eGovernment Whole-of-Government Approach for Good Governance: Initiatives from Morocco

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Abstract

Good Governance is an ongoing endeavor of all societies to reach development and prosperity. Public administration processes focus of organizational reforms to reach good governance and to serve citizens more efficiently at front offices government-to-citizens (G2C) reforms. This paper to sheds light on back-office government-to-government (G2G) reforms in Morocco's public service. It explores the powers of eGovernment to enhance interoperability and coordination between offices. In this paper, coordination theory supports the whole-of-government management, which is opposed to silo-based management, as a catalyst for a heterogeneous multi-stakeholder engagement to promote internal working processes, improving institutional linkages seamlessly between back ends. The paper gives some examples from successful eGovernment whole-of-government initiatives in Morocco, at the end.

Keywords: eGovernment, Whole-of-Government Approach (WGA), Silo-based Approach, Good Governance

Introduction

There is a global tendency to convert public governance and management from silo-based structures, disaggregation, and organizational divide into holistic integrated approaches to increase interoperability and collaborative governance. Taking a Whole-of-Government Approach has the power to change governance outcomes than before, when most competent individual agencies worked in isolation. The whole-of-organization approach can streamline workflows and clarify reform paths for human and economic development. Recently, Morocco resorted to the eGovernment Whole-of-Government Approach, as a new public reform strategy, for its endeavors to increase Good Governance ethics among back offices, enhancing efficiency of service delivery in front offices, at the end.

The Development of the Concept of Governance

The concept of "governance" is very old in history. The term had been coined in a discourse presented by Kautilya, a king in India, to his people before 400 B.C. Kautilya had emphasized in his treatise ethics of justice, tolerance, wealth and interests safeguard as fundamental pillars that the king would preserve for his subjects, at that time. These good ethics were baptized by king Kautilya as an "art of governance" (Barthwal, 2003; Kaufmann & Kraay, 2007). In this direction, governance is a process of interaction between authorities and citizens. It is the way governments influence policies and make decisions for a public welfare (Barthwal, 2003). In the seventeenth century, governance had been defined by Chaucer and Shakespeare simply as a method of management to be developed later into an act of governing so as to achieve whatever is good for society (Osborne,1999 in Sangita, 2002). Towards the end of the twentieth century, the concept of governance got a prominent attention among social scientists, donors and civil society (Barthwal, 2003), to be tuned into a rich field of study in different disciplines like economics, international relations, human development studies, political sciences, and public administration and policies (Uzun, 2010), for its concern in the whole public life. Governance is beyond the government; it is the process in which governments or governors govern their societies. Therefore, the spirit of governance would be good, if it is infused with a democratic ethos-based on anti-corrupted, effective, transparent and accountable institutions, and which is alert to equity and the rule of law (Sangita, 2002). Now, the concept of "Good Governance " has gained more deliberation in academia, as any governance indicators appeared, such as those developed by Kettani, D., & Moulin, B. (2014), out of the United Nations (2008), in their distinguished book: EGovernment for Good Governance in developing countries: empirical evidence from the eFez project, for example. These indicators measured different aspects in the quality of management and service delivery, between governments and citizens (G2C), after the integration of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Mohamed (Mo) Ibrahim, from Sudan, provides an annual report on the quality of governance in each sub-Saharan Africa African country. The assessment of governance in Africa is based on the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) (Ibrahim & Gouillart, 2009), which was formerly

established within the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University (Rotberg, 2009). According to Ibrahim & Gouillart (2009), Good Governance is "the delivery of high quality political goods to citizens by governments of all kinds" (Rotberg, 2009, p. 113). Citizens pay taxes to their governments monthly, so as to receive, in turn, for domestic services such as physical security and safety (Rotberg, 2009). Mohamed (Mo) Ibrahim constructed governance indicators to benchmark public services provision within the African context. Since 2007, the Mo Ibrahim indices have offered a unique contribution to improve the quality of governance administrative performances in Africa, (Farrington, 2009). The Ibrahim governance indicators are disaggregated into five basic axes namely: safety and security, rule of law, transparency and corruption, participation and human rights, sustainable economic opportunity and human development. The score generated from these variables gives a clear vision for each country in terms of delivery of core political goods and services. (Rotberg, 2009).

