

Transforming Citizen Engagement In E- Governance Framework: A Conceptual Analysis

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: E- Governance; Citizen Participation; New Public Governance; E- Participation

How to cite:

Araby, M. A. A. A. (2024). Transforming Citizen Engagement In E- Governance Framework: A Conceptual Analysis. JAKPP (Jurnal Analisis Kebijakan dan Pelayanan Publik), 10(2), 213-235

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.31947/jakpp.v10i2.35497>

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ABSTRACT

This study offers a conceptual and critical analysis of how citizen engagement has evolved within the e-governance framework, emphasizing the transition from traditional public administration to New Public Governance (NPG) in the digital era. By mapping four waves of governance transformation – from hierarchical bureaucracies to smart governance – the article highlights the redefinition of citizens' roles from passive service recipients to proactive partners in public service co-production. Drawing on international best practices, including from Japan, Norway, and the UK, the study identifies the determinants of effective digital participation, such as ICT infrastructure, policy design, and civic readiness. The key finding is that meaningful e-participation is contingent on both the supply side (government initiatives and digital tools) and the demand side (citizen willingness and digital literacy), forming a two-way governance relationship. The research proposes a model of “Smart Citizen Governance” that integrates co-decision, co-implementation, and co-evaluation as central pillars of inclusive and sustainable public service delivery. This analysis is especially relevant for non-Western public administration contexts, where digital transformation intersects with diverse institutional traditions and citizen expectations. By addressing existing research gaps in digital governance and citizen empowerment, the article contributes to the broader discourse on public sector reform, democratic innovation, and local policy effectiveness in the Global South.

Introduction

Terms of government, public administration, public policy, and public service are not static by nature. Still, they are recognized as being more dynamic concepts, as they are constantly changing from one time or place to another according to many surrounding ecological factors politically, economically, socially, and technologically. At the same time, they are considered to be a means, not an end; they are a means for serving people, citizens, and human communities. Hence,

citizens are the founding base for the actual practical needs of these multifaceted, dynamic concepts, and citizens are the targeted asset in the end. Thus, public citizens must adapt to all of such institutional dynamics and changes that affect, in turn, their lives in many different manners across time and different environmental contexts.

From another side, and by reviewing the proposed title of the article, the concept of "Re-inventing government" used to be one of the most deliberated crucial trends during the 1990s. It dates back to the theoretical contribution of Gaebler & Osborn (1990). Then, it was followed by some substantive practical efforts for reforming the United States of America (USA) public administration and reviewing government performance in the time of President Clinton and his Vice Al Gore by launching the Government Performance Review Act (GPRA) in 1993 and then amended by President Obama in 2011. Such precautions enhanced more shift in the public administration paradigm under the trend of New Public Management (NPM) theory that enhanced the notion of empowering the private sector managerial methods within governmental transactions, then followed in turn by a second paradigm shift in the 2000s, but this time on reinventing citizen's role in public life according to the new public governance theory.

Starting from the previous theoretical context, and by overriding the era of the 1990s decade to the fourth industrial revolution (digitalization wave) in the beginnings of the 2000s that emerged in barrel with the New Public Governance (NPG) theory, the study raises some debatable questions on: How could the notion of reinventing government mechanisms that were raised by Gaebler & Osborn (1990) be applied public citizens' as being a societal collective power or as being a social capital in other words?, Is it a reasonable dissertation?, and how to apply?, Is it an easy issue to "re-invent" citizens' behaviors and to mobilize their collective interests side by side to government acts? and what kind of means to utilize. and in what formulas we may redesign the relationship between citizens & government?

Based upon the last elaboration, the study formulates its central question: What are the determinants and dynamics of reshaping the relationship between government and citizens in the era of e-governance & open government model?

Based upon the previous major question, the study raises some other groups of sub- questions as follows: What significant theoretical implications support engaging citizens as co-partners to the government?; Why call for citizen participation in running public issues alongside the government?; What are the most commonly applied tools for engaging citizens in public affairs according to international experiences?; What kind of lessons can we retrieve from the international practices of empowering public citizens in public life?

Literature Review

The study intends to utilize this section for exposing implications and logic behind citizen empowerment as a co-partner to the government through reviewing the following literature axes:

Citizens' Engagement on New Public Governance (NPG) perspective

According to Lowatcharin (2021), public administration phenomena devolved through many various waves and evolutions over many decades, starting with the classic Public Administration (PA) model (1800s- 1970s), the New Public Administration (NPA) model (1970s), New Public Management (NPM) model (last of 1970s -2000s), NPG model (2000s – 2020s ...), and recently [E-Governance & Open Government] model in DiGi. Era and post COVID -19 pandemic according to last literature analyses:

