



2nd GLOBAL CONFERENCE on BUSINESS, ECONOMICS, MANAGEMENT and
TOURISM, 30-31 October 2014, Prague, Czech Republic

Risk Awareness after The Adoption of New Steering Model in German Public Administrations – A Case Study

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Abstract

The New Steering Model in Germany, as adoption of the New Public Management wave in the 90ies, focuses to bridge the distinctions between private and public management. Risk management could be one of the selected tools. In Germany, the public administrations have to declare their detected individual chances and threads for a sustainable allocation of services to the citizens in the annual status report. A theoretical introduction considering risk management and risk awareness in public administration shows the asymmetries between public and private sector. A relationship between recognized risks and the financial status is presented to show the different estimations of the support by risk management. The findings show a spectrum from complains about the entire financial situation to a very clear and distinct description of roots, causes and possible countermeasures for threats and chances. As one result it has to be accepted that a public entrepreneur has to cope with risk and uncertainty as component of the environment of public management; decisions and their developments have to be observed, evaluated and, in the case of adverse expectations measures, established to minimize the negative consequences for sustainable execution of operations in public administration.

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Selection and/ peer-review under responsibility of Academic World Research and Education Center

Keywords: public value; public administration; risk management; efficiency

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1. Introduction

Continental Europe is not seldom regarded as a late comer in terms of introduction and application of the tools from the New Public Management - toolbox. With the application and the adoption of some of the elementary columns of New Public Management (NPM) the public municipalities and counties in Germany tend to transform themselves towards a service provider. The sector has to focus all efforts to enhance welfare as constitutional task, but also to follow laws and political strategies. Further, private sector organizations have in focus profit maximization; public administrations have to improve welfare. So the organizational and procedural environment have to be very dynamic to cope with the requirements of resources by the different parties. Already Woodrow Wilson has pointed to these permanently changing demands (Wilson, 1887). However, obviously the local public administrations are already demanded too much for many years with these duties. The gap between the provided resources and the demands by politics and society appears very clearly in the indebtedness degree of the public sector.

Table 1: The national debts of the selected members of the European Union at 3rd Q. 2013

Country	National debt (in B€)	In relation to GDP (in %)
Germany	2126.63	78.4
Italy	2068.72	132.9
France	1900.85	92.7
Great Britain	1712.1	89.1
Spain	954.86	93.4
Netherlands	442.16	73.6
Belgium	393.6	103.7
Greece	317.31	171.6
Poland	222.33	58.0
Finland	105.5	54.8
Romania	53.54	38.9
Croatia	26.7	61.7
Luxembourg	12.45	27.7
Malta	5.41	76.6
European Union all over:		86.8

Source: Bundesamt für Statistik Wiesbaden, (2014)

The results, considering the German federal states, give a more concrete impression of the financial status as entire look. Without appropriate instruments to control costs and identify undesired expenses, at least those under direct influence of politicians and administration, this level will rise for the next years.

Table 2: Debts of German municipalities, counties and associations in Mio. €

German Federal States	Sum total	Bond debts	short-term debts	loans
Baden-Württemberg	6.703	-	160	6.543
Bayern	14.013	120	260	13.633
Brandenburg	2.124	-	787	1.336
Hessen	18.135	-	6.576	11.559
Mecklenburg-	1.908	-	638	1.269
Niedersachsen	12.375	180	3.690	8.505
Nordrhein-Westfalen	50.163	200	25.245	24.717
Rheinland-Pfalz	11.874	125	5.966	5.782
Saarland	3.241	-	1.941	1.300
Sachsen	4.315	20	106	4.188
Sachsen-Anhalt	3.136	-	1.050	2.087
Schleswig-Holstein	4.049	-	761	3.288
Thüringen	3.084	-	203	2.881

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