

**E-democracy and public administrators:
The Malaysian case**

Abdul Gapar Abu Bakar

Faculty of Information Technology
Monash University

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2010

Table of Contents

Abstract	vii
Statement of originality	viii
Acknowledgements	ix
List of tables	xi
List of figures	xiii
List of boxes	xiv
List of abbreviations, acronyms and names	xv
Glossary	xviii
1. Introduction	1
1.1. Research aims and contributions	6
1.2. Motivation	7
1.3. Research questions	9
1.4. Empirical evidence	9
1.5. Context of study: Malaysia	9
1.5.1. Geographical location	10
1.5.2. Population	11
1.5.3. Government structure	13
1.5.4. Parliamentary democracy	16
1.5.5. The public service	17
1.5.6. Civil Society Organizations	19
1.5.7. Economy	21
1.6. Structure of thesis	23
2. E-democracy and policy development	26
2.1. The relationship between technology and democracy	26
2.2. Democracy and country-specific conceptualization of e-democracy	29
2.2.1. Democracy in Malaysia	30
2.3. The definition of e-democracy	35
2.4. Public administration and citizen participation	36
2.4.1. Public administration: institutions and functions	37
2.4.2. Policy-making in public administration	40
2.4.3. Citizen participation in policy development	42
2.4.4. Issues surrounding citizen participation in policy development	45
2.5. Applying e-democracy in policy development	49
2.5.1. Possible models of e-democracy	51
2.5.2. ICT tools for e-democracy	54

2.5.3.	Challenges for e-democracy in policy development.....	55
2.6.	Conclusion	56
3.	The Malaysian Federal Public Service and policy development	57
3.1.	Structure of federal government	58
3.2.	The Malaysian Federal Public Service (MFPS).....	60
3.2.1.	Key characteristics of the MFPS	61
3.2.2.	Key changes in the MFPS.....	62
3.3.	Federal policy development and citizen participation	65
3.3.1.	Federal policy-making process	66
3.3.2.	Key frameworks for inclusion of stakeholders in the policy development process	69
3.4.	Conclusion	72
4.	Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) and e-democracy in Malaysia.....	73
4.1.	Key federal ICT policies	73
4.1.1.	National Information Technology Agenda (NITA).....	74
4.1.2.	Knowledge-based Economy (KBE) policy.....	75
4.1.3.	ICT initiatives in Malaysia.....	77
4.1.3.1.	Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC)	77
4.1.3.2.	National Broadband Plan (NBP).....	78
4.1.3.3.	Bridging the digital divide.....	79
4.2.	ICT initiatives and the Malaysian Public Service	81
4.3.	The amorphous utilization of ICTs for e-democracy	84
4.3.1.	Government-sanctioned online initiatives	84
4.3.2.	Citizens online initiatives	85
4.4.	Conclusion	87
5.	Theoretical and research framework.....	88
5.1.	Previous studies of e-democracy	88
5.2.	A new perspective to examine e-democracy practices	89
5.3.	Double Structural Loop (DSL) framework	92
5.4.	Research framework	98
5.5.	Conclusion	102
6.	Research design	103
6.1.	Research strategy	103
6.2.	Method for literature review	105
6.3.	Data collection technique – in-depth interview.....	106
6.3.1.	Unit of analysis.....	107
6.3.2.	Purposive sampling.....	107
6.3.3.	Descriptive statistics of interviewees.....	108

6.3.4.	Interview questions	115
6.3.5.	Pilot interviews	116
6.3.6.	Role management: issues of ethics, entry, and reciprocity	118
6.3.7.	Reliability of data.....	121
6.4.	Data management and analysis	122
6.4.1.	Primary data analysis tools – NVivo software	123
6.4.2.	Reflections on NVivo software	125
6.5.	Conclusion	127
7.	Findings: The technological dimension	128
7.1.	Overview of findings.....	128
7.2.	Technological facilities.....	128
7.2.1.	Purpose of ICT facilities	131
7.2.1.1.	Providing access	131
7.2.1.2.	Enhancing work process	133
7.2.2.	Types of ICT facilities.....	133
7.2.2.1.	Software	134
7.2.2.2.	Hardware	143
7.2.2.3.	Systems.....	148
7.2.2.4.	Networks.....	150
7.2.3.	Management of ICT infrastructure	154
7.2.3.1.	Government.....	154
7.2.3.2.	Private companies	155
7.2.3.3.	Online forum’s creator	156
7.3.	Conclusion	157
8.	Findings: The institutional dimension	158
8.1.	Introduction.....	158
8.2.	New norms	160
8.2.1.	Mutual benefits.....	160
8.2.2.	Self-censorship	162
8.2.3.	Target groups.....	164
8.3.	National culture.....	166
8.3.1.	Deference to authority	166
8.3.2.	Patron-client communitarianism	168
8.3.3.	Personalism	174
8.4.	Organizational culture.....	175
8.4.1.	Non-partisan and expert public service	176
8.4.2.	Incrementalism.....	179

8.4.3.	Information culture	182
8.4.4.	Integration	184
8.4.5.	Activism.....	186
8.5.	Conclusion	188
9.	Findings: The agency dimension	189
9.1.	Introduction.....	189
9.2.	Initial uncertainties about e-democracy	191
9.3.	Interpretive schemes	193
9.3.1.	Policy development.....	194
9.3.2.	Service delivery improvement.....	194
9.3.3.	Fast information-seeking and sharing	195
9.3.4.	Disintermediation – eliminating intermediaries in communication	196
9.3.5.	Gauging popularity	197
9.3.6.	Good governance indicators	197
9.4.	Four enacted e-democracy practices	199
9.4.1.	Inputs collection	199
9.4.1.1.	Policy-based inputs	201
9.4.1.2.	Issue-based inputs	207
9.4.2.	Information exchange.....	212
9.4.3.	Communication	222
9.4.4.	Electronification.....	227
9.4.4.1.	Acceptance.....	229
9.4.4.2.	Inculcation	232
9.5.	Conclusion	234
10.	Findings: The consequences dimension – notable expectations of e-democracy in Malaysia	235
10.1.	Introduction.....	235
10.2.	Design.....	236
10.2.1.	Equitable access to e-democracy	237
10.2.2.	Maximum utilization of existing infrastructure	238
10.2.3.	Employment of ubiquitous equipment	239
10.2.4.	User-friendly applications.....	240
10.2.5.	Development of relevant content	242
10.2.6.	A well-balanced application.....	244
10.2.7.	An alternative channel for inputs.....	245
10.3.	Process	248
10.3.1.	A centralized co-ordinating agency	248
10.3.2.	A neutral space and process.....	250

10.3.3.	A critical mass for participation	251
10.4.	Roles of key players of e-democracy	252
10.4.1.	Government	253
10.4.1.1.	Encouragement of sincere participation	253
10.4.1.2.	Building citizens trust.....	254
10.4.1.3.	Promoting e-democracy to all stakeholders.....	255
10.4.1.4.	Developing skills and civic competency.....	257
10.4.1.5.	Providing substantial information.....	259
10.4.1.6.	Regulating e-democracy.....	260
10.4.1.7.	Listening to citizens	263
10.4.2.	Public administrators.....	265
10.4.2.1.	Adopting e-democracy practices	265
10.4.2.2.	Redefining roles in public administration	268
10.4.2.3.	Building capacity for e-democracy.....	272
10.4.2.4.	Assigning moderators for e-democracy	275
10.4.2.5.	Simplifying the process for e-democracy	277
10.4.2.6.	Utilizing all sources of information	279
10.4.3.	Citizens	281
10.4.3.1.	To participate in e-democracy	282
10.4.3.2.	To conduct themselves maturely.....	283
10.4.4.	Bloggers.....	284
10.4.5.	The younger generation in Malaysia	285
10.4.5.1.	The younger generation for e-democracy: 'F&F'	285
10.4.5.2.	Closing the generational gap between users.....	289
10.5.	Other expectations of e-democracy practices	291
10.5.1.	Replacing the traditional general election	291
10.5.2.	A supplementary channel for young public administrators.....	291
10.5.3.	Promote transparency to reduce corruption	292
10.5.4.	Creating a robust society	293
10.6.	Conclusion	294
11.	Making sense of e-democracy and public administrators in Malaysia.....	295
11.1.	Introduction.....	295
11.2.	Nature of enacted e-democracy practices in Malaysia.....	295
11.2.1.	Interactive ICTs for e-democracy practices.....	296
11.2.2.	Control over ICT facilities	301
11.2.3.	Institutional influences in e-democracy practices	302
11.2.4.	The agents and enacted e-democracy practices	304

11.2.4.1.	'Inputs collection' for policy development and service delivery improvement.....	306
11.2.4.2.	'Information exchange' for fast information-seeking and sharing.....	309
11.2.4.3.	'Communication' for disintermediation.....	311
11.2.4.4.	'Electronification' for gauging popularity and good governance indicators	313
11.3.	The emergent roles of e-democracy practices in policy development	315
11.3.1.	Augmentation.....	315
11.3.2.	Modulation	316
11.3.3.	Retention.....	317
11.4.	Conclusion	317
12.	Conclusion and recommendations	319
12.1.	Significant research findings.....	320
12.2.	Reflections on research framework and design	323
12.3.	Revisiting research questions	324
12.4.	Recommendations.....	327
12.5.	General contributions	328
12.6.	Limitations of research.....	331
12.7.	Future study.....	331
	References	333
	Appendices.....	346

Abstract

The thesis investigates public administrators' use of interactive Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) in the Malaysian Federal Public Service (MFPS). It describes qualitative research which identifies the nature of e-democracy practices in policy development in the MFPS. In-depth interviews and scholarly as well as government documents provide empirical evidence.

Through a survey of literature, contextual features such as absence of policy in the MFPS for e-democracy, constitutional limitations on public discussions of issues relating to *Bumiputera* preferential rights, and a guarantee of non-censorship of the Internet were identified. These factors contribute to making MFPS a distinctive case for e-democracy study. Literature with structural perspectives on ICTs, including Parvez's double structural loop framework, is reviewed to develop the research framework.

The research findings describe four practices of e-democracy enacted by public administrators of policy development in the MFPS: 'inputs collection', information exchange', 'communication', and 'electronification'. These practices are shaped by cultural dimensions, namely norms, organizational culture features and national culture features. The emergent roles of e-democracy were determined by categorizing these four practices as augmenting (inputs collection and information exchange), modulating (communication), and retention (electronification) of existing processes in the MFPS. Importantly, the findings also suggest a modification to Parvez's framework with an additional Institutional Leadership loop. This modification focuses this research examination of social influences on human actors who are involved in the design of infrastructures for e-democracy without a clear policy directive.

This study therefore makes a contribution towards identifying administrative dimensions of e-democracy in the institutional context of the Malaysian public administration. By enriching knowledge of how the utilization of technology shapes e-democracy practices, this study provides a foundation for understanding e-democracy in the Malaysian context (which allows for a comparison of similarities and differences between implementations of e-democracy in other countries). The study determines how ideals of e-democracy can be nurtured to enhance policymaking processes in the MFPS and generally guides the future development of e-democracy in Malaysia.

Statement of originality

The work contained in this research has not been previously submitted for a degree or diploma at any other tertiary education. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by any other person except where the due reference is made.



.....
Abdul Gapar Abu Bakar

Notice 1

Under the Copyright Act 1968, this thesis must be used only under the normal conditions of scholarly fair dealing. In particular no results or conclusions should be extracted from it, nor should it be copied or closely paraphrased in whole or in part without the written consent of the author. Proper written acknowledgement should be made for any assistance obtained from this thesis.

Notice 2

I certify that I have made all reasonable efforts to secure copyright permissions for third-party content included in this thesis and have not knowingly added copyright content to my work without the owner's permission.

Acknowledgements

First, I'm grateful to God for His blessing in my completion of this thesis.

Hutang emas dapat dibayar, hutang budi dibawa mati^x

I am indebted to many people who have created the conditions that helped me to commence and complete this study. The scholarship awarded by the Government of Malaysia through the Public Service Department has made it financially possible for me to undertake and conclude this research.

I would like to express my greatest appreciation to my principal supervisor, Associate Professor Dr. Graeme Johanson for his invaluable comments, scrutiny, and intellect throughout this research. Much appreciation is also due to my co-supervisor, Dr. Steven Wright for his valuable input and comments. To Dr. Larry Stillman for his involvement at the beginning of this research as well as to Dr. Kerry Tanner for her participation towards the end of the research, thank you.

I would also like to express my thanks to Dr. Janice Pinder at the Matheson Library, Mr. Andrew Dixon at the Caulfield Library, as well as administrative and technical staff in the Faculty of Information Technology (FIT), Caulfield: Akamon Kunkongkapun, Cornelia, Denise, Julie, Rafiq, Sam and See, for their time and assistance.

My deepest gratitude goes to my colleagues Dr. Nguyen Than Tuyen, Rubi, Azilah, Dr. Alex, Minh, Thoa, Misita, Rebecca, Abdullah, Naif, Mohamed, Ali, and others at the FIT, Caulfield for their friendships, ideas, and assistance as well as for making my PhD journey a memorable and colourful existence.

I also record my appreciation to all participants who agreed to be interviewed for this study. Special thanks to the Ministry officials who were untiring in sharing their

^x A Malay saying translated as "A debt of money can be paid, a debt of kindness goes with one to the grave" –(Brown, 1959, p. 50).

thoughts and documents. My gratitude and appreciation goes to my friends and colleagues in the Malaysian Public Service, for their support and encouragement during the past three and a half years.

