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Designing for policy and institutional change in governance

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Designing for Policy & Institutional Change in Governance

Nenad Rava, PhD
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practices create concepts,
and in turn
concepts create practices

(or vice versa)



Do government people “design”? And what is design in policy / governance anyway?



Vs. “usability”/HCD/UX & design of policy instruments?
Vs. institutional/community design?

Who designs? - in a way, we are all designers - as we are scientists and artists (though some are professionals) – H. Simon

Cultural change: 1. Omnipotent designer 2. Professional co-design team

3. Stakeholder design

So, what can we design in Governance / Pub. Admin. / Public sector?

Services. Communications & Interfaces. Visual identity. Infrastructure & Built environments. Interiors . Tech. Other products.

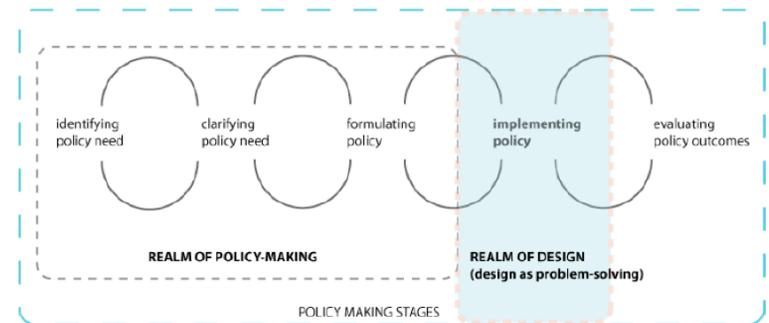
Procedures. Processes. Projects/Programmes.

Policy instruments(e.g. plans, regulations, strategies, standards, training).

Organization. Management. Governance.

Institutions. Community. Culture. Values. Policy

- **Design** (“ability to imagine that-which-does-not-exist, to make it appear in concrete form as a new purposeful addition to the real world”)
- **Policy** (intervention into society for betterment based on (re)configuration of values (Ozbekhan) → the whole policy process)
- **Evidence as design/policy judgment** (not science)
- **Generating systems** (Alexander: “systems for designing systems”)
- **Public Administration** (vs. Public Sector)
- (state/society-centric) **Governance vs. Government**
- **Center of Government** – CoG / central bodies
- **Meta-governance** (system of systems governing systems)
- **Development** (increasing opportunities / perspectives / capacity)



© Junginger 2012

Figure 1: The policy cycle by Howlett and Ramesh 2003. The policy cycle follows a linear, relay-style development process that separates activities involved in the making from the activities involved in the implementation. Design itself is thought of as a professional service which only becomes relevant during the implementation phase. What happens or needs to happen for a policy need to be identified remains in the dark. The design of policies in this model does not allow for future-oriented envisioning. Instead, policy making is a responsive action after a problem has been identified. This limits innovation across policy-making and policy implementation.

Case study: Stakeholder design of a generating system/s for policy (?!?!?!)

