E-Governance in the Philippines: Insights for Policy-Making*

RANJIT SINGH RYE

Major transformations in the global political economy have ushered in what is commonly thought of as an information and communication technology-led revolution. While a great deal has been written about some aspects of this "global shift"—the so-called borderless world or intimations of a "new economy"—much less attention has been paid to its significance for politics and policymaking. This paper looks at the relationship between ICT and politics through an examination of the concept and practices associated with e-governance, taken to be integral to the re-shaping of relations between the state, the market and society. The discussion does not assume either the feasibility or desirability of e-governance. Rather it interrogates the governance model itself, and what this signifies for state capacity, through an empirical assessment of e-governance in the Philippines. The concluding argument suggests that there exist outstanding institutional and technological challenges that have yet to be addressed in any systematic way.

Introduction

The world order is undergoing a process of profound transformation due to the paradigm altering trajectories of democratization, liberalization and globalization. These long-term trends have been enabled by a constellation of factors that both broaden and deepen interactions and interconnectedness among states, markets and societies. One of the key transfomative dynamics has been the advance in information and communication technology (ICT). The so-called revolution in ICT, as noted by scholars, politicians and policymakers alike, has had an inordinate impact on economies and societies, leading to what has been termed a "global shift".[1] This suggests two fundamental alterations to the global political economy. First, there is the movement from an industrially-based international economy to one that is information- and knowledge-based. For some, these changes signal the emergence of the so-called "Third Industrial Revolution" which is both transnational in character and based on post-Fordist regimes of accumulation.[2] Second, the ICT revolution is said to have profound political consequences. Key sets of economic agents—including those mainly responsible for the ICT revolution—are

experimenting with new forms of quasi-private regulation of their activities. In this environment, "competition states" or "regulatory states" are increasingly privileging the marketization of economic activities in the name of public sector reform and international competitiveness.

Taken together, then, the contemporary trend seems to be towards the multilayered governance of transnational networks of knowledge and information.[3] Some label this the "new economy" while others call it the "K-economy" or the "digital economy". What seems not to be in dispute is the significance of these transformations for the future of the global political economy. In this evolving order, competition, sustained growth, and development will be based, to a significant degree, on the capacity of states, firms and other actors to manage the changing logic of collective action associated with the revolution in ICT. In this way, it is likely that the acquisition, transfer, utilization, and maximization of the benefits of the information and communication technologies will shape the provision of public and private goods and induce a re-scaling of both political and economic structures.

In the literature on the long-term significance of the ICT revolution no analytical or empirical issue has been more controversial than the attributes, roles and capacities of the state. The well-rehearsed conventional view is that, in a globalizing world, nation-states have difficulty supplying or managing public goods. In this context, states are compelled to redefine their roles. If this is the case then a number of policy dilemmas immediately confront the state: How can governments and other regulatory agencies become more responsive and accessible to citizens, firms and the markets? How can governments enhance their role as a catalyst or creative facilitator of economic growth in the 'new economy'? How can governments improve the provision of public goods for their citizens? How can governments use ICT for transferring benefits, improving public services for its clients and stakeholders?

One prominent response—in both academic and policy communities—has been the promotion of the notion of an "effective state" and the adoption of "e-governance" as one of its major pillars. This idea is nested in the broader claims of the "New Public Management" and "good governance" which have, over the last fifteen years, emerged as the orthodox discourse in re-shaping the entire set of relationships between the state, the market and society. While originating in Western liberal

states, this model of "good governance" has increasingly become the accepted methodology and practice for both developed and developing countries, not least through its promotion by international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. According to its advocates, "good governance" involves the use of ICT in improving transparency and accountability in government; providing reliable information speedily to all constituents; improving efficiency in public administration; and, deepening democracy through enhanced citizen and state interaction.

This paper defines and analyzes the discourse and practice of "e-governance" with respect to the Philippines. In a relatively short period of time, "e-governance" has become an integral component of all the government-initiated ICT plans and programs. High profile e-government projects such as the setting up of government websites for online services now abound. Even local government units (LGUs) have joined the "e-governance" bandwagon. Leading actors in the private sector have been among the strongest proponents pressuring the government to utilize "e-governance" technologies to improve private—public sector linkages and the delivery of services and public goods. Such pressures on politicians to act as institutional entrepreneurs are likely to increase. Despite the appeal of "e-governance" in the Philippines remarkably little critical research has been undertaken on the feasibility, desirability or implications of these trends for the principles and policies of state—market—society relations. To this end, my aim is to move away from the *assumption* that the adoption of "e-governance" is a panacea for a whole variety of political, economic and welfare shortcomings. I propose to do this by examining three central issues involved in the reformulation of the Philippines governance agenda. This involves a reconsideration of the governance model itself and what it signifies for the state's regulatory capacity, the actual (as opposed to rhetorical) state of e-governance in the Philippines today, and the policy issues that derive from this. The concluding argument offers some preliminary thoughts on the implications of these trends for the future of "e-governance", and suggests that there exist major institutional, and technological challenges that act as impediments to the goal of improving the quality of state-market-society relations.

The Rise of E-Governance

E-governance is a fairly recent discourse and set of policy prescriptions. The term first gained prominence in affluent, post-industrial societies such

as the United States of America (US), the United Kingdom (UK) and the European Union (EU) only in the last decade.[4] The emergence of e-governance was made possible by the convergence of two important transformations, namely the revolution in ICT and the calls for thoroughgoing public sector reform in during the late 1980s and 1990s. In the first place, the convergence of various technologies into ICT, and the rapid diffusion and acceptance of these technologies in the US, Western Europe and Japan, helped pave the way for diverse applications for both business (electronic commerce) and government. The advances in science and technology, such as those in microelectronics and photonics, led to a revolution in computing and networking technology. With this came the invention, innovation and spread of the Internet and related technologies such as the development of the World Wide Web. This was, in turn, one of the key reasons for the diffusion of ICT methodologies into governance.

Parallel with the boom in ICT was the decision in many of the major liberal democracies to reform their public sectors to deal with perceived problems of corruption, inefficiency and ineffectiveness, as well as a more generalized sense of governmental malaise. Their answer to the crisis of government was to promote the idea of "governance". Unsurprisingly, the literature on governance is at pains to distinguish the notion from "government" or the "act of governing" in the traditional sense. Two authoritative definitions highlight the broad, inclusive scope of governance. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has it as follows:

> Governance is the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs.... Governance embraces all of the methods—good and bad—that societies use to distribute power and manage public resources and problems.[5]

In a similar vein, the IIAS emphasizes governance's processual qualities:

> It is the process whereby elements in society wield power and authority, and influence and enact policies and decisions concerning public life, economic and social development.[6]

As Frechette asserts, "governance is not something that the State does to society but the way society itself and the individuals who compose it, regulate all the different aspects of their collective life".[7] Thus, governance

can be plausibly understood as a process that guides citizens (also regarded as "clients"), businesses and organizations in the management of their daily activities, their decision-making, and their interactions with each other.[8] At its core, governance is about "how society organizes itself for collective decision-making, and how it provides transparent mechanisms for seeing those decisions through".[9] Within this framework, there exists a growing interaction between the three major sectors of the political structure—government, citizens, and private businesses.

