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**KONRAD
ADENAUER
STIFTUNG**

A NEW LOOK OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Edited by
Grichawat Lowatcharin

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Foreword



The College of Local Administration (COLA) at Khon Kaen University and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) are cooperation partners. Since 2012, we have continuously worked together on various academic projects aiming at developing the local administration in Khon Kaen and other provinces in northeastern Thailand. Over the years, we have organized many seminars, workshops, and lectures, and also coordinated several publications.

In 2020, one of our cooperative projects was a seminar series for faculty members at Khon Kaen University. In response to the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak, COLA initiated this activity in order to address new challenges faced by the public administration in Thailand. As an educational institution, COLA intended to disseminate knowledge and discuss with the participants—online and offline—current advancements and adjustments in the fields of public administration, public affairs, and governance that aim to meet the needs of the citizens during this critical time. The goal was to increase the expertise of academics and faculty members so they can further support local communities in the formulation and implementation of public policies that benefit the society as a whole.

With experts from Thailand, Asia, Europe, and the U.S. giving online-lectures, COLA succeeded in collecting essential answers to many questions on public administration issues deriving from the crisis. To share this valuable information and further contribute to develop local governments and local administrations in Thailand, COLA decided to publish this book. We hope that it will be an efficient tool resulting from the seminars and soon be recognized as valuable studying material for civil servants at the national and the local level, experts, lecturers, and students at Thai universities as well as the general public interested in the topic.

On behalf of the KAS, I would like to thank the dean of the College of Local Administration at Khon Kaen University, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Peerasit Kamnuansilpa, the associate deans, as well as all COLA's staff members, for initiating and implementing the seminar series, as well as preparing this publication. The KAS

hopes that these activities will contribute to an effective public administration, sound public policies, and good governance in Khon Kaen, in northeastern provinces, and also in other regions throughout Thailand in the long term.

Dr. Céline-Agathe Caro

Director, KAS Office in Thailand

Foreword



This timely book is produced under the auspices of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS). It is a byproduct of a program designed to reorient the faculty and staff members of the College of Local Administration in order to prepare them for the increasingly significant and challenging roles in their future contributions to government, both at the central and local levels, and in public and private organizations. In addition, the program offered assistance to employees of both public and private organizations in their pursuit of improved, more equitable, inclusive public services for Thailand. The philosophies and values underpinning this book are that public administration is a tool employed to improve the lives and serve the interests of citizens, which are broad and multidimensional as reflected in this book.

In line with the historical development of the field of public administration, this book covers a multidisciplinary view of how, in giving rise to a new paradigm of public affairs management, the citizens can be better served. The readers of this book will be provided with a brief history and the development of public administration. Presented in a succinct and concise manner, this book covers a comprehensive core body of the field of public administration. The book also addresses issues pertaining to how future public services should and could be delivered.

To meet the expectation of future citizens in a world of increasing volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, it is imperative that high quality public services must be provided rapidly and by service providers who are able to capitalize on current digital technology. This will go far in gaining greater trust of citizens, who desire more transparent public affairs management systems. Indeed, it is explained clearly, in one of the chapters, that governance and effective public services are the important ingredients of national progress and the wellbeing of citizens. This, in fact, is a clarion call for national leaders who know how to make the best use of digital technology to create effective digital governance. One caveat is that because of the blurred and shifting boundary of the public and private sectors, both the contributions of academicians and of practitioners, while increasingly more challenging, will have to be evaluated with caution.

This book clearly illustrates how the advancement of digital technology can make a real difference in the ways public services are provided to citizens. Equitable, inclusive, and comprehensive public services are no longer wishful thinking but have already been achieved in more economically, politically, and technologically stable and advanced countries. One question remains is whether good governance is a product or a precursor of digital technological advancement. No matter what the answer is, this book sheds light on the importance of digital governance in new public services.

One distinctive aspect of this book is that it integrates the broad scholastic knowledge of academicians and practitioners drawn from their years of experience. One of the chapters stresses that universities must be working to serve the public through research, which can eventually culminate with sound public policies. Certainly, responsive public policy recommendations proposed by universities is one vehicle to improve the lives of citizens. Here, the university must not lock itself into a role of policy making but must be assertive in policy monitoring and evaluation. In addition, in another chapter, we are provided with the wisdom of universities taking the initiative in capitalizing on the advancement of digital technology by developing digital platforms for maximizing citizen engagement. This will provide an effective strategy to pave the way for co-creation of public services among all stakeholders. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the university to work with all parties to help chart a path for democratic and economic development. This connects nicely with the final chapter that reflects on the early stages of Thailand's move to digital government and digital governance.

At this juncture, it is important that we must first increase digital literacy. It cannot be stressed enough that the universities need to work more closely with both public and private sectors if Thailand is ever going to gain the status of a high-income country.

In closing, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the speakers and authors upon which this book is based and for the hard work done in the preparation presented through the media employed in the seminar presentations. This book could not have come into being without the support and leadership of Dr. Céline-Agathe Caro, Director of KAS Office in Thailand. Finally, I would like to congratulate Dr. Grichawat Lowatcharin, the editor of this book, for putting forth the effort and diligence required in its production.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Peerasit Kamnuansilpa
Dean of the College of Local Administration
Khon Kaen University, Thailand

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Introduction: Post-COVID-19 Public Administration

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In just over a century, public administration has emerged to become an essential field of study worldwide. As a relatively young field, public administration experiences—if not, suffers from—a wide variety of epistemological, theoretical, and practical ideas that have contributed to the field's progress (see Guy & Rubin, 2015). In this brief introduction to this book, my goal is to articulate the history and evolution of public administration as a science. In particular, I will discuss how public administration has changed throughout its history by providing some examples from different points in time. Subsequently, I will discuss how the COVID-19 pandemic poses an existential crisis for public administration. In the final section, I will provide an outline of this book that explores the possibilities of public administration in this age of disruption.

An Ever-Changing Field of Science

Science encompasses a branch of knowledge or study that systematically deals with facts or truth of physical or natural phenomena. The method used in these studies is, for obvious reasons, called the scientific method. The field of public administration emerged from the marriage of at least three areas of social science—political science, economics, and law—during the late 19th century and the early 20th century (Shafritz, Russell, & Borick, 2009). The social sciences have consistently been engaged in conflicts between two schools of thought: empiricism and purposivism. Empiricism, or positivism, is concerned with a single truth, objectivity, value-neutrality, and more quantitative methodologies. Purposivists, or interpretivists,

argue that there are multiple realities and call for normative approaches and methodological pluralism. In the social science field, public administration arose from the ongoing struggle between these two schools of thought.

For various reasons, it seems that, at the time public administration emerged as a discreet field, empiricists, positivists, and rationalists won the battles. As a result, the study of public administration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries appeared to be more positive and value neutral. Public administration scholars at the time attempted to mimic the natural science approach to develop theories and methodologies. Some early public administration scholars boasted that the field could develop some universal principles, as did the natural sciences. Time has proved that such claims are farfetched. Some argue public administration can come up with, at best, concepts, never mind a single, overarching, grand theory. Examples of the attempts to mimic the natural sciences and rationalist approaches include ideas and concepts such as scientific management (e.g., Frederick W. Taylor, Luther H. Gulick, and Chester Barnard); bureaucracy (e.g., Max Weber); and politics-administration dichotomy (e.g., Woodrow Wilson, Frank Goodnow, and Leonard White). These theories share three common themes: objectivity, technical rationality, and value neutrality (see Fry & Raadschelders, 2008).

In the 1940s and 1950s, weary of trying to mimic the principles of natural science, some public administration scholars contended that some of the orthodox elements of public administration were not capable of representing actual societal phenomena. They argued that scientific management, the politics-administration dichotomy, and context-independent theories did not function as expected. Therefore, they proposed several new approaches to the study of public administration. Just before and after World War II, there emerged several approaches to public administration—i.e., bureaucratic politics, behavioralism, institutionalism, and humanism—that challenged the orthodoxy of earlier public administration theories (Frederickson & Smith, 2003).

In the late 1960s, a movement called New Public Administration (NPA) emerged as a result of scholarly discussions at the Minnowbrook Conference. NPA recognized what orthodox public administration had neglected: the relevance of societal needs, value, social equity, and change. NPA would later become an essential foundation for the development of contemporary public administration.

Since the 1980s, public administration has been under the paradigm of New Public Management and governance. New Public Management marries public administration and private management, introducing the public provision of goods and services with such business practices as market-driven managerialism, privatization, public-private partnership, and effectiveness (Lynn, 2006). The concept of governance is something larger than government (Kjær, 2004). The

governance processes encompass actors from the public, private, non-profit, non-governmental, and civil society sectors, and promotes normative public values, such as accountability, public participation, and transparency.

Some public administration scholars see governance as a different approach to NPM; others do not. Similarities and differences between NPM and governance are arguable. Still, the critical point is that these two sets of theories recognize the role of a wider variety of actors in the public policy and administration arenas. What's more, some emerging views seem more promising to incorporate different actors and values. Examples are the pragmatic approach, the phronesis social science approach, public value management, and ethical theory.

I find that several aspects of public administration have changed over time. First, ethical norms and values have gained more momentum over the past few decades. At the beginning of the field, public values and standards were not recognized as essential to public administration. As time went by, they became more important and became embedded in theoretical, methodological, and practical developments. Second, the number of actors and players in the public policy and administration processes has been more significant, thanks to public participation advocates. Orthodox theories of public administration separated bureaucrats from politicians as well as from citizens. Nowadays, the concept of governance recognizes and encourages the participation of a wider variety of participants. Finally, methods of inquiry in public administration have become more diverse. More scholars are open to different methodological approaches as together they provide a more comprehensive view of a given phenomenon. Logical positivism is no longer the lone player in the field. Pragmatism and interpretivism are more welcome, and mixed-methods research is commonplace.

Since public administration development is path-dependent, some aspects have changed little, or not at all, throughout history. These aspects include interdisciplinary nature, path dependence, and obsession with efficiency. Public administration remains the field that interacts with many other fields, e.g., education, environmental science, public health, etc. Public administration does not desert orthodox theories and concepts; it advances by integrating old and new ideas. Efficiency still serves as one of the desired goals for public administration.

What does science mean for the contemporary study of public administration? Today, for many social scientists (e.g., Feyerabend, 2011; Flyvbjerg, 2001; Kagan, 2009; Rosenberg, 2008; Shapiro, 2005), science does not necessarily connote the sense of natural science, but science in a broader sense. Science is a marketplace of ideas; an expanding ocean of alternatives (Feyerabend, 2011). The science of public administration has become diverse and pluralistic. That is, it is no longer dominated by the single-minded logical positivist, technical rationalist

approach. There are multiple paradigms—as well as epistemological and theoretical pluralisms—in public administration. Positivists coexist and work with interpretivists, and objective methods meet subjective ones. The science of public administration advances in a way that *anything is possible*.

Public Administration in the Age of Disruption

As a science, public administration has always been susceptible to epistemological forces. Similarly, as a practice, public administration has always been influenced by global economic, political, and social phenomena: multiple crises over the years have shaped how governments devise policies and provide public services.

In the early 20th century, Old Public Administration (OPA) emerged as an institutional response to inefficiency of and chronic nepotism in government in the 19th century. Bureaucracy, scientific management, and the politics-administration dichotomy were conceptualized to nurture professional civil servants who could carry out public policies and programs in a closed system without political intervention. Aroused by economic crises and red tape in the public sector in the 1970s, New Public Management introduced private sector management styles and tools to government agencies. Countries around the world employed NPM in their public sector reforms with the aim of promoting more effective and responsive public services. However, while the business or market approach has proven to be valuable in certain aspects of government activities, it has posed some normative questions about the boundary between the public and private sectors due to their different goals. The early 2000s saw the proliferation of New Public Governance (NPG) as a more democratic approach to public administration. Although NPG is not completely replacing OPA and NPM, it emphasizes the importance of diverse groups of stakeholders in the policymaking and public service arena (Osborne, 2010).

The outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 has destabilized global economic, political, and societal landscapes and will have a long-lasting impact on every facet of human activities. Throughout the world, governments have exhausted resources and strategies to control the rapidly spreading pandemic and mitigate its effects. The pandemic, however, can be viewed as a stimulus to change in the public sector. Many global trends have already disrupted the status quo and demanded institutional reforms in governments. Prominent among these trends are demographic changes and urbanization; chronic poverty, inequality, and inequity; the growing demands of diverse groups; and disruptive technological advances, to name but a few. The pandemic has driven us to more clearly realize how our urban lifestyle and infrastructure is prone to rapidly spreading diseases. The pandemic is stark evidence of how the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in our society have been neglected. COVID-19 has forced government agencies to improve their ICT

capabilities and civil servants to learn how to use various media for online meetings, and so on.

In times of crisis, with the private and other sectors suffering from economic and social consequences, the public sector must take a leading role with good governance and better policymaking, now more than ever (OECD, 2020). For the foreseeable future, public administration will need to continue to adapt itself in response to the multifaceted challenges made prominent by COVID-19. It is, once again, time for public administration scholars and practitioners to seek answers to, “How will public administration respond to this global crisis?”

Plan of This Book

This book is a product of an attempt to answer such a question. In late 2020, the College of Local Administration with support from Konrad Adenauer Stiftung invited seven scholars and practitioners from different parts of the world to contribute to a webinar series on the state of the art of public administration. Their lectures were subsequently transformed into chapters in this volume. It needs to be emphasized that all the lectures that make up these chapters were delivered orally. The chapters in this book were based on transcriptions of these lectures. We have strived to maintain the flavor of the oral presentation while removing most of the filler words that we all use in our speech and to make them a bit more readable. Therefore, please to not assess these as articles in a truly academic style of writing, but think of them as the lecturer imparting his or her knowledge to you in a “classroom” setting.

The following two chapters (Two and Three) provide a basic understanding of public administration and how it has evolved over the past decades. In Chapter Two, David Lee discusses the past and present face of governance and a possible approach for better governance in the near future. In Chapter Three, Bruce Gilley illustrates the fuzzy jurisdictional boundaries between the public and private sectors. He also argues that the boundary might not be as blurred anymore due to the resurgence of government agencies in response to COVID-19.

Chapter Four turns to a different boundary, the one between the public sector and academia. Through the eyes of a researcher at the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, Andrey Timofeev elaborates on different approaches that academic institutions can use to help pursue more meaningful policymaking.

Chapter Five explores the concept of governance in action. Gillian Koh discusses the importance of governance structure and its effects on the citizenry through the case study of Singapore.

The last three chapters explore the state of the art of an essential aspect of contemporary public administration, i.e., digital government. In Chapter Six, Gustaf Juell-Skielse elaborates on how national, regional, and local governments in Sweden promote equity and inclusiveness via digital technology. In Chapter Seven, Robert Krimmer discusses the concept of government as a platform in Estonia and how data-driven, co-created digital services help uphold a more democratic society. In Chapter Eight, Airada Luangvilai brings us up to date regarding the legal and technical aspects of digital government in Thailand.

While all of the chapters offer an understanding of contemporary public administration for certain dimensions in a universal sense, many of them also discuss specific references in the context of the author's home country. So, readers may find themselves reading this book with a comparative lens. We hope this book provides readers with insights and perspectives that might be useful in navigating public administration in the post-COVID-19 era.

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2

The Past, Present, and Future of Public Administration

David Lee

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(Lecture presented October 8, 2020)

It is my honor to give a talk to the College of Local Administration, Khon Kaen University. As Dean Peerasit mentioned, I specialize in collaboration, mainly focused on the local level. I was asked to give a lecture about the evolution of public administration research. As a student of public administration for about 20 years. My major in undergrad was also public administration, as was my master and PhD. I am the son of a public administration professor; my father was a professor in public administration. I thought it would be very meaningful time for me to remind myself of what I learned when I was in my master and PhD program and to talk about a current topic that I am interested in and to discuss the potential or future public administration model with many professors in Thailand.

Let me start by looking at a brief preview of the topic that I am going to cover today. First, I would like to talk about understanding the public administration field. Then I would like to talk about the evolution of public administration models, public administration and New Public Management, and nowadays, collaborative governance. Then I want to talk about the recent challenge that we have to deal with the global pandemic of COVID-19 and see whether there is any new theme that we would like to include to study a new public administration model. Then the conclusion is going to be something that is related to lessons learned from the COVID-19 so far.

Understanding Public Administration

As you know, the term of public administration is difficult to define because of the variety of the topics that we cover. The subject, when we talk about public administration, traditionally, was government. But, nowadays, we can say the public sector because not only governments, but public organizations also serve the public. Other sectors, like nonprofit, private, or civic sectors also provide some public services and participate in the decision-making process in public administration. A context that the government deals with or the public sector deals with is also brought from areas like international environmental issues, for example, air pollution cases in Asian countries, or like my subject area, the local homelessness problems. It is not easy to clearly define what our public administration looks like but based on a number of scholars for more than 100 years, nowadays we can say that public administration covers the structures and activities, as well as the behavior of public organizations, including public officials.

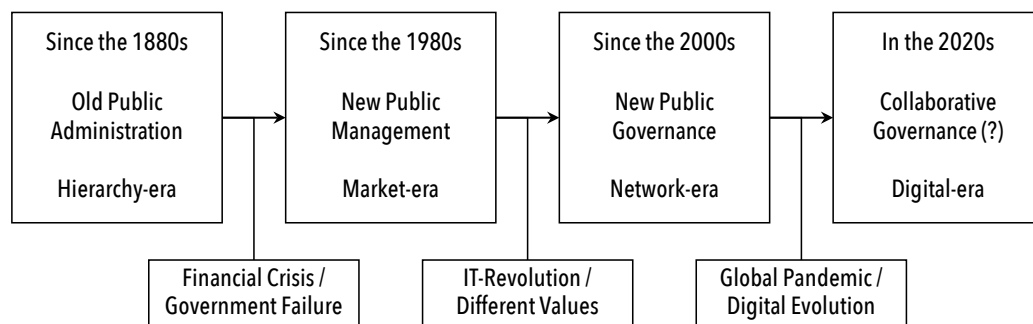
The study of public administration also lies in the intersection of science and art. The reason we say science is that we build our theory, and we have a scientific inquiry to develop the theory and test the theory. Our findings can be applicable to practical knowledge, so that is the reason we believe the study of public administration lies at the intersection between science and art. Recently, people who study public management started to talk about how maybe it is a profession, as well. The study of public administration also used some similar terms like public management, public affairs, and public policy. It depends on where you stand. For example, for people who talk about public management, their intention may be more likely to incline to the management style of the business sector. People who talk about public affairs, like my PhD program in the School of Environment and Public Affairs, broadly cover political science, organizations, and public policy.

The study of public administration is also often understood as an interdisciplinary field within the area of social science. So, old or traditional public administration theorists are actually called non-PA scholars. They are like political scientists or sociologists or even engineers. But we adopt theories from other fields, we adopt, and we regenerate, and redevelop to our own field. I would like to highlight that the study of public administration is definitely an interface. The interdisciplinary nature of PA is what I think makes the dynamics in the scholarly aspect and useful to practice.

Before I start to talk about the evolution of the administration model, I would like to highlight four major pillars of the foundation of the public administration field. Number one is economy. It is about how to manage resources;

ways of how to provide public services with fewer resources. The second one is efficiency; providing more services with the same level of resources. The third is effectiveness, which could be the most important pillar of public administration. It is about performance; whether the public services activities meet their goals. The fourth one, others may think, is the most important part of public administration. It is equity; we are talking about fairness and justice. Beyond the input or output, now we think about who is receiving your public service regardless of socioeconomic demographic factors, whether you are rich or poor, male or female, younger or older, urban or rural. All citizens are supposed to receive the same quality of service. The evolution of the public administration model, I think, can be understood as searching for balance among these four pillars when the public sector delivers public services to citizens.

Figure 2.1 Evolution of Public Administration Models



Evolution of Public Administration Models

Now, to the second part of the evolution of public administration models (Figure 2.1). First, I want to start by looking at the old public administration areas. From the 1880s, when Woodrow Wilson started to talk about administrative methods of government activities, he adopted Taylor’s scientific management approach. At the same time, the German, Max Weber, developed a theory of bureaucracy. This is what we call old public administration, which is, I think, a really important foundation of current public administration. But in the 1960s and 1970s, many governments experienced a financial crisis, and they experienced government failures. So, since the 1980s, scholars and practitioners, both, start to talk about business-like government—a market approach—the New Public Management. They tried to make small government possible. About 20 years later, another societal change of the information technology revolutions. Then people also started to talk about different values instead of the market mechanism. But what about the equity? How about the publicness? About the year 2000, many scholars in public

administration started to develop another model for New Public Governance or New Public Service. In this model, the main theme is network. These three models are, I think, the main models in public administration to date. While I prepared for this talk, I started to think that maybe, in times of crisis like now, it is time for us to think about developing another new model of public administration because of the global pandemic we have, because evolution can be another strong tool. My suggestion is a collaborative governance model the digital era. These are the four main models that I would like to talk about in today's lecture.

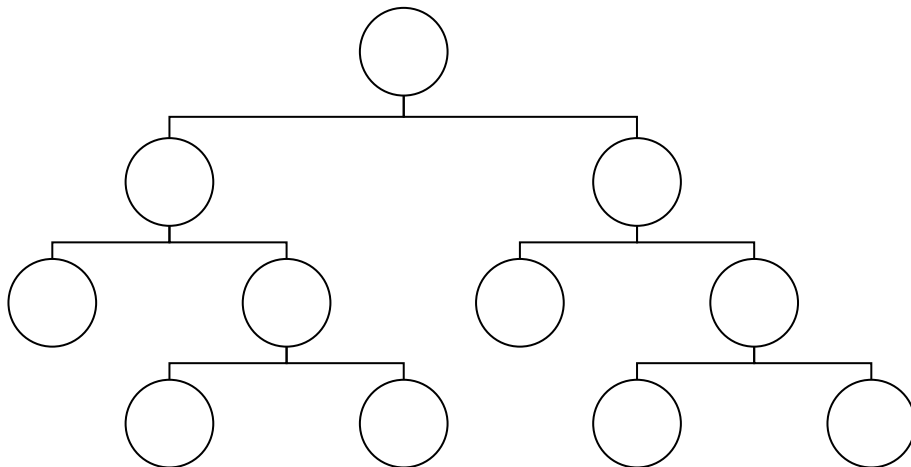
Old Public Administration

The old public administration is about hierarchy rooted in western public sector institutions (Figure 2.2). We learn that the father of public administration, Woodrow Wilson, in his dissertation, started to think about public administration. He focused on the scientific discipline of public administration. Why? Because he thought that public employment should be a career, not the person serving at the insistence of the politicians. He wanted to stay a little bit away from the politics and build public administration as a professional area. When he became the President of the United States, he aspired to Taylorism, the principle of scientific management, which is about instrumentalism. About the same time, in 1886 in Germany, Max Weber provided the theory of bureaucracy. These are the first times that people started to talk about public administration. At this time, the main theme is hierarchy and bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is about the hierarchical structure of government. And interestingly, nowadays, even though people talk about the networks or flat governments or smaller governments, a lot of different types, still I think bureaucracy is the most effective form of government. Not just government. But it performs well in many different types of organizations. The base mechanism they highlighted were rules and standards. They wanted to nurture career officials who were not affected by politics, and they thought the means and process was instrumentalism, so career officials were going to be impartially affected by others and then could focus on the government work. So, hierarchy provides a coordinated mechanism to guarantee impartiality and responsibility to the top of hierarchical structures, and very easily and clearly because of the rules and procedures the public officials need to do their own work. The main pillars of PA in this era are bureaucracy that, they believed, ensures efficiency based on rationality, rules, and laws, and a hierarchy that guarantees that public services will equally be provided to the citizens.

Interestingly, the three scholars who are the most famous in old public administration are called non-PA scholars. With Woodrow Wilson, some people speak of him as a president or political scientist. Frederick Taylor was an engineer. With Max Weber, people think of him as a sociologist instead of a public

administrator. But we are starting to adopt many benefits from other disciplines to start to develop our own area and start to develop our own theory and structure, which can be applicable to the actual structure of government. The key elements of old public administration definitely are hierarchy and bureaucracy, division of labor, rules of law, and professionally trained public employees who are responsible to the top of their bureaucracy. Public administration displayed in this era, I think, is heavily influenced by political science and law.

Figure 2.2 Bureaucratic Structure: Hierarchy



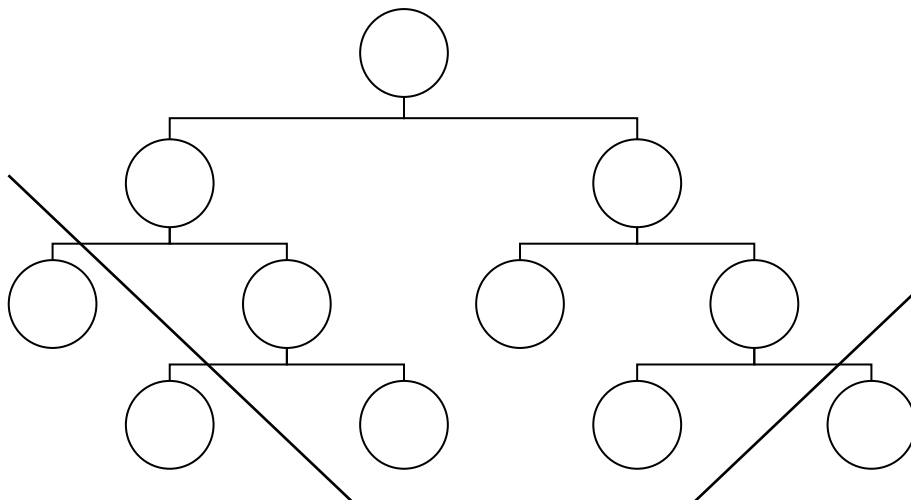
When I recall my undergraduate degree program, when I first studied public administration in South Korea, in many universities, as I remember, the Department of Public Administration was part of the Political Science College or in the College of Law, instead of the Social Sciences. I can see the reason why we see public administration as part of political science or law, but the limitations of the public administration model start to appear in the 1960s and 1970s because the hierarchy failed to promptly respond to the societal changes. Too much legislative power went to bureaucracy, so public employees and officials in the bureaucracy got too much power and they became corrupt. Too many regulations and rules, which we call red tape, causes inefficiency. By the time they started to adopt the bureaucracy theory and management science to develop the hierarchy structure of government, the main goal they pursued was efficiency. Public officials try to stay away from the political side, so they can focus on their own work. Then they can follow the rules and division of labor, and a clear standard of rules will allow them to increase the efficiency in their behavior, in their activities. In the 1970s, they experienced too much power. Too many regulations and rules or red tape bring inefficiency, and too much power to politicians and the executive levels but with a lack of accountability. This meant

they, under the old public administration, failed to deal with the citizens' new and growing needs and demands.

New Public Management

As a response to rising complexity and fiscal crises around the world in the 1970s and 1980s, the governments needed to reduce their size because they experienced government failures. Around 20 years later, South Korea experienced a financial crisis in 1997, and we were supported by the IMF. At the time, their recommendation, their condition, was to follow the New Public Management scheme. At the time, the South Korean government had to reduce its size dramatically and reform the public and private sectors. So, the pressure of financial crisis results in the size reduction. With the pressure of globalization, now people can compare our government with others' problems. They can learn from others or even different sectors. Then they start to think about maybe business could provide better outcomes than the government hierarchy. People started to think about business-like government, like Australia and the UK. Osborn and Gaebler (1992), in their book, *Reinventing Governments*, talk about making governments like a business model and they promote competition to save costs. So, the framework in this era shifted from political science and law to business, management, and economics. When I started my master and PhD, I can recall many of the courses I learned and research that I read were from the Business School and Economics Department. In this era, the mainstream is competition and making governments like businesses so they use the market mechanism. The mechanism is competition, as I said, and disaggregation, as well as economic perspectives, like bounded rationality and maximizing utility.

Figure 2.3 Market Mechanism: Cost-Saving



Two main theories, I think, that dominate the new public management era are transaction costs and principal-agent. The transaction cost gives us the frame to understand how to search for lowering cost and justification to use more contracting out and privatization (Figure 2.3). Principal-agent theory, because a lot of government parts are being contracted out and privatized, people started to think about how to handle the moral hazard, because now we cannot directly control the private sector who our contract is with and who serves the public service instead of us. Because there are no clear rules and standards to govern, there is a moral hazard of information asymmetry. We needed the scholars to start thinking about how to reduce the moral hazard of information asymmetry. The main theory we used was the principle-agent.

In this era, the main public administration pillars were economic efficiency and effectiveness, because people started to talk about performance at this time. When we started public administration, mostly we talked about 3-Es instead of 4-Es. 3-Es are all related to the economy efficiency and effectiveness, which are the main themes from business and economics. The trends were more discretion to managers and starting to talk about performance, contracting out, and privatization. At this time, the market mechanism brought us to reduce the size of government, and part could be contracted out to the private sector or just privatized. The key element of New Public Management, I think, is the private sector management practice. A little bit outdated, but we still use it.

At this time, we started to talk about input-output models to find a way to save costs and to increase efficiency. An output model inherently talks about the performance, so we start to talk about performance management and evaluation. This gave government a reason to require the annual performance report because of the legacy of the New Public Management. Then people started to talk about the service delivery process instead of the internal management of government. The New Public Management people started to think about what were the output and outcomes of government activity, which is the service delivery process. The two parts they used were the contracting out and privatization. The New Public Management is the time that I think is such to blur the boundary of the public sector. Sometimes we found the private sector providing public services in the US and, in many cases, even in South Korea. So, it is hard to say that only the public sector, the government, or the partner agencies are the main actors who deliver the public services because of the New Public Management.

The limitation of the New Public Management, I think, starts with accountability. We still failed to answer, “accountable to whom?” The problem of the

old public administration was they were responsible to their top, their boss, in their division. And their boss was responsible to whom? The executive level. And, the executive level, at that time, was responsible to the politicians. Even here, in the New Public Management, people started to pick up on the business-like government and privatization, tried to make governments like a business. Still, they failed to answer, “accountable to whom?” Why? Because the main theme of the New Public Management was performance efficiency, economy, and these kinds of things. So, they treated citizens as customers. They focused on economies of scale and on the efficiency level. They failed to think about the most vulnerable population in the community, in the society. The classic example is when governments build a work based on the New Public Management, they privatize the company, they privatize the activities, or they contract out. Then, probably, the vendor prefers to build the work in an urban area or in a richer community instead of the rural areas or the poor areas. So, citizens are mostly treated as a customer and not as a pure citizen. There was too much focus on things like government, and there was some movement of “where is the missing value of ‘public’ in public administration and public management?” About the same time, there was a small but very strong group of scholars, representing what they called a New Public Administration Model from Dwight Waldo, who talked about equity and democratic values in the public administration field. Because of the New Public Management that was too much inclined toward the business-like government, about 20 years later, people started thinking about the equity and democratic values that were missed. Then people started to think about how to make a balance between the efficiency and effectiveness and equity of democratic values.