By the advent of the new technologies, namely interoperability between systems, the traditional governance paradigm has won new additional ethics, especially in back-end works, like: seamless coordination, red tape and duplication reductions, security of information management, information sharing and greater coordination. Nowadays, eGovernment transfers the pattern of governance into other new forms of governance such as: "e-governance", "networked governance", "whole-of-organization governance" and "collaborative governance". The digital era has corrected the traditional governance paradigm where public institutions functioned as quarantined silos. EGovernment has integrated institutions to operate in holistic, cross-sectorial and multi-stakeholder coordination and synergies (United Nations, 2014).

EGovernment Technology

Electronic government or eGovernment is a new field in administration and management, which accompanied the emergence of ICTs and internet (Stowers & Melitski, 2003). EGovernment is defined as the use of ICTs to improve Good Governance ethics between G2C, G2B, and G2G (OECD, 2005; United Nations, 2014). EGovernment is a new administrative process of reform to service deliveries and government transactions that replaces traditional, hierarchical and paper-based administrations (Heeks, 2005). OECD (2003) in "The eGovernment Imperative" listed three main definitions of eGovernment, which can be summarized as the use of ICTs in front and back-offices for Good Governance (OECD, 2003, p.63). The edited book "Developments in eGovernment: A Critical Analysis" (Griffin, Trevorrow, & Halpin, 2007) conceptualizes the term of eGovernment and its theoretical contributions, empirical investigations and developments across the European Union. It is an in-depth critique for students, policy makers and researchers, for it pursues the development of eGovernment changes on local, national and global levels. The book defines "eGovernment " in a narrow definition as a "service delivery on the internet" and more broadly as "the use of ICT in the public sector". However, the whole book is limited to the area of G2C eGovernment transactions. Indeed, the authors added that eGovernment broad meaning

is still incomplete due to the lack of back-office benchmarking studies (Griffin *et al*., 2007, p. 76). Misuraca (2007) in her book "E-Governance in Africa, From Theory to Action: A Handbook on ICTs for Local Governance" associates the meaning of eGovernment with Good Governance values. She introduces eGovernment as a solution for "improved interactions with business" with "less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth and/or cost reductions" (Misuraca, 2007, p. 28). Kettani, D., & Moulin, B. (2014) also presents eGovernment Technology as a catalyst for integrity and moralities in Public Sector. Their book eGovernment for Good Governance in developing countries: empirical evidence from the eFez project narrates the abilities of the automated kiosks to deliver instant Birth Certificates to citizens without the intervention of public officers, in the municipalities of Fez. The study reveals that the manual delivery of the certificates has been badly governed, corrupt, inefficient and archaic (Kettani *et al*., 2008, p. 10); however, eGovernment integration in front offices enabled for an efficient and effective, transparent, accountable, equal, and citizen-friendly delivery of back office, in which "Good Governance" substituted "bad governance" in the municipalities of Fez. Their eGovernment work won three prizes during the period 2006-2007, namely The Moroccan National Prize of "eMtiaz" in 2006, The Award of Technology in Government in Africa (TIGA), in 2007 and the United Nations Public Service Awards for "Improving the delivery of Services" in 2007 (Kettani *et al*., 2008, p. 16).