The use of ICT *for* governance was included as part of the various strategies for public sector reform. Under the auspices of self-proclaimed "modernizing" executives, it was pioneered in a series of high-level official reports, notably the 1993 *National Performance Review* in the United States, the 1994 *Bangemann Report* in the EU, and the 1997 *Modernising Government* White Paper in the UK.[10] These policy papers focused on reforming the public sector by using, among other interventions, private sector-driven models, strategies and interventions, ones that privileged the use of various types of information technologies. As Norris notes:

> This development was fuelled by the rapid rise in access to computers and the Internet in these nations, major attempts to increase the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of public services, and perceived signs of public dissatisfaction with the representative government in established democracies.[11]

It was this context, then, that gave rise to ideas about the efficacy of "e-governance". In effect the prescriptions embodied in the various strategic visions for public sector reform were meant to permit governments to reconcile, in some constructive way, the uncertainties associated with the globalisation of ICT with a desire to harness what was widely accepted as "best practice" in private sector management to the changing notions of political authority. The espousal of this new model had two inter-related dimensions. First, the discursive move from "government" to "governance" in the language of politics reflected a deeper paradigm shift in theory and practice brought about by the prominence of new forms of public management, the growth of policy networks and the dominance of epistemic communities in policymaking.[12] In other words, governance was facilitated by the substitution of traditional vertical command and control relationships by looser, horizontal networks of relationships or multilayered governance. Second, the actual operationalization of actual public sector

reforms—modeled on the NPM practices—involved mechanisms such as the marketization of government services (outsourcing); privatization; deregulation; re-engineering and reorganization of government to minimize its size and scope; modernization of the bureaucracy; and the utilization of private sector practices that privileged market involvement and competition; the use of tools such as performance targets; customer orientation and incentives to achieve efficiency (in service delivery); economy (restricting expenditure and reducing waste); and, responsiveness to the demands of clients and the market. In practice, governance has produced a proactive agenda to slim down the state, increase efficiency in the delivery of public services and extend the range of public–private working relationships.[13] Taken together, these processes of change gave rise to what Norris calls "mediated governance".[14]

It is within this "double movement" of technological innovation and politico-administrative reform that ICT in governance or "e-governance" acquires its significance. In fact, public sector reform models anchored on NPM recognize the significant role of ICT for realizing reform initiatives.[15] ICT in governance is considered important not only for advancing the goals of efficiency, effectiveness, economy, rationality and responsiveness but is also considered, strategically, as "essential in the transformation of public administration".[16] As a result, e-governance is now widely seen as a solution not only to the challenges of reforming public sectors but for a host of other governance shortcomings. Today, e-governance has moved from fad to a pivotal status in the wholesale project of reforming politics.[17]

In the most obvious sense, e-governance involves the application of ICT in refining and strengthening the interaction between government and citizens (e-citizens or G2C in the jargon) and government and businesses (e-services or G2B), as well as improving internal government processes (e-administration or G2G) in order to streamline and improve public administration; and improve the link and interactions with and within the private sector and civil society (e-society).[18] But beyond this kind of public relations language, there is no unanimity in the definition, scope and limits of e-governance. One way to resolve this is to point out what e-governance is not. E-governance is not the same as either "e-government" or "e-democracy", though the terms are sometimes used synonymously.

E-government is defined by Backus as the utilization of ICT by government to improve its internal (back office operations) and external

operations (front line services) with the end goal of achieving efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability. More specifically, for Chadwick and May, e-government embraces the "impact of the Internet and related network technologies on the values, processes, and outcomes of central and local government to create a government structure that runs more efficiently at less cost, as well as to provide convenience in government services, widen access to public information, and increase government accountability to its citizens".[19] In this way, e-government is a narrower concept than e-governance since the former does not conceptualize nor develop new forms of direct political deliberation and decision-making. Additionally, it does not deal with issues that transcend the focus on reforming the administrative structure of government bureaucracies. In this regard, e-governance claims to deal with a much broader range of issues and relationships vis-à-vis the impact of ICT, such as the Internet, on political life at all levels.[20]

On the other hand, e-democracy—also commonly referred to as digital democracy, teledemocracy, or cyberdemocracy—is defined by Backus as the use of ICT "to improve the processes and structures that enable democratic interaction between government, elected representatives, and the citizen".[21] In this respect, the limited focus of e-democracy makes the concept distinct from e-governance. As more substantively asserted by Norris, the definitions, scope and limits of e-democracy also depend on the model of democracy advocated. But at a minimum some of the dominant objectives associated with e-democracy include: providing citizens systematized information and knowledge about the political system, its various structures, processes, and alternatives available within it, so that they are able to make informed and responsive choices within a democratic polity; and, providing citizens access to information through the use of various technologies and strategies, to improve information and knowledge flow within and about the political system and radically transform passive information access into active citizen participation.[22]

E-governance encompasses the concepts of both e-democracy and e-government. The suggestion, therefore, is that e-governance will not be accomplished unless e-government and e-democracy programs and technologies have been significantly achieved in a particular polity. In fact, integrated e-governance is the goal of many e-government and e-democracy projects around world. Despite this, there is very little consensus on the actual objectives of e-governance in the literature. Both Norris and

Heeks rather unproblematically assert that the goals of e-governance are to strengthen good governance, actualize development and deepen interactions between the state, civil society and the private sector in order to attain a number of inter-related goals:

- improve transparency and accountability in government;

- provide reliable information speedily to all constituents;

- improve efficiency in public administration involving the use of ICT;

- deepen the practice and substance of democracy through enhanced citizen and State interaction.[23]

From a more critical perspective, Chadwick presents two models that define the divergent claims in e-governance. In the first model, informed by a technologically deterministic and utopian perspective, the central aim of e-government in a narrow sense and of e-governance in a broader sense, is to utilize ICT, especially the Internet, to open up the state to public stewardship and to greater citizen participation and involvement. According to Chadwick,

> "the ubiquity of ICT technologies offers the potential to increase political participation and reshape the state into an open, interactive, network form, as an alternative to both traditional, hierarchical, bureaucratic organisations and more recent, market-like forms of service delivery based on the 'contracting out' of public sector activities, often termed the 'New Public Management'. Thus, Government becomes a 'learning organisation', able to respond to the needs of its citizens, who are, in turn, able to influence public bureaucracies by rapid, aggregative feedback mechanisms like email and interactive web sites.[24]

In the second model, ICT in governance does not "necessarily require greater public involvement in shaping how services are delivered, but instead indirectly benefits citizens through the efficiency gains and cost savings produced by the reduction of internal organisational 'friction', chiefly via the automation of routine tasks and disintermediation".[25] Seen from this perspective, ICT performs a central function, making use of network technologies, the Internet and the Intranet to create, "join up, and co-ordinate the activities of previously disparate government departments

and services". Moreover, based on this model, Chadwick asserts that citizens are perceived mainly as "consumers'" of various public services that have gone online. He further adds that this has been the dominant model in those countries that have taken the lead in introducing e-government reforms such as the US, UK, Singapore and Japan.

However, this movement to embed and utilize ICT for governance is not without critics and contestation. Chadwick asserts the externalities associated with the use of NPM strategies and ICT in governance have been

> limited to a 'managerial' agenda of service delivery more consistent with the New Public Management and that the opportunities offered by the Internet for invigorating democracy and citizenship might be missed. Other criticisms are: that the conservatism of existing administrative elites will scupper any prospects of decisive change; that issues of unequal access (both within and between states) to online services are being neglected; that large corporate IT interests are exercising an undue influence on the shape of e-government due to their expertise; that traditional face-to-face contacts with public services, especially those associated with welfare systems, cannot be satisfactorily replaced by web-based communication; that the cost savings promised by reforms have been slow to materialise; and that distintermediation of traditional representative bodies (Parliaments, local councils) may occur, to the detriment of democracy.[26]

Features and Phases of E-Governance

What then are the ways that e-governance has spread into the domestic politics of individual countries, and how have its mechanisms been operationalized? As suggested earlier, there are various "stakeholders" in e-governance whose interactions are mediated by various types of ICT. The core relations are Government to Customer (G2C), Government to Business (G2B), and Government to Government (G2G). These relations are set out schematically in Figure 1.

