BOOK REVIEW

Local Governments in the Digital Era

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The beginning of the book titled, *Setting Sail into the Age of Digital Local Government Trends and Best Practices,* is based on identifying the questions concerning the roles of E-Government in developed countries such as America, Germany, France, and Japan—all of which have been influenced by the change of information technology and public service delivery as well as role of citizens toward public management. In other words, the influence of information communication technologies affects the public management and results in E-Government affecting how the government works, especially the local government in the developed countries.

The author's attempts to answer the question focus on consideration of E-Government at a local level, which changes the public service delivery such as providing the opportunity for people to access information, to participate in the local political space, and so forth. E-Government is part of effectiveness improvement in terms of administration with emphasis on frugality, public service delivery principles, and local democracy role improvement. Through this book, it emphasizes on the E-Government as part of structure opportunities focusing on citizens by encouraging local participation. The research approach is to select small size case studies in a municipality level, which were successful in E-government implementation policy such as America (Seattle), Germany (Nuremberg), France (Bordeaux), and Japan (Shizuoka).

Even though the research relies on the quantitative and qualitative approaches, the analysis relies on the comparative case study approach with an emphasis on in-depth case study analyses by using certain methods such as semi-structured interviews, which is a qualitative research approach through local ICT policy and ICT policy innovations concerning the local participation and local democracy. Meanwhile, the quantitative research focuses on using descriptive

statistics and analytic statistic such as Multiple Regression. However, it is part of the study.

The main topic of the book is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on consideration of trends and theoretical contexts of E-Government administration based on global research works with the attempt to identify the continuously increasing local E-Government administration. It does not only concern the change of local government, but E-Government is what citizens need, especially in North America. E-Government has been used increasingly and continuously in terms of public service delivery and local participation; as a result, the mutual decision-making system between the politicians and citizens is established. This is the same for countries such as those in Europe and Japan. These countries widely use the local internet and become successful in using E-Government administration. In addition, there is an attempt to explain and confirm that local administration organizations have completely transformed into the digital age with the characteristic of democratic politics called "cyber-realism", which is e-democracy different from that of other countries. Such change allows citizens to access policy implementation and increases the local political space continuously, especially political movement or perception which can be developed to be "NetGen", a group of people with political experience gained from debating. However, the author's proposal of trends and theoretical contexts has led to the conclusion that information technology is an important tool for public administration with democracy and compliance with the current environment.

The interesting point of the first presentation is the advancement of theories and empirical information that the author is trying to present. Even though most of the data are theoretical with reference to information or the Internet, it links and explains the relationship between the information and local administration appropriately, such as the role of information and local democracy. It is also relevant to the story that the author is trying to present. In addition, another interesting thing about the first part of the presentation is reliance on empirical data from global research works, which provide important evidence for discussion. It is apparent that the E-Government administration has been used in a concrete manner in developed countries. In the future, there is a tendency of change to more advancement, which unprecedentedly affects the dimensions of the public administration and citizens' role.

The next part is the essence of the book. It is a comparative analysis of the results of the study on E-Government administration in four countries, namely, America, Germany, France, and Japan. However, although the author tries to use the comparative perspective, the overall results do not differ among the countries: America, Germany, France, and Japan. When the E-Government administration is used for economical, participation, political, transparent, and effective purposes, as well as access to public service provision, the aforementioned countries have applied the E-Government administration by using the billboards. In addition, the public service delivery and political participation in those countries do not differ. Moreover, the implementation of E-Government administration on local organizations in those four countries is the same, which is a result of implementation of national policy in local areas through legislation, local leaders, citizens' roles, information planning strategies, and citizens, all of which are the factors leading to the success of the E-Government administration in those four countries.

The main weakness in this book is the selection of case studies from four countries, all of which are the industrial countries with technological advancement. The citizens can access high-speed internet in a similar manner; therefore, there is no clear distinction among the countries. Numerous findings make the selection of samples and comparative case study approach, which is the essential approach of the book, meaningless.

However, if the weakness of the study is not considered and additional approaches to fulfill the gap are considered, the book will be unique and reliable with enough weight based on information from in-depth interview to confirm the findings. The use of case studies from four big countries gives the similar findings. Furthermore, the author believes that in the future this book will provide basic information for the context adjustment of the E-Government administration in the developing countries and that this book will provide a guideline for mobile-government with more modernization for the developed countries.