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E-Government and Digital Democracy a step towards a better Quality of Life in Algeria

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Abstract

Democracy and Governance have been seen as a process that protects human rights, ensure liberties and lead to economic development, hence, better quality of life. However, citizens in developing countries could not encounter the real democracy and good management, which led them to search for such freedom. In this context, Internet and Technology is playing a major role in countries development. Digital democracy and E-Government are new concepts which mean that citizens can freely interact with various government departments at anytime and anywhere rapidly and with minimal efforts. Therefore, this study aims to analyse theatrically and statistically the nexus E-Government, Digital Democracy and Quality of life in Algeria.

Keywords: Digital Economy, E-Government, Digital Democracy, Quality of Life, Algeria

1. Introduction

Economic freedom, better life standards, good management and low rates of corruption are the major concern of citizens all over the world. In this regard, studies show that digital economy and E-Government improves the people's life quality (Vladimir, Alexandra, Oksana, & Svetlana, 2020), (Máchová, Jolana, & Lněnička, 2018) by making new ways of management and communication which protect human rights, ensure liberties, moreover, absorb all ways of corruption and bribery, and this is the concept of democracy. Technology and Internet play a key role in the economic growth of nations. It developed the way we live, think, and perform, and even helps in applying a good governance vision. Fig.1. shows the percentage of population of internet users during the period of 1990 to 2018. It is clearly seen that the use of internet has grown day by day, especially in China and the EU. Therefore, relate democracy and governance to the internet will play such an essential role in countries development. In this context, Algerian government is trying to adopt technology in all sectors with an aim to economic, social, cultural and political growth of the country.

This paper investigates the concept of both E-government and digital democracy and it statistically analyse the efforts of Algeria in this regard. In an extended paper of this work, we plan to perform an empirical study to delve the impact of E-government and digital democracy on economic growth.

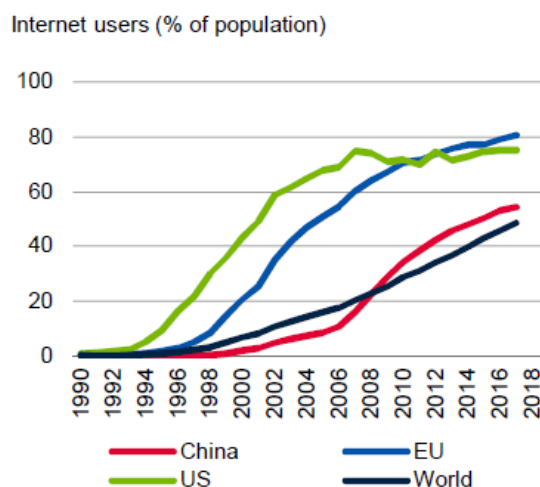


Fig.1. Internet users (% of population) (Körner, 2019, p. 1)

2. Our approach :

To conduct our study, we followed both theoretical and Analytical approach. The [first section](#) is dedicated to the theory part of the study. In the [second section](#) we analyze the E-government and digital democracy in Algeria. Finally, we performed in the third section a [conclusion](#) of the research.

2.1. E-Government:

The e-government and real government have the same activities; however, the only difference is that e-government is the availability of all transactions online which is an efficient way to disseminate information, deliver better services and empower people to participate in policy decision-making, thus, fight corruption, bureaucracy, and increase citizens' satisfaction, and to mitigate government expenditures. [\(Osborne & Gaebler, 1992\)](#), has written that Government is the mechanism used to make communal decisions, i.e. It is the way we provide services that benefit all people: national defences, environmental protection, police protection etc. It is the way we solve collective problems.

2.1.1. Definition of E-government:

The World Bank, (2012) defined E-Government as; "The use by government agencies of information technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government. These technologies can serve a variety of different ends: better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management. The resulting benefits can be less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth, and/or cost reductions".

2.1.2. Importance of E-government:

According to [\(Seifert & Bonham, 2003\)](#), E-Government provides the following benefits (Summed in the Table 01):

Table.1. E-Government benefits

	Cheaper	Quicker	Access to information
E-Government benefits	Low costs for both owners and users. Minimise efforts and maximise benefits. Cheaper communication.	Fast release of news and information.	Provides information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Transparency and Efficiency.

