der Analyse partizipativer Prozesse eine immer zentralere Stellung zu.

Unentscheidbarkeit und sozialer Konflikt seien durch die Vielfalt an Stimmen, die in der partizipativen Medienkultur laut werden, sichtbarer als zuvor. Dies trage zu politischer Unentschlossenheit bei, denn hegemoniale Positionen könnten schwerer durchgesetzt werden. Die Unmöglichkeit zu entscheiden sei Teil der Unsicherheit, die mit den neuen globalen Herausforderungen einhergeht. Sie werde aber auch zur politischen Strategie, so Carpentier. Etwas als „unentscheidbar" zu labeln, könne bestimmten politischen AkteurInnen Legitimität und Macht verleihen, betonte auch Prainsack.

Jacques Derrida bezeichnete das Moment der Unentscheidbarkeit als etwas, das eine bestimmte Entscheidung erst möglich macht, indem es jede Entscheidung als eine Intervention in die Welt begreift. In diesem Sinne können TA, STS und Politikwissenschaft in politischen sowie Umwelt- und Technikkontroversen nicht eine „richtige" Lösung präsentieren, dennoch aber vielschichtige Sichtweisen und Entscheidungen anbieten, die Wissenschaft als hervorbringende Intervention verstehen.

3 Ausblick: IPA 2014

Thematisch wieder interessant für die TA-Community ist auch die kommende IPA 2014, die sich unter dem Titel „Governance and Beyond" mit der Rolle von Wissen, Technologien und Kommunikation in einer globalisierten Welt und ihren lokalen Effekten auseinandersetzen wird. Die Konferenz wird im Juli 2014 in Wageningen, Niederlande, stattfinden. Der Call for Papers ist offen: http://www.ipa2014.nl/.

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Once You Have a Hammer…

Report from the 2nd Practitioners' Meeting within the European Project PACITA, Workshop on TA Methods

Sofia, Bulgaria, April 17–19, 2013

by Stefanie B. Seitz, ITAS, Maria João Maia, ITAS and University Nova de Lisboa (FCT-UNL), and Gabriel T. Velloso, ITAS

"These are the first clear and sunny days we have this spring", they told us as we were arriving in Sofia. The sun shines bright over the golden roofs of the famous churches of Sofia, the public parks are blossoming and one has a beautiful view to the snowy Vitosha Mountains, south of the city. For sure a place to be! This was already common knowledge among the ancient Romans, as they not only named the city "Serdica" but also built there the second largest amphitheatre in Europe. The amphitheatre, only 10 m smaller than the Coliseum in Rome, now lies within the foundations of our hotel. Sofia is actually one of the oldest cities in Europe with an occupation history reaching back to the late Stone Age. Moreover, not only was the city welcoming us but also our hosts, who did their best to make this workshop a full success. Therefore, we left not only with "scientific satisfaction" but also inspired by the hospitality of our hosts – Zoya Damianova and her team from the ARC Fund, Bulgaria – as well as by the special flair and beauty of Sofia.

1 The Quest for the Holy TA Grail

Aimed at training how to select and use the different approaches and methods of participatory Technology Assessment (pTA), the workshop brought together 32 practitioners from 15 institutions out of 13 European countries. Presentations from well-known practitioners of pTA as well as group work and plenary discussions took place. They were focused on the difficulties of project design within the complex matrix of possible approaches and methods versus given criteria, such as the issues at stake: the types of knowledge relevant for policy-making, the institutional settings in which the project is performed, and

last but not least, the political and cultural specificities of the country or of the region where the project is conducted.

Danielle Bütschi (TA-SWISS, Switzerland) opened the workshop with a key note on the selection of TA methods, the "quest for the holy TA grail". According to her experience, there is never "the right method" for a certain project but always a set of suitable ones. Thus, one has to consider not only the final goal of the project (which needs to be defined beforehand through, for example, raising awareness, public debate, legislation), but also the institutional framework conditions (e.g. the researchers' background, budget, anchoring of the institution in the political system), plus the objectives and issues at stake. Moreover, in most of the cases it is wise to assume that more than one method could be used in one project. Danielle Bütschi also reminded that the methods are usually not TA-specific methods, but that they are transversal to other processes. The toolkit of available approaches and methods is vast – this was impressively conveyed by the presented case studies, the workshop material, and the experiences shared within the group.

2 A Deep Look into the Toolkit of TA Methods

A deeper insight into "methods at work" was given by the three case studies. The first, the "Scenario Workshop" method, was used in the BaltCICA project "Climate Change: Impacts, Costs and Adaptation in the Baltic Sea Region" and it was presented by Anders Jacobi (DBT, Denmark). In this method, affected citizens worked together on possible future scenarios that could be used in the decision-making process, with voting options through a citizens' summit carried out later on. Emiliano Feresin (TA-SWISS, Switzerland) presented a case study on the "Delphi" method applied to nanotechnology, which was conducted by TA-SWISS in 2003. Here, experts were involved in a multilevel forecast on the technology development and its possible impacts. At last, the "CIVISTI" (Citizens Visions on Science, Technology and Innovation) method brings together citizens' and expert's forecasts, as Mahshid Sotoudeh (ITA, Austria) illustrated in her presentation. The method was developed in the eponymous European research foresight project funded by the Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities (SSH) Programme and aimed at a participatory demand-side foresight to identify "new and emerging relevant long-term issues" for EU R&D policy by consulting citizens in seven European countries (Denmark, Austria, Flanders/Belgium, Finland, Malta, Bulgaria, Hungary).

