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E-Government vs. Ordinary Bureaucratic Government: A Comparative Study

Mohammad Rabiul Bashar
Applied Research Centre for Business and Information Technology (ARCBIT), uzzal.fisheries@gmail.com

Karim Mohammed Razael
Glyndwr University, morekba786@yahoo.co.uk

Vic Grout
Glyndwr University, v.grout@glyndwr.ac.uk

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Abstract
In this century, e-government is drawing significant attention especially in administration and business and in other service organizations. This paper attempts to clarify the terms e-government, e-governance and bureaucratic government. It also pays the attention to establish the relationship between e-government and bureaucratic government, contrasts them and tries to clearly picturize each other. Both E-government and e-governance are based on ICTs whereas bureaucracy's base concerns traditional pen-paper and hard-and-fast rigid rules and regulations. The authors finally found e-government more effective, efficient, and mature and time oriented. On the other hand, bureaucratic form takes care of inflexible constitution and it is afraid of change with time. However, the modified e-bureaucratic form was found to be better than ordinary bureaucratic one to replace its former version. This paper also searches for frameworks and adoption of e-government in this present time. Although e-government engulfs huge money in its initial stage for installation, it gives birth of huge benefits as compared to those from bureaucratic one in the long run.

Keywords
e-government, e-governance, bureaucratic government, bureaucracy, e-bureaucracy, ICT

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E-GOVERNMENT VS. ORDINARY BUREAUCRATIC GOVERNMENT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Mohammad Rabiul Bashar, Karim Mohammed Rezaul and Vic Grout

Applied Research Centre for Business and Information Technology (ARCBIT),
644 Forest Road, London E17 3EE
uzzal.fisheries@gmail.com

Centre for Applied Internet Research (CAIR), Glyndŵr University
Wrexham, UK
morekba786@yahoo.co.uk

Centre for Applied Internet Research (CAIR), Glyndŵr University
Wrexham, UK
v.grout@glyndwr.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

In this century, e-government is drawing significant attention especially in administration and business and in other service organizations. This paper attempts to clarify the terms e-government, e-governance and bureaucratic government. It also pays the attention to establish the relationship between e-government and bureaucratic government, contrasts them and tries to clearly picturize each other. Both E-government and e-governance are based on ICTs whereas bureaucracy's base concerns traditional pen-paper and hard-and-fast rigid rules and regulations. The authors finally found e-government more effective, efficient, and mature and time oriented. On the other hand, bureaucratic form takes care of inflexible constitution and it is afraid of change with time. However, the modified e-bureaucratic form was found to be better than ordinary bureaucratic one to replace its former version. This paper also searches for frameworks and adoption of e-government in this present time. Although e-government engulfs huge money in its initial stage for installation, it gives birth of huge benefits as compared to those from bureaucratic one in the long run.

KEYWORDS

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1. INTRODUCTION

This is the e-century enriched with information technology bettering the life many folds than ever. Everywhere in this modern life, information technology plays the vital role and e-government is the gift of information technology which is contrasting itself with ordinary government whose basis is bureaucracy- a fear of red lace. "E-government (short for electronic government, also known as e-gov, digital government, online government or transformational government) is a diffused neologism used to refer to the use of information and communication technology to provide and improve government services, transactions and interactions with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government" [1]. Governments worldwide deeply interested in information and communication technology (ICT) as the expansion of e-business and e-commerce technologies in the private sector [2]. Concept of e-government is a recent one. Although e-government backing by e-commerce started its journey in the last century, its recent progress is notable. Unquestionably, public sector interest in e-government was massively stimulated by e-commerce developments between 1995 and 2001[3]. To improve the quality of the services provided to citizens and businesses, and to rationalise the internal organisation of

the administrative apparatus, almost all the developed world treated Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as powerful tools [2] which were the raw materials of e-government. Corruption, bribery for example, is common in ordinary bureaucratic government as some opportunists always seek for gaps in rules and regulations. This form also lacks the accountability in some cases. "In countries emerging from civil war with weak governments, bribery demand was used opportunistically by officials operating under unclear rules that allow them to invent offences or simply to extort funds from ordinary people" [4].

