

ÖSTERREICHISCHE FORSCHUNGSGEMEINSCHAFT  
AUSTRIAN RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

***WORKING GROUP ON DEMOCRACY:***  
**CIVIL SOCIETY AND DEMOCRACY**

**2. RESEARCH CONFERENCE**

**NOVEMBER 9-10, 2012**

Centre for International Development, Sensengasse 3

Conference Hotel *Boltzmann*

Vienna

[\*Registration\*](#)

[\*City Map\*](#)

**9.00-12.00** (includes a 30 min Coffee Break)

**Topic 1: *Perceptions of Democracy in Civil Society*:** The public discourse in many advanced democracies centers on questions of "democratic fatigue", the need for "systemic reform", and the "democratic deficit". Beyond a superficial treatment, this question has proved hard to tackle because "democracy" in the abstract seems to be popular; only its concrete manifestation in the form of institutions and persons appear to be under siege. Moreover, the fact that criticism seems to be correlated with the elite-mass cleavage and surveys, while clearly reflecting diffuse discontentment, indicates neither a clear way forward nor suggests that specific reforms of the polity would boost overall satisfaction. The question that therefore arises is one of (changing) expectations of democracy and the perception of democracy in civil society that is outside the realm of experts and political professionals.

- **Åsa Bengtsson**, Åbo Akademi University. *Perceptions of Representative Democracy and its Alternatives: An Analysis of Finnish Citizens*.
- **Norma Osterberg-Kaufmann**, Humboldt University Berlin. *Measuring How People View Democracy. Conceptual Problems and Possible Alternatives*.
- **Gianfranco Pomatto**, University of Turin. *Evaluating Substantial Quality of Deliberation Results from two Citizens' Juries*.
- **Irene Hahn -Fuhr/Susann Worschech**, European University Viadrina, Frankfurt an der Oder. *External Democracy Promotion and Domestic Civil Society – the Missing Link*.
- **Discussants: Reinhard Heinisch**, University of Salzburg; **Maneula Caiani**, IHS (Vienna) and URJC (Madrid)

**12.00-13.30 Lunch**

**Topic 2: *Citizen Juries – Relevance and Usefulness?*** At least since the 1980s citizen juries and citizen committees have been a means of enhancing citizen participation. Whereas some regard this as an innovative aspect of civil society engagement as it allows citizen representatives to pass judgment on more complicated problems ill-suited to referenda and ballot initiatives, others have contended that the lack of professionalism, accountability, and legal base pose challenges that render such groups at best as symbolic fig leaves and at the worst as a dangerous form of undermining the state of law and democracy itself. Whereas citizen juries have been part of the political conversation in countries like the US and Britain, they have been less well known in Austria. However, the growing importance of the internet as a social organizing tool and the emergence of *Bürgerfora* (citizen forums) in Germany has drawn attention to this phenomenon.

- **Mathias König/Wolfgang König**, University of Koblenz-Landau. *Citizen Juries as an Example of Useful Deliberative Governance. Conclusions of the Communal and Administrative Reform in Rhineland-Palatinate*.
- **Micol Maggiolini**, University of Torino. *Traditional Actors Dealing with Local Protests: the Case of the Turin-Lyon rail-link Observatory*.
- **Diana Redondo**, Complutense University. *Internet in the Social Mobilization: the Conquest of the Public Sphere*
- **Discussants: Martin Dolezal**, University of Vienna; **Susann Worschech**, Viadrina University Frankfurt Oder; **Gabriele Melischek**, Austrian Academy of Sciences

**15.15-16.15 Coffee Break**

**Topic 3: *Contemporary Protest Behavior*:** This topic examines the protest behavior in advanced democracies, seeking identify patterns and explanations for the variance of protest behavior across countries and within political system. From the vantage points of Austria, a country with a highly consensual political culture and rather muted forms of protest, the following questions are of interest:

- **Eva Maria Hinterhuber**, Fern Universität in Hagen. *How Do the Traditional Actors (governance, parties, bureaucracies, etc.) Deal with Protest Behavior?*
- **Manuela Caiani**, Institute of Advanced Studies (Vienna) and URJC (Madrid). *Extreme Right Protest and Democracy: Violence and Beyond in six Western Countries.*
- **Martin Dolezal**, University of Vienna. *The Europeanization of Protest Politics. A Comparative Study of EU and non-EU Member States.*
- **Discussants: Franz Fallend**, University of Salzburg; **Ludger Helms**, University of Innsbruck