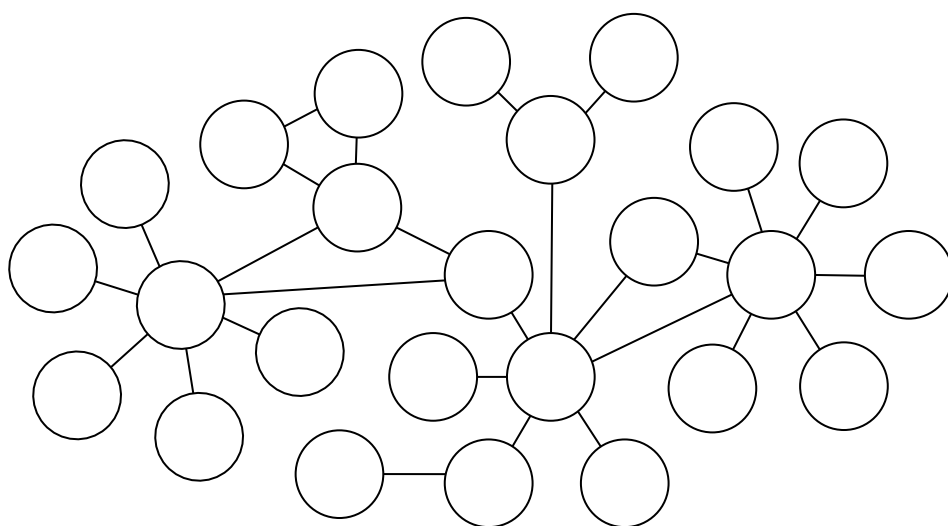
New Public Governance

So, the third model which is, I think, the main model today, is called New Public Governance, which is based on the network (Figure 2.4). The reason why people started to think about the network is that today government is not the only main actor who delivers public services. It could be non-profits, it could be the private sector, or it could even be citizens who co-produce and deliver public services to the citizens. As a response to the rising complexity and the limitations of the New Public Management, the pressure of inclusivity, people started to think about the governance model and tried to invite other stakeholders that includes citizens, interest groups, nonprofits, and so on. The pressure of participation on governance provided a big playground to promote their interaction.

In this era, the theoretical framework shifted from business- and economic-built tools, I think, to sociology and tried to include many organizational theories like network theory, and the New Public Governance. The key word is collaboration.

Network governance is based on the trust among actors, so it highlights interorganizational relations. And, in governance, government can be a main actor but, in many cases, government plays a facilitating role. Many collaboration models, nowadays, can be done without the involvement of government. Governance is kind of a process of management. Then, the collaboration and New Public Governance era is kind of boundless, so there is no longer a clear boundary between public and private and nonprofit and civic sectors. The New Public Management kind of opened the doors because they adopted a business model, and they used a lot of contracting out and privatization to make the private sector deliver public services.

Figure 2.4 New Public Governance: Network



Now, let me talk about the New Public Governance model beyond just the private sector, beyond the relationship between public and private sectors, but also about the non-profit and other civic societies. In this model domain, the value or pillars of public administration are democracy, effectiveness, and equity. The main trends, I think, are the networks, definitely, and highlighting the important role of the third sector, non-profits. They start to think about how to use the New Public Governance working with other sectors, other organizations, to make better decisions. What delivered the better quality of public services? Unlike the hierarchy or the New Public Management, the market mechanism, now people started to think about the networks.

What are the key elements of New Public Governance? Number one is the problem-solving approach. Now we learn that government cannot serve by its own efforts. There are so many wicked social problems that have multiple determinants

and that bring a lot of enormous social pressure to the society, that governments cannot resolve by their own efforts. They need to collaborate with other sectors.

They search for key resources from the environment like local expertise of nonprofits or financial resources from the local bank or the business sector. They start to form the network, the multi-sector collaboration, which highlights the participations and engagements. The key theme, the key point, in New Public Governance is deliberative effort to build trust and to manage the conflict because many different organizations have their own reasons to participate and it takes time for them to improve the level of trust to start to participate, to start to interact with others, and relieve the conflict. So, deliberative efforts are very important in New Public Governance. You will see the reason why I highlight the deliberative effort and blurred boundary. It is quite meaningful to think about the public and non-public sectors in the era of New Public Governance, but better to think about who delivers public services and who participates. Nowadays, collaborative governance becomes a most effective tool to engage various stakeholders to solve wicked social problems.

Changing Boundaries of Public Administration

The reason I keep highlighting the boundary is because the problems, the wicked social problems, have become more global while, at the same time, more local, and governments cannot effectively deal with all these problems. So, from old public administration to New Public Management, societies experienced the financial crises of government. The main reason to change the PA model was from the internal management, inside the government. Because of their corruption, because of their inefficiency, people started to use private-sector management techniques to increase and improve the level of efficiency, to reduce the corruption and to just make governments work.

The main reason for the change from Old Public Administration to New Public Management, I think, was from the government side. However, changing from New Public Management to New Public Governance is very complicated. In the era of New Public Management, government started to think about their performance, their outcomes. Then they started to think about a better way to deliver services, a better way to implement public policy, and a better way to provide a better quality of outcomes to citizens. Then, the public governance model becomes one of the most effective tools. Nowadays, we believe that includes many other stakeholders, when our government and the public sector decide to create public policy or programs or to find a better way to deliver their services. Then, the traditional boundary of government becomes very blurred. Boundaries that served us well in the past can no longer serve as well. This is the reason I highlight the

change in boundaries. Problems become much more difficult to solve, so government needs to collaborate with other sectors.

Collaborative Governance

Let me talk about collaboration and then we can move on to the final part, searching for the new public administration model. Collaboration is a process within the network structure whereby two or more entities work together to solve a problem that just one entity cannot solve on its own. Organizations choose to collaborate with other organizations when they believe the performance of collaborative effort is better than the performance through a single organization or government effort. Collaboration enables the leading entity to solve the issue of resource scarcity, which often limits their capacity to address complexity. In the collaborative governance model, sometimes the government is not a main actor. Indeed, there may not be much government in the collaborative governance model, as in many cases in the United States. Nowadays, collaborative governance has become a major policy implementation tool to solve wicked problems or to deliver better quality of services in many policy contexts.

I want to talk about the potential new model of public administration. It may be in a very initial stage, but from my own experience, when I looked at the cases or the situations that happened in the state of Hawai'i or in other countries, I started to think about how the collaborative governance model can be an effective tool respond to the COVID-19 cases. I found maybe there are some new things that we need to discuss for the future research effort. COVID-19 can be viewed as another big social change but challenging, like from old public administration to New Public Management or from New Public Management to New Public Governance, we experienced major social changes and challenges. I think COVID-19 can be one of them. Today, this is the most difficult wicked problem in the world. Compared to other pandemics, such as other virus issues like SARS or MERS, COVID-19 has the most severe cases and the most deaths.

All countries are on the same page; we are facing the same issue. As public administration scholars, this can be a very noble topic to compare which countries or which government systems work better than the others. Many PA journals provide special issues on COVID-19. The two or three main PA journals are collecting proposals which are related to COVID-19 comparative studies.

Let's think about the government response to the COVID-19. In many cases, including unfortunately, the United States, the current government system may not be very appropriate to respond to COVID-19. This is something new, totally new.

We never experienced this kind of global pandemic in our lifetimes. Do you think any of the existing PA models can deal with this kind of global pandemic like COVID-19? It is not just a health-related issue. In Hawai'i, the worst part is the local economy because the government decided to lock down the airport. There are few tourists here, maybe 500 on average. It is like 1%, 2% compared to before COVID-19. So, it is not just health related. What about the education? School closures? Any other network governance model we need was the starting point of my curiosity. Then I start to think about what we have learned so far. It is like a mid-term exam. We are just a practice test, because starting from January of 2020, no one expected this situation, and like Dr. Anthony Fauci said, we are still in the middle of the first wave. What we have so far is like the results of the mid-term test.

From my personal interest and background, I would like to share what I learned from the cases of South Korea and the State of Hawai'i. For some part, I think the collaborative governance model works well, especially the cross-sector collaboration.

The Case of *Mask-Web* in Korea

One case I want to talk about is the case of face masks in Korea. There was a shortage of masks in the beginning of 2020, so government decided to close the distribution of the masks because they did not know what was going to happen in even the next few days. Then the government started to think that maybe they can distribute the masks, but only based on the year of birth, when people can purchase their mask from the local pharmacy on designated days. By the time the government decided the way to distribute the masks, citizens used the big data—this is a platform—to create the mask web. So, every citizen in South Korea could download the mask web developed by citizens to check where they can get the masks from the local pharmacies. This is the case that is the result of the full production. When they developed this mask web, there was no government involvement. They developed the mask web to inform of the availability of the masks. The facilitating factor is the government decision-making process and open information, so they decided to share the amount of masks they have and where they go and how many masks are located in which local pharmacy. So, transparency and trust are the factors, I think, that help to make this case of the mask-web.

The Case of Hawai'i

In March of 2020, the governor decided to lock down Hawai'i. Many affected are low-income employees and families. They started to suffer from financial issues and looked to a nonprofit organization called the Hawai'i Community Foundation. They initiated collaborative networks to distribute COVID-19 Hawai'i Resilience

Fund to those who need it. The first success factor I found was the previous experience in Hawai'i of natural disasters. The Hawai'i Community Foundation, even though they never expected this kind of global pandemic, based on the number of hurricanes or volcanoes we experienced, they helped find the financial supporters to promptly provide the resilience fund to low-income families. They already had a certain amount of funds, financial resources, and they already had the MoU from the local government to become the lead agency of this local collaborative network to distribute the financial resources they got from government or local banks and businesses, that were for low-income families. It helped them to promptly respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and to reduce the socioeconomic damage.

A Future Public Administration Model

From these two cases I found a concept that I would like to talk about, a future public administration model. This is also from some articles related to a COVID-19 special issue of the *Public Administration Review* (PAR). A future public administration model should consider 3As and 3Ts: agility, adaptability, ability, technology, transparency, and trust.

The first one is agility. Speed is key in the decision-making process. When I talk about the New Public Governance model, scholars who study New Public Governance always highlight deliberation death as time consuming, because they need to build trust. In this kind of global pandemic, maybe we need to think differently. Speed is key because we do not know what is going to happen, maybe even in the next few hours. The second one is adaptability, so maybe more flexibility to adjust to new conditions. As I said, the situation changes rapidly. We face new types of wicked social problems. The third one is ability. Definitely government or other sectors must have levels of capacity to provide the services, just like the case of the Hawai'i Community Foundation. They already had the MoU, they already found the local banks and financial supporters to prepare for any future disaster event, and they had already built some capacity to provide services immediately.

The 3-As I learned from two cases. The 3-Ts support the 3-As. The first one is technology. AI-based systems and big data, open data the people used when they develop the mask-web. Transparency, openness of information, and decision-making process. We live in the in the middle of turbulent times, and I personally think transparency could be the most important thing that government or public administration should have. Trust, definitely, is a key asset in a new governance, not government.

A lot of people talk about the new normal and the new normal is what we need to get used to as public administration scholars. It is extremely uncertain, extremely complex. Now it is not just the blurred boundary or boundaries. It is *the* boundary. If we talk beyond the New Public Governance or collaborative governance, I think about the FAST model from the World Economic Forum, a suggested government structure in 2010, 2011. FAST is acronym of flat, agile, streamlined, and technology enabled as follows (World Economic Forum, 2012):

- “Flatter governments promote (a) citizen engagement, (b) administrative efficiency, (c) decision-making process, and (d) cross-sector collaboration.
- “Agile governments organize to marshal public, private, and nonprofit resources quickly to address wicked problems.
- “Streamlined governments plan workforce reductions coupled with technological advances.
- “Technology governments redesign policy frameworks to align with the dynamics of the networked world.”

So, these are my two tokens to talk about the new themes when we think about the public administration model. Again, thank you very much for your attention.

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This lecture is available
on YouTube at:
<https://youtu.be/yvaZvggpaAE>



3

The Blurred Boundary of Public and Private Affairs in the 21st Century

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(Lecture presented October 1, 2020)

Thank you, Dean Peerasit, for inviting me to again work together with the College of Local Administration at Khon Kaen University. As Dean Peerasit said, we have a very strong relationship with COLA and a broader institutional relationship between Portland State University and Khon Kaen University. We have worked together at the program level, at the one-on-one faculty level, and, as Dean Peerasit said, we have done teaching at each other's institutions. I think this is a great relationship. I am glad that through the miracle of technology we can carry on the relationship in this way. I do want to emphasize, as I have before, how very impressed I am with the things happening at COLA under Dean Peerasit's leadership. It is really a magnet for public administration and public policy teaching and research in Southeast Asia and in East Asia, generally. It is a great place to visit. I tell my graduate students to avail themselves of it. Thailand is right at the heart of many central issues having to do with public governance as the Dean alluded to. I think the college is really generating a worldwide reputation under Dean Peerasit's leadership. So, I am very proud to be a part of it and look forward to a long and happy collaboration carrying on after COVID, as well.

I have been asked to talk about the blurred boundary of public and private affairs in the 21st century. As the Dean mentioned, this is a topic which is not only rising on the agenda of countries like Thailand where the need for the public sector to collaborate with the private sector has arisen mainly because of the funding gap

or the fiscal needs of public services, which the public sector alone cannot solve. But I would say around the world this is an issue that is getting more attention. Where the public sector ends, and the private sector begins, is now very difficult to determine. What I am hoping to do with this talk is to outline a sort of framework for thinking about what we mean by this blurred boundary, why this blurred boundary has occurred, and then what tools are available for people in the public sector, public sector managers, who need to think about operating on this blurred boundary for most of the foreseeable future.

Figure 3.1 Willamette River, Portland, Oregon, United States (Photo: Cacophony)



A Picture of Portland

I want to start by using a picture, which is one of the pictures that we use in the College of Urban and Public Affairs at Portland State University to advertise our beautiful city and the beautiful setting along the Willamette River. At first, I had this picture out thinking I would just use it as a kind of screensaver background document, but I started to look at it more carefully in the context of the question of public and private sectors and the boundary between them. It struck me that there is a lot to see in this picture that talks about our topic. If you look over on the right, you will see a bridge (Figure 3.1). This is called the Hawthorne Bridge; it is one of the oldest bridges that connects the East and the West sides of Portland. We would think of this bridge as essentially a public sector matter. It is owned and maintained and operated by our county government, so it is more or less the public sector and there are no blurred boundaries there. It is a public sector undertaking. Then I would say if we keep looking around the picture, the tall building is the tallest building in Oregon. It is not very tall, but we are a small state. This is the Wells Fargo Center in downtown Portland. Wells Fargo, as you may know, is a bank. It is a private sector

bank, and it does not have any public sector ownership. So, we would think of the Wells Fargo building as the private sector and the Hawthorne bridge as the public sector, and those are two pretty distinctive cases of private and public, no blurry boundary. One is one and one is the other.

Then I would direct your attention over to the left side of the screen. This is a harbor, as you can see. You can see the boats and the docks. This is the waterfront park harbor or moorage in downtown Portland. This moorage is a little more complicated, and maybe this is the one that illustrates the blurred boundary between the public and private sector because what is it exactly? The harbor was developed by the public sector, by the Portland Development Commission, which is now called Prosper Oregon. When they were redeveloping our waterfront, the government, the public sector, developed the harbor and the docks and the associated facilities. They then sold it, however, to the private sector. It is a privately owned harbor now, run by a property company called Templeton, which also owns the condominiums and shops which are behind it. On the other hand, as a harbor on a public waterway, it is closely regulated and overseen by the Oregon State Marine Board, which is responsible for all harbors and wharfage on public waterways in Oregon, which includes this river. So maybe that is an example of an undertaking which has a more blurred boundary. Is that harbor public, private? It is a little bit of both. It involves a blurry boundary.

However, as we think more about this, we go back to the first two and we ask to what extent they are distinctively public or private. One thing to remember about any private sector undertaking, and this is particularly the case in the financial sector, is that there is a significant public role in even a private undertaking. These days we talk a lot about stakeholders. Certainly, as a large financial institution in the financial sector, your stakeholders include the government, which is responsible for maintaining financial stability, and a viable financial sector. Of course, the public sector is also your regulators. Different sectors vary but certainly we would agree that the banking sector is a heavily regulated sector. How Wells Fargo operates is significantly determined by both the public sector stakeholders as well as the public sector regulators that are involved in banking.

Let's think about the bridge a little bit more. It is true that it is a public sector bridge, owned and operated by the county government. On the other hand, it does have customers, and not just the citizens who drive across it every day. You may notice that it is an elevating bridge, so it has paying customers in the form of boats that go underneath it, so it has a kind of customer base. It also has a lot of private partners. Although the county oversees maintenance and operation, the practice of that maintenance operation is of course contracted out to companies, businesses,

and private partners who are responsible for actually conducting that maintenance. This picture shows, it seems to me, that there is a lot to be said about the blurry boundaries. There is the obviously blurred harbor front marina, and then there is the seemingly straightforward, private versus public sector undertakings, but which nonetheless have a significant public and private sector participation in them. I think this is where this idea of the blurred boundaries comes from, that it is very difficult to identify, these days, a distinctive public or private undertaking. Therefore, the question arises about what this means and how does this imply changes in local government or any level of government management.

What I want to focus on are these three parts of the story. First of all, I want to look at the “what” questions. What exactly do we mean by the blurred boundary? It is easy to say it is there but thinking about what that means in terms of places where the boundary is more or less blurred, where the public-private sector role is greater, the dynamics and the durability of that relationship it seems to me requires a lot of careful thought. Then I want to talk a little bit about why this is happening. What has been the historical evolution of the blurring of the boundary between public and private sectors and, importantly, based on that history, what does that tell us about the future? What can we expect and what are we already seeing emerge in terms of new trends in the boundary between public and private sector? And then I am going to finish with a discussion about the sorts of tools that people operating in public policy, public management, public administration, especially at the local level, need to keep in mind if we assume they are going to be managing along a blurred boundary for the foreseeable future.

What Is the Blurred Boundary?

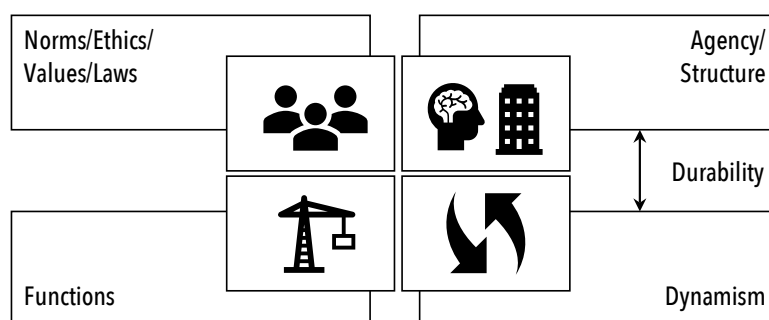
What is this blurred boundary and, in particular, how do we measure this concept? What is the concept of the blurred boundary? How might we measure it? Where does it vary? Where do we find a blurred boundary that is more intensive, more durable? Where do we find the blurred boundary that is less intensive, less durable? And why does this matter? These are the kinds of “what” questions, and I think it is worthwhile to spend a little time to think about what we are talking about when we talk about the blurred boundary.

Defining the Blurred Boundary

I am not going to cite literature here, but I will just let you know that as I prepared this talk, I looked quite extensively into three types of literature. One is the academic literature that has been written about the blurred boundary of public and private affairs. The academic literature, to some extent, is very concerned about the intrusion of the private sector into the public sector. Another set of literature I

looked at was literature coming out of international organizations such as the IMF, such as the OECD, such as the Asian Development Bank, and maybe the International Finance Corporation in the World Bank, some of these international institutions as well as private international institutions like the Center for Public Enterprise. Their emphasis has been more upon the question of how the public sector is intruding on the private sector, and what are the risks to the private sector of this blurred boundary. It is very interesting to see the two literatures focusing on sort of a different question and a risk to one sector or the other. Academics tend to worry about the integrity of the public sector and international institutions and think tanks tend to worry about the integrity of the private sector. The third set of literature I looked at was what I would call the practitioner literature. This covers NGOs involved in aid. There are very interesting summary documents produced by the British Aid Agency where they got together all the NGOs involved in development aid overseas and had a conference, essentially on what they are experiencing in terms of this blurred boundary of public and private affairs in the places they operate. The practitioner literature is not so concerned about protecting the public sector or protecting the private sector, it is more dealing with problem solving. What are some practical tools that managers, whether in nonprofits or in government, need to be aware of as they enter into sectors, whether it is health sector, education sector, social policy sector, transport infrastructure sector, where public and private sector actors are pervasive and integrated? Academic literature, international institution literature, and practitioner literature, and trying to draw this together. No footnotes, but that is kind of where this is coming from if you are wondering what I am drawing upon for these insights.

Figure 3.2 Characteristics of the Blurred Boundary



What is the blurred boundary? I define the blurred boundary as a codependency between public and private sectors, codependency meaning mutually dependent relationships between public and private sectors characterized by four

things (Figure 3.2). One of these is what I would call an overlap or intrusion of normative understandings between public and private sectors. For instance, there is value in transit-oriented development. Transit-oriented development is when a transit project like a light rail line is developed with the real estate along the line, and the real estate along the line helps to fund the development of the line itself, certainly the plan for the Khon Kaen light rail and elsewhere, as well. If there is a value, such as the value in transit-oriented development, that is shared between public and private sectors, perhaps for different reasons. The private sector may see this as a statement about economic value whereas the public sector may see this as a statement about public value, but nonetheless, both of them attaching normative significance to something. That is one of the features of codependency, that codependency arises because, for some fundamental reason, there is an overlap or intrusion or sharing of ethical orientations. This is actually when early theorists in ethics and public policy started thinking about the blurred boundary in the 1970s. They began with this ethical question.

Michael Walzer, a famous political philosopher at Harvard, in his book *Spheres of Justice*, argued that there are different spheres of justice in different aspects of public life and private life and social life. Each of them operates according to a different set of ethical criteria (Walzer, 1983). What he talked about in that book is what happens when the ethics or norms of one sector intruded into another sector. Sometimes that was good, sometimes that was bad. But this whole idea of blurring boundaries between public and private sectors actually began with an analysis of blurring ethical boundaries, blurring laws may be the consequence of this, but more fundamentally of ethics, values, and norms. If the private sector values of efficiency and value for money intrude into the public sector, which then restructures its public services in terms of measurable value, even profitability, there is an example of that normative codependency, and the result of that tends to be some form of actual institutionalization. That would be then the second aspect of the codependency, what I would call the functional aspect.

This is a codependency between public and private sectors that is a functional need or practical in fiscal, organizational, technical, managerial, legal information that could go on. Most people, when you ask them what they mean by the blurred boundary, will think of it in this functional sense. What they mean is practical overlap of the operations of public and private sectors. It can be fiscal, the two sides can be jointly contributing to the cost of a public service; it may be organizational, they may have a shared structure through which they carry out a public project; it may be technical in the sense that the public sector is always drawing upon the technical resources of the private sector—we have certainly seen that during COVID—and

other ways in which public and private sectors become integrated at a practical or functional level. You may have thought, “So that is what we are talking about.” The example I give is that the government can acquire the land we need. If a private sector undertaking requires land acquisition in order to pursue a project or an interest of that private sector entity, it may find that the land acquisition requires government action. This may be because it is a form of land that is not on the market, maybe because it is a form of land that is distributed about many owners and requires some form of eminent domain legislation or organizational mobilization by the public sector to bring owners together, all kinds of reasons. This is just an example of a functional codependency. By the same token, those types of eminent domain or public sector action to, in this instance, acquire land, would need to be motivated by some preexisting or necessary sharing of normative or ethical orientations, i.e., the project that the private sector wants to undertake is one that the public sector agrees is ethically normatively valuable.

That is what I would think about in terms of the codependency of norms and values that then spills over into a codependency at the functional level. Then I would add two more descriptive aspects to this concept. One of them is the distinction between agency and structure. I think this is something that is important to keep in mind, especially for public sector managers. This is a codependency between public and private sectors that may be intentional or it may be unintentional. When the public sector decides to contract out a public service to a private sector contractor, that is an intentional codependency and that is an example of agency. But there has been an act of agency, an intentional act to bring about a codependency. I would say much, if not most, of the blurring of the boundary between public and private sectors has resulted because of unintended causes, meaning a lack of agency but a cause relating to structures. For example, that company is the only pre-approved supplier of what...N95 masks maybe? The public sector may find itself in a situation of dependency on the private sector, not because it chooses to do that but because certain structures, perhaps the regulation and approval of masks, may have led to the elimination of all but a single supplier. In that case, you have a codependency which is unintended but nonetheless just as robust in terms of functional dependency and just as robust in terms of normative and ethical orientations. Partly related to that second criteria, this is a codependency that may be formalized or may be informal. If you form a public-private partnership, obviously you are undertaking a formal blurring of public and private sectors. However, I would say, for the most part, public and private sector functional codependency, especially the codependency, which is unintended and tends to operate through informal organizational forms, meaning you will look in vain for a formal agreement

by which the two parties contract. This is important because it is one of the aspects of the durability and the definingness of that boundary, which is obviously going to be stronger the more that this codependency is intended and formalized. The more that it is unintended and informal, the less durable it is going to be.

Related to this, I would add a fourth factor. Maybe this is related to agency in structure, but I just want to pull it out separately because I think, as a practical management issue, this is important. A blurred boundary is a codependency between public and private sectors that is constantly changing in time and it varies by place and by sector. Perhaps this talk should have been called the *Blurring Boundaries of Public and Private Affairs in the 21st Century* because, in fact, there are many boundaries, and each boundary itself is in constant flux. It may be useful in one place, like Khon Kaen, to create a public-private partnership in order to build a light rail. However, down in Bangkok, the government may have decided that light rail and public transit generally is going to be completely in the public sector. Moreover, the Khon Kaen Model may evolve over time towards a purely private sector model, that Bangkok railways overtime may evolve into a public-private partnership. So, dynamism is important to the blurred boundary.

I give this example of saying the public sector is getting out of this service area. We constantly see churn and change in the services and functional areas that the public sector is involved in. I just had an example of this pop into my life before I came here, as my wife works for the Regional Governance Agency in Portland, and they are responsible for the Oregon Zoo, where all our cute, fuzzy creatures live. Obviously, the zoo is a great example of a blurred boundary because it is on the one hand a public institution, it has a large private sector component in terms of contracting and services, it obviously has a very large client base of paying customers, and it obviously also draws heavily upon relationships with both public and private zoos in other parts of the world. The question has always arisen if the public sector should be in the business of running zoos. Many places in the United States and elsewhere have decided to get out of the business of zoos.

So, to the extent that we see that dynamic public sector changing its mission, the private sector changing its evaluation of projects that it wants to be involved in, and we should expect that boundary in the public-private sector in whatever we are looking at, health, education, transport, social policy, to be one that is constantly changing. Those last two are what I said has to do with durability of the blurred boundary depending both on the extent to which there is agency and structure involved, the more agency and the more structure, the more durable. Also, the extent to which the mission statement, so to speak, of public and private sectors are

themselves changing, and obviously the more they are the more that boundary will be changing as well.

Measuring the Blurred Boundary

I said I would talk about measurement, and this is really just a conceptual way to think about measurements. All I have done is taken these four aspects of the blurred boundary — norms, function, agency structure, and dynamism. Those last two I have combined into this concept of durability, so we have three dimensions of the concept on the top. Then, when we are talking about measurement, what we would be doing is somehow measuring the degree of the presence of these things in a given sector, in a given place, at a given time. For illustrative purposes, imagine we have four sectors we are looking at; healthcare, transportation, education, and security, and we are asking to what extent is there a codependency, which is to say a blurred boundary between public and private sectors in this particular sector. I did not do a measurement, but I think this is what you would be trying to achieve with the measurement if you were doing this. You would want to measure the degree of normative codependency, shared orientations. In health care, that is very high, of course, because health care providers in the public and private sectors share a very clear orientation about health care outcomes. Even though one is profit driven and one is not, normative ethical orientations are very strong.

Functionally, the health care sector, again, is a great example of where there is a high degree of functional interdependence. There is no healthcare system in the world that does not have a very high degree of private sector participation. Likewise, there is no health sector in the world does not have a very high degree of public participation and spending. My students are always surprised when I tell them that public sector spending on healthcare in the United States and Canada are more or less the same even though Canada has a single payer public health system and the United States has a private system. Functionally, it turns out that the public sector contributes just as much and is just as much involved as the private sector in the United States as it is in Canada. Durability, as I said, is to what extent is this in flux, to what extent is this something that comes into being but then is quickly abandoned when circumstances change. To what extent is this codependency that is so deeply entrenched in the normative and functional needs of that sector that it survives and becomes institutionalized through formal structures and through an intent and intention to maintain precisely that sort of mixed public-private organizational structure. Again, I think healthcare is an example where durability is very high. Somehow you would want to aggregate that up and say OK, the blurred boundary is very high. It is very significant in the healthcare sector.

Again, just for illustrative purposes, you could look at transportation and say normatively a little less with functional because we do see truly distinctive public versus private transportation undertakings. As I said, the Hawthorne Bridge across Portland is basically a public sector undertaking; it does not have a lot of functional dependence on the private sector and durability might be slightly less. Then education even a little bit less. Then I look at security, where you may have a very high degree of normative congruence between public and private sectors. This may be external security, this may be domestic security, but where often for reasons of protecting the integrity of public security, functional dependence is often very distinct and quite intentionally separated. So, we make sure that private sector contractors and security guards do not have access to public sector policing and defense information. That itself is a risk, so we have it quite intentional and indeed structured de-dependence, and so durability is therefore lower and also changes with time. That is the way I would think about conceptualizing and then measuring the blurred boundary, in this case using cross-sectoral variation. You could obviously use cross-time variation, and you could also use cross-jurisdictional variation.

To what extent is the boundary between public and private sectors more blurred in Thailand than it is in Malaysia? Cross-jurisdictional; to what extent is that boundary more blurred in contemporary Thailand's healthcare sector than it was in Thailand's healthcare sector 20 years ago? Cross-sectoral; to what extent is that boundary more blurred in Thailand's health sector than it is in Thailand's education sector? So, lots of ways of thinking about measurement strategies and how you choose the units of analysis that you are going to use in those measurement strategies. It depends what you are interested in.

Here is just a recent piece of analysis done by McKinsey Global Institute. They are very interesting on public and private partnerships and public and private affairs. I encourage you to go to the McKinsey Global Institute website. There is a wealth of great information. They operate mainly for private sector clients and public sector clients that have private sector partners, so they are very informed about this public-private relationship. In one of their recent reports, they are looking at the concept of smart city apps and asking whether they are public? Are they private? Which dimensions of this would we consider mainly public and which dimensions of this would we consider mainly private? They looked at a series of sectors in which there are smart city apps available: energy, water, waste utilities, public transport, and hospitals. They did not include autonomous vehicles, but maybe that is going to come in the next wave of analysis. It is very interesting when they look at different aspects of the codependency. I would consider these three types of functional codependency, so that second of my four dimensions is what they are looking at.