2. DEFINITION OF E-GOVERNMENT

Many authors and organizations introduced e-government in different ways.

E-government is a generic term for web-based services from agencies of local, state and federal governments. In e-government, the government uses information technology and particularly the Internet to support government operations, engage citizens, and provide government services. The interaction may be in the form of obtaining information, filings, or making payments and a host of other activities via the World Wide Web [5, 6, 7].

World Bank [8] definition (AOEMA report): "E-Government refers to the use by government agencies of information technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government. These technologies can serve a variety of different ends: better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management. The resulting benefits can be less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth, and/or cost reductions."

United Nations [9] definition (AOEMA report): "E-government is defined as utilizing the Internet and the world-wide-web for delivering government information and services to citizens."

Global Business Dialogue on Electronic Commerce – GBDe [10] definition (AOEMA report): "Electronic government (hereafter e-Government) refers to a situation in which administrative, legislative and judicial agencies (including both central and local governments) digitize their internal and external operations and utilize networked systems efficiently to realize better quality in the provision of public services."

The government's use of the internet and other information and communications technologies to improve the processing and delivery of information and services to citizens, employees, business partners and other government organizations is referred to as electronic government (e-government)[11]. Koh et al. [12] broadened the term e-government- "e-government is more than a web site".

3. DEFINITIONS OF E-GOVERNANCE

Basically, the term 'e-governance' sometimes creates confusion with the meaning with the term 'e-government'. E-governance, meaning 'electronic governance' is using information and communication technologies (ICTs) at various levels of the government and the public sector and beyond, for the purpose of enhancing governance [13,14,15]. According to Keohane and Nye [16], "Governance implies the processes and institutions, both formal and informal, that guide and restrain the collective activities of a group. Government is the subset that acts with authority and creates formal obligations. Governance need not necessarily be conducted exclusively by governments. Private firms, associations of firms, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and associations of NGOs all engage in it, often in association with governmental bodies, to create governance; sometimes without governmental authority."

Clearly, this definition suggests that e-governance need not be limited to the public sector. It implies managing and administering policies and procedures in the private sector as well.

4. E-GOVERNANCE AND E-GOVERNMENT

Some authors contend that e-government constitutes only a subset (though a major one) of e-governance. According to these authors, e-governance is a broader concept and includes the use of ICT by government and civil society to promote greater participation of citizens in the governance of political institutions, e.g., use of the Internet by politicians and political parties to elicit views from their constituencies in an efficient manner, or the publicizing of views by civil society organizations which are in conflict with the ruling powers [17,18]. It is clear that considerable confusion exists in explaining e-government and e-governance. In what follows, we attempt to resolve the ambiguities and come up with clear and non-overlapping definitions. Our premise is simple: e-government's focus is on constituencies and stakeholders outside the organization, whether it is the government or public sector at the city, county, state, national, or international levels. On the other hand, e-governance focuses on administration and management within an organization, whether it is public or private, large or small.

5. LIMITATIONS OF E-GOVERNMENT

There are many considerations and potential implications of implementing and designing e-government as follows:

- Risk of breaching of privacy
- Expensive
- Inaccessibility for the people in country side and illiterates.
- False sense of transparency and accountability (in some cases)

Saatçioglu et al. [19] reported some limiting factors in adoption of transport related e-government services in Turkey. And these factors were insufficient use of e-transport services due to security and privacy problems, need for substantial financial resources, fragmented nature of organizational aspects, limited number of information technology providers in transport applications, insufficient amount of R&D and need for substantial financial resources.

In addition to Saatçioglu et al. [19] and Lam [20] reported 17 barriers under four categories like i) strategy (common e-government goals and objectives, delivery timeframes, and ownership and governance), ii) technology (architecture interoperability, data standards and legacy systems), iii) policy (citizen privacy, data ownership and policy implications) and iv) organization (pace of government reform, legacy government processes and management and technical skills).