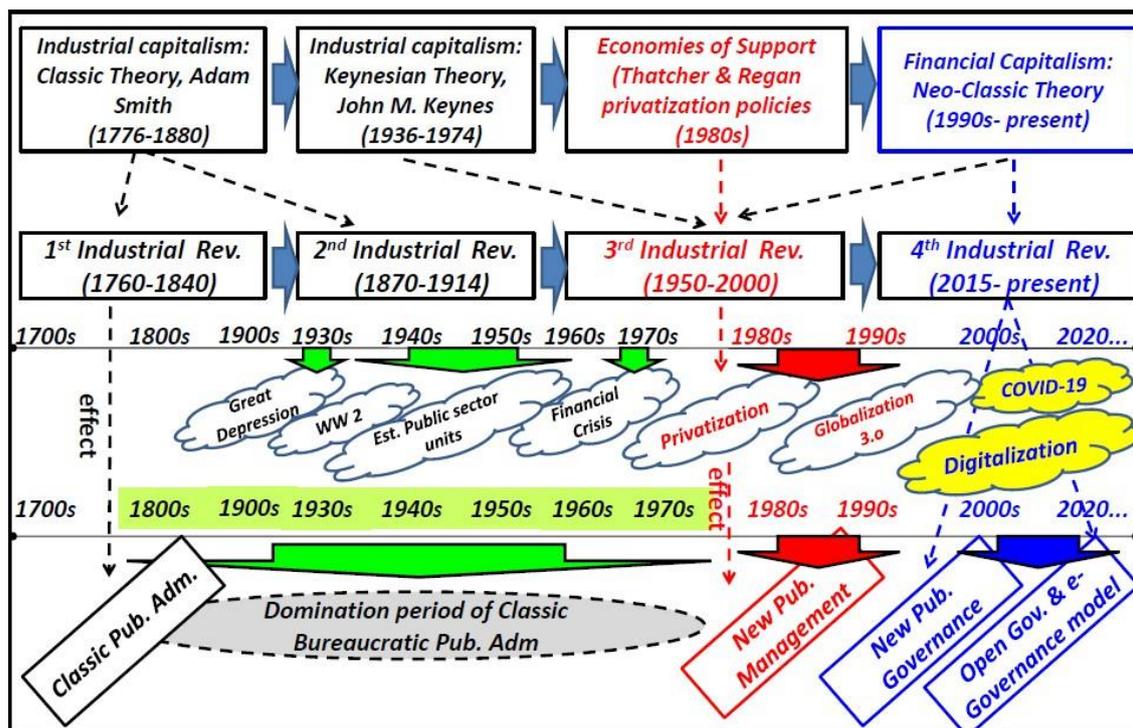


Figure 1. Evolution of Public Administration Models

Source: Designed & Adopted by the researcher, depending on Data of: (Lowatcharin (ed.), 2021, p.9); (Abd el Rasoul , 2009, pp.180-190).

The PA theory has been affected by a lot of changes due to other changes in both political & economic theories across many decades, starting with economic classic theory assumptions raised by Adam Smith (1776 – 1880s) that combined simultaneously with the 1st Industrial Revolution (1760-1840), besides of Max Webber's contributions (1800s) which lasted in turn for an extended period from until (1970s), then Industrial Capitalism model assumptions of J.M. Keynes (1936-1974) from a side, and [2ed, & 3rd] Industrial revolutions, and then followed by the end of 1970s – to start of 1980s decade with the rising of privatization programs in U.K, USA according to economic neoclassic theory evolution (Abd el Rasoul, 2009).

Thus, the official role of state as the predominant actor of public life decreased more in favor of political and economic liberal changes; due to many effects such as emergence of liberal powers, interest groups, human rights activists, financial crises stresses, information and communication technology (ICT), social media, inclusive growth theory assumption, and recently sustainable development philosophy raised by the United Nations (UN), more public concern with societal affairs, raising

of 4th industrial revolution in mid of 2020s period, assumptions of Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications through public policy (PP) & public administration (PA) activities, changing designs of sectoral public services from analog to new digitalized form especially after COVID -19 and its effects on modern economies and the changing nature of public services, thus all of these fluctuations resulted in enhancing the assumptions and applications of NPG model in public life through a new form of engaging public citizens as an additional force & co- partners to the government, in addition to private sector, then last but not least E-governance & open government model according to the new era of digital transformation.

All of the previously addressed deteriorations across many evolutionary waves of dealing with public affairs had its influences on citizen's role as being recognized as just passive consumers of public service according to assumptions of the classic model of PA, moving to another formula as "positive consumer" or owner of public service according to NPM model, and then as being a designer or co-partner in planning, producing, implementing and assessing public service side by side to the government according to the NPG model's assumptions.

New Government Trends & Tools for Empowering Public Citizens

According to Stojanovska-Stefanova et al. (2020), the world has witnessed four major evolutionary waves of [government] styles of work as follows:

1. Government as classic government: where classic, traditional adopted mechanisms of managing public affairs that depended on full command of the classic statutory power of the officials' context that was utilizing more hierarchical structures of PA apparatus (as of Max Webber's Bureaucratic model), with more strict adherence to officialism, formal directives and decisions, decrees, laws, regulations, rules, distribution of roles, and citizen was just recognized as being a passive consumer of public service & public policy's outputs.
2. Second transition: From Government to Governance: definitely in the 1980s-1990s periods, thanks to published literature of the World Bank & the International Monetary Fund that in turn called for importing governance principles from the private sector to be applied in public sector institutional context, then expanding of privatization programs in U.K & USA, replacing classical PA model with the New Public Management (NPM), a transformation from classical structure performance activities to more functional based performance, a transition from official decisions to processes focus, from rules to goals focus, from roles distribution to performance quality, from traditional implementation to collective coordination, and outputs focus to outcomes & impact.
3. Third transition: from classic 1980s & 1990s Governance spirit to e-Government models: from the 1980s up to beginning of the third millennium in the 2000s, and due to the effects of ICT & IT techniques that supported many of governments' activities, working in barrel with the NPM model assumptions & governance assumptions simultaneously across liberal democracies, beside the

emergence of e-service delivery methods, e-work flow, e-voting practices, e-productivity techniques, all of these improvements has led to changing the government patterns of work & the way that citizen can engage through which.

4. Forth transition: from e-Government to e-Governance model & Open Government: starting with the beginnings of 2nd decade of the third millennium (2020s), and due to effects of the 4th industrial revolution definitely within Davos forum discussions 2015-2016, followed by effects of COVID-19 global pandemic that digital accelerated. Wave across public domains, especially across Western liberal contexts. Thus, the government context witnessed many transitions (ex., e-service delivery to e- consultations with citizens, e-workflow to e-controllership, e-voting to e- participation, e-productivity to networked societal guidance).

Connecting with the previous elaboration and from another side, Choi & Xavier (2021), Lemke et al. (2020), and Ivanova et al. (2019) differentiated between five various phases of (e-government) for serving & empowering citizens across the last three decades starting with traditional E- Gov. 1.0 model in 1990s, up to S-Gov. 5.0 at the beginning of the 2020s decade:

1. E-GOV.1.0: Informative Public Service model: known as the informative government work model, started in the 1990s decade with the emergence of the internet (web) until the beginning of the 2000s, so this model witnessed the earlier call for producing and providing e-services, and sharing public data from government organs to publics but without a citizen direct involving in public affairs, citizen here is just passive information recipient.
2. T-GOV. 2.0: Interactive Public Service model: starting within the beginnings of the 2000s until the 2010s decade, with more citizen's positive enrollment in public affairs through open-source data provided by public organs and more expansion of provided e-services.
3. T-GOV.3.0: Transactive Public Service model: since the 2010s decade, this model witnessed invitations to enhance the quality and quantity of open data to the public, improving e-services that were more data-based.
4. DiGi.-GOV.4.0: Digital Public Service model: started in the late 2010s decade with more data openness, more governance-based management style, and more data flow channels with fewer boundaries.
5. S-GOV.5.0: Smart Government model: started roughly between the late 2010s and the beginning of the 2020s decade until now. According to this model, public service is not just a data-centric model, but a more innovation-based one, besides other characteristics such as sustainability, high rates of achievement, adopting proactive smart planning of P.P issues, utilizing more governmental ports & e-channels for public use, that is more oriented to performing predictive estimations of citizen demands over e- services, undermining traditional paper transactions through public organizations (Choi & Xavier, 2021).

