E-GOVERNANCE CAN PROMOTE TRANSPARENCY IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION?

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Abstract
Only a few years ago we began to talk about the Information Society and eGovernment, also called e-Government (or electronic government). The rapidity of technological developments in recent years has made digitalization penetrate into our everyday lives, making it an indispensable normality. Undoubtedly, these changes have also been felt in public administration so that digitization of public services is a subject that can no longer be postponed. Some theorists claim that today we are faced with great pressure to move from "governing" ("top" leadership, usually representative) to "governance" (self-determination in terms of competition) to the leadership of differentiated entities.
The disruption between e-government and e-government is still disputed both by theoreticians and practitioners. At this point we could say that a compromise has been reached and the idea is that: e-government uses one-way communication protocol (from government to citizens or the business environment) whereas e-governance uses two-way communication protocol.
This article aims to highlight the characteristics of the challenges of the new governance challenges through information and communication technologies and the role they play in the transparency of public administrations as the principle of good governance.
The research methodology was based on a review of the literature as well as on an opinion poll conducted with the citizen consultative council through a questionnaire.
The results of our research allow public authorities to introduce new mechanisms and functionalities in the electronic governance system.

Keywords
e-Governance, transparency, public administration

JEL Classification
H11, I28, H82

Introduction
Jimmy Carter said about the government that "it is a mechanism of human wisdom to meet human needs. People have the right to expect these needs to be satisfied with this wisdom. "This very wisdom Jimmy Carter spoke about the concept of e-Governance in the context in

which traditional governance was no longer enough to meet human needs. step with the new trends generated by the digital revolution.

While definitions of e-Governance from various sources may differ widely, a common theme is obvious that: e-Governance involves the use of communication and information technology, and in particular Internet, to improve the provision of government services to citizens, other government agencies and businesses. e-Governance allows citizens to interact and receive services from the state or local institutions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

On the other hand, the notion of e-Government is the first to emerge in the theoretical and practical approaches. The simplest definition is that of the UN where eGovernment consists of using the world-wide web and internet the to provide government services and information to citizens. For the World Bank, eGovernment refers to the use information technologies (such as broadband networks, the Mobile Computing and Internet) by government agencies that have the capacity to transform relations with businesses, citizens and other government branches European Commission used the term e-Government when it referred to the use of information and communication technologies (IT&C) in public administrations combined with organizational change and novel skills, its major objective being to improve public services, democratic processes and public policies.

Problem Statement

Researchers around the world have been discussing paradigms about the differences between these terms for more than a decade, and some have published articles that wanted to be a synthesis of well-known opinions in the literature.

They conclude that E-governance or "electronic governance" uses information and communication technologies (IT&C) at various levels of the public sector, the government and beyond, in order to strengthen governance. E-governance implies innovation in leadership styles, debate and decision-making, how to access education, and listening to citizens as well as ways of organizing and delivering services and information, being seen as a concept wider than e-government (Palvia and Sharma, 2014).

If we agree with the idea that transparency is open communication between citizens and governments (Abu-Shanab, 2013) then we can test the hypothesis whether e-governance can influence this type of communication and in what sense.

Some empirical studies have studied the relationship between transparency and e-government in relation to the two separate steps used and tested for transparency: Corruption perception index (CPI) and open budget index (OBI) (Abu-Shanab, 2013). These studies have used secondary data available from international reports to investigate the relationship between transparency and e-government development.

Challenge of Research

Our challenge is to identify in the literature the implications of e-governance on transparency in communicating with governments, accepting the idea that there is a sensitive difference between the terms e-government and e-governance, as we have shown in the introduction.

Embracing the idea of researchers who believe that e-government has provided a holistic approach to governance for sustainable development(Bran *et al.*, 2014) (Ciobanu, Bran and Alpopi, 2018), thus ensuring efficiency, transparency, responsiveness and participation in citizens' delivery services, and that the relationship between e-governance and government transparency involves many facets and most studies have highlighted the relationship between transparency and open government. (Iyer and Subba Rao, 2017).

