

At the Intersection of Governance and e-Governance: Examining the Suitability of Modes of Governance vis-à-vis Modes of e-Governance around the World

Summary

Countries with differing modes of governance – such as more federalised or unitary countries – have experimented with differing modes of e-governance – such as IT ministries, executive commissions, or Chief Information Officer (CIO) positions – to develop and help implement their digital transformation strategies. However, this mix of contexts and methods has yielded varying degrees of success; governments who modelled their own digital transformation governance following best-practice examples from other countries find that the same model does not function for them, and vice versa. This study seeks to explore the interdependency of modes of political governance and modes of e-governance and their performance in successfully implementing digital transformation initiatives. The study will provide valuable insights and actionable recommendations for creating e-governance models that suit particular countries contexts, thereby creating more equitable, inclusive, and prosperous societies.

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| Research field: | Information and communication technology |
| Supervisor: | Prof. Dr. Ingrid Pappel |
| Availability: | This position is available. |
| Offered by: | School of Information Technologies Department of Software Science |
| Application deadline: | Applications are accepted between June 01, 2024 00:00 and June 30, 2024 23:59 (Europe/Zurich) |

Description

The goal of this PhD project is to examine how different modes of governance and e-governance – successfully or unsuccessfully – interact with each other. “At the Intersection of Governance and e-Governance: Examining the Suitability of Modes of Governance vis-à-vis Modes of e-Governance around the World” will leverage a mixed-method approach:

1. **Quantitative analysis:** Countries’ modes of political and digital governance are classified in line with modern analytical frameworks, and are then juxtaposed against their performance in various digital transformation-related rankings including but not limited to the United Nations’ E-Government Development Index (EGDI), the OECD’s Digital Government Index, and the European Commission’s eGovernment Benchmark. Other factors such as population size, density, and economic indicators such as Gini coefficient, GDP per capita, and dependence on remittances or international development schemes should be considered given the fact that digital transformation requires investments for set-up, operation, and maintenance alike.
2. **Qualitative analysis:** To ensure the veracity of the cursory findings that are part of the quantitative analysis, interviews with key personnel of ideally every country considered within the PhD project shall be conducted. These interviews can also contribute to ascertaining other factors that have affected a country’s digital transformation performance, be it positively or negatively. Lastly, they can elucidate further context and provide the foundation for further case studies in associated journal articles, such as how the combination of a particular mode of governance and e-governance, or even switching to a new combination, has led to successful digital transformation initiatives

The research shall achieve a high degree of data quality by connecting rigid research methodology with the determination to create and analyse datasets for all countries recognised by at least one of the aforementioned rankings, meaning over 190 countries around the world. The thesis should address and answer the following questions:

1. Is there any correlation for successful digital transformation for any particular combinations of modes of governance and e-governance? If so, which combinations are they?
2. Are some modes of political governance inherently more successful at implementing digital transformation initiatives? If yes, which are they?

3. Have some countries switched their combination of governance and e-governance in the pursuit of digital excellence and what have the results been?

Responsibilities and (foreseen) tasks

- Create a methodological and analytical framework for examining countries' modes of governance and e-governance.
- Map existing e-government performance rankings, assess their relevance, and compile relevant rankings' outcomes into various data matrices.
- Overlay aforementioned datasets and identify patterns with regards to modes of governance, e-governance, and country performance in the area of digital transformation.
- Conduct qualitative interviews with subject matter experts in 190+ countries to validate quantitative findings and contextualise statistical outliers.
- Develop proposals and actionable recommendations for countries with different kinds of governance models.
- Contribute to the organisation of research and practitioner workshops where project findings are presented.

Applicants should fulfil the following requirements:

- a master's degree (preferably in ICT field, political science or economics)
- a clear interest in the topic of the position
- excellent command of English
- strong and demonstrable writing and analytical skills
- capacity to work both as an independent researcher and as part of an international team
- capacity and willingness to provide assistance in organizational tasks relevant to the project.

(The following experience is beneficial:)

- Experience in conducting empirical research, data analysis, and applying research frameworks.
- Experience in leading change transformation and facilitating smooth transitions during digital transformation initiatives.
- Working knowledge of data analytics, data-driven decision-making, and extracting insights from large datasets.
- Working knowledge governance and digital governance.
- Working knowledge of international regulations, laws, frameworks, and initiatives connected to digital transformation
- Knowledge of ethical considerations related to digital transformation, especially on data privacy, algorithmic bias, and responsible AI.

The candidate should submit a research plan for the topic, including the overall research and data collection strategy. The candidate can expand on the listed research questions and tasks, and propose theoretical lenses to be used.

We offer:

- 4-year PhD position in one of the largest, most internationalized and leading social science research centers in Estonia with a large portfolio of ongoing pan-European and national public administration, digital governance and innovation studies projects
- The chance to do high-level research in one of the most dynamic digital government contexts globally
- Opportunities for conference visits, research stays and networking with globally leading universities and research centers in the fields of public administration, innovation studies and digital government

About the department

At the TalTech School of IT, you will receive a top-level education supported by internationally recognized research and development activities and close cooperation with companies. The rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICT) affects all aspects of our daily lives. The curricula in the School of IT are designed to combine academic and practical aspects and focus on the most current topics. For instance, the curricula E-Governance Technologies and Services and Cybersecurity offer the opportunity to learn firsthand from the experts in the field. While graduation provides clear paths to further studies, close collaboration with employers throughout the studies also prepares students with specific skill-sets needed and valued in the job market.

(Additional information)



For further information, please contact Ingrid Pappel (ingrid.pappel@taltech.ee), Vice-Dean of Master's Studies - School of Information Technologies, TalTech



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