While the first day was dedicated to the welcome and introductory lectures as well as to getting acquainted with each other, the second and third day were characterised by working group activities. In these activities, structured discussions alternated with plenary sessions were held, while the results were presented and discussed with all participants. The practitioners assessed a broad spectrum of methods – including "Stakeholder Panel", "Future Search Conference", "Citizens Summit", "Voting Conference", "Parliamentary Hearing", "S&T Roadmapping", and "Scenario Building" – and their quality factors to consider. During the second day, the application of methods in specific contexts was practiced. The third day, two PACITA example topics, "European Future Panel on Public Health Genomics" and "Citizen Consultations on Sustainable Consumption", were presented by André Krom (RI, The Netherlands) and Marie Louise M. Jørgensen (DBT, Denmark), respectively. Subsequently, there was a discussion on the pros and cons of the methods used for the topics, alongside with possibilities of complementation, and practical factors to consider during implementation. The whole discussion revolved around the question of "how to meet TA quality criteria", and the purpose of the group activities was "learning by doing", as in the words of Anders Jacobi.

3 Doing Foresight in TALAND and TAKISTAN

One of the remarkable hands-on practices using fictitious settings introduced the participants to a web-based tool at http://www.doingforesight.org. It is a support tool for future-oriented policy analysis activities and projects. This

software was designed by a team of the Danish Board of Technology as part of a For Society ERA-Net activity in 2008 and is updated by the JRC-IPTS. It provides a useful gateway to the world of (p)TA methods for TA beginners – but certainly also for advanced TA practitioners. The user is led through six modules and a set of analytic questions concerning the planned project, thus helping to examine the issue and framework conditions, identify possible aims, and finally, screen for and evaluate relevant and appropriate methods.

The first module, "Frame condition", asks to register the general and specific framework conditions of the institution and the project, respectively, like the budget or duration. The second module named "Problem Definition" is aimed to identify the current situation (state of the issue), actors and their concerns. A number of proposed questions helps the user to rate them correctly. The "Role Selection" module is designed to define the focus of the project with regard to the aim and role to be performed. Here, the software uses a colour scale from green to red in order to show whether the user is too ambitious (his spectrum of aims is too broad, represented by the red colour) or if the goals are reasonable (his spectrum of aims is narrower, represented by the green colour). According to the information submitted by the user, the software ranks the innumerable methods included in the fourth module "Method". Thus, the highest ranked methods maybe more suitable for the planned project and should be considered by the user. The fifth module, called "Evaluation", gives the user the opportunity to reflect on the impacts of the project, and finally, the module "Synthesis" presents the conclusions, thus allowing the user to learn from the experience.

At a first glance, it seems a little time consuming to answer all the questions precisely. However, it is not thought to be a "Method-To-Go" device but rather to stimulate a deep reflection on the real aims and goals of a planned project. In résumé, the software gives the opportunity to go across each important step of planning in a project in order to explore suitable methods, and raises awareness of the framework conditions and aims. The "Doing Foresight" interface is quite user friendly and includes many tutorials along with its elements. In the workshop, the facilitators provided scenarios on how to use the software. By the way, here the fictitious settings were a real sparkle of organisers' creativity: The "TA Offices of Taland and Takistan" (TAO) had to deal with "anti-aging medicine" and "digital divide", respectively.

4 It Does Not Always Have to Be a Hammer

To sum it up, it was finally clear to all participants that each and every method has its strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, the TA practitioner should be aware of the given framework of his project and should search for the appropriate methods carefully. But – as Emiliano Feresin suggested – one should look beyond the horizons of one's own experiences as well as the experiences of one's institution: This is to ensure that the most suitable method is chosen. Because "once you have a hammer, everything looks like a nail" and your next project might not be a "nail" for your favourite method! Besides, it was quite relieving for the young practitioners to hear that even experts know only a subset of the methods available. Thus, other important lessons to learn were to be open to new approaches, to search for cooperation with experienced practitioners, and to be able to learn and work in a team.

Last but not least it should be mentioned the great effort undertaken by the organisation team to create plenty of opportunities for networking and exchange of experience among the international young and senior practitioners. Two other workshops in this series will follow: The next one, titled "Stakeholders in the Parliamentary Technology Assessment", will take place on November 20–22, 2013 in Vilnius (Lithuania), and the last one on "Communication & Impact Strategies" is scheduled for September 2014 in Prague (Czech Republic). For more details about the upcoming events, materials and project outcomes, visit the PACITA project website at http://www.pacitaproject.eu.

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