My deepest thanks to my mother, Salinah Abdullah, whose emotional support and endless prayers have accompanied me during the course of my life, especially throughout this PhD journey. I am grateful to my mother and mother-in-law, Che Pora Hamid, for their understanding of my family's living abroad for a long time. Many thanks to my siblings: Noraini, Khairudin, Saharudin, Haslina, Shahrizal and Sharliawati, for their support and continuous encouragement. To my son, Adam and my daughter, Afaf, you may never imagine how much your love and antics melt all my worries away after long hours at the office. Last but not least, to my wife, Nor Mazny Abdul Majid, for her love, enduring inspiration and understanding throughout this PhD journey. Her outstanding gastronomic skills have kept our family healthy and fail to notice that we are away from Malaysia.

To my late father, Abu Bakar Dol for his vision and unfaltering belief in me I dedicate this work to his memory, with my deepest affection.

List of tables

Table 1-1 Civil society organizations in Malaysia (as of December 2009).....	19
Table 2-1 Tools for e-democracy at each stage of the policy-making cycle	54
Table 4-1 Selected development expenditure and allocation for ICT programs, 2001 to 2010	76
Table 4-2 USP project sites under the 8MP	80
Table 5-1 Categories of 11 key social structures and agency issues	97
Table 5-2 Application of 11 elements into the research framework	99
Table 5-3 Matrix of research framework dimensions and key literature.....	100
Table 6-1 Interview periods	109
Table 6-2 List of agencies for the second cycle of interview.....	109
Table 6-3 Gender of interviewees.....	110
Table 6-4 Examples of interview protocol.....	115
Table 6-5 List of interviewees – pilot interview	117
Table 6-6 Group A – public administrators’ identifier	118
Table 6-7 Group B – Commentators’ identifier	119
Table 6-8 Organizations’ inventory code	119
Table 6-9 Definition of NVivo key terms	123
Table 7-1 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and websites or portals for e-democracy	135
Table 7-2 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and blogs for e-democracy.....	137
Table 7-3 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and online forums for e-democracy.....	140
Table 7-4 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and online voting or, polling for e-democracy.....	142
Table 7-5 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and phones for e-democracy.....	143
Table 7-6 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and DC for e-democracy	145
Table 7-7 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and TV for e-democracy.....	146
Table 7-8 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and e-mail and SMS for e-democracy.....	148
Table 7-9 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and network for e-democracy.....	151
Table 8-1 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and deference to authority.....	166
Table 8-2 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and patron-client communitarianism	169
Table 8-3 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and a non-partisan and expert public service.....	176
Table 8-4 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and incrementalism	180
Table 9-1 Attributes analysis: Public administrators who are not sure about e-democracy	192
Table 9-2 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and practice of ‘inputs collection’	200
Table 9-3 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and practice of ‘information exchange’	213
Table 9-4 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and practice of ‘communication’	222
Table 9-5 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and practice of ‘electronification’	228

Table 10-1 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and expectations for an alternative channel	246
Table 10-2 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and expectations for regulating e-democracy.....	261
Table 10-3 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and expectations for adopting e-democracy practices	265
Table 10-4 Attribute analysis: Public administrators and expectations for redefining roles in public administration	269
Table 10-5 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and expectations for citizens to participate in e- democracy	282
Table 10-6 Attribute analysis: Public administrators and expectations for the younger generation for e- democracy	286

List of figures

Figure 1-1 Interactive ICTs in policy development.....	6
Figure 1-2 Map of Malaysia	10
Figure 1-3 Three-tier government in Malaysia	14
Figure 2-1 Policy-making life cycle	41
Figure 3-1 Structure of federal government administration.....	58
Figure 3-2 System of planning and implementation at the federal level	66
Figure 4-1 Relationships of ICT councils and policies in Malaysia	82
Figure 4-2 Public service strategic direction for ICTs	83
Figure 5-1 The dimensions of the duality of structure.....	91
Figure 5-2 Structural Model of Technology	93
Figure 5-3 Enactment of technologies-in-practice	95
Figure 5-4 The Double Structural Loop framework for examining e-democracy.....	96
Figure 6-1 Case study design.....	104
Figure 6-2 Age groups of interviewees	110
Figure 6-3 Breakdown by agency	111
Figure 6-4 Public administrators' services	112
Figure 6-5 Public administrators' years of service	113
Figure 6-6 Public administrators' grades	114
Figure 6-7 Commentators' areas of expertise	114
Figure 6-8 Data analysis processes using NVivo software.....	124
Figure 7-1 Parvez's Framework – Technological Dimensions.....	130
Figure 7-2 The ICT facilities of e-democracy.....	131
Figure 8-1 Parvez's Framework – Institutional dimensions	158
Figure 8-2 Cultural dimensions that shape e-democracy in Malaysia	160
Figure 9-1 Parvez's framework – Agency Dimensions	189
Figure 9-2 The interpretive schemes	190
Figure 9-3 Four enacted e-democracy practices	191
Figure 9-4 The 'inputs collection' practice	201
Figure 9-5 'Information exchange' practice.....	214
Figure 9-6 'Communication' practice	223
Figure 9-7 The 'electronification' practice	229
Figure 10-1 Expectations of e-democracy in Malaysia	235
Figure 10-2 Parvez's Framework – Consequences Dimensions	236
Figure 11-1 A modified triple loop framework.....	305

List of boxes

Box 9 - 1 My Water Voice	204
Box 9 - 2 National Broadband Online Registration Centre	205
Box 9 - 3 ePublisiti	206
Box 9 - 4 National Physical Plan.....	207
Box 9 - 5 Biro Pengaduan Awam or Public Complaints Bureau	210
Box 9 - 6 Sistem Aduan Bersepadu or Centralized Online Complaints System	211
Box 9 - 7 ePBT	216
Box 9 - 8 RedesignMalaysia website	217
Box 9 - 9 Che Det blog	218
Box 9 - 10 Precinct 11 house buyers' blog	219
Box 9 - 11 bangkit.net blog	220
Box 9 - 12 PTD portal	220
Box 9 - 13 PERJASA online forum	221
Box 9 - 14 MYBLOG	225
Box 9 - 15 KSN's official website	226
Box 9 - 16 Warkah Untuk PM	226
Box 9 - 17 myGovernment website.....	231
Box 9 - 18 MyIslamNetwork.net.....	231
Box 9 - 19 UM ICT Services	233

List of abbreviations, acronyms and names

ABIM	Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement)
ASTRO	Astro All Asia Networks
BoG	Bill of Guarantees
BPA	Biro Pengaduan Awam (Public Complaints Bureau)
CMA	Communication and Multimedia Act 1998
COAC	Center for Orang Asli Concerns
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAGS	Demonstrator Application Grant Scheme
DAI	Digital Access Index
DAPAT	DAPAT Vista (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd.
DSL	Double Structural Loop
DPADM	Division for Public Administration and Development Management, United Nations
EPU	Economic Planning Unit
F&F	Fast and Free generation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GITN	Government Intergrated Telecommunication & Network
GLC	Government-linked Company
HBA	House Buyers' Association
HDI	Human Development Index
ICTs	Information and Communications Technologies
INTAN	Malaysian National Institute for Public Administration
IT	Information Technology
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JITIK	Jawatankuasa IT dan Internet Kerajaan (Government IT and Internet Committee)
JPA	Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awan (Public Service Department)
JPBD	Jabatan Perancang Bandar dan Desa (Semenanjung) Malaysia (Department of Town and Rural Planning (Peninsular) Malaysia)
KBE	Knowledge-based Economy
KKM	Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (Ministry of Health)
KPLBW	Kementerian Pembangunan Luar Bandar dan Wilayah Ministry of Rural and Regional Development
KPKT	Kementerian Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan (Ministry of Housing and Local Government)
KPKW	Kementerian Penerangan Kebudayaan dan Warisan (Ministry of Information, Culture, and Heritage)

KSN	Ketua Setiausaha Negara (Chief Secretary to the Government)
KTAK	Kementerian Tenaga, Air, dan Komunikasi Ministry of Energy, Water and Communications
MAMPU	Malaysian Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit
MCMC	Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission
MDeC	Multimedia Development Corporation
MENGO	Malaysian Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations
MFPS	Malaysian Federal Public Service
MIMOS	Malaysian Institute of Microelectronics System
MOSTI	Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation
MPS	Malaysian Public Service
MQLI	Malaysian Quality of Life Index
MSC	Multimedia Super Corridor
NBORC	National Broadband Online Registration Centre
NEP	New Economic Policy
NSC	National Security Council
NITA	National Information Technology Agenda
NITC	National Information Technology Council
NPP	National Physical Plan
NUP	National Urbanization Plan
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCN	Putrajaya Campus Network
PEMUDAH	Pasukan Petugas Khas Pemudahcara Perniagaan (Special Taskforce to Facilitate Business)
PERJASA	Persatuan Juruanalisa Sistem Sektor Awam (Perjasa) Malaysia (Malaysian Public Sector's Systems Analysts Association)
PSC	Public Service Commission
PTD	Pegawai Tadbir dan Diplomatik (Diplomatic and Administrative Officer)
PTM	Pegawai Teknologi Maklumat (Information Technology Officer)
RM	Ringgit Malaysia
RoS	Registrar of Society
JPJ	Jabatan Pengangkutan Jalan (Road Transport Department)
JUSA	Jawatan Utama Sektor Awam (Super-scaled Grade of Public Sector)
SCERH	Monash Standing Committee for Ethics in Research Involving Humans
SMT	Structurational Model of Technology

SPR	Suruhanjaya Pilihanraya (Election Commission)
TiP	Technologies-in-Practice
TM	Telekom Malaysia Berhad
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	United States of America
USP	Universal Service Provision
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society
WUP	Warkah Untuk PM (Letter to the Prime Minister's Website)

Glossary

Term	Meaning
ASTRO	ASTRO All Asia Networks (ASTRO) is Malaysia's Direct-To-Home (DTH) TV services and commercial radio. This subscription TV service broadcasts over 100 pay-TV channels across Malaysia to over 2 million subscribers in four major languages, namely Bahasa Malaysia, English, Chinese, and Tamil (ASTRO, 2008a).
AWANI	Astro Awani is a 24-hour news and information channel in the national language – Bahasa Malaysia – (ASTRO, 2008b).
<i>Bumiputera</i>	Literally translated into “son of the soil; a legal term used to mean Malays and indigenes such as Orang Asli peoples who are, under the Malaysian Constitution, accorded special privileges” (Hussin, 1990, p. 8).
Central Agency	Federal government agency, which responsible for formulating, monitoring and regulating national's financial and economic management as well as public sector's human resources (Public Service Department, 2001).
DAPAT	DAPAT Vista (DAPAT) is a private company, which provides mobile data services and products. DAPAT is the main provider for mobile interactivity in the Government SMS Gateway (mySMS) initiative (DAPAT Vista, 2009).
GITN Sdn. Bhd. (GSB)	GSB is a privatized government-linked company which implements the Government Integrated Telecommunication Network (GITN) – the official network provider for e-government. GITN is a network infrastructure for government agencies supporting e-government initiatives (GITN Sdn. Bhd., n.d.).
Government SMS Gateway or mySMS	Government SMS Gateway or mySMS aspires to provide information about government services and a channel for complaints through a single SMS short code: 15888. mySMS provide four main features, namely, Information on Demand, Document on Demand, SMS Broadcast, and SMS Complaints, for citizens to request information and documents, to receive public broadcast information, and to make complaints (Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU), 2009).
JARING	JARING (Jaring Communications Sdn Bhd) is the first internet service provider in Malaysia. The word JARING was derived from Joint Advanced Research Integrated Networking (Jaring Communication Sdn. Bhd., 2009).
Local authority	Local authority established under the <i>Local Government Act 1976</i> (Act 171) (Public Service Department, 2001).

Term	Meaning
Malay	Defined in the Malaysian Constitution as, anyone born in the Federation (or Singapore) before independence (or offspring of any such person), who professes the Muslim faith, habitually speaks the Malay language and practices Malay culture. (Hussin, 1990, p. 8).
Ministry	A body responsible for policy formulation, monitoring, implementation and coordination of policy and programme under the portfolio of a Cabinet Minister (Public Service Department, 2001).
Streamyx	Streamyx is one of Malaysia's broadband services, provided by Telekom Malaysia (TM). It provides connection with download speeds of up to 4Mbps, and unlimited usage at a fixed rate (Telekom Malaysia, 2009).
Service Group	Services are clustered and prioritised into Upper Management, Management and Professional and Support (Public Service Department, 2001).
Yang di-Pertuan Agung	The supreme federal ruler appointed by the Conference of Rulers every five years from among the hereditary rulers of nine states, namely Perlis, Kedah, Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Johor, Pahang, Terengganu, and Kelantan in Malaysia

1. Introduction

Hati gajah sama dilapah, hati kuman sama dicecah¹

The Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi², in addressing a motion of thanks to the former Prime Minister, Tun Mahathir Mohamed at the parliament in 2003, called for all Malaysians to work with him:

I have inherited the responsibility of governing a successful country. The responsibility is heavy and I cannot do it alone. Therefore, I seek the cooperation and support from all – legislators, administrators, the private sector, political parties, the media and from Malaysian citizens from all walks of life to work with me to take Malaysia to greater heights – to achieve excellence, glory and distinction (Prime Minister of Malaysia, 2003).

For many Malaysians, Abdullah's notion of "work with me" can be appraised as an invitation to citizens from all sections of society to contribute ideas and provide direct feedback to the government. Inputs which are obtained through this concept of wider participation will allow government to develop more informed policies. Central to this catchphrase is the assurance of togetherness between the government on one hand and ordinary Malaysians on the other.

