Intercantonal comparison of class sizes and pupil/teacher ratios

By analysing at community level the influence of such factors as pupil numbers, surface area of the community and degree of urbanisation on average class sizes, we can also answer the question of whether intercantonal differences are due to the different character of the communities. If these structural factors are ignored, the cantonal averages fluctuate relatively strongly compared with the national average (19.2) (→ Figure 62), from levels as high as 1.3 pupils more per class (Zurich) to 2.8 pupils fewer per class (Graubünden).

Taking into account the different composition of the individual cantons, and therefore assuming that all cantons are made up of average communities in terms of pupil numbers, surface area and degree of urbanisation, we can see that while these factors have an influence on the average class size in a community, they barely help to explain any of the intercantonal differences. The difference between the canton with the biggest classes sizes and the canton with the smallest classes remains almost unchanged at approximately 4 pupils per class. There must therefore be other reasons for the very major differences.[8]

However, it is not just class size that affects spending on education. Pupil/teacher ratios are another key factor. This can be similarly high even for a disproportionately large class if that class is taught by several teachers. A

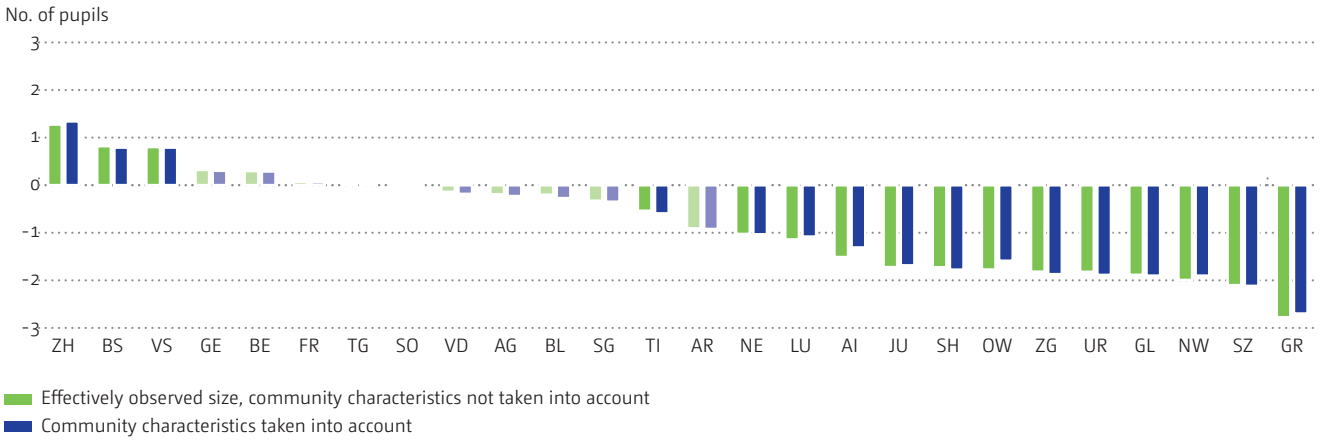
Pupil/teacher ratio

According to the Federal Statistical Office's definition, the number of pupils per teacher (full-time equivalent) at a specific educational level is the pupil/teacher ratio.

62 **Average cantonal class size at primary school level (3rd to 8th school year), 2015/16**

Excluding pupils in special classes and private schools; Deviation in the number of pupils from average for the communities

Data: FSO; calculations: SCCRE



Matt colours indicate that the class size does not deviate significantly for statistical purposes ($p \geq 0.05$) from the national average. The values are based on the average class sizes in the communities, weighted according to cantonal pupil numbers. The following characteristics were incorporated into the second calculations (blue bar): Pupil numbers, surface area, degree of urbanisation.

8 The factors investigated all appear to explain statistically significantly a certain portion of the differences in class size among the individual communities. The reason why they only account for so little of the major differences among the cantons lies in the fact that the overall impact of these factors is not very big. This in turn is due to the fact that, for example, a rural community with a low population density does not automatically have to have small class sizes as in empirical terms it will also be possible to find communities with the same characteristics that run classes where the number of pupils corresponds to the national average or is actually higher than the average.