The dominant technology utilized by e-governance is the Internet though e-governance technologies are not limited to the Internet alone. In fact the concept of ICT in e-governance actually includes all types of electronic media such as radio, cellular technology, television and old forms network technology such electronic data interchange (EDI). According to

Figure 1. The Use of ICT in Governance Relations
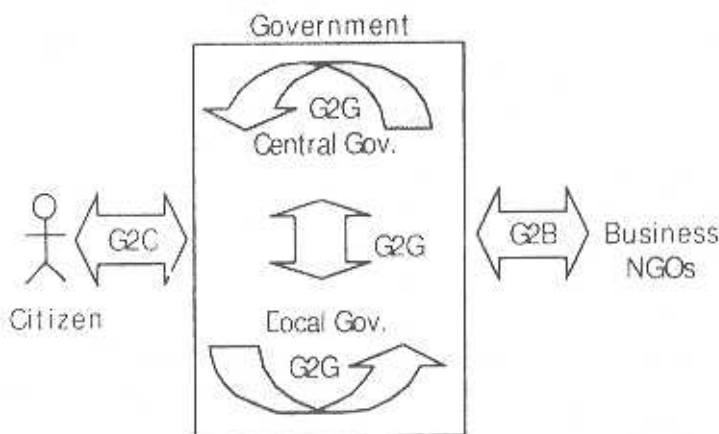
Source: Backus, 2002

Snellen, the various types of technologies utilized in e-governance initiatives are:[27]

- The use database technologies (e.g. Lotus Spreadsheets);

- The use decision support (DSS) technologies for planning and forcasting (modeling and simulation programs, MIS);

- The use of networking technologies (e-mail, intra/internet, electronic data interchange, Wi-Fi technology) personal identification and tracking technologies (e.g. Global positioning technology and geographic information systems); and

- The use of office and multimedia technologies (e.g. Electronic data processing and analysis, application software, CAD/CAM).

Some e-governance technologies are, in fact, not new and have been used even before the employment of the term e-governance. Technology-based solutions in governance—such as database technologies, electronic document management systems and other traditional information technology (IT) systems—have been utilized in many government bureaucracies for four decades now.[28] What makes the new technologies unique is that they are now embedded in a model that veers away from the traditional focus of information technology that sought only to automate

the internal workings of government through the traditional data processing.[29] Heeks adds that ICT is now a lever for change and is no longer isolated and sidelined as regards public sector reform as these technologies now play a central and integrated role in public sector reform.[30]

This emerging model focuses on using ICT in supporting and transforming traditional government to governance. A summary of the various ICT applications in governance over time is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. **History of ICT solutions in Governance**

Technology Solution	Approximate Time Period	Typical Application
Basic electronic data Processing and analysis	Since 1960s	Study of trends in immigration, social security and so on – in order to provide policy makers with information
Spreadsheet	Since 1970s (mainframe computers) 1980s (Microcomputers-PCs)	Simple budgeting and financial planning activities
Modeling and simulation	Since 1980s	Environmental policy making Criminal profiling (Police)
Expert Systems	Since 1970s	Social security benefits (USA in 1970s) and testing consistency of current regulations (UK late 1980s)
Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)	Since 1990s	Managing legal, financial and procurement systems
Geographical Information Systems (GIS)	Since mid 1980s	Bringing together databases of information relating to territories and location. This combined with modeling would allow casual relationship to be explored.
Electronic Mail Systems	Since 1980s	Ease of communication and information/idea sharing amongst policy makers
Intranets	Since early-mid 1990s	Across the agency/organization information sharing
The World Wide Web	Since late 1990s	By the late 1990s in some fields, international agencies were able to offer high quality restricted access material to policy makers

Source: Asgarkhani, 2002

E-governance initiatives are now a reality in various countries. E-governance programs penetrate through government institutions in phases. The following is a hybrid model depicting the evolution of e-governance in phases using the different models found in the articles of Bakus and Asgarkhani. Both authors define five phases that organizations undertake

when introducing ICT tools for governance. The following is a summary of their discussion:

• *Phase 1. Information Phase:* The improvement of the internal functional efficiency of an organization through the application of ICT.[31]

• *Phase 2. Interaction Phase:* The improvement of internal communications through the application of management information systems (MIS) and introducing workflow management systems technologies for increased process efficiency and the use of local area network (LAN), intranet, and the internet to speed up internal communications and information flow within the organization (email, data management and exchange etc.). In this phase, there is an increasing level of interaction by government, business community (G2B) and the public (G2C) because of the various applications (static web pages or websites, etc.) and certain services (online services info kiosk) but with limited two-way communication. In this phase, major efforts are undertaken to digitize data and systematize "back-end" operations and processes.[32]

• *Phase 3. Transactional Phase:* Online feedback and transaction management systems are set-up and complete transactions between government, the business community and the public can be undertaken online or using various other forms of ICT such the cellular phone or facsimile. In this phase, a framework of applications and technologies would not only enable transactions between citizens to government (C2G), businesses to government (B2G) and government to government (G2G) but also make possible forms of feedback and citizens' participation. Examples of online transactions would be the online filling and payment of various types of licenses, taxes, and the procurement of supplies and other goods and services between government and the business community. The back-end and front-end operations of the organization are completely "digitized and informatized".[33]

• *Phase 4. Digital Democracy:* These forms of ICT in governance provide technological solutions that enable processes and structures to enhance democratic processes and elevate the level of interaction between government, elected representatives, and voters. The various ICTs that enable this phase are still in their nascent stage of development. The diffusion and application of these technologies, structures and processes are still limited to a few post-industrial societies. But early examples would

be computerized elections, online voting systems and the use of the internet as a tool for citizens to directly participate in law making.

• *Phase 5. Integrated E-governance:* This refers to one's ability to use a web-portal or smart card in order to obtain information and services from various government organizations without needing to know which government agencies are responsible. That is to say, "a citizen could submit a change of address on his/her driving license, and the change would be automatically registered with all the other government agencies such as the health electoral system, tax department and so forth in a one-stop virtual counter".[34] This is also known as the transformational phase where government structure is "virtual" and so permeated by technology that all transactions and interactions can be undertaken directly in a "disintermediated" form between governance stakeholders, the civil society and the private sector. This is undertaken through the use of various forms of ICT such as the Internet.[35] In principle, as e-governance initiatives becomes widespread and complex, the values to governance stakeholders such as citizens and the business community become higher.[36] This relationship is depicted in Figure 2. Moreover, the phased model does not necessarily imply that all governments go through all the phases in a linear fashion at the same pace and time. According to Backus, taking the case of developed countries such as the US and UK where e-governance initiatives are most advanced, it is common to have different government agencies at different phases of e-governance. In the Philippines, most e-government and nascent e-governance initiatives are in Phases 1 and 2.
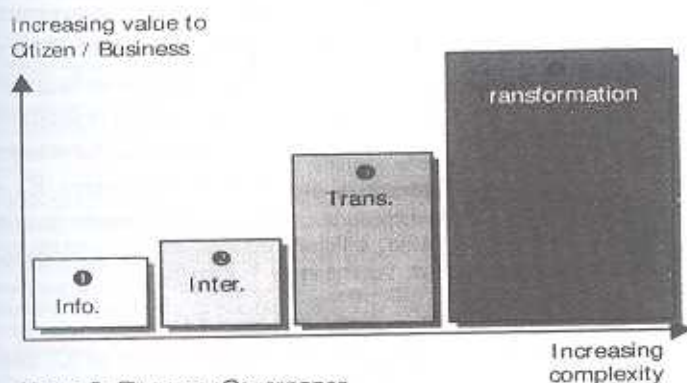
Figure 2. Phases of E-governance

Figure 2: Phases e-Governance

Source: Backus, 2002

E-governance for Good Governance

Having examined the operationalization of e-governance mechanisms we turn to an analysis of the implications, potentials and impact of e-governance on "good governance". As a concept, good governance is touted as the strategic objective of e-governance. According to Uma-okot, the concept of good governance can be defined as a democratic exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority to improve the management of a nation's affairs in all levels.[36] Both NPM and the good governance literature emphasize a variety of values, practices and interventions that supposedly enhance government capacity to deliver public goods and services. For example, they stress the "role of public managers in providing high quality services that citizens and communities of diverse interest, communities of expertise, and communities of inter-dependence value.[37] Both paradigms advocates "increasing managerial autonomy, by the reduction of central agency control, demands, measures and rewards, in relation to both organizational and individual performance and values such as accountability, transparency, predictability, and participation".[38] Further, Uma-okot suggests that good governance highlights the role of technology and recognizes the need for providing the human and technological resources that managers require to meet their performance targets, and is receptive to competition and open-minded about which public functions should be performed by public servants as opposed to the private sector. He concludes that:

