


INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON COOPERATIVE FEDERALISM January 20-21, 2016, New Delhi, India 

Swiss contribution: Strengthening COOPERATIVE Federalism

- 1 Between history and future – “learning from each other”
- 2 Short introduction to the Swiss system of government
- 3 Change in society – recent reforms from centralization to cooperation
- 4 Main characteristics of IGR in Switzerland – cooperation & concordance
- 5 Framework of IGR - institutions & processes
- 6 IGR in action - competition & cooperation
- 7 Fiscal federalism: autonomy, competition & financial equalization
- 8 The call for reforms – a never ending story

Thomas Pfisterer, Januar 2016

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Part I SWISS CONTRIBUTION TO STRENGTHENING COOPERATIVE FEDERALISM

1 BETWEEN HISTORY AND FUTURE
– “LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER” –
«GUIDELINES...a Swiss Contribution» - how to IMPROVE?



 Forum of Federations
The Global Network on Federations and Devolved Governance

Thomas Pfisterer, Januar 2016

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2 SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE SWISS SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

2.1 Small, diverse and complex Country and Politics

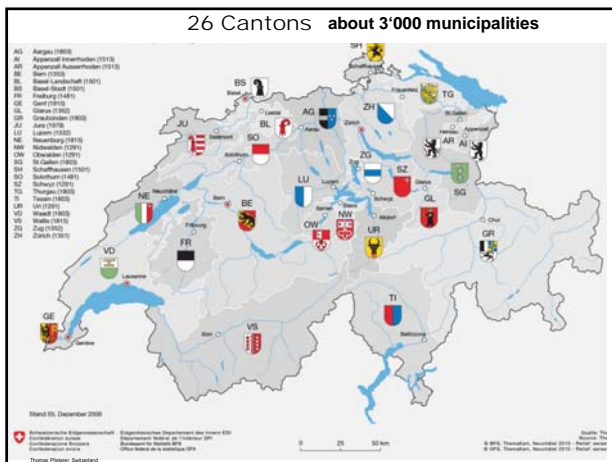
2.2 The Importance of Direct Democracy in Switzerland

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Switzerland - a small country (Western Europe)



26 Cantons about 3'000 municipalities



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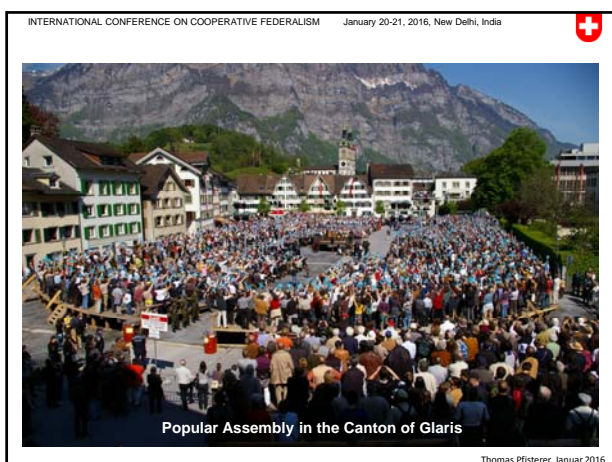
DIRECT DEMOCRACY



Instruments of direct democracy:

- **REFERENDUM**
- optional or mandatory
- popular **INITIATIVE**
- others popular rights

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3. CHANGE IN SOCIETY – **RECENT REFORMS**
FROM CENTRALIZATION TO **COOPERATION**

3.1 **Expectations:** better Service Delivery & more public Influence

3.2 Trend towards **Centralization** & widening of **Disparities** -
the **RECENT REFORMS**

3.3 **Change:** Growing role of **CANTONS**
– opportunities & participation (with three voices)

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4 MAIN CHARACTERISTICS: «**bottom up - Federalism**»
– **COOPERATION & CONCORDANCE**

4.1 **REFORMS:** more «**bottom up**» – Autonomy & Cooperation

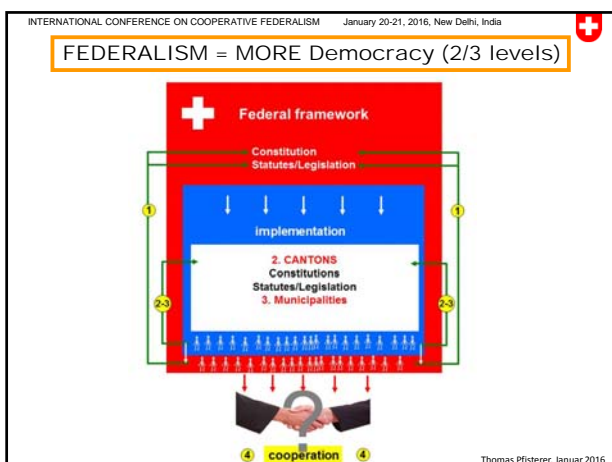
4.2 Notion of IGR – more “**Bridges**” between Federation & Cantons