Research Methods

The research methodology was based on a review of the literature as well as on an opinion poll conducted with the citizen consultative council through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to the members of the advisory council of a Romanian rural community and the data were introduced on the electronic platform www.chestionare.ase.ro. The questionnaire contained 29 questions out of which 4 about respondent data. The questionnaire was answered by 63 people, of which 25 members of the Citizens Advisory Council (CCC), ie 100% of CCC members, respectively. 2% of the local population, ie over 5% of the number of voting residents) or five times more than the number of local councilors (13 for a population of 3197 inhabitants). Education (Costache *et al.*, 2015), health (Carra *et al.*, 2016) and ensuring the conditions for creating jobs (Ciobanu, Bran and Alpopi, 2018) is in the opinion of respondents the most important areas that the government should consider them and over which should govern transparency.

Findings

Scientific literature widely discusses both e-governance and transparency in governance. In the Web of Science there are about 1,000 articles dealing with eGovernment and a relatively equal number in ScienceDirect. Over the last five years, around 100 new articles / year have been discussing this theme with different approaches and perspectives. Government transparency is a hot topic anytime in the literature with over 100,000 articles in the past 10 years registered in the data bases of the main pubic streams with over 1,000 new articles annually. A graphic representation of the subject by category is shown in Figure 1.

Fig. no. 1 e-Governance in Web of Science Categories
Source: Processing results from http://wcs.webofknowledge.com/RA/analyze.do

These visual representations, made directly by the web site of science, indicate suggestively which perspective of the subject is addressed. Thus, for e-governance, technology is predominant, and for transparency the main field of research is public administration and political sciences (fig. no. 2).
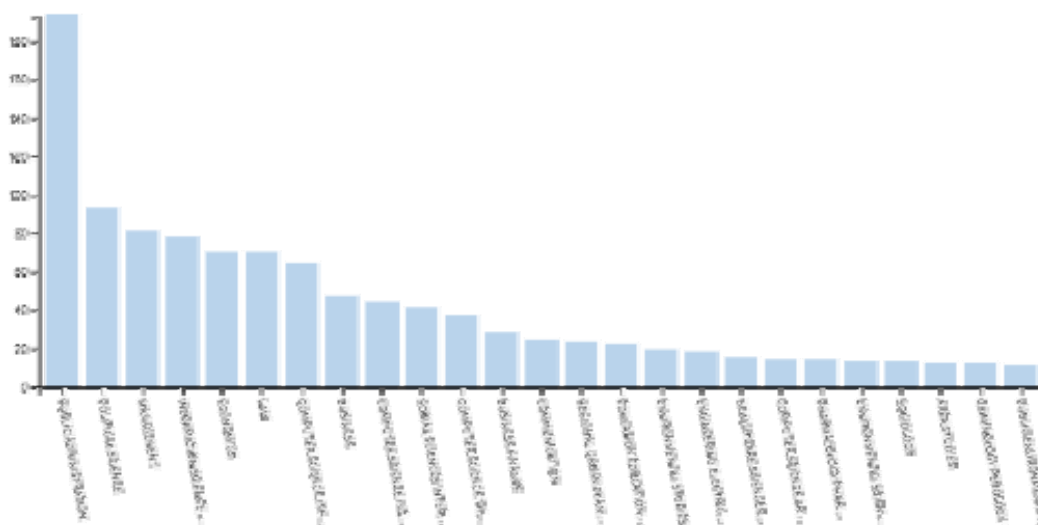
Fig. no. 2 Transparency in the Web of Science Categories
Source: Processing results from http://wcs.webofknowledge.com/RA/analyze.do

These analyzes have helped us to understand what has been emphasized in research so far and to pursue our research by trying to identify how transparency is being influenced by e-Governance.

A real help in our research was the opinion poll conducted in a locality in Romania. The size of the locality, population density and positioning were the selection criteria (Rădulescu, Bodislav and Burlacu, 2018). In the questionnaire the following findings were made: To the question: How do you appreciate your communication skills using your computer and the Internet? over 66% of respondents felt they had solid or medium knowledge (fig. no. 3).