> The emergence of new forms of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has all the attributes of imparting added value to the processes that characterize Good Governance.... The rapid development, deployment and proliferation of the new and emerging information and communication technologies (ICTs) herald new opportunities for growth and development in countries around the world Governments worldwide are seeking to harness the potential offered by these new technologies to create new dimensions of economic and social progress. ICT is considered essential to the achievement of good governance goals of efficiency, transparency, accountability, and enhance citizen participation in governance.[39]

In a similar vein, Heeks notes that the introduction of ICT can help improve government processes (e-administration), connect citizens (e-citizens and e-services), and build external interactions (e-society). In

essence, ICT enables the integration of people, processes, information, and technology in the service of achieving good governance objectives.[40]

Beyond these very general claims, it is important to actually conceptualize the supposed links between e-governance and good governance. This exercise in modeling produces a much more nuanced picture of the possible impacts of e-governance on good governance. The discussion here follows the important study by Perri 6 who identifies four opposing theoretical clusters on the significance of e-governance— rationalization; the price of reason; noise, fragmentation and the erosion

Table 2. **The Impact of E-governance on Good Governance**

Rationalization (Pure Optimism)	*The Price of Reason (Optimism with Some Concerns)*
• The use of ICT systems in governance represents a substantial once-and-for-all improvement in the capabilities of governance by creating more effective management of governmental functions in all areas. • The cost of systems acquisition is considered as an investment since eventually these would reduce the operational costs of day-to-day activities such as acquiring, ordering, coding, organizing, selecting, managing and using information, and decision-making. • Information is seen as control, to reduce uncertainty, minimize entropy, and heighten system control by activating feedback and deviation correction. • In effect, the more information obtained through ICT intervention, the greater control is achieved.	• The possibility of greater control, quality, and rationality in decision-making through e-governance systems is generally acceptable, but it comes at a price, particularly in terms of compromising a number of basic democratic rights and principles such as, among several possible scenarios, compromising citizen's rights in terms of individual liberty and privacy and influencing government's decision-making process, as well as having less control over politicians' decision-making agendas. • Safeguards are to be put in place to prevent the occurrence of these possibilities. • One extreme scenario views government technologies, including e-governance systems, as gradually reaching invasive levels in their extension of knowledge and information about civilian populations.
Noise, Fragmentation and the Erosion of Reason (Pessimism)	*Technology as Totem, Fetish Arena and Foil in Ritualized Social Conflict (Technology Viewed as a Tool Only)*
• E-governance systems will actually erode rationality and decision-making, whereby the extreme demand for policy analysis based on an increased amount of information will, in fact, slow down the process by creating delays in action. • "Paralysis by analysis", through information overload and obsession with overly simple canned and measured data, is a distraction of policymakers' attention away from the more relevant tacit, implicit, qualitative and unstructured factors, toward formal, explicit, quantitatively measured and structured factors and information. • In effect, the cultivation and exercise of good judgment in decision-making will be totally left out. • Clearly, this view openly rejects the cybernetic theory of information as control.	• Technology is viewed only as a means or tool for either altering or maintaining the *style* *of governance* (i.e., conservative vs. radical styles) or in other words, as a totem for conflict over preservation or change. • By itself, technology systems will have very little fundamental and independent impact on the technical or political rationality of the decision-making process. • Continuities, changes, and developments in governance will continue to be viewed as the effects of the traditional social and political influences, and not by technology itself.

of reason; and technology as totem, fetish arena and foil in ritualized social conflict.[41] These four theories find parallels with Asgarkhani's four models of e-governance systems as they impact on future scenarios: pure optimism; optimism with some concerns; pessimism; and technology viewed as a tool only (but not a driving factor on its own).[42] A combined model of the impact of e-governance (using elements of both Perri 6 and Asgarkahni) is summarized in Table 2.

Moving from general principles to actual practice, Magno and Serafica assert that there are three ways in which ICT in governance can contribute to good governance: (1) by increasing transparency, information, and accountability; (2) by facilitating accurate decision-making and public participation; and (3) by enhancing the efficient delivery of public goods and services.[43] In the old pre-ICT governmental system, citizens had to literally and figuratively go to government offices and line up for information thus wasting time, money and effort. Today, however, with the informatization and the re-engineering of processes and procedures, the digitizing of government documents and the ICT enabled streamlining of office operations, the use of accessible wide area network, information that was once inaccessible, limited and monopolized today "flows" to citizens and stakeholders online. The increasing use of ICT for governance has not only made it easier for citizens to access information and services as well as actively participate in policy making processes, it has also provided government the mechanisms for efficiently disseminating information to the public about its programs, policies and their outcomes. that is crucial to the achievement of transparency and accountability.[44] The potentials of creating efficient and effective public administration, wider citizen access to information and public services, as well as the broadening of citizen participation in the policy making process has broad implications for the attainment transparency and accountability and the realization of good governance.

Turning to the issue of efficiency, e-governance systems can improve the productivity and efficiency of public administration and hasten service delivery by not only providing accurate and accessible information crucial decision support, planning, forecasting and decision making for policy makers and bureaucrats and their clients, but also through the ICT enabled re-engineering of government procedures and processes that includes the streamlining of processes, automation of work to cut red tape and overhead costs, the use of networks and the digitalization of information. From Norway to India, myriad documented case studies around the world

show that ICT in governance can really achieve efficiency gains. E-governance and its various ICT interventions such as the setting up e-procurement systems, e-tax assessment and online collection programs, electronic data inter change for expediting online permits and licenses, not only reduce the administrative and transaction costs for both government and citizens when they interact but also enhance the access to government services by its clients and aiding in the speedy delivery of good and services. Moreover, ICT in governance can also improve productivity in government by providing alternative mechanisms for service delivery such as the use of

Table 3. **Models of Democracy and E-governance**

	Pluralist democracy	Representative democracy	Direct democracy
Concept of democracy	Elite-level competition among rival interest groups, parties, and leaders	Electoral accountability of representatives and governing parties	Citizens consultation and participation in policy making process
Role of e-government: good governance	Managerial efficiency in public service delivery	Managerial efficiency in public service delivery	Managerial efficiency in public service delivery
	Transparent information published about major policy proposals and the decision-making process	Transparent information published about major policy proposals and the decision-making process	Transparent information published about major policy proposals and the decision-making process
	Extensive interest-group consultation	Extensive interest-group consultation	Extensive interest-group consultation
	Open pluralistic competition for government contracts and reduced corruption	Open pluralistic competition for government contracts and reduced corruption	Open pluralistic competition for government contracts and reduced corruption
Role of e-government: electoral accountability		Transparent information published about major policy proposals, administrative decisions, and legislative Acts	Transparent information published about major policy proposals, administrative decisions, and legislative Acts
		Efficient and transparent electoral administration	Efficient and transparent electoral administration
		Opportunities for e-voting in elections	Opportunities for e-voting in elections
Role of e-government: Public participation			Two-way interaction and communication between citizens and public officials
			Extensive public consultation, information-gathering, open public forums, and systematic user feedback
			Opportunities for e-voting in plebiscites, referendums, surveys and polls
Indicators from web sites	Information and communication functions	Information and communication functions	Information, communication and action functions

Source: Norris, 2003

ICT mediated technologies like electronic commerce, e-bidding and e-procurement, the introduction of various ICT mediated technologies such as the Internet and the Intranet that increase office productivity and provide increased capacity for policy planning and program administration.[45] Similarly, e-governance interventions not only reduce the role of intermediaries or so called "middle men", but also increase the capacity government to monitor its various operations thereby reducing the potential for corruption and waste. Reducing corruption in government is one of the attractions of ICT in governance. The disintermediation brought about by e-government and e-governance technologies disempowers intermediaries that have been the source of "noise" in the policy making process and the center of negative bureaucratic behavior and rent seeking in government. The potential savings from the efficiency gains of e-governance interventions can be re- allocated for other important government expenditures such as social development. Furthermore the efficiency gains create an environment that is stable, predictable, and market friendly inducing more investments and strengthening linkage between government and the private sector. In sum, ICT in governance has the potential of actualizing good governance by empowering the citizen and civil society with accurate and accessible information, providing venues and mechanisms for broader, active and critical participation in policy making, creating conditions for a competitive and market friendly business environment as well as actualizing responsive, efficient, effective, transparent and accountable public administration.[46]

Of all the benefits that can, in theory at least, accrue from the important of e-governance into good governance perhaps the most difficult to implement is that of public participation. This touches the core of the political system and the possibility for deepening democracy. It implications are considered in the next section.