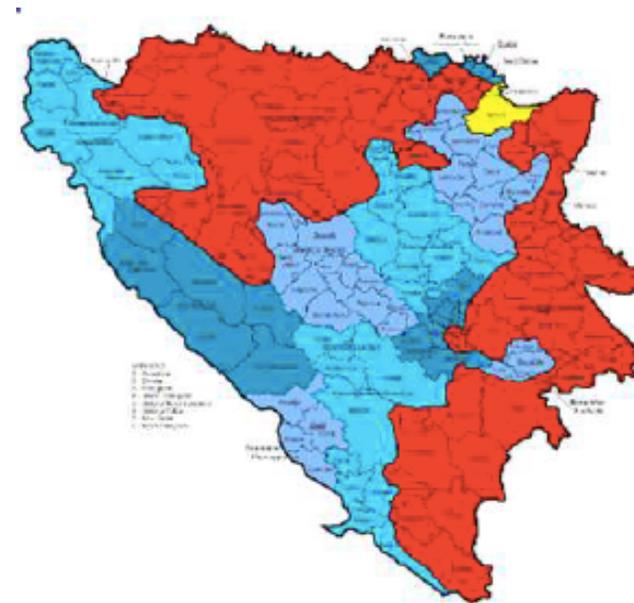
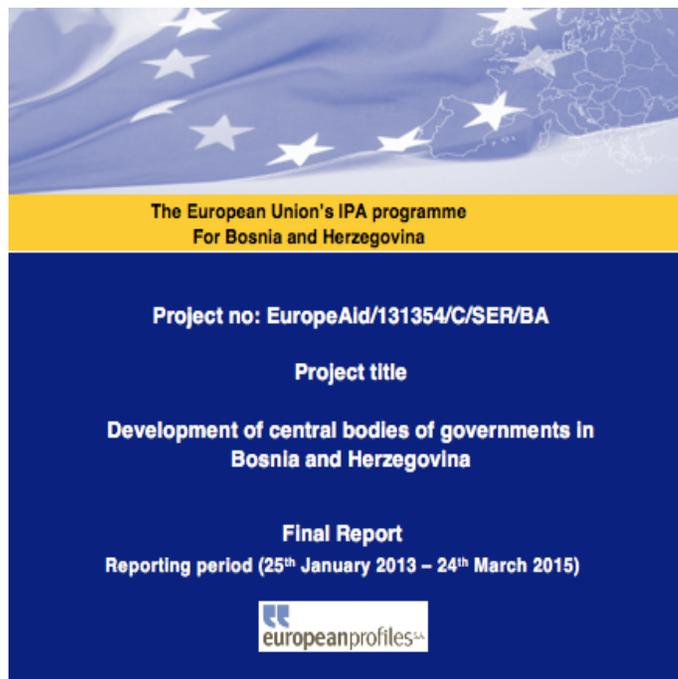


Identifying Design by focusing on

- **Design Attitude** (Boland & Collopy)
- **Design Competence & Culture** (Nelson & Stolterman)
- Design Ability (Cross)



EU-funded project in BiH: Strengthening the Central Bodies of Governments/CoM (strategic planning, policy & RIA)



How did it manifest?

through processes, practices, attitudes, values,
culture, relationships, methods....

Not hammer-strokes, but dance of
the water, sings the pebbles into
perfection.

— Rabindranath Tagore —

A. Challenging the brief by redesign for upstream focus & stakeholders design

-> The Why & the Who?

REFRAMING: A “Gap Assessment”

collaborative -> introducing new concepts and frames of reference

took 4 months -> was not planned & delayed the “implementation” + increased the “risk” + invested scarce resources

low expectations -> convenience: everybody expected it to fail – so no “danger” in “playfulness”

NEW WHY-> purpose & intention (new “desiderata” with the same objectives!)

change of formal structures & use of benchmarks-> development of new practices, processes, skills, and attitudes

linear & downstream delivery (problem-solving) -> iterative design of a generating system for policy

NEW WHO -> Broadened boundary: from 4 to 20+ institutions (+ all other related projects)

B1. Thrownness. “Liquid state”. Reflecting in/with/on/across (systemic) situation/s.

-> The “material” we are working with is “us”

USE WHAT YOU HAVE: the “upgrade” of the existing “Thesis” (re-composition)
context & material (people, culture, practices) are already there + most what you need has already been done
it has a “history” – you cannot start with a blank canvas
do it with local understanding by actual people (not “empathy”)

ALL OPEN UNTIL ALL IS DONE: iterations / probing until it is “good enough” (as defined by stakeholders)
nothing put on a paper for 3 months -> then a “Schreck prototype”
the “agony” of diverging and converging: strange-making and sense-making + judgment calls
still some “crystalline” process -> phased (concept, processes, templates, regulation, testing, application)

WORKING ACROSS (6) SYSTEMS: interactive & inter-subjective approach
relating and connecting + cross-fertilization & peer-learning
operating INSIDE & OUTSIDE the “box”
30+ workshops, coaching sessions, conversations - only in the first 10 months
visiting people for “friendly chats” - releasing their frustration and helping the sense-making

B1. Design into “making”. “Closure”.