In Romania, the internet connection of households is constantly expanding nowadays to over 80% of households, slightly below the EU average, as can be seen in fig. no. 4 based on Eurostat data.
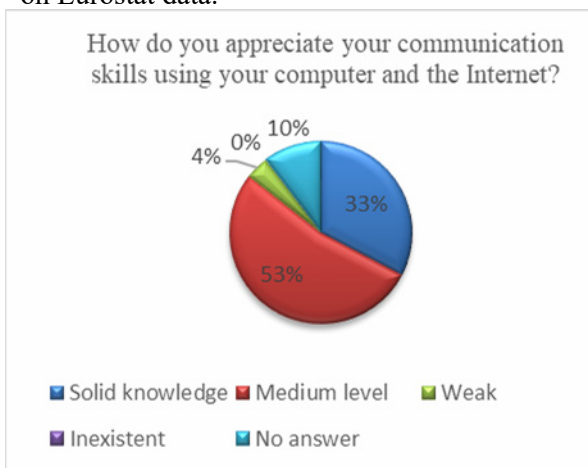

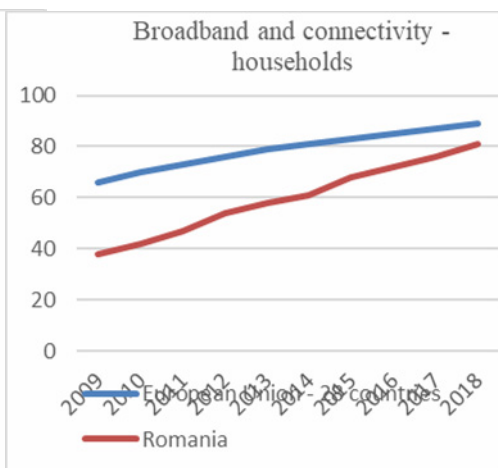**Fig. no. 3 Skills ICT**
Source: own processing

Fig. no. 4 Internet connectivity
Source: Eurostat

To the question: In which of the following issues do you want to have a say when deciding at a local level?, (fig. no. 5) the respondents indicated over 50% education, followed by health (42%), jobs (36.5%) and dwellings (21%).
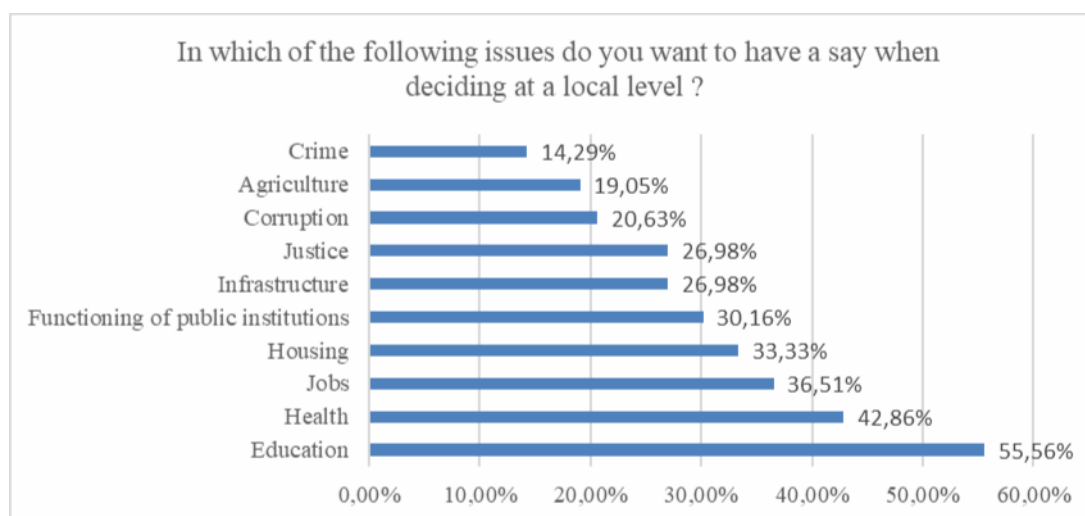
Fig. no. 5 Prioritize decision areas at the local level
Source: own processing

Thus, we find that at least in small localities, the functioning of public administration is more important than agriculture, infrastructure, justice or corruption being ranked 5th, immediately after dwellings.

A perception, perhaps not surprising but certainly important, we found it in the answers to the question: Which of these forms of involvement do you think best produces?

The first place in the respondents' preferences is contacting the media (30,16%) closely followed by a petition (28,57%) and a protest (26,98%). One in five respondents indicated that a solution could also come after contacting a public official or receiving a response to a local consultant. Only one in 10 respondents indicated contacting a local politician as a possible solution.