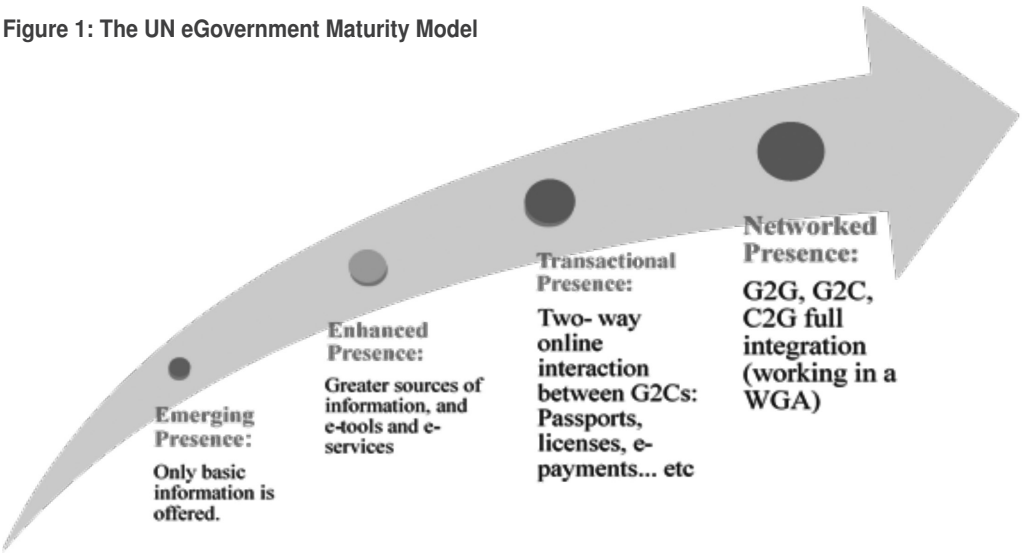
Forms of EGovernment

EGovernment exists as a multidirectional form of transaction. It is a long-term strategic plan to reform the process of all existing transactions of governments towards citizens, businesses and governments. Front-office deliveries are concerned with the online information and service delivery to citizens G2C and government to businesses (G2B), through ICTs. However, the back-office side of eGovernment is concerned with the internal administrative transactions and information sharing both within and between governments. Therefore, G2C and G2B transactions exist within the rubric of front-office; where G2G transactions are carried within back office operations between governments (United Nations, 2014). An example of G2B involves business-based transactions like payments, taxes, and placed bids for contracts between government and business corporations. Government-to- Citizen G2C involves the use of ICTs designed to simplify people's interaction with their governments as customers. EGovernment supports the new administrative approach to put citizens at the heart of service delivery, moving them from inline to online service delivery. Citizens now could request their administrative licenses and documents or participate at decision-making and elections using technology from their homes. Government-to-Government (G2G) involves all the processes of electronic integration and interoperability to streamline transactions between offices, with more transparency and accountability mechanisms. It is a new approach in public administration, which supports a Whole-of-Government coordination between multi-stakeholders to enhance an ICT-enabled public sector governance (United Nations, 2008).

EGovernment Evolution Stages

Many authors tried to provide a better understanding for the emerging patterns of eGovernment performance across the development of ICTs (Coursey & Norris, 2008; Layne and Lee, 2001; Siau & Long, 2005; United Nations, 2008, 2014). The United Nations Surveys contribute to the ongoing discussion drawing a good map for eGovernment maturity stages. The model underlines the ongoing endeavors of all governments around the world to reach the best for the welfare of citizens. All the models developed, so far, picture a true, stepwise, and real development of eGovernment (Coursey & Norris, 2008). In the same context, Fath-Allah, Cheikhi, Al-Qutaish, &Idri (2014), compared 25 maturity models of eGovernment developing stages, for the purpose to reveal similarities and differences between them. The paper begins with the model of Layne and Lee (2001) and ends with the UK national Model. Fath-Allah *et al*. (2014) concluded that all the models, under study, express the same features using different terms. For them, "eGovernment maturity" underwent a unique evolution through time according to the pace of each country's "e-readiness". Most of these authors confirmed the possibility to reduce their models into a four major stage model evolution which comprises: Presence, Interaction, Transaction and Integration" (Fath-Allah *et al*., 2014; Layne and Lee, 2001; United Nations, 2014), the same model which is developed by the United Nations in its surveys. Effectively, the United Nations (2014) has a more holistic and linear map of eGovernment evolution stages (Figure 1) . This model begins with an emerging state of Internet in the mid of 1990s, that has given birth to eGovernment technologies, serving citizens through static websites at the beginning. Citizens could have only basic and limited information about their administrations online. Then, eGovernment moved a bit to serve citizens with some downloadable forms, regulations and services online. At that stage, eGovernment facilitated a (G2C) two-layered communication process. Later, EGovernment developed into a "transactional" stage, where governments could receive some input from their citizens, in turn. People could pay their taxes online and apply for certificates and licenses. The "connected stage" witnessed the emergence of Web 2.0 enhancing technology and interactive applications that managed to transform governments into connected entities. Data, information, workflows could be transmitted between governments in a seamless manner, creating an efficient environment of interchange, coordination and communication between agencies (United Nations, 2014). EGovernment, now, is believed to change silo mind-sets with holistic cultures. Silos could disappear when governments are orchestrated together in a Whole-of-Government Approach for a unified service delivery in front offices (United Nations, 2014).

Figure 1: The UN eGovernment Maturity Model



Source: United Nations, 2014.

