Policy Design Workshop: Collaborative Design Methodology Architecting for the Future Public Policies

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Abstract. Recently, the idea of using collaborative systems methodologies for addressing problems in complex and multi-polar social systems has attracted considerable academic and social attention. The concept of the Future Center, a collaborative systems methodology globally diffused from Europe, is expected to be an effective catalyzer for innovative design in society. However, the Future Center has not, at least in Japan, materialized as a practical platform of collaboration (i.e., "Ba" as the platform for idea emergences) for public policy innovation. In Japan, the Future Center is still at the trial stage and used by a limited number of local governments and NPOs.

This paper aims to propose the concept of the policy design workshop (PDW), a public policy that the Future Center can deliver, which is suitable in the Asian context. The paper then proceeds to a detailed design of PDWs in collaboration with selected Asian academic experts in this field of study. Finally, the paper will validate the effectiveness of the PDW as a participatory systems methodology for creating innovative designs of public policies.

INTRODUCTION

Problem

The idea that collaborative works by multi-stakeholders are important in solving issues in the public domain is a relatively recent one in modern society. The concept of collaborative works refers to equal-footing co-operation with mutual respect, supplementing between different grounds and characteristics to achieve a common goal. However, a platform for such collaborative works has not yet been established. This is a significant social problem. In this situation, the concept of the Future Center (hereafter referred to as "FC") (Figure 1) gains public attention from those involved in knowledge management that stimulates experiments to create a platform for collaborative works (Dvir *et al.* 2006 and 2007) (Table 1). As shown in Figure 1, the FC is often mainly placed in the public sector. Further, in an FC, people from various sectors, including businesses, colleges and NPOs, come together to focus on problem solving. Table 1 presents the main FCs in the EU. FCs are not only operated by Governments but also by companies or universities.

This paper aims to propose a new platform for solving problems in the public domain, with reference to the concept of the FC. As a concrete model, universities and the non-profit sector will create this platform jointly, by organizing a policy design workshop (PDW) for creating public policies to solve problems in the public domain. This paper empirically validates the workability of the proposed platform by means of a social experiment.

Previous Studies

Based upon participatory systems analysis (Smith *et al.* 2007), an FC is a methodology of social design for solving a social problem. The FC enables the establishment of the "Ba" (Nonaka and Konno 1998), a platform to share the problem, just as the World Café (Brown and Isaac 2005) does. Dvir *et al.*(2008)

define the FC as a platform for preparing systematically for the future and for supporting organizations to make proactive efforts to respond to it by organizing specific ways of facilitating their response. This definition is commonly used in Japan. The FC is understood to be the creative "Ba" for co-works and dialogues, uniting diversified stakeholders to work towards a long-term agenda. However, at least in Japan, the academic definitions of methodologies used in the FC have not yet been established. Thus, based on the definitions given in previous studies, in this paper, the Japanese-type FC is defined as a platform to simultaneously develop accommodation and find a solution, with the participation of multi-stakeholders, through dialogues and practices, based upon a certain method.

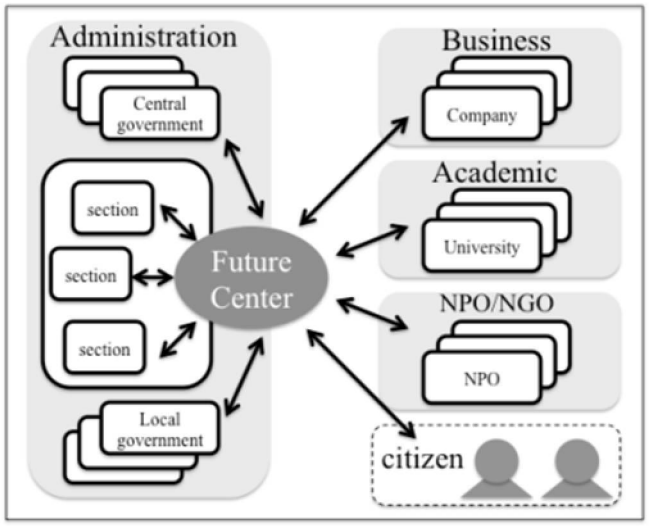

Figure 1. Public Future Center

Table 1: Main Future Centers in EU

Name	Organization	City	Country
Future Center	Skandia	Vaxholm	Sweden
Network Oasis	Joensuu Science Park	Joensuu	Finland
Mind Lab	Ministry of Trade & Industry	Copenhagen	Denmark
Mobillion	Minitsry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management	Amsterdam	The Netherlands
The Shipyard	Tax and Customs Authorities	Breda	The Netherlands
The Country House	Ministry of Internal Affairs	The Hague	The Netherlands
SZW Academy	Ministry of Social Affairs	The Hague	The Netherlands
Future Forcus	Ministry of Trade & Industry	London	The United Kingdom
Think Lab	Salford University	Salford	The United Kingdom