In practice, the government of Malaysia – through the Malaysian Public Service (MPS) – has been obtaining inputs from the public since the introduction of the "Malaysia Incorporated" policy in 1983 (Karim, 1996). The concept of Malaysia Incorporated envisages the country as a business entity, jointly owned by both public and private sectors. The concept calls for the private sector and civil society organizations (CSO) to cooperate and collaborate with the government and the MPS through various councils, task forces, and federal agencies (discussed in Chapter 3). As a person must be a member of a committee or council to participate, these channels remain out of reach to most ordinary Malaysians. From the perspective of the MPS, although there may be institutional

¹ A Malay saying – "Together we slice the elephant's heart, together we taste the heart of the mite". This saying envisages the importance of working together as a team to benefit from all members' expertise. The English equivalent is "Through thick and thin" (Brown, 1959, p. 207).

² The prime ministership of Malaysia was handed over to Dato' Sri Najib Tun Abdul Razak on 3 April 2009.

capacity, opening up policy development for wider public participation is quite impossible if proper processes, institutional arrangements, as well as efficient means for the management of inputs, are not in place.

A new medium is offered by the advancement of interactive Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) for Malaysian society to contribute to public administration. At present most government agencies and departments in the MPS are interconnected and provide online integrated cross-agency services to the public (e.g., Karim & Khalid, 2003; A. M. Yusof, 2008; Zahri, 2008b). The policies and initiatives for ICT provisions in the MPS are discussed in Chapter 4.

Employment of ICTs to transform the internal and external relationships of government is known as e-government (United Nations, 2003). More easily understood is Okot-Uma's specific definition of e-government as the process and structure related to the electronic delivery of government services, which cover different branches and levels of government (2000). The main aims of e-government are to facilitate government branches at all levels to adopt ICTs and integrate for efficient online service provision. Not only do government websites and portals offer services, such as online applications and transactions, they also provide access to information regarding government agencies and their programs and activities. Thus, e-government offers more convenient online options in comparison to real face-to-face interaction for dealing with government.

The focus of e-government in the MPS is automation of service delivery (Karim & Khalid, 2003). Its initiatives are implemented with the mission to provide one-stop quality services to the public through multiple delivery channels using improved processes and innovative technology. Five e-government pilot projects were introduced in 1997. These projects are divided into two categories:

- intra-agency category and inter-agency category, which both support service delivery between and among government agencies. Under these categories, three pilot project applications were introduced, namely: human resources management information system, project monitoring system, and generic office environment.

- citizen-to-government and business-to-government category to support service delivery from the government to citizens and businesses which include two pilot projects – e-services and e-procurement (Karim & Khalid, 2003).

Of the two categories mentioned above, the latter is aimed at facilitating citizen-government interaction, a theme which is close to e-democracy. To illustrate this category, the e-services application (MyEG Services, 2006) is elaborated. The e-services application provides electronic delivery of driver and vehicle registration, licensing, summons services, automobile insurance renewal, and utility payment. An individual visits the e-services website at www.myeg.com.my (from a PC, internet kiosk, telecenter, or using mobile devices) for single-point access to all government departments which offer these services. Through this website a person can make online application for license renewal. Payment for renewal is made through an online transaction with credit cards or online banking direct debit options. Such a transaction does away with face-to-face interaction, between individuals and public administrators, for speedier and more convenient service.

As a whole, e-government initiatives such as e-services represent the capability of government agencies to adopt ICTs and utilize websites and portals as avenues to provide easier access to information, online applications and transactions. Applications such as this achieve e-government's mission of facilitating transactional interaction between the government and citizens with a focus on service delivery.

Besides the automation traditional ways in which government departments delivered their services to the public, government websites and portals often provide virtual spaces for interactive online dialogue. These spaces invite people to interact with government through online forums, online feedback forms, and online polling. The public is provided with opportunities to e-mail feedback, post questions, and vote on diverse issues, such as public road safety, public transport, and education. These dialogues are useful for government to identify or access options, evaluate ongoing activities and tap people's thoughts on a particular

public issue or policy. Dialogue between citizens and government in public policy and decision-making is called 'citizen participation' (Baum, Neil, & Paul, 2001). When citizen participation is carried out using interactive ICTs, it diminishes traditional barriers of time, space and other physical restrictions. Thanks to such opportunities, citizens are able to be more involved in public administration. Public administration is defined as

the formal procedural and organizational arrangements under which public [administrators] serve a government, by implementing and advising on policy, and managing resources (Johnston, Neil, & Paul, 2001, pp. 12507-12508).

Participation in public administration is not only about citizens. Another important player in such a process is the public administrator who serves an elected government. The public administrators' role of implementing and advising on policy is evolving with the development of ICTs whereby public administrators' expertise, insights, and analytical power are enhanced by interactive ICTs (Snellen, 2001b). The application of ICTs can now liberalize access within public administration's organizational hierarchy, whereby citizens can communicate directly with a particular public administrator online without having to make appointments. Online citizen participation is becoming an important factor in public administration for development of more responsive and receptive policies. Public administrators are generally expected to incorporate citizens' inputs through listening to a wide range of citizens including non-profit organizations or interest groups in order to

work effectively on their behalf [and] bring strong democracy [with direct participation] to the administrative process (Thomas, 1995, p. 7).

Public administrators need to utilize inputs from online citizen participation to enhance the policy development process. Kim Chan Goun (2005) conducted a study on the use of online forums among public administrators at central and local levels of government in South Korea. He identified three factors which motivate public administrators to use online policy forums, namely their perceived usefulness, information quality, and their attitudes toward citizen participation. Kim's study shows that public administrators will use inputs from online citizen participation in policy development and adapt to new ways of citizen participation.

The study however neglects the possibility of other forms of interactive ICTs supporting the policy development process, such as online feedback forms and online polling. Kim's study raises another question as to how public administrators actually utilize these interactive ICTs in policy development. The patterns of utilization of interactive ICTs among public administrators in Malaysia may vary from those in South Korea. Such patterns are investigated in the present study and discussed in Chapters 9 and 11.

Gronlund (2001) describes the changing citizens-government communication as 'e-democracy', referring to the use of ICTs by politicians through public administrators and citizens to inform about, vote on, poll on and discuss topical issues. He also acknowledges other scholars' usage of terms, such as 'teledemocracy' and 'digital democracy', to describe the same phenomenon. For many commentators, e-democracy potentially allows direct interaction between citizens and government. According to Hacker and Dijk (2000) this new form of interaction is "*an addition, not a replacement for traditional 'analogue' political [and administrative] practices*" (author's italics, p. 1). The availability of this additional form of interaction allows citizens to engage more actively with government.

For the purpose of this study, e-democracy will be generally defined as the utilization of interactive ICTs between public administrators and citizens to inform, vote on, poll on and discuss public policy, although as Chapter 2 will argue, the concept of e-democracy is more complicated than this. All forms of e-democracy – government-sanctioned, citizen-initiated, and citizens as users – will be investigated, but the main focus of this study is government-sanctioned practices at the federal level of government in Malaysia.

Existing research on e-democracy and public administrators is lacking (discussed in Chapter 5). The role of public administrators in policy development and their practical use of interactive ICTs in exercising their intermediary role between citizens and elected government provide a significant gap in e-democracy research. In Malaysia today, not much is known about the employment and extent of interaction between public administrators and the public regarding policy development. Any serious research on the subject of e-democracy in relation to

the role played by public administrators in Malaysia remains scarce or non-existent. An assessment of the full capability of interactive ICTs in assisting public administrators in their policy development role is thus timely. It provides a key justification for undertaking this study on the Malaysian federal public administrators' use of interactive ICTs for e-democracy in policy development. Empirical research is required to identify the nature of ICT utilization for e-democracy among public administrators to formulate policy and contemplate its role in policy development. This study focuses on the online interaction between public administrators and citizens as stakeholders in public policy (discussed in Chapter 3), as illustrated in Figure 1-1.

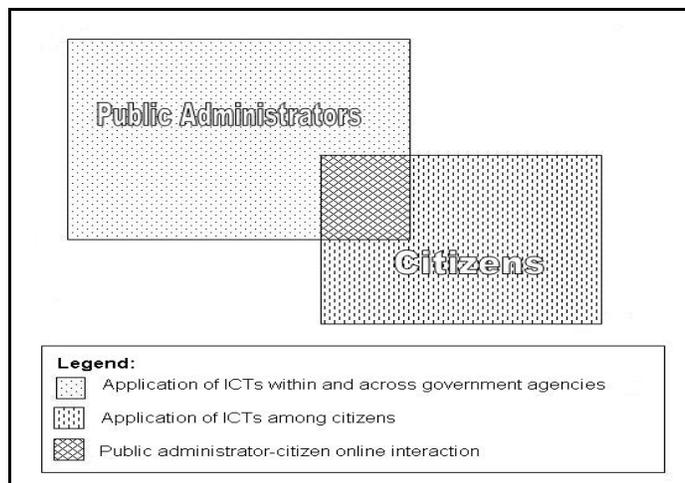


Figure 1-1 Interactive ICTs in policy development

This chapter outlines the aims of the study and its contribution towards the body of knowledge on e-democracy. It outlines the motivation to conduct the present study and provides the research questions. The chapter then goes on to provide a summary of empirical evidence used in the study. The context of the study is described through a brief discussion of Malaysia's key features. The chapter concludes with an overview of thesis structure.

1.1. Research aims and contributions

This study aims to identify the nature of e-democracy practices for policy development in the Malaysian Federal Public Service (MFPS). It seeks to

discover how the ideals of e-democracy can be nurtured to enhance the policy development in Malaysia.

The study:

- identifies administrative dimensions of e-democracy by studying it in the institutional context of the Malaysian Federal Public Service (MFPS)
- enriches knowledge about how use of technology shapes e-democracy practices
- provides a foundation for understanding e-democracy in the context of Malaysia (which allows for future comparison of similarities and differences between practices of e-democracy in different countries)
- identifies examples of e-democracy practices in public organizations to inform policy development
- lays out clear advantages for public administrators by helping to remove their misconceptions about e-democracy in policy development; and
- provides a foundation for guidance in e-democracy implementation for government
- proposes a triple loop framework– two existing loops from Parvez’s framework – and an additional Institutional Leadership loop – which exerts social influences on public administrators who are involved in the design of infrastructures for e-democracy without a clear policy directive. The triple loop framework aims to examine unstructured e-democracy practices in multiple organizations under one main entity, e.g., different government ministries and departments under a federal public service.

1.2. Motivation

The researcher is a public administrator in the MFPS. Being appointed to PTD (the common Malay abbreviation for Administrative and Diplomatic Officer) service in 1995, the researcher has been involved in public administration of the country for 15 years. The researcher’s previous postings include KKM (the common Malay abbreviation for the Ministry of Health), JPM (the common Malay abbreviation for the Prime Minister’s Department), and KTAK (the common Malay

abbreviation for the Ministry of Energy, Water, and Communication). All these postings provide hands-on experience, to the researcher of policy development in the MFPS. The nature of such development, which often requires comprehensive analysis of issues and possible solutions and the abundance of information made available on the Internet, particularly by the public, are two key elements that motivate the researcher to investigate the link between these two elements.

The constitutional limitations, which circumscribe the extent of citizens' engagement in the public sphere, are unique to Malaysia (as discussed in section 1.5). Such distinctiveness also possibly means that a study of e-democracy explores a unique dimension and will contribute towards an extension of the body of knowledge of e-democracy practices worldwide. At the same time, the researcher's experience as a PTD officer provides him an appreciation of public administrators as individuals with their own preferences, regardless of ICTs provided to them. The researcher is intrigued to untangle the myth, among public administrators, of ICTs becoming an extra burden to their workload. It is the researcher's hope that the present study will offer answers to some, if not all of these problems.

In the early phases of thesis development, consideration was given to making comparative studies with other countries, but the selection of other potential countries was not easy. Although there were many e-democracy activities in Malaysia, they were undertaken unofficially and were quite unique to the country. Thus, it was determined that the main focus of the research was to identify the nature of e-democracy in Malaysia, and not to undertake a comparative study. While Canada and Singapore both have formal, official e-democracies, for example they were not directly comparable. A prior study of e-democracy in Korea was limited to online forums, and it was thus not suitable for making comparisons. In addition, the thesis was running to a full length with the treatment of Malaysia alone, and a comparative study would not fit into the available length. Later in this thesis, recommendations are made for future research to compare the identified practices of e-democracy in Malaysia with other e-democracy projects, discussed in Chapter 12.

1.3. Research questions

This study focuses on the following primary and secondary questions:

Primary question:

- How do interactive Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) (as part of e-democracy) inform Malaysian public administrators in developing policy?

Secondary questions:

- What does e-democracy mean in Malaysia?
- What are the significant cultural dimensions that shape conceptions of e-democracy in the Malaysian Federal Public Service?
- What are the key expectations of human actors (public administrators and key informants) of e-democracy in Malaysia?

1.4. Empirical evidence

The empirical evidence for this study was derived from two primary sources, namely documents and in-depth interviews. The main source of documents were theses, journal articles, websites, online databases on e-democracy, and the Malaysian government policy documents, publications, websites, portals, and blogs. The details of this evidence are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

1.5. Context of study: Malaysia

This section describes Malaysia's key features including its geographic location, population (including literacy, language, and religion), government structure, public service, Civil Society Organizations (CSO), and socio-economic indicators. These features provide the context for the present study, focusing on policy development in the public service.