One of them is looking at ownership in terms of the share of applications, the share of apps. Where is the ownership? Ownership is obviously a fundamental way of thinking about if is this public sector or private sector. Most natural owners, they think, will be found in the public sector over time. A 70-30 split is their estimate of the share of applications that will be held in public sector versus held in the private sector.

On the other hand, ownership is not the same as investment. When they look at investment, which is to say where the funding is coming from, they see that the share of investment that is accounted for by the private sector is more significant than that by the public sector. In terms of number of applications, most applications are publicly owned. But most of the money in that 30% that is held by the private sector is accounting for 60% of the investment. Maybe that is not surprising. The public sector will be left with applications which maybe do not attract much finance. Indeed, maybe that is why they are in the private sector. Maybe waste utility management apps do not really have much of a return, so the private sector avoids them. The private sector goes to the smaller number of apps with higher returns. The result of this is investment in smart city apps tends to be split 60-40, private versus public.

Regarding public ownership return on investment. Practically half of the apps have no direct financial return, which is to say they are essentially money losing or money neutral investments. 55% would have a positive financial return. Even 55% seems high because one would assume that those with positive financial returns would attract more private sector ownership. The point of that is that as we move from simply measuring the number of apps, where most of them look like they are public, you would say that smart city apps are largely a public sector undertaking with a small private sector contribution. You look at the actual amount of money, which is probably a measure of users and significance, then we see this as more of a private sector undertaking with some public sector participation. When we unpack that public sector participation segment, we see that part of the reason why the public sector becomes smaller is because a lot of these apps are essentially ones where, I would say, that the normative codependency is missing, meaning these are apps that are seen by the public sector as having value but are not seen by the private sector as having value.

This is just example of different functional codependencies between public and private sectors and one of the consequences of those different dependencies. The reason we like to look at money, the reason we like to follow the money when we study public and private sectors, is it tells us something deeper about the degree to which public and private sector values overlap.

Result of the Blurred Boundary: Opportunity, Process, and Impact

Finally, in this section, I want to look at the results of the blurred boundary and I want to use three concepts: opportunity, process, and impact. This is basically a way of thinking about what the blurred boundary means in practical terms if you are a public sector manager. It does three things: it reshapes your opportunities as a public sector manager; it reshapes how you go about governing day-to-day public management; and it impacts the outcomes you get. I was talking about opportunities and the reasons for thinking about why this blurred boundary matters. It expands the scope for public services that is the fundamental driver from the public sector perspective. I think capacity building is related but not the same. Scope for public services means there is an immediate public need, such as the need to expand transport infrastructure or the need to improve hospital management, where the public sector can draw upon the resources of the private sector. By capacity building, I mean in terms of future projects. One of the interesting things that we have discovered in looking at public-private sector relationships is although the private sector is generally quite aware of the public sector, the public sector is often quite ignorant of the private sector—its own local private sector. I had a student who went to work in the aid business and was in Africa. When she landed in the country she was working in and was given a mandate to think about providing clean water, providing medical services, and education, realized that their organization had no idea who were the private sector providers of some of these things. They had no list; they had no assessment of private sector capacity. So, one of the things that the blurred boundary does is not just in terms of the immediate scope for public services, but the public sector's capacity building for the provision of the future services or new services. This is like a capacity building side of this.

Likewise, for the private sector in terms of making itself aware of how it can leverage public sector resources to expand private sector projects. For instance, I talked about land acquisition. Public sector nodality and values is a process issue. As I said, one of the main concerns in the academic literature and in some of the development literature is what happens to the public sector when this boundary starts to blur? Is the public sector at risk? Are public sector values at risk if suddenly private sector values intrude? Does the public sector get hollowed out? I would say that this question of nodality, meaning the extent to which the public sector retains its central place as well as values, the extent to which public sector values remain distinct, is a really key process issue with the public-private boundary. I think the fears are largely overblown and I think if anything we have seen a reassertion of public sector nodality and values, especially since COVID. The second thing in terms of process, obviously, is public sector efficiency. This is maybe just your standard

New Public Management perspective, but I do think it's important to remind ourselves that the more there is a sharing of values between public and private sectors, the more that it is natural to expect the public sector become more efficient precisely because it is codependent on a sector that we know has to be efficient in order to survive.

Finally, and this is really just obvious and I am not inventing anything new here, but impact is the fundamental thing we are concerned about; costs and benefits for stakeholders. Does the blurred boundary create better outcomes or better public value than sectors or instances where the boundary is not blurred, where the public sector operates distinctly and separately from the private sector? That is just the standard kind of policy evaluation or program evaluation question. But we always have to step outside of the policy and administration box to think about political and social impacts, which may not be captured in standard cost benefit analysis. Political impacts arise typically where the blurred boundary has caused a problem. This may be because of corruption; this may be because of perceptions of favoritism; this may be because there is a failure and the failure in the private sector spills over into the public sector because the public sector has been in some codependency relationship with the private sector. When private undertakings fail and implicate public money, then this has political implications and likewise social implications of the public and private sectors. There is a very rich discussion in the business literature about what it means for entrepreneurship in the private sector if entrepreneurship depends very heavily on the need to build relationships and contacts in the public sector. What does this do to sort of social innovation? What does this do to social opportunity, especially when access to that public sector network is selective and not open access? This is the open access system versus the closed access system that some scholars believe is a really central part of how societies succeed or fail.

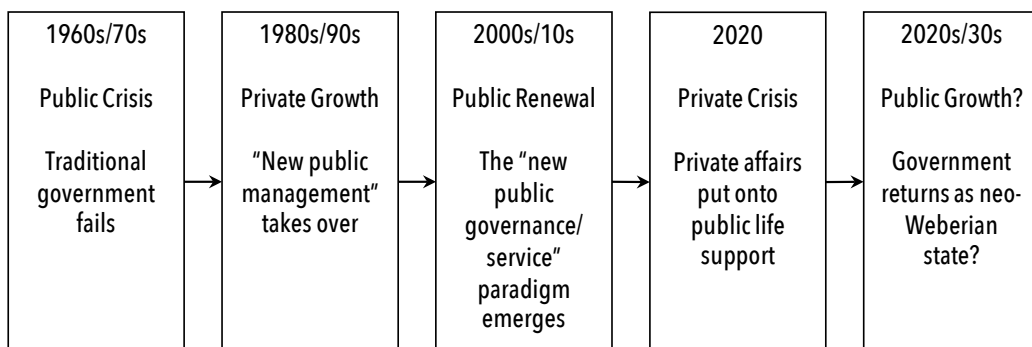
The Case of New Clark City, the Philippines

I want to just talk briefly about one example of a very interesting blurred boundary, and it is called New Clark City. It is the new town being built on the former Clark Air Force Base north of Manila. In Manila Bay and the boundaries of Metro Manila. Metro Manila, as in most rapidly urbanizing Asian countries, is teeming and stuffed to the gills. It has long since reached its capacity and is suffering from a lot of efficiency problems. Like most governments, the government of the Philippines is trying to deconcentrate urban growth. In the case of the Metro Manila area, they have developed this New Clark City idea. It is under construction right now; it is kind of half built. It is about an hour's north of Manila. They just signed a major contract to build a high-speed rail between Manila and New Clark City. New Clark City is expected to have about two million people when it reaches capacity in

a few years. It is a very interesting case study in public-private partnerships but, more broadly, not just the formalized and intentional public-private partnerships but also the non-intentional public-private partnerships because of the number of actors involved in this.

New Clark City is interesting for me because it is a great example of all four of those things I have talked about. There is a lot of normative congruence between public and private sectors; infrastructuralism is the concept that is used to describe this. Private and public sectors share an infrastructuralist orientation. There is obviously a lot of functional integration as that video shows. ADB, the base's conversion authority is the public sector authority overseeing this. And there is a lot of villager advocate issues going on because it is the Philippines, but that is the social participatory side. There is an interesting question of agency and structure because there is not a local government yet in New Clark City. It is a planned city that has not actually been populated and therefore governed at the local level yet, so the structures are changing rapidly. This is not just a blurred boundary across sectors and with multiple agents as it develops. This is what I would say is the dynamic aspect of New Clark City, that the public and private boundary is changing because new public and private actors are coming along as the city moves to different stages of development. So, it is a very interesting illustration of this dynamic normative functional and agency structure blurred boundary.

Figure 3.3 Timeline of the Blurred Boundary



Why Is the Blurred Boundary?

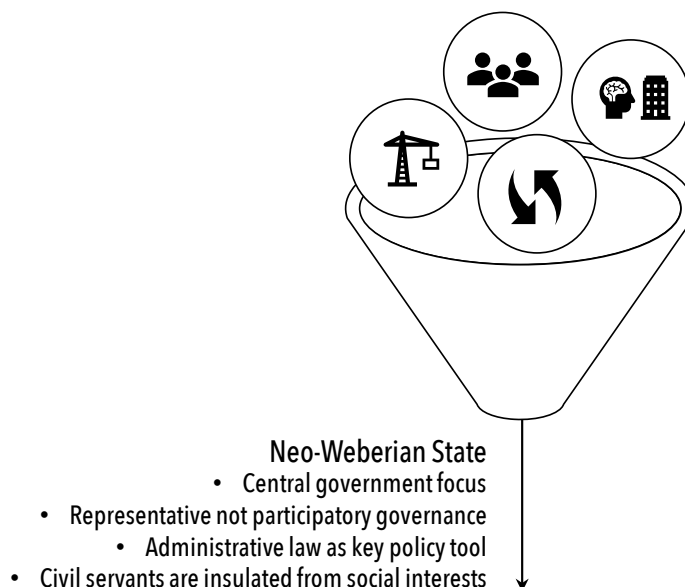
Where did this blurred boundary come from? The blurred boundary came about because way back in 1689, John Locke told us that there was such a thing as the private sector. People tend to think that, but the story of the blurred boundary of the public and private sector has been about the emergence of government into the sort of state of nature of the private sector. Actually, the state of nature and

human society is the public sector. Public authority is the state of nature and private life has only arisen very recently in human societies; distinctively private, with its own set of norms and its own functional capabilities. So, we have to remember that the default in human societies is the public sector. Then, over time, what we have had in the evolution of the blurred boundary is, what I would say, are these five phases (Figure 3.3). First of all, the crisis of public authority in the 1960s and 1970s, which is where the private sector first started to make inroads into the public sector. Then this gave rise to real expansion of private growth in public affairs in the 1980s. We call this New Public Management. This was followed in the early 2000s and 2010s by the public renewal, the renewal of the public space, and this is, I think, where we really started to use this language of blurred boundary as New Public Governance emerged as an alternative to New Public Management. So now it was a more rebalanced public and private sector relationship. I think that 2020 is a turning point, because 2020 has been a confluence of several crises, not just COVID and an economic crisis, but I think also issues of climate change and population growth in developing countries have created a crisis for the private sector. A lot of them are on public life support right now, so I think this is actually bringing about what scholars in Europe are describing as the Neo-Weberian state (Figure 3.4). The Neo-Weberian state is a way of thinking about public and private relationships in which the public sector has kind of regained its dominance in the boundary between public and private affairs. It is back in the driver's seat, so to speak. One of the things that I think is important to keep in mind is that we've always thought it is in the driver's seat in many developing countries. Certainly, the story of governance in Asia has been the Neo-Weberian state, which has never been pushed aside. But I think now in Europe and even in the United States, we see this resurgence of what is a kind of the Neo-Weberian state. Think about this transformation. In 1970 in Kuala Lumpur, there was a government industrial school, a straightforward government undertaking. After the rise of the private sector, there are comprehensive secondary schools with public and private money. Again, it is Kuala Lumpur just for comparison, but what I would say is what is happened in 2020, what has happened to the education sector since COVID hit, is a rapid reassertion of public authority and public regulation over the private sector. This idea of the Neo-Weberian state is the public sector regaining its role, the blurred boundary being pushed more back towards the expansion of the public sector, and the public sector having a much greater ability to shape and control the boundary between the two.

So, central governments are back in vogue. Some of you may remember the 1990s, when it was all about decentralization. I think the decentralization days are over. I think we are back to central governments as the leading authorities.

Participatory governance, I think, is on the out. I think that New Clark City is very interesting because if that project was being developed even just ten years ago, there would have been a big focus on participatory governance of the development of that town. There is no discussion of that coming out of the ADB anymore, even out of the World Bank. The focus is on putting in place representative institutions when the time is right. Administrative law is back in focus. This is the policy tool we thought was out of focus and out of vogue. Administrative law is again a very powerful and pervasive tool during the COVID era, and I think this will carry on. New Clark City has been developed through a series of administrative mandates, for the most part. Finally, an installation of civil servants from societal interests that is Max Weber's whole idea of bureaucracy as a distinctive kind of social group, almost a distinctive ethnicity, is coming back, I think as part of this Neo-Weberian state.

Figure 3.4 The Neo-Weberian State



What Tools Will Help Public Managers?

Finally, a few questions on tools. I think the issue that most people in the public sector will raise when we talk about the blurred boundary is what is my risk? I think risk is, indeed, the problem here because the accountability models in the public and private sector are very different. In the private sector, the accountability model puts an emphasis on operational risks and demand risks, meaning you want to make sure the project has sufficient demand. Those smart city apps that the private sector is investing in are the ones they are investing in because there is a perception

of demand. If those demand estimates prove to be wrong, too high, there is a demand risk. Then there is an operational risk, especially when you are working in the public sector. The private sector is very shy of public-private partnerships. The main story of public-private partnerships is the extent to which they have not taken off as expected. The main reason for that is that the private sector is afraid of the operational complexities of having to deal with public sector mandates, public sector rules, public sector contracting requirements, and what not. The two of them share financial and legal risks. Obviously financial; they both have money in the game; they both have resources in the game is a better way of putting that. Both of them face legal risks, different types of legal risks, but equal. Then, from the public sector perspective, it is mainly a question of political and policy risks, which is to say the risks of projects— look at New Clark City. What if New Clark City proves to not generate sufficient demand from private sector partners? What if nobody moves there? The developing world is littered with ghost towns that were developed as model cities and did not attract population. That creates a policy risk. Then there is, of course, political risk for the public sector when it is doing work with the private sector. This is the issue of capture, the issue of corruption, the issue of taking the political fall for private sector mismanagement. So, risk management is a big part of the tools that public sector managers need.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude with these four ideas. Again, I am generalizing from the literature I am seeing in the practitioner and the development community. Best practices in public and private affairs are really where most of the discussion is taking place. How do you manage those risks? How do you create processes which attract the private sector? How do you do contracting? These are the sort of public administration issues that are dealt with all the time, but with a specific focus here on private sector interactions. Secondly, remember, because of dynamism, that a public-private partnership maybe institutionalized in a single legal body but it is still going to be dynamic. Simply being institutionalized does not mean it does not change. Learning and growth is important. Third, communication and assessment. Is the program working at the boundary? There may be a growing number of instances – this is why I think of a kind of Neo-Weberian state – where either the public or the private sector decides that the blurred boundary is not working. That either the risks or the results for the private sector or the public sector are too great, and that assessment might lead to an abandonment of working in the blurred boundary; retrenchment, taking services back inside public sector, or abandoning certain services or goods to the private sector. Finally, I would say getting to know your private sector is important because in the era of COVID, and I think this is the

next little while, what we mean by the private sector is going to be in a rapid period of churn and restructuring; whole sectors are just disappearing and other whole sectors are rising, with capabilities that public sector managers need to think about. Think about this. Amazon is now the largest transportation company in the United States. Why is that? Because it suddenly found itself in a business model where transportation was a huge part of its capacity issue and it now has capabilities on transport that may have nothing to do with delivering goods to private customers but may have a lot to do with public sector needs to move people from A to B, to move public services from A to B, to respond to emergencies. This is recognizing that one of the reasons the public sector/private sector boundary is so dynamic is that the private sector itself, above all, and especially right now, is in a period of rapid flux.

With that, I will say thank you.

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This lecture is available
on YouTube at:
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4

Policy Research and Policy Analysis Methods: The Role of Academia in Policy Making

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I understand that you would like me to talk about our experience as an academic institution working in the applied public policy work. It is not something we teach academically, but policy analysis is something we've been doing in practice for 20 years. So I just wanted to let you know that is how I am going to approach this topic. I will share with you our experience and also tell you a little bit about the context so that you will decide for yourself if that experience is relevant for you or if you can learn from it. I wanted to give some structure to this talk.

First I will tell you more about our institution, the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies (AYSPS), and then I will cover three separate themes related to applied policy work. One is the difference between the practice of policy work as opposed to academic research. Then I will talk about program evaluation as a natural entry point for academics into the policy application. Finally I will talk a little bit about the art of communicating our research to non-academics, say to decision-makers.

About the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies

Background

I am a faculty member, actually a research faculty member, at the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies (AYSPS). The Andrew Young School is one of twelve colleges that we have at Georgia State University. The university, itself, was established more than a hundred years ago but the policy school is quite young. It

was established in 1997 and it was named after Ambassador Andrew Young. I think we are very fortunate to be affiliated with Ambassador Young. He has a long and distinguished career in public service, which started in the civil rights movement alongside Martin Luther King and then he was the first African-American to be elected to the US Congress from the Deep South. Later he was appointed as an ambassador to the United Nations, representing the United States. After that he served as the mayor of Atlanta, where our university is located, for two consecutive terms, and these days he's still very much involved in policy work. He leads a not-for-profit foundation that is very active throughout the world doing social entrepreneurship and he also very involved in our institution.

So now you know a little bit more about the name of our school. Even though the school was established only 20 years ago, since that time it has climbed the rankings pretty fast. These days it is ranked among the top ten in various areas of public policy. It is number five in public finance and budgeting and also ranks among the top ten in other areas such as urban studies and so on. In particular, the school houses a number of policy research centers that focus on policy reform areas in the United States and also throughout the world. Over the years, our faculty has worked in more than 60 countries on various reforms related to the public sector.

AYSPS Academic Departments

The school is comprised of academic departments that are related to public policy. These departments offer classes and award degrees. We have five academic departments; economics, public management and policy, urban studies, social work, and criminal justice. So, as you see, all are in some way related to public policy. Actually, these academic departments predate the creation of the school. Before that, if you go back 20 years, all these departments were scattered around different colleges. So, my Department of Economics was housed at the College of Business. The Department of Public Policy was at the College of Arts and Science. One day somebody got the vision to bring all these departments dealing with public policy under one roof and allow for synergy and cross-fertilization among all the disciplines. So, again, I am affiliated with Department of Economics; that is my background. But I often collaborate with my colleagues from other departments, in particular from public management and policy. I understand that is the area which is closer to you but they also work with other departments

AYSPS Research Centers

In addition to academic departments that are involved in teaching, we also have a dozen research centers. Research centers are involved in applied policy work. They are not involved with teaching, they have nothing to do with classes, but all

they do is applied work. Often, they engage faculty from the departments, but also, they have a lot of research associates that are not involved in teaching at all but all they do is research. Out of these 10 or 11 research centers, there are three which are clustered together under the name of the Public Finance Research Cluster. All these centers have something to do with public finance, with budgeting. The first one is the Fiscal Research Center. Actually, the Fiscal Research Center is kind of an outsourced office of the state government because they conduct a lot of analysis which is legally required by the state. For example, by law, every bill, before it can be deliberated in the State Assembly, has to be accompanied with a fiscal note and the fiscal note makes an assessment of whether this bill will have a fiscal impact, whether it will lead to increasing taxes or whether it will require certain expenditure commitments for the state government. That is the legal requirement. Technically, the state government could have developed capacities to do that in-house, but at that time the decision was made that they do not want to have this kind of capacity. They would rather have a contract or outsource it to Georgia State University, which is a state institution anyway. Since that time, the Fiscal Research Center has been responsible for a number of analyses which are legally required. Another one, the state forecaster that is housed in the Fiscal Research Center, provides a forecast for the budgeting process at the state level.

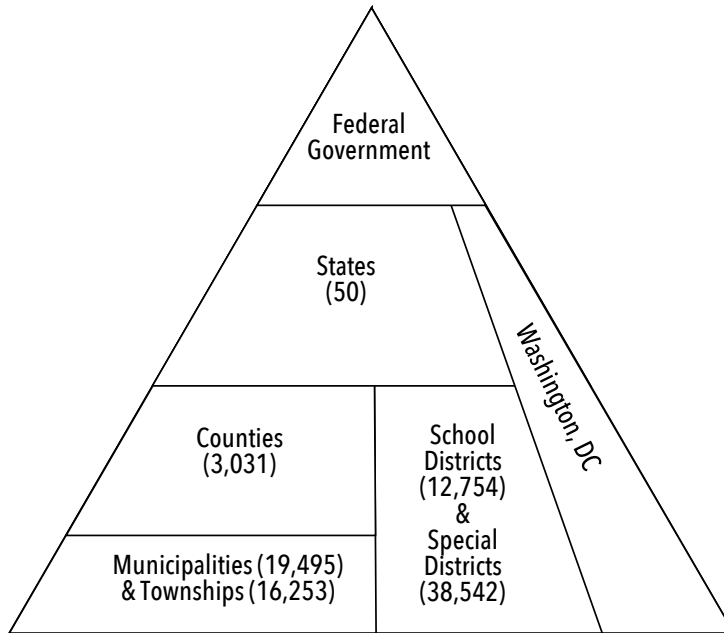
The second center, the Center for State and Local Finance. It also focuses on domestic issues. It works with various domestic government agencies, state, local, and some federal. But its research agenda is more fluid. For some projects, they are approached by various state and local agencies who ask for their assistance to research issues, to make an assessment. But sometimes the Center decides to conduct certain research because it is of general interest. Maybe in their work with the state government they would like to know more about the experience of other states and therefore they decided to undertake a study of a best practice on something like forecasting.

Finally, the last of the three centers is my center, the International Center for Public Policy. We pretty much do the same kind of analysis as the first two centers except that we do them outside the United States. So we are often approached by foreign governments, national, state, and local, to help them with technical assistance or with capacity-building training. At the back end, there is a lot of synergy. So we do same research, we might use the same databases, we might use the same researchers as the domestic centers.

We also have other research centers with deal with non-fiscal aspects, such as Georgia Health Policy Center. Usury Workplace Research Group deals with labor policies. Georgia Policy Labs deal with education policies. Nonprofit Studies

Program deals with NGOs. Urban Studies Institute deals with urban issues and there are other centers which deal with law enforcement.

Figure 4.1 US Structure of Government (2017) (Illustration: Grichawat Lowatcharin)



Subnational Government Structure

Since I am going to refer to our experience working in the United States, I just want to make sure that you have some general idea about the structure of government in the United States (Figure 4.1). You probably know that United States is a federal country. At the top we have one federal government. Then we have 50 states that used to be separate and, at some point, they each joined the union. Then, within states, we have different kinds of local governments, and so what is peculiar to the United States is that the local governments are creatures of the states. There is nothing in the Federal Constitution that talks about local governments, and so each state decides on the structure and functions and scope of their local governments. Each state is divided into jurisdictions, which are generally called counties, probably something like your districts. They can have different names in different states. In some states they are called parishes and in others they are called boroughs. But no matter wherever you are in the United States, you are in a county. Right now, I am in Fulton County, but in addition to having a county government, some parts of the county might also have a municipal government basically, any part of the county can decide to incorporate, meaning that they would have to raise additional revenue, pay additional taxes, and then they would have additional services.

Where I am right now, in the in the City of Atlanta, means that I pay more taxes than somebody who lives just 20 km south, who would be just outside the city limits. He would pay taxes to the county but would not pay taxes to the city but would also not receive any services from the City of Atlanta. In addition to these general-purpose governments like counties and townships, we have special local governments just for one function like for education or for fire protection. They have an elected representative branch, they have an executive branch, they raise their own taxes like local government, but only do one function like schools. Over the United States, we have about ninety thousand local government units of different kinds. We at the School of Policy Studies work with all of those kinds of local governments.

International Center for Public Policy

That is the domestic side. I am moving on to my center, the International Center for Public Policy (ICePP). As I mentioned, we do pretty much what the domestic centers do. We focus on the same issues, fiscal and non-fiscal, except that we have a different geographic scope. We work outside the United States. As I mentioned, we have worked in over 60 countries over the last 20 years. I personally have worked in about 20 countries. Our domain is public policy, so generally we are ready to help with anything. If somebody approaches us for help with a particular public policy issue, we will reach out to faculty within our institution, be that budgeting or public health or law enforcement, we will reach out in-house and find the right expertise. If we do not find the right expertise in-house, we will reach out to our sister agencies at other universities in Georgia and beyond.

Since you are interested to hear how an academic institution can be engaged in a policy role, let me tell you about our *modus operandi*, how we operate. It always starts when somebody reaches out to us for help, and because we work outside United States most often, we do not know much about the context. The first thing we always do is trying to do the diagnostics, trying to understand what the problem is and what the context of the problem is. That is something that we believe strongly and something which I will reiterate throughout my talk. We think that cookie-cutter solutions just do not work. You cannot step off your plane, go to a meeting with a government, and have a solution. You always start with the diagnostics. You try to understand what the problem is, what the context is. Then you collect your data and you go home and you do some homework, some analysis. When you do your analysis, there are two kinds of analyses you can do. One is what you can do, given your time constraints, because usually when somebody ask you for assistance, they have a relatively short time frame. So, for example, now is August [2020]. If someone's asking for particular assistance, and they would like it implemented

starting in the next fiscal year starting from July 1st, that means that they want to hear something from us within three months, by December. If we give them some time to deliberate options internally and if they decide to go ahead with a certain intervention, then they will still have about six months, starting from January, in order to draft laws, bylaws, do training, change the systems, and so forth. So that is the policy that is applied. But often we realize that there is something that we do not have answers to and there is something that there's not much evidence, even in the literature. Then, we sort of make a note for ourselves that that is something we need to research deeper when we have time. This is the second kind of analysis—something that we can put on the back burner when we work on the project but then we will come back to later.

After we have done our analysis, we go back to our clients, to the beneficiary, and present the options. As part of delivery of the options, sometimes it also requires some training, then some kind of policy dialogue. So we might be able to facilitate a policy dialogue, especially if the political landscape is very fractured and so different factions do not talk to each other. So sometimes it can be helpful to be an outsider and, given that we do not have a dog in this fight and we just try to present a neutral explanation of the options and try to pursue the dialogue, and everybody knows that we do not take sides. Then finally, if it is decided that reform is going to happen, then we probably also stay involved in the evaluation.

It is in that part of the project, or sometime later, they invite us to come back and we help them evaluate, like one year later, if the intervention is working as intended. Then if something did not work as expected or some results were not achieved, that allows us to do some evaluation to try to learn lessons and that completes the circle. If something did not work, then maybe we can learn something. Then, when we go to the next project, maybe we can avoid certain mistakes or have more options to offer. So that is pretty much how we operate.

Practice of Policy Analysis

Policy Advisors as Clinicians

The next topic I would like to mention is the notion of policy advisors as clinicians. That is an idea that is not mine, but I have heard different versions of it many times in the policy circles and I think there is something to it. That is why I would like to use this analogy to highlight certain aspects of applied policy work. Basically, the idea is that doing applied policy work is pretty similar to, say, practicing medicine in the sense that economies or governments are very complicated systems just like human bodies are very complicated. Human bodies need the proper functioning of the nervous system, cardiovascular system, respiratory system in order

to perform, as does a national economy, or a local economy, or a government system. If one system fails, that can lead to cascading problems to others.

That is important because, just like in medicine when a person comes with a certain medical emergency and you look at them, there can be many things that is wrong. He might have high cholesterol and be overweight and he's smoking. So, he might have all those things, but you need to focus on the issue which is the root cause of the problem or the condition that he presented right now. The same with national economies or local economies. It is a complicated system and there are a lot of things that need to work properly; energy, transport, finance, labor, and at any given time you can find problems. For example, here in the United States you can find a lot of issues, like we do not have a Value Added Tax. Every country in the world has a Value Added Tax. We do not. But it does not mean that we should stop everything and try to get a Value Added Tax. So basically, even though there could be many issues, you need to focus on the underlying cause of the condition you are trying to address.

A related observation is that the same kind of symptom might have very different underlying causes. Different causes require different remedies and that is another reason why cookie cutter solutions do not work. You have to pinpoint which problem, which underlying issue, is behind a particular problem. If you have unemployment, there can be many, many reasons why, and for different causes you will need different kinds of reforms. You have to pin-point which of those problems are binding constraints and which really do not matter right now because there are other things that need to be fixed first. What is important is that sometimes it is impossible to identify one single cause. There can be many causes and we can rule out many them, but at the end of the day we can still end up with several possibilities. These possible causes might require very different treatments, remedies. Then you have to do what is called “differential diagnosis,” and you might have to continue with that differential diagnosis. You say it could be one of the two, I do not know which one, and they require separate treatments. But if it is the first one and it is not treated immediately, there is going to be a major crisis very soon. I will start treating that one because the other one can wait. I will start treating the first one and I will see if it does not have an effect...it does not lead to improvement. If not, maybe it is not this one, maybe it is the other one, and then I switch. So that is called differential diagnosis and that is pretty much the way to do it.