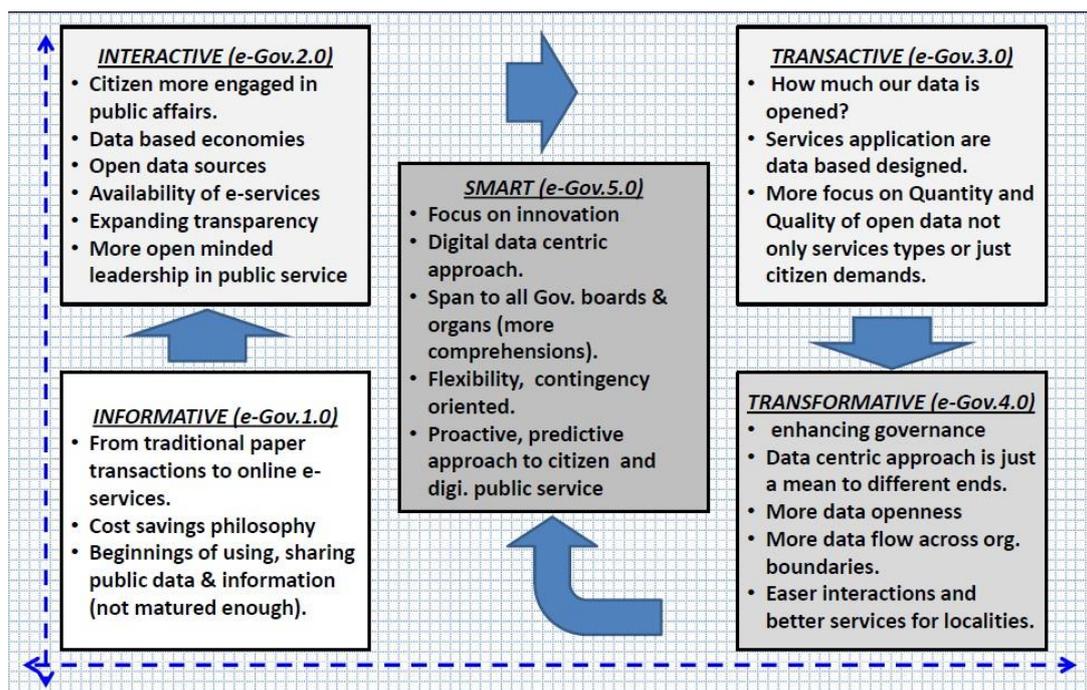


Figure 2. Evolution of E-Government Models

Source: Adapted from Choi & Xavier (2021: 1-2); Lemke et al. (2020:152–164.); and Ivanova et al:649-661).

The New Wave of Designing a Collective Smart Public Policy by enrolling the Public Citizen (Public Policy 3.0 concept)

Uzun (2021) suggests three elaboration on public policy evolution waves as follows:

1. *P.P. 1.0 as Traditional Policymaking model*: according to this assumption, building, designing, and planning of P.P were the significant tasks of government (matching with the classic mode discussed earlier), usually the process of setting agenda was dominated by small groups of public officials and bureaucrats in the light of available policy inputs, and people demands, then to be implemented and evaluated within public organs, without significant societal participation.
2. *P.P. 2.0 as Policymaking from the perspective of NPM model*: according to this model, the state turned out to be the first actor in policy making among other equal actors (ex., private sector, societal groups), and public choice theory assumptions were utilized in setting public policy agenda in the light of the western liberal values, in addition to that assessing P.P. programs was based on cost-benefit analysis & societal impact beside expansions of public-private partnership programs.
3. *P.P. 3.0 as Smart Policy model according to NPG model, and DiGi. era*: the effects of ICT and digitalization were assumed to be more evident within the third wave of the policy-making process, in the light of e-governance practices and open government models due to digital factors and e-service expansions. Thus the state turned out to be just one of many societal partners in policy-making process that is characterized in turn by setting more collective agenda

by involving people, besides adopting co-designed methods of public programs, collective consultations, implementing and delivering public services in its modernized liberal formula by citizens' hands and to their equals through many societal segments of people (ex. policy labs mechanisms), besides utilizing new digitalized techniques for service delivery such as (ex. platforms, e-government gates) (Uzun, 2021).

Table 1. Evolution of Public Policy Dynamics

Evolution Policy Making	Webberian P.A [Public Policy 1.0]	N.P.M [Public Policy 2.0]	N.P.G + E-governance & Open Gov. model [Public Policy 3.0]
Pub. Policy Initiation & planning	State, Government, Bureaucracy are the major actors	State turned to be first among semi-equals	State and other partners: Civil Society, Citizen, Private sector
Setting Agenda (Policy Priorities)	Elite Approach	Public choice	Collective Bargaining, Co-designing based on Societal dialogues
Policy Formulation Style	Evidence-based	Result-based	DiGi. & Data-based
Policy Implementation tools	Public Administration & Bureaucracy	Public & Private sectors (PPP) programs	Digitalized PA with technique tools Networking, Platforms
Policy Evaluation	Public Organs & Bodies	Public Organs + Stakeholders + Public opinion + Media	Collective Real-Time assessments in all policy making stages

Source: Adapted from Uzun (2021, pp.75-76).