Inevitably when structuring an entire thesis, consideration is given to the length and depth of detail in individual chapters, and the overall impression which they

create. A dilemma was posed by this section which deals with ‘the Malaysian context’. If it was separated into a new and independent chapter it would be much shorter than any of the other chapters and it thus might be considered as of less significance. It is clearly of central importance to the flow of the argument, and is thus incorporated necessarily into the preliminary information imparted in this chapter.

1.5.1. Geographical location

Malaysia is a country in South East Asia. It consists of two geographical regions: the Peninsula Malaysia in the west, as well as the states of Sabah and Sarawak in the east, separated by the South China Sea. It is administratively divided into 13 states – namely Perlis, Kedah, Pulau Pinang, Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Johor, Pahang, Terengganu, Kelantan, Sabah, and Sarawak – and one federal territory with three components (Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya, and Labuan), as illustrated in Figure 1-2. Putrajaya is the administrative capital. It is where most federal government agencies, which are the focus of this study, are located.



Figure 1-2 Map of Malaysia

Source: Reproduced from the University of Texas at Austin(2008)

The geographical location of states in Malaysia – particularly Sarawak and Sabah separated by the South China Sea – limits physical movement of citizens from these states to participate in the conventional citizen participation method, like meetings, workshops, and seminars, organized by federal agencies in Putrajaya. Such a physical limitation is dealt with online interaction via interactive ICTs from any location in the country. Citizens from all states can interact with federal government through the provisions of ICT initiatives (discussed in Chapter 4).

1.5.2. Population

The estimated population of Malaysia (as of July 2009) is 28.31 million with a age group breakdown of 31.8 percent below 15, 63.6 percent between 15 to 64, and 4.6 percent older than 65 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2010a). The statistics provide an indication of a high percentage of population (in the age groups 15 to 64 and older than 65) that has mostly attained their qualification to vote. The suffrage for Malaysians is 21 years as prescribed in Article 119 of the Federal Constitution (Sheridan, Groves, Vohrah, Koh, & Ling, 2004). The relations between different age groups and the practices of e-democracy are discussed in Chapters 10 and 11.

According to the Population and Housing Census 2000³ (Census 2000), the literacy rate among the population was at 93.5 percent in 2000 (Department of Statistic, 2001). The high literacy rate is generally conducive to e-democracy practices. Chapter 10 discusses whether such a condition or other expectations, such as new skills, are required for an effective e-democracy practice in Malaysia.

Constitutionally, the official language of Malaysia is *Bahasa Malaysia*, but English is widely spoken. Other indigenous languages such as Mandarin, Tamil and over 100 others are also spoken among its respective ethnic groups (Gordon, 2005). The official religion of the country is Islam, which is practised by the majority of Malay. Other religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism and Christianity are also practised by their believers harmoniously. The range of religions and

³ The population and Housing Census in Malaysia is conducted every ten years. The next census is due in 2010.

languages spoken are closely related to diverse ethnic groups. The Census 2000 revealed that the population is made up of 8 percent Indian, 26 percent Chinese, and 65 percent *Bumiputera*⁴, or the indigenous people (Department of Statistic, 2001). The nation-state of Malaysia adopted the majority ethnic cultural values and the *Bahasa Malaysia* language to integrate the ethnic groups, states, and to build the nation. The diverse population of Malaysia furnishes different perspectives on culture and values for the present study. The national cultural features are likely to influence online interaction between citizens and the federal government. Such cultural features are discussed in Chapter 8.

Malaysia's population is termed a 'plural society' (e.g., Embong, 2007; Hussin, 1990). According to Shamsul (2005) the plural society rises from colonial British rule in Malaya (now Malaysia) which replaced traditional polities of the country with its systems of governance. The plural society

signifies the introduction of knowledge, social constructs, vocabulary, idioms and institutions hitherto unknown to the indigenous population (such as maps, census, museums and ethnic categories), the introduction of [a] market-oriented economy and systematized hegemonic politics (Shamsul, 2005, p. 3).

The British also brought in Chinese and Indians in large numbers to serve their economic interests by providing labour for tin mines and rubber plantations. The Malays are associated with agriculture and rural areas, the Chinese are associated with business and urban areas, and the Indians are associated with rubber plantations (Shamsul, 2005). Before independence, the Malays, Chinese and Indians as the majority forces in the country made a bargain, whereby Malay hegemony in the political arena was recognized in return for Chinese and Indian citizenship status (Singh & Narayanan, 1989). The bargain gives the Malays control over the body politic. Until today, all Prime Ministers of Malaysia have been Malays. The Chinese and Indians, who were considered immigrants, had dominance in the economy. They are granted citizenship, which makes their status equivalent to the *Bumiputera*, except in the body politic. This bargain is considered a form of 'social contract' which brought the country into independence with

⁴ *Bumiputera* is a term used to describe 'son of the soil', or indigenous people. The *Bumiputera* includes ethnic Malay and various indigenous groups such as the *Orang Asli* in Peninsula Malaysia, *Iban* in Sarawak and *Kadazan Dusun* in Sabah.

promises [that the Chinese and Indians are] to help the Malays economically and [the Malays] to accept gradual non-Malay political equality (Horowitz, 1985, p. 581).

The bargain's principles are preserved along with the adoption of democratic ideals in the country. This is distinctive to Malaysia. The balance of the bargain's principles and democratic ideals shapes Malaysian democratic practices, its public administration, and public administrators (discussed in Chapters 2 and 3). The extent of such influences on the practices of e-democracy in Malaysia is discussed in Chapter 8.

1.5.3. Government structure

Malaysia is a constitutional monarchy. After attaining its independence from British colonial rule on 31 August 1957, a Federal Constitution was promulgated and later amended in 1963 with the inclusion of Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore into the federation. Singapore left the federation in 1966. The current federation of 13 states upholds the principles of parliamentary democracy. The *Yang di-Pertuan Agung* is the supreme federal ruler appointed by the Conference of Rulers every five years from among the nine states' hereditary rulers⁵ as prescribed under Article 32 (2) of the Federal Constitution (Sheridan, et al., 2004). Governors are appointed every four years by the *Yang di-Pertuan Agung* to be the state's ceremonial head for states without hereditary rulers, namely Melaka, Pulau Pinang, Sarawak and Sabah.

The legislative authority of the federal government is a bicameral Parliament with the *Yang di-Pertuan Agung* as head. The *Yang di-Pertuan Agung* does not preside in Parliament but may address the two houses as and when necessary. His executive authority is enshrined in Article 181 of the Federal Constitution (Sheridan, et al., 2004). The other parliamentary legislative bodies consist of a Senate called *Dewan Negara* and an elected House of Representative called *Dewan Rakyat* (Parliament of Malaysia, 2007). The parliament is represented by Members of Parliament (MPs) from 222 constituencies. The MPs are elected

⁵ The hereditary ruler of a state is called "Sultan" for the states of Kedah, Perak, Selangor, Terengganu, and Kelantan or "Raja" for the state of Perlis or "Yamtuan Besar" for the state of Negeri Sembilan.

representatives from 31 political parties, which include 20 from the Peninsular of Malaysia, six from Sabah, and five from Sarawak (see Appendix A for the list of political parties). Currently, the National Front, a coalition of 14 political parties, holds the majority of seats and forms the federal government (Suruhanjaya Pilihanraya Malaysia, 2009).

Article 10(4) of Malaysia’s Federal Constitution outlines clear restrictions and limitations on the parliament. Its members and Malaysians in general cannot question special rights and status provided under Articles 152, 153, and 181 of the constitution. Members of parliament and Malaysians are prohibited from discussing certain issues in parliament and elsewhere, either offline or online, namely the supremacy of *Bahasa Malaysia* as the national language (Article 152), special rights and privileges of the *Bumiputera* like education and positions in the public service (Article 153), and the sovereignty of Malay kings (Article 181) (Sheridan, et al., 2004). The prohibition of discussion of these issues is aimed at controlling tension among ethnic groups in the country. Whether such a restriction is seen as a barrier to open online deliberation in e-democracy practices in Malaysia and expectations to overcome such barriers are discussed in Chapters 8 and 10.

The Malaysian public administration is structured in three tiers. Federal, state, and local governments constitute the three-tier government in Malaysia. The relation between these tiers of government is illustrated in Figure 1-3.

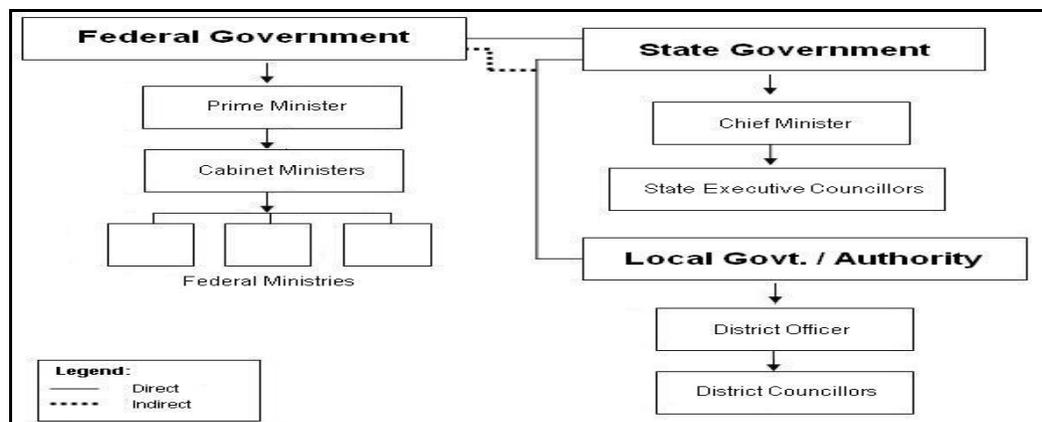


Figure 1-3 Three-tier government in Malaysia

Each level of government requires elaboration to provide context for the role and influences of federal government in relation to the states and local governments. At the federal level, the Cabinet or executive branch (a part of the House of Representative or *Dewan Rakyat*) is headed by the Prime Minister with Cabinet ministers. These ministers head federal ministries, such as the Ministry of Energy, Water and Communication. All major public policy of the country is decided by Cabinet. A detailed discussion about the structure and functions of federal government is discussed in Chapter 3.

At the state level, the State Executive Council (ExCo) is the federal Cabinet equivalent. The ExCo comprises councillors from elected state representatives, headed by a Chief Minister. It is the highest co-ordinating body on all matters of interest in the state. The ExCo is administratively supported by a State Secretary from the public service (either from the federal public service or state public service to be explained in section 1.5.5). In contrast to the federal government, all states have unicameral legislatures elected at least every five years. Schedule IX, of the Federal Constitution, outlines that state legislature has the autonomy to pass any law as long as it does not militate against a corresponding federal competency (Sheridan, et al., 2004).

At the local level, each local government is governed by a district council. The council is headed by a district officer from the public service. The Federal Constitution prescribes, under Item 4 in List II of the Ninth Schedule, that local government is to be a subject under the State List, thus resulting in all local authorities falling under the exclusive jurisdiction of state governments. However, following an amendment to the Federal Constitution under Article 95A, the government enacted the National Council for Local Government to advise and co-ordinate local governments in matters especially pertaining to legal and major policy issues (Government of Malaysia, 1963). The local governments implement policies of federal and state governments.

The direct relation between federal and state governments, as well as the indirect relation between federal and local governments, suggests a substantial role and

influence of the federal government in policy-making processes over states and local governments. Wide adoption of ICTs in government agencies across all levels of government has the potential to facilitate such processes (discussed in Chapter 4). The government is empowered to interact with citizens online at all levels. Only the nature of online interaction between public administrators and citizens at the federal level is explored in this study due to the scope of the project.

1.5.4. Parliamentary democracy

The current federation of 13 states in Malaysia upholds the principles of parliamentary democracy. Lijphart (1977) calls Malaysian democracy ‘consociational democracy’ with four distinct characteristics, comprising a grand coalition government, which includes the political leaders of significant segments of plural society, mutual veto or ‘concurrent majority’ rule, which serves as an additional protection of minority interests, a high degree of autonomy for each coalition’s party to run its own internal affairs, and “proportionality as the principal standard of political representation, civil service appointments, and allocation of public funds” (Lijphart, 1977, p. 25). The principle of proportionality constructs a distinctive public administration structure and governance in Malaysia (discussed in Chapter 3). Assessment of how public administrators utilize interactive ICTs for e-democracy in this context will expand knowledge in the field of e-democracy research.

Besides Lijphart’s consociational democracy, Neher (1994) identifies Malaysian democracy as an ‘Asian-style democracy’. The Asian-style democracy is described as the embodiment of five characteristics, namely patron-client communitarianism, which emphasizes the place of an individual’s status with others; personalism, which emphasizes leaders rather than laws; deference to authority and hierarchy, which emphasizes respect for organization or people associated with power; dominant political parties, which suggests that consensus is highly regarded rather than competition by Asian rulers and ruled; and a strong state, which suggests that the state has co-opted organizations to ensure interdependence between the state and the society’s various organizations (Neher, 1994). More recently, Neher (2002) defines Malaysian democracy as

'semi-democracy'. He specifically refers to Malaysia's semi-democracy as possessing a parliamentary-democratic system, featuring free, competitive elections and limits on state power (Neher, 2002).