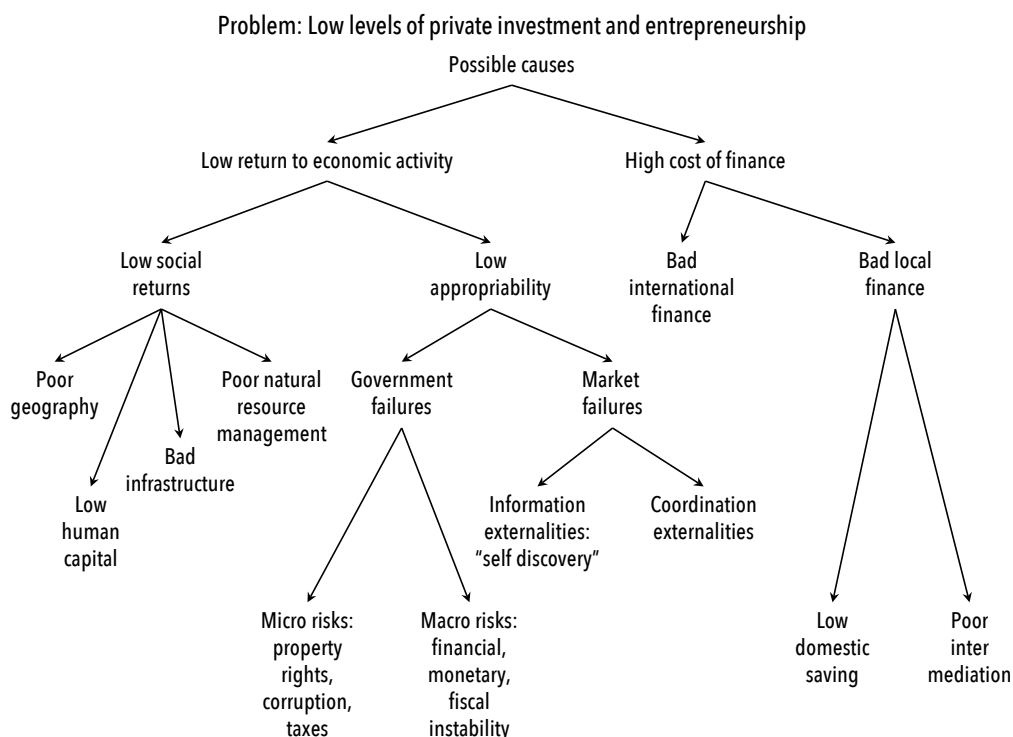
Another important analogy with the medical field is that you have to consider the family ties. When a doctor has a patient, he has to ask if the patient has heart problems in the family, he asks about the overall situation in the family because all that is important for many reasons. One is that it can help with the diagnosis, but it

can also help you to choose the right remedy, the kind of remedy which would be feasible and something that the patient can sustain. To use a medical example, if you have a person who may be a single mother and she has a nervous breakdown because she is overwhelmed. She has to wake up early in the morning and go to the market and sell something so that she has money to come back feed the children before they can go to school. Then she has to stay up until late and she only gets couple of hours of sleep, and, as a result, she has a nervous breakdown. If you give her advice that she needs to take a break, it is not very useful advice because in her family situation that does not work. So, you have to come up with the remedy that is feasible in her circumstances, i.e., for the particular patient. It is the same in our field when you consider a form of policy intervention. You should consider what can work in these particular circumstances, and that could be the circumstances of this country in terms of the political situation, socioeconomic situation, and so on. It could also be a more regional issue. Maybe they have a lot of refugees or maybe something else you have to consider. That is very important. I had a personal experience when I was working in a Middle Eastern country and they had social unrest that arose because of a policy proposal that originated in the project I was working. It was not my component so I had nothing to do with it, but there was a riot and the whole country was locked down. I could not travel there for several months because of the security situation. So that is important. That is another illustration of why you cannot just offer cookie cutter solutions. Everything has to be tailored specifically to a particular situation.

Another observation is that whatever the treatment, whatever solution or intervention you prescribe, you have to monitor it. You cannot just write a report, especially in the case of international advice, leave it and hop on a plane. You have to stay involved, you have to monitor to make sure that whatever solution you proposed is actually working. If not, that may need some mid-term correction.

The final observation, which is probably more relevant in the case of international policy advice, is the importance of maintaining high ethical standards. That is the difference from academic research in the policy area. Whatever we do, it affects somebody. Somebody can become unemployed, somebody can suffer. Therefore, it means that we have to be committed to do the best we can—we cannot just settle for easy solutions even if we are working in a very difficult environment where there is no data available or there is some kind of political thing going on and there is not enough buy-in. It is hard for us to work in this environment, but we have to adjust. Just like in the medical area where they have the principle to do no harm. It pretty much applies to our field.

Figure 4.2 A Differential Diagnosis Decision Tree (Adapted from Hausmann, Rodrik, & Velasco, 2005)



Differential Diagnosis

Since I mentioned the importance of differential diagnosis, I would like to provide another illustration so that it does not sound too abstract, and maybe something a little more specific (Figure 4.2). If we are talking about economic development, local economic development or development at the national level, it is important to find what is the binding constraint. At any given time, we can do many things. There is a caricature of an economist. Some people think that we always advocate for trade liberalization, deregulation, shrinking of the government sector...no, that is not true. Actually, we try to find the root cause of why an economy is underperforming, whether it is a local economy or a regional economy. There can be very different reasons. So, if you have low economic activity, there are two possibilities. One is that maybe it is difficult to obtain financing, and that also can have very different reasons. It may be the entire country is shut off from international capital markets. Maybe the country defaulted in the past or, for some other reasons, foreign investors think it is very risky. Or maybe the problem is with the domestic financing system. Maybe the banking system is underdeveloped and

there are no banking branches outside the capital. These are very different causes and require very different interventions.

Similarly, if we go back to the top of the diagram, in the opposite case, where the problem is not the lack of financing; the problem is that there are no worthy applications for investment. That can also have very different reasons. It could be because that there is just no way to invest, basically the returns on investment are very low. That could be because of the geography in a particular region or maybe it would be a lack of human capital, we can't find the people with the right skills. These are very different reasons and they require very different interventions and it is very unlikely that both of them are critical. Most likely one of them is binding and that is the one that you should address first. Even if it might look too complicated and overwhelming, actually it is quite feasible to work it out. Different possibilities would present themselves with very different symptoms or very different signals. If the problem is the lack of finance, then you would see a lot of business people with a lot of good ideas chasing lenders, and the interest rates will be very high. An example of that problem was the case of Turkey and Brazil some time ago. But if the cause is the opposite, if it is not the access to finance, it is that there's no place to invest it, then what we observe would tell me some of the signals or symptoms would look completely different. You would see that the banks are awash with liquidity and they do not have good loan applications and no better use for their money than just invest in government bonds, which might have very, very low interest rates, maybe negative, but they do not have anything better. What I am saying is that it is quite feasible to work through this differential diagnosis in this example of economic development but also for other public policy problems.

Benchmarking

Next I would like to talk about another social policy analysis which is used in practice, and I want to be careful because it is a little bit controversial. This is benchmarking. Benchmarking is when you can try to get some ideas by comparing this country to another country by comparing some very basic indicators. Say we compare the tax-to-GDP ratio, the tax yield of the tax systems, of different countries. In this example, two developed countries, Germany and the United States. Their tax yield is very different, meaning that their tax systems are very different. The United States is well below the average for developed countries and Germany is about average. This is an illustration that benchmarking does not actually tell you much. It does not give you a diagnosis but it can be helpful in pointing you to the areas of potential weakness. Basically it can draw your attention to the areas where you need to collect more data or maybe when you need to talk more with stakeholders to try to understand what is behind that. As a result, it might help you to uncover the

underlying cause or it might not. So, when used properly, I think benchmarking can be useful, but you need to be very careful not to misuse it. While it can identify possible causes, possibilities are not certainties and problems are not solutions. It is more of something you do in the very beginning. In my case, when I arrive in a new country I have never been to and I am just trying to figure out what is going on, that could help. It could guide me in my process of assessment of a diagnosis, but it will not give me the diagnosis and it will not give me the solutions. It will guide the process; it will help me to focus where I should dig deeper.

Since we are talking about talking about benchmarking to other countries, you might be interested to know about Thailand's tax yields, its tax-to-GDP ratio. You can see that right now Thailand is below both United States and Germany. The tax yield is less than 20% of GDP in Thailand while United States it is 25%. Does that mean anything? Does it mean that there is something that Thailand needs to focus on? No. Based on the experience of United States and Germany, you can see that the United States has always had lower taxes than Germany. The reason for that is that these two countries have different contexts. The point that I was trying to make earlier is that policy solutions have to be tailored to each particular context and maybe it is not surprising that United States and Germany have a very different tax system because they have different contexts even though they are in the same group of countries. They are developed countries, they are both federal countries, they are quite large — Germany is larger than many other countries.

If you dig deeper you will find out that there a lot of differences that explain why the tax yield in Germany has been always higher than the United States. If you look back 50 years and look 50 years from now, the difference will still be there. The same with Thailand. It is true that Thailand still has room to catch up in terms of the level of devolvement and per capita income. It is true that as the economies mature and the institutions mature, it is easier to collect taxes. It is quite possible that sometime in the future the tax rates in Thailand will rise. But right now, I cannot tell if Thailand's tax yield will become as high as Germany or just reach the low level of the United States. It all depends on the context, and Thailand has a very different context. And, just not to be too abstract, there specific factors of environment that determine which tax system is appropriate for each country.

Now let me briefly list those factors. The first is ideas. If you go to the different countries and you try to talk about taxes, what they think a good tax is, you will hear very different ideas. What is a fair tax? What is a good tax? You will be surprised. Here [in the US] people hate value added tax...left and right. On the left they think that the value added tax is regressive. On the right they think the value

added tax is a tax machine and will lead to the explosion of the public sector. But if you go to the European Union, the value added tax is something that is very natural. In fact, you cannot become a member of the European Union if you do not have a value added tax. The balance of vested interests shapes the tax system, because taxes affect differentially, different segments of the society. For example, business versus labor, rural versus urban, young versus old, and to the extent that over time the balance of those interests and political representation of those interests change, that makes an impact on the tax system. So, the tax system evolves in response.

Public service needs also determine the level of taxation. So right now, most countries have a great need for resources in order to combat and mitigate the pandemic. While some countries are able in the short-term to borrow funds, eventually they will have to be paid off, So I would not be surprised to see that many countries will have to raise the level of taxation in the next five years or so. Changing economic conditions make a huge difference. The economies of most countries undergo tremendous transformation. Globalization, digitization, 'uberization.' They change the way businesses operate and because of that they affect how the government can reach those economic activities with a tax net.

Finally, as administrative constraints and technological possibilities change, public tax administration capabilities change. These days, Google Earth allows us in near real time to see when there is some kind of construction or new development going on in our city. That makes property assessment and reappraisal very easy. But I remember when there was a time that the City of Atlanta, or actually Fulton County, would have to do aerial photography. You cannot do this every day...you can do it every five years or so. You would have to hire a company that would fly over and take pictures. So now it is much easier to keep the property evaluation up to date.

The final point is that cultural context also matters. Things like attitudes about government, attitudes about taxes, affects how much taxes you can raise. This is just an illustration that there is no such thing as an optimal tax system—you cannot just find best practice and copy it. No. Each country has its own context and it has to find the tax system in this case, or other policy intervention, which uniquely fits the context of a particular country or particular region.

Program Evaluation

Monitoring versus Evaluation

I am going to move to the next topic. The next thing I would like to talk about is monitoring and evaluation as an entry point for us academics into the policy work. Even though monitoring and evaluation, M&E, is just like one word, actually

these are two different things. Monitoring and evaluation are hugely different. Monitoring is about the tracking, the implementation of the project or the program. Basically, you are monitoring what are we doing, how activities are implemented. This is something that government agencies can do themselves. Sometimes with training, but monitoring is something they can easily do themselves. They can design the proper reporting forms, make sure that whoever implements a project or program submits the report. If they do not submit it, you will not make the next disbursement of the funds. So that is something that governments can do. But when it comes to evaluation, evaluation is different. So, tracking is about what we are doing. Evaluation is about whether we are achieving the objectives. There's a big difference between completing or implementing a program and achieving its objectives. You can complete the program, you can complete all activities, spend all the funds, all boxes checked, all the reports submitted. But if you look at the objective, say the objective was to reduce unemployment or to increase the number of small businesses or startups, there could be no change. Or, more importantly, if there is a change, evaluation also requires that we are attributing the change to our program to make sure that whatever improvement we see is because of our program and it wouldn't have happened otherwise. That is the attribution part. And actually, this is quite hard and that is something that government agencies often struggle with and, in our case, that is where we always get requests for assistance from government agencies.

So, how, then, to carry out a program evaluation? Once again, basically, for evaluation at the minimum, you have to measure some indicators of outcome at the beginning (a baseline) and at the end. But it is not enough just to look at the change in the indicators. You have to compare that to the change that would have happened without the program and then the impact is the difference in the change that happened during the program compared to what would have happened without the program. Only the difference between what happened and the counterfactual (what would have happened), only this difference can be attributed to our program, something that is called impact. That, as you can see, is not that easy. It is easier to measure the actual at the beginning and at the end, but it is hard to measure the counterfactual, something that did not happen because you either had a program or did not have a program, or an individual was either participating or not participating. If you know one, then you do not know the other.

Causal Inference Problem, Statistical Techniques, and Randomization

That is what is called causal inference problem because we cannot observe both. We cannot observe somebody after participating in the program and after not participating. It is either one or the other. We can observe two different individuals,

we can observe two different municipalities, one participated and one not, and then we will look at the difference in outcomes. But then we do not know if the outcome is different because one participated and one not or because these are two different people and they have very different characteristics. So, we do not observe the counterfactual and so we cannot measure the causal effect. The only way to approach it is through statistical analysis and there are two kinds of statistical analysis. One is less demanding computationally but more demanding in terms of logistics. The other one is the other way around; you do not have to spend too much money on collecting data but then you have to spend a lot of time trying to produce the estimate.

The first one is called perspective, meaning that before you start implementing your program, you already have to design your evaluation strategy so that you know what kind of data you have to collect on program participants and on the control group. This can be expensive because you have to spend resources monitoring not only your participants but also the control group. Resources are limited in that the resources that you spend on the control group you did not spend on the actual intervention. You could have involved more people in the program but you did not because you have to set aside part of your program budget for monitoring the control group. On the other hand, what happens more often than not is that you have to do a retrospective evaluation, meaning that the program has already ended. They did not design a retrospective study; they were not collecting data on the control group. The only thing they have is monitoring data from the program participants and they have nothing to compare it with. Then, if you do not have data, you have to do more sophisticated statistical analysis trying to come up with a counterfactual that you did not observe. And, there are different kinds of sophisticated statistical analysis: difference-in-difference, matching, regression discontinuity, etc. You would probably need a whole lecture on each of those. But whatever they are, most often government agencies do not have capacity to do this kind of analysis and that is why they reach out to us.

I do not know how familiar you are with either of the two approaches and which of them is more common in your work. If the prospective study is something that sounds too exotic, maybe I could spend a bit more time. It is rare but it is not exotic. Everybody knows what it is and, ideally, one has to make a decision to do it or not. If they want to do that, when they plan the program they have to budget, they have to set aside the resources for the randomized control trial. So the very few examples that are widely known eventually led to academic publications in high-ranking journals. But the idea, as I mentioned, is that you have to randomly assign individuals (or municipalities) to the program either as program participants or the control group or sometimes you randomize across the applicants. So maybe you

randomize and use different intensity of the treatment among participants, so that also gives you some idea about optimal intensity.

What are the benefits? The benefit is that when you observe the outcome, you know that the outcome, the difference in the outcome, between control group and the treatment group is only due to the treatment, due to the program, because everything else should balance out because we randomly selected both groups. Therefore, while it is true that each individual is different but because you randomly selected them, as a group they are very representative. Like there are short individuals, tall individuals, so when you take the average of the treatment group it all balances out. The only thing is left is that the fact that they were treated. And the same in the control group because you randomly assign them to make sure that the group is very representative. So, when you take the average of the control group everything balances out and what is left is the average and if it is different from the average for the control group that is probably due to the program.

The Case of Indonesia Village Road Projects

I will go with more details about the randomized control trials since it is still new in some areas. So, this example in the news they were using controlled trials to see how effective auditing is in reducing leakage in investment grants to villages. In Indonesia they have 80,000 villages. Even though they are not municipalities, they still have some kind of governance structure so that they come together and come up with certain projects. So, out of this 80,000 I do not know how many were actually part of the program, but 600 of them were selected randomly to be either observed as a treatment group or the control group. The ones in the treatment group were told that they were going to be audited while the ones in the control group were not told that they were going to be audited. But then all of them were audited, all 600. They were trying to see if there was any difference. That is, if knowing that they were going to be audited made any difference. In those that knew they were going to be audited, the leakage was about 8% less and the difference was statistically significant. While statistically significant, 8% might not be such a huge number, for example, to justify complete auditing of all villages. But it is good information to have. So, if you decide you want to invest in auditing, that gives you some idea how much it will return in terms of reduced leakage.

The Case of Fertilizer Use in Kenya

Another example from a completely different area of public programs related to agriculture programs. Basically, the program offers fertilizers and hybrid seeds to farmers in Kenya (Duflo, Kremer, & Jonathan, 2008). The problem is that there was not sufficient uptake because those inputs were not free, farmers still had to pay for

them. They are trying to understand why it is that there is no uptake. Is it because that intervention is not effective or that the fertilizer does not make any difference? To do that, they had six trials, basically three years, and each year they have two growing seasons. So, you have two seasons per year over three years allowing for six trials. For each trial, they had randomly selected farmers to be either in the treatment group, who received fertilizers, or in the control group, who did not receive fertilizers. Then, at the end of the growing season they would compare the yields. They would harvest and compare what the yields were on the fields that were receiving fertilizers and compare that to the average yield on the fields that were not receiving fertilizers. Furthermore, in the treatment group there were different intensities of treatment, so some of them would only receive one fertilizer (calcium ammonium nitrate) in different dosages while some were receiving the full package of fertilizers plus hybrid seeds. So, as I mentioned, at the end of each growing season the maize was harvested and weighed.

Table 4.1 Returns to Fertilizer

| | Mean | Median | Std Error | Obs |
|---|-------|--------|-----------|-----|
| Panel A. ¼ Teaspoon Top Dressing Fertilizer | | | | |
| Percentage Increase in Yield | 28.1 | 8.9 | 6.8 | 112 |
| Rate of Return Over the Season | 4.8 | -27.7 | 38.8 | 112 |
| Annualized Rate of Return (at the Mean and Median) | 8.4 | -42.6 | | 112 |
| Panel B. ½ Teaspoon Top Dressing Fertilizer | | | | |
| Percentage Increase in Yield | 47.6 | 24.3 | 6.1 | 200 |
| Rate of Return Over the Season | 36 | 23.9 | 16.9 | 202 |
| Annualized Rate of Return (at the Mean and Median) | 69.5 | 44.4 | | 202 |
| Panel C. 1 Teaspoon Top Dressing Fertilizer | | | | |
| Percentage Increase in Yield | 63.1 | 30.6 | 8.2 | 273 |
| Rate of Return Over the Season | -10.8 | -16.9 | 8.4 | 274 |
| Annualized Rate of Return (at the Mean and Median) | -17.8 | -27.3 | | 274 |
| Panel D. Full Package Recommended by Ministry of Agriculture | | | | |
| Percentage Increase in Yield | 90.6 | 48.7 | 15.4 | 82 |
| Rate of Return Over the Season | -38.9 | -49.4 | 10.4 | 85 |
| Annualized Rate of Return (at the Mean and Median) | -48.2 | -59.7 | | 85 |

Source: Duflo, Kremer, & Jonathan (2008)

So here are the results (Table 4.1). If we look just at the yield and the yield is the average harvest, the difference, how much how much was harvested in the treatment group compared to the control group. So, the yield, the additional yield, is always positive no matter what the dosage. With the smallest dosage of a quarter of teaspoon, I guess per bucket, the yield was 28%. If you double the dosage then the yield goes to 47.6%. If you double again, it increases but by a smaller margin. If you use the full package deal, this is even higher. However, if you adjust the yield, if you take into account the cost of the actual inputs and you look and the net return, then we see that the relationship between program intensity and the return is not monotonous. As you can see, if you increase the dosage from a quarter of teaspoon to 1/2 teaspoon, the rate of return increases from 4.8 to 36%, but if you increase it further actually the additional yield does not cover the additional cost of the fertilizer. And if you use the full package, then actually you are in a big loss in terms of money. You lose 50%, meaning on each dollar that you spend on fertilizers, you get back less than 50 cents. So, the result is, on average, without fertilizer you would get 8,000 Kenyan Shilling in harvest, but if you use half a teaspoon, which is to be the optimal dosage, then you would get 1/3 more, 1100 initially. As to the policy implication, when used in the right dosage fertilizer can be efficient. It can actually have a return of 36% over one growing season or 69% over a year. However, the other levels of fertilizer might actually be unprofitable and lead to a loss for the farmer. That is the policy implication.

That is what I wanted to tell you about randomized control trials. Again, this is still a less common approach. Most approaches are still retrospective, but it also means there is more computation involved and also less defensible. You try to communicate your evidence and say this is the difference between what happened and what could have happened, but to determine what could have happened you actually have to use very complicated math. It is very difficult to communicate. Therefore, under randomized control trials it is much easier to explain. This is the control group, this is the treatment group, and that is the difference. It is very easy to communicate to policy makers.

Communication of Research Findings: How to Write a Policy Brief

The last thing I wanted to talk about is communication. Our research probably would have little value if we were not able to communicate it to others. In academia, if we do not publish, we do not succeed in our careers, at least in the research field...we can still do good in teaching. With policy work, basically it is the same. You have to be able to communicate your results. The principles are the same, so basically the effective communication strategy is to tailor your communications

tool to your target audience. You need to understand who your target audience is, what they already know, if they already have opinions about this subject...maybe some misconceptions that we have to address. Then, you have to have some idea how they consume information and, on the basis of that, you would come up with the customized communication tool. Just like with making the proposal itself, with actual research everything depends on the context and different contexts might require different communication strategies, some of which would be more effective than others. It also depends on the cultural context. In different cultures people consume information differently. For example, they say that here in the United States people do not have reading culture; people do not like to read. So, I am going to have to take that into account. In others, maybe people like to read, they do not want to listen. It has to be tailored, but the general idea is the same. You have to tailor your communication strategy to your audience. The audience can be different, and that that would require a different communication strategy.

From my experience, the way I work throughout my policy work, throughout the same project, I interact with different kinds of counterparts and for different counterparts I use different ways of communication. Most of my interaction is with the technical person. Usually it would be, for example, a policy adviser to a decision maker, a policy advisor to a minister, a policy advisor to a mayor. And with the policy advisor, things can be more informal, and I also have more time. I can spend some time and I can better understand. For example, maybe there's some term in English that just does not resonate in the particular environment. Eventually I learn because I can see the feedback. For instance, I used to work in Nepal, and, for whatever reason, they do not like the word "subnational." Here I do not want to say, "state and local governments," it too long, we say "subnational governments." In Nepal they just did not like it. Then I say "sub-federal." I would never say sub-federal here, but if that is what works, fine.

What I am saying is that normally I spend a lot of time working with the technical person. Through some back and forth, I get some feedback on what I have proposed and eventually I get to the point with this technical person where a decision has to be made, where this technical person has to take our proposal to a decision maker. Then he will ask for a two-pager that he can take to his boss. I would ask how exactly his boss takes the information; should it be more visual? more graphs? more tables? and he will tell me. Then I would make a two-pager. I would give it to my counterpart, and he would maybe bold something, highlight some words, and then he will take it to his boss. So that is, generally, how it works. But again, what I think what is specific to the policy work, especially as you get closer to the decision-makers, is that you have more and more space and time constraints. Therefore, what

is very commonly used is a policy brief, where you only have two to four pages to communicate your message. Again, how to do that, how to use that limited space more efficiently, may be slightly different from country to country, from context to context, and some cultural things are in play here.

Table 4.2 How to Write a Policy Brief

| |
|---|
| <p>Succinct presentation of a problem, its context, and recommendation action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informative & Engaging Title • Executive Summary: <i>1-2 paragraphs, overview of problem and proposed policy action</i> • Problem Statement: <i>Why should the audience care? Define the scope of the problem.</i> • Policy Alternatives: <i>Describe current and proposed policy options.</i> • Policy Recommendations: <i>Explain what steps must be taken.</i> • Sources Consulted or Recommended. |
|---|

There are some general tips that I listed on Table 4.2, and probably these tips are more attuned to the English-speaking countries, to Anglo-Saxon culture, but I think they also, to some extent, can be adapted to other cultures. It is very important to have an informative and engaging title. Informative means from the title itself the reader should know what it is about. Unlike thrillers, you do not need to keep your readers in suspense. From the title itself, it should be immediately clear what it is about. Also, it should be engaging enough, not too boring. You want them to continue reading. So, if you managed to get the reader past the title, then essentially you have just 45 seconds to one minute of his time.

In the first paragraph you have to get all your message across; what the problem is, what are the alternative solutions, and what do you recommend. All that in just one paragraph. And the reason for that is, as you are probably familiar yourself, when I worked with decision makers, whenever I went to their offices, they had huge piles of papers on their desk, so they have to screen what they are going to read. If after reading one paragraph they do not see where it is heading, they will think they are not going to waste their time. They just put it aside, say they are hoping to read later, and they will never read it. So that is why the first paragraph is the most critical, you have to get the entire message across in that paragraph. Then, if you are successful and they continue reading it, you still have a page and a half to elaborate. Basically, to state more clearly the problem: why should anyone care?; describe the options, including the current option; what are possible alternatives; offer a neutral evaluation, the pros and cons for each of those options. At the end, while not making a decision yourself, you can still narrow those options, tentatively narrow the options or state your neutral opinion why you think some options, based on the specific

criteria that you mention, are more favorable than others. And finally, it is important to list the sources of your information, because you will never have time to do original research. It is all based on secondary information, maybe something you researched yourself or you know research of other people working in your field. So, it is very important to be transparent, based on what evidence you are making this statement.

So that is pretty much what I want to share with you in terms of some kind of experiences or lessons from my experience when it comes to communication. I think the only way to learn it is to practice. When I started 20 years ago, I was not as effective in writing, in communicating to policymakers, as I think I am now. So that is why I think rather than trying to read some kind of textbooks on effective communication, I believe that the best way to hone those skills, the art of communication, is by practice. What would be the next step how to learn more? For one thing, you could go to the website of one of our centers, open any of the briefs and try to see how effective they are. There are both briefs and full reports on this webpage. For example, from the title or the first paragraph, you can tell what it is about? What is the problem and what the solutions and what do they recommend? Just in case some of you decide to go to the website, just let me tell you now that this website lists long reports, full reports, as well as briefs. The first one is brief, *The Future of Industry and Employment* (Bluestone, Chike, & Wallace, 2020). Some policymakers wanted to know what you have to do about the response to the COVID when it comes to a choice of unemployment policies. Here we have a two-pager. Again, the policy brief is not the only form of communication. We have others, we have full reports, there can be white papers that the government writes but we might contribute to. The policy brief is something that is particularly specific to the policy area, unlike full reports. Full reports can be similar in structure to academic papers, but the policy brief is specific to the policy arena.

So that is all I had to share. Thank you!

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This lecture is available
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<https://youtu.be/rwNAz13fQoE>



Public Governance as a Strategy for National Development: The Case of Singapore

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(Lecture presented October 15, 2020)

Thank you and good morning everybody. It is a great privilege to be addressing participants of this special program that is presented by the College of Local Administration at Khon Kaen University. Greetings from Singapore and I am very pleased to have the opportunity to discuss the topic: “Public Governance as a Strategy for National Development: The Singapore Case Study” this morning. I will spend about 20 to 30 minutes going through my presentation.

Let me kick off with a discussion of the concept of “governance,” and it is not just about government but *governance*. We then look at how various agencies across the world have rated Singapore on governance. I will try to answer the question of why Singapore’s governance system is the way it is; what are the key ingredients to the system?

I just want to make the point through this whole presentation that actually Singapore, unlike Thailand, is an improbable independent nation-state. Our birth was actually sudden and unexpected, because we thought that we were gaining independence as part of the Federation of Malaysia, but it didn't quite happen that way. After two years, we separated from the Federation to become a sovereign city-state. Therefore, with no resources but our geographical location and our people, our survival then depended on how well we could organize ourselves, govern ourselves to progress. All this is within the context of geopolitical and economic conditions across the world. So, as a small city-state, we are not market leaders; we

cannot dictate terms and instead, we have to adapt. This is the story of governance that I want to tell you as we go through this session today

What Is Governance?

The World Bank Group (1992) has defined governance, not government but governance, as what consists of traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. It includes the process by which governments are selected, monitored, replaced. It, of course, includes the idea of the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies, but this is where it is more than government. This is because governance also includes the aspect of citizens and state and the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them. In other words, the concept of governance includes the idea that you have to engage citizens in the process of national development. This is not a question of just the government doing it all by itself, but it has to co-create a future together with its people.

How does the World Bank try to unpack this idea? For the World Bank, governance includes the need to look at how citizens are given voice; how citizens can hold government to account for its performance. Governance does mean political state stability and that everyone in the state is assured of the absence of violence and sudden violence from the state, itself. It must include government effectiveness, which I am sure is the main interest among you this morning. That also depends on the quality of regulation, which is not just what the regulations are but whether they are fair. Are they just? Do they support business development? Do they support social inclusion of people as development is delivered? Clearly there must be rule of law so that they are clear and applied equally. There must be control of corruption.

How Does Singapore Rate?

I have just said that Singapore gained independence in 1965; we are barely 55 years old today. What most people understand is that Singapore's been governed by only one party since self-governance in 1959 until now. People are interested in Singapore because even though we began as a postcolonial state, the impression is that we have transformed ourselves from third world to first within one or two generations.

So, what has been that track record on governance? If you take a look at Table 5.1, some of the usual measures are stated there. Would you believe that Singapore has actually grown in size? This is by land reclamation, which itself is a key public policy and it cannot be done so easily as you think. It is not just a question of

putting sand on the ground or in the ocean. In our case we have not just done reclamation, but we have built housing, recreation, and industry on the reclaimed land. The population has grown from only 1.58 million in 1959 to 5.69 million today, a growth of 3.6 times. Our gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in 1959 when we received self-government was about \$1,300. Now per capita GDP is \$88,991, which we can see is almost \$89,000. Unemployment rate last quarter was at 3.9%. Obviously, we are all suffering from the COVID pandemic, so this has taken a toll on unemployment. Nonetheless, you can see that it is definitely under 5% and it is being addressed right now with a lot of government support for jobs, for businesses, so that the impact of COVID on our livelihoods is not too severe. We can take a look at the size of our official foreign reserves—they have grown about 300 times since 1959.

Table 5.1 Changes in Singapore’s Policy Context (1959-2020)

| Indicator | Year | | | Change (%) |
|---|-------|---------|---------|------------|
| | 1959 | 2008 | 2020 | |
| Land Area (m ²) | 581.5 | 710.2 | 725.7 | 1.24 |
| Population (million) | 1.58 | 4.83 | 5.69 | 3.6 |
| GDP per capita (S\$) | 1,330 | 53,192 | 88,991 | 66.9 |
| Unemployment rate (%) | 14 | 2.2 | 3.9 | 0.27 |
| Official foreign reserves (S\$ million) | 1,151 | 250,346 | 375,782 | 326.5 |
| Population living in public housing (%) | 9 | 82 | 78.6 | 8.7 |
| Government expenditure on education (S\$ million) | 63.39 | 8,246.3 | 13,090 | 206.5 |
| Extent of corruption | High | Low | Low | |

Source: Adapted from Quah (2010)

Public housing provides shelter for almost 80% of the resident population. As an indicator of the commitment to development of its human resource, you can see how total expenditure of the government on education has grown. Finally, you have Transparency International’s ranking of Singapore in terms of corruption. It’s low and it ranks 4th out of 180 countries that are monitored. When corruption is unveiled or surfaced, it is understood that even the big fish will be prosecuted for corruption. This has included senior civil servants as well as ministers.

The most recent World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Index puts Singapore at the top of the rankings for global competitiveness. It is always a competition among Switzerland, the United States, and Hong Kong, as well as some key European countries (Schwab, 2019). So, there we are at the top. Then there is

the question of what are the opportunities? Are the opportunities for progress made available to all citizens or is it just the elites serving the elites?

