



The Political Economy of Public Participation in Natural Hazard Decisions – a case study of Austria

C.D. Gamper (1, 2)

(1) Faculty of Economics and Statistics, University of Innsbruck, Austria

(2) alpS Centre for Natural Hazard Management, Innsbruck, Austria

It is often argued whether public good decisions with a high degree of uncertainty should be solely left to expert bodies for decision-making. Imperfect knowledge of experts leaves an uncertain level of risk to the public or the affected groups of persons. Direct participation of affected parties in such decisions is believed to be valuable in many ways. On the one hand, it allows final decision makers' choices to be more accepted among stakeholders and on the other hand, knowledge by the experts can be complemented with the one by affected parties. The latter is the case of the present study's application, namely danger zone planning in Austria. It shows that even though experts, contrary to the wide believe that they think of themselves to have perfect knowledge, allow for changes in draft plans after statements of affected parties. From a political economic viewpoint it will be discussed whether this process can be viewed to provide a "better" decision-making process.