E-Government, Trust and Corruption

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Abstract
Governments around the worlds especially in developing countries face with tremendous challenges. High or moderate rate of corruption can be named as one of the most important of these challenges. Corruption and its inefficiency can deviate resources allocation to unproductive sectors of economy. Trust in social networks or within the society has two antithetic effects in deployment of corruption in government and bureaucratic systems. Governments may want to use public trust for eradicating corruption in one hand and by the other hand particularistic trust may cause corruption. Generalized and particularistic trusts have two effects on corruption. E-Government a solution can decrease the harmful effects of particularistic trust extension. This paper wants to introduce and use these two phenomena in the field of public economics by concentrate on corruption and e-Government as a solution.

Keywords: E-government, generalized trust, particularistic trust, corruption, social network

Introduction
Erosion of citizen’s trust in government due to rampant corruption at various levels in government ought to be an area of serious concern for developing countries and development agencies. A well-planned E-government strategy can build a more efficient, accountable and transparent government (Bhatnagar, 2008). During the last recent years, trust phenomenon and its effects have been entered into the public economics discussions and naturally it would relate to the governments concepts. Considering governments as essential institution in the political structure of each country or political regimes, it will be clear that talking about trust is an important subject in the field of public economics. Trust is a key concept that can affect bilateral relationship between government and publics. Since applying contract theory in every principle – agent model highly depends on trust levels between two or more parties. But studying about several aspects of trust will explicitly focus on generalized trust so it is essential to distinguish this type of trust from particularistic trust. In other word based on the social and economic literatures trust has two important aspects named generalized and particularistic trust (Wegner, 2006). Trust dichotomy has been used for the first time by Banfield, 1958. He was the first who
introduced the Amoral Familism theory when studying the behaviour of peoples in a village in south of Italy. He found that people within the family have strong powerful trusty relationships (particularistic trust) but between families there are no trusty relations (generalizes trust). Systematic Corruptive behaviours often rest on particularistic trust among the conspirators. Using information and communication technology (ICT) in the government's structure names E-Government, it would be applicable to decrease the menace of face to face contacts between agents and principals that rests on particularistic trust as a source of corruption.

**Trust & Corruption**

The term corruption is used to describe a variety of activities such as bribery, embezzlement, collusion, peddling, ethics violations, illegal asset accumulation, conflict of interest, political cronyism or nepotism, campaign and party finance violations, money launderings, illegal transactions, frauds, gifts and hospitalities, lobbyings, revolving door, patronages and many other issues. Transparency International (TI) gives the following definitions of some of the most common types of corrupt activities (Transparency international, 2009):

Attempts at developing the typology of corrupt practices have led into the differentiation among three levels of this complex phenomenon

A. **Systemic**, when corruption is incorporated within the entire or particular section (e.g. border control) of the rule of law system (multiple institutions: judiciary, police, customs, tax, etc.);

B. **Institutional**, where the institution affected is tolerant of corrupt practices;

C. **Individual**, where the person is prepared to undertake illegal actions because their employment provides them with an opportunity to exploit their position for again.

According to the World Bank, corruption is “the abuse of public office for private gain. UNDP defines corruption as the misuse of public power, office or authority for private benefit (UNDP, 2004).

Trust is the cornerstone of a cooperative spirit (Uslaner, 2004). According to an OECD report public service is a public trust, citizens expect public servants to serve the public interest with fairness and to manage public resources properly on a daily basis. Fair and reliable public services inspire public trust and create a favourable environment for businesses, thus contributing to well-functioning markets and economic growth (OECD, 2000). This report identifies a number of core public service values as being important for building citizen trust. These include: impartiality; legality; integrity; transparency; efficiency; equality; responsibility and justice. As Uslaner (2004) describes there are two dimensions of trust. First is distinction between moralistic and strategic trust and the second is between generalized and particularistic trust. Uslaner discuss that trust as an opposite
behaviour against corruption is based on moralistic and generalized trust. Moralistic trust means that people with different backgrounds may still constitute a moral community and generalized trust is the belief that most people can be trusted.

But in the other hand corruption as an illegal and unethical behaviour deeply rely on strategic or particularistic trust. Strategic trust is some kind of trust that based upon experienced instead of values and particularistic trust is only trust in people like you.

Base on Uslaner definition in particularistic trust people just relate to peoples like themselves that is opposed to trust to people in general. Corrupt networks reflect and rely upon people like themselves so trusting to other persons exclude the networks may become dangerous. So entrance to corrupt networks will not to be easy.in this situation Benefits within the networks share between corrupt party and other related persons and most of other people abdicate from possible such benefits. The same distinguish has been drawn by Putnam (1993) which described the defences between "bonding" and "bridging" social capital. We bond with our friends and people like ourselves. We form bridges with people who are different from ourselves.

E-Government

United Nations defines E-government as the employment of the Internet and the world-wide-web for delivering government information and services to the citizens (OECD, 2000).

