

Chapter 25

Sources of Legitimacy for the M–Government Initiatives in Turkey: Human vs. Technical Resource Management Concerns

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ABSTRACT

Emerging markets have recently been experiencing a dramatic increase in the number of mobile phone per capita. M-government has, hence, been heralded as an opportunity to leap-frog the technology cycle and provide cheaper and more inclusive services to all. This chapter explores, within an emerging market context, the legitimacy and resistance facing civil servants' at the engagement stage with m-government activities and the direct implication for resource management. Thirty in depth interview, in Turkey, are drawn-upon with key ICT civil servant in local organizations. The findings show that three types of resources are perceived as central namely: (i) diffusion of information management, (ii) operating system resource management and (iii) human resource management. The main evidence suggests that legitimacy for each resource management, at local level, is an ongoing struggle where all groups deploy multiples forms of resistance. Overall, greater attention in the resource management strategy for m-government application needs to be devoted to enablers such as civil servants rather than the final consumers or citizens.

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INTRODUCTION

Mobile government (m-government hereafter) has been heralded as an imperative for administrative processes' modernization in emerging countries (Kushchu, 2007). Although several m-government services are already available in emerging markets, provided by both private and public organizations, little is known about the formative stages and the legitimacy/resistance (positive and negative) civil servants are encountering in their everyday activities, from a resource management perspective, in order to implement m-government applications and strategies (Abanumy & Mayhew, 2005; Ghyasi & Kushchu, 2004; Sundar & Garg, 2005; Tozsa & Budai, 2005; Prins, 2001). In this chapter, m-government is defined as the development of new technologies, applications and services in order to create an "able society" (Kushchu, 2007). Digital technologies as resource management tools used in public administration have contributed to an improved understanding of many aspects of everyday practices, especially at local level, including digital strategies (Kahraman et al., 2007; Ferguson, 2001), impact of e-culture on e-governments (Hazlett & Hill, 2003), m-government policy issues (Yildiz, 2007; Lam, 2005), service architecture (Sharma & Gupta, 2004; Abramowicz et al., 2006), e-governance (Saxena, 2005; Stahl, 2005; Holliday & Kwok, 2004) and e-government models (Heeks, 2002).

In turn, legitimacy of ICT and mobility within public administrations at local level, in an emerging market context, point to multiple possible sources (m-GovLab, MGCI, www.mgovernment.org). The literature highlights two important aspects: (i) the difference between the meanings of mobility: mobility which is driven by personal motivation/resistance and by social factors; and (ii) the difference between mobile technological innovation and the legitimacy of institutional changes.

Consecutively, mobile technologies have attracted interdisciplinary interest centered around

three main areas: domestication (Goggin, 2008; Weilenmann, 2001); mobile technology and user practices (Fortunati et al., 2003; Katz, 2003); and, at a societal level, adoption with engagement in wider spheres including politics and social policies (Brown et al., 2002; Rheingold, 2002). Further related aspects include status symbols (Dedeoglu, 2004; Ozcan & Kocak, 2003), MMS/SMS social and pragmatic aspects (Chapman & Schofield, 1998; Lin & Tong, 2008; Rettie, 2007; Sharma & Sturges, 2007), networked society (Ling, 2004; Goggin, 2008), mobile devices as fashion items (Katz & Sugiyama, 2006; Hulme & Peters, 2003) and m-entertainment (Ha et al., 2007; Harmer, 2003; Pagani, 2004).

The negative aspects of mobile technologies have also been studied including issues relating to health (Foster & Moulder, 2000), addiction (Bianchi & Phillips, 2005), lack of concentration while driving or multitasking (Esbjornsson et al., 2007), increased reaction time, psychological impact of mobile consumption on children and adolescents (Döring & Gundolf, 2005) and misappreciation of cognitive and/or physical demand while multitasking (Goodman et al., 1999; McEvoy et al., 2005).

Based on the above characteristics, three partial gaps have been identified from the literature. First, few, if any, studies have been conducted in the context of the public services and the role of m-services. Second, most studies examining digital resource management strategies have usually been conducted at macro level rather than at local level. Third, published work on digital resource management strategy has almost exclusively focused on the so-called 'first tier' countries, with concentration on the central North American and European perspectives. Examples of the 'second tier' or peripheral regions of Europe such as Turkey are limited.

This book chapter presents the findings of a total of 30 phone interviews which were conducted with the key civil servants working within local government organizations in Turkey during the

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