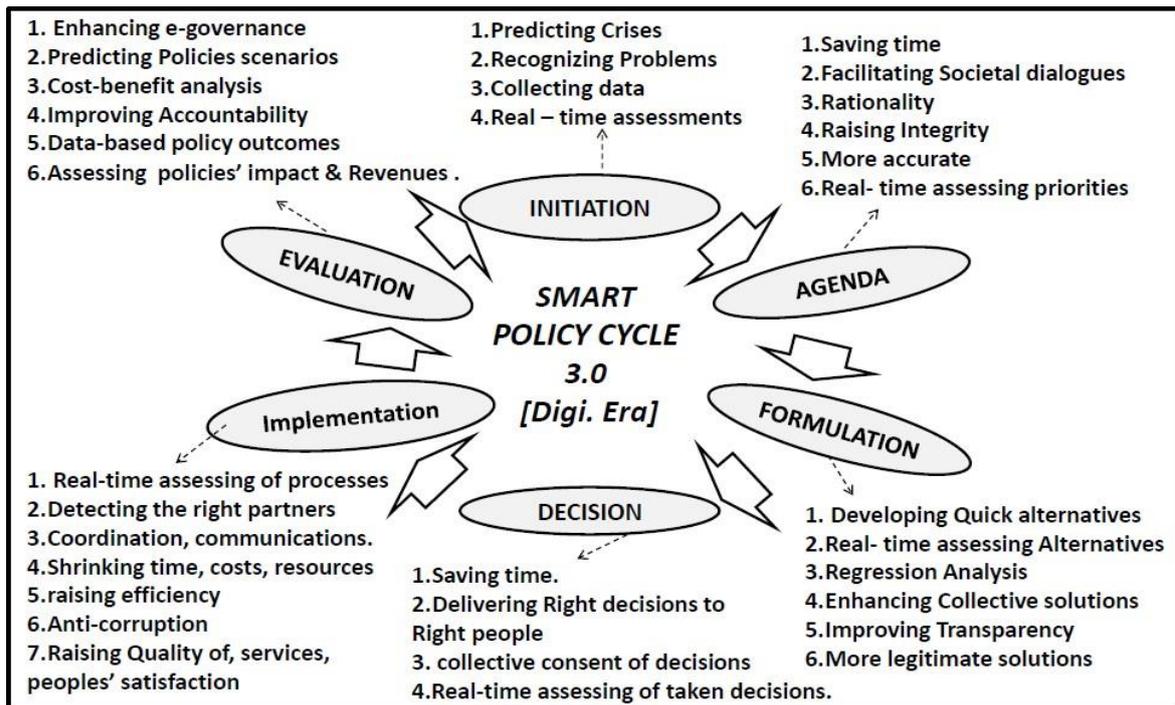


Figure 3. Third-wave assumptions of Designing Smart Public Policy

Source: Adapted from Uzun (2021, pp.77-95).

According to the last reviewed works of literature, the author concludes that there are several implications that support citizen participation in public affairs. Thus, public participation is not affected by political nor economic factors only, but public administration & public policy dynamics & techniques have a crucial role in supporting the whole issue, as they offer the required societal infrastructure and legitimate channels for feeding people's engagement process as illustrated in the Figure 4.

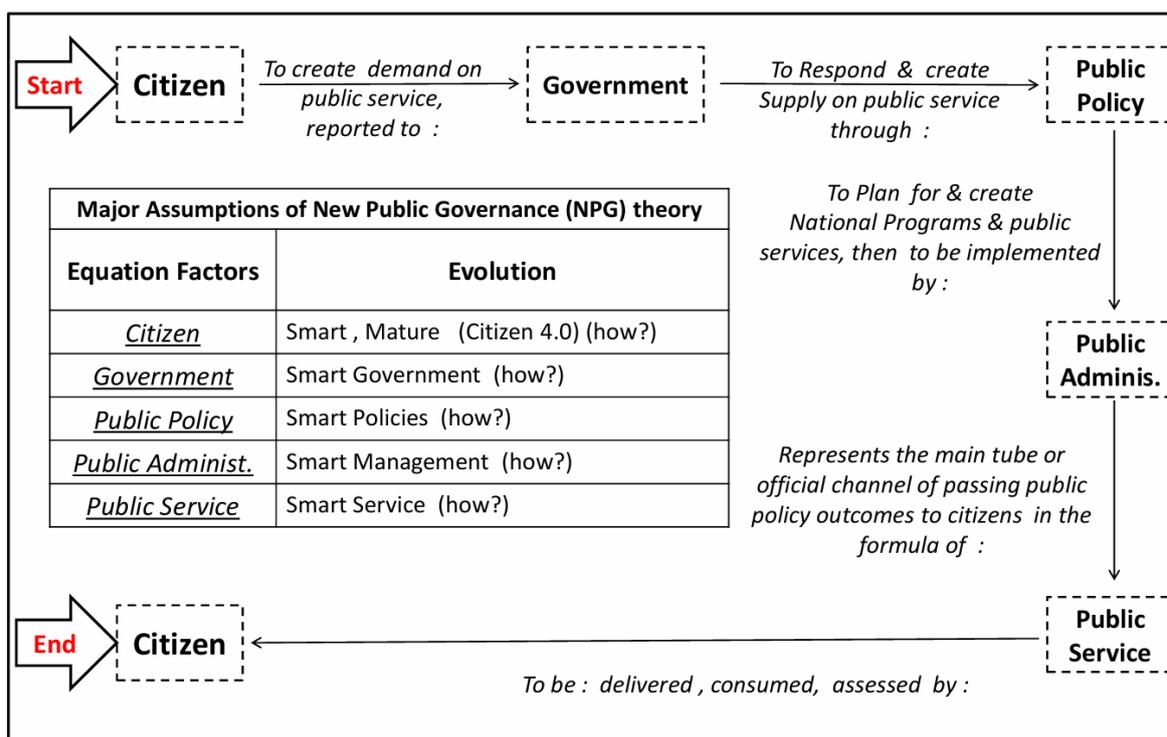


Figure 4. Determinants of public participation across differential waves

Source: Designed & Adopted by researcher.

