

Foreshadowing Data-driven Government

Citizen-Government Interaction in Visions of the Data-powered State

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25 July 2016

24th World Congress of Political Science in Poznań, Poland



Big Data + Government = ♥

- Government is a knowledge-based business:
 - “Bureaucratic administration means fundamentally dominance through knowledge” (Weber 1922)
- Big Data among most important technologies for the future of public administration (Pollitt 2014)
 - Historical importance of information management in government (Porter 1996; Scott 1998; Desrosières 2002)

Data-driven government

HP HAVEn turns Big Data into efficient and effective government

Next-Generation Governance
Enhanced Decisionmaking Through a
Mission-Focused, Data-Driven Approach

Data-driven government:
Challenges and a path forward

data driven government preparing for the age of the citizen



Why should we care?

“policy innovations soon become dependent upon the key values and discourses [...] that frame them during their decisive early phases”

(Chadwick & May 2003)

Management Fashions (Abrahamson 1996)

- „travelling ideas“ of the organizational world
- spread specific institutions and social practices
- commonly believed to be rational and progressive
- spread by „fashion setters“ like consultancies

Key Questions

1. Does data-driven government qualify as a management fashion?
2. What does data-driven government look like?

Sample of 43 consultancy reports

1. ~ 80 reports by Googling for: *Big Data, data-driven, data analytics + government, public administration*

(only PDF and ignoring academic publications)
2. Eliminating documents by governmental and inter-governmental organizations
3. Eliminating documents focussing only on technical aspects



Typical Elements of Management Fashions (Benders & van Veen 2001)

Promises of, preferably substantial, performance enhancement

The threat of bankruptcy in case of non-adoption

Using well-known and successful users of the concept in question

Stressing the concept's universal applicability

Presenting the concept as an easily understandable commodity with a catchy title

Presenting the concept as timely, innovative and future-oriented

Interpretative viability, i.e. leaving a certain room for interpretation

Promises of,
preferably substantial,
performance
enhancement

- “Get Big Data right, and you’ll unlock a treasure chest of improved intelligence that can inform better and faster decision-making up and down your organisation.”
IPL 2013

The threat of
bankruptcy in case of
non-adoption

- „Only the data driven government will be ready to rise to the challenge of meeting citizen’s increasing demands and expectation“
Atos 2015

Stressing the
concept's universal
applicability

- “Public sector organisations could all benefit from harnessing the power of the Big Data they have available to them.”
IPL 2013

Does data-driven government qualify as a management fashion?

- It has all the right ingredients.

What does data-driven government look like?

Models of Interaction in E-Government (Chadwick & May 2003)

1. What role is played by government?
2. Who are the principal actors and interests?
3. What is the dominant perspective on the flow of information?
4. What are the principal mechanisms for interaction between government and citizens?
5. What attention is paid to the ability of citizens to interact electronically?
6. What is the defining logic, or *raison d'être*, of each model?

Managerial, consultative & participatory models

	Managerial	Consultative	Participatory
Role for government	Regulatory; responding to the needs of the “new economy”; efficient and faster delivery of government information to citizens and “users.”	Regulatory; responding to the needs of societal interests as expressed electronically; better policy provision to citizens and “users”	Protector of free speech and rights of expression, regulator of infrastructure, but little beyond that; civil society exists away from the state and (will be) mediated electronically.
Flow of information	Unilinear from government to “customers” or customers to government, but main emphasis on improving flow of information within government	Unilinear from government to citizens or citizens to government	Discursive and complex – citizens to citizens, citizens to government, government to citizens
Principal mechanisms for interaction	Online tax returns; benefit claims; “one-stop shops”; updating personal information held by public bureaucracies; government gathering and aggregation of “market research data”; government provision of information about its activities to media and public	“E-voting” at elections; instant opinion polling; electronic input from voters and interest groups to government; “advisory” referendums; “electronic town meetings,” and so on	Autonomous pluralist mechanisms, such as discussion lists, Usenet, peer-to-peer technologies; time and distance become compressed, facilitating increased political participation and a “cyber civil society”
Defining logic	“Service delivery” and policy presentation	“Technical accuracy” and improved policy success rate	“Deliberation,” participation and enhanced democracy

What about data-driven government?

Actors: Direct Bureaucracy-Citizen Axis

- Agencies:
 - autonomous and entrepreneurial
 - focus on their mission
 - focus on efficiency and citizen satisfaction

- Citizens:
 - want faster, better, cheaper services
 - want transparency

- Political level:
 - only relevant as regulator

- “Governments can and must use the power of Big Data to be more citizen-focussed, to design cost-effective and responsive services”
(Atos 2015)
- “Why just meet citizen demands when you can anticipate them, identify new opportunities, and provide targeted services.”
(SAP 2014)
- “We citizens [...] expect high standards of speed, joined-up service quality, and transparency from governments – just as we do in other aspects our live.”
(Atos 2015)

Information Flows: Indirect Data Collection & Transparency

- Indirect Data Collection:
 - Government compiles data about citizens
 - No active engagement with citizens

- Transparency:
 - Government posts data about their activities online

Information Flows: Indirect Data Collection

- “Knowing a lot about an individual user, consumer or citizen makes it possible to **forecast their specific needs and behaviour**, sometimes with a very high degree of precision.”
(Policy Exchange 2012)
- “A **unified view of citizens** can not only streamline costs of service delivery, but also improve a citizen’s interactive experience with the public sector.”
(IBM Center for The Business of Government 2014)

Information Flows: Transparency

- “Greater transparency of information creates improved accountability in public sector agencies and improved public trust. Dashboards and comparative engines offer citizens the means of measuring the effectiveness of programs and policies.”
(McKinsey Global Institute 2011)

Defining logic of data-driven government

Anticipatory,
responsive
and optimized
service delivery
and government transparency

Mixture of managerial and consultative models

- Strong focus on service delivery, quality and efficiency
- Idea of improving services with citizen feedback
- BUT: feedback generated passively, not from active engagement

Invoking the Supermarket State (Christensen 2003)

- “the state has a service-providing role, with an emphasis on efficiency and good quality”
- sees its citizens as “consumers, users or clients”
- “if governmental units do not produce satisfactory services at a low price these services must be outsourced or downsized”
- “instead of the state controlling society, based on a democratic mandate from the people, society more directly controls the state through market mechanisms”

Demise of the participatory turn?

- Open Government as dominant discourse in digital government
- Managerial logic of data-driven government goes against the participatory trajectory

To conclude

- Limitation: Consultancy reports do not present holistic utopias
- Defining feature: Indirect data collection
- Moving towards the Supermarket State rather than Open Government

Thank you!

Contact

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