Karlsruher Institut für Technologie

Transnational TA in Europe

Conference on pEPTA

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CONTENT

1.1 The Background (I)

- In the **middle of the 90s**: beginning of research cooperation with colleagues especially in CR, H, PL, ROM, SR (, RUS)
- *Research fields*: TA, ethics of science and technology, sustainability, knowledge based society / information society
- *Aims* of these "go east" ITAS activities:

  - to "watch" institutional and content-related activities in the field of interdisciplinary technology and environmental research (monitoring) in order to create starting points for cooperation opportunities;

  - bi- and multilateral activities should be carried out to concentrate and combine different conceptual as well as methodological knowledge in the fields of technology risk assessment and environmental research.
- This mainly concerns

  - research on theoretical and methodical aspects of technology assessment, risk assessment and environmental research under the influence of ethical interrelations;

  - knowledge transfer in the field of education (related to both that of natural, technological and economic scientists and of social and human scientists).

1.1 The Background (II)

- The background of it was “non-knowledge” of this situation especially in Germany, but in other Western European countries too: Middle and Eastern Europe was a “terra incognita”!
- It was an “unknown land” – regarding the knowledge here of e. g. interdisciplinary technology and environmental research, the situation of the environment, restructuring in industry and agriculture, trans-formations in the field of science, or approaches in technology policy.
- But in the last years a lot has changed here: improved situation regarding information, better understanding of the respective problem situation, joint activities.
- With the transformation processes of the last fifteen to twenty years in these countries opportunities in the field of interdisciplinary technology and environmental studies have improved.

1.1 The Background (III)

Starting point: Project of the European Academy Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler, Germany: "Technology Assessment und Ethics of Science in Central and Eastern European Countries" (CR, H, PL, SR) – 1997/1999

The aim was a state-of-the-art report of the situation in these countries:

- topics;
- institutions;
- persons;
- activities;
- forms …

Before this projects starts there were two interesting activities:

- October 7-9, 1991, Prague: conference "Technology assessment and its role in processes of society transformation in Central and Eastern European countries" (one of the organizers was ITAS!);
- project by Renate Mayntz, Uwe Schimank and Peter Weingart "Transformation of the Central and East European Science Systems", 1994-1996.

But both activities without sustainable effects!

1.1 The Background (IV)

The first steps show:

(1) There were different activities in research and teaching (f. i.: in Poland Lech W. Zacher and Andrzej Kiepas, in Czech Republic Ladislav Tondl, in Hungary Imre Hronszky). [I will come back to this.]

(2) Many of these activities don't have the name "technology assessment", but "philosophy of technology", "science and technology studies", "problems of scientific-technological revolution" or "technological prognostic".

(3) The solutions and activities were mostly in a specific national manner (based on the national culture, history, political traditions a. s. o.).

(4) That means that the "transfer" of solutions, which were established under other national conditions (f. i. in the institutional direction) mostly had no chance of realization (see TA in Hungary or PIAS in Czech Republic). (This was influenced by the national strategy of development – in science, technology, education, … – too!).

(5) The conclusion was, that there is a pool of different experiences, of specific knowledge (methodological foundation!) and a good basis (interested persons in scientific institutions) for a transfer of ideas from west to east, but from east to west too (f.i. and case studies). (Examples are the Ist and IInd German-Polish-Conference on Sustainable Development.)

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1.1 The Background (V)

- In many so called socialist countries research into the "science of science" and "philosophy of technology" were established .

  These included research analogous to current TA: "social/socio-economical analyses/evaluation of technology" – economic, social and human impacts, in the 1980th in the direction of environmental impacts too.

  (At this time the ecological audit or "Umweltverträglichkeitsprüfung" [Environmental Impact Assessment] was established in Poland.)

- This was "academic" research, (mostly) without

  - systematic and interdisciplinary (methodological) research,
  - forms of institutionalization,
  - political consequences,
  - influences of technological development.

- But: There were persons with a scientific background and experiences concerning TA. Some of them wrote relevant books after 1990 (f.i. in Czech, Polish, Hungarian).

1.2 Cooperation Partners (I)

- for *Czech Republic*: Centre for Science, Technology and Society Studies at the Institute for Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague;
- for *Hungary*: Technical and Economic University Budapest;
- for *Poland*: Silesian University Katowice (Institutes for Philosophy and Cultural Science), University for Social Sciences and Management Tychy as well as the Technical University Rzeszów;
- for *Romania*: University "1 Decembrie 1918" Alba Iulia;
- for *Slovak Republic*: Chair for Ethics and Applied Ethics of the Matej Bel-University Banská Bystrica as well as the Technical University Košice.

1st experience: It isn't easy to establish a continuous cooperation (there were many Mayfly-like activities / short-term cooperation) – based on different interests, types of financial support, persons a.o.
Cooperation based more on the interests of individual persons than of an "interested environment".

2nd experience: Cooperation partners were more in science than in enterprises, government or public administration. (One activity in Poland for the government.)