The Whole-of-Government Stage

The "Whole-of-Government Approach" was first coined by the former president of UK, Tony Blair, as a strategic plan to better increase "wicked" public ethics in his country (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007). The concept is originally labeled as a "joined-up government" in the United Kingdom, "horizontal government" in Canada, "network government" in United States and "integrated government" in New Zealand (Halligan, 2007, p. 204). The Whole-of-Government Approach is simply the integration of public service agencies to achieve a shared goal and integrated government responses to particular issues (United Nations, 2014). It is a new concept in public administration, which looks to promote inter-sectorial collaboration between offices in "the pursuit of government policy goals" (Halligan, 2007, p. 204). The approach aims to use eGovernment technology to transform public institutions from dispersed silos into orchestrated entities working seamlessly, towards a unified objective to produce good environments of interoperability, reactivity, effectiveness, cost-efficiency, accountability, transparency, and strategic visions of development. It is a new institutional policy for greater collaboration among government agencies through integrated information management systems (United Nations, 2014).

The Whole-of-Government Approach vs the Silo-Based Approach

The United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN) developed series of surveys between 2001 and 2014 to help countries, especially developing countries and countries in economic transition, respond to challenges of Good Governance in the Public Sector.

The United Nations seeks to build an eGovernment Whole-of-Government strategy that

links regional with national institutions, not for public service provision only, but for efficiency, transparency, accountability, and streamlined service delivery that may render cost savings in government transactions (United Nations, 2008). This new approach is initiated in the world as a reaction to the shortcomings of "single-purpose organizations" (Christensen & Laegreid, 2006). The Approach has been adopted for public sector reforms in United States, United Kingdom, Australia and Canada (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007). EGovernment Whole-of-Government collaboration between offices is deemed to bring the following gains:

- Effectiveness and responsiveness of governments towards complex administrative issues.
- Simplification of Administrative procedures.
- Reduction of duplications, and rule of law unification between public agencies.
- Cost-effectiveness and time-savings.
- Citizen's trust increase in their governments.
- Decentralization of public service delivery through ICTs.
- Increased transparency and accountability mechanisms for cross-agency collaboration.
- Integrated and seamless service delivery.
- Innovative approach to complex problem solving.
- Collaboration and shared strategic visions
  (*United Nations*, 2014, pp. 78–82).

The United Nations (2008) sees that "Connected Governance" should replace the bureaucracy of hierarchical silos, which failed to deliver efficient services at front-desks (Christensen &Laegreid, 2006; Christensen & Lægreid, 2007; Chun *et al*., 2011; United Nations, 2008, 2012, 2014).Within this context, the UN report "Government Survey 2012: EGovernment for the People" highlights the vital necessity to understand the new economic, social and administrative new inquiries, that national governments must cope with to reform their strategies towards Good Governance. Therefore, a holistic approach towards connected governance should substitute "the siloization" of the public sector to consolidate back-office activities in order to find solutions for complex issues, through coordinated synergies (United Nations, 2012, p. 55).

Coordination Theory in the Public Sector

Governance and coordination have been described as essential "protocols" in reforming the public sector. Coordination is suggested to foster communication and transparency to constitute the so-called "a reasonable market practice" among bureaucracies working towards the same objective (Thornton & Fleming, 2011, p. 129). Governance is a way of workflows coordination between organizations, which are two sides of the same coin (Tierney, 2006). It is "the act of working together harmoniously" (Malone & Crowston, 1990, p. 5), to manage orchestrated activities together (Malone and Crowston, 1994). Therefore, coordination theory builds "tools that enable people to work together more effectively and more enjoyably". The theory is called for Crowston (1998) as a developing form of theories about how coordination can happen in various

