

Open Dialogue in Geoscience-based Policy Process: Linking Stakeholders and Researchers

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To realize sustainable and resilient societies, an effective way to manage the complexity and uncertainty in contemporary society and scientific knowledge is needed. This is also the case in the policy process that requires geoscientific knowledge. I argue that researchers could play significant roles in geoscience-based policy process that engages local stakeholders and general public. Their contribution to open dialogue in the policy process with stakeholder/public engagement deals with the constraints of positionality and scientific uncertainty. Two case studies in post-disaster Japan are presented. One is on three-year long capacity development of local volcano disaster resilience and governance in three prefectures in central Japan after Mt Ontake eruption in 2014. The other is on five-year long random-sampling citizen dialogue on geological disposal of nuclear waste in two prefectures in central Japan after Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant accident in 2011. In the former case, researchers functioned as producers, coordinators, and facilitators of capacity development, in collaboration with local government. In the latter case, researchers played a role of science interpreters with differing views, reflecting dialogue among citizens. These studies suggest that explicit treatment of pluralistic positions and views among stakeholders and researchers would be a key for quality learning and deliberation in geoscience-based policy process.

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