Besides the last theoretical elaboration offered by literature, this study seeks to address and cover some research gap points:

1. Exploring different stages of building public participation.
2. Detecting some practical tools for supporting public participation that were retrieved from international experiments.
3. Reviewing empirical results of international indexes that are covering the status of e-participation internationally

Research Methods

Based on the previous theoretical dissertation & literature review, the study adopts the qualitative analysis tool in barrel with the deductive approach for answering the primary question and sub-questions in the light of the proposed methodological model that is elaborated by the author:

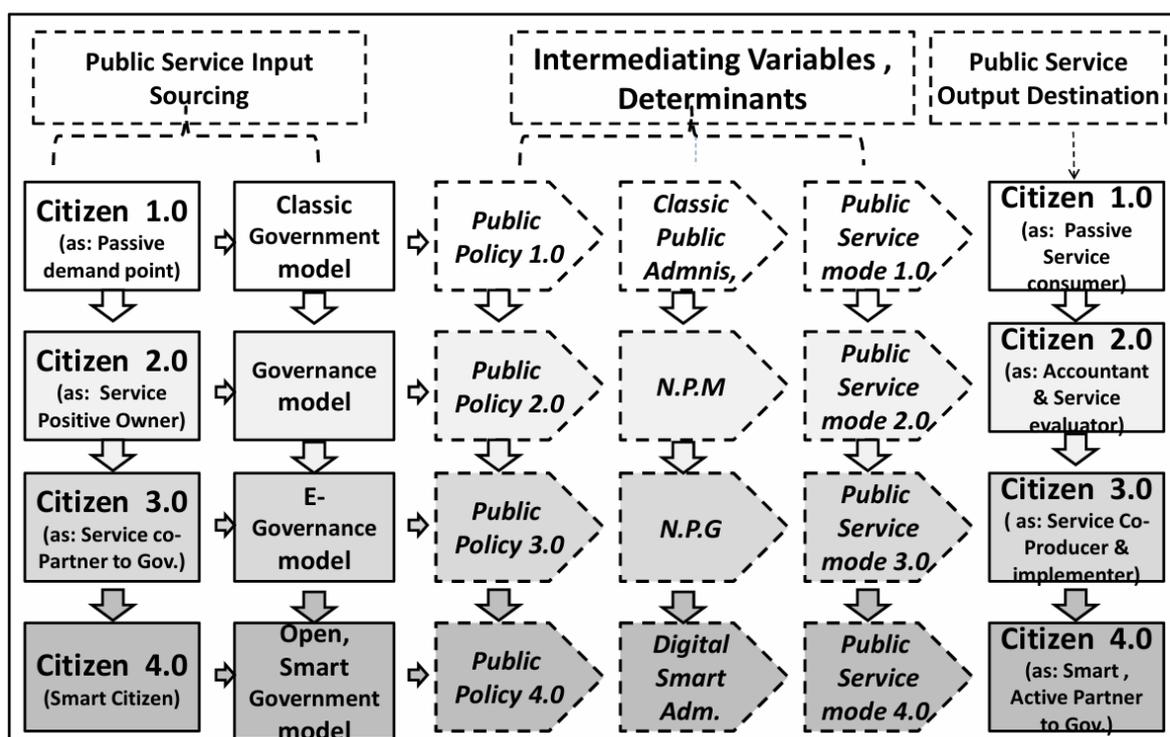


Figure 5: Study's primary assumption & proposed model

Source: Designed & deducted by the researcher in light of the literature review.

The author establishes his proposed methodological model by assuming that the citizen represents the starting and ending point of the whole mechanism of running public affairs; as he is supposed to be the source of public service demand, the government will have to respond, then public administration is supposed to implement policies, then to deliver public service to citizen once again, thus applying such model on different models starting from the classic model of government and public administration, reaching e-governance model, we will find that citizen's role is changing from one area to another across different levels of deteriorations and evolutions.

Result and Discussion

Thus, based upon all that was introduced, the study is seeking to answer some debatable questions; first, what is the logic behind the concept (Reinventing citizen's role in public life)?

Osborne (1993) used the term (reinventing) that was calling for reforming the overall performance of the government and public administration methods in general, not just for the federal government in Washington D.C, by applying managerial methods of the private sector in public sector organizations to reach the same efficiency standards in public transactions, and for matching with the new public management trend, but today (as of 2020s decade) it is not enough to reinvent government methods only without a complete reconsideration of citizen's role in public life in the light of the new public governance trend in a new digitalized world where "classic" governance notion is turning in the direction of "e-governance &

Open government" (Strokosch & Osborne, 2020; Grigalashvili, 2023; Bernhard, 2014).

According to the World Health Organization (2022), citizen engagement is a deliberative form of public participation that enables them to discuss public policy, recognizing views, perspectives, and knowledge from diverse groups of citizens for making a national policy integration using different methods of governance, while the information and privacy commission of New South Wales (2018) defined public participation as involving those who are affected by a public decision inside the decision- making process itself.

Besides, Guribye & Iversen (2020) stated that three different levels could determine the public participation mechanism according to the "ladder of citizen participation" model that was developed by the end of the 1960s decade, so according to this model, the public participation starts with detecting the availability of data and public information for the people, then followed by a dialogue, and finally the co-creation of public affairs cases.

Integrating with the same context, the OECD (2015) detected six accumulative steps for public participation, starting with communication, consultation, participation, representing people in decision-making bodies, partnership, and co-decision, co-production, While the Information and Privacy Commission of New South Wales (2018), reported that the same issued process starts with informing people, consulting, involving, collaborating, then empowering them. On the other hand, Grazian & Nahr (2020) detected four levels of public participation, starting with the availability of information channels, then the convenient level of transparency and data availability, mobilizing people for participation, and finally, the complete deliberation condition.

Besides what has been introduced, there are some other remaining questions on the evolution of citizen's participation across different waves of the other determinants reaching the e-governance phase as illustrated in Figure 5 model, Rodriguez & Komendantova (2022) differentiated among three different evolutionary waves of citizen engagement:

1. The traditional model represented the classic era of the first industrial revolution in Europe when classic administration techniques prevailed and public decisions were made and taken from above to the bottom. Thus, citizens had no adequate power to affect public affairs due to a lack of information, specialized knowledge, and public consciousness.
2. Socio-environmental model: matching more with the emergence of the new public management trend in the 1970s - 1998s, when discussions over public affairs were more profound, more focused on developing solutions for societal problems such as management of natural resources, public services, agriculture, food, development, health, environment issues across many conflicting societal powers and views.
3. Systemic approach and innovation model: emerged recently, giving full support for new societal values such as public innovation, green economy,

economies of knowledge, digitalization, new public governance, citizens' involvement in public affairs and policies, supporting various forms and channels of engaging people in public issues such as collective participating in policy forums, citizen steering committees, societal innovation networks involving start-ups, accelerators, networks of knowledge dissemination, innovation incubators, and laboratories.