1.2 Cooperation Partners (II)

- 2 additional remarks:

1. So called "Science, Technology, and Society Studies" (STS) in these countries includes Technological Foresight.

   Also that has traditions in the past ("planning of development/science/technology"; "prognostics")

   There were foresight studies in many Central and Eastern European Countries at the beginning of the 21st century. Their impact on policy is difficult to judge without further research, but none have been followed up. However, some of the principal actors established themselves at the national level (Technology Centre AV, Prague, A. Havas in Hungary).

2. There are only some initiatives for institutionalization of TA and for policy advice – but without results.

   (Example: PIAS by Peter Pechan at the end of the 1990th.)

   The reasons are varied:

   - low interest,
   - prejudice (TA as "technology arrestment"),
   - not so important,
   - solutions from other countries are not acceptable, non-transferable, …

1.3 Past Activities (I)

- Initiation and implementation of joint (short-term as well as long-term) activities (in particular research projects, workshops and conferences, publications);
- Mutual participation in (national) scientific events;
- Holding lectures (e. g. on technology risk assessment, on the philosophy and ethics of science and technology, on sustainability and socio-scientific environmental questions);
- Organization and preparation of translations (e. g. into German, Polish, Russian, Slovak, Czech);
- Exchange of visiting lecturers/scientists (in Germany, Poland, the Slovak and Czech Republic);
- (joint) supervision of doctoral candidates (in Poland and Czech Republic), cooperation in scientific councils as well as in appointment commissions.

All this based on various means of financial support (DAAD, ERASMUS / SOCRATES, DFG, EU Research Framework).

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1.3 Past Activities (II)

- "International Network on Cultural Diversity and New Media" (CultMedia) (A, CZ, D, E, PL, RUS, SK) – founded 2002, Prague (CR)
  - 10 workshops / since 2009 3 annual conferences (Cottbus, Katowice, Prague), the Annual Conference 2012 in Poland (in the frame of Polish Congress for Philosophy)
  - since 2004 own publication series "e-Culture / Cultural Diversity and New Media" (16 vols., mostly in German)
- "Forum on Sustainable Technological Development in a Globalising World" (G, H, U.S.) – founded 2002, Eger (H)
  - 8 Forums alternately in Europe and in Florida, U.S. (with participants from numerous countries)
  - 7 book publications & 2 in preparation (in English; published in Germany, Hungary, and U.S.)

1.4 Route to the Future – the Polish TA Network

- Since 1 year: Idea to prepare/to found a Polish TA Network:
  - together with colleagues from TU (Polytechnikum) Rzeszów and US Katowice
  - meeting in October or November in Katowice
  - bring together all experts in Poland in TA
  - coordination/promotion of TA activities (in research and teaching) – there are some initiatives in different institutions (Katowice, Poznań, Rzeszów, Warsaw, Wrocław
  - first contacts to the “Biuro Analiz Sejmowych” (BAS), associate member of EPTA, by Krzysztof Michalski (Rzeszów)
  - TA-Reader in Polish with “classic” articles from Germany and Poland (edited by Krzysztof Michalski and me)

1.5 Conclusions

1. *In a more conceptual direction:*

- In the 90s conceptualizations in specifically national manners (f. i. topics, relationship research/teaching interests or scientific/public debates), in the present mostly the same topics / debates as in Western Europe (EU membership!)
- Bring in a broad scientific potential and a broad spectrum of questions / answers / solutions – TA in general, in specific technologies (environmental technologies, sustainable development, new media, …).

2. *In a more practical direction:*

- Political power constellations are changing as the basic economic conditions do, potentials of science were reorganized or newly organized just as the administrative bodies on state and regional level.
- Thus, both political aims and priorities and opportunities for social interference and action changed as well (occasionally very quickly).
- Consequently, there was (and is) often a lack of time and continuity required for consolidation and differentiation processes in TA.

Cooperation with countries in Middle and Eastern Europe is a “normal” process today!

There is a “pool” for cooperation in TA.

2.1 Experience in European Parliamentary Technology Assessment (EPTA)

- EPTA has always been open to further members and willing to provide support to actors wishing to institutionalize parliamentary TA.
- EPTA can only provide assistance if there are actors in the country seriously interested in establishing PTA.

  Such assistance can take the shape of invitations to EPTA meetings or to EPTA institutions and targeted advice about the “dos and don’ts” based on past experience.
- An important condition is a “TA Champion” within the parliament concerned.
- Solutions depend on the constitution, political constellations and cultural factors in the country concerned.

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2.2 Experience with European Technology Assessment Group (ETAG)

- ETAG was set up specifically to enable pan-European cooperation on TA projects for STOA.
- As far as possible, ETAG draws on project experience for national parliaments (EPTA members).
- Full participation of EPTA members in ETAG not possible due to variety of organisational solutions: impossible for members with parliamentary committee model, difficult for parliamentary office model.

  This applies to any endeavour towards pan-European TA.
- Attempts to broaden ETAG participation (NMS, Southern European Countries) are faced with the problem of under-developed TA cultures and lack of project experience.

  The way forward can only be a “junior partner” model.