Marche and McNiven [21], also add some more barriers in this connection such as issues of citizen privacy and security, inadequately skilled citizens and government employees, and the tendency for e-government to replicate traditional government, i.e. perpetuating the functional insularity.

Chen et al. [22] studied that regulations might limit government powers to institute and complete e-government projects. Belanger and Hiller [23] supported Chen et al. [22] and put some more constraints in global e-government and these were laws and policies; technical capabilities; and user feasibility. They also explained, E-government initiatives required appropriate investments in hardware, software, and expertise. Insufficient funds or a shortage of personnel might hinder e-government implementation. Moon [24] showed that few local governments conduct online transactions with citizens, and even fewer. Municipalities perceived the lack of technical, personnel, and financial capabilities as major hindrances to the development of e-government. His overall evaluation (from a survey of 1,471 municipalities) was that the state of e-government at the municipal level is primitive.

E-government system installation and maintenance are expensive and in some cases this may not be cost effective. Again, the investment did not provide the expected, for instance, approximately 85% of government information technology projects worldwide had been failures [25]. Similarly, in the UK, recently e-government costs not only soared, but possibly even outweighed the stated benefits it aimed to provide [26, 27]. In the year 2007, the CIO of the UK Department for Work and Pensions estimated a public sector IT expenditure of £14 billion a year, with only 30% of the government's IT projects succeeding [28].

Finally there is the issue of access to the e-government facilities and sadly many of the people who might stand to gain most from e-government are the least connected, least educated, and least aware of how to do so [29].

6. POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF E-GOVERNMENT

The anticipated benefits of e-government include efficiency, improved services, better accessibility of public services, and more transparency and accountability. Other benefits include the following:

- Democratization process increases
- Environmental bonuses: paperless offices
- Speed, efficiency, and convenience
- Public approval: online discussions, e-voting etc.

With the development of the World Wide Web, considerable attention has been focused on the adaptation of web-based technologies to the business environment, notably in government-to-business (G2B) and government-to-citizen (G2C)[30].

Based on the critical success factors in transport related e-government services in Turkey, Saatçioglu et al. [19] conducted a research. They found several potential e-government based services such as increasing logistics and transportation activities, national information system strategy towards the advanced information technology applications, adoption of European Union and international standards, awareness of transport industry about the importance of information technology etc.

Lots of benefits may mount up from e-government initiatives including cost savings, improved communications and coordination, expanded citizen participation and increased government accountability [31,32].

E-government reduces paper based forms and the time of processing. Thus, it is offering citizen quick service and less cost. Al-Kibsi et al. [33] reported, a few years ago, Singapore's e-citizen portal, which allowed citizens and businesses to access all government services, obtaining an import or export license required applicants to fill out 21 different forms and took 15-20 days for 23 agencies to process the request. Today, applicants can submit one online form and receive a license about 15 seconds later.

Koh et al. [12] agreed with Al-Kibsi et al. [33] in this connection. They added, e-government took less time than ordinary bureaucratic government in its day-to-day work and it's e-documents and forms were standardised to increase accuracy and efficiency.

Increasing development of Internet and its use is changing former existing bureaucratic forms and other ordinary mode of actions in modern life. Ho [34], and Scavo and Shi [35] depicted, development of the Internet and consequently the e-commerce, allowed public administration to experience a change from the bureaucratic, inward-looking approach to a citizen-centric, outward-looking approach that prioritizes the concerns and needs of users.

E-government is for the citizen- not for the government itself. Ho [34] also added, public managers were then emphasizing user satisfaction and control, flexibility in service delivery, and network management with internal and external partners, rather than solely cost-efficiency

issues. Layne and Lee [36] gave the same opinion "government processes will be organized for citizens' convenience instead of the convenience of the government".

E-government can bring profit to small firms. Thompson et al. [30] demonstrated, the development of new businesses from use of e-government services was expected to have a direct positive impact on the firm's profitability.