**Saturday, November 10, 2012**

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**9.00-10.30**

**Topic 4: Lobbying and Civil Society?** In the continental tradition, lobbying has been perceived in the public discourse as having a harmful and negative influence on the quality of democracy. In the Anglo-Saxon reception, the verdict has been rather mixed. On one hand lobbying can be seen as a linkage between civil society interests and legislators and thus as a means of educating law-makers independent of powerful institutions such as political parties, government ministries, and the executive branch. On the other hand, the superior resources of corporations and mainstream institutions suggest that that civil society groups are at a decided disadvantage when it comes to lobbying. In some cases like Austria, both the public discourse and even the law draw a distinction between "positive" interest groups such as labor unions and employer associations and seemingly less desirable "lobbies" per se. We are interested in work on the nexus between lobbying and civil society and especially in the following research questions:

- **Jan Henning Ullrich**, Berlin Graduate School of Social Sciences (BGSS). *The Fate of Diffuse Interests. Interest Group Influence in Multi-level Decision-Making: The Case of EU Consumer Protection Policy.*
- **Tetiana Kostiuhenko**, National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. *Civic and Political Connections between Ukrainian Governing Elites: Opportunities for Lobbying and Policy Making.*
- **Discussants: Reinhard Heinisch**, University of Salzburg; **Åsa Bengtsson**, Åbo Akademi University

**10.30-11.00 Coffee Break**

**Topic 5: Local Democracy:** Because of its smaller scope and large variety local politics has produced a flourishing diversity of democracy in action. Local democracy can also be considered a laboratory for democratic innovation. This topic investigates the patterns and variety of how democracy manifests itself at the local level in terms of political participation, organization, strategies, and activism.

- **Armin Mühlböck**, University of Salzburg. *Democracy at the Local Level - Results of Survey from Salzburg Communities.*
- **Klaus Poier**, University of Graz/**Martin Dolezal**, University of Vienna. *Local Democracy in Austria.*
- **Discussants: Reinhard Neck**, University of Klagenfurt; **Norma Osterberg-Kaufmann**, Humboldt University Berlin

**12.30-13.30 Lunch**

**13.30-15.00 Group Discussion of Findings and Taking the Next Step**

**15.00 Conference End**

**Conference Participants:**

**Åsa Bengtsson**, Åbo Akademi University

**Maneula Caiani**, IHS (Vienna) and URJC (Madrid)

**Martin Dolezal**, University of Vienna

**Tamara Ehs**, University of Vienna

**Franz Fallend**, University of Salzburg

**Irene Hahn-Fuhr**, European University Viadrina

**Reinhard Heinisch**, University of Salzburg

**Ludger Helms**, University of Innsbruck

**Eva Maria Hinterhuber**, Fern Universität in Hagen

**Mathias König / Wolfgang König**, University of Koblenz-Landau

**Tetiana Kostiuhenko**, National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy

**Micol Maggiolini**, University of Torino

**Gabriele Melischek**, ÖAW, Zentrum Sozialwissenschaften

**Armin Mühlböck**, University of Salzburg

**Reinhard Neck**, University of Klagenfurt

**Norma Osterberg-Kaufmann**, Humboldt University Berlin

**Gianfranco Pomatto**, University of Turin

**Diana Redondo**, Complutense University

**Jan Henning Ullrich**, Berlin Graduate School of Social Sciences (BGSS)

**Susann Worschech**, European University Viadrina

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**Paper Abstracts**  
(shortened)

**Åsa Bengtsson**, Åbo Akademi University. *Perceptions of Representative Democracy and its Alternatives: An Analysis of Finnish Citizens.*

The theoretical and normative foundations of representative democracy have been in crossfire during recent decades. Citizens have become more critical of the actors and institutions that form the basis of the representative democratic process, and traditional political participation has been in decline (Mattila & Sänkiaho 2005; Dalton 2004). The most common way of participating – voting at elections – has fallen in most democracies since the 1970s (Franklin 2004), and the share of citizens belonging to political parties has waned (Scarrow 2007). The decline in turnout and party membership has been particularly marked in established democracies and political parties are turning into clubs for pensioners (Borg 2008). Yet, fundamental support for a democratic form of government has remained high.