Discussions

The results of this research, corroborated with our previous research (Constantin *et al.*, 2018), have allowed us to identify both the current state of e-government in Romania as compared to the research trends (Burlacu, Gutu and Matei, 2018), the difference between e-government and e-governance, the skills of computer use on the internet and the phenomenon manifestation of digital divide as well as future research paths to take advantage of the current technological and ideological revolutions.

Using government websites to increase e-government capacity even in a democratic manner can be a great challenge today. Some researchers have even built a conceptual model for evaluation in this sense, which they called the DEWEM Democratic E-Governance Website Evaluation Model (Lee-Geiller and Lee, 2019). DEWEM as a tool for democratic electronic governance is based on the author's understanding, on three pillars of development: Transparency, Quality of Service and Citizen Involvement. Fill out this model with a new pillars: accountability authorities. Adapted and developed this model can be represented as in figure no. 6.

The pursuit of the evolution of research trends can be done today by using network analysis tools. For example, some researchers have analyzed with this technique the literature that highlights the shift from conventional governance to e-democracy (Bindu, Sankar and Kumar, 2019).
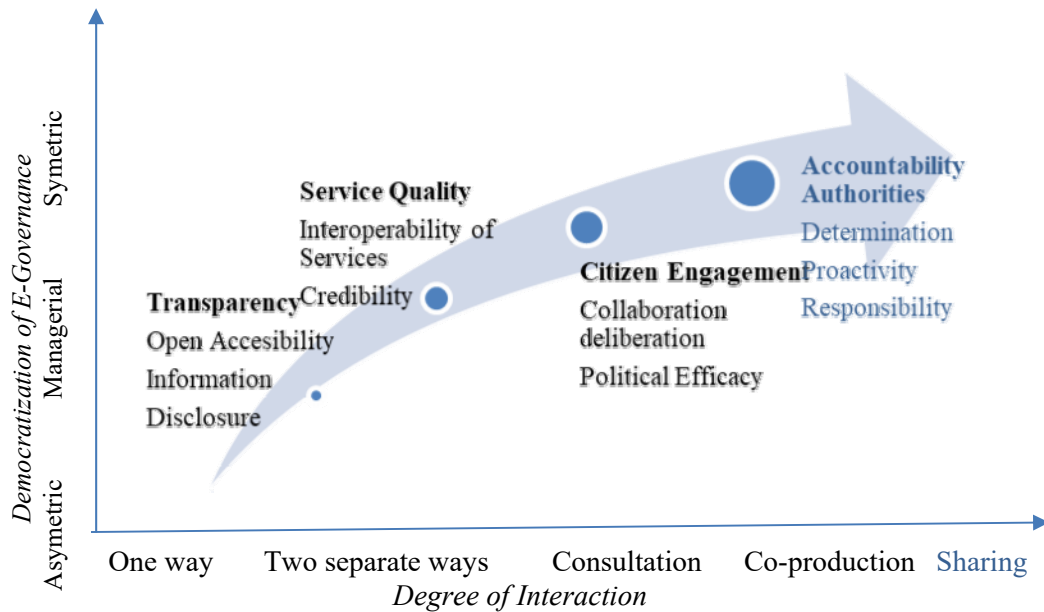
Fig. no. 6 DEWEM as an Instrument for Democratic E-Governance
Source: Adapted from Lee-Geiller and Lee, 2019

From Fig. no. 7 we can see that the first articles published in journals available in international databases (Web of Science Core Collection) have approached organizational transparency through eGovernment, relatively recently, since 2003, and sustained until today.
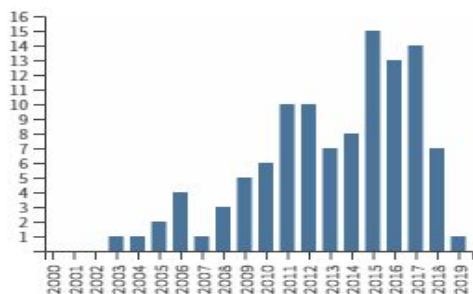

Fig. no. 7 Total Publications by Year
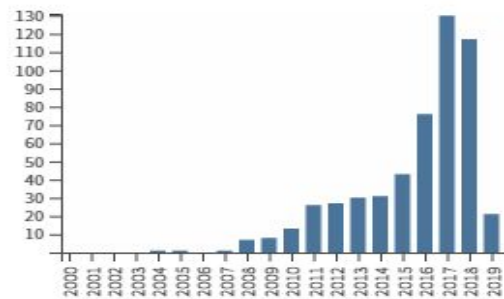*Source: Web of Science*

Fig. no. 8 Sum of Times Cited by Year
Source: Source: Web of Science

Recognizing the importance of these approaches is highlighted in Fig. no. 9 by the large number of citations (Web of Science Core Collection) that recontextualize the relationship between transparency and e-governance.

