Adversarial, Managerial, Network Or Collaborative Governance? Examining Relation Between The State And Civil Society

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For long, a healthy civil society is regarded as an indispensable ingredient in the course of democratization and state transformation. In recent decades, as participatory democracy model calls for the deepening of democracy, related concepts such as network and collaborative governance rise as alternatives to traditional adversarial and managerial type of policy making. Whereas in the latter public agencies made policy decision unilaterally or in a more adversarial atmosphere, the former is characterized by its cooperative and interdependent trend. Based upon the above theoretical departure, this paper proposes that by dissecting the relationship between the state and its civil society, the interplay pattern can reveal the degree of democracy of that nation. To provide empirical grounding and a demonstration of that proposition, the paper conducts a comparative case study in Taiwan: (1) to empirically map the relationship between the state and civil society in reference to the four types of governance, namely adversarial, managerial, network and collaborative mode, and (2) to address not only a more frequently asked question of the influence of the state on civil society, but also how civil society shape the institutional behavior of the public sector or the general quality of democracy.

The argument and findings of this paper will be based on a mixed-methods study, including an online survey of and in-depth interviews with both staff of 30 social enterprises and the corresponding government actors who interact with the targeted social enterprises in Taiwan. Aside from the mapping analysis, special attention will be placed on the way social enterprises interact or cooperate with the government either at local or central level to solve social problems. Are leaders of social enterprises included in or excluded from the policy making process? What is the role of Taiwan government in relation to social enterprise? Are the presence and interaction of social enterprises capable of producing disruption to the existing governmental path dependencies and causing institutional change?

The paper will mainly argue that the political regime under scrutiny – Taiwan is in the transition from adversarialism and managerialism to network governance or is constituted of the mix of the three policy making modes; whereas collaborative governance is rare. Depending on the policy area, some social problems trigger a closer interaction or cooperation between the state and social enterprises such as gender equality and unemployment issue, the others still heavily rely on agency experts to make decision unilaterally where leaders of social enterprises are excluded. However, there are signs showing the increasing attention of the public sector injecting into the development of social enterprise as the state is exploring its potential role as network broker in the coordination of community problem solving.

As to address to the international audience, in the conclusion, the paper will restate the findings and arguments by emphasizing how future researches on other countries or a comparative study can launch a similar mapping effort of the relationship between the state and civil society. The paper claims that the result yielded by mapping analysis could help scholars to locate the degree of democracy for the selected country cases and empower researchers to discuss in details the quality of democracy.

Keywords: adversarialism, collaborative governance, social enterprise, quality of democracy

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