But can a development towards more participatory or deliberative forms of democracy offer a cure to the current political malaise and increase democratic legitimacy? The true potential and impact of participatory and deliberative forms of democracy is in fact still contested and some evidence even suggests that citizens prefer to avoid political conflicts and are happy to leave politics to politicians, as long as these act in a fair and constructive manner and avoid petty politicking. In fact, some claim that people would prefer to leave more power to independent and unselfish experts (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002).

What is needed at this stage is more thorough knowledge about citizens' own expectations about the current form of representative democracy, as well as their capacity and willingness concerning direct or deliberative democratic participation. The paper proposed here deals with the current deficit concerning citizens' perceptions as well as their expectations by systematically analyzing two questions; how do people conceive the current representative political system and what kind of political processes would people in general prefer? The analysis is performed on 12 focus group discussions performed with Finnish citizens of varying age and political interest during the spring of 2012.

**Norma Osterberg-Kaufmann**, Humboldt University Berlin. *Measuring How People View Democracy. Conceptual Problems and Possible Alternatives.*

Measuring people's attitudes towards democracy is a key question of current political culture research and research on democracy as they are crucial for a stable political system and/or the chances for democratization. The continuous importance of a deeper understanding of democratization can be illustrated by a number of examples such as the transformation to democracy in post-socialist Europe and elsewhere. As illustrated by these examples, one fundamental question has to be whether we are right in assuming that there exists a universal and homogenous understanding of what democracy means. Or do different cultural and socioeconomic preconditions lead to differences in the understanding of democracy in different countries and therefore as well to different expectations what democracy and their institutions should achieve?

A number of standardized surveys have made available comparable data on the attitudes of people concerning the principles and institutions of democracy (Diamond 2008; Welzel/Inglehart 2008). But faced with numerous unexpected findings, such as a more favourable opinion on democracy in Albania and Azerbaijan than in Switzerland or Sweden (Welzel/Inglehart 2008), the credibility of the world-wide overwhelming support for democracy is questionable (Inglehart 2003; Pickel 2006; Dalton/Shin/Jou 2007). The methodological challenge of survey-research, which became obvious by the aforementioned problems, is rooted particularly in the phenomenon of linguistic and functional equivalence. Therefore the need for alternative methods arises. The specific advantage of the method that I will introduce here is that it takes account of the use of language and word associations but also allows for inter-cultural comparisons. Therefore, the use of Repertory-Grid allows an entirely new approach to cross-country and cross-culture research, new insights in the field of international comparison and a more differentiated understanding of what democracy means to the people.

**Gianfranco Pomatto**, University of Turin. *Evaluating Substantial Quality of Deliberation Results from two Citizens' Juries.*

Although still marginal compared with other traditional forms of policy-making, public deliberation is spreading all over the world at various government levels. It aims at responding to the crisis of the representative democracy and of its traditional actors, such as political parties and trade unions, through dialogical processes involving main actors potentially affected by the policy measures under discussion. The goal pursued is to replace strategic bargaining among actors with reflexive interactions based on exchanges of information and arguments that induce a learning process and favour problem solving.

The procedural and relational aspects are important attributes of deliberative processes. However they are not sufficient to really distinguish the high quality deliberative processes from the others. What is crucial when evaluating the quality of deliberation is thus to adopt a substantive perspective. In this respect the paper maintains that a high quality deliberation requires four attributes: i) *completeness*: all points of view concerning the issue at stake have brought into the debate, ii) *disagreement*: participants have been expressing opposing views on the most contentious matters, iii) *learning*: participants did not display a selective learning, iv) *faithfulness*: the final recommendations thoroughly reflected the content of deliberation.

The paper presents the results of a research that has been carried out through this framework on two citizens' juries: the first took place during a cultural event in Turin and it was about the federal reform of Italian state; the second was carried out in 2011 in Tuscany and it was part of a decision making process about a waste pyrogasifier.

**Irene Hahn-Fuhr/Susann Worschech**, European University Viadrina, Frankfurt an der Oder. *External Democracy Promotion and Domestic Civil Society – the Missing Link.*

In research on external democratization, there is little dispute that the support of a country's civil society serves as one of the few unsuspecting instruments of democracy promotion. As long as external assistance is directed towards the 'civil' – and not towards radical and/or violent – parts of civil society, both political actors and scholars largely assume a positive correlation between civil society and democratic development.

