

# **Soziale Arbeit**

**ICOS**

**Germans in Switzerland -**

**Similar and different**

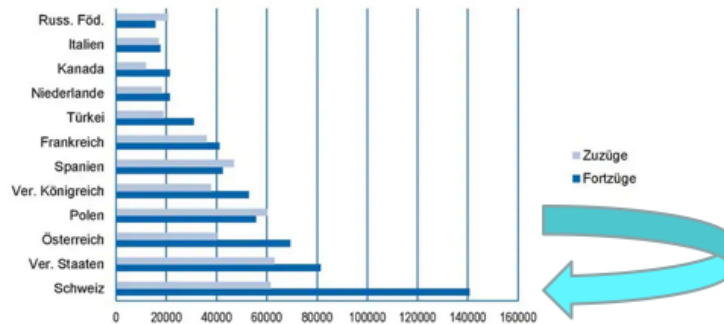
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### Migration of Germans to Switzerland (OECD 2015)

- From 2008 to 2013 around 140'000 Germans immigrated to Switzerland and around 60'000 left Switzerland
- Around 310'000 Germans live in CH (14% of foreigners)
- Most of these Germans are less than 35 years old and highly qualified

Abbildung 3.4 Wanderungsbewegungen deutscher Staatsangehöriger zwischen Deutschland und ausgewählten Zielländern, 2008-2013



2008-2009 it was quite a hot topic in the media – a lot of title – more Germans coming to Switzerland, they don't adapt, etc. negative headlines...

Miryam – is a researcher on racism, xenophobia, etc.

Quite a lot of xenophobia against Germans in Switzerland – astonishing phenomena

Normally these were immigrants who were accused of “bad behavior” and Germans were not associated with these phenomena.

They were problematized in a different way.

Polarization, stigmatization

An explorative study.

Most of the Germans are young and highly qualified

Switzerland is the favourite migration destination for Germans. Many Germans also move away from Switzerland

**Blick** TV News Sport Meinung Politik Wirtschaft People Leben

Schweiz | Neue Expat-Studie: So sehr leiden Deutsche in der Schweiz

10.09.2018, 03:05 U

**«Der Run der Deutschen auf die Schweiz in Zahlen» (Handelszeitung 8.4.14)**

**Neue Expat-Studie**

# So sehr leiden Deutsche in der Schweiz

Deutsche in der Schweiz haben Probleme eine Wohnung zu finden und werden am Arbeitsplatz blöd angemacht. Das zeigt eine neue Studie, die sich mit der Fremdenfeindlichkeit gegenüber Deutschen in der Schweiz befasst.



**DEUTSCHE EINWANDERER**

# Eine Frage der Einstellung

Lesezeit: 11 Minuten

Immer mehr gutqualifizierte Deutsche bekommen Arbeit, für die sich auch Schweizer bewerben. Diese Konkurrenz belastet das Verhältnis zu den neuen Arbeitskollegen.

Zürcher Fachhochschule

Headlines from newspapers: 2016, 2018

Things have changed over time – but we see there is some conflict potential and xenophobic attitudes, also competition for jobs and incomes

## Germans in Switzerland – Similiar but different An exploratory study

Main question of the research (Eser Davolio/Tov/Meyer 2012):

Online survey conducted in 2008

- A total of 252 participants, of which
- 54.4% German
- 105 women and 137 men
- Age mainly between 28-50 years
- Superiors overrepresented (43.0%)

They worked with the 20 Min. and placed an advertisement for an online survey.

## Main research question

- How do Swiss and German employees perceive each other and what any conflicts exist between them?

They published the study and there was quite resonance for it – important topic for entrepreneurs, business, hospitals or other working places which had to do with these conflicts

## Similarity and diversity

Cultural lyrise studies show many similarities between Germans and Swiss in terms of cultural greatness and action-determining categories of thought (Levine 1998, Trompenaars 1993).

Compared to the group of Austrians, they have more common ground in terms of striving for efficiency, future orientation, strutting order and adherence to rules (see Brück 2002).