A recent report issued by the World Economic Forum, not by Singapore, titled *The Global Social Mobility Index Ranking*, explores 10 key areas including health, education, and jobs, to identify the extent to which opportunities are made available to all citizens. Denmark ranks right at the top and Singapore is at number 20 (World Economic Forum, 2020). Not too bad. I think that there is a lot of pressure for the government to continue to stem the trends of income inequality in capitalist systems. So, this is a reflection of the very hard work that's been put in and the very hard work of advocacy by academics and civic activists here to ensure that we do not have a runaway problem of income and social inequality.

Why Is Singapore's Governance the Way It Is?

History

Now to what you are really interested in. Why is Singapore's governance the way it is and how does it contribute to national development? Just a bit of history. Please remember that our deep history of 700 years ago provides artifacts that suggest that we were merely a sea town for a while and then became a center or a part of the spread of Islam to the region. In the 14th century, we were visited by Admiral Zheng He. The formal founding of modern Singapore is traced to the year 1819 when Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles of the East Asia Company in Britain established a port here. From then on, we became a formal crossroads for trade, for people, and for ideas. Certainly, the British welcomed this and tried their best to manage the different peoples that would come but kept this as an open and free port. We were part of the struggle in World War Two against fascism and for some time, were occupied by the Japanese.

When the war was won by the US, the Japanese retreated and the British returned. By then the locals had decided they should fight for self-determination, but the question was how the British would hand over Singapore. Would it be on its own or would it only have comfort if it handed it over together with Malaysia? At this time, the ideological struggle between the colonial palace and communism was rife. In order to stave off Singapore being taken over by the communists, the British decided the British formula for independence was to place Singapore within Malaysia. However, after a year and a half, while it was a formula to stave off communism it was not a formula to stave off communalism. So, race politics got in the way and the political leadership in Singapore, the nationalist leadership in Singapore, wanted a Singapore that treated all races equally, whereas in Malaysia, the ruling class, which was well established and traditional, wanted the Malays to be

recognized for their special position as men and women of the soil, as the natives. The conundrum could not be resolved and, in the end, the national leaders in Singapore took it out of the Federation. It was in 1965, the ninth of August, that Singapore became an independent country.

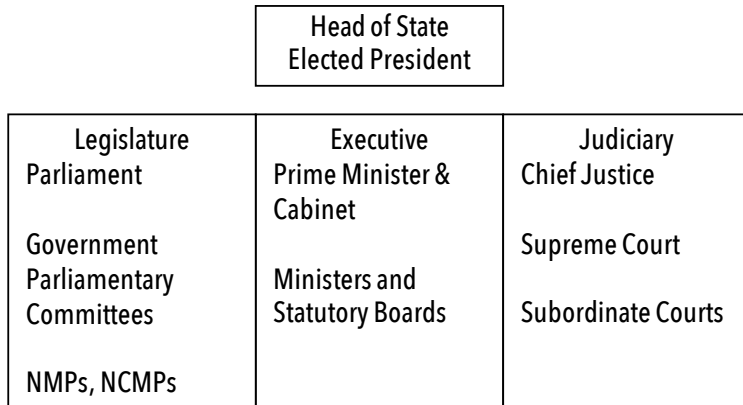
This is an important story because the merger with Malaya was meant to provide a common market and that there would be, at that time, an internally driven development strategy. But by pulling Singapore out of Malaysia, a Singapore with no hinterland and no natural resources, the formula for development now, if Singapore was to be a viable, small, independent country, was to pursue export-oriented industrialization.

So, the challenge was to get rid of the scourge of colonialism, which left a corrupt state in place. The challenge was to be independent and have an economy that was viable even when we had no hinterland and no common market. And the challenge was to convert a society of immigrants into a community of citizens and to convince them that Singapore as an idea and as a country could stand on its own. So, with that heritage and colonial legacy, the only way forward was to pursue economic rationalism and be pragmatic, not to take an ideological stance but to do whatever the market needed in response in order to be relevant player and achieve national development through an integration with the global economy, which was, at that time, as you know, one that was led by America. There was a window of opportunity to make hay as the capitalist sun shone. It also meant that Singapore would pursue a multiracial, meritocratic, and modern vision of itself. So now I think we have a full grasp of the context.

The early years of governance were led by the People's Action Party government under Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. He provided the context for why it was important that the civil service played its part to ensure that not just self-government, but independent governance, would be successful. I have just pulled a quote from before that which was in 1959, because in 1959 we were still under self-government, because I think it captures nicely the spirit and the passion and the commitment to self-government and eventually independent government, which drove all the energies and effort towards national development. Let me read this quote. "...whether an administration functions efficiently and smoothly in the interests of the people as a whole or in the interest of a small section of the people, depends upon the policies of the ministers. But it's your responsibility" [he was addressing the civil servants] "it is your responsibility make sure that there is an efficient civil service... We the elected ministers have to work through you and with you to translate your plans and policies into reality." [and now we underline this part of the quote] "You should give your best in the service of our people. It is in your

interest to show that under the system of one-man-one-vote” [that is democracy] “there can be an honest and efficient government which works through an efficient administration in the interests of the people” (Lee, 1959 cited in Quah, 2010, p. 134)

Figure 5.1 Singapore Structure of Government



Structure of Government

The political system we have is comprised of three parts (Figure 5.1). The legislature, which is Parliament, is voted in through regular elections which are contested and considered relatively free and fair. The Prime Minister, in a unicameral parliamentary system, is drawn out of the party with the majority number of seats in parliament. Then, under the Prime Minister, there are cabinet ministries and statutory boards. Finally, there is the judiciary and the legal system. It is very important to uphold the rule of law, predictability, and get rid of the scourge of corruption in order to deliver good governance. Over time, and specifically in 1991, the concept of an elected president rather than a nominated president was introduced. Now we have a system where, above parliament, there is an elected president. The president is voted in by all the citizens and is a nonpartisan person who has five key powers, three of which are very important for the purposes of our discussion. First, he has power to veto the budgetary plans of the government if it is going to use ices of the national reserves. Second, he has the power to veto nominations by the government for the key positions in civil service and statutory boards. Third, he has the power to approve investigations by our Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau, even if the Prime Minister denies the bureau the permission to go ahead. In other words, there is a check and balance within the executive or upon the executive by another power, which is the elected president, that has its locus of authority from the people.

Table 5.2 Electoral Contests in Singapore

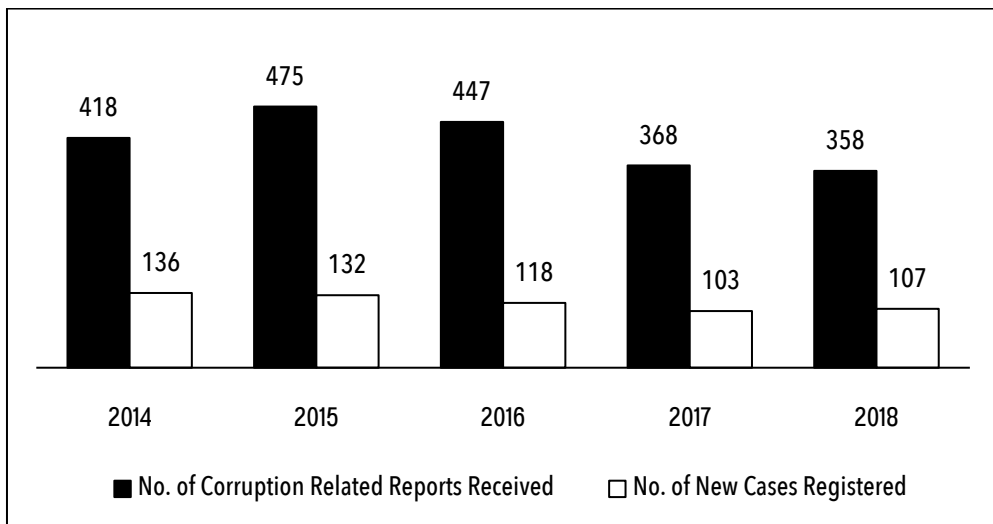
| Year | Total Seats | Contested Seats | Change in Vote for PAP (%) | % of Vote for PAP | Non-PAP/ Opposition Seats Held | % of Electors Who Voted |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1955 | 25 | 25 | - | 8.7 | 22 | |
| 1959 | 51 | 51 | 45.4 | 54.1 | 8 | |
| 1963 | 51 | 51 | -7.2 | 46.9 | 14 | |
| 1968 | 58 | 7 | - | 86.7 | 0 | |
| 1972 | 65 | 57 | -16.3 | 70.4 | 0 | 89.5 |
| 1976 | 69 | 53 | 3.7 | 74.1 | 0 | |
| 1980 | 75 | 38 | 3.5 | 77.6 | 0 | |
| 1981 (Anson by-election) | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | |
| 1984 | 79 | 49 | -12.8 | 64.8 | 2 | 60.4 |
| 1988 | 81 | 70 | -1.6 | 63.2 | 1 | 82.3 |
| 1991 | 81 | 40 | -2.2 | 61 | 4 | 48.5 |
| 1997 | 83 | 36 | 4 | 65 | 2 | 39.0 |
| 2001 | 84 | 29 | 10.3 | 75.3 | 2 | 31.4 |
| 2006 | 84 | 47 | -8.7 | 66.6 | 2 | 52.0 |
| 2011 | 87 | 82 | -6.5 | 60.1 | 6 | 89.1 |
| 2012 (Hougang by-election) | 1 | 1 | | 37.9 | 1 | 92.8 |
| 2013 (Punggol East by-election) | 1 | 1 | | 43.7 | 1 | 93.02 |
| 2015 | 89 | 89 | 9.8 | 69.9 | 6 | 93.7 |
| 2016 (Bukit Batok by-election) | 1 | 1 | -12 | 61.2 | 0 | 91.7 |
| 2020 | 93 | 93 | -8.7 | 61.2 | 10 | 95.8 |

We have just held an election on July 10, 2020. Suffice it to say that our elections are contestable and in 2020 you will notice that all 93 seats were contested, and ten seats were taken by the opposition, which means 83 seats are taken by the People's Action Party (PAP) (Table 5.2). We saw a -8.7% swing away from the People's Action Party. Mr. Lee Hsien Loong is the Prime Minister, and his successor-in-waiting is the Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat. There are two senior ministers who used to be deputy prime ministers. They are called Coordinating Minister for Security and Coordinating Minister for Social Policies, whereas Deputy Prime Minister Heng is the Coordinating Minister for Economic Policies. There are 37 office holders altogether and you can call 16 ministries, but one of them is the prime minister's office. Each ministry is held by the minister, assisted by senior ministers of state that can be ministers of state and parliamentary secretaries.

Running as the equivalent of CEO of a ministry is the permanent secretary. Under the permanent secretary are officers in the administrative service, and those of you who are familiar with the British system will know that these are generalist officers.

In reforms over the years of the Singapore public service, the generalist administrative service now falls within something called the Public Sector Leadership Program, which also includes specialists. Their ability to progress is assessed as a group and only the best will be brought into the formal administrative system and made permanent members of that service, so there is a competition to be able to ascend to the highest levels of a ministry. The ministry works with the elected government to shape Singapore’s future. There are 146,000 public servants in Singapore, fifty statutory boards, and eight organs of state. The most important point to note here is that the civil servants are not allowed to hold office in political parties or stand for election except for those who are part of universities that can be considered semi-public sector. So, there actually is very little exception to this rule of non-partisanship within the bureaucracy.

Figure 5.2 Number of New Cases Registered for Investigation Relative to Number of Corruption-Related Reports Received (2014-2018) (Data Source: Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau, 2019)



What Are the Key Ingredients in Singapore’s Governance System?

Rule of Law and Corruption

What, then, are the key ingredients to Singapore’s government system? Of course, the rule of law, which is supported by a very strong Prevention of Corruption Act. It covers not just people who take bribes in the public sector *as well as* the private

sector, but it prosecutes those who *give* bribes. This is supported and enforced by a very tough Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau and clearly the criminal justice system (Figure 5.2). As I said, the elected president can even override the prime minister's call not to investigate an alleged act of corruption. All these add to what is called the National Integrity System. These are to try and curb the supply of corruption. If you think of this as a rent-seeking, the pay of political leaders and civil servants are not so low and are competitive, so that there is really no excuse for them to participate in rent-seeking activities.

Government Effectiveness and Regulation

I think you would also be interested to know how effectiveness in government action and in regulation is achieved. I would say that emphasis is given to strategic focus, long-term planning, and of course, the politics allows for long-term planning since we have had the same party in power over all these years. But, as I mentioned, the government is pragmatic and adapts to changing conditions, internally in terms of what the citizens want, in terms of what technology is available, or in terms of what the global markets demand for us to be a competitive economy. There has been a lot of emphasis on the use of the best of technology and most importantly, there's a process of accounting for performance and effectiveness through the public sector outcomes review which the Ministry of Finance compiles every two years. And pay for civil servants is tied to performance. Ultimately, there are general elections to ensure there is a prize for good governance.

Pay

Just to say a little bit more about pay. Pay is a very controversial thing. Every now and then, people ask why civil service salaries are so high. Really, as I said, it is in order to take away the demand for rent-seeking behavior. But also, because top talent is required in the civil service and the leaders recognized that in order to attract the top talent there must be at least some parity or at least salaries offered must be close to what this top talent would get if they went to the private sector.

Performance appraisal

Performance appraisal, to mention a little bit more about this. For the top talent that is brought in or the government scholars who have been recruited from the time they are 18 and sent to the best schools to prepare them for civil service careers, they are all thrown into a pool and assessed peer-to-peer; assessed across the board for what is called their currently estimated potential for their leadership qualities. But over the years the leadership of the public service does not just look at credentials, it looks at performance and what kinds of skills and competencies each

senior civil servant is displaying in order to establish how far they can go in their career.

Planning

In terms of budgetary planning and financing of government spending, this is based on a blocked budget system, where money that is not spent is returned to the central pool. There are strategic reviews of policy and, more importantly, over the years, an introduction of scenario planning. As a country that lives by its wits, there is a 20-to-30-year forecast of new trends, new threats, new opportunities that Singapore will face as an economy, society, and polity.

People-Centric, Collaborative Governance

Trends in the last two decades that make for effective governance and national development strategy are: the engagement of civil society and citizens for their points of view, for their insights into what policy is doing in their lives or is not doing in their lives, and for welcoming of partnership with people on the ground to deliver policy. There is a whole set of community-based organizations that the government works with to deliver services which include social services, services to the elderly, services for community development.

Figure 5.3 Examples of Population White Papers



Policy-Making Process

The key point I want to make in terms of policymaking is that problem identification may be straight from the heart of government, but there is a huge process of feedback in scenario planning in order to understand what government needs to do. Then there is a lot of public consultation—through “population white papers”—typically introduced when a policy problem is identified, and proposals and options are surfaced (Figure 5.3). So, the public is included early in the process. The proposals eventually are put forward to a cabinet minister, with civil servants having to declare in their cabinet papers what the understanding of the sentiment is on the ground. What is the understanding of potential impact of the different options if they were to go through? There are parliamentary committees that can review proposed legislation and refine policy ideas. Then the bill is presented in parliament or there is a white paper, and a decision is made by parliament and implemented by civil service. Then we go back and close the loop again with evaluation feedback.

Conclusion

So, let me end by saying that I hope I have given you a flavor of what governance in Singapore has been like. Being a very small city-state with an unnatural, untimely, unexpected birth, there is the idea that we really do have to live by our wits and governance effectiveness. So, government has to be responsive, not just through outside conditions but also internally, through the demands and various pain points. And finally, integrity in government then feeds trust with trust, good regulation, enforcement, performance. And where there is performance, it feeds further trust, and we can then create a virtuous cycle like this.

With that I thank you.

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Digital Government Transformation for Equitable and Inclusive Public Services

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(Lecture presented September 3, 2020)

Thank you very much for this opportunity to present a little bit about e-services and inclusive and equitable public services. I will use Sweden as the case during my presentation. I will start by giving a short introduction to Sweden and briefly mention Stockholm University. I think it is strongly believed that public administration and how we design digital services and e-government solutions is very much dependent on the context, on the special characteristics, of the country where it is developed. I think Sweden is important as a backdrop to what I'm saying here. Then I will talk about equitable and inclusive public services. I will start by giving you a few examples and then I will discuss a few topics in relation to this. E-service maturity, which you probably are familiar with, single point of contact, a little bit about citizen mailboxes and digital archives, open data and service ecosystems, automation, and finally about Sweden's public strategy for e-government and digitalization, as well as weaknesses and challenges that we have.

Introduction to Sweden and Stockholm University

Sweden and Thailand have the same fundamental government system (Table 6.1). Thailand is slightly bigger than Sweden and you have a much larger population than Sweden. We have a GDP which is about 1/3 of your GDP, but we have managed to develop e-government in a fairly successful way, so far anyway, while Thailand is still lagging a bit, at least when we look at the United Nations e-

Government survey of this year. Sweden was the top country in the world (United Nations, 2020).

Table 6.1 A Comparison of Thailand and Sweden

| | Thailand | Sweden |
|--|---|---|
| Government | Unitary parliamentary constitutional monarchy | Unitary parliamentary constitutional monarchy |
| Area | 513,120 km ² | 450,295 km ² |
| Population | 70 million | 10 million |
| Gross Domestic Product (Purchasing Power Parity) | US\$1.390 trillion | US\$563 billion |
| E-Government Development Index Ranking (2020) | 57 th | 6 th |

A look at the Swedish government structure. We have a national government, we have 21 regional governments, and we have 290 municipalities or local governments. Regional governments and local governments are on the same government level, but they are responsible for different things. The regions are responsible for health care, dental care for up to young adults, and public transport, while local government has a larger responsibility in terms of schools, social services, elderly care, urban planning, and emergency services and sanitation. If we look at the public budget, the national budget is about 130 billion dollars, the regional budget about 44 billion, and local budgets at about 82 billion. That means that above 45% of the Swedish GDP is paid in taxes and used as public funding. Of course, Sweden is part of the European Union and so a portion of our taxes and public budgets goes to the European Union. The goal of the European Union is to have a single market for trade, but also for employment. So, a Swede can work in France, for example, and a French citizen can work in Sweden.

Figure 6.1 A Typology of European Social Models (Adapted from Sapir, 2005)

| | | | |
|--------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| | | Efficiency | |
| | | <i>Low</i> | <i>High</i> |
| Equity | <i>High</i> | Continental | Nordic |
| | <i>Low</i> | Mediterranean | Anglo-Saxon |

A few things about the Swedish context. Sweden, together with other Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, and Norway, but also the Netherlands, are characterized by a fairly high equity among citizens and a high efficiency in public administration, which is, I think, a significant characteristic of our government (Figure 6.1). Sweden is also characterized by a high degree of decentralization, and we will see later on that this is a little bit cumbersome when it comes to e-government implementation. But this means that the local governments and the regions have a big responsibility for e-government development in each of their areas. It means, basically, that the local e-government solution has to be developed 290 times and the sharing of standards and so forth is not as high as you would like it to be.

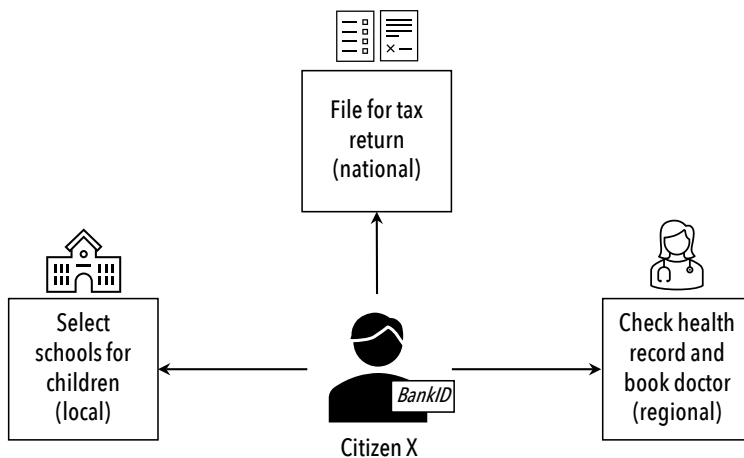
Sweden is also characterized by a comparatively high level of trust in public institutions. Swedish people's trust in the political, legal, and police systems is much higher than the average of trust among OECD countries or EU countries. Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, and also Switzerland put much higher trust in government, which means that they can do things and we trust that they will do the right thing when they invest, for example, in e-government. We also have one thing that maybe stands out a little and that is public transparency, which is constituted in law. It is supposed to be one of the first transparency acts in the world, dating from 1766. It means that everybody has access to official documents. All the officials in government also have the freedom to express their view, even if it is different from the view of the head of the administration. Also, public officials have the right to communicate and publish information, for example in newspapers or on TV. Everybody has access to all court hearings; they are public. And also, decision-making meetings like the Swedish parliament.

Stockholm University is located outside the city center of Stockholm. It was founded almost 150 years ago. We have 33,000 students and 5600 employees, which makes us the largest university in Sweden. Depending on which world ranking you look at we are among the top 100 or top 200 universities in the world. As Professor Peerasit said, where he and his colleague colleagues visited us was at the Department of Computer and System Sciences at our e-Gov Lab, which is our lab for e-government development and e-government solutions. We are located north of the main campus of Stockholm University, but it is in a suburb of Stockholm, where we have a lot of IT companies. I belong to the unit of Information Systems, and as Professor Peerasit said, my focus is on e-government and digital innovation, as well as enterprise systems.

Equitable and Inclusive Public Services

Let's move on to focus on equitable and inclusive public services. I will give you a few examples of Swedish e-services. I will touch upon e-service maturity as a concept and single point of contact, which seems to be a very important part of an e-government strategy. I will also talk a little about the concept of life events, touch upon the digital flow and the importance of citizen mailboxes and digital archives in order to not break this flow. I will also talk about some recent developments regarding open data and service ecosystems, automation, and then weaknesses in Sweden's digitalization. I will start with some examples of Swedish e-services so we will have this as the backdrop when we discuss later on.

Figure 6.2 Examples of Local, Regional, and National e-Services in Sweden



Some Examples of e-Services

I will present to you three examples (Figure 6.2). Filing for a tax return, which is a national e-service that we use once a year. Also, regional service where I can check my health records, I can check my prescriptions, test results and so forth, and book doctor appointments. I will also show you a local e-service for selecting schools for children. Now, my children are grown ups, but I have a record from 2013 which is still there, and you will see it. The Citizen X in this case is me.

Core to all e-services in Sweden is an electronic ID. The so-called BankID has become the common solution that people tend to use, so I will start with this. Basically, the BankID is a service that you will have installed as an app on your mobile phone, and through that app you can identify yourself in both commercial and public services. As the name says, it started out as an electronic ID for the Swedish banks, but it quickly emerged as the electronic ID used by common people. If we look at

how many of the Swedish citizens use BankID, we can see that it is close to 100%. There are almost 100% smartphone users in most age categories and almost all of these users use BankIDs. However, at the older ages, for example 76 years and above, we only have 60% smart phone users and only 20% BankID users. It seems like the BankID, itself, is a barrier for elderly people, and it hinders them from using some of the e-services here. There are some drawbacks with the BankID. There have been some frauds, there have been some security issues, but it has so far been manageable, both from the police and from the banks. But people are a little bit skeptical of actually using it and carrying it around on their phones. They are afraid of being robbed or the like.

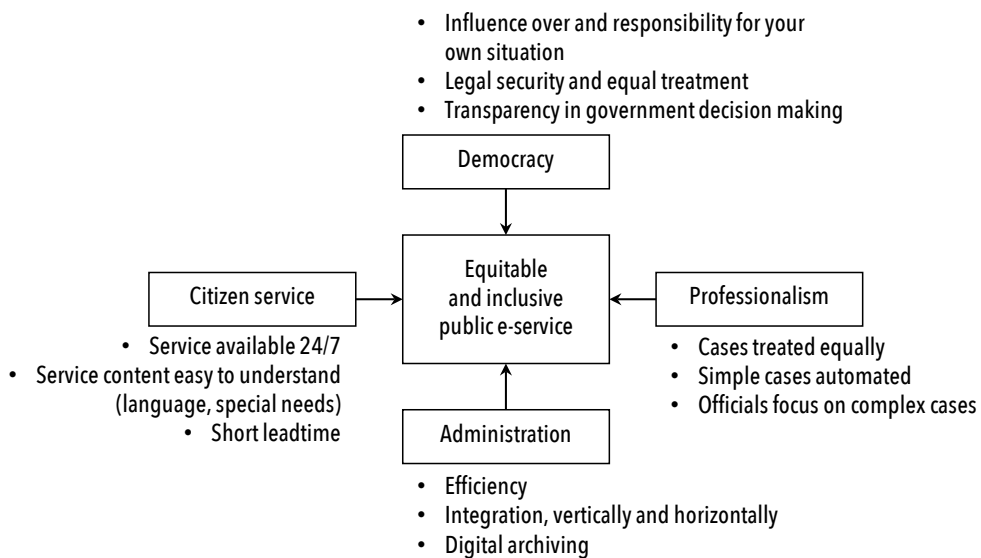
Next, let's move to one of the national e-services issued by the national government and the national tax agency. Taxes in Sweden, as you saw, are about 250 billion US dollars in taxes collected every year. They are collected collectively for all levels of government, so we do not pay directly to local government or to regional governments. It is all collected on one level and then redistributed. When we look at the number of people who actually used the e-service (there is also the option to file for tax return using paper forms), 80% did so digitally this year. We file for tax returns in May every year, and four million used e-service. Basically, the process is that the tax agency, in advance, collects all data about your income and the preliminary taxes that you have paid throughout the year, and then they do all sorts of deductions and things that you have the right to do depending on who you are. Then you check these figures, you adjust, and then you sign the form, the digital form, and you submit it. In the same process they calculate your final taxes. For example, this year I had to pay a few extra dollars because I had more income than they thought I would have. 1 1/2 million use the mobile service. Half a million use the buttons on their telephone and half a million used SMS. When this service appeared, it started out as an SMS service and then they built the mobile service and kept the SMS on the telephone service as an option.

Let's move on to the second example service. That is a regional service where I can check my health records and I can also book a doctor. It is in Swedish. It is called 1177 e-services. I can log into my account in the same fashion as I do to the tax authority's service. I can check journal services, we call it journal in Sweden and not health record, but in English it is health record. I can see what the doctor has written from our last appointments and my prescriptions for medications, test results, for example I made a test for COVID-19 two months ago and it was negative. This is a regional service, and it is pretty complex. It collects data from all 21 regions in Sweden. I had my doctor's appointment, it will collect all the medical records, it will collect all the test answers and so forth.

Let's move on to the third service I wanted to talk about. It is a local service where I can select schools for my children, if I have any. I live in a municipality, one of the 290 Swedish municipalities east of Stockholm called Nacka. It is a suburb about 15 minutes from central Stockholm. In this service, I have my page. I can log in using my BankID. I communicate with my municipality. For example, I can choose schools. When I do that, I get a list of schools and here I can select up to three options, I then apply for my kid to that school. I have an old record in my pages for my youngest daughter who is 20 years old now, but it was when she was going to start grade 7. Here we can see the status, she was placed in the school called Skuru.

So, these were some examples: file for tax return, a national service; check health record and book the doctor, a regional service; and select schools for children, a local service.

Figure 6.3 Aspects of Equitable and Inclusive Public Services (Adapted from Juell-Skielse, Mattsson, Persson, & Uppström, 2011)



Aspects of Equitable and Inclusive Public Services

When we talk about equitable and inclusive public services, what kind of characteristics, what kind of requirements could you place on such services? I think this is, of course, a much bigger debate than I will be able to cover in this presentation. I wrote a paper a few years ago where we looked at four important aspects of this type of service: the democracy aspect, the service aspect, a professionalism aspect, and an administrative aspect (Juell-Skielse, Mattsson,

Persson, & Uppström, 2011) (Figure 6.3). From a democratic perspective, what can you expect? As you can see, all these services include some kind of interaction I have some influence over and also responsibility for my own situation. I interact with the government at the different levels. Also, the service should provide legal security and equal treatment for me. Even if I do not make as much money as my neighbor, I should be treated in the same fashion. I think that is one of the key things with public e-services is that each citizen is treated in an equal manner. But also, transparency in government decision-making. I can go back and check the grounds for a decision made by government, and I have the right to appeal if I do not like the result. In these three examples, there are buttons I can use in order to appeal. From a citizen perspective, e-government and public services are usually available 24/7. This is not true for the tax agency services. They are only open between about 06:00 and 22:00 hours. This is because they do batch jobs when they process the data, which means that they cannot be open during a period of time, and they have decided to shut down during night. It is also for the tax agency to be able to answer questions if something goes wrong in the services. So, they always have to have assistants available and monitoring the operation of the services.

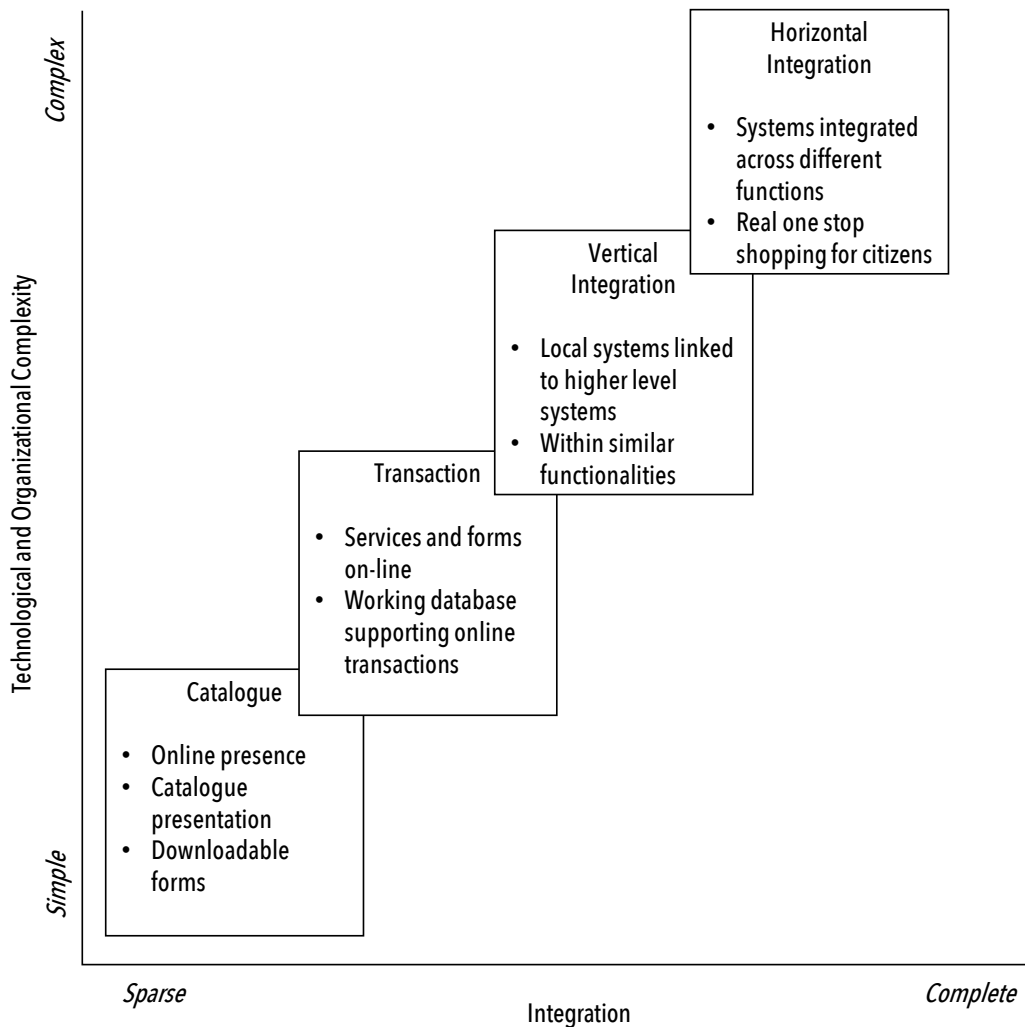
The next bullet here, service content, is easy to understand. I think is fundamental for the inclusiveness. We have a few minority languages which all these services should be able to handle. There could be special needs. If you have, for example, a hearing deficit. Also, from the perspective of the user, short lead times, which provide an instant response to your interaction with the government. From the other side of the table, from the officials and the public administrator's side, that cases are treated equally, and the simple case is automated if possible. We will look at that a bit later. This means that officials can focus on complex cases where they are needed the most, where it makes the best use of human resources. You can see traces of this from the administrative perspective as well. Efficiency is important and in order to get efficiency in public services you need to integrate between different agencies, both vertically and horizontally, and we will get back to what this means later on. Digital archiving seems to be a great barrier to really creating full efficiency in public services. It is a slow process, at least in Sweden.

