

The Coming of the Digital Age and its Implications for Public Governance and Policy

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Abstract

Purpose of the article This study has the basic purpose of contributing to the understanding of digitization, its aspects and causes, its characteristic features, and its consequences, risks and opportunities for urban and public governance, policy making and service delivery processes.

Methodology/Methods: This study takes an interdisciplinary approach to evaluate and assess the issue because it necessitates such an interdisciplinary approach beyond the classical approaches of urban and public administration and policies. For this purpose, the techniques of a review of the literature on digitalization processes, digital age, Industry 4.0 and their consequences through the works by Case (2016), Schwab (2016), Stibel (2013), Salganik (2018), West (2018), Srnicek and Williams (2015), and Goldin and Kutarna (2016), among others are utilized in the study. It also employs secondary data analysis by Turk-stat, Eurostat etc. as well as content analysis of the documents on digitalization, its aspects and impact by Economist Intelligence Unit (2018), European Commission (2017) and MIT Tech Review (2018), among others.

Scientific Aim: The paper aims to contribute to the discussions and analyses on how digitalization and Industry 4.0 affects and will affect urban and public governance, policy making and service provision processes. The related areas of interest involve participation of smart / digital citizens, digital access to public and urban services, use of Internet of Things in service coordination and quality and challenges of big data, just to name a few. Besides, the paper aims to explore the extent to which the possible risks and opportunities of the future uses and proliferation of digital technologies pose for urban and public governance and policy making processes.

Findings: Despite its positive aspects, the digital revolution seems to have been accompanied with new challenges and risks, such as big data, breach of personal data and privacy, employment losses in traditional employment areas to digitalized technologies and robots, cyber crimes, increased inequality and digital divide, and difficulties of increasing awareness about the use of and adaptation to digital technologies especially in the public sector.

Conclusions: The study makes some recommendations for the development of better policies to reap the benefits of digitalization and to avoid the possible risks involved in urban and public governance, policy making and service delivery processes. Some of these policy suggestions include improving the digital adaptation of public sector in order to improve adaptability, quality, efficiency and effectiveness in the process of urban and public governance, policy making and service provision as well as enhancing innovative capacity, sustainability, green economy, and digital abilities of the labor force as a requirement for adaptation to the digital age.

Keywords: the digital age, technology, digitization, the Internet, public governance, public policies, public service delivery

JEL Classification: E62, E63

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