Deliberative Democracy and Building Visions for 2020 e-governance Initiative: An Experimental Exercise in Taiwan

Dr. Don-yun Chen

Research Fellow, TEG
Associate Professor,
Dept. of Public Administration, NCCU

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Introduction (I)

• …democratic governments are under pressure to adopt a new approach to policy-making – one which places greater emphasis on citizen involvement both upstream and downstream to decision-making. It requires governments to provide ample opportunity for information, consultation and participation by citizens in developing policy options prior to decision making and to give reasons for their policy choice once a decision has been taken.

Introduction (II)

- **Explicit Side of the Story** – ICT’s instrumental value is well recognized: ICT has became one of the critical tools for government renovations and, in recent year, “new hope” for democratic reforms.

- **Implicit Side of the Story** – e-government initiation is in itself a public policy where decision about resources allocation is made. ICT Infrastructure building costs (tax) money!
E-government policies hold out the prospect of greater cost efficiencies as well as broader public convenience, but there is no intrinsic link between successful e-government and strengthened democracy. Some of the world leaders in e-government service delivery are far from being democratic. The challenge is to create a link between e-government and e-democracy – to transcend the one-way model of service delivery and exploit for democratic purposes the feedback paths that are inherent to digital media.

- S. Coleman and J. Gotze, “Bowling Together”
The Reality (II)

1. E-government initiative is led by the vision of the future, which is constructed through the future perspectives of technological innovation, international benchmarking and domestic environment.

2. In the past, the construction of the vision for e-government initiatives is usually “elite oriented,” where public servants, experts, and businessmen are more involved in the process than the laymen (or users).

The Main Idea: Incorporating e-democracy into e-government initiative is different from letting the process of initiating e-government project (led by vision building) to be democratic!
Competing Values

1. Science vs. Democracy: Professional asymmetry causes laymen to be incompetent to involve in constructing e-government initiatives.

2. Professional Responsibility vs. Democratic Responsiveness: Planners should take the responsibility of “good policy” as an adequate response to democratic public rather than just listening to the public.

3. Traditional vs. Authentic Participation: Agenda-setting power should be in the hands of experts and participation of laymen should be in a later stage of public policy cycle.
For Example

Figure One: Traditional and Authentic Participation

Source: King, Feltey, and Susel (1998)
The Key Question

- Can we promote democracy by using undemocratic way?
- As the vision of e-government initiative is transferred from e-service to e-governance in recent years, promoting healthy and networked civic engagement between government and citizenry is one of the focus of e-governance. But, the key problem is: Could we be “undemocratic” in the process of e-governance initiative building in order to promote e-governance?
Why “Vision building”?

1. It is “the” necessary component for every e-government initiative, whether explicitly or implicitly speaking in the decision making process.

2. It is the very first step of e-government decision-making cycle, so-called “the agenda-setting” stage of policy making.

3. It is important to ask whether government should construct the vision of e-government initiative democratically? And if it is undemocratic, what are the possible consequences? The answers to the question can be the key information to the “demand-side perspective” of e-government initiations. (Reddick, 2005)
Vision building in e-government

1. Vision statement is a brief description of an organization’s fundamental purpose both for those in the organization and for the public.

2. It is a “disciplined imagination” which will lead organization from scenarios to strategic options and prepare for the future. (Schoemaker, 1997)

3. Strategic decision concerning the future is based on the realization of the multiple “realities” which is stakeholders induced. (Gairns and others, 2004)
### An Example of e-government Vision

(EU e-Government 2020 vision Matrix, Millard, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Networked</th>
<th>Distributed</th>
<th>Centralized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proactive:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• active&lt;br&gt;• omnipresent and highly involved&lt;br&gt;• provides both interventions and frameworks for others</td>
<td>1) A Dynamic&lt;br&gt;2) A Personal&lt;br&gt;3) A Inclusive&lt;br&gt;4) A democratic Public Sector</td>
<td>7) A Diverse Public Sector</td>
<td>9) A Single Public Sector</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reactive:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• passive&lt;br&gt;• partially present and only reluctantly involved&lt;br&gt;• only provides frameworks for others</td>
<td>5) An Open&lt;br&gt;6) An User-driven Public Sector</td>
<td>8) A Private Public Sector</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Problems of Non-participatory Decision Making in e-governance