The Malaysian form of democracy is a careful balancing act to promote growth and stability. A strong state can introduce e-democracy practices, but the research acknowledges that engaging citizens with high respect for leaders, authority, and hierarchy to participate online could possibly be difficult. The characteristics of Malaysian democracy as identified by Lijphart (1977) and Neher (1994) are likely to shape e-democracy practices in Malaysia and the way that public administrators utilize interactive ICTs to engage citizens online. Chapters 8 and 11 explore these influences which shape e-democracy in Malaysia. Chapter 2 will discuss features of Malaysia's democracy in more detail.

1.5.5. The public service

The public service in Malaysia is diverse. This section provides an overview of the Malaysian Public Service (MPS) to contextualize its function in policy-making processes. For the purpose of the present study, as discussed, the structure of the Malaysian Federal Public Service (MFPS) and its policy-making processes, are discussed in Chapter 3.

Article 132 of the Federal Constitution defines it as consisting of the General Public Service of the Federation, the Public Service of the States (which includes six state public services for the states of Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu, Johor, Sabah and Sarawak), the Joint Public Service, Education Service, Judicial and Legal Service, Police Force, and Armed Forces (Sheridan, et al., 2004). Each of these services has its own Commission or Council, appointed by the *Yang di-Pertuan Agung*, to ensure impartiality and protection from political interference. The Public Service Commission of Malaysia is accountable for "appointments, confirmations, promotions, transfers, and discipline including dismissals ... based on professional principles and free from outside interference" (Sarji, 1996, p. 246). JPA (the common Malay abbreviation for the Public Service Department) takes

charge of other aspects of human resource management, such as training (Public Service Commission, 2007).

The complexity of the public service in Malaysia is applicable at all levels of government. Each level of government is composed of public administrators from some, if not all 20 classifications of schemes of service. These classifications represent different areas of responsibilities of public administrators, such as transport, art and talent, science, and education. A list of all classifications of schemes of service is shown in Appendix B (Public Service Department, 2001; 2006b). All public administrators from any scheme of services are required to implement and administer policies which are legislated by parliament (Sarji, 1996) at all levels of government. For example, at the federal level, the Ministry of Health is responsible for policies on health and managing health and medical personnel, and facilities. Public administrators at this level formulate and advise the Health Minister on hospital management policy, which is then brought up to Cabinet and the parliament for legislation. This policy may then be disseminated to the state government for consideration and implementation at state level. State government may then disseminate the policy to local authorities for consideration and implementation. Any federal policy, which only concerns the local governments, will be disseminated directly to the relevant local governments.

The application of ICTs within government agencies at all levels through e-government initiatives has often helped to inform the public and improve its online service provision, as discussed. The nature and extent of interactive ICT usage for e-democracy in developing a policy by public administrators, particularly at the federal level, is a dimension to be explored in this study. The limited resources circumscribe the present study to examine policy development at the federal level. It is hoped that the identified nature of e-democracy practices and their roles in policy development show clear advantages for public administrators at the federal level. The advantages could demystify the public administrators' misconception that e-democracy is an extra workload, which further complicates their function. The identification of e-democracy practices and their roles are discussed in Chapters 9 and 11.

1.5.6. Civil Society Organizations

As discussed, Civil Society Organizations (CSO) play a vital role in the Malaysia Incorporated concept. This section provides an overview of CSOs in Malaysia and their issues to provide background for their involvement in policy development of the MPS.

The *Societies' Act 1966* governs CSO in Malaysia (Government of Malaysia, 2006b). The Act outlines the establishment of the Registrar of Societies (RoS) under the Ministry of Home Affairs. All CSO must register with the RoS to legally operate in the country. The RoS regulates a society which fulfils the conditions of establishment of a 'physical' society as outlined in Section Four of the *Societies Act 1969*. A society is deemed to be established in Malaysia if:

any of its office-bearers or members resides in Malaysia or is present therein, or if any person in Malaysia manages or assists in the management of such society or solicits or collects money or subscription in its behalf (Government of Malaysia, 2006b).

There are over 40000 registered CSO in Malaysia, as of January 2009. These CSO are divided into 13 categories, as shown in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1 Civil society organizations in Malaysia (as of December 2009)

No.	Category of organization	Total
1	Political	35
2	Educational	453
3	Women	494
4	Work	1,384
5	Cultural	2,019
6	Mutual Benefit	2,128
7	Youth	3,295
8	Sport	3,021
9	Trade	3,618
10	Social Welfare	7,234
11	Social and Recreational	6,741
12	Religious	7,916

No.	Category of organization	Total
13	General	8,001
	Total	46,339

Source: Adapted from the website of the RoS (2010)

Most of these CSO are involved in some form of consultation with government on various issues and public policy. The categorization of CSO facilitates identification of their interest and potential contribution to policy development. For instance, during the development of the Required Access Services' policy under the Ministry of Energy, Water and Communication, several CSO under the Social Welfare category – representing groups of people with physical disabilities, like blindness, deafness, mutism, and physical challenges – were invited to provide their inputs.

A new form of civil society is enabled to form online with the development of interactive ICTs called an online or virtual community (Rheingold, 1995, 2000). The online community is fluid in nature, whereby a new community can be easily formed for a particular purpose and dissolved when the purpose is fulfilled; some communities, however, continue to exist online. A group of home buyers who are affected by a developer abandoning their housing project is a good example of such an online community in Malaysia. The house buyers communicate online and present their cases to the government (e.g., Casa Gemilang, 2008). The online community dissolves when the housing project is recovered or all house buyers take delivery of their houses. Currently, there is virtually no regulation for online communities in Malaysia. Another reason for lack of regulation is possibly due to the non-censorship of the Internet policy promulgated under the Multimedia Super Corridor's Bills of Guarantee (Multimedia Development Corporation, 2008a) discussed in Chapter 4.

The CSO also utilize ICTs to promote their cause to the public at large and the government. The absence of a regulation for online communities and a policy on e-democracy presents a unique setting for the present study. Chapter 10

discusses the expectations of interviewees of a clear policy for e-democracy in Malaysia.

1.5.7. Economy

Malaysia's economy is considered one of the most robust in South-East Asia, with an annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate of more than 5 percent since the financial crisis in 1998 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2007). Despite a plunge of around six percent of GDP growth rate in the first quarter of 2009, due to the American financial crisis, the country's GDP growth rate has managed to rebound to more than four percent in the fourth quarter of 2009 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2010b). In April 2010, the country's total exports amounted to RM52.03 billion or US\$ 14.42 billion and imports were RM42.80 billion or US\$ 11.86 billion. The trade balance was RM9.22 billion or US\$ 2.55 billion. The major exports of Malaysia in 2007 are electrical and electronic products (39.7% of total exports), palm oil (6.6% of total exports), chemicals and chemical products (6.5% of total exports), and crude petroleum (5.4% of total exports). The country's total debt in 2008 amounted to RM235.6 billion or US\$ 67.3 billion (Economic Planning Unit, 2010c; Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation, 2010). This stable economic environment enables Malaysia to apportion ample budgetary allocation to develop a comprehensive physical ICT infrastructure for global competitiveness (as discussed in Chapter 4).

In 2003, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) published the Digital Access Index (DAI), which measures the overall ability of individuals in a country to access and use ICTs that consist of eight variables organized into five categories, namely infrastructure, affordability, knowledge, quality and usage. In the area of telecommunication infrastructure and access, Malaysia is ranked in the Upper-Access category (or 46th of 178 countries) and ranked first among developing Asia Pacific countries (International Telecommunication Union, 2003). In 2009, the ITU consolidated its ICT development indices, such as DAI, into a single ICT Development Index (IDI). The IDI consists of three sub-indexes – ICT access, ICT use, and ICT skill. The IDI is constructed to provide a tool to

benchmark information society developments and monitor global progress to close the digital divide (the difference between the e-haves and e-have-nots). The IDI for Malaysia improved from 3.66 in 2007 to 3.96 index values in 2008, however its ranking fell from 55 to 56 of 159 countries (International Telecommunication Union, 2010).

Additionally, the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) reported that in 2008, the number of internet users in Malaysia stood at 38.2 per hundred inhabitants or second among other ASEAN countries such as Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, Philippines, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission, 2008). The penetration rates for dial-up Internet services was 44.0 per hundred households and broadband (fixed and wireless) was at 31.7 per household, in the fourth quarter of 2009 (Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission, 2010). Even though Malaysia is ranked first among developing countries in DAI, its Internet uptake is still low. Malaysia still needs to address issues of the digital divide and equal access for its citizens through ICT initiatives. Such issues and initiatives are discussed in Chapter 4.

The United Nations Development Programme (2006) conducts an assessment of countries' human development in areas, such as education and literacy. The result of the assessment was a ranking of 177 countries, called the Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI categorizes Malaysia in the high human development group with a ranking of 61 of 177 countries. Malaysia's HDI is higher compared to other countries in the South-East Asia region. Equally important, the Malaysian Quality of Life Index (MQLI) covering socio-economic development of the country from 1990 to 2007 shows an overall improvement (Economic Planning Unit, 2010b). The MQLI suggests several potential issues which relate to the basic needs of citizens that might attract participation, such as family life (which declined from 103.83 in 2006 to 100.81 in 2007) and public safety (which declined from 80.22 in 2006 to 79.36 in 2007). The HDI and MQLI show that Malaysians are potentially empowered and enabled to participate online in policy development.

All key features discussed show that Malaysia is a good case for e-democracy study. The country's population, government structure, democratic practices, public service, and socio-economic indicators provide unique features for the development of a body of knowledge in e-democracy research, which may allow for a comparison of similarities and differences between implementations of e-democracy in other countries by other researchers.

1.6. Structure of thesis

The thesis is divided into five parts and structured in the following way:

Part I:

Chapter 1: Introduction

- An overview of the study, research aims and contributions, motivations, research questions, summary of descriptive statistics of interviewees, and explanation of the context of the study.

Part II:

The literature review of this study is discussed over four chapters.

Chapter 2: E-democracy and policy development

- This chapter discusses the concepts of e-democracy and several concepts around e-democracy, namely public administration, citizen participation, democracy, and Malaysian democracy. These concepts inform the research framework of this study.

Chapter 3: Malaysian Federal Public Service (MFPS) and policy development

- This chapter describes the structure of the Malaysian federal government. It goes on to discuss the structure, characteristics, and functions of the MFPS to contextualize policy development within the structure of the Malaysian federal government.

Chapter 4: ICTs and e-democracy in Malaysia

- This chapter discusses key ICT policies and initiatives by the Malaysian Government to promote ICTs. It provides context for the implementation of e-democracy in the MFPS. The last section discusses the lack of policy for e-democracy and amorphous implementation of e-democracy within several agencies of the MFPS.

Chapter 5: Theoretical and conceptual framework

- This chapter considers the theoretical basis to inform and develop the research framework for this study. It includes discussions of Giddens' Structuration Theory, Orlikowski's Structural Model of Technology and her technology practise lens, and Parvez's Double Loop Structural framework to examine e-democracy. The framework also considers applicable themes from literature on e-democracy, public administration, citizen participation, democracy, and Malaysian democracy, discussed in Chapters 1 to 4.

Part III:

Chapter 6: Research design

- This chapter describes the research design for this study. It includes a description of exploratory, ethnographic, qualitative, and case study methodologies. It goes on to discuss purposive sampling techniques to identify the unit of analysis for in-depth interviews and the employment of NVivo software for data management and analysis.

Part IV:

The findings of this study are reported in five chapters.

Chapter 7: The technological dimension

- This chapter describes the purpose and types of ICT facilities available to human actors for e-democracy, as well as the forms of control over such facilities.

Chapter 8: The institutional dimension

- This chapter discusses three emergent categories of institutional dimensions, namely norms, national culture, and organizational culture, which shape the conceptions of e-democracy in the MFPS.

Chapter 9: The agency dimension

- This chapter discusses the agency dimension which covers human actors' understandings and shared meaning to make sense of their utilization of interactive ICTs for e-democracy in Malaysia. It includes a discussion of six interpretive schemes identified in the study, which human actors draw on to enact four practices of e-democracy in the MFPS.

Chapter 10: Notable expectations of e-democracy in Malaysia

- This chapter describes notable expectations of e-democracy practices in Malaysia. The emergent expectations are divided into three categories, namely design, process, and roles of key players of e-democracy (government, public administrators, citizens, bloggers, and the younger generation).

Chapter 11: Making sense of e-democracy and public administrators in Malaysia

- This chapter discusses the emerging nature of enacted e-democracy practices; and emergent roles of e-democracy practices in policy development in the MFPS. Key findings from Chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10 are brought together and synthesized to provide discussion of the emerging nature of enacted e-democracy practices. These findings allow a deeper understanding of how e-democracy practices inform public administrators in policy development in the MFPS.

Part V:

Chapter 12: Conclusions and recommendations

- This chapter draws conclusions from the study, presents recommendations for future e-democracy in Malaysia, as well as suggestions for future research.

2. E-democracy and policy development

Berapa panjang lunjur, begitulah selimut⁶

This chapter aims to discuss: the concept of e-democracy and a number of associated concepts, namely public administration, citizen participation, democracy, and Malaysian democracy, which inform the research framework (see Chapter 5). The chapter begins with a discussion of opportunities and risks through the application of Information Communications Technologies (ICTs) to democratic practices to contextualize the relationship between technology and democracy. Next, the chapter discusses the concepts of democracy, Malaysian democracy, and country-specific conceptualization of e-democracy. It goes on to discuss an overview of different understandings of the term ‘e-democracy’. In the final section of this chapter, the institutions, and processes of public administration, the processes and issues in the engagement of citizens in public administration, and the application of e-democracy in policy development are described. The thesis returns to some of these issues in later chapters, in particular to questions about the players’ expectations of e-democracy in its implementation at federal government level in Malaysia (see Chapter 10).