kinds of systems, and the way "we can help us build useful cooperative work tools" (Malone & Crowston, 1990, p. 11). The theory has impacted different disciplines that necessitate coordination and collaboration, especially Public Administration. Coordination Theory has been cited at least in 287 journal articles, conference papers and dissertations (Crowston, Rubleske, & Howison, 2006) to investigate how separate actors and activities can be coordinated in a Whole-of-Government Approach through ICTs (Malone & Crowston, 1990). Coordination always happens beyond curtains and its visibility is detected by the absence of efficiency. Indeed, Good Governance in front offices must be contingent on a good whole-of-government coordination in back offices. Olson, Malone, & Smith (2012) in their coedited book: "coordination theory and collaboration technology" try to determine "the principles underlying how people collaborate and coordinate work efficiently and productively in environments characterized by a high degree of decentralized computation and decision-making" (Olson *et al*., 2012, p. 2). According to Olson *et al.* (2012), coordination theory can help to study the impact of ICTs on the way people coordinate their work together in corporations, under what they named "computer-supported cooperative work". More specifically, ICT-based coordination, offered by these "computer-supported cooperative works" are new capabilities in organizations to communicate "information faster, less expensively, and more selectively" (Olson *et al*., 2012, pp. 8–9). For Olson *et al* (2012), coordination can change organizations from mere "adhocracies" into solid organizations of highly decentralized networks and team works. Coordination theorists are concerned with coordination theory's impact on governance and decision-making among a group of people and how do computer-based group processes and tools affect the making of decisions, especially by the "rapid response and high reliability" offered by the new technologies (p.22). Malone and Crowston (1994) aim to theorize coordination among a "groupware", in order to help people coordinate their activities better by facilitating transactions between corporations, integrating ICTs to convert individual actions into larger purposeful wholes respecting onuses of time, order, quantity and quality. In conclusion, coordination theory supports integration and interoperability of workflows between different governmental entities for a holistic cooperation, management and Good Governance between offices.

EGovernment Initiatives in Morocco

Morocco issued a package of eGovernment strategic plans, with an online administration program to reform the public sector (Bennani & Elayoubi, 2008; Kettani & Moulin, 2014; OECD, 2010). "EGovernment proves to be a privileged gateway to a wide range of public sector reforms, and the MENA region offers a very broad scope of experiences", after the failure of traditional strategies (OECD, 2010, p. 187). Morocco is one of the countries that joined the track of these new reforms since 1997, when The Moroccan prime ministers' discourse on "Electronic Administration Days" emphasized the roles of ICTs as an alternative choice to improve efficiency, performance, transparency and accountability in the Moroccan administrative management, cutting red tape, duplication and fragmentation for a streamlined service delivery, at the end (Bennani & Elayoubi, 2008, pp. 228–229).

The online administration program in 1997 is followed by "e-Morocco 2010" to reduce administrative transaction costs and position Morocco internationally and externally in the field of ICTs. The country launched later for "Maroc Numeric 2013" with a budget of 2.5 billion Dirhams (Bennani & Elayoubi, 2008). The program aims to transfer the Moroccan public sector from an office-oriented to citizen-oriented, putting customers at the center of service delivery. An inter-ministerial committee (CIGOV) is nominated to benchmark and assess this project, which looks to increase interoperability among ministries, national and local public agencies through integrated system applications in Morocco (OECD, 2010). Twenty five eGovernment projects out of sixty nine projects are operational now, including six transactional online services. "Watiqa" (www.watiqa.ma) is an example that enables citizens to receive their birth certificates and other administrative documents on their devices only by a registered mail. This automated G2C application aims to reduce transaction costs and bribery, associated with the direct contact of citizens with local officials. Now, many other G2G Inter-organizational System Applications function between different ministries. BADR (Base Automatisée des Douanes en Réseau), for example, also is an operative system since 2009, which makes it easier for customs to register their statements online. DAMANCOM system also receives online declaration of earnings and payments. Direct Info allows citizens to consult companies' legal and financial information, to get a certificate, and to register a trademark (OECD, 2010). The integrated eGovernment system GID (Gestion Intégrée de la Dépense) links all public ministries, delegations, provinces, local collectivities to manage public expenditure. The system comes out of a series of fiscal reforms, which are deemed to modernize expenditure management between intergovernmental public agencies. It is an operable system since 2010, which is believed to increase efficiency, transparency of budget and accountability between local and national offices. The GID system is a major achievement and a pure successful product of the Ministry of Finance, which is offered to boost a holistic management for the public budget in the country.

Conclusion

EGovernment Whole-of-Government Approach is a transformation of bureaucracies from adhocracies and classic top-down hierarchies into a connected way of governance. The eGovernment Whole-of-Government package holds a great potential to reform governance in back-offices by breaking stove-piped working approaches that consistently fail to deal with complex issues of public administration and deliver efficient services at front-desks. Indeed, excellent service delivery in front offices entails an excellent orchestration and harmony of workflows in back offices, as advanced by the coordination theory in public administration. Therefore, eGovernment Whole-of-Government Approach is trusted as a solution for bad governance and fragmentation, and the Moroccan government should take pains to reach eGovernment in Morocco, fine-tuning the country to promote good governance and democracy. This will no doubt accelerate social and economic development in the modern information age.

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