However, there may be tendencies towards demarcation at the following levels (Auernheimer 2002):

- ❖ Power dimension
- ❖ Collective experiences
- ❖ Mutual foreign images
- ❖ Cultural dimension

According to the studies of management cultures in three countries (Brück 2002)– comparing Germans, Swiss and Austrians, we can say that Swiss people have more in common with Germans than with Austrians.

But we cannot observe xenophobia against Austrians. Then it has to do with other phenomena

Georg Auernheimer put four dimensions:

1. Highly qualitifed people migrating to Switzerland – competition and jealousy
2. Second world war can cause prejudice
3. Stereotypes – what we learn at home
4. Cultural dimensions

With some participants, they made longer in-depth interviews

## Over-layering is new for Swiss

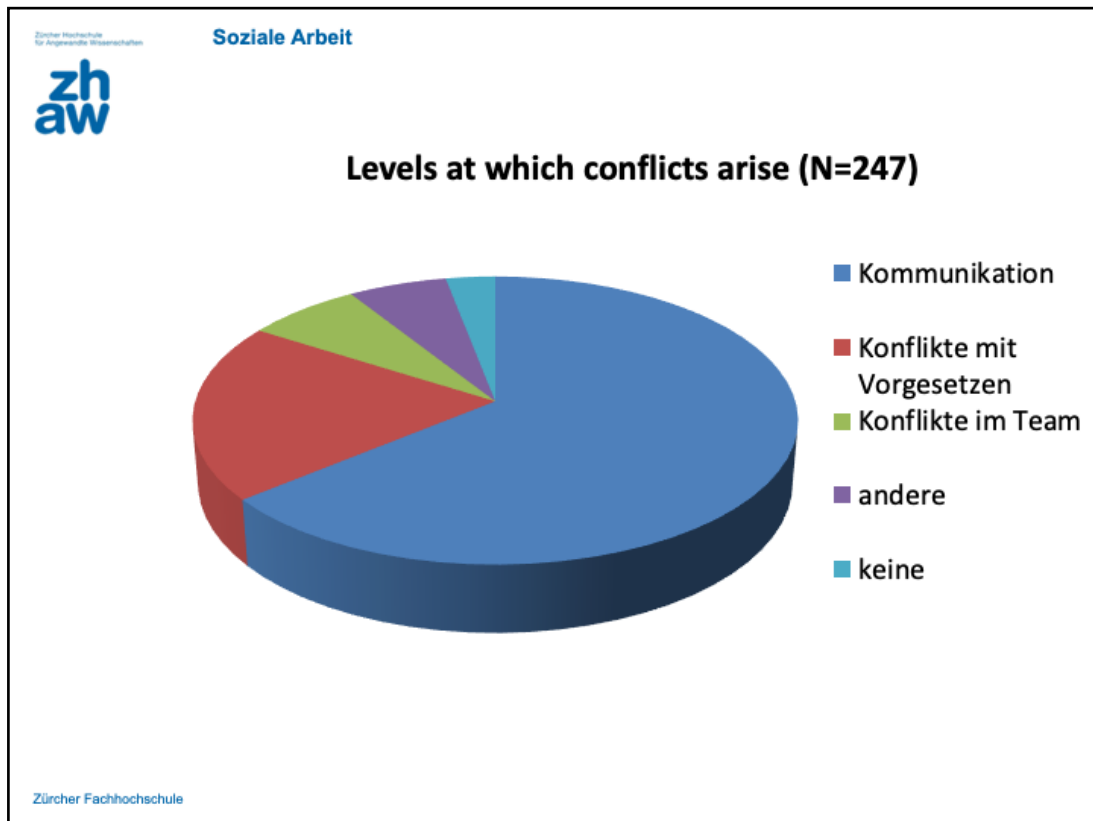
45% of managers in CH companies are foreigners;  
56% of CEOs (see Schilling 2009).

