



Berlin Conference on Evidence for Sustainable Development 2012

Decisions, Policy Evidence and Participation: How Democratic is Democratic Policy-Making?

Peter Biegelbauer

Austrian Institute of Technology

AIT
AUSTRIAN INST
OF TECHNOLOG
TOMORROW TODAY



Research Questions

What is the impact of different instruments, participatory and expert led, on regulatory activities?

How democratic are the instruments themselves?

What does “democratic” mean in the context of knowledge-based decision-making in complex policy fields?

What to do about all of this?



XTP – Both Solution and Problem

**The Problem: long waiting lists
for organ transplantation**

**The Solution: introduction of a
new controversial technology**

**The new Problem: risks of viral
transmission**

→ Need for regulation



XTP Regulation Processes

Switzerland (expert TA, PTA, Parliament)
Canada (expert TA, PTA)
Netherlands (expert TA, PTA, Parliament)
UK (expert TA, public communication)
Denmark (expert TA, Parliament)
Sweden (expert TA, Parliament)
Italy, Latvia (expert discussions)
Austria (discussions amongst civil servants)

Actors

	Civil Service	Politicians	Scientists	Stakeholders	NGOs	Civics
AT	++	--	--	--	--	--
CND	++	+	++	++	++	++
DK	+	++	++	-	--	--
NL	+	++	++	++	+	++
SWI	++	++	++	++	++	++
SWE	+	++	++	-	-	--
UK	++	--	++	++	++	--



Assessment Regulatory Process I



Representative Democratic Criteria	Countries Fulfilling the Criterion
Equal weight to all citizens -> Are the included representative of the citizenry in general?	Switzerland, Canada
Adequate information provision -> Are the included fully informed in an unbiased way?	Switzerland, Canada, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden
Accountability of decision makers -> Is it transparent how decisions are made and where complaints/dissatisfaction can be registered?	Switzerland, Canada, Netherlands, UK, Denmark, Sweden



Assessment Regulatory Process II



Direct Democratic Criteria	Countries Fulfilling the Criterion
Inclusion of affected groups -> Are all legitimate interests given a voice?	Switzerland, Canada, Netherlands, Sweden
Framing by the participants -> Are the included enabled to query the issues according to what they consider relevant?	Switzerland, Canada, UK, Denmark
Attention to arguments -> Is the process genuinely open ended, and are decision makers willing to give reasons and engage in argumentative processes?	Switzerland, Canada, (Netherlands), Denmark



Explaining the Impact of (P)TA

- **How flexible is a political system? AT vs. NL**
- **How tightly knit is a policy community? UK**
- **How accountable and open is a civil service? SWI, CND**
- **How pluralistic is a political system? CND, NL**
- **How active are mass-media? UK**
- **What are previous experiences with similar public debates? CND, DK, SWE**

What to do: I

Acknowledge the political role of the civil service (even with NPM)

Check for double role of „neutral“ experts

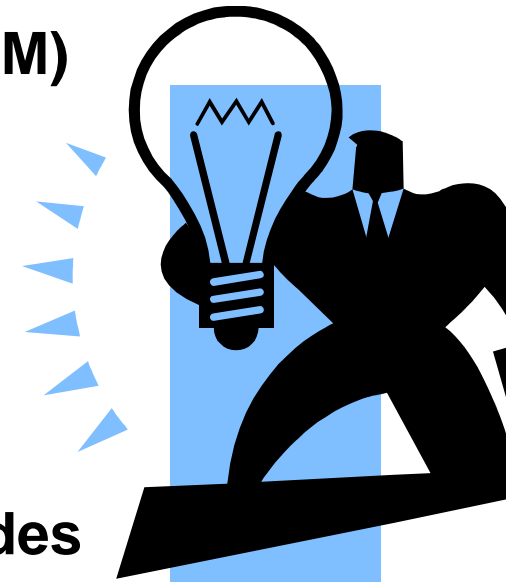
International organisations are made up of civil servants and scientific experts

Politicians often can not fulfill (overblown) expectations

Knowledge on how to organise political processes usually resides with the civil service and not politicians

Organised stakeholders (especially industry) normally are stronger than the unorganised public

In a representative democracy the unorganised public has to be invited by state actors in order to contribute to debates



What to do: II

PTAs and similar often have no direct impact on political decision-making processes, yet they can help to create public debates, provide information and raise awareness

Democratic experiments, such as PTAs, theatre plays, townhall meetings, strategic games, can create possible opportunities for developing a political system further

Institutional learning is more likely when institutions actually are involved

Not all instruments fit all political systems due to the historical contingency of political culture and institutional set-up



More on these issues:

**Erich Griessler, Peter Biegelbauer, Janus Hansen (guest editors),
Science and Public Policy, 38(8), October 2011**

Special issue on citizens' impact on knowledge-intensive policy

**Erich Griessler, Peter Biegelbauer, Janus Hansen, Anne Loeber,
*Citizen Participation in Decision-Making on Complex and Sensitive Issues?
Experiences with Xenotransplantation*, 2012, Vienna**

**Peter Biegelbauer, Erich Griessler, Anne Loeber, “Politik, öffentliche Verwaltung
und Wissen: Wer prägt die Politikgestaltung ethisch und technisch komplexer
Themen?”, in: *der moderne staat - dms*, Vol 6(1), forthcoming 2013**

CIT-PART project reports on: www.cit-part.at