E-service Maturity

Let's move on to e-service maturity. This is very old model by Layne and Lee (2001) (Figure 6.4). It was published 20 years ago now, but it constituted the first idea of how e-services develop and what makes a complex service and what makes a simple service. We go from very simple technical solution with a very low level or sparse integration. When we talk about catalog services, those are basically information services where you can read something about a service provided by a

public organization. The next level is transaction, where forms are available online and databases supporting online transactions. Vertical integration, then, means that local systems are linked to higher level systems, but you keep the functionality quite narrow, so we have a similar functionality. Then you have horizontal integration

Figure 6.4 Dimension and Stages of e-Government Development (From Layne & Lee, 2001)



where systems are integrated across different functions among different public agencies and so forth, and support for one-stop shopping for citizens. This ladder of maturity has been criticized because it is very 2-dimensional, and public digital government can develop along different axes. It could look a little bit different in different countries in different agencies in different municipalities, depending on the

context. So, it has been criticized for not reflecting reality so well. But if we use this as a template and look at the three examples I had, and look at the level of maturity for the three examples, the filing for a tax return is definitely a case of horizontal integration, where you collect data from a number of different systems and agencies before you put together an individual's open tax record. The other two are examples of vertical integration, where maybe the regional service is more complex than the local service. I do not know if the local service integrated with different school systems is as complex as the regional service, but they are both examples of vertical integration. It is more than transaction systems. They also integrate different systems over different domains in a useful way for me, as a user.

Single Point of Contact

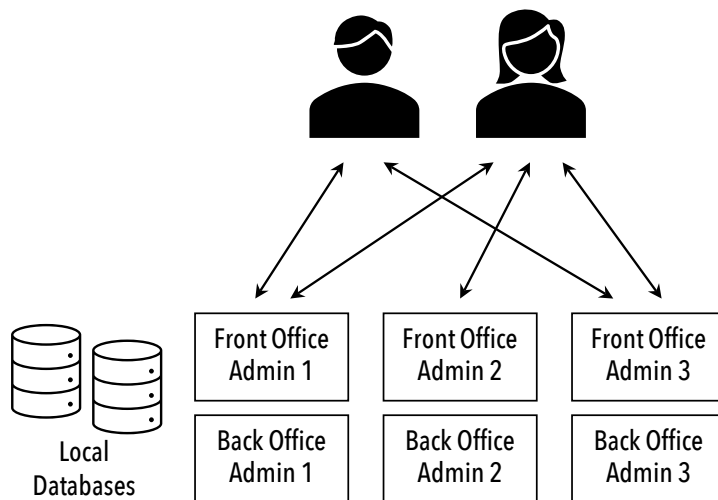
This leads us to the next point, which is single point of contact. This has been a big drive among local governments in Sweden over the last five years, to strive for a single point of contact. And why is that so? If you remember from one of my earlier points, I discussed the responsibility of local government in Sweden. You have schools at different levels, you have social services, you have elderly care, you have urban planning. All these areas are usually organized in one separate administration each, depending on the size of the municipality. The city of Stockholm, which has many inhabitants, has several separate administrations, while smaller municipalities with maybe 15,000 or 20,000 inhabitants might have fewer administrations.

Each of these administrations traditionally have separate organizations, and usually they have their own service desk or contact point (Figure 6.5). So, in a small municipality with, say, six separate administrations, you will have six different contact points depending on the type of case that you are handling. But many Swedish local governments moved towards the single point of contact for all administrations, so you, as a citizen, do not have to bother where to contact the municipality. You just go straight to the service desk or you use the e-services that are available from one point. This has pretty big implications, both for citizens (it becomes more convenient, hopefully), but also for the organization of the government and the technical architecture behind this.

Just let me give you a brief illustration of this. One smaller municipality in northern Stockholm has six different administrations, and you have to choose one when you come for assistance because they have six different entry points. Next, we have Skellefteå, which is slightly bigger but further North in Sweden, and they only have one point of contact, and it is open 24 hours a day. What does this mean to you as a client or a citizen? In a traditional architecture, you have to have contacts with each single department or each single organization, while in the new architecture you have a layer on top of each of the organizations, a point of contact, a service desk,

or in this case they call it “service orchestrator.” With some data about you, you only stay in contact with this service orchestrator, and they orchestrate the integration with the different organizations. In a traditional architecture where each administration has developed its own systems, you typically have a front office, you have local databases, and you have a back office for each administration. In a single municipality you would have 5-10 of these separate admins (Figure 6.5). It is not citizen centric. I have to contact each of them independently and that creates barriers between the administrations internally, so it is usually quite difficult for them to cooperate internally.

Figure 6.5 Traditional Architecture



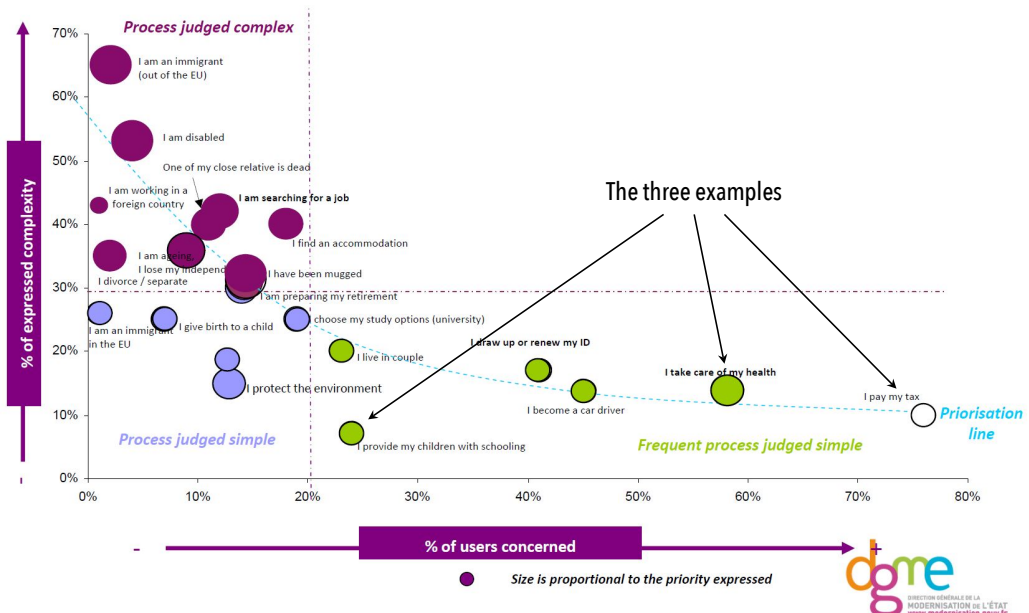
If you move from this traditional architecture towards the single point of contact, you have front office layers where you identify yourself in the digital authentication. You can access through multiple channels in services, SMS, mobile services, telephone, or physical contact. You have a seamless interface, so you have access to all the services irrespective of which administration is actually responsible for that specific service. I know from the case of Skellefteå (skelleftea.se) that they have identified 2,300 types of cases in their day-to-day operations. For each of these cases, they have assigned three people responsible for handling them. If you have good system support, this is not a problem. But, in the traditional way, it would have been handled by each separate administration. We also have back office layers connecting the back-office systems on the different administrations. So, we have a corporation infrastructure, we have local databases, and we have connectivity infrastructure. This municipality also can integrate technically with other agencies.

For example, the tax agency, the police, or whatever. This back-office layer supports collaboration within and between agencies. On an EU level, we have the single digital gateway as a strategic initiative. It is an example of a single point of contact on the supra-national level.

What are the implications of single point of contact? The advantages are we get a citizen-centric solution, which is good for inclusion and equity, we get a faster response time, we get central control over all cases. When a municipality moves towards this, it is something that they will realize makes it very easy for them to prioritize resources. It becomes a foundation for continuous improvement, which is a very good way to learn and to develop and to evaluate. For example, they found out that one of the top contacts with the municipality was to know the opening hours for the city dump. So, they created a very, very simple mobile service to inform about this. More or less overnight, they reduced the contacts by 10%.

It is a challenge to establish a multi-channel service desk with competent staff. You have to pick people from each of the separate administrations in order to create a good service desk. It also means you need to re-balance the responsibility between the service desk staff and the administrative staff, and this means a shifting of power among middle management. That leads to resistance and you need to work actively with this resistance to overcome it, at least that is the experience from Sweden.

Figure 6.6 Life events from the Citizen Perspective (Adapted from Waitrop, 2009)



Source: BVA / DGME Survey October 2008



Life Events

Talking about moving government closer to the citizen, there is this concept of life events that appeared about 10-15 years ago. What is it? The life event is when you look at something that makes sense of a person's life, for example, becoming a parent or starting a business. Then you organize all the public services around this life event. It means that I, as a citizen, when I face a certain event in my life. For example, getting my first job or when I become a parent, I need to have contact with different agencies within the municipality. If we create a public service for this life event, it will become much easier for me, as a citizen, to navigate through all these different contacts that I need to have. From my perspective, the vision here is that I should only experience it as one contact, while in reality it is a number of different transactions with different agencies. A survey made by the French government under President Sarkozy explores life events from the citizen perspective (Figure 6.6). I will not go into details here about all the different life events they define, but they define thousands of them. The size of the bubble indicates the importance. Here we have a number of users, a lot of people have to pay taxes, and here we have the complexity of the services. These are the three examples I brought up. I have to provide my children with schooling, I take care of my health, and I pay my tax. Here is a business perspective from the same survey and one of these life events is starting a business. It usually involves a lot of contacts with public agencies. You have to get permits, you have to set up the store somewhere, you need to get permits to treat food, you need to get a permit to employ people, you need to establish the firm itself, and so on and so forth. A number of agencies, a number of contacts.

Let's have a look at the Swedish solution to this. I think this is one of the few examples where Swedish public administration has made an attempt to create a service for a life event. As I told you, when you start a business you usually have contacts with a number of agencies, and it could be overwhelming and take a lot of time. For example, if you would start a trucking business, a logistical business, you would have contact with six different agencies in Sweden and it usually took 6 to 12 months to get your permit. They created a specific service for this type of business. They shortened the lead time to a few days instead. In this, the overarching service for this is called Verksam.se. It is government services for businesses and here you can start a business within a few minutes; I did so when I started my own business a few years ago. I registered a company and during a single subway trip I got the confirmation that the business was accepted.

There are some challenges with life events. A life consists of thousands of life events. In many life events, the relevance differs from person to person. It is very difficult, we have found, to make agencies take responsibility outside their own area

of responsibilities—they will not just do it. So, it means that one agency or a new type of agency needs to be set up to coordinate all other agencies that are involved in the life event, taking a lot of investment in order to get one of these services up and running. There are very high demands for technical integration and standards for sharing information between a large number of agencies. It puts a lot of emphasis on horizontal integration to get the life event service up and running.

Citizen Mailboxes and Digital Archives

One thing that has proven to be difficult, but also is important for an effective electronic or digital handling of services, is that we do not have “bridges,” manual bridges. There are two points where we found that there are many bridges. First is when you inform the citizen about the decision, then you have a manual mailbox outside your house. You have to convert the digital case into an analog case on paper. Today, we have system mailboxes, electronic mailboxes. For example, when I have filed for my tax return, I get the receipt to my digital mailbox. It has only four million users today, but we would expect to have at least eight million users of this. It is not being taken up super-fast. People tend to mix this up with an ordinary mailbox for email, but here you cannot answer and you cannot send from this one, you can only receive. People tend to think that it is not that much use, but I think it is pretty convenient. I do not get mails anymore from different government agencies; I get it into this mailbox instead. I do not get paper post; I get electronic mail.

On the other hand, we have the archiving. An archive in, for example, a municipality could be pretty huge with a lot of documents stretching hundreds of years back in time and the uptake of digital archiving is pretty slow. But, at the end of the day, when you move the electronic cases you have in your back-office system into the archive, it is very convenient if it is digital. It becomes safer, as well. It cannot catch fire. In the same sense it would not be flooded or whatever other disaster might happen to the paper archives.

Open Data and Service Ecosystems

Recently, open data has become pretty popular. The idea is that government agencies, municipalities, make their archives open, and here you can see the benefit of a digital archive. They make their registries open for third parties to build their services on. An example is a service called the Open Stockholm Portal and it is a service created by a private company based on public open data to help people with autism such as ADHD symptoms to navigate in the public transport system. It is an app that could be used both on a smart phone and on a smart watch that helps you to navigate. One important piece of data that they needed was the exact geographical points for the entrances to the subway stations. As it turned out, the position of the

subway systems at the center of the platforms were known in the public registry but not the entrance positions. At first, when you walked and followed the instructions you would end up somewhere in the middle of the street because the subway platform was right under your feet. But what you really wanted was the position of the entrance. This is an example where public data, what is needed and what is available, could differ a bit. The team that developed this app and subsequently started the company participated in a number of innovations and contests. They raised money by winning these contests and finally were able to establish their firm. Now they operate this service as a company.

In the open data service provided by the City of Stockholm, there are many different types of data, annual financial reports, building permits, and also the registry of Giant Oak Trees, for example. There are lots of public data with various degrees of importance for third party service developers. Different formats make it sometimes very difficult to use. You have to convert between different formats, but as we get more and more used to open data, I think the formats will converge. There is a directive about public sector information in the European Union which stipulates that much of the public sector information should be available for reuse and they believe that this is a multibillion dollar or multibillion euro business, that is possible to create based on the proper use of these open data.

We can think about open data as an ecosystem and this is how you can create value from open data involving different types of actors. You have the role of data providers and then you had different types of developers and end users. There are challenges with open data. The initial idea was published 'and they will come,' but it is not that easy. Developers' data needs are sometimes different from the available data that is published. Also, public agencies become data providers, which is a new role for them. They need to handle requests for data from developers and they sometimes need to process large volumes of data. For example, the Swedish Weather Service is only the 10th largest user of their own data, which means that they need to create a service capacity that is well beyond their own needs. Who is going to pay for this, and so forth? In Sweden, the current laws are written and created based on paper and not on digital data, which creates uncertainties. Do we need to collect a signature or not?

Automation of Public Services

There is a recent trend where we tend to implement more and more software robots in public administration. It is often called robotic process automation and it imitates software programs we call robots, which imitate human behavior. They perform tasks on the user interface of the available systems, primarily back-office systems. They are pretty fast to implement and they are very time and cost effective.

They are user-driven rather than IT department-driven. It is a simple form of artificial intelligence that also could be the platform for more advanced implementation of the artificial intelligence, machine learning, video processing, and so forth. We made a survey this spring and it seems like about 20% of Swedish local governments and regions have implemented at least one software robot in their administration. About 50% plan to implement and it looks like the municipalities are a bit more positive than the regions at the moment. About 1/3 have no plan but it doesn't mean that they have a plan not to implement RPA, although some have it. Some just haven't yet dealt with the issue. The goals here are to free up time for the civil servants and reduce costs to case management, but also to increase citizen service and increase legal certainty in case handling. Using robots, you will always treat the case in the same fashion and through the robots you can also implement regulations.

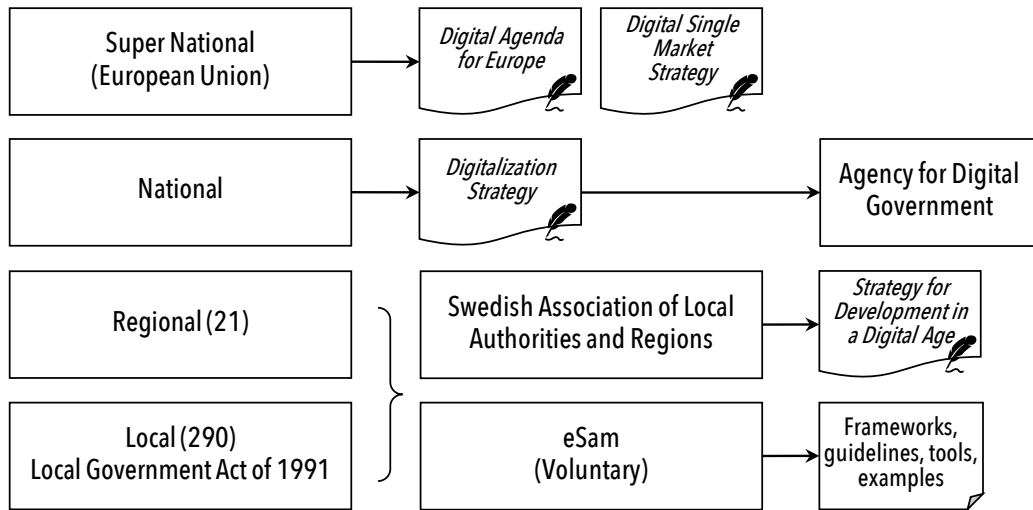
However, it can go wrong, like in this case in Göteborg, where they used the robot and an algorithm to plan to do children's placement in school. There were 12,000 children and they used the linear distance for planning rather than travel distance. It was heavily criticized and children that used to have a 5-minute walk could end up having to travel 45 minutes by bus instead. Hence, the title of the newspaper article, "Children are not birds, they are physically attached to Earth." (Dagens Nyheter, 2020)

Swedish Strategies and Action Plans: Weaknesses in Sweden's Digitization

How do we govern e-government development in Sweden? What are the different strategies and action plans that government is using to lead e-government implementation? This is a very complex picture (Figure 6.7). At the left side, you have the four levels of government. You have national, regional, local, and the supranational European Union. Europe has two very influential documents and strategies—the Digital Agenda for Europe and Digital Single Market Strategy. Sweden has a national digitalization strategy. The first one was published in the 1990s and was called the 24-Hour Authority and the current strategy is called the Digitalization Strategy. They have also set up an agency for digital government which is called DIGG. It is one of several agencies that have been put in place by national government. National government cannot control exactly what is done at regional and local levels. They can only have influence because of the Local Government Act from 1991, which stipulates that the local government has a great deal of authority over its own business. It also means that they need to develop their own e-government plans and strategies and implement their own systems. However, they

collaborate in an organization called the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions and they have their own strategy for development in the digital age. There is also a voluntary organization called *eSam*. *Sam* means collaboration in Swedish. So, *eSam* means e-collaboration. They have frameworks, guidelines, tools, standards, and examples that they share among each other, and it is open for anyone.

Figure 6.7 The Ecosystem for Sweden’s Digitization



A few snapshots. The national digitalization strategy currently has five focus areas: competence, safety, innovation, leadership, and infrastructure. It is in Swedish, but you can read and translate—it translates very well into English if you use Google Translate. The agency I mentioned for digital government focuses on a few things. Accessibility to increase inclusion because we are lagging there. The minorities and their languages are not represented very well in the public services, the digital services that is, so they are working heavily with solutions to this. They are also focusing on the digital mailbox or the digital post, digital identity, as I mentioned, but that seems to sell itself because it is an interaction between commercial needs and public needs. Only the elderly are lagging there at the moment. Also, a solution for invoicing and e-commerce in public organizations since they buy a lot of services and channel that on to citizens.

Then we have a collaboration between local and regional government the Swedish Association for Local Authorities and Regions. They have their own strategy that has four pillars: management, governance, and organization of digital transformation; the architecture and security issues related the technical issues; information supply and digital infrastructure, digital archives for example; and a cohesive digital service. There is no manual in the digital services. Each area is, of

course, broken down in more detail such as the architecture and security area, where there are three goals, a common framework, systematic security work, open international standards, and so forth.

There are a lot of weaknesses in Sweden's digitalization. As I mentioned earlier, there is a high degree of decentralization in Swedish government, which means that every local and regional government had to reinvent the wheel and it leads to slow implementation and the lack of the use of standards. There is the dependency on outdated legacy systems. The first computer systems appeared in Sweden in the 1950s and 1960s and there were some public registries, for social security numbers for example, very early on and we still live with these all registries and systems and databases. They are a good resource but sometimes they are very old and hinder or become a barrier to digitalization. Some local governments have implemented a single point of contact but there are still many contact points for most complex life events. There are still many digital flaws that are non-cohesive. There are many manual bridges in the digital flows, for example, due to the lack of digital archiving but also a lack of standards. The Swedish National Auditing Office have issued a number of investigations and reports pointing to these weaknesses. So, future strategists will have to take these things into account in a better fashion. Also, the elderly are quite slow in adoption, which is a threat to the inclusive aspects of public digital government.

So, thank you. That will be the end of my formal lecture.

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This lecture is available
on YouTube at:
<https://youtu.be/GnxiWeqDyUQ>



Digital Platforms for Promoting Public Engagement and Local Democracy

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(Lecture presented September 10, 2020)

Thank you, participants, for having me, even if only in a remote way. But I think that is one of the nice advantages that we have with this COVID virus, that we start to engage more also with the distance, which allows us to engage more with diverse opinions, diverse experiences, and have even more intense exchanges across borders and across institutions. And thank you very much for having me in your series of discussing new topics in public administration, and it is a particular honor for me to connect basically three topics for you. On the one side, the experience of the small country of Estonia, then the topic of open data – how data-drivenness can actually provide for new ways. And that is where I link with the topic of innovation for new ways of creating public services in the digital age. I am talking about how we as a government can provide innovation on the side of the citizens in order to do our jobs. That is, in a nutshell, what I will be talking about.

Let me first say I am not an Estonian citizen. I am actually German and Austrian by birth, but I moved some six years ago to Estonia because I really was curious about this small country—the size of Switzerland or the Netherlands, but only having a small population of 1.3 million—driving digital innovation so rapidly, so quickly and adopting it also on a wide, diverse level in their population. For example, in the most recent parliamentary elections, every second voter voted online. Almost 99% of the residents submit their tax reports online, with half doing it within the first 24 hours of its possibility. The government sets the 15th of February that we

can report taxes and on the 16th almost half had done that. It is incredible what they have been managing and what they have been engaging with. So, let me talk a bit about this phenomenon.

We have the issue, we have the trend, that our society is changing. I have been saying that even before COVID, but thanks to COVID it is even more a reality that we are going not to what we had in the past. Maybe in Rome or the Vikings or Italian or German city states, had this face-to-face society. I mean we are losing that more and more. We live in a territorial society. But as our seminar today also shows, we have essentially lost those borders and we are living in a global society and information, in particular, can travel with immediate speed from one place to the other. So, we also need to find new ways of not only providing information but also governing our reality that already takes place online. We need to find a way of how we can innovate, how we can provide this information that we have through those new means, for the greater good of creating new services. So that is exactly what leads me to this topic of government as a platform.

Government as a Platform (GaaP) is a concept that was coined as the idea of how can you actually create an open platform where all the people inside and outside government can innovate, can provide new solutions. How can you design such a system where you do not know what the outcome will be but, because those interactions between government and the citizens actually take place, you become a service provider and having kind of a service user community? Then, the question is what is going to be driving this idea that have government as a platform as we have with Facebook or with other social media platforms currently on the Internet? How can we use this technology to develop that into a better platform?

I will be talking about what is already a reality in Estonia. I will talk about this idea of government as a platform, about co-production, or co-creation, which is exactly this element of citizen innovation. Then, how does this connect to e-government; how do we get from classical electronic government to open government, something that would actually enable such a development? Then to see how we can come up with new forms of public service development, which leads me then to this idea of the data-driven, co-created public services, meaning this new way of citizens taking charge and caring for the greater good.

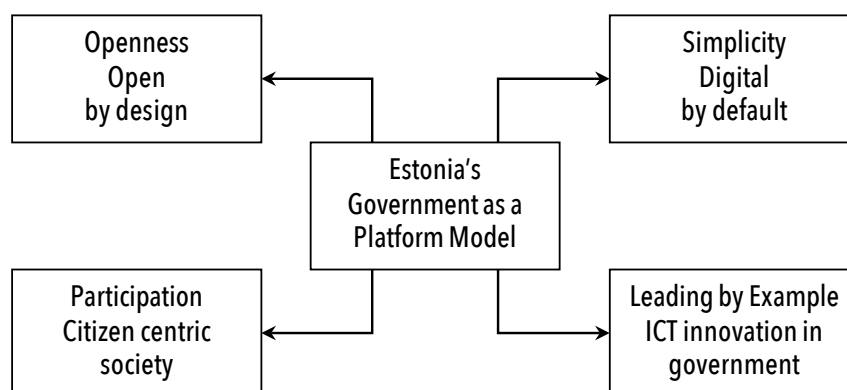
Government as a Platform: What Can Estonia Show the World?

Let me start with the Estonian example. In Estonia, understanding that this government as a platform is something that exists because there is open data, meaning data that is available without any restrictions; application programming

interfaces for programs to directly access that information, where innovation is possible through open standards through open source. Basically, also something that is following the startup principle that you start small and simple, you show that something works, and then you scale it up, meaning you look for the minimum viable product and then you develop it big. You want to decrease the barriers to participation, so you want to be open by default, you want to have architecture that allows the interaction, and you also understand that you need to learn, you need to be agile. You do not have this idea beforehand – the waterfall principle that you have the idea, you get the requirements, you start implementing, and then you have a product. No, you actually go in circles, and we'll come back to that a bit later. That is something that Tim O'Reilly (2011) has coined with this term of the government as a platform.

We have seven principles of GaaP (O'Reilly, 2011) by which we can measure if something is really going for this idea. First, open standards spark innovation and growth. Second, you build simple systems and let them evolve. Third, you design the systems from the beginning for participation. Fourth, you learn from the hackers; you learn from the people that actually put code together and develop the new applications. Fifth, then when you have data available, you mine it and you try to understand it to see where the implicit participation is. Sixth, you lower the barriers to experimentation so failure is not a problem. Finally, you lead by example and show how you can actually do that.

Figure 7.1 Where Does Estonia Succeed on the GaaP Model?



Margetts and Naumann (2017) have analyzed Estonia against this government as a platform (Figure 7.1). So, where is Estonia good? On the one side, openness. Estonian design is really open from the beginning. It is putting free, open technical standards first. It tries to be simple, not to overcomplicate by having digital

by default. So, in Estonia, when public services are designed, you first think about the digital channel. Only then do you think about how you can also provide the service to people who are not online. They also exist in this country, but they are getting fewer and fewer. Participation is the idea to have the citizens in the center and actually to bring them forward and to lead the example by having ICT innovation in the government and continuously provide new ideas around the clock. Estonia is trying to learn from its hackers. So, although it is more top down, the hackers do have regular garage hackathons where the government is participating, but that is certainly something where there could be more interaction.

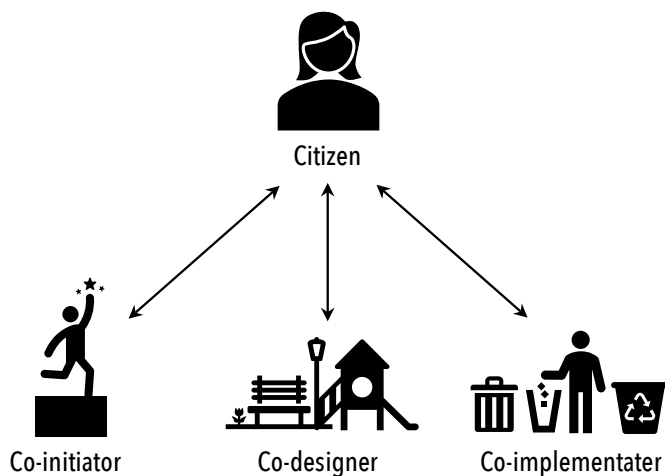
Data mining. Estonia has this wonderful data exchange platform which is called X-Road. It follows the principle of the once only, meaning that all data can only be stored once in the country. So, there is only one database that stores your home address, there is only one database that stores your health record, there is only one database that stores your home ownership, and that can actually then be connected through the X-Road. That also provides an account of what has been exchanged, what kind of data has been exchanged, when and where. But it is not storing the exchanged data, it is only storing a hash value thereof, and that provides access for data mining. Then the experimentation. This is something where Estonia is not doing great. There is still this fear culture, that you could actually fail. So, failure is still not part of the culture here, so that is something where Estonia certainly could improve.

Government as a Platform, Co-Production, and Co-Creation

Estonia is certainly a great example when it comes to certain elements but not in everything, so let us go to this idea of co-creation. How can you actually make sure that you use the government as this platform? Let's start with the idea of co-creation and co-production. It was originally coined by Elinor Ostrom, the Nobel Prize winner of economics, who analyzed the Neighborhood Watch project in Chicago, Illinois, in the 1970s. There was a process that is ongoing where people take the space that the state allows them and co-produce and, in that sense, they were co-producing security by watching the neighborhood where the police could not go. The idea is that co-production is a process through which inputs used to produce a good or service are contributed by individuals that are not in the same organization. You see different people coming together to do something for the greater good. Then, when we go for co-creation, it is more not only about producing but also about initiating and designing the process. So, it is a bit more holistic concept where it talks about the involvement of citizens in the initiation and/or design process of public services in order to co-create beneficial outcomes, and that is something that

Voorberg, Bekkers, and Tummers defined in 2014. This is sometimes used interchangeably, but if you are strict, if you are really going down on the academic level, then certainly we would need to distinguish those two terms.

Figure 7.2 Types of Co-Creation



So, why is citizen co-creation actually a nice way to go forward? Dissemination of information is really cheap. With the Internet, we can get information to the people in no time. The government is scattering data and why should the public have to pay for that data again to get access to it when they actually paid for it with their taxpayers' money? In reality, all the data that the government collects that is not sensitive, either for state secrets or data protection, should be available to the citizens immediately. This data can then be used to create new services which help improve decision making, productivity, and well-being. As such, this platform can be employed by stakeholders, not only government agencies but it can be companies, it can be NGOs, it can be individuals. As such, when you have this availability or this idea of government as a platform, then you decrease those barriers to co-creation because the power or the source data is generally available.

