Chapter 77
Exploring Civil Servant Resistance to M-Government:
A Story of Transition and Opportunities in Turkey

Ronan de Kervenoael
Sabanci University, Turkey & Aston University, UK

Mark Palmer
Aston University, UK

N. Meltem Cakici
Gediz University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

The concept of mobility, related to technology in particular, has evolved dramatically over the last two decades including: (i) hardware ranging from walkmans to Ipods, laptops to netbooks, PDAs to 3G mobile phone; (ii) software supporting multiple audio and video formats driven by ubiquitous mobile wireless access, WiMax, automations such as radio frequency ID tracking and location aware services. Against the background of increasing budget deficit, along with the imperative for efficiency gains, leveraging ICT and mobility promises for work related tasks, in a public administration context, in emerging markets, point to multiple possible paths. M-government transition involve both technological changes and adoption to deliver government services differently (e.g. 24/7, error free, anywhere to the same standards) but also the design of digital strategies including possibly competing m-government models, the re-shaping of cultural practices, the creation of m-policies and legislations, the structuring of m-services architecture, and progress regarding m-governance. While many emerging countries are already offering e-government services and are gearing-up for further m-government activities, little is actually known about the resistance that is encountered, as a reflection of civil servants' current standing, before any further macro-strategies are deployed. Drawing on the resistance and mobility literature, this chapter investigates how civil servants' behaviors, in an emerging country technological environment, through their everyday practice, react and resist the influence of m-government transition. The findings points to four main type of resistance namely: i) functional resistance; ii) ideological resistance; iii) market driven resistance and iv) geographical resistance. Policy implication are discussed in the specific context of emerging markets.

INTRODUCTION

Resistance across history has remained a powerful symbol of human territoriality. In turn, territoriality is often described as the primary expression of social power (Sack, 1986). In the context of this chapter, resistance is associated with the possibility of territorial changes, power shifts and responsibility evolutions occurring. Territoriality traditionally involves some form of classification or assigning tasks to a category affecting ongoing relationships between territorial units. Territoriality displaces attention within relationships as a mean to exteriorize power and creates de-facto boundaries among territorial divisions. Examples include expression such "ours" and not "yours" and "it is the local regulation", "you may not do this there" (Sack, 1986). In particular, at individual civil servant level, the scope of knowledge is often graded according to different territorial spaces leading to a scale regarding the endowment of responsibilities. The span of control of any individual is then devised to an extensive level of details.

One of the most recent and significant shifts in territoriality to occur has been the advance in Information Communication Technology (ICT thereafter) and the creation of digital and virtual spaces (Castells, 2001). At the same time, the concept of mobility has evolved dramatically over the last two decades and transformed many aspects of business management and day-to-day activities (Ling, 2008). Accordingly, recent studies have begun to address the role of resistance in the particular context of mobile technology (Venkatesh et al., 2003; Lapointe & Rivard, 2003). While many studies have used a positivist, deterministic framework, one further recurrent theme, in social sciences, has been the difference between mobility being driven by personal motivation and mobility driven by societal and ideological factors (Avgerou et al., 2004; Goggin, 2008; Ling, 2008). Significantly, several studies have analyzed ICT and mobility in the context of m-government primarily from an end user perspective (Kushchu, 2007). However, leveraging ICT and mobility promises within public administration in emerging market point also to multiple other factors such as civil servant resistances, organizational culture clashes and capacity absorption issues (Sheng & Trimi, 2008; Oxford Internet Institute, 2006; Vincent & Harris, 2008). M-services, in public administration, are linked to actions and functions involving services such as instant up to date information release, error free data collection, mobile transaction (e,g. taxes, benefits), crime prevention (e.g. use of video/photographic elements of mobile phones) and the way digital technologies are used within the socio-political context to allow more transparency, the inclusion of minorities, and the civil society at large (Welsh & Wong, 2001; Hallin & Lundevall, 2007; Yu and Kushchu, 2004; Kushchu et al., 2007).

M-government is defined as "a strategy and its implementation involving the utilization of all kinds of wireless and mobile technology, services, application and devices for improving benefits to the parties involved in e-government including citizens, businesses and all government units" (Kushchu & Kuscu, 2003, p.3). The main heralded benefits include: cost reduction, efficiency mainly in data collection, processing and regarding redundancies and errors, transformation/modernization of public sector organizations, added convenience and flexibility (e.g. urgency factor), better services to the citizens and civil servants, ability to reach a larger number of people through mobile devices than would be possible using wired internet only. Mobility is understood in the general sense of being mobile. Examples involve not returning to a fix point between appointments, working in the field or from home rather than a fixed location. Others aspects of mobility encompass the notion of inter-jurisdictional mobility and sphere of power, equal competence and service provision, standards, protocols and interoperability (EC., 2003), privacy and security issues (Kumar et al., 2008; Garson, 2006b). Concurrently, depending on the

Related Content

The Impact of M-Government on Organisations: A Mobility Response Model
Ibrahim Kushchu, Seda Aratand Chet Borucki (2007). *Mobile Government: An Emerging Direction in e-Government (pp. 134-153).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/impact-government-organisations/26750

An Analysis of the Impact of Business Networks on Technology Development: Using Agent-Based Modeling
Maryam Ebrahimi (2019). *Private Sector Innovations and Technological Growth in the MENA Region (pp. 20-44).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/an-analysis-of-the-impact-of-business-networks-on-technology-development/216158

Use of Social Media in Citizen-Centric Electronic Government Services: A Literature Analysis
Mohammad Abdallah Ali Alryalat, Nripendra P. Rana, Ganesh P. Sahu, Yogesh K. Dwivediand Mina Tajvidi (2017). *International Journal of Electronic Government Research (pp. 55-79).*
www.irma-international.org/article/use-of-social-media-in-citizen-centric-electronic-government-services/190836

Analysing Open Data in Virtual Research Environments: New Collaboration Opportunities to Improve Policy Making
Anneke Zuiderwijk (2017). *International Journal of Electronic Government Research (pp. 76-92).*
www.irma-international.org/article/analysing-open-data-in-virtual-research-environments/199814

Toward Quality Measurement Approaches for Improving E-Government Services in Jordan
Salah Alhyariand Mohammad Alhyari (2014). *IT in the Public Sphere: Applications in Administration, Government, Politics, and Planning (pp. 82-98).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/toward-quality-measurement-approaches-for-improving-e-government-services-in-jordan/104011