A Research Agenda for Evaluating Open Government Initiatives

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21st European Conference on Information Systems
Utrecht, Netherlands, 9th of June 2013
Stuttgart 21

- Urban development and under construction transport project
- Has been a controversial issue among politicians and locals
- Protest was organized by several *grassroot initiatives* who suggest a *renovation* of the current train station respecting the cultural heritage of the station and the natural heritage of the Schlossgarten

**Effects on politics**

- Governing parties (CDU and FDP) lost most of their political power in the Baden-Württemberg state election
- Calls for more transparency, participation and collaboration in government (→ Barack Obamas Open Gov Doctrine)

**Practitioner’s demand on research**

- Where and how can we “effectively” use Open Government?
1. Perspectives on Open Government
   - Kantian Perspective
   - Machiavellian Perspective

2. Limitations of Previous Research
   - Literature Review
   - Case of Open Data at a German University

3. A Research Agenda
Immanuel Kant (German philosopher, 1724-1804)

- Relationship between morality and politics

Political Moralist:
Manipulates people with specific ends in view

Moral Politician:
Moral actions will necessary lead to moral ends

- Because of the unpredictability in achieving beneficial outcomes through immoral means, straying from morality during political activity cannot be justified
- Openness and transparency are categorical imperatives
Modern Kantian Perspective: Open Government as a Categorical Imperative

Open Government Maturity Model (OGMM)

- Initial conditions
  - Information broadcasting
  - Transparency of government processes and performance
  - Data quality

- Open Data
  - Transparency of government processes and performance
  - Crowd-sourcing

- Open Participation
  - Public feedback, conversation, voting, and ideation
  - Interactive communications

- Open Collaboration
  - Interagency collaboration
  - Open collaboration with the public
  - Co-creating value-added services

- Ubiquitous Engagement
  - Increased transparency, participation, and collaboration

Lee and Kwak (2012)
Niccolò Machiavelli (Italian philosopher, 1469 – 1527)

→ Relationship between morality and politics

- **Political Moralist:**
  - Manipulates people with specific ends in view

- **Moral Politician:**
  - Moral actions will necessarily lead to moral ends

- A power holder who is transparent and faithful to his word will be admired by the society but that this transparent authority is not always the most successful
- Means are justified in light of the ends
Politics and Morality: Views on Open Government

Modern Machiavellian Perspective: Open Government as a Strategy

- Value proposition: What is the reason for the organization’s existence?
- Does the authorizing environment (citizens, elected representatives, interest groups) support the value proposition and how the organization operates?
- Are sufficient know-how and capability existent to achieve the desired result?

PUBLIC VALUE

LEGITIMACY and SUPPORT

OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

Citizen-Sourcing

Open Data

Ends

Impact

Means
Structured Literature Review

Search space

- Core outlets of digital government research (Scholl, 2009)
  - *Electronic Government - An International Journal*
  - *Electronic Journal of E-Government*
  - *Government Information Quarterly*
  - *Information Policy*
  - *International Journal of Electronic Government Research*
  - *Journal of Information Technology and Politics*
  - *Transforming Government: Process, People, and Policy*
  - *E-Government track at HICSS*
  - *DEXA EGOV*
  - *DBSNA’s dg.o conference*

Selection criteria

- Time period: 2009-2012
- Content: dealing with evaluation of Open Government initiatives
Frameworks for Evaluating Open Government

- Alanzi and Chatfield (2012) - AMCIS
  - Comparison of the level of maturity in the Middle East
  - Comparison assumes that more functionalities are better
- Bertot et al. (2012) – HICSS
  - Propose a measurement tool to evaluate initiatives
  - Metrics assume that more is better
- Kalampokis et al. (2011) – EGOV
  - Maturity model for Open data
  - Maturity model for Open Government
- Nam (2012) – Government Information Quarterly
  - Emphasizes that citizen-sourcing should be evaluated with respect to the outcome (only conceptual)

(compare also benchmarking reports in practice)
What are the Limitations of the Kantian Perspective?