The following sections discuss each concept to explore the interactions of human actors (public administrators and citizens) through e-democracy with the democratic policy development process.

2.1. The relationship between technology and democracy

An advocate for the future integration of ICTs and democracy, Benjamin Barber (1998), observes that technology shrinks the world. Barber points out that Aristotle once argued that, the ideal size for a democratic polity could be quantified by the amount of land a man could travel in one day to ensure that all citizens

⁶ A Malay saying, translated in English – “As the length of one’s stretch, so the length of one’s sheet” (Brown, 1959, p. 46). This saying envisages the significance of knowing a particular subject’s domain to effectively deal with the subject.

could attend a popular assembly. By this standard, Barber (1998) maintains that, Marshall McLuhan's concept of a global village is a reality that is confirmed each day by advances in ICTs, particularly the spread of the Internet. Technology presents limitless possibilities "for the mastery of time and space, and of knowledge and its transmission" (Barber, 1998, p. 575). Barber appreciates that ICT has the potential to challenge passivity, enhance information equality, overcome sectarianism and prejudice, as well as facilitate participation in deliberative political processes. His conclusion that ICTs could be used as a facilitator to democracy in the future is supported by many others, such as Chadwick (2006), Castells (2002), and Gronlund (2001).

Chadwick (2006) ascertains that the Internet or cyberspace is relatively speedy and fluid. Compared to the relative passive consumption of broadcasting, he maintains that cyberspace is more interactive and participatory. With these attributes of cyberspace, Chadwick suggests that "the authoritative status of powerful institutional players, be they governments, corporations, or mainstream media, has been loosened" (2006, p. 6). Castells (2002) establishes that ICT is
an ideal instrument to further democracy ... [since its interactive nature] ... makes it possible for citizens to request information, voice their opinion, [and] ask [for] personalized answer[s] from their representatives (p. 155).

Gronlund (2001) argues that ICT has "the opportunity to become a rhetorical tool in the hands of politicians as well as a tool for democratic enlightenment and opportunity for exerting influence over decision-making processes on the part of citizens" (p. 25). Barber, Gronlund, Castells and Chadwick support the notion that ICT can enhance democratic practices and are likely to enable citizens to participate and influence policy development.

Barber (1998) cautions that technology is not wholly self-determining and does not write its own history, independent of human intentions. He asserts, "where technology takes our political and social institutions will depend, in part, on where we take technology" (p. 575). On the prospects for the future of technology and democracy, Barber argues that opportunities provided by ICT for democratic practices vary in different environments. He analyses three scenarios of the relationship between technology and democracy, which he admits to fancifully

calling the Pangloss, Pandora, and Jeffersonian scenarios. First, the Pangloss scenario occurs when the technological market players will not invest in new technology without apparent commercial and entertainment values. Second, the Pandora scenario is characterized by a government which utilizes new technology to further standardize, control and even repress citizens with centralization of control over information and communication. Third, the Jeffersonian scenario is defined as affirmative uses of new technology to nurture modern democratic life through increasing the quality of communication and interaction among and between citizens and public administrators, as well as elected representatives.

The Pangloss scenario embodies Barber's pessimism over promises of a new communicative equality through technology. He believes there will always be attempts at controlling information and communication, where power and status are dependent. Although technologies should benefit political culture, by favoring decentralization and the multiplication of choice and consumer sovereignty, Barber believes that there exist other less compassionate market forces which conspire to work against these developments. He argues that as long as power, status, and profit-making remain the utmost consideration, market tyranny, such as that "already being exercised over world communication by Anglo-American programming and software monopolies" (Barber, 1998, p. 579), will impact free societies.

However, Barber considers the Pandora scenario a greater danger to democracy. Such a scenario "envisions what might happen if a government consciously sets out to utilize new technologies for purposes of standardization, control or repression" (1998, p. 580). Issues surrounding government acts of surveillance and disregard of privacy, as well as the general monopoly of information and communication, promote the possibility of new technology becoming a dangerous facilitator of domination and tyranny.

Barber nonetheless remains optimistic and idealistic about the capacity of technology for democracy and expresses this optimism through the Jeffersonian scenario. Although he admits this scenario to be the least probable, its stress on

technologies' capability to enhance the quality and degree of communication among citizens and between citizens and bureaucrats, and experts, nevertheless makes possible a guarded optimism. The Jeffersonian scenario brought Barber to reflect that "[i]t is then the will and not the way that is missing at present" (1998, p. 584). The Jeffersonian scenario also holds up the belief he shares with Gronlund and Castell about the capacity of ICT to enhance democratic practices and enable citizens to participate and influence policy development. The association of ICT and democracy is described as 'e-democracy'. The following sections describe the concepts of democracy and e-democracy.

2.2. Democracy and country-specific conceptualization of e-democracy

Much has been said about ICT and its potential to generally enhance democracy. The definition of democracy however, remains open to contestation. Scholars (e.g., Fishkin, Neil, & Paul, 2001; Sheehan & Neil, 2001) often argue that there is no single collective definition. Gallie (1964), states that democracy is an "essentially contested concept" (p. 178) and Lijphart (1977) argues that "[d]emocracy is a concept that virtually defies definition" (p. 4). More recently, King (2005) reaffirms this argument and maintains that the question of what defines democracy "is very difficult to answer definitively" (p. 16).

Inevitably the difficulty to define the term has subjected it to diverse interpretations. According to Dahl, Neil and Paul (2001), the term 'democracy' sometimes even conflicts with its original Greek word of demos (meaning 'people') and kratia (meaning 'rule') or rule by the people. They maintain that a country is considered democratic when it fulfils the five basic political institutions, namely, elected official, free, fair, and frequent elections, freedom of expression, access to alternative independent sources of information, and autonomous associations.

Seemingly, the evolution of democratic ideals adapts to the characteristics of nation-state that chooses to implement it. Scholars argue that many different ideas of democracy are being practised today (e.g., Rawls, 1997) and these

practices are determined and “largely conditional on differing conceptions of citizenship, social needs, and human nature... [as a] result of social, cultural, and ideological variables” (Inoguchi, Newman, & Keane, 1998, p. 2). Thus, these arguments support democracy as defined by the context of its application in a particular country.

Democratic ideals are adopted by countries for different reasons. Contemporary democracy is arguably still “justified as the best form of government for political equity and that it is the natural form of consent through deliberation” (Korac-Kakabadse & Korac-Kakabadse, 1999, p. 211). Held (1996) maintains that rather than other forms of regime, democratic concepts can be used to assert change in a democratic country through “a better opportunity for deliberation, debate and resolution” (p. 298) on substantive issues.

The prospect of deliberating on issues that matter to citizens compels some nation-states to adopt and implement democratic ideals. It has often been argued that among democratic countries in South-East Asia, some exercise limits to opportunities for citizen deliberation. Neher (2002) points out that the act of limiting deliberation particularly in South-East Asia is due to the fact that these countries are still undergoing a process of nation building. He asserts that the South-East Asian countries are

moving in the direction of greater national resilience and self-reliance. Their prospects rest on each nation’s internal capacity to meet the needs of its people and to assure them of a higher standard of living. Each nation must strike its own bargain between its requirements for growth and stability, authority, and freedom, regional interdependence and nationalism, and modernization and cultural integrity ... [E]ach nation however, is coping with change in ways that create difficult problems and choices (p. 284).

Malaysia is a nation which practises democratic ideals and strikes a bargain to achieve growth and stability. The following section discusses democracy in Malaysia.

2.2.1. Democracy in Malaysia

E-democracy practices are dependent on context and political environment (Catinet & Vedel, 2000). The model of choice for e-democracy often conforms to a

country's present democratic system, which determines styles of governance and influences on social actors of democratic practices. Lijphart (1977) named Malaysia's democracy as 'consociational democracy', which he defines as one which has four distinct characteristics, namely a grand coalition government made up of political leaders of significant segments of plural society; the exercise of mutual veto or 'concurrent majority' rule to further serve to protect minority interests; a high degree of autonomy for each party in a coalition to run its own internal affairs; and proportionality as the principle standard of political representation, civil service appointments, and allocation of public funds. The significance of Malaysia as a consociational democracy to the discussion of e-democracy is that the existence of a grand coalition government and the exercise of the principle of proportionality construct a distinctive governance and public administrative structure. Related to this is another scholar's description of Malaysia's approach to democracy as accommodation or a strategy of "consensual and deliberative posture [practised] by the dominant ethnic regime" (Hussin, 1990, p. 26), whereby minority ethnic groups can bargain and pressure government on issues of interest.

Analyzing Malaysian democracy in the South-East Asia regional context, Neher (1994, 2002) emphasizes that the region is diverse and consists of ten nations with different histories, cultural traditions, and political-economic systems. These countries share similar patterns, such as a history of colonization, struggles for independence and modernization, and religious prevalence of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Based on these socio-political and cultural backgrounds, Neher (1994) identified Malaysian democracy as an 'Asian-style democracy'. He postulated that Malaysia maintains five characteristics of Asian-style democracy, as listed below:

- Deference to authority and hierarchy: It is almost obligatory to follow directives from legitimate leaders and it is unacceptable to criticize publicly a nation's leaders except when "those leaders have lost their "mandate" to rule. Criticism [of] rulers is tantamount to criticism of the state itself" (p. 953 , emphasis in original).

- Personalism: Political leadership depends on individuals rather than laws. In some cases individual Asian leaders play an important role in determining the direction of their societies.
- Patron-client communitarianism: The primary pattern of exchange interaction is “hierarchical, [face-to-face], superior-inferior relationship of reciprocity” (p. 950). He argued that patron-client relationships grow from personal relationships such as kinship grouping and official ties within bureaucracy. The bonds between two individuals are linked with others in a network at all levels of society. He also claimed that it is theoretically possible to trace a hierarchical chain of patron-client bonds from the lowest to the highest levels of society.
- Dominant political parties: The leading role of the United Malay National Organization (UMNO) party has emerged in Malaysia due to its role in “the independence struggles against the colonialists, thereby garnering the image of nationalism” (p. 955).
- A strong state: The state, which refers to “public officials, elective and appointive, who decide public policy” (p. 956), has co-opted organizations to ensure interdependence between state and society’s various organizations.

More recently, Neher (2002) defines Malaysian democracy as a ‘semi-democracy’, a term which he uses to refer to “a parliamentary-democratic system, featuring free, competitive elections and limits on state power” (p. 4). He argues that authoritative decisions have been made by elected leaders and accepted by the Malaysian population, due to the government’s objective of ensuring continued stability and development. Although he concedes that this categorization may only be useful for specific times – both of Neher’s analyses were conducted during the era of the former Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohammed, which ended in October 2003 – this analysis emphasizes the role of leadership in the discourse of democracy in Malaysia. Neher’s categorization may be applicable for the period other than Mahathir’s regime. Currently (at least during commencement and duration of data collection of this study) Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who took over in November 2003, is the Prime Minister of Malaysia.

A prominent Malaysian Professor of Sociology, Abdul Rahman Embong (2007) emphasizes that democracy must be understood in its formal and substantive senses. He points out that formal democracy refers to institutional democracy, where country leaders, who compete for power through their respective political parties, are elected through the institution of an electoral system. Substantive democracy refers to participatory democracy or “the space for the articulation of views based on the basic freedom of speech, space to participate in decision-making processes at different levels, access to opportunities, irrespective of ethnicity, gender and religion, and so on” (p. 131). It is necessary therefore to differentiate substantive democracy from formal democracy when analyzing democratic practice in Malaysia, where the applicable framework of democracy is based on a Western-style democratic system, but “the substance and implementation has been very much conditioned by the historical context as well as by the internal social and political dynamics that impact upon the system, leading to some modifications and changes” (Embong, 2007, p. 171). According to Lijphart (1977), Malaysian democracy is a careful balancing act because “the political stakes are often high in plural societies” (p. 27).

Three of the five characteristics described above, namely personalism, deference to authority, and patron-client communitarianism, hold particular significance for analyzing democratic practice in Malaysia. Personalism often refers to the leadership style and personality, which Malaysia’s prime ministers play in determining the direction of the country. Some scholars (e.g., Samad, 2008) note that no “two Malaysian leaders were the same... [where] previous Prime Ministers managed the country in non-similar manners” (p. 107). While Mahathir’s style is generalized as “combative, confrontational, blunt and aloof, bordering even on arrogance” (Samad, 2008, p. 107), Abdullah’s style of leadership is described as cautious, consensual and consultative (Embong, 2007; Ooi et al., 2008). Abdullah is thus favored to introduce

a more consultative, consensus-oriented form of leadership, which would provide greater space for discussion and openness. With a civil service background ... Abdullah was used to open-minded, non-totalitarian leadership. He was happy to consult others who worked for him (Samad, 2008, p. 70).

This form of leadership, which is termed the 'Abdullah factor' (Embong, 2007, p. 154), is likely to introduce a new style of interaction among social actors as greater space for discussions and openness enhances democratic practice in the country. Theoretically, leadership styles are likely to affect the way democracy plays out in Malaysia.

Deference to authority is closely linked to an important concept in Islam, the official religion of Malaysia. For example, the Quran pronounces as follows:

O ye who believe! Obey God, and the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you. If ye differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to God and His Apostle, if ye do believe in God and the Last Day: That is best and most suitable for final determination (surah Al-Nisa':59).