How to get there? There are basically three stages. First you have the design and planning of new services. Then you have the day-to-day execution in this government as a platform and how to involve co-creation. Then you have the monitoring and evaluation of services to make sure that you can really look into that. So, how would you have that in the traditional way? You would have those three stages. You would have to design, where you would do the information and nudging, where you would have brochures, health labels for cigarettes, etc. That is what you would have in the ICT area. You would have crime mapping data mining. In the

execution level, you would have academic alliances, embedded community health workers, etc. When we talk about the ICT facilitated co-creation, think about the Global Positioning System. Think about government open sourcing information and data. Then, when we talk about the monitoring, this open-book government, actually a Freedom of Information Act, is one classical way of providing the citizen co-creation. Federal registers or bulletins. If we talk about IT related ones, then we could actually see data.gov as a public repository for datarecovery.gov. So, there are already different elements.

Let's break down what co-creation really is and make it into three very simple examples (Figure 7.2). Citizens can either be co-initiators; they could say something like we really should set up a public statue for honoring a very important person this place. Then they start the discussion process and eventually the public agencies will follow up and put that statue up after a lengthy process. So it is really about initiating something where they are raising their concern that is being addressed. The idea of being a co-designer for citizens is when, for example, you involve parents to design the playground their kids will play on. They know best what the kids actually like and do not like. So, designing the playground would be another co-creation activity. Then there is what I would say is the most sophisticated level, the one where citizens are co-implementers of the policy. Think about recycling. Without citizens actually doing the separation of waste, recycling would not be possible. They are actually the best co-creators for implementing the co-creation policy and otherwise it wouldn't really work. Think always about those three levels; co-initiation, co-designing, and co-implementing or co-producing.

Let's go for some examples. For co-initiation; how could that be in the digital world? We could have petitioning. Think about petition.whitehouse.gov, where citizen input leads to government response. Think about checkmyschool.org, where concerned parents come together with the government to create a new school monitoring service. They said we need to have a way of actually monitoring the progress in the schools. When we look at the petitioning tool, it is one where you need to have 100,000 signatures in 30 days in the US, as an example. That is a classical co-initiation platform.

So what are the co-design elements? Think about open-source software, think about GitHub, the repository where people are putting up code and everybody can see the code and can actually also commit new code to that. People can co-design how the software should look. In our third element, or in the co-design, we had a pilot here in Estonia where we designed a real estate information platform where we used information from open data, Google Maps, which we combined with information about the real-estate from the city of Tallinn. We also put in crime data,

we put in health data, we put in noise levels. We put together different sources of data. We wanted to know from the citizens what would be the ideas that they want to have there and what are the data that they need and so we co-designed it together with them.

When we go to the co-implementation level, then also think about the possibility that not only data comes from the government but also citizens can provide the data. One platform that we usually get to see whenever a plane crashes is flightradar.com and flightradar24.com. That is actually a platform based on an open protocol where people put sensors in their neighborhood receivers and put the information that they received from the planes all around them into the Flightradar24 platform. Through that we are actually open sourcing, having availability for information that beforehand was not available at all. That needs the citizens to co-produce this element to co-implement. Similarly, we have an application where people install sensors to supplement government flood watch observations, so that you can find that on the website that I put up there. Another website that helps to fight corruption is where citizens using public services can report when they had to pay a bribe, so www.ipaythebribe.com is a very popular service that helps to fight corruption. In Estonia there is anna-teada.ee, where citizens post issues that they have, like a problem with a hole in the street or they see that some lamp is not functioning. They report it to the government so that they can react to those issues and also address them. With ipaidabribe.com, you can choose whether you are a victim of having to pay a bribe, you can be a bribe fighter when you did not pay a bribe, or you met an honest official, which you can also report. Co-creation is a powerful movement that talks about creating public service or even creating public value through the availability of new forms of information and citizens co-producing our public good.

From e-Government to Open Government

Let us come to the world that we actually wanted to talk about at the beginning. E-government is something that has evolved over time. When we go to the evolution of e-government, at the very beginning it was the use of ICT in the public sector. It was pretty much when people started to use computers because it was hard to do the census, it was hard to calculate the taxes. That was basically in the 1960s, 1970s, when computers came about, and they were in just one small department, usually in the finance ministry. But in the last 10 years, it has grown into a prevalent field of research and practice that is driving the discussion of this digitization, this digital transformation process in the public. When the European Commission actually defines e-government, it talks about rethinking organization

and processes, changing behavior so the public services are delivered more efficiently to the people who need to use them. It would now enable citizens and enterprise organizations to carry out their business with government more easily, more quickly, and at a lower cost. So you see that definition is really not talking that much about the about the technology but it is talking more about the business process reorganization, talking more about this element of reform rather than this technical inducement of change.

So why do we talk about like the need to go from e-government to open government? In particular, in the beginning, e-government was very tech focused. It was really focused on making sure you can use that technology, but it was not talking about what the users needed. It did not think about the organizational aspect and it also did not take into account the legal and policy dimensions of ICT development. It also assumed, very often, that if the service works in one country it is for sure going to work in another country. It completely neglected the need for adapting to the local context. With this demand for going for good governance of this element, having more understanding, better understanding of KPIs, this push in government got even more focused and there was a need for having a much more holistic view of e-government. This development through good governance going for a new way of e-government, it is really about making sure that we have e-participation, meaning having the possibility for citizens to prepare and to develop new ideas to input into democratic decision making. It is about deliberation, about formulation of policy. Then, on the other hand, e-governance and public governance, where you focus on the organization efficiency aspect and also include citizen participation in there. That led to a new coining of open government, which really got this huge push in particular when Barack Obama was voted into office. On his first day in office, he put a memorandum forward to the heads of executive departments and agencies where he said transparency and open government is key. The Freedom of Information Act is important in that you have openness that prevails and you actually commit to accountability and transparency. That, in turn, in the executive order from 2013, was talking about making open machine readable the new default for government information. He actually brought this open data approach into government so that we talk not only about open data but open government. He talked about an open data policy, where he had an implementation range from 30-90 days.

What are the important elements? First, he was talking about collecting and creating information in ways to downstream information processing dissemination activities, use data standards, build information systems that support interoperability and information accessibility, strengthening data management and release practices,

and strengthen measures to ensure the privacy and confidentiality, and incorporate new interoperability and openness requirements in the core processes. While I have to say it is certainly true that the US has amongst the largest number of datasets available in the open, not all of them make sense. Some of them are just data dumps. Somebody put the data on a website, and nobody can use it. Sometimes it feels a bit like what the US did is basically replace a sense-making data exchange with just putting the data out there. That is not what you really want.

Let's go to this idea of open sourcing. What is the other key element next to actually having data and putting it up on a website? Software is open source based on the license that it is under. The open-source initiative defines open-source software as software that can be freely used, changed, and shared, modified or unmodified by anyone. The software is made by many people and distributed under the license that is compliant with this open-source definition. What does it mean? It means that you need to be able to freely distribute the software. You need to be able to have the source code, the machine code that tells us how it works. You need to be able to derive new work from it, so you are not locked-in, that you are not able to create new things out of it. You still need to maintain the official source code and its integrity, but you can add on. You always need to refer to what was the original official code. It can actually become quite tricky when you want to find out who produced the code. In a large, open-source project, you are not allowed to discriminate against any persons or groups and no discrimination against fields of endeavor. You need to distribute the license and the license should not be specific to product and not restrict other software. It also needs to be technology neutral.

What are the key open-source licenses? We have on the one side the General Public License, where anyone can copy, distribute, or modify the software. It also allows for applications to be distributed commercially but they need to be in GPLv3. The Berkeley Software Development License is the one that really allows everyone to freely use, modify, and distribute as long as the copyright note is included in the source code. This seems to be the most liberal open-source license. When we turn that into open data, we take this idea of open-source software where it actually works already very well, and we turn it into data. It means that open data is a set of policies and practices. So, the data should be accessible, you need to place the data online, so on the platform. It needs to be standardized, so you need to use standard common format and not proprietary ones. And it needs to be reusable, so you need to put it under a license which allows people to use the data. It is not like you can look at the data and that is it. You really need to make it usable. Open data, as such, is then the response to the changing technologies and society. It allows us to do the technical change, where we have a bigger bandwidth. We now can do video conferencing

across continents. Imagine that if that were thought of even 20 years ago, video conferencing will be such an immersive technology by now. We can share all layers and then analyze information. This created a demand for open data. We also have the social change, where the authority becomes decoupled from institutions, intuitions become less important. People really want to check on the basis of what is the evidence for the practice. We want to be able to really *see* what is there and not only be told. We are starting to question power as defined by Niklas Luhman. We are starting to take charge as citizens. In modern-day life, open data almost becomes a must. But it also means for us that open data is what open data does. Whatever you do with it, the practice is the one that defines how it is being lived. In the end, what people really expect from open data is the mashups, the visualizations, the websites. It is basically what has started with Google Maps. You can easily embed them in your website and you can make mashups, you can provide your own information on those Google Maps. This is exactly what people expect. Open data has almost turned into a philosophy and into a movement, which tries to counter the movement of intellectual property that tries to lock information in, where you have information as a commercial asset.

Open source revitalized the movement for common access to knowledge and information. In the end, open is the ethical good and the only way to support global collaboration. Why should you limit the information in one country only because you want to make money there, if in reality it would allow for all the world to benefit from it and provide more information? Data is actually the foundation for a collaborative web. Tim Berners-Lee, who was the inventor of the World Wide Web, envisaged the web not just of documents but also datasets where people collaborate with less friction across organizational boundaries. If you know the story about how the World Wide Web came about, Tim Berners-Lee was a researcher at CERN, which is the world leading research facility for physical research, looking down into the components of atoms and so on. Researchers got seconded to Geneva in Switzerland from all around Europe and then they wanted to share the information with their research groups back home. So, the World Wide Web was essentially not about just websites and information, but it was about providing datasets to the people back home. It was already about open data and the web of open data is really about leaving the web.

You need to have some kind of open government principles to really create government as a platform, so you need to have accountability, you need to have transparency, you need to have openness. When we turn that into open government data, we want to make decisions based on information. Information is essentially data plus the context in which it is being used, and data is encoded information. Data

can be manipulated by computers, it can be sorted, filled with remix, turned back into information in diverse ways. So, it is really important to understand the differences of what you can do with the data. Governments in the past have taken on a monopoly role when collecting data. It was the first ones that actually shaped the data collections as well also the records of the world. So how the world is being seen is also something that the government is defining. Government data that is available is, in the end, a product of political decisions. Is it good that there is a government monopoly on data collection? Do we still need it today or is it something that we can open up? If we do that, then we have a revitalized democracy where we can produce new socially and economically valuable software, but we need to see if it can also work as a political action. Will it help us with having economic growth that we have open data as a platform to generate innovation and can it generate value? But for that we need to have raw data that is produced into usable data.

What we see very often is that we need to overcome the sorts of production reform engagement to support it in practice. We need to get more research on that. The openness of the data can sometimes take the trails we might use to trace its impact, and we also need to see about that. We can see open government data is going global. We see more tech companies that are based on open data, we see new companies that are helping the public in developing that, so it is an indication that there is something really big going on.

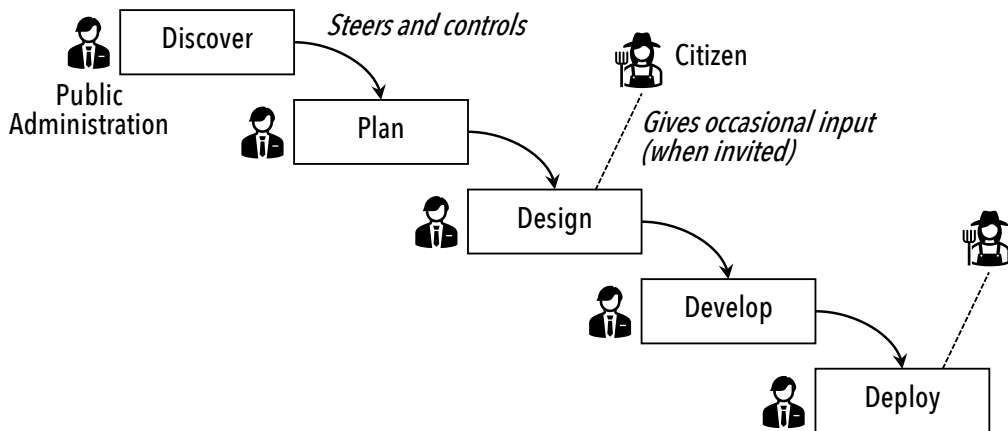
Public Service Development

I know you are here not just to hear about open data. You are here to see how this innovation, this value creation, becomes a reality. That is where public service development really needs to change, and that will be the last part of my lecture. When we talk about the traditional public service delivery, it is usually a top-down approach. Government drives the process. It basically knows what the citizens need. It makes a law which is planned, which is designed, which is delivered, and then is evaluated. The public administrators are the brokers between the society and the political system. They know what is good for them, so to speak. But in reality, that is slow, it is inefficient, it is departmentalized. You can talk about those silos in public administration. You all know that very well from your own research. It provides many inefficient services.

There was a start in the 1980s to have a more efficient way of services, to have more focus on citizens, and to actually have a more business-run style of government. Think about NPM and all its pitfalls. Still, the traditional production cycle of service delivery is the same. There is some planning, there is the design, there is the delivery, there is evaluation. What fits very well into this development process

is the waterfall model, which is the key software development model, I would say, up until the Internet age. It was a very linear development model. You first start with requirements that are outlined at the very beginning of the development. It is where public administrators steer the whole process, where they go about discovering the issue, of planning, designing, developing, and then deploying. But it is not something that is really helpful for cooperation, collaboration, or communication.

Figure 7.3 Traditional Top-Down/Waterfall Public Service Production Model



So, let's look at that in a more graphical way (Figure 7.3). We talk about having a need for something, we plan it, we design. Sometimes we involve citizens in this design phase, and we ask them if what we are doing is good. But then you actually handle it. You make a procurement process, you ask the developer to implement, and then at the end, when the deployment happens, the citizens suddenly come in and say, "Oh ****. This is not what we can use at all." Then the government has a big problem. Do we need to go back to the very beginning and how can we have this costly process be improved? This is usually only when you have another agency that comes in with a new law.

There is a need for a different way of developing public service. There is a different need of capitalizing on this knowledge of the citizens, of the knowledge of the users, that they know what they really *need*. But somehow, they are disconnected from the administration. How do they feed into it? They can make some pledges; they can take some other steps. But isn't there a way where they can take charge, where they can co-create public services using the data that the government provides them with?

Data Driven Co-Created Public Services

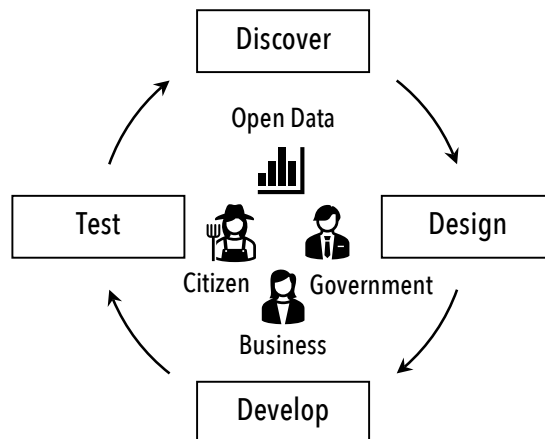
Here I will come back to the Estonian example. In the definition of the law, “public service is a service that the state, local government or a person in private law performing public duties providing at the will of a person for the performance of their legal obligations or the exercise of their rights.” Really, a very straightforward description. In the UK, public services are something that should increase choice and give people control over the services they can use, allow local decision-making, allow decentralizing power. It should open up public service provision, give everyone fair access, make public service roles accountable. It is all a bit more open. For example, the European Commission – sorry for being so Eurocentric but that is where I do my research, of course, but I hope you can still also fit your examples into this. The European Commission, in its vision for public service, talks about public services as services offered to the general public and over public interest with the main purpose of *developing public value*. The future of government is less in the hands of government alone. Technology has empowered ordinary citizens by offering them a way to make their voices heard. Not only hearing the voices, but actually implementing. This is where the startup culture, the startup experiences, the experiences in modern production facilities, come to hand. It talks about not waterfall development style, but *agile* development.

If you looked on your mobile phone this morning, then probably your phone had shown you need to update two or three apps. You do not even notice it anymore because it is done so seamlessly in the background, but the software companies have started to produce or to revamp the software all the time, in cycles. They have an agile development cycle where they go through plan, build, test, release. They do that multiple times instead of having just one big release. This lean development that is behind the agile development principle is from this lean startup, where we talk about a minimal viable product, where there are fast cycles of build, measure, learn, and there is fast feedback from service users and easy to change directions and it allows to improve efficiency and effectiveness. You have an idea and you start building a prototype. It might not be functional, but it might only show the interface. Through that you have a product that you start to test with people, and you measure their feedback.

You can do that through data and based on the data you learn it allows you to get new ideas on how to improve the service. This lean development cycle is really something where you have an idea, you build it, you have the product, you measure the impact, you see the data, from the data you learn again, and you go multiple cycles. This is how startups like Facebook and others started to work. This allows for avoiding failure, and that is the key thing. You have faster feedback for the

service. You increase the speed at which the service becomes available to public, and you are able to change how it looks. It is not uncommon that a service that first was something in one direction became something completely different later on. This minimum viable product allows to have the core user as soon as possible and not longer than three months from the beginning of the project and have a beta and a test period. Through that, you are getting it much quicker to the end user, and you do not have a year-long process and failures such as they had in the US with healthcare.gov, the Obama system.

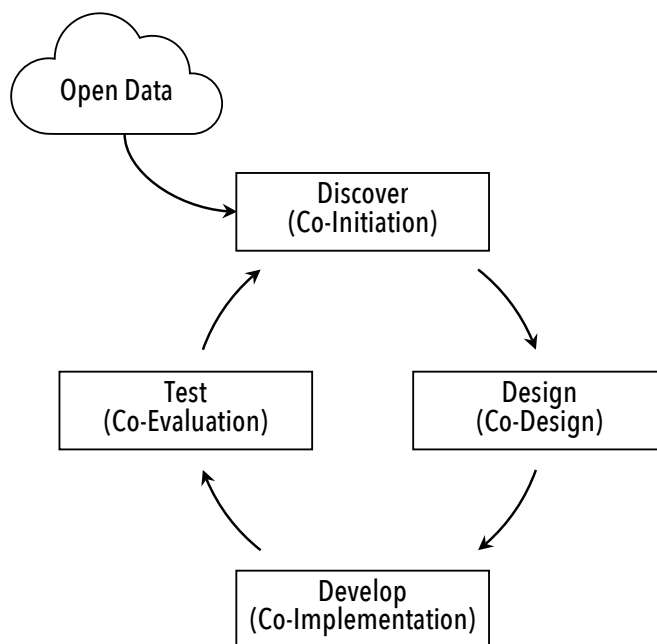
Figure 7.4 Lean/Agile Co-Creation of Data-Driven Public Services



How would this lean, agile co-creation of data-driven public services work? We first have the discovery of a need (Figure 7.4). We did not start designing with the users involved right from the beginning. We then start to develop and immediately roll out a first beta test. Then we discover again, so we do the same thing, just also in the public service. When we had our traditional public service, that needs to go into a data-driven way and they want to go into the co-creation way. We not only want to have a data-driven public service, we not only want to have a co-created public service, but we want to have co-created, data-driven public service. Now you will ask yourself, “What is that?” Think about a database of lost bicycles, which is provided by the police. When a bicycle is actually found by the lost and found of the city, they publish a list of the bicycles with the with the registration number of the bike. Now comes an NGO that says, “Dear citizens. I know you want to register your bike in case it gets lost so you are informed immediately.” So, they take this data source from the lost and found service of the city and combine it with a database where citizens can register their bikes themselves and if they lose their bike and it is found by the city, they are informed immediately. You have data from

the state, you have the co-creation from the citizens that provide us additional data, and together you create a new public service that the public would never want to do but is very much needed by the citizens. You can do that in many other areas. Think about restaurant testing like in Chicago, where it is happening, where on the basis of public data, they assess the likelihood of a restaurant being not maintaining hygienic standards. Then the food police come in and look into them.

Figure 7.5 Co-Created Open Data Driven Public Service Model



Let’s put this all together (Figure 7.5). We want to have this co-created, open, data-driven public service model. We want to emphasize the “Co-.” We want to have the agile development, we want to have the minimum viable product, we want to have lean development, and we want to have open data. So, we initiate the development by having open data at the beginning; we source the information. We allow the discovery and the co-initiation through citizens. We allow the co-design so that we start designing the service. They may even develop it, or it could also be done by the public or the other way around. Then we start testing. We have this ongoing process all the time. The important element is that the only thing that the state really needs to do is provide the source information as open data, ideally through APIs so that they are more current. Anyone can become a service creator. Anyone can build on open government data and provide their stakeholder input. You could have this open-source development that people put it also up on GitHub and start to study it

even more. But there is a focus on the communication, on the feedback, on the improvement, to actually increase efficiency and effectiveness. You would have service users, service providers, government, all coming together.

Finally, let me give you some examples from Estonia. Where we had our real estate pilot, we did user workshops to see what the people needed. We did open-source style development on GitHub so that people could also improve it. We had multiple stakeholders that were involved. Statistics from Estonia, the city of Tallinn, so we had the Ministry of Interior involved. We cleaned the data, we released it to the public, and we had this strong emphasis of co-creation. We now have this platform where people can see where the schools are, where the car accidents are. Now, when they look for real estate, they are much better informed than before.

Conclusion

Let me conclude government as a platform. It provides easy access to information. It provides participation in simplicity. It provides new innovative public service to be built. Estonia is a good example but of course it can get even better. Co-creation is allowing non-governmental stakeholders to get involved in the public service creation process. New models are needed to understand how government is a platform, also understanding public service creation. We want to get to government as the platform driving co-created, data-driven public service creation. We want the citizens, the companies, the NGOs to take charge and enable them by providing them with data and to allow much quicker new public services that the public would have never thought about and even maybe never thought they needed. Through that, we get better public value overall for all of us so that we are actually developing a digital society that not only is surveilling the citizen—which we hope it does not do at all—but first and foremost serving the citizen in order to create public value that we all can use so we can rapidly deal with user feedback and critiques.

And with that, I thank you very much.

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This lecture is available
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Digital Transformation: A New Focus of Thai Government's Policy

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(Lecture presented October 28, 2020 in Thai)

Good morning everyone. Today, I would like to talk about digital transformation in the public sector. I would like to focus on the transformation or digitalization of government organizations into digital organizations to create a digital government. We will look at the policies of the government as well as laws related to the transformation of government organizations into digital organizations or digital government. I will show you some examples of projects and platforms that are the keys to create a digital government. The last topic focuses on tools to develop or enhance the digital literacy of public officials at every level.

Before I discuss public sector projects concerning digital government, I would like to inform you about the general situation in Thailand. Before we look at changes in the organizations or the development of Thailand to become Digital Thailand or Thailand 4.0, we will look at changes in the private sector and other sectors, as well as how they prepare themselves. We have to look at the big picture of whether we are ready to become Digital Thailand. The readiness is reflected by how our citizens use the internet and social media. These are tools that can show the extent to which Thai citizens can access the Internet and how interested they are in using technology.

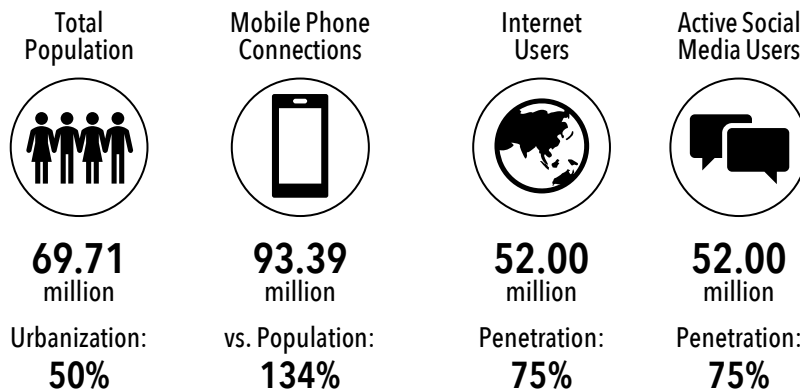
Access to the Internet

Hootsuite and We Are Social (2020) reported that among 70 million citizens in Thailand, there are 93 million registered phone numbers in the system, which is

more than the number of citizens (Figure 8.1). This data confirms how many people own more than one number, which is quite interesting.

Next, I want you to look at the number of internet users. We found that there are 75% or 52 million users. That means most Thai people have access to the internet for individual purposes such as information gathering, online services, education, and entertainment.

Figure 8.1 The State of Mobile, Internet, and Social Media Use in Thailand (Adapted from Hootsuit and We Are Social, 2020)



Next is social media users, which is one of the statistics that we usually look at. We can see that there are also 52 million users or 75% of all the citizens. We can assume from the data that most internet users are also on social media. This is the opportunity to access the internet; it means 75% of the citizens can access the internet and technology. In terms of infrastructure development, these data indicate that we are able to provide services to at least 75% of the citizens. Meanwhile, for communication, information, and online services, the data indicates that 75% of the citizens are our target group.

Private-Sector Digital Services

Online and Unmanned Stores

Then, we have other data that shows how most people start using services via online platforms, especially during the pandemic of COVID-19. People have taken an increasingly greater interest in online shopping, ordering food, and utilizing services via online platforms. The shopping behavior of Thais has evolved from going to physical stores to shopping online. Therefore, every business, regardless of size, must adjust themselves accordingly to this new behavior. If you do not have an

online platform, you will not be able to compete with those that do. We can see that some products or businesses can survive by adapting to the current situation. Furthermore, we see that there are unstaffed stores. For example, Siam Commercial Bank worked with the Sasin School of Management to open a store without cashiers. This type of store is well suited to the current situation since less physical contact occurs between individuals. They have been doing that since before the pandemic. This is an example of how they integrate technology into their workflow.

Face Pay

The next example of a private-sector change is payment. We have a case study of KasikornBank that uses faces instead of bank accounts as a payment method. The bank has been experimenting with this and called it Face Pay. If they can use faces instead of bank accounts, that means there are programs or tools that can differentiate between a human face and a picture, male or female, and can depict a wide range of facial characteristics. Such tools require artificial intelligence to distinguish human facial features, which is facial recognition.

The private sector is working on linking our faces to our bank accounts, which means we will no longer have to use a smartphone to scan QR codes when purchasing in the future since there will be a camera at the cashier counter with technology to read our faces. When the system gets your picture, it will check the database of the bank you use to see which bank accounts are linked to you, and you will be charged when it finds your bank account.

Peer-to-Peer Lending

Another change is Peer-to-Peer Lending (P2P Lending), which Thailand is in the process of developing but other countries already have. In comparison to the old system, it is like informal debt, where people lend and borrow money illegally. The reason why there is a platform where people can lend and borrow money among themselves is due to the difficulty in borrowing money from banks, which require many documents in order to get the loan. However, if we develop a system that matches borrowers who need money to run a business with lenders, we can reduce risks. With that, we have a platform that acts as a center or marketplace and is regulated by the Bank of Thailand. The Bank of Thailand has already established regulations for P2P lending, and soon, we will see people offering P2P lending services legally. This technology will collect the data of lenders, borrowers, and interest rates. The contracts will be in an e-Contract format and will be archived in a secure system.

The famous platform from other countries is Society One. Its popularity has made it the fastest-growing financial service provider in the world. Many countries

started to take an interest in this. Many studies have been conducted, and policies and regulations related to this came out. In fact, as you know, lending money between individuals is illegal, but now we have technology and regulations to support that.

Online Medical Service

Next, we have public health changes. Samitivej Hospital has a virtual hospital where you can meet with a real doctor without having to go to the hospital. Samitivej Hospital cooperates with LINE for online appointments to be booked with LINE. When the appointment time comes, we will be able to speak with the doctor via video call. If you are prescribed medicine, it will be delivered to your home by LINE.

Another example in this area is an application called Raksa, which was developed by collaboration between doctors. The application gathers different medical specialists who are willing to take part in the project. We can talk to them via this application. You do not have to stick to just one hospital because you can choose the doctor you want. If you are not experiencing any symptoms that require special testing, you can speak with the doctors and have them prescribe you medication. The advantage is you do not have to order medicine from hospitals. You can bring the prescription you get from the doctor and go to any drug store. It will be a lot cheaper than purchasing at the hospital.

These are just a few brief examples. There are actually many more examples of how the private sector has been adapting.

Legal Framework for Digital Transformation in the Public Sector

We have examined the general state of Thailand and how the private sector has been adapting. Now, we will look at what the public sector has been doing. The primary focus of what we will discuss is the public sector's policies related to digitization, especially when the government needs to transform into a digital organization, as a digital government. I will identify how the government can progress, develop, or adapt in order to be a truly digital government.

The government considers digital government as vital, as evidenced in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2560, Section 258 B, and other places where they talk about connecting data, exchanging data, open data, and implementing digital technology as a tool. In addition, there are the 20-Year National Strategy, the Current National Economic and Social Development Plan, and other policies that are about to be implemented and will be mostly about digital government. The constitution, plans, and policies call for specifically addressing government digitalization. We could see that digitization progressed very slowly in

the past. Our problem is not that we do not know how to do it. We know to do it, but we do not have the tools. There are no laws supporting digital government, so the process progresses very slowly, not going anywhere, and facing many obstacles ranging from budget to knowledge, development direction to laws. Everything is obstructed, so we are going nowhere. The Digitalization of Public Administration and Services Delivery Act (The e-Government Act) must therefore be drafted and implemented by the government. Here are the principles and essences of the act:

National Plan

This act is one of many acts in the digital area, but it is different from other acts because it gives us guidance on how to implement digital government. We had the problem of not having a clear direction on what, how much, and when to do something. This act tells us to make another digital government plan as a national plan which is a level-three plan because it is specific to one matter according to the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC). This plan guides the government on how to develop a digital government and lets the government organizations know what to do. This plan is now in the hands of the Office of the NESDC. Once it is approved by the NESDC, passed to the cabinet, and publicized in the Royal Gazette announcement, every organization will have to make its own separate digital government plan. Just like many years ago when we had to make an Information and Communication Technology plan according to the ICT master plan, now we do not have the ICT master plan anymore; we will instead have a digital government development plan.

Digital Government Development Committee

Now that we have the plan, another requirement is a digital government development committee. This is a national committee that will formulate and implement policies to ensure the success of the digital government plan.

Procedural and Operational Reform

Section 12 in the act is believed to be able to digitalize the public sector because it contains many facets. To become a digital organization, it begins with transforming organizational data into digital data. After that, operational procedures, information systems, and other service systems should be digitalized. When data and systems have been digitalized, people have to be digitalized too, that is to be equipped with digital literacy which is appropriate and needed to digitalize the organizations.