E-government presents transparency, clarity, efficiency and accountability in this time. The government to e-government transition process offers governments a unique opportunity to enhance not only their operational transparency, clarity of purpose and responsiveness to citizens [21] but also their own internal efficiency and effectiveness, important concerns in times of economic downturn and increasing public pressure for internal accountability [37].

7. E-GOVERNMENT FRAMEWORK

Watson and Mundy [38] showed a model for e-government with three constituents- i) initiation, ii) infusion, and iii) customization. However, Symonds [39] described four stages to e-government: i) one-way communications, ii) two-way communications, iii) exchanges, and iv) portals. Further more, Belanger and Hiller[23] improved Symonds's [39] model adding a fifth stage- electronic political participation by citizens. Followings are the e-government models which are more improved than the previous ones. The US General Accounting Office categorized e-government using the typology of government-to-citizen (G2C), government-to-employee (G2E), government-to-government (G2G), and government-to-business (G2B). The US Office of Management and Budget (OMB) categorized e-government as G2C, G2B, G2G, and internal efficiency and effectiveness (IEE). IEE initiatives "bring commercial best practices to key government operations, particularly supply chain management, human capital management, financial management and document workflow" [40].

E-government might be more than merely use of electronic form. Burn and Robins [41] observed, "e-government is not just about putting forms and services online. It provides the opportunity to rethink how the government provides services and how it links them in a way that is tailored to the users' needs". They also added, "government must develop a far more sophisticated view of the people it is there to serve and devolve real power as an integral part of its approach to e-government and provide more freedom of information".

Citizens should be supposed to enjoy a one-stop service that would be simple and capable of personalization [42]. Davision et al. [37] showed, achieving such a service required significant inter-departmental cooperation. They also suggested, citizens should be more loyal towards the e-government portals (for example, The Australian Centrelink.gov.au) that were citizen-centric, and were designed to fulfil their needs.

8. ADOPTION OF E-GOVERNMENT

Citizens are the customers of the e-government form and their satisfaction is the main objective of it. Osbourne and Gaebler [43] proposed that citizens should be regarded and treated as customers, suggesting that the delivery of government services should be redesigned with a customer focus.

Koh et al. [12] demonstrated different internal factors, (e.g., budget cuts and legislative mandates) and external forces (increasing public demand for better services) are pressuring government organizations to move forward with e-government initiatives. They also admitted that the internet had a significant role to play in the functioning of e-government at various levels. Migrating an organization into a fully integrated, automated digital establishment (e-government) is a more difficult task than believed in the early days of the internet [44, 45]. Nevertheless, although internet and its applications are getting more complicated and

sophisticated, it needs more carefulness, deep knowledge and IT personnel to implement e-government. A gradual adaptation through trial is helpful to adopt is eventually.

Research showed that endorsement by top management, and inclusion of information technology in strategic plans led to improved employee acceptance of technology [46, 47]. Furthermore, government agencies that engaged in comprehensive formal strategic IS planning were able to foster an environment more supportive of the use of IT applications [48].

Placing of e-government policy in place of/with bureaucratic government in third world countries like Mongolia is time lined. Sukhbaatar et al. [49] reviewed recent trends of the Mongolian e-government and presented the findings of the e-government initiatives that might affect government collaboration, citizen participation and public-private partnership. The findings of study suggested that Mongolian government must seriously take into reconsideration of working style, business process reengineering, financial arrangements and public organization cultures. Mongolia also must quickly learn western management techniques and create the basic skills for e-government. Furthermore, it had to be an integrated approach with good governance that improved public services, involved public-private partnership, built up citizen participation and promoted open government.

Recently public sector organizations embarked on their journey to create and realize business value through their e-government initiatives. Lee [50] reported that e-business value templates that oftentimes relied on economical justifications should not be applied indiscriminately to the public sector. He added that contextual nuances in the public sector such as criticality of political value propositions and a distinct set of risk factors warranted an investigation into how e-government and e-business initiatives were each characterized by unique business value drivers and barriers. Preliminary meta-analysis on the recent business value of IT studies revealed that e-government initiatives had a distinct set of business value sources different from those of e-business projects.