*Excerpts from interviews:*

*"There are difficulties at all levels, but above all at the level of management, because one is reluctant to be managed by a German. He doesn't understand Swiss culture or bring an added-value." (CH, Manager, Banking)*

Around a third of the executives come from Germany, the second largest group from the Anglo-Saxon region. For a long time, the management level was almost exclusively occupied by Swiss (cf. De Pellegrin 2008:3). Especially at the level of the middle and upper squads, however, there have been big changes in the last 15 to 20 years.

People in this branches are not used that "foreigners" would manage them and be superior to them.



The big issue is communication

Also German managers have withdrawn from communication and their employees also withdraw from communication – which became a problem for management and working climate, team work in the companies

Important question – what is typical for Swiss management style and German management style?

We knew that this is a stereotyping question – because there is no objectively Swiss and German style of management - what you associate with this style is important

Both the German and Swiss had the same associations with the both styles – which was astonishing...



### Communication difficulties arise, if...

- definitions of the situation of the communication partners **do not overlap "sufficiently"** (Habermas 1995:185).
- Implicit knowledge and **semi-conscious expectations** play a major role here, as communication is also based on contextual reference and "relationship knowledge". since the clarification of differences at the relationship level is much more difficult than substantive differences (Auernheimer 2002:184).
- The **conflicts usually remain unspoken** and continue to smoulder on the side of expectation or appeal, which can lead to serious communication disruptions. Not only are the expectations of the behaviour of the other person not fulfilled, but also the image they think of themselves in the opposite is negatively anticipated (cf. *ibid.*).
- **Consequences:** withdrawal, relationship breakdown or aggressive reactions

Different communication styles – for example, making a pause – is not common in German speech

### Germans problematize the communication:

- *"I was used to always saying openly what I think. But this is only possible here with people who think the same way, **so I hold back.**"*
- *"**Criticism is not clear enough**, so you don't know exactly where you are."*
- *"lack of openness, blasphemy and **bullying at the back**"*
- *"Decisions or mistakes are widely made and much later are repeatedly raised."*
- *"**Information hiding**, decisions are not supported or boycotted."*

Expectation how one should behave oneself in a situation

Relationship knowledge – how one behaves in a relationship – Feedback  
Gespräch als Beispiel – how direct you communicate critique – Swiss way  
“packen es ein”

The conflict remains hidden – collateral damage – in the background, can  
lead to serious communication problems – expectations are not met,  
everything is negativized in the behavior of the other.

Not perceived as critique...

The Swiss are bullying at the back

They are criticized all the time for the whole time and “nachtragend” , they feel  
bullied

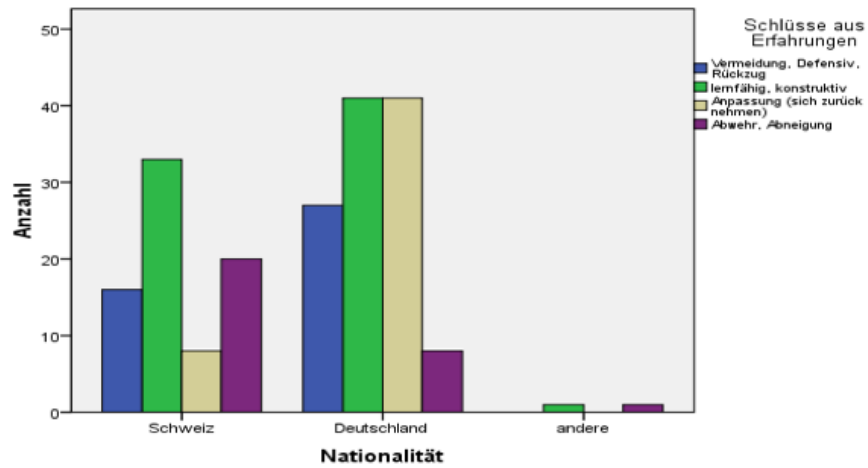
- Information hidden, decisions are not supported, not accepted – Spital ,