‘Digital Agenda for Europe report defines E-government as tools and systems made possible by Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to provide better services to employees, businesses and citizens.

using such tools promote more efficient and cost effective government, facilitate more convenient government services and allow greater public access to information, and make government more accountable to citizens, whereas governance is a wider term which covers the state’s institutional arrangements, decision making processes, implementation capacity and the relationship between government officials and the public. By Engaging citizens through dialogue and feedback to promote their greater participation in the process of governance of these institutions e-government can be viewed as a subset of e-governance, and its focus is largely on improving administrative efficiency and reducing administrative corruption (Putnam, Leonardi, & Nanetti, 1993)

Both the United Nations and the World Bank present an incremental development model for E government services. This four-stage model (Figure 1) encompasses the following phases:
Figure 1. Four stages of service development (paradigm vs. target).

Base on the figure (1) the following targets were defined:

- Government to Employee (G2E) (focus on administrative issues, and targeting government employees).
- Government to Business (G2B) (focus on business issues, and targeting companies).
- Government to Citizen (G2C) (focus on citizenship and tourism, and targeting citizens).
- Citizen to Citizen (C2C) (focus on the civil society, and targeting citizen to citizen communication).

According to the United Nations E-government Survey, “Europe as a region has been in the vanguard of information technology and setting the pace for others to follow. Building on the existing strength of high levels of human capital and infrastructure, the transformative role of ICT has been recognized and adopted to further streamline E-government services.” The average E-government Development Index (EGDI) in Europe is almost 0.25 above the world average (Figure 2) demonstrating Europe’s clear leadership in this domain.
Figure 2. Average e-government development (United Nations E-government Survey 2012).

Trust and Government

According to Zucker (1986) trust in government emerges from three factors:
1. Characteristics of the individual (i.e. his or her social–cultural background);
2. Professional standards and public statements of ethical standards (institutional trust); and
3. Experience (process trust).

Franklin, van der Eijk, and Marsh (1995) argue that trust may be influenced by the transient popularity of the government in power as by broader concerns about institutions, and that the more popular the government, the more people trust not only it, but the state. Kampen, Van De Walle, and Bouckaert (2006) suggest that trust is lost more easily than it is gained; to use their own colorful phrase, “trust comes on foot and goes away on horseback. Christensen and Laegreid (2005) argue that trust in government depends on several factors including trust in institutions and democracy and well as service satisfaction and a number of demographic variables such as age and education.

Reviewing several papers about the role of trust in government structure and state as a whole declare that trust to government implements we know as being benevolent government, can decrease the transaction costs and help government be more effective in public goods production process. It is essential to emphasis that E-Government, can increase trust in government is of interest.

Trust and e-Government

Several literatures investigated the relations between trust and its implications in the government structures and some others especially surveyed the relations within trust and e-
government. For example, Warkentin, Gefen, Pavlou, and Rose (2002) proposed a model of trust in E-government while Carter and Bélanger (2005) and Rogers (1995) worked on the effects of increased trust in government generally. They found that trust in government generally leads into increased use of E-government facilities.

But Goldfinch, Gauld, and Herbison (2009) suggest the opposite, i.e. that those who trust government less tend to make greater use of e-Government.

The result of Welch, Hinnant, & Moon (2005) study on the relation between trust and government categories to three main factors: transactions, transparency, and interactivity. Transactions are measured by convenience, quality, privacy, efficiency, and security. Transparency is a measure of how visible the organization and its processes are to the user, i.e. how well does the citizen understand what is going on? Interactivity is simply the speed and quality of response (Bannisterb, & College, 2013). Figure 3 shows Welch et al.'s model. The results of Welch et al.'s analysis show that citizens who are most satisfied with E-government also trust government more (which conflicts with the findings of Goldfinch et al. noted above), but also show that citizens that trust government more are more likely to be satisfied with E-government.

E-government has the power to create new modes of public service whereby all public organizations deliver modernized, integrated, and seamless services for citizens. In this shift towards external services, transparency has been increasingly emphasized as a fundamental driver for E-government. E-government initiatives are regarded as a powerful schema for enhancing public transparency (along with internal efficiency and quality service delivery) to the public (Fountain, 2001); (Brown, 1999). Northrup and Thorson (2003) cite increased efficiency, increased transparency, and transformation as important reasons for e-government initiatives.

Compared with earlier forms of E-government infrastructures (Chadwick, 2001), most current e-government websites and systems encompass more interactive features and services in order to restore public trust by providing necessary information and regulations, in addition to quick responses to individual queries (Moon, 2002). By incorporating the agent-principal theory, Smith and Bertozzi (1998) explain the relationship between governments (as agents who work for citizens) and citizens (as principals). Since the governments have more control than citizens over the flow of information, members of the government are prone to corruption.
**Conclusion**

Transparency in decisions, actions, rules, procedures and performance is the direct effect of expanding ICT in Government structures. By automating public service delivery's processes the society can benefit from less discretion, less delay and less corruption. Beside that, ICT can simplify reengineering of government procedures. Information and communication can eradicate the bad effects of particularistic trust as the source of corrupt behavior by decreasing the face to face contact of citizens or parties who belong to same ethnical, cultural and political groups.

Builds accountability, documentation to citizens for following up the procedures, increase competition amongst delivery channels, Standardized documentation of comments and objections, effective supervision through comparative indicators, Centralizes and integrates data for better audit and analysis are some of the most important benefits that comes from E-government. Most of these factors can consider as anti-corruption policies and also has direct and indirect effect on generalized trust as a sustainable development index.

**References**


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