E-government recently has started to give its benefits to third world countries as well. Madon and Kiran [51] showed that citizen attitudes towards government were changing as a result of an increased sense of trust and reciprocity developing between citizens and the state. With FRIENDS (an e-governance project in India), for the first time, the government is seen as capable of providing a responsible level of service without corruption.

E-governance makes life easer and hassle free in this e-time. Madon and Kiran [52] reported that citizens had a real opportunity to pay their bill without hassle from middlemen.

Jansen [53] proposed a simple research skeleton including three distinct dimension e-democracy, e-service and e-administration, all of them based on adequate technical and organisational infrastructures.

Coleman et al. [54] presented a model to explain the minority representative role as well as its likely consequences for decision-making affecting minority groups. Adherence to a minority representative role was influenced by an individual's personal characteristics, including race and ethnicity, organizational factors, and perceived expectations of their work obligations. To the degree that public administrators adopted a minority representative role they would be more likely to make decisions that reflected the interests of minorities.

9. ORDINARY BUREAUCRATIC GOVERNMENT

Ordinary traditional bureaucratic government is based on bureaucracy. The word "bureaucracy" itself originated from the word "bureau", used from the early 18th century in Western Europe not just to refer to a writing desk, but to an office, i.e., a workplace, where officials worked. According to Wikipedia [55], ‘Bureaucracy’ is the structure and set of regulations in place to control activity, usually in large organizations and government. As opposed to adhocracy, it is represented by standardized procedure (rule-following) that dictates the execution of most or all

processes within the body, formal division of powers, hierarchy, and relationships. In practice the interpretation and execution of policy can lead to informal influence. Bureaucracy is a concept referring to the way that the administrative execution and enforcement of legal rules are socially organized. Four structural concepts are central to any definition of bureaucracy:

1. a well-defined division of administrative labour among persons and offices,
2. a personnel system with consistent patterns of recruitment and stable linear careers,
3. a hierarchy among offices, such that the authority and status are differentially distributed among actors, and
4. formal and informal networks that connect organizational actors to one another through flows of information and patterns of cooperation.

Examples of everyday bureaucracies include governments, armed forces, corporations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), hospitals, courts, ministries and schools.

10. BUREAUCRATIC FORM

In the 1930s, Max Weber's (a German sociologist) principles spread throughout both public and private sectors. Even though Weber's writings have been widely discredited, the bureaucratic form lives on.

Weber noted six major principles as follows:

1. A formal hierarchical structure
2. Management by rules
3. Organization by functional specialty
4. An "up-focused" or "in-focused" mission
5. Purposely impersonal
6. Employment based on technical qualifications

Weber [56] also added, the goal of bureaucracies and subsequently of bureaucratic organisation was the need to maximise efficiency. He suggested that bureaucracies are instruments of administration that are technically efficient because institutionalised rules and regulations enable all employees to perform their duties optimally.

Cordella [2] featured bureaucratic form in three characteristics as follows,

1. bureaucracies have a formal and explicit hierarchical structure of authority.
2. bureaucracies have a detailed, rationalised division of labour.
3. bureaucracies are governed by a set of formal, explicit, comprehensive and stable set of rules that are impersonally enforced in decision-making.

11. THE MAJOR BENEFITS PROMISED BY THE BUREAUCRATIC FORM (GOVERNMENT)

Hierarchical authority promises control and responsibility.

- Management by rules promises control and consistency
- An up-focused mission promised that governmental agencies would serve the legislative or executive bodies that formed them.
- Specialization of sub-units promised accountability, control and expertise.

- Being impersonal promises objectivity, consistency and equality.
- Employment based on technical qualifications promises equal opportunity, and protection from arbitrary dismissal promises job security to those who can pass a test and follow the rules.

12. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF BUREAUCRATIC GOVERNMENT

Bureaucratic government is slow in process and afraid of change. This form of government is slow-moving, unwilling or unable to change and years behind other industry sectors in its use of new technology and new business models [57]. Marche and McNiven [21] accepted the opinion of Accenture [57] and depicted that bureaucratic governments had been slower to climb onto the web-enabled bandwagon: governments (bureaucratic form) were traditionally more conservative entities, slower to change, and slower to adopt new initiatives, than operators in the commercial field.

Hill [58] clarified, over the past quarter century, federal bureaucracies in the USA had been affected by numerous changes many of which were designed to restrict bureaucratic autonomy. Bureaucracy's role in the process of governance had been substantially diminished. When the changes were closely inspected, however, most including the proliferation of political appointees proved not to be as effective at restraining bureaucracy as often supposed. Plus, since many restrictions interacted with others, they were not really summative, sometimes they cancelled each other out.

Some recent theories blamed the growth of government on budget-maximizing bureaucrats who are assumedly capable of imposing their most preferred budget-output combination on legislatures, subject to cost and demand constraints. However, a research [59] depicted that theoretical examination of the range of bargaining outcomed that might occur between bureau and legislature showed that budget-maximizing behavior did not necessarily lead to super-optimal levels of production, nor did the suggested reforms of competition and privatization necessarily improved the situation. In the bargaining model, the central determinants of governmental growth were not budget-maximizing bureaucrats, but the legislature's decisions regarding mode of oversight and form of internal organization.

Bureaucratic forms are prone to corruption. Ehrlich and Lui [60] observed diversity in the incidence of bureaucratic corruption across countries at different stages of economic development and under different political and economic regimes.

Challenging former researchers Cordella [2] proposed a modified bureaucratic form which he termed as e-bureaucratic government. He outlined, bureaucratic institutions not only provide mechanisms to coordinate work activities in the public sector, but also serve to enforce the democratic values of equality and impartiality. According to him the e-bureaucratic form was proposed as an e-government solution, which taking advantages of the information and communication technology as means of coordination, boosted to enforce the values of equality and impartiality underpinned through the actions emanating from bureaucratic structures as well.

13. MODIFIED BUREAUCRATIC FORM

Recently, concepts are mounting on e-bureaucracy as an effort of reforming it. ICTs are the fuel here, too, like e-government. Furthermore, Cordella [2] clarified, ICTs are not only tools to transform bureaucracies in market-oriented organisations, but are also tools to support bureaucratic administration functions. The implementation of ICTs to digitalize existing administrative procedures can improve the administrative system's efficiency and effectiveness without changing its fundamental logic [61]. Many more tools have been used for this purpose.

Cordella [2] exemplified such tools as Office automation software (OAS), database management systems (DMS), management information systems (MIS), decision support systems (DSS), and more recently, integrated informational systems over the Internet.

Osborne and Plastrik [62] proposed the ways in which bureaucracies could "reinvent" themselves, by bringing fundamental changes to increase effectiveness, efficiency, adaptability, and capacity to innovate. They suggested replacing bureaucratic systems with entrepreneurial systems, which in the long run would lead to public organizations and systems that continually worked on self-improvement. They also outlined five strategies (the five Cs) for effecting change: i) the core strategy, ii) the consequences strategy iii) the customer strategy iv) the control strategy and v) the culture strategy.

14. CONCLUSIONS

This paper focused on clarification of e-government, e-governance and ordinary bureaucratic government and the relationship among them. It linked with relevant works of different researchers in this field around the globe. To summerise, e-governance covers the broader area including the political government whereas e-government limits it's dealing with political government, its various depertments and its citizens only in the land. However, some authors use these two terms synonymously as both basically use the same basis of ICTs. Bureaucratic government is based on hard and fast, inflexible rules and regulations and it usually does not use ICTs or scarcely uses it at a negligible level. It is evident that bureaucratic form has the fear of red tape - a slower form in its nature. Bureaucratic government is, furthermore, the old system which is being replaced by e-government. On the other hand, e-government was found to be fast, more effective, professional, accountable, transparent and reliable. Although its installation cost is higher, it has long-term effect which reduces overall cost. However, e-bureaucracy is proved to be better than traditional bureaucracy.

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