E-governance and Democracy

Conceptualizing the relationship between e-governance and democracy is a complex and contested terrain. Some authors assert that the model of democracy defines the range of possibilities, as well as constraints and potentials for configuring more inclusive and deliberative political processes and crafting more representative and accountable of institutions. Hence, different democracies utilize different e-government and e-governance systems. However, space does not permit a detailed consideration of arguments for or against particular models of democracy. Rather, we

focus here on the three models of democracy—pluralist, representative and direct—and the identified role of e-governance in each.[47]

Intuitively, e-governance has the potential to aid governments in creating more opportunities to link with their constituents, enhance their participation, conceptualize new forms and frameworks for collective action.[48] It does so by increasing the number of access points for and substantively improving the quality of political participation through ICT mediated technology, e-governance has the potential to alter in a substantive way collective action and change the nature and nuance of democracy. Although the literature is replete with skeptics about the democratic possibilities of ICT in governance, Pascual outlines below some important claims about the potential contributions of ICT mediated governance to reconfiguring and hoperfully deepening democracy :[49]

> *Improving access to public information and services.* Government carries the burden and responsibility of ensuring that citizens, communities, businesses, and civil society are equipped with complete information so that they can make timely and appropriate life decisions. Through ICTs— broadly defined to include television, radio and telephones—the public can more easily access information and services. By providing the public with details of government activities and providing them with venues to actively participate in these activities, e-government compels officials to be more transparent and accountable for their actions and decisions, as well as to improve not only the delivery of services but also the quality of these services.

> *Enhancing political participation.* ICTs have made it possible for citizens around the world to be included in the policy process, to have their voices heard, to participate in the policy development process, and ultimately, to influence decision-making. ICTs have opened numerous channels of participation not usually open or available to the broader public. Many instances around the world today have shown the potential of ICTs to change society through the participation of a wide variety of people from various social and cultural backgrounds, social strata, and religious beliefs.

> *Engendering women empowerment.* Governments must pay special attention to providing women not only with access to information technology (IT), but also with IT training and education. ICTs are

particularly useful for giving voice to women in developing countries who traditionally are isolated, invisible and silent. It presents new opportunities for women to improve their lives, economically, politically and socially. e-Government can also be used to strengthen women's participation in the political process, help women exercise their fundamental rights, improve the performance of elected women officials, strengthen advocacy of women's issues, and disseminate knowledge. Providing channels for participation in policy-making.

But none of this is as straightforward as it appears. In fact, much of the potential of e-governance and e-government for enhancing democracy have been more rhetoric rather than reality. Even in developed societies with extensive experience with advance e-government projects and already existing e-governance experiments, the experience with increased participation in policy making and decision making, enhance consultation and feedback is limited. Very few case studies in the literature are able to highlight extensive and successful implementation of e-governance and e-democracy. These findings were echoed in an e-government study cited in Lallana, where a global survey was conducted among 2,288 government websites in 196 nations and concluded that e-governance initiatives have failed to realize their potentials for both good governance and enhancing and deepening democracy.[50]

There are myriad reasons for the aforementioned state of affairs. One of the reasons often cited in the literature is the existence of a technical and infrastructure divide. The so-called digital divide exists in both the developing and developed world that limits citizens's connectivity and access to e-governance technologies. If the digital divide is not bridged, the potential transformative impact of e-governance technologies on governance and democracy will remain marginal especiall in developing countries. Others further critic, that e-governance and its early form, e-government are really reform projects that are geared at achieving "managerial efficiency" and not creating substantive consultation and participation in a polity. Thus, e-governance is not about creating deliberative and participatory democracies but really to configure market-friendly competition states. Still supporters of ICT in governance and democracy argue that e-governance and e-democracy are the wave of the future. That the potential of the e-governance technologies in deepening democracy has only been limited by the fact that much of the efforts to use ICT in political participation even in advanced industrial societies are still evolving or in

their early stages. Governments around the world need to increase the use of ICT for governance for e-governance and e-democracy projects to succeed. According to the optimists, it's too early to judge the success or failure of e-governance, especially with regards to its impact of democracy and it's difficult to pre-judge initiatives towards e-governance and e-democracy because it's just too early to judge.[51] Moreover, the long term transformations associated with the e-government and e-democracy such as the institutionalization of a more inclusive and deliberative form of democracy really takes an evolutionary tract that may take generations to achieve. [52]

From the foregoing discussion, it should be clear that there are both procedural and substantive issues at play when assessing the potential and implications of ICT for governance in terms of enhancing citizen-state interactions towards deepening democracy. This complexity can be captured by reference to the models of interaction developed by Chadwick and May.[53] In this landmark comparative study of ICT and governance the main aim is to explain why e-government initiatives in the US, UK and EU were "non-deliberative" and "non-interactive" in character. The study focuses on the dynamics of interaction among government, citizens and businesses within the e-governance structure by studying the relationship of ICT, politics and democratic theory. The basic argument advanced here is that democratic interaction was being marginalized and outmaneuvered by managerialism. In effect, this meant that e-government initiatives achieved significant levels of organizational efficiency and effectiveness but failed to increase level of participation crucial to deepening democracy. Chadwick and May seek to explain this observation by developing three models of interaction—managerial, consultative, and participatory. These can be elaborated in the following terms.

Managerial model. Chadwick and and May, assert that ICTs are primarily viewed as quantitative improvements over earlier technologies. Government services are made more efficient in terms of increased speed of delivery coupled with a minimization of costs. Horizontal information flows are also enhanced to remove negative interdepartmental barriers, thereby easing "friction" within state bureaucracies, and to take out entrenched vertical hierarchies. While the reduced costs transformed the very nature of governance, this interaction is more of an improvement of traditional public functions rather than as an increase in citizen access. The core of the managerial model assumes that change is incremental, where

the challenges and opportunities offered by ICTs for governments is offset by their unchanged operational logic, and the government's role in the economy remains the same. Chadwick and May emphasize that the e-governance model is characterized as "managerial" and very much nested in the discourse of NPM. The managerial model regards the state as the authoritative source of information, which, in turn, is treated as relatively simple and unilinear instead of complex and deliberatively produced. It is a "push" model of information dissemination where the citizens are seen as passive recipients (gaining information is a voluntary option on their part) and accessibility is considered a secondary, 'technical' issue. ICT is a quantitative improvement on previous technologies. Chadwick and May emphasize that the state will continue as before but will be made more 'efficient', where 'efficiency' means increased speed of delivery combined with a reduction in costs.

Consultative model. Chadwickand May define this as a "pull" model where ICTs facilitate the conveyance of more essential citizen opinion to government and information is considered as a resource means for 'better' government, particularly on such vital issues as guiding policymaking and knowing what the people really think. This model covers the entire gamut of consultation, ranging from low-level information gathering, to the more substantial, quasi-deliberative forum of interaction and consultation. While this model contains the germ of greater democratic participation so desired for a well-developed e-democracy, it still falls short of the true requirement for this ideal and is thus more representative of a transition stage towards the greater participatory models of e-government. This model also values the notion of how the dearth of resources determines access to government, particularly for such traditional practices such as focus group discussions and opinion polls where sample size determines the level of representative views. The model is cognizant of some prevailing problems inherent in state-citizen relationships, such as the dominance of ICT-literate groups in consultative forums whose views and opinions may not be representative of citizens as a whole. As in the managerial model, this approach also considers information as a passive resource, permitting only a selection of inputs that come within the criteria defined by policymakers (i.e. opinions questioning the very basis of policy formulation are viewed as 'ill-informed' or 'ideologically-determined').

