

Chapter 14

Reflections on Government's Accountability in Complex Socio- Economic Realities (In the Post-Political Era)

Lech W. Zacher
Kozminski University, Poland

ABSTRACT

Government accountability is important for more rational and effective functioning of authorities and societies. The actual assessment of government performance in the present complex and diverse socio-economic realities is not possible without qualitative and quantitative analyses. Additionally, new approaches and methods in synchronization with ICTs, computer simulations, and modeling enable the improvisation of execution of the governments. This chapter advocates that multicriterial and multilevel assessment of governments should be enriched by recognition and analyses of contexts in which they act. Government characteristics and the present contexts are diverse and their responses to new challenges are limited and differentiated.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-5146-3.ch014

Copyright ©2014, IGI Global. Copying or distributing in print or electronic forms without written permission of IGI Global is prohibited.

INTRODUCTION

Goal setting, choices, strategy building, policy planning, and implementation activities – all need decision-making and are realms of government (broadly understood). All types of government decisions, actions, and activities can be evaluated by government itself to monitor, analyze performance, assess effectiveness and elaborate future visions. Various data, indicators, formal models, calculations and computer simulations are necessary for successful and effective functioning. However, focusing on self-assessment is *de facto* an internal issue, may be biased in many ways, and can be manipulated and used in political games. To assess whether a government really contributes to the realization of a *good governance* vision requires critical external evaluation – by scientists, citizens, NGOs, business people, international institutions and organizations, etc. External reference points can help to modify and ameliorate not only government performance, but all its activities. Various sophisticated methods and models, also quantitative, are needed to this end. Nowadays it is evident that governments and their multiple activities and responsibilities are embedded in new contexts, new processes which should be identified, recognized, analyzed with a help of new thinking, new approaches and methods. Good governance should be based on a positive feedback of internal self-assessment and external evaluations.

Measuring, quantifying and evaluating of governmental performance seem extremely difficult in complex socio-economic realities of the present time. Not all government activities can be presented in a form of variables and numbers. Moreover, effective governance depends on many factors and contexts. Their complexity and diversity make solely statistical (mathematical) methods helpful but not sufficient. These methods can be applied both to policy decision-making and to public assessment of government performance. In both cases, their narrative requires qualitative, interpretative, evaluative data, methods and applications. Purely “technical” use of them may be too primitive and excluding comparative studies. And one more skeptical warning: politics is – at all levels – a kind of art, so it is to a great extent subjective, sometimes even personal, sometimes idealistic or just stupid, often imposed by situations and external forces, not rarely deliberately fuzzy or not practically feasible, often referred to distant visions, ideologies, religion, national mythology, etc. So its analysis, measurement, and evaluation are extremely hard task.

21 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/reflections-on-governments-accountability-in-complex-socio-economic-realities-in-the-post-political-era/101279

Related Content

EDMS Use in Local E-Government: An Analysis of the Path from Extent of Use to Overall Performance

Carlos M. Afonso, Andrew Schwarz, José L. Roldán and Manuel J. Sánchez- Franco (2015). *International Journal of Electronic Government Research* (pp. 18-34).
www.irma-international.org/article/edms-use-in-local-e-government/126943

Digital Television Transition in South Africa: Paradoxes and Dilemmas

Blessing Mbatha (2014). *Digital Access and E-Government: Perspectives from Developing and Emerging Countries* (pp. 15-26).
www.irma-international.org/chapter/digital-television-transition-in-south-africa/107162

Assessing the Effectiveness of E-Government Services in Ghana: A Case of the Registrar General's Department

Acheampong Owusu, Cynthia Esinu Akpe-Doe and Ivy Hawah Taana (2022). *International Journal of Electronic Government Research* (pp. 1-23).
www.irma-international.org/article/assessing-the-effectiveness-of-e-government-services-in-ghana/289827

Introduction to Electronic Government: Development and Adoption

Ahsan Akhter Hasin, Vinod Kumar, Uma Kumar and Mahmud Akhter Shareef (2011). *Stakeholder Adoption of E-Government Services: Driving and Resisting Factors* (pp. 1-13).
www.irma-international.org/chapter/introduction-electronic-government/54118

The Challenge of Teaching Information Technology in Public Administration Graduate Programs

Alana Northrop (1999). *Information Technology and Computer Applications in Public Administration: Issues and Trends* (pp. 1-22).
www.irma-international.org/chapter/challenge-teaching-information-technology-public/74595