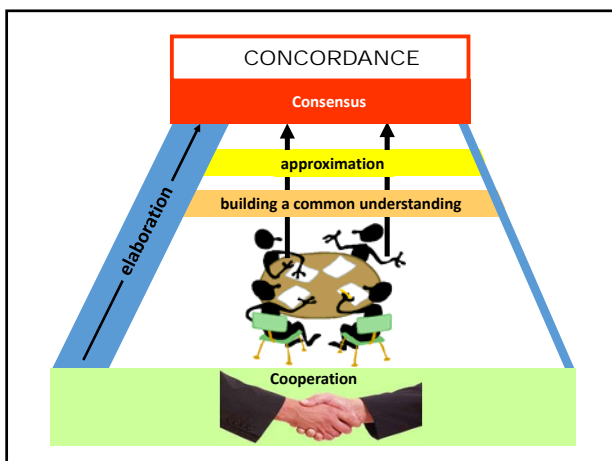
4.3 **Federalism:** Direct **Democracy on all Levels** -,
Elections, Referenda, Initiatives & the Citizens Freedom of
Choice

4.4 The Swiss System of **Concordance:** beyond Elections or
Referenda – Content through Consensus

4.5 Democracy shapes the **whole political System** –
limited Role of the Parties

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- 5 FRAMEWORK OF IGR**
- INSTITUTIONS & PROCESSES
- 5.1 **Cooperation**: Principles & Agreements
 - 5.2 **Partnership** of the Federation and the Cantons
 - 5.3 The Contribution of the **Cantons to Democracy** on all Levels
 - 5.4 **Legislative**: Second Chamber & Participation in the Preparation of legislative Acts
 - 5.5 **Executive**: collegiate Composition & Conference of Cantonal Governments & many other Forums & Conferences
 - 5.6 Dispute Resolution by Negotiation and **Mediation** - Judiciary
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6 IGR IN ACTION
- COMPETITION & COOPERATION

6.1 Not only Reallocation of Powers –
 the lasting Fact of overlapping of federal & cantonal Tasks

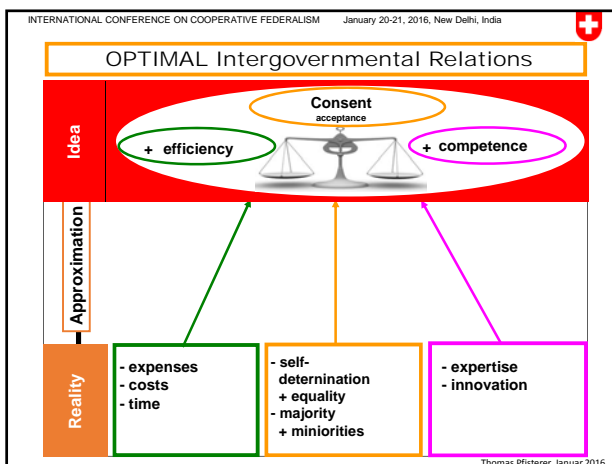
6.2 Reorganization of the federal State as a whole
 – not “Decentralization”, but “Federalism”


6.3 Triangle of optimal IGR: Efficiency, Competence & Consent

6.4 Autonomy, Competition and Cooperation – formal & informal

6.5 Integration of non-territorial Minorities – Politics, civil Society & interest Groups

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7 FISCAL FEDERALISM: Economy of Federalism
AUTONOMY, COMPETITION & FINANCIAL EQUALIZATION

7.1 Sufficient Powers & equivalent financial Resources for all Levels to supply the best Services to Residents – Economy of Federalism

7.2 Large-scale financial Autonomy of the Cantons – 2/3 of public Revenue, Taxes & Tax Competition

7.3 Solidarity & financial Equalization to reduce Disparities

7.4 Fiscal Sustainability: Debt Brake - Budget Discipline & no Bailouts

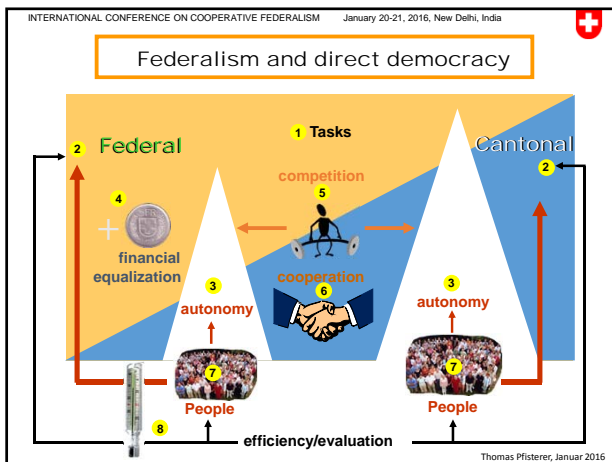
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8 «NEVER ENDING» **CALL FOR REFORMS**

- 8.1 Trend of Centralization & Abuse against & of Democracy
- 8.2 The Process of permanent Review & Adaption of fiscal Sharing – IGR: informal Alternatives to formal Reforms
- 8.3 Safeguards for the future Distribution of Powers – small Effects
- 8.4 Executive Federalism: strengthening People/Parliament
- 8.5 Risks of Democracy for LAW/Federalism/ Separation of powers/Minorities

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Thanks!

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