On the other hand, Thuber et al. (2020) argued that the evolution of citizen's role in engaging in public affairs witnessed four different formulas:

1. [*Citizen 1.0 as Service Passive Consumer*]: according to assumptions of the classic PA model, citizens used to be just passive consumers of P.P. outcomes, without having enough chances or channels for expressing their feedback on public service status.
2. [*Citizen 2.0 as Positive Owner of Public Service*]: according to NPM assumptions & after the privatization reforms that were adopted in many states during decades of the 1980s & 1990s, public service was recognized as turned as being more citizen-oriented matching with market rules, public sight toward citizen has been evolved as being cheerful consumer, owner of the public service; due to many factors including enhancing private sector for presenting and providing public service on behalf of the government through different formulas of partnership contracts (PPP), beside the domination of liberal democratic values within western contexts, societal accountability, market contestability due to variety of public service channels offered either by the public or private outlets.
3. [*Citizen 3.0 as New Public Service Participator*]: starting with the beginnings of 3rd millennium (2000s) additional theoretical assumptions on inclusive growth theory were launched in barrel with emerged economic and financial crises, especially within Asian and Western economies, rising of government budget deficit adverse effects, thus due to all these implications citizen's role was recognized as being co-partner to government, co-designer, co-producer co-evaluator rather than just owner of public service, supported by several societal accountability tools.
4. [*Citizen 4.0 as Smart Citizen in DiGi. era*]: reaching the Digital Era, the 4th industrial revolution, and as of deliberated consultations raised by the Davos forum in 2016, the citizen's role evolved one more step of public engagement due to the positive effects of ICT, especially within and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Thus, public citizens acquired more enrollment lands in public affairs as a digital service consultant and co-partners of public affairs with full support of digitalized tools with many new perceptions as being an active smart social capital and as an active working societal producing power, as being a human innovation asset, as being a solution supplier and problem-solving partner side by side to the public officials.

Besides what was introduced above, we still have another question: How does the government push in the direction of empowering citizens in public

affairs? And what does the citizen need from the government in the new open government model?

In terms of demand & supply, offering a balanced model of citizen participation requires not only government support but also the citizen himself must have the natural desire to engage, the citizen represents the demand aspect of participation, and the government must provide the minimum level of participation's requirements supply as illustrated in below:

Table 2. Demand & Supply requirements of citizen's participation

Smart Citizen e-Participation “ Participation Demand Aspect”	Smart Citizen e-Participation “Participation Supply Aspect”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • X % of citizens who have desire to participate in public affairs activities. • X % of citizens who don't have desire to participate. • X % of citizens' participations per sectors. • X % of citizens who participate online. • X % of citizens who participate offline. • X % of citizens who have access to internet and participate. • X % of citizens who don't have stable access to internet and want participating. • X % of citizens who have ICT normal skills. • X % of citizens who suffer from digital illiteracy. • X % of demanded e-service regularly by citizens. ▪ X % of demanded information by citizens. ▪ X % of males who participate regularly. ▪ X % of females who participate regularly. ▪ X % of citizens who participate regularly in rural areas. ▪ X % of citizens who participate regularly in urban areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of online sectoral information. • Existence of obvious sectoral Gov. digital channels (mobile devices/ platforms). • Existence of legislative acts guaranteeing freedom of information and access to information). • Existence of personal data protection legislation online. • Existence of e-participation policies/ mission statements online. • Existence of public e-procurement systems, portals for tender s and auctions online. • Rate of Government partnerships or collaboration with third parties (such as civil society or the private sector) in the provision of services. • Free access to online government services through the main portal, community centers, post offices, libraries, public spaces or free Wi-Fi. ▪ Existence of obvious means for measuring and absorbing public opinion reactions to public policies and Gov. programs. ▪ Engaging people in consultations, communication related sectoral services (education, health, social protection, employment,

Smart Citizen e-Participation “ Participation Demand Aspect”	Smart Citizen e-Participation “Participation Supply Aspect”
	<p>environment and/or justice).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Combining government decisions made and the results of online consultations with people on new policies. ▪ Declaration of policy outcomes and results after consultations with public opinion.

Source: Adapted from the United Nations E-Government Survey (2020:117-118).

Moving around international context practices in citizen participation, the remaining question in this part is what kind of lessons and positive experiences developing countries can learn to reach some significant levels of public participation in public life. by differentiating the most sophisticated models of public participation a side, and the underdeveloped models, we need to shed light on some empirical quantitative data in the light of the UN e-participation index results:

The e-Participation Index (EPI) is issued every two years and applied to 194 states worldwide for tracing and assessing the status of public e- participation. The EPI 2022 reports that Japan is the 1st ranking model of e- participation, as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. UN E-Participation Index 2022

	Rank	Country	EPI Score Value per Country	EPI Level
Top EPI Countries' scores 2022	1	Japan	1.0	Very High EPI
	2	Australia	0.9886	Very High EPI
	3	Singapore	0.9773	Very High EPI
	3	Estonia	0.9773	Very High EPI
	5	Netherlands	0.9659	Very High EPI
	6	Newzeland	0.9545	Very High EPI
	6	U.K	0.9545	Very High EPI
	6	Finland	0.9545	Very High EPI
	9	S.Korea	0.9432	Very High EPI
	10	USA	0.9091	Very High EPI
	12	Denmark	0.8864	Very High EPI
	13	China	0.8636	Very High EPI

	18	United Arab Emirates	0.7841	Very High EPI
43	Saudi Arabia	0.6932	High EPI	

Arab Countries' EPI status 2022	50	Oman	0.6591	High EPI
	51	Bahrain	0.7738	High EPI
	67	Kuwait	0.5455	High EPI
	67	Jordan	0.5455	High EPI
	67	Tunisia	0.5455	High EPI
	89	Bahrain	0.4432	High EPI
	95	Lebanon	0.3977	Middle
	101	Qatar	0.3750	High EPI
	107	<u>Egypt</u>	0.3523	<u>Middle EPI</u>
	128	Morocco	0.2727	Middle EPI
	148	Algeria	0.2273	Low EPI
	153	Iraq	0.2159	Low
	163	Yemen	0.1932	Low EPI
	185	Syrian Arab Republic	0.0682	Low EPI
	187	Sudan	0.0455	Low
189	Libya	0.0341	Low	
190	Mauritania	0.0227	Low	
...	
Lowest EPI Countries' scores 2022	183	Dominican	0.0909	Low
	184	Guinea Bissau	0.0795	Low
	186	N. Korea	0.0568	Low
	190	Eritrea	0.0227	Low
	192	Kumar Islands	0.0114	Low
	194	South of Sudan	0.0	Low

Source: Adapted from the United Nations E-Government Survey (2022, p.255)

So, commenting on the previously illustrated empirical index results, the question is: what makes the excellent model of public participation as being good and vice versa?

