

# ROLE OF ICT IN POLITICAL SCENARIO

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## Abstract

*A global culture centered on information access emerged in the past few decades. Information and communication technologies (ICT) are increasingly available to advance the ease and efficiency in many areas of life. ICT holds promise in areas of governance and public participation. e-government proponents believe governments in the digital age can use information to reduce corruption and increase government transparency, accountability, efficiency and citizen participation. The importance of the proposed topic derives from the political importance of political communication and marketing for the actions of political entities and the creation of their campaign strategy in general on one side and from the social importance of ICT and internet for modern citizenship on the other side. This paper provides a clear conceptual approach in analysing and evaluating the on-going processes of change at the different levels ICT brings about. By applying an evolutionary economics approach we discuss ICT regarding its potential with respect to policies, politics and polities.*

**Keywords:** *e-government, Government transparency, Political communication etc.*

## Introduction:

Modern-day society is witnessing the continuous creation of innovative mediums concerning communications technology that are not only convenient to use but inexpensive as well. Such digital communication tools include mobile phones, smart phones, and the Internet. It is not a secret that they have been successful in bringing a drastic revolution in the methods of information-sharing and communication. [1] It is not surprising that these innovative technologies have impacted every aspect of peoples' lives, be it political, religious, educational, professional, social, or economical. Innovations in information and communication technologies (ICTs) have not only increased the availability of innumerable products and services but have also reduced their prices. As a result, the inexpensiveness of and accessibility to ICTs have caused a great reduction in "the costs associated both with doing business and with organizing social and political movements" (Hart, 2010) [2]. The cheap availability of ICTs has also declined the costs of communication and transportation.

Communication technologies have also facilitated the reduction of "information gaps and restrictions inherent in marketplaces where consumers and producers have little means of comparing commodity prices between distant markets" (Zambrano & Seward, 2010) [3]. ICTs are presently working as a catalytic tool in the improvement and expansion of development programming. In addition, the advancement in mobile technologies and their accessibility to rural areas have also contributed towards sustainable development. Thus, the technological change has introduced ways that have made the economic growth sustainable. The communication technologies are, in fact, sustainable technologies that are helping people and governments meet "the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Beder, 2006) [4].

## ICT Effecting Public Policy Making

Assessing the potential influence of ICT on policies, politics and polities becomes even more difficult, because ICT are not a set of uniform technologies, but consist of a number of separate technological components. To make things even more complicated, these single components are still in a process of fundamental change. ICT are still not mature technologies, but such that are characterized by ongoing innovations. Since such innovation processes are in turn shaped by economic factors, any attempt to make a prediction of the overall impact of ICT on politics is doomed to failure.

ICT not only affects public policies, which are one of the main outcomes of the political process, but this very process of policymaking itself. Governments elected by the public for a limited time period are the main agent in putting forward legislation in representative democracies. Accordingly, getting elected is one of the main goals of political parties.



Image Source: composition according to Meier/Slembeck (1998)

Problems differ regarding the number of people affected and the degree to which they might raise concerns among voters and/or the public. When taking these two dimensions into account, the – simplified – classification in Table 4 holds. Chances are best to be successful in the policy formation process for interest-group problems with only a rather small group of people being affected, however to a high degree, like e.g. trade unions. In contrast to that chances are poorest for structural problems where a huge number of people are affected but only to a low degree, like e.g. consumer protection or environmental issues. To analyse innovation and change in politics, the evolutionary economics approach is useful, too. Like in markets political entrepreneurs play an important role in creating innovations. These also refer both to the outcome of the policy-formation process (policy innovations as compared to product innovations) as well as to the process itself of how politics takes place (process innovations). What innovations are successful depends on the respective selection environment and the resulting selection mechanisms.

### Access and Use of ICT Tools

ICT tools can be very useful in promoting greater government transparency and citizen participation, but their access and use pose unique challenges. First, there are barriers associated with usability of ICTs. Marginalized populations often suffer from lack of resources for ICTs, cultural and literacy barriers, and other concerns, so ICTs may not be an effective tool to help them gain access to politics. The integrity of digital records is a major concern when using ICT in governance. The trustworthiness, accessibility, and maintenance of records are crucial to government transparency. Both a lack of capacity and a lack of political will can cause governments to fail to make digital information accessible and keep it well-maintained, but without a framework for information governance, ICTs may lead to the misleading and misinforming of citizen, rather than their empowerment.

In order to study the relationship between ICTs and political development, several scholars have examined the effect of ICTs on governments. Most of the researches explained that using ICTs in governments affects different aspects of government such as accountability, transparency, corruption, capacity building, and bureaucracy. For example, Fountain (2001) [5] pointed out that ICTs affect the effectiveness of governments and also can facilitate the process of structural transformation of governments in order to develop their abilities to deal with the changing demands of society. Bimber (2003) [6] implied that increasing the power of information technologies in societies could lead to a reduction in the government bureaucracy and force government to be more effective. Some researchers emphasized how ICTs lead to administrative reform and implied that using ICTs enhances the quality of government bureaucracies (Johnson, 1998; Klitgaard, 1997) [7]. Many scholars explained that using ICTs in governments introduced a new form of government, the so-called ‘e-government’.

## Conclusion:

In this era, the government and the people of each country have an important role in the strengthening or weakening of the process. The main feature of ICT is to provide information and to communicate it at much higher speed and at much lower costs over time and space than it was possible with mere analogous modes of communication. Accordingly, the resulting information and communication costs decrease enormously in the areas where ICT are used, leading to a decrease in search and transaction costs. [8] Although political development and the role of ICTs in the process of society's development have attracted many studies in the fields of public administration and political science, few studies have attempted to investigate the effect of ICTs on the political aspect of development, and this underscores the necessity of conducting more research in future investigations. This paper is the first study to examine the effect of ICTs on political development in a broad sense.

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