-> Done? Ready? -> NO! Start all over again from the scratch

BRIEF CHANGED -> ALL OVER AGAIN (5month before end) -> integrate 3 other systems (budget + investments + HR)
One (!) stakeholder insists we integrate it all (although donors/experts prefer to leave it for the “next phase”)
major increase of complexity + high intensity (done in 2 months) -> Maaaaajor improvement of quality and added value!

to ensure “harmonization” - had to be re-done in other 2 governments
more risk involved: but trust and shared understanding again to the rescue

2nd “LETTING GO” & EVOLVING (living) DESIGN

don’t “overdo” – leave it “unfinished”-> not the “final” or even a “solution”
cannot scale “solutions” to complex problems -> can scale practices (as continued in the last 2 years in cantons)

no need for an “exit strategy” – it has always been “theirs”
out from the “studio” -> raised to the political level (EU used it as a pillar for the whole EU integration agenda)

Beyond “co-design”

- Not expert-driven, but a facilitated process of stakeholder design
- Not “they do not understand our design” - it is their design and they create meaning (including aesthetics of it)
- Final design only after involving all ministries and agencies (100+)
- By the time it is finished the capacity was built in – learning as a part designing (“they know better than us”)

+ Understanding the **culture**: the case of working with N.G

Responsibility for design outcome

- More commitment than in the contract (with less time/resources): the whole responsibility (guarantor of design: g.o.d.)
- Creating trust, while nurturing (painfully) an enabling context (shared assumptions & expectations + agreement on iterative & participatory design)

+ **Trust**: the case of working with a GenSec - “tear it up & throw into trash if you do not like it at the end”

Policy as learning

(Hisschemoller & Hoppe, 1996)

FIGURE 2
The Relationship between Problem Structure and Policy Strategy

Consensus on relevant norms and values

		<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>
Certainty about relevant knowledge	<i>No</i>	UNSTRUCTURED PROBLEM Policy as learning A	MODERATELY STRUCTURED PROBLEM (ENDS) Policy as negotiation B
	<i>Yes</i>	C MODERATELY STRUCTURED PROBLEM (MEANS) Policy as accommodation	D STRUCTURED PROBLEM Policy as rule

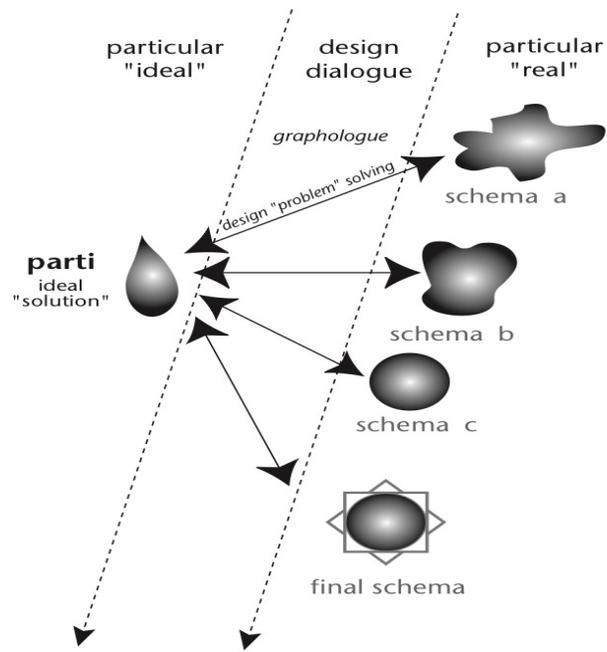


Figure 9.6
Design development

**The “actual”
design problem**
(Nelson & Stolterman, 2014)

Being a “professional” policy designer

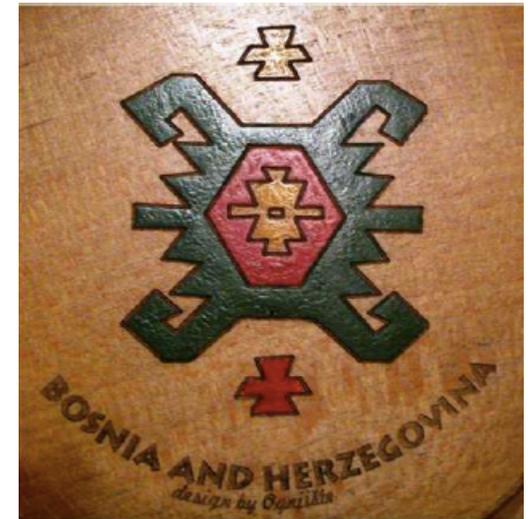
How all this came to be?

- How many more are out there?

What does it mean for policy people and designers?

A) We do not have a policy design methodology – we still might not even know what it is

B) Policy and Design are much closer than one would expect (but cultures still very different)



Design by Ognjiste (“hearth”)