When the authors compared the EU-type FCs and the Japanese-type FCs, they discovered significant contrasts (Table 2). The main similarity is that both were private sector initiatives. The following are the differences: EU FCs are developed into government-centered movements; however, none of the Japanese FCs are operated by the government. This contrast stems from how tawpayers consider the governments' role. The interviews conducted by the authors with central and local government officials

in Japan reveal that these officials tend to believe that their involvements in FCs would make them strictly responsible for all the ideas suggested by the FCs. Their mentality indicates that EU-style FCs would not be not feasible in Japan. Therefore, apart from the studies on FCs in Europe, a study on Japanese-syle FCs is necessary in order for it to develop in the Japanese context.

Soda *et al.* (forthcoming) proposed a model of a Japanese-type FC based on university-NPO collaboration in order to create a policy recommendation. They have also showed the workability of this model. However, thus far, this verification is purely conceptual. Accordingly, this paper will focus on empirically validating Japanese-style FCs with the university-NPO collaboration by implementing an actual PDW.

Table 2: Contrasts between Future Centers: EU and Japan

	Viewpoints	EU	Japan	Future Directions of Japan
Similarity	Origin	From Private Sector	From Private Sector	
Difference	Developments for Public Issues	Governemnt-centered	Not yet estalished. Under discussion.	Realized through a coalition of Universties & NPOs
	Feedback on Public Policies	Implemented by the Governments	Not Established. Under discussion.	Function of Policy Recommendations (Realized through Policy Design Workshops)

Hypotheis and Field Selection

The following hypothesis is proposed in this paper: A multi-stakeholder PDW organized by an university and a NPO is workable for designing public policies for solving issues in the public domain.

As the field for validation, the authors selected the Fukushima prefecture, the area that was most severely hit by the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011, and the subsequent nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. These disasters have forced the residents of the Fukushima prefecture to face tremendous challenges, which need to be solved as soon as possible. The difficulty is that the residents need to formulate agreements on public policies beyond their different stances on the issues. Such a gap provides a rationale for the authors to validate the Japanese-type FC with field-research in this prefecture.

POLICY DESIGN WORKSHOP

Fukushima PDW Meeting

Table 3 presents the details of the Fukushima PDW meeting convened on December 11, 2011 at the Fukushima National University. The PDW meeting of that day followed the four steps described in Table 4.

Table 3: Fukushima PDW Meeting Outline

Items	Contents
Organizers	Link with Fukushima (NPO), National Fukushima University, Keio University
Date and Time	Sunday, December 11, 2011, 1–5pm
Venue	Classrooms of National Fukushima University
Subsection	Subheadings
Number of Participants	Eighteen
Attributes of Participants	Government officials, Corporate CEOs, farmers, teachers, NPO officials, students
Body with Courier	Specially delineated text such as URLs
Workshop Theme	Industrial Policy Design for Fukushima

Table 4: Workshops Procedure

Step	Workshop Name	Purpose
1	Group Workshop A	Accommodation and Selecting Themes
2	Subgroup Workshop A	Identifying Issues
3	Subgroup Workshop B	Policy Designs
4	Group Workshop B	Sharing and Reflection

Rule-Settings and Groupings

While rules are being set, the concept of whole systems conversation technologies, which is one of the FC methodologies, would be helpful. World Café (Brown, 2005), Open-space technology (Harrison, 1997), and Future Search (Marvin, 2000) are typical techniques in this area. As the common characteristic suggest with both Japanese and EU-style FCs, the PDWs were designed with various FC methodologies and combined different types and sizes of meetings—workshops for everyone and group workshops. Each workshop had different sets of rules and groupings.

Step 1: Group Workshop A

The Step 1 enabled participants to formulate and share the problem that they would discuss and which policy theme they would select to approach and attempt to solve that problem.

Group Workshop A was designed to offer a relaxed atmosphere to make the participants feel that they were on an equal footing, with a mutual understanding of the issues being discussed. The participants were seated in a circle (Figure 2) and introduced themselves breifly, sharing the reasons why they were participating in the meeting and the problems that they felt were urgent. As shown in Figure 2, by forming a circle, it was possible to establish an environment for participants to interact on an equal footing with each other. For this ice-breaking session, the facilitator of the workshop shared two grand rules with the participants, which would be applicable through all the workshops.

Grand Rule #1: Discuss with future-oriented thinking. Look back at the present as if from the future.

Grand Rule #2: Respect others' viewpoints. Do not criticize others' opinions.

