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# Government Information Disclosure and the Expansion of Public Reason



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## Abstract

In the process of deepening government reform and transforming government functions, the disclosure of government information has increasingly gained widespread attention in both academic and practical circles. Government information disclosure is based on the evolution of rational choice model in organizational decision-making, the introduction of information asymmetry assumption in game theory, and the impact of information asymmetry on the effectiveness of policy decision-making, etc., focusing on the alleviation of information asymmetry. This paper finds that government information disclosure is mainly aimed at expanding public rationality by enriching the amount of information in the government decision-making process, increasing the possibility of monitoring government decision-making behavior, and weakening the influence of subjective factors of decision-makers.

**Keywords:** Government Information Disclosure; Public Rationality; Information Asymmetry; Policy Decision-Making

## Introduction

In the context of economic globalization and the information age, information has become an important determinant of social development. Government information covers 80% of the information of the society. Therefore, its disclosure becomes a direct channel for the public to understand and supervise government behavior. At the same time, its also an important manifestation of building a sunny government. Government information has become an important criterion for measuring public rationality in terms of whether it is open or not, and how effective it is. The understanding of government information disclosure is carried out from a multi-dimensional perspective, and then the question of how government information disclosure expands public rationality is answered.

### Openness of Government Information from a Multidimensional Perspective

Government information disclosure is mainly driven by external traction, internal governmental driving force and the impetus brought by technological progress [1]. In terms of external traction, government receives external information demand including public demand and market demand. Under the

law, the government protects public's and market's right to obtain information, and the risks posed by information asymmetry are curbed. In terms of internal driving force, service-oriented government is the modernization goal and direction of government function transformation, therefore, in order to improve the effectiveness of service-oriented government construction, it is necessary to respond to the requirements of the development of democratic politics and the transformation of government functions with information disclosure. In terms of technological impetus, the rapid development and extensive use of modern information technology has laid a solid material foundation for the collection, processing and transmission of information, becoming an effective vehicle for enhancing the service capacity.

The content of government information disclosure can be understood in breadth and depth. From the aspect of the breadth, the current information disclosed by the government mostly consists of documents and result information, and the degree of disclosure of detailed and dynamic elements is relatively low. From the depth, feedback and evaluation of information disclosure is not enough. The core of current government information disclosure lies mainly in policy, for the purpose of enhancing

citizens' understanding and improving policy mobilization [2]. However, there is still some room for optimization of the match between government information disclosure and citizens' needs.

Under the promotion of diversification and intelligence of government open platform, the current government information disclosure in China has broken the limitation and gradually formed a diversified and three-dimensional mode [3]. It also enriched the way with the help of information technology and products such as cloud computing and Internet of Things, continuously evolving towards the ideal information disclosure mode of "government-led and public opinion integration"[4].

The evaluation of the quality of government information disclosure can be carried out from various evaluation systems. For example, the three principles of quality culture, legal norms, scientificity [5] and the nine quality dimensions proposed from the perspective of both the government and the public [6]. What's more, residents' subjective well-being [7] and other different aspects are equally contributing. It can be seen that quality has increasingly gained attention, which not only helps to provide benign feedback for information disclosure, but also helps to face the series of problems brought by information asymmetry, and provides useful reference for the improvement of the quality and efficiency of government information disclosure.

### How Government Information Disclosure Expands Public Reason

Public rationality, as one of the constituent elements of steady state democracy, is in essence the public application of rationality by the citizens' aggregate to realize the continuous normative cooperation among pluralistic social subjects [8]. Government information disclosure focuses on reducing information asymmetry in public organization [9], and it is a legal form of disclosure of information related to the interests of the members of the society, allowing the members of the society to make full use of the information in a legal way.

Specifically, government information disclosure expands public rationality in two ways:

First, enriching the sources of information for decision-making, which requires a certain amount of factual information to discuss problems, identify core issues, and ultimately form policy decisions through the policy agenda. However, information asymmetry in the vertical hierarchical distortion, horizontal interdepartmental shielding impedes access to decision-making information. Ideally, government information disclosure should shorten the information transmission path as much as possible, improve the efficiency of information dissemination, protect the authority and timeliness of information and lay a solid foundation for the expansion of public rationality.

Secondly, strengthening the supervision of governmental decision-making behavior and weakening the influence of

subjective factors. In the traditional administrative system, public policymaking process is often in a "black box" state, not only erode the public's trust in public policy, but also undermine the public policy of the Democracy. Government information disclosure provides a channel for the public to obtain information and track the process of policy implementation, and to monitor policymakers. Citizens are also able to discuss the process and content of policymaking. Under such circumstances, the public's right to know and participation is guaranteed, policymakers' tendency to deviate from the public interest are effectively curbed, and the policymaking process becomes more rationality.

### Conclusion

Discussions in organizational sociology around rational choice in decision-making within governmental organizations and the introduction of game theory's assumption of information asymmetry have become an important source of the basis for government information disclosure. As one of the important initiatives in the current government reform process in China, the positive effect of government information disclosure is reflected not only in the enrichment of the abstract concept of public rationality, but also in all aspects of the government's daily affairs. However, while recognizing the necessity of government information disclosure and the initial progress made, as well as the positive significance under the state of necessity, we should also pay attention to the deficiencies and shortcomings of the existing government information disclosure, and how to effectively play the function of government information disclosure has become the topic that needs to be discussed in depth in theories and practices.

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