Editorial

Transforming Government: People, Process, and Policy

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the second issue of the tenth volume of *Transforming Government: People, Process, and Policy*. Over the years, the constant update of the journal's scope to advocate theoretical as well as empirical research has led to an increase in the quality of submissions and citations. The papers in this issue of *TGPPP* provide a rich contextual background in the area of public policy and administration, understanding the significance of social media in the public sector, information exchange between networked actors in public administration, transforming government into more collaborative, innovative and open government, e-Rulemaking, government agencies or private sectors organisations converting huge volumes of crime data to useful information, e-Participation and open government reforms.

This issue commences with a viewpoint by Adam Okulicz-kozaryn, entitled "Happiness Research for Public Policy and Administration". This viewpoint introduces happiness research for public policy and administration scholars and practitioners. The published literature indicates that happiness can be used as a "yardstick" to support public policy – this is not a new idea – it has already been proposed by Veenhoven (1988) and progresses this perspective. Happiness can be defined as people's evaluations of their lives, which includes "both cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction in addition to affective evaluations of mood and emotions" (Steel *et al.*, 2008). Happiness is not only a desirable outcome of interest but it also predicts other desirable outcomes of interest: life expectancy, morbidity, productivity, quits, absenteeism, unemployment duration and marriage duration (Clark, 2008). The author argues that this phenomenon has been constantly overlooked; however, that arguably the ultimate outcome of any public policy is happiness. Thus, the purpose is to focuses on what can be useful for the discipline, provides relevant examples and presents the most recent findings and directions for future research. The scientific study of happiness is taking now place for several decades in psychology and economics, other fields such as sociology and management are slowly joining, and recently studies specifically focusing on public policy are being published. Even OECD and UK government have recently joined the debate. Yet, these developments are happening without public policy and administration scholars.

Following the above viewpoint, we have a research paper by Marius Johannessen, Øystein Sæbø and Leif Skiftenes Flak, entitled "Social Media as Public Sphere: A Stakeholder Perspective". In this paper, the authors argue that despite realising the significance of the social media phenomenon, it has proven difficult to get people actively participate in the decision-making processes. As citizens are increasingly getting digitised, governments are attempting to boost democratic interest through various e-Participation programmes (Macintosh *et al.*, 2005). Among these many e-Participation programmes, several projects fail to attract large groups of citizens and change the way politicians work (Chadwick, 2008). The latter can be attributed to either due to low interest (Sæbø *et al.*, 2009), lack of purpose and rules for conversation (Hurwitz, 2003) or a lack of citizen participation (Sotirios *et al.*, 2011). In this context, social media is being increasingly used by the public sector –

specifically the local government authorities (Mainka *et al.*, 2014). This paper examines major stakeholders' communication preferences in e-Participation initiatives and discusses how this affects the public sphere. The research presented in this paper was conducted as an interpretive case study. The objective was to explore how local government stakeholder groups use social media; thus, for this, an urban planning case from a municipality in southern Norway was selected. The findings indicate that communication preferences of stakeholders vary according to their salience level. Stakeholders with higher salience are less likely to participate in social media, while those who are less salient will use every available medium to gain influence. This challenges the opportunity to create a traditional public sphere in social media.

We then have Martin Matzner, Erwin Folmer, Michael Räckers, Hendrik Scholta and Jörg Becker presenting their research, entitled "Standardized, Flexible Information Exchange for Networked Public Administrations – A Method". In this paper, the authors argue that governmental institutions must collaborate with other organisations across institutional boundaries to achieve high-quality service offerings. The required cooperation may lead to complex networks, including several of the thousands of public administrations in the many federal layers of a single country. This paper therefore addresses the key challenge of the proper management of the information exchange between networked actors, which is generally conducted by means of forms. In a networked business scenario, forms as a specific type of a boundary object, must have several characteristics to be useful for efficient information exchanges. According to Wenger (1998), four such characteristics are essential:

(1) *modularity*, which allows stakeholders to use only subsets of the information that they need to perform their tasks;

(2) *abstraction*, which allows forms to abstract the information needed from details that are not relevant to all stakeholders;

(3) *accommodation*, so information is sufficiently generic to assist in a variety of activities; and

(4) *standardisation*, such as the use of standardised codes, which allows diverse stakeholders to interpret the information.

However, these characteristics also make the management of forms challenging. This paper pursues the Design Science Research paradigm, as it aims to help solve "identified organisation problems" (Hevner *et al.*, 2004) through the development of an innovative IT artefact (March and Smith, 1995) or method. The findings indicate that the discussions carried out in the project's focus groups add evidence to the authors' expectation that the method developed in this study improves the quality of forms while reducing the effort required for their design and maintenance.

Then, we have Karin Hansson and Love Ekenberg presenting their research, entitled "Managing Deliberation: Tools for Structuring Discussions and Analyzing Representation". This research argues that the transformation of government towards a more collaborative, innovative and open government, is often promoted as a way of creating a more participatory democratic system. However, a more collaborative government brings some obvious problems regarding deliberative democracy such as representativeness, which becomes emphasised due to digital division and

differentiation. For example, Macintosh *et al.* (2009) emphasises that the unequal distribution of internet access may cause severe counter effects when attempting to strengthen democracy through increased e-Participation. Advocates claim that there is also a general lack of knowledge regarding who, in terms of gender, nationality and social grouping, actually participates and how (Fyfe and Crookall, 2010; Macintosh *et al.*, 2009). In this research, the authors address the lack of methodologies and tools that support community and consensus processes in online settings while also acknowledging agonistic conflicts and a diversity of interest communities. The purpose with this design research is to develop a methodology and tool support for analysing discursive processes as well as for creating structural support for better informed deliberative processes. The authors made use of tools while analysing representativeness in the discussion, and being unsatisfied with the prevailing methods, they have grounded the design process in two very different cases of urban planning in the municipality Upplands Väsby and Husby in Sweden as the starting point for finding new tools supported approaches to public participation. The findings indicate that a general participatory methodology on different levels of governance can be supported using a standard type of interface and analytical tools for structured discussions and statistics.