- The doubts of wasteful government investments are casted because of the low utilization rate on initiatives such as “wireless city” and “Public Policy Think Tank” in Taiwan after enormous construction costs invested.
- The user-unfriendly websites of government agencies are mostly serving for “propaganda” or “shopping windows” rather than “connecting-people” purposes.
The Demand Side of the e-government policy making

- The traditional focus on e-government research and policy, until the recession of 2001, was on what governments offer citizens. When there was more money for e-government innovations the focus was on supply, but when resources became scarce there is increased emphasis on demand.

- Focal point: Regular surveys of citizens and businesses of attitudes and needs.

- Chris G. Reddick (2005)
What Does Taiwanese Want for e-government?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Service Delivery</th>
<th>Information Collection</th>
<th>Expressing Opinion</th>
<th>Voting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tel/Fax</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Person</td>
<td><strong>40%</strong> (31%)</td>
<td><strong>20%</strong> (60%)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td><strong>80%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet (I-User)</td>
<td>21% (31%)</td>
<td>41% (60%)</td>
<td>32% (48%)</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jaing and others (2004)
Evaluating Vision Building Mechanism

1. Structure: Organizational and procedural aspects.
2. Scope: National initiatives in chronically order.
3. Dimensions of evaluation:
   - (1) Free from manipulation (agenda autonomy)
   - (2) Complete Representations (stakeholder identification)
   - (3) Knowledge sharing or improved understanding (deliberative quality)
   - (4) Delegated authority (result credibility)
4. Bureaucrat’s attitude toward participatory vision building mechanism.
Before 2001

Central Govt.

Executive Yuan

RDEC

Other Departments

Local Executive

Planning Office

Other Departments

Local Govt.

After 2001

Executive Yuan

RDEC

Other Departments

Local Executive

Planning Office

Other Departments

III -- Institute for Information Industry (1979-now)
RDEC – Research, Development, and Evaluation Committee
NII – Steering Committee of National Information Infrastructure (1994-2001)
NICI -- National Information and Communications Initiative Committee (2001-now)
Structural Characteristics in Taiwan:

1. Led by economic development mentality in the 1980s and New Public Management Reform mentality in the 1990s.


3. Within agency “deliberative component” - Committee governance – representatives from government officials, scholars (specialists), and businessmen to build up vision.

4. Cabinet level involvement.

5. Independent budget after 2003, beginning with the “e-Taiwan” project.
Evaluating e-government Decision-making in Taiwan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative Name</th>
<th>'80–'90</th>
<th>'90–'97</th>
<th>'98–'00</th>
<th>'01–'04</th>
<th>'03–'07</th>
<th>'08–'12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrative Information System</td>
<td>Computerization</td>
<td>Web/electronic government</td>
<td>e-government project</td>
<td>Plan for e-government</td>
<td>Plan for Mobil and ubiquitous government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Administrative effectiveness and service delivery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>citizen-centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda</td>
<td>Executive dominance</td>
<td>Executive dominance</td>
<td>Executive dominance</td>
<td>Executive dominance</td>
<td>Executive dominance with plural participation</td>
<td>Executive dominance with plural participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation</td>
<td>Officials Scholars</td>
<td>Officials Scholars</td>
<td>Officials Scholars</td>
<td>Officials Scholars Businessmen</td>
<td>Officials Scholars Businessmen</td>
<td>Officials Scholars Businessmen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliberation</td>
<td>median</td>
<td>median</td>
<td>median</td>
<td>extended</td>
<td>extended</td>
<td>extended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Centralized</td>
<td>Centralized</td>
<td>Centralized</td>
<td>Centralized</td>
<td>Shared</td>
<td>Shared</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Future of Democratizing Vision-building Activities

• Deliberative democracy and e-government vision building: (Coleman and Gotze, 2001)
  – Access to balanced information
  – An open agenda
  – Time to consider issue expansively
  – Freedom from manipulation or coercion
  – A rule-based framework for discussion
  – Participation by an inclusive sample of citizens
  – Scope for free interaction between participants
  – Recognition of differences between participants

• A possible approach for vision-building: The utilization of “scenario workshop”.
What is Scenario Workshop?

