



INSTITUTE OF
TECHNOLOGY
ASSESSMENT

The Paradox of Participation in New and Emerging Technologies

PACITA – The First European Conference on
Technology Assessment
Session XII: Participatory Methods
Praha, 14 March 2013

ALEXANDER BOGNER



OAW
Austrian Academy
of Sciences

Introduction

- What are current trends in participation in the field of new and emerging technologies?
- Laypeople's involvement in the process of technology assessment at an early stage – people are invited to discuss emerging technologies
- Changing nature of participation

Technoscience

- ‘Technoscience’ = a new socio-technical constellation
 - Entanglement of basic research and technological development
 - Technology does not follow basic research in a linear way
 - Decisions on applications are taken early during research
- Participation has to set in at an early stage – in order to influence effectively technology development

Upstream Engagement

- With ‘technoscience’, upstream engagement enters the stage: to intensify public involvement much earlier than previously
- Challenges of upstream engagement:
 - It sets in at a point in time where there is no cause for public controversies
 - There are no concrete applications that could trigger citizens’ concern
 - The public tends to be little interested
- Citizens need to be actively interested and motivated to participate

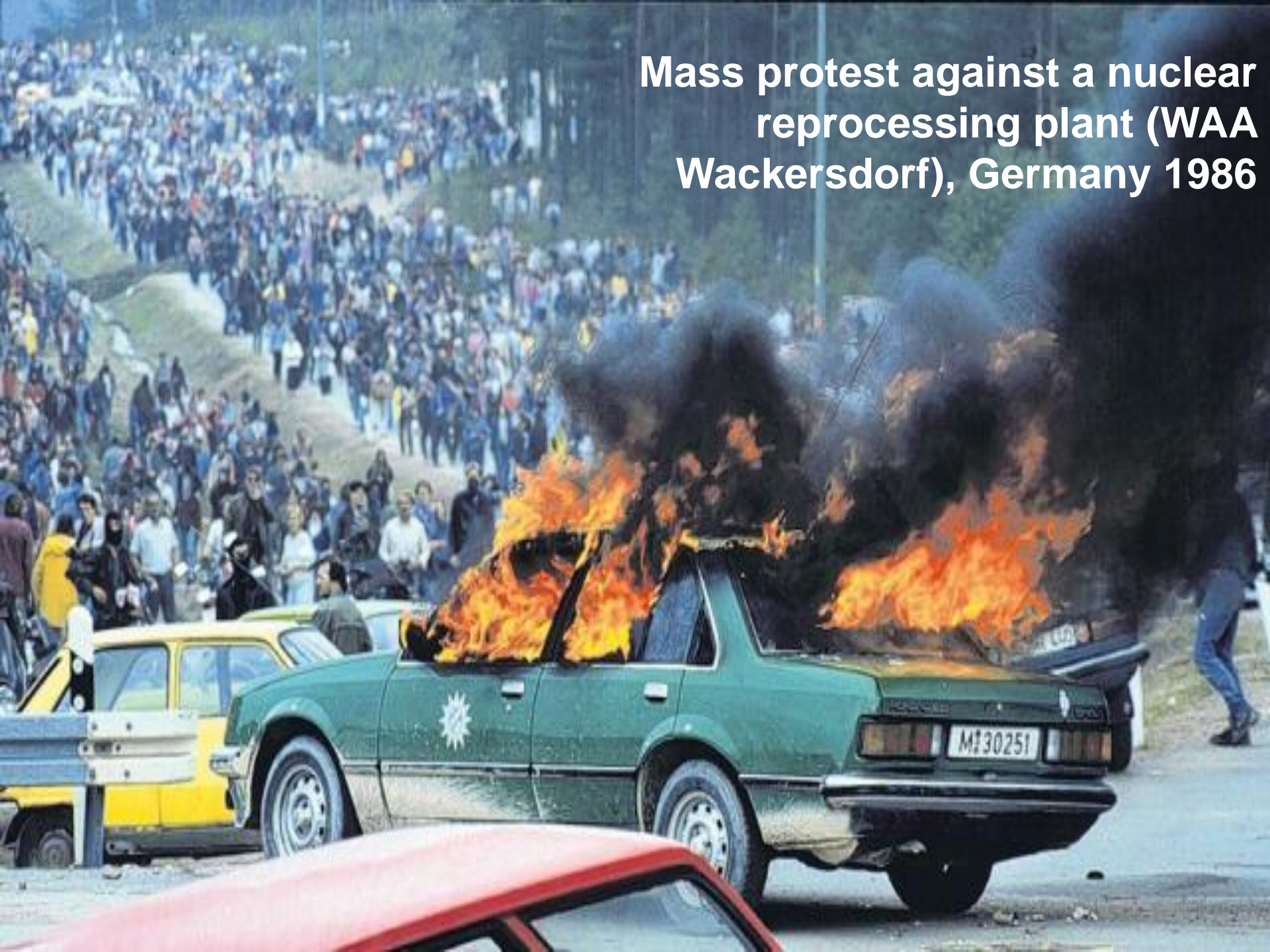
Project-shaped participation (PSP)