Next, we must have a digital identification system. That means we must have a digital ID for every public official and citizen. The systems to be developed must be secure, trustworthy, and legally compliant. Furthermore, in the service aspect, if certain services evolved with paying or receiving fees from citizens, the public sector

must have e-Payment to support that. Therefore, only section 12 is enough to digitalize the public sector in every aspect.

One-Stop Service

Section 10(5) results from the third topic, that is when services are digitalized, if each department or equivalent—300-400 departments in total—has one service, one application, or one website. Citizens will have to install a number of applications in their smartphones or remember a great many website URLs. Therefore, the government must implement a one-stop service which will be divided into services for citizens, businesses, and foreigners. The service systems still belong to the responsible departments, but the front end to services will be combined into one, separated by types of services. This will allow citizens to install fewer applications and remember fewer URLs. Moreover, if we have a digital identification system, that means you can use one digital ID to access every service. This is how digital government is born.

Connecting and Exchanging Data

To create a one-stop service, not only does the front end of all departments have to be combined, but the back end system must truly support one-stop service.

For example, do you know that when you set up a restaurant, there are ten licenses that you have to get from at least ten departments? What do you do then? Even though each department has an online service according to the third topic, we have to access each department's service, submit each one the required documents, follow-up with each of them, and wait for the results. There might be some payment as well; some departments required you to pay their counter services. We cannot consider this to be a one-stop service.

If we have a one-stop service as mentioned in the fourth topic, when we set up a restaurant, the system must show all related licenses in one form. We then look at those licenses. If they are not related to you, do not select them. When we are done selecting, the system will send our application to the departments responsible for handing out licenses with us filling just one application and sending a set of documents. The system will copy the data and send the application to each department. This is a truly one-stop service.

So, a one-stop service has two main aspects. The first one is a single point of access. Clients can file a single application with a set of documents. They can follow the status from one point and use one identification system to apply for every license. The licenses are e-License and payment is e-Payment. The second one is that to achieve this, every department's operations must be linked along with all related organizational data.

This act indicates that a data exchange center is to be established as a means of connecting the data of all departments. When a department wants to have other departments' data, they have to connect to the Government Data Exchange Center (GDX). The departments that own the data must connect with GDX, and the departments that want to use the data must connect with GDX. Every department must connect to a single location, and they can use data from other departments. The one-stop service system must rely on GDX since, whenever it needs data, it can connect with the department that owns it and use it to handle cases.

Data Governance

Once we have data exchange as well as a data exchange center, the data from each department must be accurate, complete, up-to-date, easy to use, and aligned with each other. The act states that data governance is required to ensure data is of good quality and easy-to-use.

Open Government Data Portal

After data is assumed to be of good quality and easy to use by data governance, the data that can be revealed must be made publicly available. The problem is which data can be made available and which cannot. Generally, we have the Official Information Act (B.E. 2540) that the public sector must adhere to. The act indicates what can be made available and what cannot. Normally, the departments are required to make their data available, but they may not and claim that laws and regulations are prohibiting them from doing so. However, the government must make all data available by default, except for data that are confidential or related to national security.

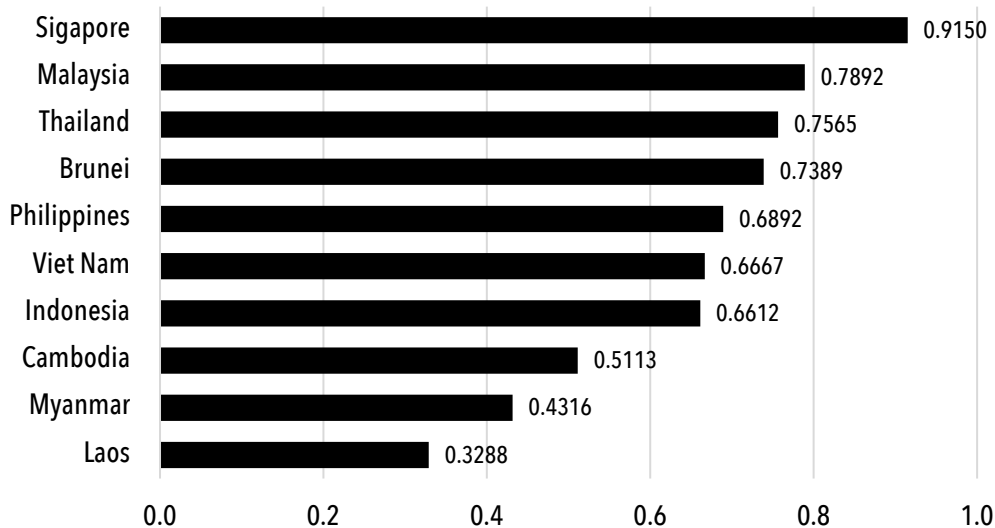
This act emphasizes that the government must have open data and implement open data tools including an Open Government Data Portal to enable every department to share their data. If every department shares their data to the Open Government Data Portal, we can go to the platform and see what data is available for us. All of us have the right to access the data, regardless of whether we belong to the government or the private sector. Even citizens and foreigners can use it since it is open data. We can use the data without asking for permission.

Digital Government Development Agency

Since we have been mandated to implement these seven topics, we need an organization to lead digital government development. All the topics I have mentioned will be monitored by the Digital Government Development Agency, which is a legal entity that ensures the success of the topics using tools and procedures.

This shows how the public sector places importance on digital government by creating a law specifically and clearly indicating the procedures. The e-Government Act leads to the development of standards and guidelines to put the act into practice. The government has established Data Governance Framework and declared in the Royal Gazette announcement. Moreover, they have also established rules and regulations for open data, so every department must adhere to these frameworks. Data must be made available and data governance must be implemented according to the frameworks.

Figure 8.2 E-Government Development Index for 2020 in the ASEAN Countries (Data from United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020)



Current Situation

E-government Development Index

The UN e-government ranking indicates that in July 2020, Thailand ranked 57th out of 193 countries, up 16 ranks from two years ago (United Nations, 2020). We have grown by leaps and bounds. Within ASEAN, Thailand is ranked third behind Singapore and Malaysia. Let's put Singapore aside since it is ranked among the top ten in the world. This ranking shows that one country with incremental growth can get passed by the country that has a giant leap in growth as Thailand has passed Brunei; Thailand is ranked third while Brunei is ranked fourth (Figure 8.2). This information confirms that Thailand has been going the right way, so we have dramatically risen to a good rank.

What does the UN consider when compiling this ranking? Infrastructure, internet access, online services access, development of individuals, digital literacy, and many other factors.

On the other hand, if we look at the private sector, Thailand places importance on ease of doing business, which is evaluated by the World Bank. The World Bank publishes this ranking every year. We are pleased that Thailand is ranked 21st out of about 190 countries in the 2020 ranking, up six ranks from 27th last year (World Bank, 2020). The rankings are based on the overall scores on ten topics, consisting of:

- Starting a business
- Dealing with construction licenses
- Getting electricity
- Registering property
- Getting credit
- Protecting investors
- Paying taxes
- Trading across borders
- Enforcing contracts
- Resolving insolvency

Government e-Service

Government e-Service or Online Service is one of the indicators that the UN focuses on. In fact, the indicators are just one aspect as our primary goal is to facilitate the citizens and businesses to use services provided by the public sector. The survey by the Office of the Public Sector Development Commission (OPDC) indicates that 280 services out of 3,000 are available online. OPDC classified these services into types that could be accessed by citizens from start to finish at one point. There are 75 services available online. 125 services are available for one-step request and online payment and 80 services are available for online request. This survey shows that government e-Service should continue to be improved.

Among government organizations, the question then arises as to whether they need to develop their services to align them with the e-Service as prescribed by the e-Government Act. Here we can check the guidelines. First, digital identification is needed, and it is supported by the digital ID platform. Next, requests must be submitted online by filling a single application form at one point, which is supported by Citizen/Business/Foreign Portals. Then, in the licensing process, the organizations must access the data of related organizations to get the documents

needed to get a license—the documents provided by the government—without having to ask citizens for these documents. This process needs the GDX Platform. In the payment process, if citizens are still required to pay the fee at the counter services, the services are not considered e-Government as prescribed by the e-Government Act. An e-Payment Platform is required in this process. Lastly, licenses must be in the form of electronic licenses which citizens can access from anywhere and at any time. An e-Document/e-License Platform is needed. We can see that there are core platforms supported in every process.

The Public Sector's Current Activities

After learning about the legal framework and the current situation, we will discuss the topics covered in the e-Government Act. Have they been implemented? How are they coming along?

Citizen Platform

It starts with a one-stop service. On the citizen's side, we will soon launch a citizen platform or portal, which will provide access to public sector data and services. This platform will offer services from cradle to grave and is categorized into 13 types of services such as civil registration, households and land, traveling, health care, education, work, and finance and taxation (Figure 8.3).

Citizen portal development is based on citizen-centric concepts. When we develop a service, we need to think about what the citizens want. We want a service that we can log in and verify our identities with a digital ID. We want to see information about our user profiles and all documents provided by the public sector in digital form. Information will appear categorized into sections. What title deeds do we have? What are our academic levels? Which university's diploma do we have? What medical benefits do we have? What welfare do we have? Do we have a car? When do we need to pay for vehicle tax? This means that this platform can notify us as it connects with data from the organizations. For example, it should notify us when it is time to pay vehicle tax, which you have to do every year.

This is what we believe the citizens need based on individual and personalized factors. If we can do this, citizens will not have to waste their time looking at 3,000 services provided by the public sector and decide what is related to them. Therefore, we will have a citizen portal that can connect to all data and services related to them.

Figure 8.3 Lifecycle Aspects Included in the Citizen Platform

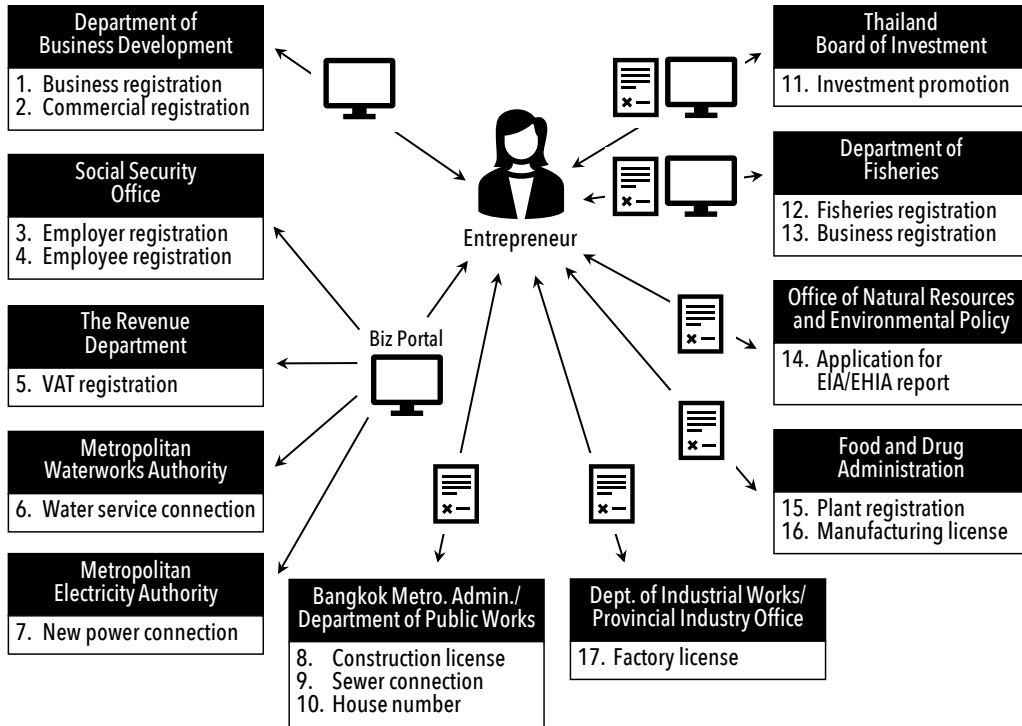


This is the concept of how we develop the citizen portal. We will soon launch an application specifically for this service. There will be a small number of services in the beginning and might not be comprehensive depending on the readiness of the organizations. The services that will be available through the application will be a front end, a one-stop service for all organizations, and a center for all public sector services.

Business Platform

Next, we will look at a platform for businesses. I have mentioned before that government policies are looking at ease of doing business. In fact, every entrepreneur is involved with these ten topics. You have to contact the public sector and other organizations about starting a business, dealing with construction licenses, getting electricity, registering property, getting credit, protecting investors, paying taxes, trading across borders, enforcing contracts, and resolving insolvency. The question is how the public sector can make these business functions easier, less time consuming and save costs.

I will give you a business as an example. Suppose we are an investor that wants to open a frozen seafood business. We realize that we have to contact 11 organizations in order to do so and there are 17 processes that we need to go through (Figure 8.4). The investor will raise the question of why they have to contact 11 organizations and go through 17 processes in order to open a business. Why does each organization ask for the same documents even though those documents are provided by government organizations themselves? This is the pain point of the business sector.

Figure 8.4 Opening a Frozen Seafood Business in Thailand

What I am trying to say is that the public sector needs to design its services based on citizen and client problems. They need to pursue customer-centric and citizen-centric approaches. When we understand a client's point of view, we can develop and design services that meet their needs or offer the right solutions.

If we look at the services and processes separately, we find that businesses have to pass many processes such as searching for information, verifying identity, filling out forms, filing requests, waiting for approvals, paying fees, issuing licenses, and sending out licenses. We have to change these processes and make it easier. This is the goal of the business platform development which will enable entrepreneurs to access all services related to the ten topics at only one point.

The business platform is a bit different from the citizen platform development in that it has already been developed and is available for business license registration. Based on the ten topics from the World Bank framework, it means Thailand has already transformed the first topic, starting a business, into an e-Service. Now you can use the service by going to Bizportal.go.th. You can register for 78 types of licenses covering 25 types of businesses. According to the data, only 300 licenses have been registered using this platform in the two years since launch,

which is very low. As mentioned, a part of this problem comes from legal limitations that many organizations continue to use the traditional procedure. This is our main obstacle.

We discovered that 13 acts hinder e-Service development, along with 28 ministerial regulations and 43 administrative agency orders. A total of 84.51% of these laws are easy to alter since they are just administrative agency orders. Therefore, OPDC has brought to the cabinet these laws that hinder e-Service development, and the cabinet concluded that for acts, they need to be presented to the council for consideration. After revising all of the acts, all organic laws must be modified within 2-3 months. For administrative agency orders, they are to be brought to and examined by the cabinet within 2 months starting from September 8, 2020.

Digital Identification Platform

For verifying identification, we currently have a digital ID platform in development. Soon, Thai people will have digital ID for verifying their identification, for telling who you are in the digital world, and for online banking. In comparison to the physical world, when we make a transaction, we need to have our ID cards to verify ourselves so they can make the transaction for us. To put it simply for a clearer understanding but might not be all correct according to its definition, a digital ID is a digital ID card. When we contact organizations via e-Service, we are not going to meet real officers, but we are going to meet the system. The question is how the system knows if Mr. A is the person who is making this transaction. The digital ID will help to confirm the system that it is, in fact, Mr. A who is making the transaction now.

To get a digital ID, citizens need to verify themselves at the district offices first. We call this Know Your Customer (KYC) which consists of normal physical KYC and e-KYC. For civil registration, they choose to do normal KYC first, but if the citizens can choose, they are likely to go for e-KYC. Why are we asking 70 million citizens to go to the district offices to verify their identities to get a digital ID? When will KYC be complete for 70 million people? We have to use e-KYC to distribute digital IDs.

The next question is how we can ensure that e-KYC is reliable. The Electronic Transactions Act (No. 3) B.E. 2562 which is one of the digital acts indicates a brief procedure. Other laws and regulations will come out to indicate how digital ID can be used to verify identity when using public sector services. In addition, the Digital Government Development Agency is going to publish regulations in this area to inform the public sector of the different categories of services that require different degrees of identification. Eventually, we will have digital IDs as a tool for

verifying our identification in the near future. This year, we will see a test run through the citizen portal.

Electronic Document Platform

From now on, documents provided by the public sector must be in the form of an e-Document. Regarding university matters, we are currently implementing a digital transcript project that Khon Kaen University is participating in. We hope that by 2021, all universities participating in this project will be able to provide digital transcripts for their students. We would also like the public and private sectors to accept digital transcripts.

Regarding the public sector, we are going to see electronic ID cards, digital house registrations, digital title deeds, digital military service records, etc. Every document must be transformed into a digital document as stated in the acts. There is an e-Document Platform to help government organizations with that. Each organization does not have to do all these by themselves.

Many people might wonder how we know that digital documents are real and provided by the organizations with the authority to do so. A way that helps to confirm that is a digital signature. The Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA)—which is the organization under the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society—needs to establish a regulation for this matter. The regulation is called ETDA Recommendation on ICT Standard for Electronic Transactions: Electronic Signature Guideline. It is for government organizations that do not know whether their digital signatures are legal and up-to-standard. I would like to say that we now have an act that supports it. The government policies are in line with this. We have the guideline for document digitalization and a core platform. What is left is the government organizations to implement it.

Universities can implement this as well because transcripts are not the only documents, there are also receipts, diplomas, and other documents. They can digitalize these documents. If you follow the guideline, you can use the platform as well without having to develop one.

Electronic Timestamping

When cases are handled online, having timestamping is crucial. We cannot use the clock of each server, as it may be different because this will create a problem when we need to use time as a reference. In general, we will set time on our clocks according to metrology to ensure they are set to the same standard as well as set our computer system and online services. We must implement e-Timestamping with a specific main server.

The advantage of e-Timestamping is that it certifies the existence of public documents; it tells us that they are really there. Having correct timestamping helps us know when the documents are issued, the exact time of when they are sent between system/service/server, and so on. The system will timestamp all the documents. This system is one of the methods that will help us determine if the documents are real or not. When someone makes a copy of a diploma in 2020, but the diploma has been issued in 2019, we can check if we have e-Timestamping. This system will ensure that the documents really exist.

Government Data Exchange Center

As mentioned earlier, a platform that has been in development is Government Data Exchange Center (GDX). This platform is a center for data exchange between government organizations. To put it simply, it is a means that allows government organizations to access the data of other organizations without having to directly connect with the organizations themselves. Some data are used by ten organizations while some are used by hundreds of them. If each organization accesses the data by itself, each organization's system will be busy with traffic. If our organizational data is accessed by many organizations, we have to have a system that can support hundreds of accesses. It is like having hundreds of roads leading to us or having hundreds of pieces of equipment installed at our place to build a road to let data run along.

Therefore, if we have a center for data exchange, we can access data in this center that connects to the data of the organization that owns it. There will be thousands of organizations that will use data in GDX because GDX connects with data from many organizations. Simply put, GDX does not store any data; it is merely a nexus for connecting with all data. The organizations just have to ask what data they want through GDX. This platform is one of the tools that allow the public sector to exchange data and encourage integrated operation. To create an integrated operation, there must be integrated data, not just an integrated procedure.

Now, Thailand has two important platforms for data exchange. The first platform is the Population Information Linkage Center which belongs to the Bureau of Registration Administration, Ministry of Interior. The center aims to connect citizen data within ministries. At the end of 2019, this center had connected with more than 100 services and more than 90 databases from 72 organizations. By now, they are likely to have made further progress.

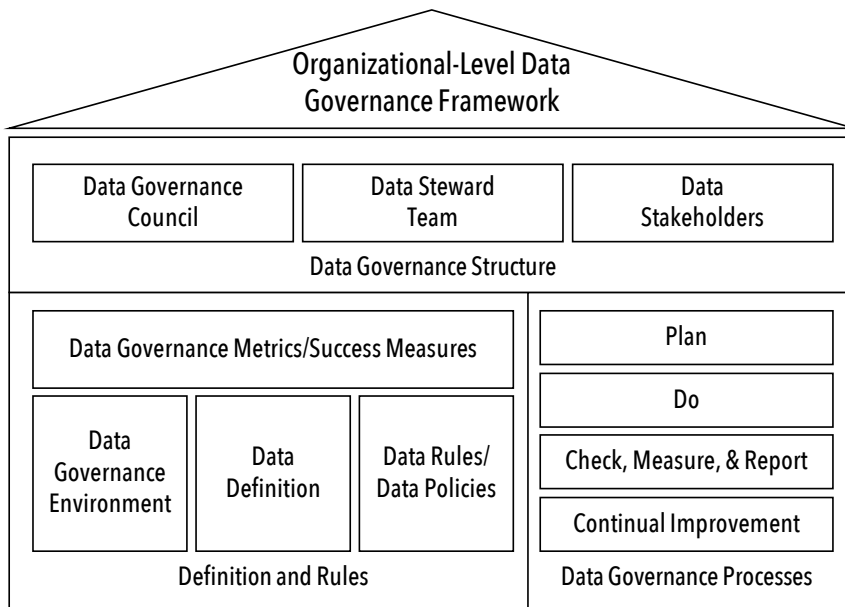
Another platform is Government Data Exchange Center (GDX) which is set up to comply with the e-Government Act. GDX connects with data of the citizens and legal entities as well as data that do not belong to citizens and legal

entities. It connects with the necessary data and exchanges it within organizations. Currently, it has connected with legal entity data from the Department of Business Development and with data from the Revenue Department as well as cooperatives. To put it simply, organizations can connect to GDX to ask for data that GDX has access to without having to go directly the organization that owns it. It is easy for citizen data too as it can connect with the Population Information Linkage Center, and at the same time, the Population Information Linkage Center can also connect to GDX.

On September 8, 2020, OPDC informed every organization that the GDX is a core platform of the public sector to exchange data, so the organizations that own data have to connect with GDX.

Therefore, the organizations that have been struggling trying to use data from other organizations do not have to go directly the data owner and can just connect to GDX. This is one of the activities to make GDX become one of the tools for digital government development.

Figure 8.5 Thailand’s Data Governance Framework



Data Governance

When we talk about data, we must certainly be able to control the quality of the data, which is called data governance. Government organizations need to have data governance. I will briefly explain how the public sector can manage data governance (Figure 8.5).

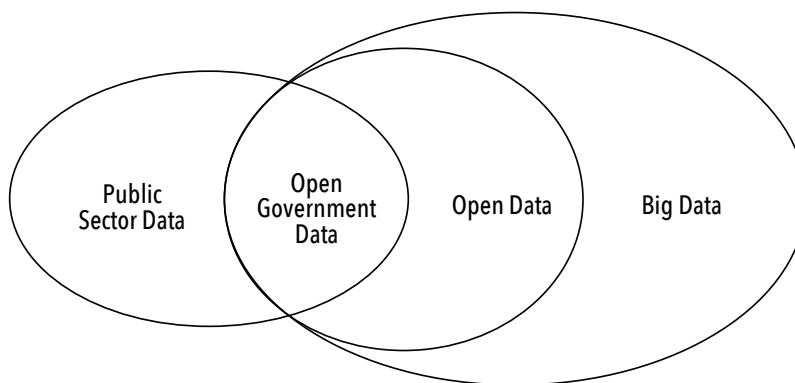
First, the organization must look into their data to see what data are available, how they are kept, which types of data are they, where it comes from—from within the organization or outside—who create it, who manages the data, how do they manage it, which server the data are kept, how often the data get an update, etc. That means the organization needs to check their data, then create a data catalogue to see what data you have. After that, the organization must examine other details to see whether the data is confidential, can be made available and can connect with other data, who will keep the data up-to-date, and who has rights to allow the data to be made public. These are examples of how the organization can manage the data. This is the first step of digital government development.

If you want to know whether an organization has data governance or not, you can look for these three components: data security, data privacy, and data quality. If they have these three components, the organization is considered to have data governance.

Open Government Data

Once we have data governance, next we have to consider which and how data can be made available. Open data is data that is made available for everyone to access and use. The Official Information Act (B.E. 2540) indicates which data can be made available and which cannot. For how to determine open data, the organizations can refer to the regulation for open data which is declared in the government gazette. We can see that there is a lot of data; some belong to the private sector while some belong to the public sector. Some data is big data (Figure 8.6). Each data has rules, regulations, and procedures which may be similar or different.

Figure 8.6 A Conceptual Framework of Open Government Data

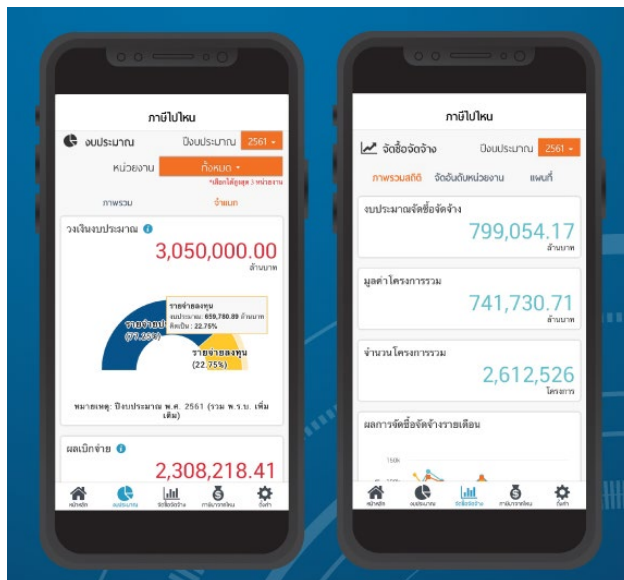


Regarding government open data, it indicates how we are moving toward open government. Open government starts with making all data available—except

for those that are confidential and related to national security—especially data on spending. We can see that the e-Government Act indicates that there must be a center for open data which we already have at data.go.th. Now, we have around 2,000 open data sources from various organizations. Many organizations provide open data via Application Programming Interface (API) to allow people to easily use data. There are many types of data available on this website that you can use without asking for permission.

An example of the use of open data is when the government enacts a policy requiring all government organizations to make their spending data available, which began in 2015. Data from the Bureau of the Budget, data on the procurement of every project, data of revenue collection from the three departments, income data from state enterprise, data on tax collection from local organizations are required to be made available in the system called “Where is our tax?” (govspending.data.go.th) which is available both on a website and mobile application (Figure 8.7).

Figure 8.7 The Interface of the “Where Is Our Tax?” Application (From Digital Government Development Agency, 2020)



When you install the app called “Where is our tax?” and open it, the app will show government projects near you that use a budget to run. When you click on it, you will know how much the project has spent, the procurement procedure, companies that are hired, duration, disbursement process, and whether the project has been completed or is still in progress. This tells you that the public sector wants to create transparency with open data and let citizens participate in it. This

application is run by Digital Government Development Agency in collaboration with the organizations that own the data. We cannot make this application fully functional unless the government organizations make their data available to us.

Aside from checking the data of each organization, we can look at spatial data with this application to see which provinces receive higher budgets, which provinces receive lower budgets, which provinces have higher tax income, and which provinces have lower tax income. If it is data on spending or procurement, we can dig down to the district level and local administration level. We can check the details of the contracts. If the projects include location, we can see where the money goes.

Citizens will be able to report back to the government if they find out that a certain project has problems or something is amiss. If the report involves corruption, it will be immediately sent to the Office of the National Anti-Corruption Commission (ONACC) or Office of Public Sector Anti-Corruption Commission (PACC). If we find something and we want to make a comment or share it on social media, we can put some words and immediately share it on social media with a sharing system. In addition to open data, this application also allows citizens to have a voice in government spending.

Guidelines for Public Officials' Digital Literacy Development

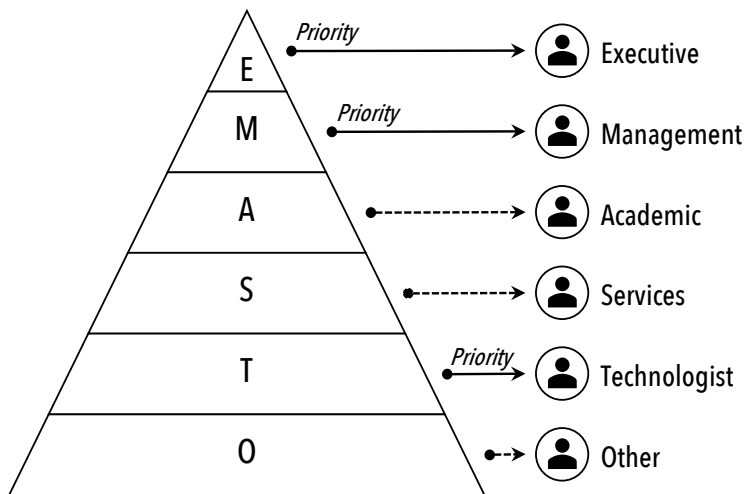
You can see that we already have policies, plans, and laws. We also have many platforms such as a one-stop service platform, citizen platform, and business platform which has been implemented. We also have core platforms such as Digital ID, e-Document, and e-Payment which are implemented for the government organizations to use. Organizations no longer need to develop their systems from scratch. You can use these core platforms for free if you need to. This is how Thailand has been developing its digital government and has been doing so for some time.

Public officials' knowledge on these matters should be of concern. Honestly, government officials still have limited understanding and digital literacy. Therefore, OCSC, which is considered to be human resources of the public sector, has categorized people into six groups, from the executive level to the operational level (Figure 8.8). They indicate which digital skills and digital competencies each group should have. Once the OCSC has completed that, the committee will approve and announce it to all government organizations.

After that, the office of the Public Sector Development Commission, OCSC, Thailand Professional Qualification Institute (Public Organization), Digital Government Development Agency (Public Organization), and Office of the

National Digital Economy and Society Commission will work together. There will be tools for the public officials to evaluate themselves and see what they lack. Once they know what they are missing, they ought to find out where they can learn more about that. Places, where public officials can learn about digital literacy, will be provided by Thailand Digital Government Academy (TDGA) which is an organization under the Digital Government Development Agency and serves as a center for improving the digital literacy of the public officials.

Figure 8.8 Target Groups for Digital Literacy Development



As there are about 3 million officials, Thailand Digital Government Academy will design courses for those officials based on the digital literacy standards provided by OCSC. The courses are to be distributed to all universities and institutions. If you want to be our partners in making officials better, we can offer you these courses, and you can hold them at your place. However, before these courses can be given away, they must be accessed and approved by the Office of the National Digital Economy and Society Commission (ONDE). When they pass ONDE, we can collaborate with universities and institutions to help us deliver training using these courses.

The training will provide individual records for officials. This record can be used for promotions and raises. You will be checked if you have passed a certain area of digital literacy. OCSC will have to design how we can use digital literacy as a reference. This is one of the systems that the public sector is currently working on and will require cooperation from universities.

Conclusion

What I have discussed is the progress of what the public sector has been working on, which might be considered at an early stage. I have to admit it was not easy to get to this point and we will push forward to provide a concrete result so the citizens can experience a digital change. The government needs to work on plenty of things, especially in collaboration with government organizations, but we must start from there. We must increase digital literacy among the people, and universities can play a role in this.

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