The first place with 89 citations obtained in 12 years since its appearance in 2006 is the article "E-government developments in European Union cities: Reshaping government's relationship with citizens" (Torres, Pina and Acerete, 2006). It re-contextualizes already 37 papers addressing the transparency issue in relation to the concept that was increasingly gaining the account at that time: e-government. The oldest article in the Web of Science Core Collection is titled "Electronic Governance - a Vehicle for the New World Order" and was published in 1999 Deb, G. K. (1999). Researchers predict realistic trends in e-governance and transparence is a key factor.

A visual analysis of the bibliographic references found in the Web of Science for the period 1975-2019 dealing with e-governance in relation to other terms is shown in Fig. no. 9.
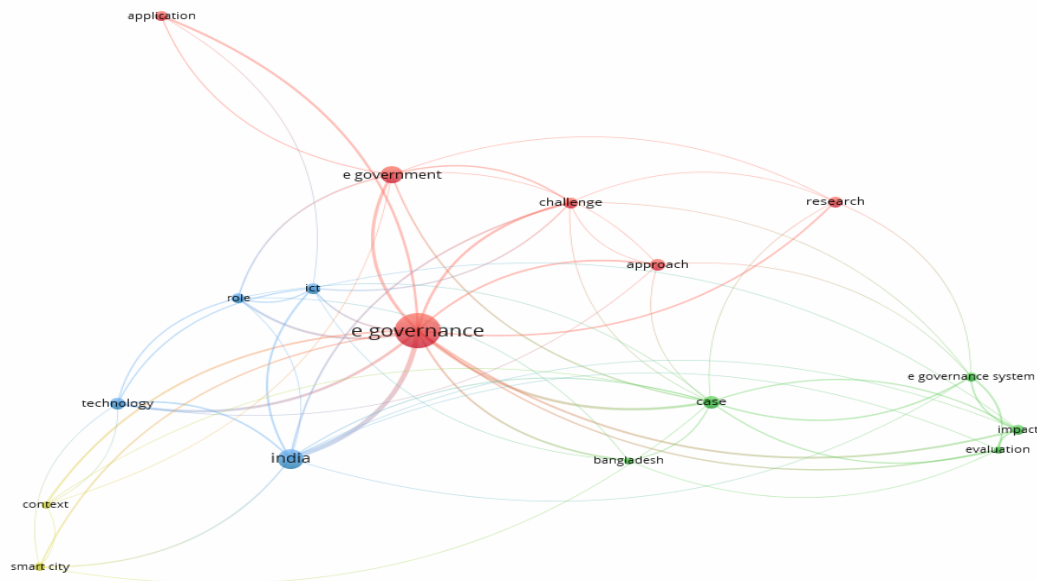

Fig. no. 9 Map of bibliographic references
Source: Made by authors with the VOSviewer application with Web of Science data for 1975-2019

In fact, there are many articles that discuss the issues of organizational transparency and many of them focus on the relationship with the public administration. The concept of transparency that we have followed in our reviews was, moreover, the one defined in our earlier submissions, namely "a routine information from external stakeholders that serves the purpose of improving our understanding of what the government is doing their" (Szabo *et al.*, 2016).

Conclusions

In conclusion, if eGovernment takes into account four major indicators such as (Commission, 2018): user centricity, transparency in governance, cross-border mobility and key activators with the five key prerequisites (Electronic Identification (eID), Electronic documents eDocuments, Authentic Sources, eSafe, and Single Sign On (SSO), e-Governance as self-determination in the conditions of competition through information and communication technology can greatly contribute to increasing government transparency if it is assimilated to global dissemination of information (similar to the media) and direct reactivity (petitioners) if it is assumed by a large proportion of the population that today has access to the Internet and has good computer skills over the internet.

So, from this perspective, the answer to the question: "e-Governance can promote transparency in public administration?" Is positive.

But a new question opens, which we will analyze in our forthcoming research, namely, whether transparency in public administration through e-Governance can be a decisive factor for good governance.

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