- Engagement procedures are initiated and organised ‘from outside’ (often by TA institutions)
- Participation takes the form of a project funded by a third party
- Participation takes place without reference to existing public controversies or to explicit individual concerns

Changed context of participation

	PTA (protest-shaped)	PSP (project-shaped)
<i>Societal context</i>	Public controversies, open protest	No controversies, little interest
<i>Expectation</i>	Channeling the protest, contributing to political solutions	Stimulating a public debate, raising interest

Mass protest against a nuclear reprocessing plant (WAA Wackersdorf), Germany 1986



NanoTruck Initiative 2008 sponsored by the German BMBF

Upstream engagement
in science and technology
to be 'driven'
to the public



European Citizens' Conference on Brain Science, Brussels 2006 'Meeting of Minds'





Policy Report



Watch Documentary



Results in detail



World Wide Views

As policymaking becomes global in scale, new tools are needed in order to include and engage citizens worldwide in the political processes. The challenge is to close a widening democratic gap between policymakers and citizens and thereby increase the citizen's sense of ownership to decisions made about current global issues.

World Wide Views on Global Warming (WWViews) is a response to this challenge.

With the participation of more than 4,000 ordinary citizens gathered in 38 countries worldwide, WWViews was the first and only initiative taken to produce a trustworthy, detailed and in-depth snap shot of the global public opinion of the climate negotiations at COP15.



WWViews India



WWViews Mozambique

Unlike traditional opinion polls, the WWViews method offers participating citizens extensive information on a complex subject as well as time for face-to-face deliberation before the questions are answered. Therefore the WWViews method ensures more qualified and well-considered answers from the participants.

On this site you will find extensive information about the World Wide Views-concept. World Wide Views on Global Warming serves as an exceptional example of how to include everyday citizens in future global policymaking, giving them a bigger sense of political ownership and policymakers a better insight in the views of the citizens they represent.



Which Country Are You?



Compare your views with those of the WWViews participants and find out which country you resemble the most.

Contact

WWViews, c/o
Teknologirådet

The Danish Board of
Technology
Antonigade 4
DK1106 Copenhagen K
Phone: +45 33320503

www.tekno.dk

info@wwviews.org

facebook

Global citizen
conference on global
warming, 2009

www.wwviews.org

Challenges for TA

- Participation becoming project-shaped means that participation has limitations
 - in time (i.e. a defined beginning and an end)
 - in the issue (i.e. a clear task definition)
 - in social reach (i.e. discussing the problem among a defined range of participants)

Experimental character of participation



Challenges for TA

- Exclusion
- Framing
- Hying

Exclusion

- In the course of PSP deliberation norms become established which lead to the exclusion of those participants who cannot or do not want to fit in with those norms

Framing

- Emerging technologies lack an established perspective which they can be debated under
- Upstream debates need a dominant frame that determines which aspects are relevant
- Danger of restricting public debates to well-known aspects ('mainstreaming')

Hyping

- If nobody is interested in participating the TA organisers have to raise public attention
- “For getting attention a perspective needs to be formulated which can be disputed. In order to stimulate social debate and formation of political judgements, we need to evoke objections and at the same time remain scientifically and socially reliable.”
(Frans Brom, Rathenau Institute)
- TA has to foster public engagement without uncritically echoing the hype

Conclusion

- Increasing demand for public participation but little interest ‘from below’
- Unintended consequences of PSP: Exclusion of participants and mainstreaming of the discourse
- Towards more experimental forms of using the wisdom of the crowd in technology policy

Thank you for your attention!

Contact:

ALEXANDER BOGNER

A-1030 Vienna, Strohgasse 45/5

Tel: +43 (1) 51581 6595

Fax: +43 (1) 7109883

Email: abogner@oeaw.ac.at

WWW: www.oeaw.ac.at/ita