Civic actors on their part often define themselves as spearheads of democracy, hence legitimating external funding by their democratizing function in nondemocratic regimes. Considering this general consensus, there is surprisingly little knowledge about concrete mechanisms and effects of external support for civil society in democratizing countries. Therefore, in this proposed paper we analyze external democracy promotion as a complex set of assumptions and perceptions concerning civil society's roles and functions in democratization processes. We argue that the process of external democracy promotion is determined by certain underlying ideas on the link between civil society and democratization, which, moreover, provokes specific effects in the development of supported civic actors.

These effects seem to contrast recent theories on civil society's democratizing potential, as democracy promotion via civil society displays an ambiguous picture. Today, in post-socialist Europe, there are huge numbers of civic organizations working on democracy issues and campaigns. Yet, while external civil society promotion as a purpose in itself appears to be successful in quantitative terms, this seems not to be the case for external democracy promotion via civil society. The aim of this paper is to propose a model to distinguish modes and strategies of democracy promotion that lead to these specific effects and phenomena on the side of civil society.

Following the question on how to examine whether external democracy promotion via civil society has any impact on sustained democratic development in authoritarian contexts, we present a combination of theoretic approaches to analyze this process systematically. The model also provides for certain methodological perspectives to shed light on specific aspects of external democracy promotion via civil society, and thus to help exploring the details of external assistance and civil society development in post-socialist contexts.

**Mathias König/Wolfgang König**, University of Koblenz-Landau. *Citizen Juries as an Example of Useful Deliberative Governance. Conclusions of the Communal and Administrative Reform in Rhineland-Palatinate.*

There have been numerous communal and administrative reforms in Germany, and experience has shown that communal and administrative reforms are complex procedures which are difficult to communicate in general. The informational value is especially high only after the reforms have been resolved upon and have to be implemented despite the resistance of the people affected. In order to solve this paradox, the political public has to be constantly informed during the process (Sarcinelli, König & König, 2008).

The last communal and administrative reform in Rhineland-Palatinate took place 30 years ago. It was an elite project of the political parties CDU and SPD and led to massive resistance on the part of the citizens. The current key issue of the reform is again the local administrative reform as an instrument of regional planning, in terms of whether and how the associations of municipalities can be maintained even with a declining number of inhabitants, or whether they might have to merge. In case of mergers, the new communal area and the associated resources, the political majorities, and the distance to the point of administration may change. Theoretically, the reform can affect all associations of municipalities in Rhine-land-Palatinate, but partly also counties, and towns with county status. Due to the fragmented character of Rhineland-Palatinate, the majority of the citizens is affected by the reform. Public involvement was started already at the beginning of the reform planning process and not only at the end as a measure of subsequent legitimation.

Thus, participation can be regarded as an element of political communication, because participation allows for the communication of information and knowledge both on the part of politics towards the citizens and on the part of the citizens towards politics. Participation can also become an instrument of political consulting, as political projects are subjected to a rationality test or reality check by the citizens. This way, "blind spots" in the planning can be detected. For the case of Rhineland-Palatinate extensive qualitative and quantitative data is available on the basis of which it is possible to formulate conclusions concerning the successfulness of deliberative political consultation beyond the Citizens' Jury.

**Micol Maggiolini**, University of Torino. *Traditional Actors Dealing with Local Protests: the Case of the Turin-Lyon rail-link Observatory.*

The project of a new international railway offers an interesting chance to analyse the interrelationship among the different levels in which a public policy is developed, from local to international. The policy network includes actors of different level of government: European, national, regional, provincial and local. The adoption of tools and methods for taking into consideration opinions expressed by the involved local communities often becomes a hardly avoidable matter, especially when the project is accompanied by the rise and consolidation of a substantial and deep-rooted opposition movement that generally includes several local administrators.

The new Lyon-Turin railway project (NLTL) serves as a stimulating example for investigating the difficult and changing relationship between the central government and local authorities: In the whole affair of NLTL, moments of excess of resoluteness in the decision-making, centralism, and the exclusion of stakeholders are followed by partial openness to dialogue and innovations. In turn, this process triggered radicalization and intense opposition to local authorities. In response, two ad hoc bodies were set up in order to handle the phase: the Institutional Forum of Palazzo Chigi, referred as a "political forum", which brought together the national government and the regional and local institutions; and the Turin-Lyon rail-link Observatory to carry out the necessary technical studies together with the parties concerned. In the latter, trustworthy technicians represented all the actors, even if, in no case, direct participation of citizens was scheduled.

Based on participant observation, the paper presents findings concerning the direct and more subtle effects of this process of managing citizens' response to such a large-scale infrastructure project.