- Case Background: Open Government at German University
  
  - Introduction of tuition fees in Germany is **highly controversial** political issue
    - Contra: 500€ per semester might **prevent young people to study**
    - Pro: Funds can **improve conditions for studying** and teaching
  
  - Information about how the funds from the tuition fees were allocated, were published on an online platform
Methodology and Results

- Survey among 70 students
  - 43% female (57% male)
  - Between 19 and 34 (Ø24.5)
  - BSc, MSc, PhD
- Survey development
  - Awareness and use of open data portal
  - Evaluation of the tuition fee allocation process
- Measurement validation
  - CR>0,9
  - AVE>0,7
  - Fornel&Larcker

Construct | Mean (STD) | Reliability | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  |
---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
1. Awareness | 4,78 (1,82) | 0,9516 | 0,8932 |
2. Use | 3,71 (1,40) | 0,9562 | 0,4013 | 0,9021 |
3. Procedural Fairness | 4,09 (1,54) | 0,9784 | 0,3011 | -0,0550 | 0,8973 |
4. Trusting Belief | 3,75 (2,00) | 0,9476 | 0,4882 | -0,1144 | 0,7875 | 0,8855 |

Note: The diagonal elements (in bold) represent the square root of AVE.
Limitations of the Kantian Perspective

Discussion

- The Kantian Perspective
  - Allocation of funds from tuition fees would have come out anyway, at least in the long run (e.g., Wikileaks)
  - Public managers use Open Government as a tool for receiving direct feedback from the public
  - We should implement as much as open government as possible for receiving feedback

Do you believe that public managers are acting like that?
Limitations of the Kantian Perspective

Discussion

- Machiavellian Perspective
  - Open Government may very well backfire
    - Public engagement (open government) does not always lead to intended results (legitimacy and support, operational capacity)
  - Unpredictability of the outcome is highly problematic
  - Only positive ends may justify Open Government initiatives

![Diagram showing relationships between Awareness, Use, and Relational Impact]
Challenges of Open Government

- It is a lot of work:
  - Creating and sustaining public engagement
  - Monitoring and responding to public feedback
  - Facilitating and coordinating a productive collaboration
  - Putting effective collaborative processes and tools in place
  - Integrating with internal business processes

- It can get out of control…
  - Keeping a balance between control and public autonomy
  - Lack of accountability and responsibility
  - Increased complexity
  - Linking public input to rule making and stay consistent

- However, research does not offer any insights on
  - “Where and why should public managers start open government initiatives?”
Research on the evaluation of Open Government initiatives in still at an emerging state

- Most Frameworks assume that more open government is better
- Only of limited practical relevance
- Practitioners strive for understanding the individual short- and long-term consequences of openness and transparency
  - Bud Spencer Tunnel
  - New but different one-stop government maturity model story

Our call for future research

- We should not solely focus on proposing new IT artifacts or solutions how to open up government but should be very explicit about the consequences of using them
- Supported by Agarwal and Lucas (2005): IS researchers should “focus on the impact of the IT artifact rather than the artifact itself”
Research Agenda is twofold: 1. Who is affected?

- Access to Open Government is a "process with many social, mental and technological causes and not [...] a single event [...]" of using a particular Open Government service (Van Dijk, 2006, p. 224).

- Ways to characterize advantaged and disadvantaged groups
  - Which socio-demographic groups are left out?
  - What types of technological capital (Selwyn, 2004) determine engagement?

- Ways to overcome inequalities
  - What are effective awareness campaigns?
  - How to design portals that they can be used by everyone?
Research Agenda is twofold: 2. How is the impact?

- Quest for Dependent Variable
  - What are relevant outcomes (e.g. legitimacy, trust, operational capacity) of Open Government initiatives and what are the underlying assumptions?
  - Are there major differences between open data and citizen-sourcing with respect to the intended relational impact? (cf. next presentation)

- Context for “successful” Open Government initiatives
  - In what kind of scenarios can Open Government positively influence relevant outcomes?
  - Have decisions that fully incorporate the outcome of Open Government initiatives more legitimacy and support in society?
  - Can Open Government increase the operational efficiency of government? (cf. Nam, 2012)
Thank you for your attention!
Any Questions?

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New Digital Government Textbook
Foundations of Digital Government: Leading and Managing in the Digital Era
- Covers all important aspects of digital government management
- Provides theories and frameworks from academic literature to understand digital government
- Integrates examples and cases from administrative practice
- Further Details
  - English language
  - 3rd year bachelor students
  - European Audience
  - Available in August 2013
  - Lecture slides available
What is open government?

• Open Government is manifested under three integrating themes (Heller, 2012)
  – *Information transparency*
    • The public may better understand the workings of their government
  – *Accountability*
    • Empowers the public to hold government accountable for its policy and service delivery performance
  – *Public engagement*
    • Engage the public in governmental policy processes and service delivery programs

• Means to implement Open Government
  – *Open data*
  – *Citizen-sourcing strategies*