CONSTRUCTING TOMORROW’S FEDERALISM

Federalism in Switzerland

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1. Introduction

95 % live in multicultural states

40 % live in federal states

Federalism = possible solution to conflict in multicultural societies
2. Federalism, Democracy and Power-sharing

Federalism: a structure, a process and a political culture

The national legitimacy of Switzerland is based on the legitimacy of municipal and cantonal democracies
Democracy

Referenda

Popular votes on parliamentary decisions, constitutional amendments (Swiss people and the cantons), legislation (Swiss people)

The popular initiative

Signatures of 100,000 citizens required
Power-sharing

Involving all political groupings in the exercise of power

Protecting minorities
3. Self rule and shared rule

Art. 3 Cantons

The cantons are sovereign insofar as their sovereignty is not limited by the Federal Constitution; they shall exercise all rights which are not transferred to the Confederation.

⇒ Self rule
Art. 45 Participation in Federal Decision Making

1 In the cases foreseen by the Federal Constitution, the cantons shall participate in the decision-making process on the federal level, in particular in federal legislation.

2 The Confederation shall inform the cantons timely and fully of its plans; it shall consult them if their interests are affected.

⇒ Shared rule
The Senate

46 delegates elected by the people of the cantons. Two seats per full canton, one seat per half canton.

The House of Representatives

200 representatives elected by the people according to the system of proportional representation.
The Federal Government

7 members, each individually elected by the Parliament.
The Conference of the Cantonal Governments

Promoting the co-operation among the cantons influencing the political decisions on the federal level.
4. Reform of the federal system

Reform of Financial Equalization and Task Allocation between the Confederation and the cantons (RET).
Key features

Reallocating the responsibilities of the Confederation and the cantons.

Improving cooperation and financial restructuring between the Confederation and the cantons.

Encouraging intercantonal cooperation.
5. Federalism and Globalization

International legislation with direct effect (EU)
IMF, WTO
MNEs
NGOs
6. Conclusion

150 years of Swiss federalism
Multilevel legitimacy
New challenge EU
Switzerland between innovation and stagnation