It is imperative that Muslims obey authority like "those who have been charged with the affairs of the country and are responsible to make decisions in the interest[s] of the public" (Agil, 1994, p. 119). Although criticisms are allowed and acceptable, once leaders deviate from a righteous path and violate public interests, in practice, the nature of Malaysian democracy is frequently shaped by the possible consequences of its social actors negatively criticizing their leaders.

Patron-client communitarianism often restricts transmission of criticism to leaders. This characteristic exists, for example, when leaders at all levels of society expect their subordinates to discuss issues with them before allowing such issues to be promoted in the hierarchy. In the bureaucracy hierarchical ties are broadly defined by one's level whereby, the higher grade officer (superior) normally is the patron, while the clients are those in grades lower than him or her (subordinate). By going through the hierarchy, any form of criticism from the subordinate is often filtered by the immediate superior based on his own reasoning. This form of filtering potentially limits citizens' concerns from reaching their leaders in democratic practices. It may be possible that a new medium of interaction, such as is feasible with ICTs, may facilitate and enable citizens to challenge these filters and enhance the exercise of their democratic rights.

Neher's characteristics of Asian-style democracy are focused on Asian values. It has been argued by Inoguchi (1998) that almost

all formulations of Asian values assume a dichotomy between Asian and Western, particularly American, values. Indeed, the debate often assumes aspects of a “declaration of independence” from American cultural values. Thus, Asian values are identified as values neglected (or even despised) by Americans – communitarian ties with neighbourhood, workplace, and state; respect for the elderly; an emphasis on education; collective over individual welfare and so on (Inoguchi, 1998, p. 179, Emphasis in original).

The three Asian values outlined above provide significant insights in analyzing democratic practice in a culture like Malaysia’s. ICTs might further facilitate democratic practice, whereby these values and other emerging cultural values from the study will reveal significant cultural dimensions that shape the conceptions of ICTs usage in democratic practice in Malaysia. The application of these values in this study is discussed in Chapter 5. The concept of e-democracy is elaborated in the next section.

2.3. The definition of e-democracy

Literatures in the field of e-democracy suggest various definitions some of which are too general. They simply equate e-democracy with the utilization of ICTs in democratic practice. For example, Stephen Coleman and Donald Norris (2005) refer to e-democracy as the use of ICT to enhance democratic structures and processes. Street and Neil (2001) describe the term as the use of ICT to expedite or transform the idea and practice of democracy.

More elaborate definitions of e-democracy (e.g., Clift, 2003; Gronlund, 2001; Hansard Society, 2003; Macintosh, 2004; Queensland Government, 2004) contribute to further understanding of the term. Steven Clift (2003), who claimed he coined the term ‘e-democracy’ in 1994, focuses on the actors of e-democracy. Clift states that e-democracy is the utilization of ICTs by ‘democratic sectors’, such as government and citizens, within the political processes of local communities, states, nations, and on the global stage. A clearer relationship between actors of e-democracy is provided by the Hansard Society in the United Kingdom, which states that “the concept of e-democracy is associated with efforts to broaden political participation by enabling citizens to connect with one another and with their representatives via new information and communication technologies” (2003).

This definition points to both horizontal linkages between citizens and civil society, as well as the vertical linkages between civil society and policy makers.

A more useful and practical definition is provided by Gronlund (2001), who explains that e-democracy points towards the usage of ICTs between politicians (through public administrators) and citizens to inform, vote, poll and discuss issues. In attempting to define e-democracy as a process, Macintosh (2004) describes e-democracy as the “use of [ICT] to engage citizens, support the democratic decision-making processes and strengthen representative democracy” (p. 2). In practice, the government of Queensland, Australia (2004) promulgated its e-democracy policy framework by emphasizing opportunities provided by new ICTs, such as the Internet, interactive digital television, and mobile communication systems to increase public participation in government decision-making process.

To summarize, the definition of e-democracy revolves around three key dimensions, specifically human actors, their utilization of ICTs, and democratic practices. For the purpose of this study, e-democracy is generally defined as the utilization of interactive ICTs between public officials (elected and appointed) and citizens to inform, vote on, poll about and discuss public policy. As discussed in Chapter 1, the focus of this study is the practice of e-democracy between public administrators and citizens. The following section explores the dimension of human actors (public administrators and citizens) around the concepts of public administration and citizen participation.

2.4. Public administration and citizen participation

The concept of public administration, according to Johnston, Neil, and Paul (2001), is defined as “the formal procedural and organizational arrangements under which public [administrators] serve a government” (p. 12507). The public administrators operate in organizations to implement and advise on policy, as well as managing public resources. The aspects of organization and control in public administration are related to bureaucratic forms of organization. Max Weber, the sociologist, establishes that bureaucracy concerns “the ideals of rational-legal authority, under

which all decisions, except executive decisions, are based on rules that are internally consistent and stable over time” (Meyer, Neil, & Paul, 2001, p. 1402). Bureaucratic authority can be achieved through particular institutional arrangements with predetermined functions as discussed in the following section.

2.4.1. Public administration: institutions and functions

Public administration is generally organized in five forms: central agencies, departments, government business enterprises, review and regulatory agencies, as well as peripheral boards and agencies. Each form of organization serves a specific purpose for the administration:

- central agencies are dedicated to coordinate and support government efforts. Central agencies are mainly responsible for financial and human resource management and management improvement;
- departments are responsible for direct service provision to the public, across a broad range of policy;
- government business enterprises operate in a more business-like way to provide some essential or commercial services;
- agencies in charge of review and regulation (e.g., auditors general, ombudsmen, and anti-corruption agencies); and
- boards and agencies are more peripheral and conduct other, sometimes more obscure, aspects of government business (Johnston, et al., 2001).

Relationships within and between these agencies are intricate and significant for achieving objectives of the public administration. Each organization also consists of “appointed, i.e., not elected, civil servants, organized in a hierarchy and reporting to the sovereign authority, originally to the king, then to the nation as represented by its elected representatives” (Meyer, et al., 2001, p. 1406). It is important to identify the way institutions – for public administration in a particular country – are organized to establish a control and authority structure. Such a structure provides insights into the nature of e-democracy which can be practiced. For the purpose of this study, a detailed description of the structure of the Malaysian public administration is discussed in Chapter 3.

The functions of public administrators in a bureaucratic structure are restricted. Weber (2007; Weber, Gerth, & Mills, 1948) outlines six principles for bureaucratic functions.

The first principle is fixed and official jurisdictional areas are set in accordance to laws or administrative regulations. Regular activities of a bureaucratically governed structure are fixed and identified as official duties, with an authority and prescribed methods to discharge the duties. These three elements form bureaucratic authority. Public administrators are limited to implementing their official duties. Initiating a new role, e.g., through e-democracy, without any mandate from those in authority will be disadvantageous to the productivity of public administrators. The outcomes of such non-mandated initiatives, at best, will only be considered as unofficial inputs or rejected by the higher authority in public administration.

The second principle is office hierarchy and graded authorities, which shape a superior-subordinate system. Hierarchical office authority is found in all bureaucratic structures, irrespective of whether they are public or private. As discussed, it is important to understand the extent of hierarchical authority in a particular organization to identify e-democracy practices in such an organization.

The third principle is written documents or file-based management in which documents are preserved in their original form. These files and public administrators “along with the respective apparatus of material implements” (Weber, 2007, p. 44) constitute a bureau. Public administrators are familiar with hard copy documents and so the notion of working with soft copy materials, such as online feedback in e-democracy, can be problematic to the bureau. It is significant to identify any shift of preference towards working with soft copy documents among public administrators in this study.

The fourth principle of Weber’s bureaucratic functions concerns office management which presupposes a thorough and expert training, which includes all specialized office management. This principle emphasizes the need for training

in every function of public administration, including new initiatives like e-democracy.

The fifth principle demands full working capacity of the official when the office is fully developed. This principle is pertinent although the official obligatory time in the bureau is strictly delimited. As such, any introduction of new initiatives, such as e-democracy in policy development, could be considered extra workload by public administrators. Identification of e-democracy as a burden to public administrators will construct a complete understanding of e-democracy practices and the proper rectification steps needed to overcome them.

The final principle is office management, following general rules which are stable and exhaustive. These rules can be learned and represent special technical learning of public administrators. As discussed, any changes to the role of public administrators, e.g., the introduction of e-democracy, must be streamlined with general rules for a concerted administration.

Weber's principles of bureaucratic functions are applicable to most public service organizations in the world, including the Malaysian Federal Public Service (MFPS), (see Chapter 3). Public administrators in a bureaucratic structure are restricted from the rapid adoption of new innovative functions, such as e-democracy, in policy development. Effective implementation of e-democracy would require new processes to be clearly defined in the existing administrative procedures and regulations. Such procedures and regulations should also include specialized methods for handling electronic documents, as opposed to hard copy files, to facilitate the systematic implementation of citizen participation through e-democracy into such a structure. This study will investigate the expectation for new procedures to regulate e-democracy among interviewees (see Chapter 10). In order to frame the discussion of e-democracy in policy development, relevant processes are explained in the following sections.

2.4.2. Policy-making in public administration

The policy-making process is complicated in nature. According to Giandomenico Majone (1989), a former professor of public policy analysis, “[p]ublic policy is made of language” (p. 1). Policy-making involves argument at all stages of its process and policy analysts, such as public administrators, manage such processes as craftsmen. Majone argues that similar to traditional crafts, a successful performance of a public policy depends on public administrators’ “intimate knowledge of materials and tools, and on [a] highly personal relationship” (1989, p. 45) between public administrators and the task of policy-making. The traditional craftsman utilizes concrete materials to produce an object, while policy analysts use concepts, theories, data, and technical tools to argue and produce evidence in support of a particular policy. Majone’s argument, which equates public administrators as craftsmen in policy-making processes, emphasizes the importance of public administrators in acquiring a body of skills and mastering tools, such as interactive ICTs in e-democracy, in the development of public policy. The nature of the public administrators’ utilization of interactive ICTs in e-democracy to support policy-making processes will be identified in this study (see Chapter 1).

Another scholar, Charles E. Lindblom (1959, 2007) who champions the incremental approach in policy-making, argues that literature on policy-making approaches suggests a rational comprehensive (or root) method for all public policy development. He establishes that this body of literature neglects a practical approach, termed the ‘method of successive limited comparisons’ (or branch method), normally practised by public administrators. Lindblom (1959, 2007) argues that public policy analysis for the root method cannot be comprehensive due to limited human capacities and limited availability of information for a policy. A succession of incremental changes in the branch method is preferable because policy making is “a process of successive approximation to some desired objectives in which what is desired itself continues to change under consideration” (1959, p. 171). He concluded that the branch method is far superior to the root method due to its deliberate, systematic, and defensible exclusions of factors in an incremental policy analysis process. The arguments outlined by Lindblom and

Majone suggest that policy-making processes are intricate in nature. A manageable framework is thus required to examine the application of e-democracy in such processes.

Althaus, Bridgman, and Davis (2007) claim that policy-making processes are best described in identifiable and clear steps, referred to as a policy cycle. The general policy cycle consists of (at least) five steps: problem identification, agenda setting, adoption, implementation, and policy evaluation. They argue that the policy cycle will assist public administrators to disaggregate “complex phenomena into manageable steps” (2007, p. 33) and acknowledge that policy development is a non-linear process. Althaus et.al. admit that imposing the policy cycle will create an unrealistic expectation of reliable and predictable public policy processes, which are always dependent on other factors, such as political will, and budget constraints. The unpredictable nature of policy-making poses a real challenge in investigating e-democracy practices in such processes.

Macintosh (2004) conveniently suggests five high-level stages in the policy-making life cycle to examine the application of e-democracy, as shown in Figure 2-1. These stages – setting the agenda for policy, analyzing the challenges and opportunities associated with the agenda, creating policy, implementing policy, and monitoring policy – frame policy-making processes for a systematic investigation of relevant e-democracy practices at each stage.

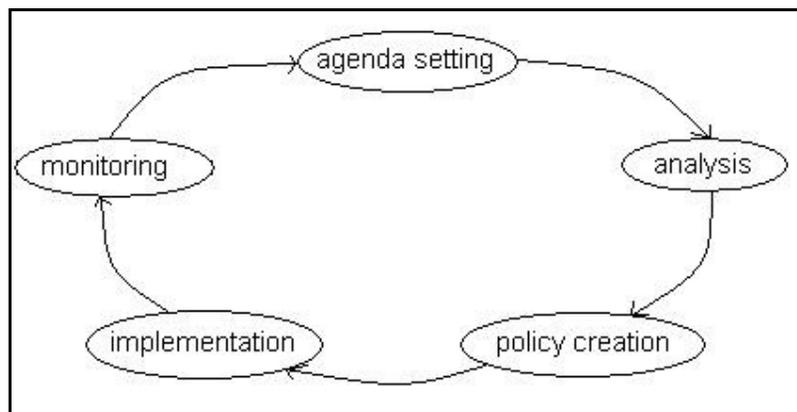


Figure 2-1 Policy-making life cycle

Source: Reproduced from (Macintosh, 2004, p. 3)

Macintosh outlines that these stages should be explicitly defined to allow for different policy cycles from different countries to be appreciated. The Australian policy cycle, for example, which consists of eight stages, starts with “issue identification, and then proceeds through policy analysis, policy instruments, consultation, co-ordination, decision, implementation and evaluation” (Althaus, et al., 2007, p. 37). Extra stages in the Australian example suggest different initiatives in policy-making in different countries. To achieve the aims of this study, the Malaysian policy cycle, which consists of five steps – policy development, planning, implementation, co-ordination, and evaluation – is discussed in Chapter 3. The inclusion of citizens in policy-making processes is discussed in the following section.

