

# Auditing federalism. The virtues and perils of decentralized governance

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Federalism has long gained political traction worldwide and decentralization reforms are being implemented around the world grounded on the promises of better democratic governance and higher economic efficiency. Yet the practice of decentralization shows that reforms may result into its greatest perils; namely poor fiscal management, increasing regional disparities and hampered accountability. What are the conditions for federalism to fulfil its economic and democratic promises? Certainly, the devil is in the detail, and success of federalism is contingent on securing that fiscal and political arrangements set in place prevent opportunism, enhance accountability and minimise distributive struggles.

This seminar will contribute to the debate on the virtues and perils of federalism by examining ongoing academic research on the causes and consequences of decentralized governance. The aim is to engage students into the discussion about the driving political forces of past decentralizing reforms in many European countries as well as their consequences. Why after all national politicians are willing to give up power transferring it downwards? Is it about democracy? Is it about economic efficiency? Or is it just a political strategy to enhance their electoral prospects? The module will also explore the consequences federalism. Are the federal promises fulfilled? Under which conditions devolution may succeed as an institutional engine for stability, accountability or economic efficiency? These questions will be addressed drawing comparative evidence from advanced democracies.

## *Schedule:*

19.04.2017: 9.00-18.00 Seminarraum 1 (WiSo)

20.04.2017: 9.00-18.00 Seminarraum 1 (WiSo)

30.05.2017: 9.00-16.00 Seminarraum 1 (WiSo)