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Analyzing Stakeholder Diversity in G2G Efforts: Combining Descriptive Stakeholder Theory and Dialectic Process Theory

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ABSTRACT

Previous research indicates that the benefits of e-government initiatives are slower to realize than initially expected. This has partly been ascribed to the particularly complex settings of e-government projects, consisting of a variety of stakeholders promoting different and often conflicting objectives. Yet few studies have explicitly addressed the inherent challenges of this diversity. This study presents an analytical approach for investigating contradictory stakeholder interests by combining descriptive stakeholder theory and dialectic process theory. Descriptive stakeholder theory is concerned with why some stakeholder claims are attended to. Dialectic process theory views organizational change and development as the result of contradictory values competing for domination. The approach is illustrated through empirical data from a Government-to-Government (G2G) project in Norway, focusing on information technology related collaboration between two regional clusters of municipalities. The analytical approach proved useful for identifying how contradictory stakeholder interests represented barriers for realizing the objectives of this project. We argue that combining descriptive stakeholder theory with dialectic process theory provides a powerful analytical tool for identifying potential conflicts between stakeholders, which can prove valuable for both e-government research and practice.

Keywords: government-2-government, stakeholder theory, dialectics, municipal cooperation, case study

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