2.1.3. Types of E-Government:

[\(Betchoo, 2016, p. 527\)](#), in his paper mentioned that there are three types of e-government summed as the following:

- The Government to Government Model (G2G) appears in the implementation of e-Government within state organisations,
- Government to business (G2B) seen in transactions, public and private sector interaction,
- Government to Citizens (G2C) which relates between government and citizens by using internet and technology, for example the online political participation (Vote online) which comes under the term of digital democracy.
- G2E (Government to Employees) refers to the relationship between government and its employees with aim to serve them and offer some online services.

2.2. Digital Democracy:

2.2.1. Definition of digital democracy:

Digital democracy can be defined as the pursuit and the practice of democracy in whatever view using digital media in online and offline political communication [\(Dijk, 2012\)](#).

2.2.2. The Claims and Achievements of Digital Democracy:

Three claims in favour of digital democracy have been made in the last 25 years (Tsagarousianou, 1999):

- Digital democracy improves political information retrieval and exchange between governments, public administrations, representatives, political and community organizations and individual citizens.
- Digital democracy supports public debate, deliberation and community formation.
- Digital democracy enhances participation in political decision-making by citizens.

2.2.3. Digital Democracy Model:

According to (Nair, 2007, p. 151), in both developed and developing countries, a four stage model of digital democracy is accepted and practiced. The stages are the following:

- Information disclosure, public agencies provide useful information about policy matters on the Internet so that citizens can read and form opinions
- Listening /consultation. Public agencies receive feedback or opinions from citizens through government Web sites. In the stage of online deliberation,
- Online deliberation, citizens and public officials discuss policy issues online.
- Online decision-making, in this stage citizen can participate in decision making online

3. E-Government and Digital Democracy in Algeria:

➤ E-Government in Algeria:

The Algerian Government has adopted an action plan to develop the E-government which based around thirteen major axes, and according to (Idoughi & Abdelhakim, 2013) these thirteen axes are:

- ✓ The acceleration of the use of ICTs in public administration;
- ✓ The acceleration of the use of ICTs in enterprises;
- ✓ Development of mechanisms and encouragement measures for citizens' access to equipment and ICTs networks;
- ✓ Boosting the development of the digital economy;
- ✓ Enable the telecommunications infrastructure in high and very high speed;
- ✓ The improvement of human skills;
- ✓ The reinforcement of research development and innovation;
- ✓ Starting up a national legal frame;
- ✓ Information and communication;
- ✓ Valorisation of international cooperation;
- ✓ Providing mechanisms of evaluation;
- ✓ Organizational measures;
- ✓ Financiers and planning means;

Table 01 shows some statistics about E-Government development in Algeria between 2010 and 2018(Data are extracted from Knoema dataset). From 2016 to 2018, E-government development known a gradual increase from 0.30 to 0.42 which is a progress of 12% and this is because of the Algerian government strategy. In the terms of ranking, Algeria has moved from the 150th place to the 130th place in the world.

Table.2. E-gov. development index and World E-gov. development ranking in Algeria

Years	World E-gov. development ranking	E-gov. development index
2010	131	0.32
2012	132	0.36
2014	136	0.31
2016	150	0.30
2018	130	0.42

➤ Digital democracy in Algeria:

Democracy and economic development a nexus has known many investigations (Zirari & Souar, 2019), (Baklouti & Boujelbene, 2018)), most of the studies showed that democracy can improve the quality of life by improving economic growth and protect human rights and freedom. Therefore, developing countries have tended to be democracies. However, citizens could not feel democracy and change. Hence, they gathered in demonstrations to ask for the real democracy that give them the right to choose their governor, transparency and freedom of expression. In this regard, Internet and technology play a major role in this revolution. In Algeria, this can be seen in the Popular Mobility that started in February, 2019. By using the internet and social media citizens could practice digital democracy, they coalesced in virtual organizations to describe their daily suffering from unemployment, bad infrastructure, and bureaucracy, on the other hand, to fight for their rights and ask for their demands. In addition, the elite of the society (Students) did the same and all their meetings were online. The digital Algerian mobility has played a huge role in the new Algeria, and from this example it is clearly seen that digital democracy can considered as a step for real democracy and better quality of life.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, we have analysed the E-Government, Digital democracy and the quality of life in Algeria. At first, we developed a theoretical approach to define the two concepts (E-Government and Digital democracy) and in a second step we tried to statistically analyse the position of Algerian government in this regard. As a result, Algeria as a developing country is trying to move towards an E-government and digital system which may foster economic growth and hence a fitness life.

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