Following the above research paper, we have a paper by Hany Abdelghaffar and Lobna Samer, entitled "Social Development of Rules: Can Social Networking Sites Benefit E-Rulemaking?" Hany and Lobna argue that little research has been conducted to examine how social networking sites (SNS) can be used in e-rulemaking, thus constituting a challenge for governments interested in using social networks in e-rulemaking. Especially developing countries, where the transfer of e-Government concepts is not seamless (Schuppan, 2009). This paper presents a model of how social networks can enhance e-rulemaking. In doing so, it aims to answer the following research question:

How can social networks enhance e-rulemaking?
The authors assert that no model existed that could specifically illustrate how SNS can facilitate e-rulemaking. The proposed model is necessary to illustrate the relationship between the variables affecting e-rulemaking outcomes before hypotheses could be drawn or before a prototype could be made on a scientific basis. To validate the conceptual contribution, an exploratory research design was used, and Egypt was selected as a context region where the empirical research is conducted. Through the empirical research certain variables were found to have a statistically significant impact on the dependent variables of this study. The variables include (information collection, user interface, privacy, security and use of emoticons in communications). The research provides an understanding of the variables that significantly and insignificantly affect the use of SNS in e-rulemaking.

Mohammad Rob and Floyd Srubar then present their research, entitled "Information Gems from Criminal Mines: A Data Warehouse Case Study Focusing on Big-City Criminal Activity". In this research, the authors report that during the post 9/11era, criminal data collection by law enforcement agencies received significant attention across the World. Rapid advancement of technology helped collection and storage of these data in large volumes, but often does not get analysed due to improper data format, lack of technological knowledge and time. Data

warehousing (DW) and OLAP tools can be used to organise and present these data in a form strategically meaningful to the general public. In this study, the authors took a seven-month sample crime data from the City of Houston Police Department's website, cleaned and organised them into a data warehouse with the hope of answering common questions related to crime statistics in a big city in USA. The purpose is to demonstrate how existing huge volumes of crime data could be converted to useful information by government agencies or private sectors with the readily available technologies. To prove the usefulness of the DW and OLAP cube, the authors demonstrate few sample queries displaying the number as well as the types of crimes as a function of time of the day, location, premises and etc. For example, this study found 98 crimes occurred on a major street in the city during the early working hours (7 a.m. and 12 p.m.) when nobody virtually was at home, and among those crimes, roughly two-third of them are thefts. This summarised information is significantly useful to the general public and the law enforcement agencies.

Then, we have another study by Emad Abu-Shanab and Lana Bataineh, entitled "How Perceptions of E-Participation Levels Influence the Intention to Use E-Government Websites". The value of e-participation has been recognised by government administrators, politicians, community leaders and officials. However, many of the e-Government initiators do not have enough understanding and experience in managing e-participation to achieve the required and desirable results (Bryson *et al.*, 2013). The vital role of citizens, represented in citizens' public participation, has a huge influence on public trust in their government. The required form of citizen's participation and its impact on building public trust towards government is still under testing (Kim and Lee, 2012). To achieve higher levels of public trust, governments need to increase transparency by increasing citizens' access to information, ensure transparency of rules and policies and build a mechanism to track the decisions and actions of government officials (Alenezi *et al.*, 2015). This paper explores e-Participation initiative in Jordan, in an attempt to understand e-Participation practices from citizens' perspective. Specifically, the study examines the impact of each e-Participation level on the e-Participation process in Jordan. An empirical test was adopted using a survey to measure the five levels of e-Participation and the dependent variable intention to participate in e-Government initiatives. The findings indicate that all the estimated means of e-Participation levels were moderately perceived. The regression results indicate a significant prediction of the three levels: *e-informing*, *e-consulting* and *e-empowering*.

Finally, we have a paper by Erna Ruijer and Richard Huff, entitled "Breaking through barriers: The impact of organizational culture on Open Government Reform". In this research, the authors examine the impact of organisational culture on open government reforms by developing a theoretical framework bridging the theory and practice gap. The central question of this study is: how agencies can institutionalise a culture of openness within government agencies to enhance transparency, participation and collaboration with external stakeholders?

This study aims to contribute to a better understanding of the impact of organisational culture on open government reforms to bridge the theory and practice gap to inform other agencies and countries around the world striving to implement similar open government reforms. It explores whether collaboration

within federal agencies in the form of a networks strategy could help to overcome the structures of a traditional and rigid bureaucratic organisation. To validate the proposed model, a qualitative analysis was conducted, consisting of an exploratory document analysis and a case study. The findings indicate that an open organisational culture is a precursor to effective open government. A network strategy as a facilitator for developing an open culture was used in one US federal agency, breaking across boundaries within the organisation, creating greater symmetrical horizontal and vertical openness.

We hope you will find this issue interesting and though provoking, and hope to receive your valuable contributions for the forthcoming issue.

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