Practically, there is no clear, unified answer for serving one unified model of participation, but taking into consideration the privacy and internal conditions of each case, economically, socially, and politically, besides technique factors per each country, we may grasp some lessons from the most sophisticated models as presented in the following context:

Starting with the Asian context, and as being presented above according to EPI index results (2022), Japan recorded the 1st rank over more than 194 countries regarding empowering public citizens in public affairs, and by analyzing Japanese experiment, Narou (2016) argued that starting with 1952 Japanese public policies were totally issued by executive branch (the social & economic council affiliated

directly to the prime minister) that was in charge of building Japanese public policy, with a zero weight of empowering the public, and then by the year of 2001 this council was dissolved as a result of an adopted overall reform program including central government ministries and agencies, thus planning economic policies turned to be a collective societal and a collaborative affair rather than just an individual task performed by central government, or even a task of one designated ministry or an entitled public organ, so designating sectoral public policy outline of each government branch is being performed with full cooperation with many actors the most important of which is the Japanese local citizen, so since then socio economic plans are led by many actors side by side to the central & local governments that represent 47 Japanese prefectures, including local citizens, public opinion feedbacks, university professors, private sector powers, interest groups, media, political parties, and the national parliament (The Diet), all of these efforts are supposed to be collected and interact together through some kind of advisory council called in Japanese the (Shingi-Kai) or the "public council" committees & sub-committees around the Japanese territory, thus in Japan now there are many Shingi-Kai councils reflecting each sector combining all of those formal and informal actors with full support from the designated sectoral ministry which is in charge of a certain policy in particular, so that is the new image of developing public policy in Japan starting from 2001 up till now, thus transforming public policy making process from a central traditional form to more democratic liberal pluralistic model.

Moving to the E.U. context, according to the Norwegian experience, Guribye & Iversen (2020) argued that there are too many empirical options and tools for engaging people in public life, they vary between setting practical mechanisms for meeting places, planning methods and workshops, digital tools, knowledge production methodologies, and mobilization:

Table 4. e-Governance International Methods: Selected Cases

Participation Themes	Supporting tools (ex.)	Description
Meeting Places	Mayor's Bench	Making mayor accessible to local people.
	Collaboration Board	Representatives from municipalities' administrators, local politicians, NGOs, associations, unions, voluntary centers.
	Citizens Assembly	Randomized memberships of citizens to meet for discussing national or regional specific issues, it is covering all segments of citizens.
	City Labs	Policy affairs informal societal forums, centers for local public meetings & discussions.
	Loop Co-creation Game	Developing specific projects, ideas, and initiatives by teams (3 -8 people) through the volunteer council (founded in

Participation Themes	Supporting tools (ex.)	Description
Planning & Workshop		Denmark, Norway).
	Dream Box	A citizen dialogue tool in form of video booth allowing people to provide their inputs for urban development.
	Future Scenario	Running a forward sight method for public issues collectively.
	Validity test analysis	For the official development local plans to be survived, oversighted, articulated by people.
Digital Tools	e-Democracy	Electronic channels, portals accessed by people for reporting policy errors and submitting assessments.
	Audience Response Systems (ARS)	Gathering people's feedbacks on public cases through phone apps.
	Digital planning tool	Connecting politicians and people, allowing them to fulfill their proposed plans for public issues, and information to accessible to them.
	My Cause website	Allowing people to express objections on certain cases or initiatives through specialized portals.
Knowledge Production	Citizen Panel	Gathering information on citizen needs through prepared survey.
	Community Based Monitoring	Offering overview or reporting of services' quality and efficiency across regional, local areas.
	Design Thinking	Method for ensuring that above official policy initiative is meeting people desire, through creating common understanding, brain storming, policy prototyping, testing solutions before implementation and final assessment.
	Asset Based Community Development	Identifying key actors and building public trust in running and directing local resources for serving people needs.
Citizen mobilization	Urban Regeneration	Mobilizing local actors for developing areas with full cooperation among civil powers networks and private sectors.
	The Dream Bank	Supporting individual creative initiatives and solutions through online portals.
	The Coastal Lottery	Offering motives, prizes, privileges to local community people who participate physically by time and efforts for

Participation Themes	Supporting tools (ex.)	Description
		conserving sanitation and environment preservation and protection programs
	Time Credits	Participants earn number of credits for each hour of voluntary effort in local areas.

Source: Adapted from Guribye & Iversen (2020)

Connected with the same context, Chwalisz (2017) asserted on some retrieved lessons from the UK experience, speaking on some of the citizen empowering tools in public life, based on Scottish practice, the mechanism of Scottish local policy and public decision-making is a common issue in between local government, Scottish government, universities, research centers, economic and social research council, NGOs, people involved within inside living Labs of public innovation, local government associations. Thus, the Scottish experience utilizes many forms of involving people and stakeholders in public affairs issues such as Citizen's Juries, Living Labs, participatory budgeting system, applying the Community Empowerment Act, preparing local democracy bills documents, co-production, and co-evaluation processes.

Claudia Chwalisz (2017) also shed light on the Irish Constitutional Convention (2013) for engaging people in public life as a response to the financial crisis, which was comprised of 66 randomly elected citizens and 33 politicians, as well as members of the Irish parliament and chair appointed by the government. Besides, she also addressed similar practices and tools in other equal experiences of countries such as the Canadian case (citizen's reference panels, citizens assemblies or commissions), the citizen's jury, and the people's panel tool in Australia.