Figure 2. Meeting of Group Workshop A.

After setting the grand rules, the session moved to a round-table discussion with all participants on the first topic: Which industries would be needed to reconstruct the economy of Fukushima. The participants concentrated their discussions on several key industries that they felt were most neccesary to be included in a potential industrial policy. This was the discussion theme for the PDW for that day. Every participant, by turn, shared with other participants the theme to be discussed and their rationales. The themes that were chosen were visualized and shared on the classroom's blackboard (Table 5). They jointly selected four themes that they could agree to focus on for the next workshop: agriculture, energy, education, and social business. After they decided four central themes for discussion, they chose, according to their own preferences, the most interesting theme from among the four in order to formulate four separate groups for the next session.

Table 5: Industrial Policies Themes To Be Discussed

Theme	Keywords	Choice
Agriculure	Safe, Gurantee of Quality	X
Manufacturing Industry	Hollowing Out	
Community Development	Reconstruction Budget	
Energy	Next Generation Power	X
Tourism Industry	Culture Resources	
Education Industry	Personnel Training	X
Business for Senior Citizens	Care Supports	
Social Business	Venture, Change Makers	X

Step 2: Subgroup Workshop A

Step 2 (Figure 3) aimed to identify issues that were contained in the themes selected in Step 1.

First, the participants of this workshop brainstormed problems to be solved under each theme. The brainstorming invited participants' chained responses of dialogues and emergent developments of ideas through collective efforts to produce ideas.

Second, they categorized and grouped all the problems that they shared according to the KJ Method, a methodology for grouping data in a field invented by the late cultural anthlopologist Dr. Jiro Kawakita. After grouping problems according to the KJ Method, they discussed relations between groups, and gave a round mark to the most important problem that they believed they discussed during this

workshop.

Finally, each discussion table/small group made a respective presentation through stories on the basis of the outcomes of their discussions. The facilitator invited tables to make clear to members that did not join in the discussion on their table why they finally selected one issue as most significant.

As shown in Figure 3, it was important for the participants to visualize their own ideas on a sheet of paper and share their ideas with other groups.

Step 3: Subgroup Workshop B

Step 3 (Figure 3) was to design a public policy responding to the issue that small groups finally selected as most important.

Firstly, tables discussed the current state of specific issues. The focus of the discussion was placed on stakeholders who had a particular interest in the issues. They visualized the relations of stakeholders to the issue by using Customer Value Chain Analysis (CVCA). CVCA is a tool used in the service science to identify stakeholders for goods and services and to describe their relations by means of drawing lines of money, information, and human flows. The CVCA envisions the value-chains of stakeholders.

Second, they discussed how they would be able to improve the current situation and how to change the current CVCA. Thereafter, they identified the potential role of the government in this improvement, which was then formulated as a policy recommendation.

Finally, each table made a presentation of their discussion results, again using stories. The facilitator set the virtual conditions, as if they were actually briefing a policy to government officials. The small groups that were not currently giving a presentation played the role of government officials. A question and answer session followed these presentations.

Figure 3. Meetings of Subgroup Workshops A and B.

Step 4: Group Workshop B

The purpose of Step 4 was to share and reflect on the outcomes from the PDW.

First, participants reflected on the course that they discussed in the workshops. They were seated in a circle again and shared what they thought and felt in the workshops. Thereafter, the facilitator invited them to reflect on what policies must be implemented in the future and to what they wanted to link their expreriences at the PDW. Lastly, they filled in the pre-prepared survey sheets in order to validate the workability of the Japanese-style FC.

Verification

The validation of the PDW was implemented in two ways: first, interviews with policy officials of the Fukushima prefectural government who were in charge of industrial policy; second, the poll survey and interviews with workshop participants.

Interviews with Fukushima Prefectural Government Policy Officials

In the interviews with policy officials, officials were required to respond to the comments on the PDW processes and policy recommendations that were made in the workshops.

Policy officials who participated in the PDW on that day as observers responded to the questions from the authors in the following manner:

[On the outcomes from the PDW]

Rather useful. The policy recommendations drawn from the workshops are in paralell with the Prefectural Reconstraction Plan of Fukushima, which is now at the planning stage.

We encourage the participants to utilize their outcomes for the actual policy design of Fukushima. For example, the outcomes may be posted to the Fukushima prefectural government as public commemts to the above reconstruction plan.

[On the workability of the PDW]

It is considered workable. After the Earthquake, we face challenges to convince tax-payers of Fukushima regarding the legitimacy of policies. The PDW will have the potential to facilitate accommodations on policies between tax-payers and the Fukushima prefectural government.

It would be difficult for the governemnt to set up a PDW. Therefore, it would be appreciated if universities and other non-partisan entities implement PDWs.

