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Social Acceptance of Small-Scale Hydropower in Austria from 2015 to 2019

Robert Sposato and Nina Hampf

Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt, Department of Operations, Energy, and Environmental Management, Sustainable Energy Management Unit, Austria (robert.sposato@aau.at)

The research presented here is based on an extensive data set of five distinct nationally representative surveys in Austria sampling an average of 1.008 respondents per year. The surveys ran from 2015 to 2019 and were designed to measure respondents' perceptions and attitudes towards various renewable energy-related issues, including perceptions of and attitudes towards electric vehicles and photovoltaic panels for private consumers but also renewable energy technologies in general and renewable energy production sites, specifically wind turbines, large-scale photovoltaic power plants and small-scale hydropower. Particular attention was paid to the question of local acceptance, or better, support for infrastructure in respondents' local community. The data presented will thus offer a variety of perspectives. Firstly, longitudinal trends in the acceptance of small-scale hydropower will indicate the relative development of small-scale hydropower in terms of both regional differences but equally with respect to the two other surveyed renewable energy technologies. Comparisons on an aggregate level also offer an in depth and robust multiple regression analysis of the various predictors of social acceptance. Again, comparing these results to the results for both wind and photovoltaic energy technology. From an applied perspective, results are then discussed with respect to their implications for future renewable energy technology scenarios with respect to social acceptance and the role small-scale hydro power can play in these. Equally the rather novel scholarly effort to investigate social acceptance of small-scale hydropower and the potential for comparisons with more extensively studied renewable energy technology forms will offer an interesting ground for debate among academics and practitioners.