Participatory model. While the first two models emphasize the vertical bi-linear flows of communication between the government and

citizens, the participatory model is viewed as a more diverse and multi-directional complex of inter-activity. In this model, the state is seen not as the hub of information authority within this complex, but as a nexus or component of the whole, interacting as one organization among many others in civil society. The state remains, however, a major facilitator of discussion and interaction and as the main target for organized political activity.[54] In his positive appraisal of this model as a barrier less approach

Table 4. **Three Models of Interaction in Governance**

	Managerial	*Consultative*	*Participatory*
Role for Government	Regulatory; responding to the needs of the new economy; efficient and faster delivery of government information to citizens and users'.	Regulatory; responding to needs of societal interest as expressed electronically; better policy provision to citizens and users'	Protector of free speech and rights of expression, but little beyond that; civil society exists away from the state and (will be) mediated electronically.
Principal actors and interest	Government and its customers'; the media	Government; 'customer'; interest groups	Voluntary associations and interest groups spontaneously interacting within 'cyberspace'; groups use information gleaned through deliberation to influence government.
Flow of information	Unilinear from government to citizens, but also emphasis on improving flow of information within government	Unilinear from government to citizens or citizens to government	Discursive and complex – citizens, citizens to government, government to citizens
Principal mechanism for interaction	On-line tax returns; benefit claims; 'one stop shops'; updating of personal information held by public bureaucracies; government gathering and aggregation of 'market research' data; government provision of information about its activities to media and public.	'e-voting' at elections; instantaneous opinion polling; electronic input from voters and interest groups to government; 'advisory' referendums; 'electronic town meetings'	Autonomous pluralist mechanisms such as discussion lists, Usenet, peer-to-peer technologies, 'cyber civil society'; time and distance become compressed, facilitating increased political participation.
Ability of citizens to interact	Considerations largely absent.	A 'technical' issue to be solved by cheaper and more readily available technology.	'Access is enough' to encourage wider political participation.
Defining logic	'Service delivery' and presentation ('spin')	'Technical accuracy' and improved policy success rate.	'Deliberation' and participation.

Source: Chadwick and May, 2003

The basic argument of Chadwick and May is that there is a that the non deliberative and non interactive character of e-government is because policy guide it, at least in the the UK, EU and US, has privilaged the managerial model of e-government. This model of ICT for governance emphasize efficiency , effectiveness,and is rooted in cofiguring the State to be market and e-commerce friendly. It does not privilage and enhance forms of interaction that would alter collective action to make it more deliberative, consultative and partipatory.

These models of interaction, together with the models defining the impact of e-governance, can now be used to analyze the various challenges to e-governance in the Philippines.

E-governance in the Philippines: Insights from Local Studies

Although there is a dearth of systematic studies on e-governance in the Philippines, some research has been undertaken to provide insights into the national and local e-governance initiatives and the various challenges they pose, ranging from institutional and policy problems to technological and access issues. This section offers a description of the technical and infrastructural challenges to e-governance, an assessment of the state of e-governance initiatives in relation to good governance, and an analysis of the legal, institutional and policy framework for e-governance.

Technical and infrastructure challenges to e-governance

The Philippine e-governance infrastructure is backward and is still in the process of developing. Citing the ASEAN e-Readiness Survey in Lallana, the Philippines e-government infrastructure is defined as evolving.[53] The regional survey is comprised of five components: e-society, e-commerce, e-government, ICT infrastructure and the liberalizing of trade in ICT goods and services. According to the regional survey, the Philippines has a moderate to low communication infrastructure penetration and a moderate to low penetration of terminal devices such as the personal computer and the cellular phone.[55] This data alone defines how low the access to technology is for most Filipinos. The same survey, also defines a liberalizing market for the telecommunications and ISP sector with personal computer penetration of roughly around 2-5 per cent and a teledensity that is defined around 5-10 per cent.[56] In the same study, aside from the low PC and internet penetration in government; government use of internet is limited

to email and there is only a moderate number of government departments that have websites. [57] The data shows that government utilization of even rudimentary e-government interventions is low and its provision of ICT mediated services is even lower.

This situation compounds the already existing 'digital divide'. Norris asserts that the digital divide is a multidimensional phenomenon that depicts, a social divide between the information rich and poor in a particular society at one level and a democratic divide between those who use or don't use the panoply of digital resources to engage, mobilize, and participate in politics and public life at another level. The latest estimate of internet users is around two per cent or a little over two million people. Hence, in the Philippines the bridging of the digital divide through the enhancement of access and connectivity is seen as a crucial issue that needs to be addressed as part of a long term set of solutions to universal access to ICT and its potentials.

Currently, government access strategies such as the provision of an improved, consolidated, and integrated ICT network and infrastructure focused on citizen centric processes, the reduction of telecommunications and internet access costs, and the provision of public information infrastructure (such as public computer kiosks, community e-centers, etc.) have been limited because of the lack of resources. [58] A long-term solution to the issue may require the government to forge constructive and dynamic partnerships with civil society and the private sector in providing a form of re-intermediation (as opposed to disintermediation) to bridge the digital divide in the Philippines. [59]

E-governance initiatives towards good governance: national and local cases

E-government, as noted above, is a rudimentary form of e-governance and an important stage in its development. At this stage of e-governance, ICT is introduced to government to improve internal processes and administration (e-administration), strengthen the links between citizens and government (e-citizens and e-services), and build external interactions with other institutions and the market (e-society) with the end goal of enabling the integration of people, processes, information, institutions, and technology for good governance. [60] Based on the evidence of empirical studies, it is clear that initiatives with regard to ICT in governance are still at the early e-government stage and far from mature e-governance

systems. National and local government experience in e-government emphasizes the achievement of e-administration. In this context, Ilago notes "innovations were aimed mainly at improving the internal efficiency of local governments. ICT-based systems were applied to achieve improved administration in such areas as local tax administration, civil registry, business licenses and permit operations".[61]

At the national level, an excellent example would be the Philippine Customs Bureau project. This case has been a model for the World Bank of successful e-government intervention that has increased transparency and accountability as well as efficiency in an institution known for inefficiency and corruption. This example of ICT in governance was launched to facilitate customs clearance through the development of business systems for customs payments, processing of clearance documents, and releasing of shipments from customs control. Cargo release has improved from eight days under the old system to two days with the new G2B system. The new on-line system has led to a faster and more secure transmission of payment details.[62] At the local level, the study of Ilago is the only source of systematized data and it provides many examples of increased efficiency through e-government interventions that has redounded in an improvement in governance. These cases are presented in Table 5.

In the cases cited, the national and local governments were able to make efficient their office systems and administrative process, services and utilize resources to achieve organizational goals and performance. Ilago emphasizes that in the local government examples the process was not simply automation but a real integration of technology in that "achieve a level of performance that maximizes available information and resources, and add more value to the service being rendered. ICT was thus seen as a tool and not as the end of improved governance".[63] He goes on to assert that the process of embedding ICT in governance was not a frictionless one. The organizational change within the various local government units was undertaken with much adjustment and preparation and was not as smooth as one would have expected under a deterministic perspective of technological change.[64]

Ilago asserts, efficiency and effectiveness are not the only potential benefits of e-governance. It also has the potential to help governments create more opportunities to get connected with their constituents and

Table 5. **ICT Initiatives at the Local Level**

Local Government Units	ICT Project Implemented	Project Gains
Muntinlupa City	ICT enabled Real Property Tax Administration System	• Transaction time has been reduced drastically from 30 to 45 minutes to barely 3 to 10 minutes. • Collection for 1999 grew by 156 percent despite the absence of revaluation or increase in tax rates while its real property tax base grew from P2.6 billion in 1988 to about P19.5 billion in 1999.
Bulacan	Personnel Management Information System (PMIS)	• The system substantially improved the preparation and maintenance of general payroll, personnel files and daily time record by reducing the time and personnel required in preparing service records, computing leave credits, processing pay slips, and remitting payments to government social security, housing and health insurance agencies. • The system generated savings in salaries of about 2.5 million pesos annually since its introduction.
Guagua	Geographic Information System (GIS)	• The system enabled the municipality to verify the location and boundaries of each parcel of land, thus facilitating better assessment and administration of real property taxes. • It is used as a decision-support system for disaster management, given Guagua's location as a flood-prone barangays, evacuees' pick-up points and exit routes. This information is attached to hazard maps, which are used in risk mitigation and disaster threat analysis.
Naga City	Computerization Program for administrative processes and services	• The computerization of such processes (around 75 percent of all transactions involving the city government had been computerized as of year 2001) and procedures as business licensing, real property tax administration of real tax administration, civil registration, city hall personnel information, payroll and time management, urban poor housing billing, local infrastructure monitoring, city hospital patient information and local building registration, has led to increases in city revenues, improvement in response times, and reduction in manpower needed to sustain a function. • Income from business licensing and real property taxation has substantially increased. Birth certificates are now issued within 30 minutes compared to the previous waiting period of one week. The number of personnel needed to prepare the payroll was reduced to only 2 from 22.