- Originated from Danish initiation for participatory governance of connecting policy-makers, business representatives, experts and citizens to come up with solutions for public problems.
- Participants are trained for basic knowledge of the problem as to make informed dialogue and decisions.
- A set of scenarios related to the problem is written to be the base for discussion.
- Three basic procedures:
  - To comment on, and criticize, the scenarios by pointing out barriers to realizing the visions
  - To develop the participants’ own visions and proposals
  - To develop local plans of action.
The First Scenarios Workshop for e-governance Vision Building in Taiwan (I)

• The Title: The Scenario Workshop for Visioning 2020 e-governance in Taiwan
• Date: Sept. 27 & Oct. 18, 2008 (Two Days)
• Participants: Officials (10), Businessmen (10), NPO (8), Citizen (17)
• Four-stage Deliberation:
  – (1) Devising readable handbook and providing training lectures;
  – (2) Formulating visions by commenting on scenarios and building consensus on visions;
  – (3) Formulating action plans from consent visions;
  – (4) Voting for action plans from proposed vision/plans.
The First Scenarios Workshop for e-governance Vision Building in Taiwan (II)

1. Identifying Relative Issues by using
   - Past initiatives
   - Research literatures
   - Civil servant’s opened questions in 8/29 training camp.

2. Three major issues for discussion:
   - Governmental Service delivery
   - Transparency and privacy-protection
   - Deepening Democracy
The First Scenarios Workshop for e-governance Vision Building in Taiwan (III)

Introducing Myself

Training Sessions

Group Discussion

“Bleaching” Visions

General Discussion

Presenting Visions
2020 e-governance **Vision** and **Action Plans** for Taiwan from The First Scenario Workshop

1. Governmental Service delivery
   1.1 Equality on line -- Regulating ICT market, subside rural area, and education
   1.2 Real-time service – Establishing centralized governing agency
   1.3 Customized information – Establishing Multi-media platform

2. Transparency and privacy-protection
   2.1 Comprehensive legislations – Legislation and specialized monitoring agency
   2.2 Personal consent on information release – Information classification and establishing consent-granting mechanism
   2.3 Perfect internet ID – Establishing personal database for perfect ID

3. Deepening Democracy
   3.1 Perfect monitoring of political agents – Establishing Searchable MOD online
   3.2 Make citizen’s voice heard – Establishing e-petition system
   3.3 Realize radical democracy through internet – Establishing I-voting with planned stages
Some Reflections on the Exercise

1. In the process, there was a high recognition of professional asymmetry in the e-government policy making across different stakeholders.

2. Can there really be informed participation in the process? The before-and-after survey and in-depth interviews (is still in progress) will reveal some useful information about the question.

3. Though it is only an experimental exercise, it is still interesting to see how these outputs influence e-government policy. If not, what cause the uselessness of these outputs?
Tentative Conclusion (I):
The Ambiguous Future of Virtual State

- A dual system is growing in the American state that combines pockets of networked creativity and openness with large areas of traditional command and control. It is not clear how a hybrid hierarchical and networked government will operate as networked arrangements move beyond informal undertakings to ongoing operations.

- J. E. Fountain (2001: 164)
Tentative Conclusion (II):
Question Needed to be Answered

- E-government reform begins with “top-down,” “executive dominated” and “centralized” style. Will the decentralized nature of ICTs eventually reform its master (government)? Or, a more explicit, delicate, and “behind the mirror” system of control will be emerged in the world run by an “IT Big Brother”?
- To bring deliberative democracy into formulating and evaluating e-government initiatives could prevent us from moving toward expert-led virtual tyranny!
The End

Thanks for Your Attention