Poll Survey and Interviews with Workshop Participants

The poll survey and subsequent interviews asked participants whether their original thoughts changed, and how they changed as a result of contact with others in the group. The results were used to validate the workability of the PDW for multi-stakeholders. Table 6 presents a questionnaire from the poll survey. The authors requested the participants to answer the questions in five stages; a. Strongly agree; b. Agree; c. Do not know; d. Disagree; and e. Strongly disagree.

Table 6: Survey Questionnaire for PDW Participants

Number	Questions
Q1	Did you learn or gain an impression of something new through this PDW ?
Q2	If you answered “Agree” to Q1, please provide feedback on what you learned or perceived regarding your future activities?
Q3	Do you feel more interested in other stakeholders as a result of this PDW?
Q4	Do you want to participate in future PDWs ?

Figure 4 illustrates the result of the poll survey. Over 90% of participants favorably responded that they learned or gained something from the PDW this time, and that they wanted utilize this experience in their own activities in the future. Approximately 70% of the participants answered that this PDW increased their interest in other stakeholders. As shown in Figure 4, the satisfaction of the participants was high, and the PDW can be deemed effective.

The interviews with participants revealed their mixed responses: on the one hand, the younger participants generally desired a forward-looking discussion; on the other hand, members of other generations mostly found that they wanted to focus only on the current situations. However, those who were looking forward to a future PDW seemed to be dominant. This implies the necessity of conducting more PDWs in order to accommodate the stakeholders in Fukushima.

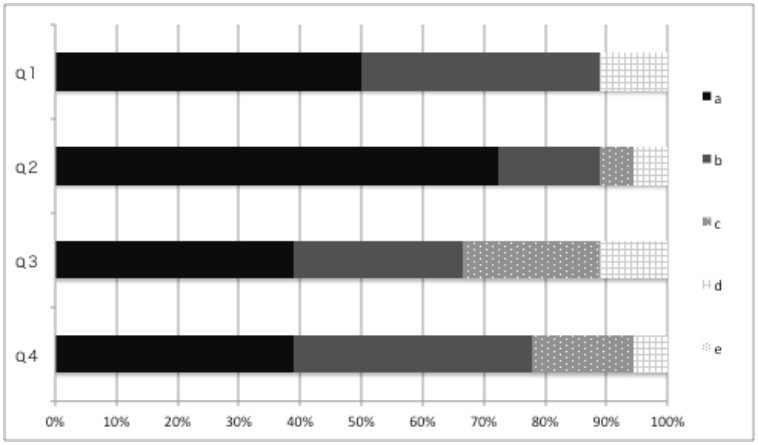

Figure 4. Survey Results

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH AGENDA

This empirical research in Fukushima showed the workability of a Japanese-style FC as a collaborative policy design platform organized by universities and NPOs. Therefore, the hypothesis of this paper was validated. In particular, it was observed that stakeholders who have diversified opinions on a certain policy issue could move forward to new opinions and actions by discussing actual policies in the PDW. The new opinions and actions in turn were more compatible with the interests of others. Such a synergistic effect will increase incentives for the participants to return to a PDW in the future.

It is remarkable that policy officials from the prefectural governement positively evaluated the outcomes of the PDW. They benefited from the process of ascertaining taxpayers' preferences on policies. Thus, they considered the PDW to be a promising process for building public policy.

Both the government side and the taxpayers side appreciated the workability of this methodology. However, this paper only aims to observe a one-time effect of a PDW. In most countries, FCs are designed to have standing and long-lasting social functions. Post-disaster experiences need to be repeatedly addressed by the involvement of multi-stakeholders in an FC. The Japanese-style FC can also be equipped with permanent functions.

As a further research agenda, a study on the detailed design of a Japanese-style FC and its actual set-up would be helpful; this would enable PDWs to become more influential in terms of helping to set the public policy agenda. The Social Design Center of the Keio University SDM Institute is expected to begin preliminary research on developing a university-based FC, based on the concept explored in this paper. If it is actually established, a Japanese-style FC based on a university-driven framework may contribute considerably to solving problems in the public domain.

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BIOGRAPHY

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Mr. Soda is a Researcher at the SDM Research Institute, Graduate School of System Design and Management (SDM), Keio University, and also Deputy Director, Information Technology (IT) Policy Office, Cabinet Secretariat, Government of Japan. He has been involved in designing social system concepts within four sectors, including businesses, administration, NPOs, and colleges. He obtained a Bachelor of Law degree from Kumamoto University and a Master's degree in System Design and Management from Keio University. He is a Certified Small and Medium Enterprise Management Consultant and also interim lecturer of Keio SDM.

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