Source: Ilago, 2002

enhance citizens' participation and deepen democracy. In fact, various types of ICT enabled governance interventions such as the Internet carry the potential for greater citizen participation due to its interactive character and capacity for information and communication. Hence ICT is expected to generate enhanced forms of democratic participation. At present, there is very little empirical data to make such an assessment. At the national level, there is a dearth of strong documented cases of government-initiated e-governance project that highlights participatory governance. Many of the e-government initiatives are still in their early stage of development and have focused on "managerial" aspects and less on consultative and participatory models of ICT for governance.

From those studies that are available, local e-governance initiatives seem to promote very little participation or even interaction. The survey results of the Lallana study—classifying some 140 Philippine government websites—found that there is no "transactional" government website; about 14 per cent of the agency websites were unreachable; about a quarter (24 per cent) of these websites can be considered rudimentary; a significant number (42 per cent) of the government websites are at stage 2, "enhanced web presence"; and, only 19 per cent of the Philippine government websites can be considered "interactive".[65] Government websites do not have common features, and are non-interactive with hardly any information about security and privacy policies.[66] In sum, the websites demonstrate the shallowness of the Philippine government's implementation of its national information technology plan. There is a need to implement the provisions of the e-commerce law, and initiate a government website development. Government in the long term must find ways and means to evolve a comprehensive and intergrated e-governance policy, program and strategy to guide nation wide e-government initiatives..

The low levels of participation and interactivity are reflected also at the local government level. This is due not only to the lack of infrastructure but also issues of access. One of the key issues that will hinder the success of e-government initiatives and the eventual evolution of e-governance is the issue of access which has technical, cultural and learning dimensions such as issues of infrastructure support, the persistence of a digital divide and limited technological access, as well as barriers in terms of computer and Internet literacy.[67] The data from Ilago show that only a small percentage of local government units are online as indicated in the findings

Table 6. **Philippine Local Government Unit Official Websites**
(as of July 2001)

Level	Total number of LGU's	LGUs with websites	Percentage %	Inaccessible/ under construction
Province	79	11	13.9	5
City	113	28	24.8	10
Municipality	1,496	14	0.93	3

Source: Ilago, 2002

in Table 6. These are crucial data, because most nascent e-governance initiatives (e-government) need at least internet access in order to function.

Further, the limited number of LGUs websites were of a very rudimentary kind and did not truly enhance the levels of participation. As Alampay tersely notes, the information from the government is "provided with little or no interactivity".[68] Most of these websites are used mainly for the provision of information, thus permitting only a passive form of citizen participation. Even in this application of the internet, the quality of information suffers in terms of timeliness, redundancy and relevance to potential users.[69]

Perhaps unsurprisingly, these findings reflect a global trend where e-governance initiatives seem to provide organizational and administrative efficiency and effectiveness but fail to significantly increase levels of participation. For example, one major study cited in Lallana indicates that ICT in governance has not taken full advantage of the interactive feature of the internet. ICT for governance has not maximized its democratizing capabilities.[70] They further reinforce the idea that the dominant managerial model that characterizes e-governance initiatives in the Philippines may improve basic service delivery to citizens, but limit or minimize the prospect for interactivity that is so important in enhancing participation and deepening democracy.

It is commonly held that ICT in governance can achieve and further good governance objectives by providing tools that enhance transparency and accountability.[71] Greater access in terms of volume and quality of information by the public about government transactions and processes brought about by the use of ICT or e-governance can increase organizational

transparency. In this regard, Bekkers and Zouridis in Ilago, define transparency in the following terms:

> The government agencies are able to register and process the needs
> and preferences of citizens, making it possible for them to acquire a
> better insight into their client's situations, thus aiding them in tailor-
> fitting policies and programs. By means of profiling, government would
> be able to anticipate the future behavior of its citizens.[72]

At the national level, there are hardly any documented examples of this except the initiative of the Bureau of Customs (BOC) through its computerization program. The BOC has been consistently ranked as one of the most corrupt government agencies. By using ICT for governance, the BOC was not only able to process customs clearances faster but was able to transact business online reducing the roles of corrupt intermediaries and providing a medium that was accessible to all BOC clients thus making the process accountable and transparent.[73] At the local level, data show that the web pages utilized by LGUs were provided a function so that local executives could have feedback from their constituents through a complaints and action page for citizens.[74] An example would be Bulacan province's attempt at transparency and accountability with its "Isumbong mo kay Governor" (Tell it to the Governor) feature on the provincial webpage.[75] The data show that both citizen clients and local government executives did not utilize the feedback function adequately.[76] The feature is still not being utilized optimally and there are complaints logged but there is hardly any response from the provincial government.[77]

The Legal, Institutional and Policy Framework for E-Governance

The use of ICT in governance is not new in the Philippines. The use of IT resources such as computers began with the creation of the National Computer Center (NCC) in 1971. This was the key institution in charge of defining IT policy and programs for the government's IT projects for almost three decades. Today, the responsibility lies with the Information Technology and Electronic Commerce Council (ITECC), a body created in 2000 under the Office of the President, is composed of representatives from the private sector and public sector and tasked to be the central coordinating body in charge of defining policy for ICT in governance. However, this body has been inadequate, given the complexity of e-governance initiatives and the challenges faced by the Philippines, in providing the policy planning,

coordinating, regulating, implementing and administrative support for ICT in governance initiatives. Currently, policy formulation and program implementation is fragmented between different ad hoc committees and departments to the detriment of initiatives for ICT in governance. The creation of an institutional and administrative body that would have the power to define coherent consistent and predictable policy for e-governance would clearly be beneficial. The institutional mechanism that would have enabled coherent, consistent, and predictable policy for e-governance was the creation of a Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT). But the initiative has not materialized and continues to languish in Congress, delayed and bog down by issues ranging from the dearth of financial, administrative and institutional resources to a sheer lack of political will on the part of government to push the initiative. At the moment that administrative structure which should promote, develop, and regulate integrated and strategic ICT systems for governance and commerce does not exist.

There is clearly a need to look into the nature of existing legal framework and policies on ICT for governance in order to investigate gaps that hinder the implementation and long-term viability of ICT in governance. In this light, the key document that defines the legal framework and policy infrastructure for ICT utilization in the public and private sector is the the Electronic Commerce (eCommerce) Act of the Philippines (Republic Act No. 8792). This law was one of the first of its kind in the ASEAN region and it provides the legal framework that connects the local information infrastructure and with the global information infrastructure that manages e-commerce. The law provides the rules and regulations which guide online commerce, recognize and provide legal protection for online contracts and cyber agreements property rights and all other related legal transactions It also provides protect doing business online and offers legal protection for transactions undertaken online, protects cyber agreements, recognizes online property rights and provides sanctions against hackers and other destructive acts on the internet. It is more oriented to facilitating e-commerce and e-government but less focused on creating e-governance. which gave the required policy infrastructure for e-commerce but also it has also required government to have the capacity to accept electronic business transactions thru e-government.[78]

Given the connectivity and access issues associated with the reality of a digital divide, the Philippine government has crafted a set of policies towards bridging the technical and administrative challenges to ICT

enabled governance. Two important documents lay the policy foundations: IT 21 Action Agenda for the 21st Century; and, EO 265 or the Government Information System Plan (GISP) of 2000. Both documents appreciate the strategic value of ICT as an instrument of national development. Both policies intend to promote ICT enabled governance. Moreover, both documents stress the need to address issues that impede ICT enabled governance such as the digital divide and other access issues, telecommunications costs, network infrastructure, and so on. Based on the GISP, the objectives of the government policy are the phased implementation of e-governance that will lead to faster and better delivery of public goods and services; greater transparency in government operations; increased capacities of public sector organizations, and proactive participation of citizens in governance. In both policies on ICT development, the government plays the role of enabler and prime user as well as key partner of the private sector.

