Foreword

In the last decades, many governments around the world have undertaken numerous efforts in the implementation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), which have played a key role in democratic, political and governance process. These technological advances represent the new alternatives and initiatives to representative democracy and hierarchical governance. Specially, the innovation and development of e-Government favored the participation opportunities between public managers, politicians and citizens.

Nowadays, the citizens demand greater participation in public affairs for which they need to have access to a greater volume of information. Public organizations, in particular Local Governments, are using new platforms, channels and tools via Internet to reach a wider audience and disclose a huge amount of information for a relatively low cost. In this context, social media technologies support interactive participation between policy-makers and citizens in real time, which represents an important strategy for improving trust in local governments. Social media allow the citizens to offer feedback, comments, ideas, knowledge, opinions and experiences about the public services, public policies, social initiatives, health systems and so on. In fact, the politician could perceive social media technologies as an opportunity to communicate with the public, giving citizens a more active advisory role in public affairs.

In this book, the contributions seek to assist researches and academics in the development of their future analyses, identifying trends of research, barriers in the use of social media, and challenges to be undertaken. The chapters including in this books show with case studies (Mexico, Turkey, Cameroon, Malaysia, Brazil, or Philippines) how the use of social media platforms allows government to communicate more efficiently with citizens. This way of acting increases the efficiency and effectiveness in public sector.

The authors highlighted that e-Participation initiatives using Web 2.0 and social media tools provide new opportunities for participation in good governance in developing countries. Although, the authors consider that the success of such initiatives depends on modern and reliable communication networks and the political

will of the governments, the achieved findings in these chapters show that platforms that allow meaningful collaboration (*crowdsourcing*), delegation of final decision-making rights to the public, and the implementation of what citizens decide are almost absent.

Finally, this book shows how citizens' benefits of their participation in social media have gone beyond simple social sharing to building reputations and bringing in career opportunities, monetary income or social life. Social media facilities the co-creation of value through active, creative, and social collaboration processes between public managers and citizens in public services. Managers of public organizations think that social media is an opportunity to integrate information and opinions from citizens into the policy making processes, through the sharing of more information, improving transparency and collaboration with the public and finding solutions for solving governmental problems, and improving efficiency in policies and initiatives.

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