

September 2016: 580.000 asylum requests pending;
April 2018: 51.000



➔ **Massive institutional overload at all levels of PA**

Source: Asylgeschäftsstatistik BAMF, 1990-1994; Bogumil et al. 2017

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Policy Challenges and Pressures

Assets

- After a period of stress German PA managed the refugee crisis **fairly well**
- **Cooperative Federalism/ cooperation** between levels crucial for migration management
- Sub-national levels with **fast/flexible solutions** (receptions facilities, housing etc.)
- **Innovative local solutions** to migration issues
- **Proximity** to local citizens and strong position of civil society/**civic engagement** as major assets



Drawbacks

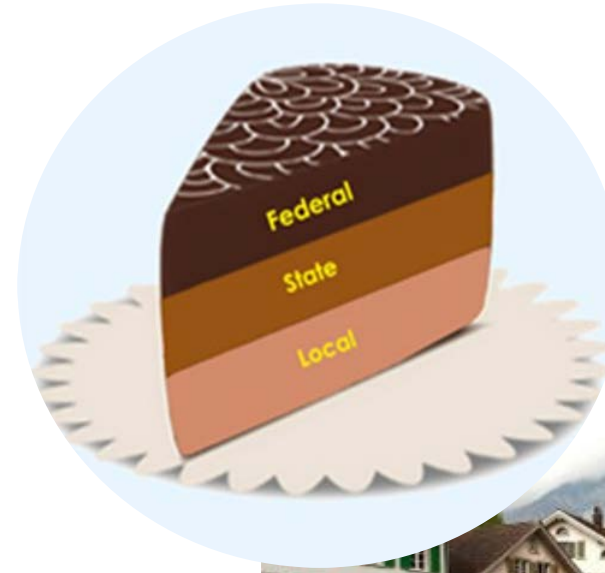
- Manifold **problems of coordination** in federal system
- Fragmented/**unclear distribution of tasks** in the areas of asylum, residence, integration;
- **Too many interfaces** between agencies/levels
- **Insufficient communication** between levels
- Long and complex **bureaucratic procedures**
- Complexity, continuous amendments of asylum **laws**
- **Limited local discretion/resources** for integration management



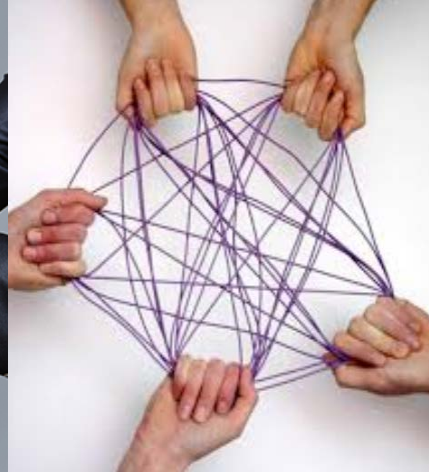
Lessons to learn?

Lessons to learn for us from Switzerland?

- Clearer **separation of tasks** between levels?
- More **autonomy** to each level + less obligations for cooperation and less institutional interfaces?
- **Disentanglement** of competencies between levels?
- Further limitations regarding Federal administrative competencies
- More emphasis on **competitive** and dual federalism?
 - However: recent trends towards more centralization!
- More autonomy for local governments, including **fiscal discretion** (taxes)?
- Strengthening of direct democracy???
- Smaller local units???



Lessons to learn?



Is there anything to learn from us, too?

- **Constructive tension between competition and cooperation:** cooperative/"unitary" federalism combines equivalence of living conditions with diversity and sub-national autonomy
- **Multilevel governance** and collaboration across levels as important pillars of coherence/integration
- Functionally strong, **professional local governments** as drivers of innovation
 - Note: functional responsibilities shape citizens perceptions: more functions → higher expectations → more critical views on LG performance → less satisfaction (≠ CH)
- **Territorial viability** (large scale) of local units promotes professionalism, effective task fulfilment, organizational robustness, administrative resilience

Lesson learning: issues of transferability and translation

- Institutions are **path-dependent**, culturally embedded, historically shaped
- Institutional change depends on national/regional **political processes and actors**, endogenous forces
- Direct “copy and paste” is neither possible nor desirable
- Institutions change when transferred from one context to another; there can be **misfits**, rejections, incompatibilities → hybrids do not always work
- **Contexts** and “starting conditions” need to be taken into account when transferring institutional models
- Often **several institutional solutions** are equivalent and necessary for different contexts



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Different roads can lead to success