However, a careful reading of the IT 21 and GISP documents reveals that the essential focus is on policy and initiatives for e-government only and not for the broader process of e-governance. This presents a real gap in policy. Moreover, the end goal of the documents is the configuration of a policy direction that emphasizes a form of e-government whose character is akin to the "managerial model". This model of e-government privileges managerial efficiency and regulatory issues at the expense of a more enhanced citizen participation. Not surprisingly, the existing policies reflect coherence and congruence with the overall public sector reform model in the Philippines that is, among other things, being configured to be "market-friendly" and supportive of neo-liberal economic policies. Hence, a balance has to be struck at the level of policy for ICT or e-governance that emphasizes aspects of the consultative and participatory models .Only a balance in policy can veer policy, program and initiatives aways from form a non-deliberative, non-interactive and overly "managerial" model of e-governance.

Conclusion

This paper has provided a broad conceptual and empirical overview of e-governance by delineating and defining some of the key concepts, technologies, and institutional arrangements associated with the current discourse and practices. In doing so, we focused on elaborating the potential of e-governance to reconfigure the state's regulatory capacity and

governance nexus through the enhancement of good governance and democracy. The empirical data on selected local and national e-governance initiatives confirm the relatively underdeveloped state and slow growth of the country's e-governance. The reasons for this include the existence of a backward and dependent national science and technology system, an underdeveloped ICT infrastructure; poor implementation of the legal and regulatory systems, access and participation issues brought about by the digital divide; the poor quality of government websites that are mostly rudimentary and non-interactive; the lack of important services to encourage citizens towards online transactions with the government, and, even the friction caused by integrating into a global political economy that dominates and disarticulates poor countries with regards to science and technology. Despite these obvious shortcomings, there are some successful cases of good governance acheived through the application of various e-governance technologies . The premise and promise of improved internal administration efficiency, streamlining of operations and processes, economy and effectiveness has been realized to some degree and in some instances. But the potential of using e-governance technologies for good governance is still a long way from being maximized.

The prospects for change brought about by the utilization of e-government, an early stage of e-governance, are likely to be implemented mainly in improved managerial and technocratic functions of service delivery of routine public services (e.g. the provision of permits, licenses, tax payment and collection etc. and the efficiency streamlining and efficiency gains by streamlining labor-intensive bureaucratic transactions). In this case, ICT for governance will only achieve a few of the stated goals of good governance. If these initiatives continue along the same trajectory they will fail in their consultative and participatory functions. As such, the potential and promise of e-governance will be marginal because it will fail to promote genuine participation and enhance democracy. We can attribute this to many factors, some rooted in the fundamental issues of access and connectivity (digital divide, IT literacy), administrative and political culture (patronange, conservatism etc) and other factors would be rooted in the nature of the institutions (lack of resources and political will) itself but perhaps the most important are the policy and program that guide e-government and early e-governance initiatives which are still rooted in the dominant managerial model governance. In this model asserted by Chadwick and May, the managerial and technocratic functions of delivering efficiency, economy gains will be realized but it will fail in the

functions that are relevant to enhancing democracy through e-governance, namely, in the consultative and participative aspects. While the Philippine government strives to prioritize the development of basic ICT and e-government infrastructure as well as strengthen its regulatory framework, it must be stressed that technology by itself is no assurance for efficient governance. More importantly, the introduction and adoption of e-governance solutions must be approached as a holistic process that combines technological advances with other equally essential factors rooted in the socio-economic structure, cultural values and attitudes, and ethical issues. The attainment of these broader goals would entail a conscious, cautious and progressive attempt to reconfigure an intergrated national e-governance policy and program. It would require, at the very least, a fundamental de-emphasis of the managerial model of e-governance and a movement towards more consultative and participatory models of e-governance in order to balance and enhance governance and deepen democracy. ✿

Endnotes

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3   Castells, Manuel. *The Information Society*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.

4   For a detailed discussion of the debates regarding e-governance and democracy see Norris, Pippa. "Deepening Democracy via E-Governance", draft chapter for the United Nations World Public Sector Report, 2003, at http://www.ksghome.harvard.edu/~pnorris.shorenstein.ksg/acrobat/e-governance.pdf. pp. 1-2

5   World Bank definition in Carino Ledivina., "From Government to Governance", Proceedings of the World Governance Conference (EROPA, 2000) p. 4.

6   IIAS definition in ibid., p. 4.

7   Ibid., p.5.

8   Ibid., pp. 1-5.

9   Ibid., pp. 1-5.

10 Norris, same as above n 4, pp. 1-3.

11 Norris, same as above n 4, pp. 2-3.

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20 ibid., pp. 271-280.

21 Backus, same as above n 18, pp. 1-2

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28 Heeks, Richard. "Understanding E-governance for Development", Development Policy and Management (IDPM) I-Government working papers series no.11, University of Manchester, 2001, at man.ac.uk/idpm/idpm_dp.htm#ig.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 Bakus, same as above n 18, pp. 1-4.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Uma-okot, Rogers,. "Electronic Governance: Reinventing Good Governance, Commonwealth Secretariat London 2002, available online at http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/egov/okot-uma.pdf. pp. 1-19.

37 Ibid., p. 3.

38 Ibid., pp. 5-9.

39 Ibid., p. 3.

40 Heeks, same as above n 27.

41 The foregoing discussion is just a summary of the models outlined. For more comprehensive analysis please refer to Perri 6. "E-governance: Weber's revenge", in J. Hughes and H. Margetts (eds) *Challenges to Democracy: Ideas, Involvement, and Institutions*, New York: Palgrave. 2001. pp. 220-236.

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43 Magno, Francisco and Serafica, Ramonette. Unpublished paper presented at the conference on "Information Technology and Local Governance: Best Practices in the Philippines, Korea and Singapore". 2001. pp. 2-3.

44 Pascual, Patricia. *An E-primer on e-government.* Manila: E-Asean and UNDP- APDIP, May 2003 pp. 5-15

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48 Pascual, Patricia. *An E-primer on e-government.* Manila: E-Asean and UNDP- APDIP, May 2003 pp. 15-16.

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50 Lallana, 2002.

51 Bryan, Cathy, Roza Tsagarousianou and Damian Tambini, 2002 as cited in Quilala, Dennis. Local eGovernment and Good Governance: A Study of Three Metro Manila Cities. Unpublished paper submitted in PS 299, Department of Political Science, CSSP, UP Diliman, Quezon City. 2002.

52 The paper attempted to summarize some of the keep points defining the various models. For a more a comprehensive version of this analysis please refer to the exemplary article of Chadwick and May. 2003, pp. 271-300.

53 Ibid.

54 Lallana et. al, same as above n 17, p. 20.

55 Lallana et. al, same as above n 17, pp. 15-26.

56 Lallana et. al, same as above n 17, pp. 15-26.

57 Ibid., pp. 21-22. In sum, the survey depicts the Philippines as moving slowly but inconsistently into e-governance. Hence, at the national level, e-government and e-governance infrastructure and initiatives as measured through government websites, are considered rudimentary to underdeveloped, essentially non-interactive and non-deliberative. This has characterized the country as possessing a weak e-government system that is a major impediment to the long-term achievement integrated e-governance.

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59 Ibid.

60 Ilago same as above n 15, p. 2.

61 Ibid.

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63 Ilago, same as above n 15, p. 3.

64 Ilago, same as above n 15, p. 3-4.

65 Lallana et al., same as above n 17, p. 25.

66 Ibid.,p. 26.

66 Alampay, same as above n 72, pp. 2-4.

67 Ibid., pp. 2-4.

69 Ilago, same as above n 15.

70 Lallana et al., same as above n 17, p. 15.

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73 Lallana et al., same as above n 17, pp.41-42.

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