**Diana Redondo**, Complutense University. *Internet in the Social Mobilization: the Conquest of the Public Sphere*

The media are a space of power and transmission of cultural values in a massive way. Until the advent of new technologies, media communications space was taken over by the posts of public authorities and institutions. Internet reverses, or at least balances, the State relations of domination with the rest of the social agents, as well as it makes easier the access to this sphere of power to ideas and values of other political actors, such as social movements and citizenship. Regarding the media's use in the following days to the mobilization of 15M (Indignad@s) provided by the agency Havas, we observed that 77% of the Spanish population was informed through television and 66% via the Internet.

Due to the Internet expansion, social movements have made a tactical use of technology to promote the protest and participation, improved inter and intra-group coordination and created a space for open and horizontal deliberation. But also, as exemplified in 15M movement, the network has been used by social movements to achieve the change of mass media agenda. The Indignad@s movement is also generating a current of opinion by its massive expansion in blogs, forums, online media, and social networks like Twitter and Facebook. The opinions expressed in these channels are collected and disseminated through the mainstream media because of the size of its mobilizing impact.

In recent years, with the rise of the anti-globalization movement, the mass media have offered a negative view or criminalization of social movements, emphasizing above all the violence, and making invisible the protests and actions of these groups; also as a result from the production routines of the media and the limits imposed by the immediacy of the news or the job insecurity of journalists, among other reasons. Therefore, especially social networks have established themselves as a key tool for social movements, as they accomplish a role of control – driven by citizenship – over public power and mass media.

Our paper examines the impact that the communication strategy of 15M has had in changing the agenda of the media and the role played by collective hacktivists in the widespread use of the network to help to break their isolation and reaffirm the location of the movement in public sphere. To explain the current situation, we review the use of new technologies by social movements from the WTO summit in Seattle (1998) and analyze the practices derivate from it that now have materialized in the Spanish movement Indignad@s.

**Eva Maria Hinterhuber**, Fern Universität in Hagen. *How Do the Traditional Actors (governance, parties, bureaucracies, etc.) Deal with Protest Behavior?*

Civil society has been reacting to the growing power of corporations (Crouch 2011) and although their actions are typically directed at governments there is also increasing evidence of direct interactions of Civil Society Organizations with private companies. This spectrum of interaction is rather broad (Simsa 2011: de Nève 2011:): ranging from cooperation to confrontation. In fact, civil society never appears to have been as successful as evidenced by a reawakening of the anti-nuclear movement and other examples. Often CSO depart from conventional forms of political behavior and open up to new forms of activism and protest. This is made possible increasingly by new media and new forms of communication (social networks, Flash mobs, Street Art, etc.). In turn, parts of the market have discovered this kind of political participation for themselves and can instrumentalize the latter for their own purpose. The research proposed here intends to analyze the forms through which economic actors have copied, commercialized, and coopted civil society participation.



**Maneula Caiani**, Institute of Advanced Studies (Vienna) and URJC (Madrid). *Extreme Right Protest and Democracy: Violence and Beyond in six Western countries.*

In the last two decades many Western democracies have experienced a considerable rise of extreme right mobilization (a so-called 'right wing populist wave'); waves of protest and political campaigns initiated by extreme-right parties, extra parliamentary organizations and single activists against the European integration, immigration, the introduction of the Euro, the rising unemployment rate and the relevant traditional parties' social policies and economic politics. Extreme-right mobilization is, however, not limited to the institutionalized/political arena, but it can take different forms, including violence and the use of new technologies. In this paper, by focusing on five European countries (France, Italy, Germany, Spain, and England) and the USA, through a protest event analysis of the daily press in the most recent years (2005-2009), we will explore the action repertoire of the extreme right within a cross-country, cross-time, and cross-group perspective. The paper presents the main characteristics of the (violent and non-violent) activities of the extreme right as reported in the press, looking at their forms, scope, targets, and issues, and linking them at the available organizational resources and political opportunities of the contexts.