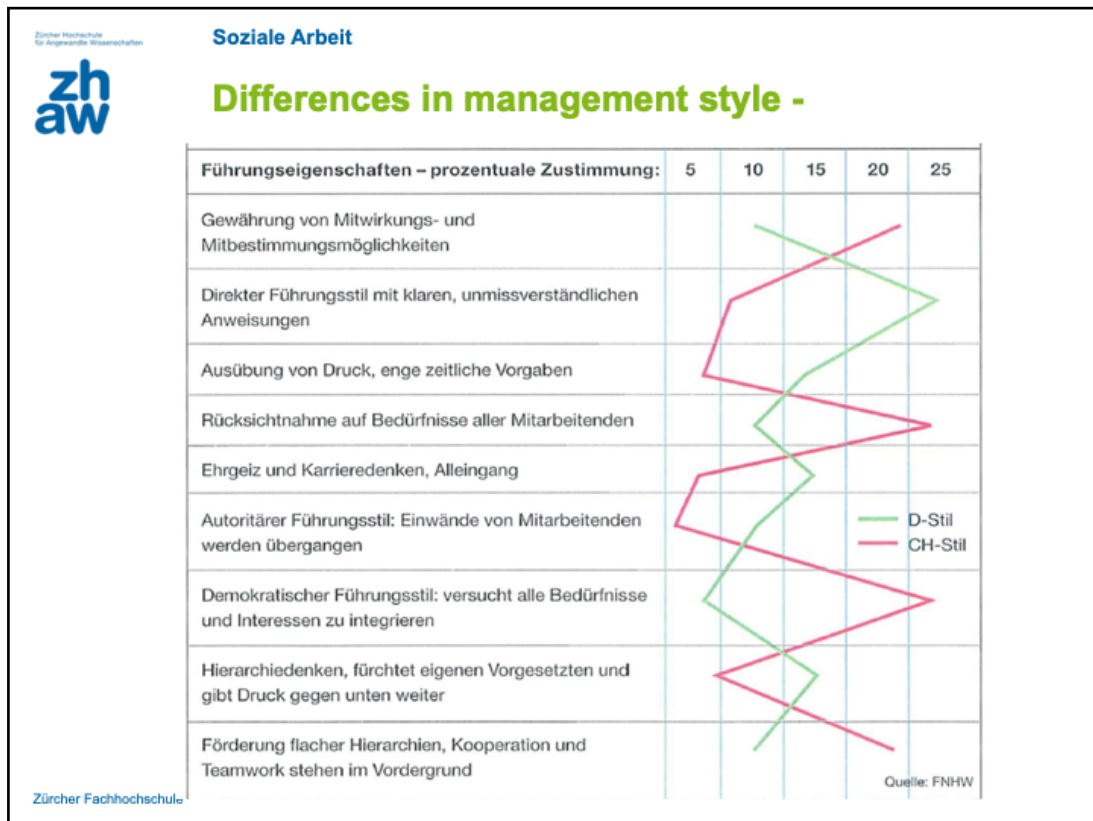
**Conclusions from the experiences:**

**- Swiss react ready to learn or with aversion and retreat**

**- Germans react ready to learn or with adaptation and retreat**

Balkendiagramm





Democratic management style was associated with Swiss style and more authoritative with German

German leadership style is considered to be much more directive, less considerate and more hierarchical

It was especially important in the context of hospitals – because the hierarchies between the doctors and nurses are quite different in Germany than it is in Switzerland. Responsibilities of nurses are higher than in Germany and doctors didn't know that and nurses felt they were not enough respected by German doctors

Difficulties arise when these different communication and management styles are not discussed and communicated between the people – since they withdraw, don't communicate and then more and more distance and misunderstanding are reinforced

Different leadership styles dependent on the branch or company

Lernprozess, Anpassung – Swiss leadership style to become more clear,  
direct and open

Mittlere Wert von allen Befragten

There are differences..

