



Adaptation strategies and policy implementation for sharing responsibility in managing mountain hazards (SHARED)

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Austrian municipalities face increasing risks from natural hazards due to a number of reasons: the frequency and magnitude of extreme weather events is expected to rise as a result of climate change, settlements are expanding in hazard-prone areas and the monetary value of assets and properties at risk increases. These developments drive transformation regarding the role of the state and the individual to share responsibility in risk management. It has often been argued that risk reduction and emergency management can be better handled on a local level, which consequently indicates a shift from a centralised to a decentralised organisation. The policy discourse favoured private flood preparedness actions in the last decades. Yet, private preparedness in hazard-prone areas has so far been pursued in an unsystematic way, mainly because current policy arrangements are unable to negotiate conflicts of adaptation between national and local levels. As a consequence, most residents refrain from self-protective action and attribute the respective responsibilities to the public administration. Therefore, the ability of society to cope with these hazards has made little progress, apart from existing top-down national and regional approaches. Taking the case study of Dornbirn, Austria, as an example we show how this gap could be overcome. The region, situated in the Rhine valley, is an important hub for education, industry, trade and services, however, at the same time faces multiple hazards. While the physical and economic impacts on vulnerability are already reasonably well understood, we adopted an interdisciplinary approach by integrating knowledge from the social and political sciences to assess critical factors that emerge from the multi-stakeholder context of vulnerability. A particular focus lies on uncovering informal and tacit expertise which implicitly shapes current risk governance arrangements and thus is pivotal to understand and eventually revise those arrangements. These insights are obtained by continuous interaction with stakeholders from administrative bodies (regional and local level), insurance businesses and the general public. The societal relevance of this project is not only given by the need to frame vulnerability to natural hazards against climate change policies, but also regarding the background of the European Floods Directive (2007/60/EC).