

Páll Skúlason:

## **How to Improve our Decision-Making?**

Abstract

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In this lecture, I will present the principles which I believe are the most important for good decision-making by people working in the public interest within the public sphere. These principles are related to our natural ways of thinking as self-conscious human beings and give us guidance for grasping our concrete situation within a given context. They reflect the criteria involved in trying to achieve scientific, technical and ethical knowledge. Sound decision-making depends upon our willingness and capacity to apply these principles in a rational discussion that clarifies the various options available and the various interests at stake. Such a discussion is to a large extent the responsibility of the professionals who provide the information that is needed for people to make enlightened decisions. It also requires that we reach a principled agreement about what should be considered to be *public utilities* in our various societies and how the common interest is to be safeguarded. Such an agreement has to be based upon a shared understanding of the different domains of values that are at stake in our societies.

In the last part of my presentation I will discuss some examples from Iceland of important decisions concerning our road system in the light of the principles explained in the lecture.