**Martin Dolezal**, University of Vienna. *The Europeanization of Protest Politics A Comparative Study of EU and non-EU Member States.*

Political contestation has lately entered the world of European integration studies. Apart from public opinion, voting behaviour, and party competition, scholars interested in the politicization of Europe have also studied whether and how European integration has restructured protest politics. However, research on the Europeanization of protest is still rare as compared to studies on more institutionalized forms of participation and mobilization. Furthermore, the literature seems divided: While a few quantitative protest event studies exist that mainly focus on the volume and development of Europeanized protests, researchers relying on case studies or other strategies of data collection have paid close attention to different forms of Europeanized protests. The present paper attempts to bridge this divide by exploring both the extent and the forms of protest in three West European countries for the period 1995 to 2010. To do so, we rely on a new in-depth selection and coding of quality press articles on Europeanized protest events. The three countries covered in this paper include a founding member of the EU (Germany), a member-country since 1995 (Austria), and a non-member (Switzerland). This sample allows us to test whether the volume and the form of Europeanized protest politics depend on a country's degree of integration.

**Jan Henning Ullrich**, Berlin Graduate School of Social Sciences (BGSS). *The Fate of Diffuse Interests. Interest Group Influence in Multi-level Decision-Making: The Case of EU Consumer Protection Policy.*

The supranational EU institutions are usually considered the main allies of the consumer in Europe and they frequently express the priority of consumer safety. Yet they are continually exposed to harsh criticism voiced by official consumer representatives who point to shortcomings in EU efforts to effectively harmonize product safety standards regulating the food market in EU member states.

I argue that the (un)successful representation of consumer interests in the field of product safety regulation is driven by the decision-making structures of the EU multi-level system of governance and the ability of cross-level interest group coalitions to exploit them through strategies of issue framing. I develop a threefold theoretical framework that puts emphasis on three main causal mechanisms (multi-level decision-making procedures, interest group resource endowments, and multi-level venue shopping and framing strategies) that, taken together, help to account for the puzzling varying degree of successful consumer interest intermediation in the European Community. Hypotheses which are derived from the theoretical model will eventually be tested against a small set of cases comprising recent EU regulations and directives in the field of consumer safety, with a focus on food safety issues.

The cases are systematically selected from the European Union Policy Making (EUPOL) dataset and I combine methods of Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and process tracing to reveal the crucial causal mechanisms behind lobbying success for all the cases considered to shed light on the debate on what non-state actors are or are not influential in EU decision-making. The goal is to develop a set of conditions which are necessary and/or sufficient for successfully affecting policy outputs in European consumer protection policy.

**Tetiana Kostiuhenko**, National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. *Civic and Political Connections between Ukrainian Governing Elites: Opportunities for Lobbying and Policy Making.*

According to the most recent Freedom House Report, the civil society actors are rather active in Ukraine, though they are weak in influencing public policy. Therefore the paper suggests a possible explanation for how the joint legislative initiatives overlap with the personal entanglements and affiliations of the MPs and ministers with various non-governmental organizations, think-tanks, philanthropy organizations and other entities. In other words, the central question of the paper is to what extent the common past of the policy-makers affects their current willingness to work on policy development together. Moreover, common interests based on the former affiliation with the same organization provide potential for the formation of coalitions and lobbying groups in the parliament and government.

The empirical basis for this paper includes two dimensions of interconnections between Ukrainian political elite members (over 500 actors) who were in power during 2007-2012. One layer of a complete network is affiliations through joint legislative initiatives, specifically draft laws submitted during the mentioned period of time; the other one contains biographical ties of the elite members in various spheres: political, business, civic, and educational, along with kinship ties. The basic network measures (density, average distance, centralization indices) are calculated along with the identification of cohesive subgroups, central actors and hypotheses testing.

**Armin Mühlböck**, University of Salzburg. *Democracy at the Local Level - Results of Survey from Salzburg Communities*

The project concerns with the community as a small political entity and also a socializing agent of democracy. In our research, we are interested in how political outcomes are arrived at by negotiation at this local level. Specifically, we wish to compare competitive and concordant forms of democratic decision-making by applying a hypothesis-test derived from the theory of Lars Holtkamps.

Using this as a theatrical yardstick, we are able to evaluate the pattern of how democracy is practiced in certain communities in the Salzburg area. The subsequent objective is to identify general trends and establish communalities. Based on the model by Holtkamps, we expect for example larger communities to converge on the more competitive democratic mode.

**Klaus Poier**, University of Graz/**Martin Dolezal**, University of Vienna. *Local Direct Democracy in Austria.*

The researchers plan to share the initial findings of a comprehensive analysis about the state and nature of local democracy in Austria following a survey of all Austrian small communities. Because of their scope and variety local politics has produced a flourishing diversity of democracy in action. The research investigates the patterns and variety of how democracy manifests itself at the local level in terms of political participation, organization, strategies, and activism.