



Interactive comment on “Public participation in recovery after earthquakes in Friuli (NE Italy) and the Upper Soča Valley (NW Slovenia) in 1976, 1998, and 2004” by P. Pipan and M. Zorn

Anonymous Referee #2

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Dear authors,

your paper touches a relevant field of natural hazards research from a social-science perspective. The issue of participation in recovery is certainly underresearched, and your paper is even more interesting as it makes an effort to compare between countries and different societal systems. However, in its current form the paper has some major weaknesses:

1. There are no research questions or hypotheses provided. Therefore the reader does not know what he/she will expect. Is there a theoretical/conceptual model that

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you tested in your research? What is the state of research you are building upon? The participation literature partly referred to (e.g. in the Methodology section) should be a starting point for writing an additional chapter on these issues.

2. Similarly, the methodology is described only partly: (a) how many interviews and which kind of interviews were conducted and when? what about language issues (in Italian or translated interviews in Italy?) (b) while the reference to Arnstein is relevant in the context of your research, it does not become clear which role it plays: did you apply the ladder BEFORE (or FOR) choosing the research settlements or did you group them afterwards according to the different rungs? In the latter case: doesn't this already include knowledge from your research? How did you group them (by using which knowledge)? (see also case study descriptions in Section 4: you describe the results of the ranking process but not how you came there).

3. The missing thematic introduction (as described in (1) above) also leads to the problem that some of the informative statements in Section 3 are not understandable from an outsider's perspective: e.g. the reference to Breginj (p. 4, lines 8 and 29-31; p. 5, line 5) or other assessments (e.g. p. 6, line 26: "weak local community"; p. 7, line 10 "community was divided"; p. 7, line 30: different understandings of residents and authorities => some more background information need to be provided)

4. Section 4 needs some kind of introduction: what were the objectives/rationales for conducting case studies? Again, a theoretical introduction/model would ease to understand your way of argumentation.

5. After presenting your findings (rankings) I highly recommend to add a section (eg. called "discussion") where you relate your findings (a) to the participation literature (b) to the issue of social capacities which is the subject of the Special Issue.

6. As for the conclusions, again, the problem of the missing theoretical model and/or research questions comes about. When judging "success" of a recovery process (p. 8, line 18) you need a frame of reference, clear indicators or the like. Please also add

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some reflections on the usefulness/applicability of the Arnstein ladder. And are there some cross-national/cross-system "lessons learnt" that you can provide the reader with?

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