Philips – Kündigung von Schweizer - zu viel Deutsch manager im  
Unternehmen. Kurs – neu in der Schweiz – für Deutsche Führungskräfte  
Es müssen – Schweizer und Deutsche Führungskräfte

Sensitive issue...

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**Soziale Arbeit**

**Where Germans experience racism**

**Public space**

**Housing search**


**Media (Sport)**

**negative attention**

**latent rejection**

**open hostility**

**discrimination**



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Wohnungssuche , media – negative discrimination

Experiences in the everyday life – difficulties in finding apartment, sport events, cars damaged if they had German flags on it during the Football matches. They now put a German and Swiss flag – works better. They feel individual attacked by various acts – offending

Some told – that they don't speak anymore in bus – don't want to be recognized as a German. Try to keep low profile

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Tabooing conflicts

NEUE STUDIE ERKLÄRT

**Darum hassen die Schweizer die Deutschen so**

Teilen Twittern

10.02.2010 - 17:01 Uhr

*Als arrogant gelten wir, als unfreundlich, als kalt und viel zu laut – so denken viele Schweizer über die Deutschen! Lange vor der aktuellen Diskussion über den Kauf der gestohlenen Steuersünder-Daten aus dem Nachbarland, überschlugen sich die Emotionen immer wieder.*

Around half talk about the difficulties only with friends or work colleagues, but not with their superiors, because  
37 out of 105 Swiss and  
23 out of 130 Germans fear negative consequences

*„Any tensions are a huge taboo subject and most will be wary of cutting that taboo.“*

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Tabuisierung der Konflikt – tensions are tabu – unterschwellige Konflikte die zu wenig angesprochen

Konflikte ansprechen – Deutsch die in der Schweiz länger sind – Vermittlerrolle – Verhalten ändern

“Hallo Leute”

And what is important – they didn't want to accept that, they were resisting against that – because many foreigners just accept it

But Germans had good expectations but were shocked by their experiences ... they felt that whole community was punished for something .

Also media – with their headlines – like “Darum hassen Schweizer die Deutschen so..” etc.

Most of them didn't talk about the conflicts – silenced conflicts

## Culture shock and learning process

**Astonishment - Disillusionment - Frustration - Repositioning**

After this initial impotence, the individual is required to provide burdensome psychological **adaptation** services, while at the same time **confusion** about the role and the role expectations of the others (cf. Taft 1977). Recovery only occurs when an **understanding** of one's own cultural character and the logics of action of the new environment can be gained.

Culture shock – positive expectations for Switzerland – repositioning, adaptation process.

Especially important were Germans who already worked in Switzerland before because they could warn and alert the German colleagues – how they should adapt to be accepted.

They coached the other Germans. They had the role of dealing with the topic, of communicating, intercultural trainers, mediators

Learning processes – repositioning

Some just leave.... Because don't like the environment,



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***Differentiation - Reflecting Together - Approach/Confidence***

 *"There are no "THE Germans", they are just as diverse as other nations."*

*"If the differences aren't so serious anymore, I don't get upset about it."*

*"Addressing differences helps mutual understanding."*

 *"It's a different culture in many areas that I find more pleasant and in keeping with my personal style. However, it calls for rethinking and abandonment of the social "survival strategies" learned so far in Germany."*

*"I'm more concerned about myself and the way I affect others."*

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Learning processes – reflection about oneself

Swiss also have to learn to talk openly

One expects less problems but in the everyday can be problems

Swiss have also to learn and adapt

More differentiated experiences

That “Germans” don’t exist as a group are also important learning experiences

Also Germans could learn from these first negative experiences - difficulties and differences can be quite pronounced even if you speak the same language.

Would you have expected such results or was it surprising for you?

Have you experienced some of these things too?

Different accepted ways of behavior in different institutional contexts

Apparenty in French-speaking part of Switzerland – similar problems with the

French

Different communication strategies – always useful to observe other dynamics and observe what it makes with you and with the group.

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