Besides, the concerned works of literature also discussed many practical tools of (the e-democracy) approach for engaging people in public affairs by presenting some case studies as illustrated below, which is adapted from Grazian & Nahr (2020)

Table 5. e-Democracy International Applications: Selected Cases

E-democracy supporting tools from E.U countries practices	Short description & objective	Adopting Countries
<i>Who Can I Vote For</i>	Election transparency tool platform: www.whocanivotefor.co.uk	United Kingdom
Stop Fals	Disinformation Detection App, https://stopfals.md/ro/about-us	Moldova
<i>Harta Banilor Publici</i>	Public Procurement Mapping, https://www.hartabanilorpublici.ro	Romania

E-democracy supporting tools from E.U countries practices	Short description & objective	Adopting Countries
<i>Parlameter</i>	Parliament Transparency Tool, www.parlameter.si	Slovenia
<i>Rezultate Vot</i>	Election Result Display, www.rezultatevot.ro/elections/112/turnout	Romania
<i>Vouli Watch</i>	Parliament Transparency Tool, www.vouliwatch.gr	Greece
<i>Diskutier Mit Mir</i>	Discussion tool, www.diskutiermitmir.de	Germany
<i>Manabalss</i>	Deliberation & participation platform, www.manabalss.lv	Latvia
<i>Rahvaalgatus</i>	Deliberation & participation platform, www.rahvaalgatus.ee	Estonia
<i>Parlement & Citoyens</i>	Deliberation & participation platform, www.parlement-et-citoyens.fr	France
<i>Swap My Vote</i>	Voting Efficiency Tool www.swapmyvote.uk	United Kingdom
<i>Grajdantie</i>	Citizen reporting system, www.grajdanite.bg	Bulgaria
<i>Hejt Stop</i>	Citizen Reporting System, www.hejtstop.pl	Poland
Local Digital Democracy In the Netherlands	Educating Public Administration, The www.lokale-democratie.nl/cms/view/57979766/lokale-burgerparticipatie	Netherlands
The Scottish Government's National Covid Conversation	Participation project, Scotland, https://blog.delib.net/the-wisdom-of-crowds-scotlands-national-covid-conversation	United Kingdom

Source: Prepared by the author in the light of data retrieved from (Grazian & Nahr, 2020).

Conclusion

At the end of the study, the author reached the following results and lessons:

1. The human behavior of public citizens could be developed and reshaped as many tangible institutions for the good of the whole community and for serving the collective public interest.
2. The development issue is not only the government's responsibility (just as in classic models) alone, but now it is a joint shared responsibility of all designated partners, starting from the citizen himself, which is supposed to be the primary assumption of the new public governance & e-governance model.
3. The free and genuine willingness of public participation (from the citizen side before even the government's willingness) is a must for building some consolidated model of citizen's engagement, and it is two ways of willingness: the government from one side and the citizen from the other side, and so without any of both poles, there is no significant relationship in between the two variables.
4. Public participation is not one standard stereotype to be applied in all societies in the same manner; the concept, degree, and depth of participation differ in turn from one nation to another due to many factors: political & economic maturity, social awareness, levels of education & culture, societal stability. and so on, such conditions play a crucial role in formulating the negative or positive image of engaging citizens in public life.
5. The digitalization process played a decisive role in opening the space field of (e-governance & open government model). Despite existing for several decades, ICT effects doubled many times, especially in the aftermath the COVID-19; it contributed to many transitions in public life and running public affairs: from participation to e-participation, from democracy to e-democracy, from a routine negative recipient citizen of public service to an smart actor, from the government to e- government and smart government, form governance traditional scoop to e-governance scoop, from classic made public policy to smart public policy, from analog public service to digital service, from a culture of classic bureaucracy outlets to culture of government platforms & online government gates:

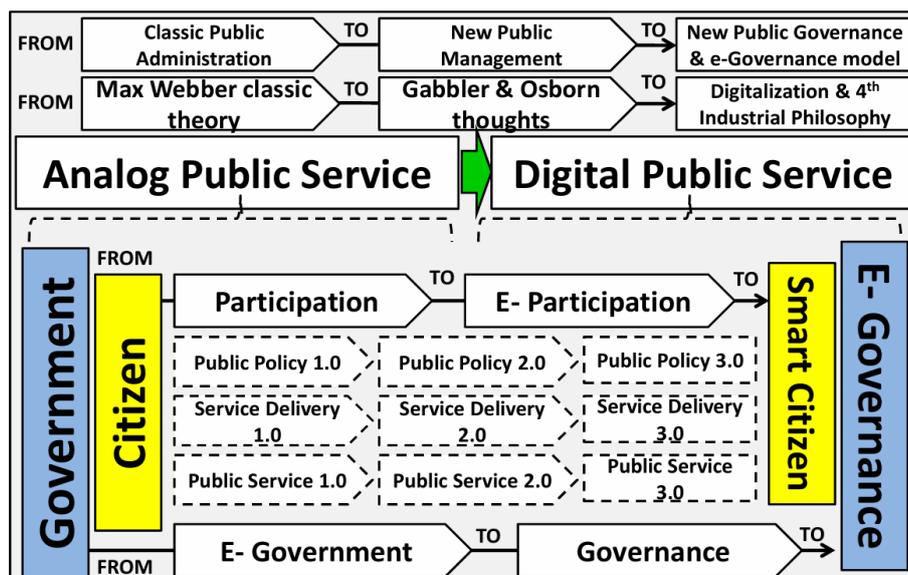


Figure 6. Smart Citizen Governance Transition model (designed & elaborated by the author)

Based on this study, the authors recommend three following agendas. First, digitalized infrastructure is a crucial factor to be committed by governments for enhancing public participation on both levels: nationally and locally. Second, supporting education in ICT and IT is vital for future generations of young citizens. Lastly, retrieving foreign experiments supporting new e-government practices is a very important issue, taking into account the native conditions of each country.

The author acknowledges that the study could not explore other relevant research areas due to the constraints of research scope, time limitations, and data availability. The primary drawback is the dependence on a few sources, underscoring the necessity for additional empirical study to support the suggested agendas. Furthermore, the study's absence of a thorough examination of real-world applications makes it challenging to extrapolate the results to other situations. Even if the mentioned study fields are important, they should be investigated further using case studies, comparative analysis, and larger data sets to provide more solid proof and real-world application. To address these gaps, the author proposes three areas for future research: (1) developing policy labs and public innovation systems tailored to the needs of developing countries; (2) conducting case studies on e-participation across different nations, including both prosperous and less developed examples; and (3) creating indigenous indexes to support and evaluate local participation efforts

Acknowledgment

This study is performed by the Author in the light of analyzing changes in public administration's state of the art; thus, it is a pleasure for him to express gratefulness and deep appreciation to the JAKPP journal team for supporting & allowing the author to offer such modest research work that expresses his view around the presented title of the study.

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