2.4.3. Citizen participation in policy development

The engagement of citizens in public administration relates to the notion of public governance. The concept of public governance integrates “strong principles into building institutions, processes, and capacities that can help produce prosperity, equity and social justice in each and every society” (e.g., United Nations, 2008a, p. 22). The World Public Sector Report (WPSR) 2008 (United Nations, 2008a) conceptualizes public governance as consisting of two interrelated components based on its activities aimed at improving public welfare. The first component is called Development Management and focuses on public policy institutions and processes that contribute to the material and social well-being of citizens. The development component is aimed at public policy institutions and processes. The second component is called Rights with ten features, such as freedom of information, rule of law, and due political process. Rights represent principles of political and human rights which shape a citizen-government relationship in society. The Report argues, for example, that civic participation in policy development involves both components of institutions and processes (Development Management) and a number of rights, such as access to information, (the Rights). While both components are significant for examining citizen participation in public administration, Development Management of public governance is the main focus of this study, particularly in relation to the inclusion of citizens via e-democracy in policy development at the federal level (see Chapter

1). In the present study, the Rights component will address the dimensions of issues surrounding citizen participation in such processes.

The realization of citizen participation in policy development processes impacts upon the credibility and integrity, as well as acceptance, of government policies. Scholars (e.g., Caddy, Vergez, & Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2001; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004) have identified several driving forces that lead governments to engage citizens in policy development:

- policy quality improvement – governments can tap into wider sources of information, views, and possible solutions to overcome the pressure of time on policy development and the increasing complexity and interdependency of policy. Governments can also educate citizens about the reasons for a particular public policy;
- management of emerging government-citizen interaction – governments can prepare for greater and faster interactions with citizens while ensuring better knowledge management;
- public input integration in policy development – governments can incorporate public inputs in policy development to ensure that citizens' expectations are heard and their views considered;
- transparent and accountable government – governments can increase transparency and accountability by allowing public and media scrutiny of government actions; and
- public trust restoration – governments can build trust, which is the key to the functions and sustainability of public governance to overturn the declining voter turnout in elections and outcomes of surveys, which might show declining confidence in key public institutions.

These reasons compel governments to engage citizens in policy development. Whether these or other emerging reasons drive the Malaysian federal government to engage citizens in the process of policy development are discussed in Chapter 10.

The literature suggests a number of citizen participation initiatives in policy development. The WPSR (2008a) discusses four significant initiatives of citizen

participation in policy development processes at national or federal level of government. These initiatives include multi-stakeholders participation through Economic and Social Councils (ESCs), network governance, deliberative democracy, and direct democracy. First, ESCs are designed to promote multi-stakeholders participation, namely representatives from government, business, civil society organizations, and trade unions, in policy development. The focus of ESCs public policy deliberation is mostly on social and environmental issues. Second, the network governance initiative promotes interdependency and collaboration for mutual benefit among multi-stakeholders in policy development. This type of governance facilitates decision-making through negotiation without any party having a determining power over the other and is particularly useful in the area of policy advocacy. Third, the deliberative democracy initiative refers to informed dialogue and negotiation around issues of public policy. Finally, the direct democracy initiative refers to direct citizen participation in policy deliberation through petitions and referendums. The report concludes that successful initiatives of citizen participation in policy development are largely dependent on a particular country's cultural and institutional contexts. Government commitment and relevant institutional changes are two important factors that drive the successful implementation of such initiatives (United Nations, 2008a). The report neglects e-democracy initiatives of citizen participation in policy development, but maintains that ICTs are becoming important tools for the government to engage citizens. The present study will investigate any enhancement, transformation, or mere preservation of any or all four offline initiatives discussed, to realize e-democracy practices, or emerging e-democracy initiatives to include citizens and other stakeholders in the policy development process. Initiatives of citizen participation by the Malaysian federal government are discussed in Chapter 3 to facilitate the investigation.

Separate from government, active citizen participation is another important aspect in policy development. Scholars (e.g., Inoguchi, et al., 1998) stress that democracy is the political machinery that translates public preference into public policy. They argue that democratic institutions can ill afford to produce the intended policy results without active participation on the part of citizens. The

extent of citizen involvement will be dependent on the nature of issues surrounding a policy, e.g., whether it concerns operational issues, which can be opened to all citizens, or a national strategic issue, which requires a certain level of security clearance. It will also depend on citizens' competencies, as well as their willingness to influence policy (Anttiroiko, 2003; Bakar & Johanson, 2010). This is because citizens participate in policy development for different reasons. Baum, Neil and Paul (2001) outline four possible purposes for citizens to participate in public life: (a) to communicate information, which include perceptions, beliefs, opinions, hopes, expectations and intentions; (b) to develop relationships by creating new ones and strengthening existing ones; (c) to develop the capacity to act and organize action, which includes organizing coalitions, planning, strategizing, as well as creating and exercising power; and (d) to preserve or change policies, practices, conditions and relationships.

These purposes are likely to drive citizens to provide views, opinions and exercise their rights. The opportunities provided by ICTs create a situation where "more people have come to feel capable of speaking out about decisions that will affect their lives, and consequently, they have been demanding [to have] a say in those decisions" (Thomas, 1995, p. 1). The onus rests on government to realize citizen participation in policy development. Any decision to open up any policy for e-democracy is dependent on government priorities. A better understanding of the way citizens participate and their motivation to engage through e-democracy could ensure effective adoption. Governments and public administrators need to comprehend the nature of e-democracy implementation within their own institutional context, which is a task undertaken in this study.

2.4.4. Issues surrounding citizen participation in policy development

Citizen participation in policy development is an ongoing practice in the public service. Irvin and Stansbury (2004) outline a number of issues related to citizen participation: the time it takes, its cost, and loss of control in the decision-making process. They argue that engaging citizens would require a longer period of time and higher cost to reach a decision. The same decision that a group of citizens reached could be made by a single well-trained public administrator. As some

public issues are time-sensitive and need to be swiftly dealt with, the issue of timing is crucial for public administrators in developing a particular public policy, such as one concerning national security. A higher cost involved in engaging citizens at the beginning of the policy development process may result in smaller budgets for actual implementation of the policy.

The inclusion of citizens in policy development also challenges the bureaucratic authority of the public service, which may result in the public service losing control over decision-making. Althaus et al. (2007) argue that traditional policy-making is premised on the operation of the public service with Weberian bureaucratic characteristics (hierarchical, maintenance of the division of labour, and governed by rules) discussed earlier. Vertical hierarchy and the distinct division of labour in public service agencies are at odds with the horizontal approach of citizen participation in the agencies' policy development. The initiatives of citizen participation in policy development, such as network governance, offer the possibility of a bottom-up conceptualization of public policy with constructive inputs from stakeholders, such as private sectors, non-governmental organizations, and citizens. Different expectations of government, the public service, and citizens in such processes are to be expected. These expectations, specifically the inclusion of citizens in policy development through e-democracy, are discussed in Chapter 10.

Co-ordination among government agencies is critical to realize a coherent and consistent policy across sectors (Althaus, et al., 2007). The Australian federal government, for example, introduces the whole-of-government concept to promulgate a co-ordinated approach to its public service. The concept "denotes public service agencies working across portfolio boundaries to achieve a shared goal and an integrated government response to particular issues" (Management Advisory Committee, 2004, p. 1). The focus of the whole-of-government concept is toward coordinated policy development, program management and service delivery. Similar initiatives to improve co-ordination among government agencies in the MFPS are discussed in Chapter 3.

Public administrators through their organizations have the means and ability to engage with citizens. Weber (2007) identifies five external patterns of the personal position of public administrators in bureaucratic organizations. First, public administrators benefit from a distinct social esteem relative to the people whom they serve. The social position follows the fulfilment of three conditions: a heavy demand for trained experts for the administration, a strong and stable social differentiation which favors candidates for public administration from socially and economically advantaged strata, and “where the costliness of the required training and status conventions are binding upon” (Weber, 2007, p. 45) public administrators. Second, public administrators who are appointed by a superior authority are considered to be a pure type of official. As compared to an elected official, these public administrators are appointed on their merits, qualifications, and qualities to function specifically in their post. Elected officials are often selected by their superior, based on the services they render and not on their qualification. This threatens the exact functioning of the bureaucratic mechanism. These elected officials are less dependent on hierarchy, particularly for large administrative bodies. Third, the position of a public administrator is held for life. A presupposed tenure for life is accepted as a fact in most public administrations, which guarantees an independence to discharge specific office duties free from personal considerations. Fourth, public administrators receive a regular emolument and a pension for financial security after retirement. This salary and pension is fixed according to their status (according to function and rank) and their length of service. Finally, public administrators are set for a career within the hierarchical structure of the public service. Their career path is determined by several conditions of promotion, like seniority in the service and expert examinations, which form special features of public administrators.

The distinct social position often inhibits most public administrators from accepting inputs from those whom they govern. A secure position, income, and old age security place some public administrators in a complacent mode, without much desire to accomplish more than their routine work. An introduction of new processes like e-democracy for policy development demands a shift from such a complacent mode towards active engagement with citizens. Any expectation for

such a shift in public administrators' position for e-democracy practices is discussed in Chapter 10.

According to founder and former President of the Institute on Governance, Tim Plumptre (2001), the public service, as an organization, has to rapidly adjust to the present context of governance. He argues that the public service is potentially at risk of being ineffective and not developing strategies required in coping with the changes brought forward by public governance. When delivering a talk to public administrators in INTAN (Malay acronym for the Malaysian National Institute for Public Administration) in 2001, Plumptre (2001) shared an analogy of the frog:

[W]hat happens to a frog when he is dropped into a pot of already boiling water, and what happens if he is placed into a pot of cold water, and the heat is gradually increased to the boiling point[?]. In the first instance, it seems, he leaps out immediately. In the second, he does not perceive the gradual change around him, and he dies from boiling before he has a chance to hop out (p. 46).

The moral of the story includes possible disastrous consequences for public administrators who failed to grasp how their environment is changing, and that “progressive change in [public administrators’] surroundings is much harder to apprehend than dramatic change” (Plumptre, 2001, p. 47). Any form of changes, progressive or drastic, that occurs in the public service should be strategically managed by public administrators to ensure their bureaucratic functions in public governance remain relevant.

New strategies to bridge relations between government and citizens in public administration are required. Donald F. Kettl (2007), in his article about the transformation of governance, observes that public administrators must manage the complex network in public governance within the context of public bureaucracy’s hierarchy and authority; rely more on inter-personal and inter-organizational processes to complement authority for co-ordinating action; utilize ICTs and performance management; build trust and confidence with citizens through transparency; invest in developing human capital to acquire new skills in terms of negotiation and co-ordination skills; promote bottom-up feedback; and supply bottom-up accountability to the public.

While Kettl's arguments about the transformation of governance are focused on the United States government, all issues related to such transformation are universal in nature and applicable to other governments. The relevance of such strategies to the practice of e-democracy in policy development at the federal level of government in Malaysia is discussed in Chapter 10. The following section explores the application of e-democracy in the policy development.

2.5. Applying e-democracy in policy development

The development that is taking place in terms of globalization and specifically ICT, changes the environment surrounding the public service (Kettl, 2002). ICT poses a great challenge to the public service through rapid innovation and its offer of speedy distribution and access to information. The Internet represents new possibilities for seeking public involvement in policy development, such as that envisaged by the concept of e-democracy. Public administrators should recognize ICT's transformational effects on public organizations and policy development processes. It is their responsibility to understand and take charge in spearheading the process of change (Plumptre, 2001).

According to Peter Chen (2007), the interactive nature of ICTs empowers citizens to form coalitions, mobilize opinion and engage with decision-makers. The application of ICTs in public administration may have a number of implications, including the demand for more transparency, and participation in decision-making, as well as the need for government and public administration to realize that with ICT, communities of interest cease to be geographically defined, as discussed in Chapter 1. These online communities can arise spontaneously and may play active roles in facilitating or preventing the implementation of policies.

Envisioning the potential problems of e-democracy frequently impedes public administrators from engaging citizens in their policy development process. The nature of specialized public administrators operating through a hierarchy – without efficient integration among themselves – possibly restricts them from exercising direct citizen engagement, as discussed. Another reason for not engaging citizens

is a belief on the part of public administrators that e-democracy may involve “a dramatic expansion in the role of the public in public management” (Thomas, 1995, p. 1), which in turn may add burden to the policy development process. The demand to include citizens in the policy development process has the potential to result in significant expansion of the public administrators’ role, even as the growing recognition of e-democracy’s potential may enhance the process acceptance.

Chen (2007) suggests various ways in which the adoption of new ICTs may be manifested, namely “the substitution of old methods with new ones; the development of new channels of communication with existing stakeholders; the ability to access new stakeholder groups and draw them into the policy development and implementation process; active participation in decision-making by the community; and new forms of policy administration and implementation using collaborative technologies” (Chen, 2007, p. 1). Chen’s conceptualization of the relationship between the development of e-democracy practices and the role of public administrators, by associating different types of engagement activities with different management roles or approaches to project implementation, shows how citizen participation through e-democracy requires three different managerial approaches. These approaches are: (1) an active listening role as a passive form of management, (2) a cultivating role which focuses on capacity building and the replication of action by others, and (3) a steering role as a programmatic approach with high levels of management and control. He explains that while all activities indicated in e-democracy conceptualization have fundamental democratic outcomes and objectives, the role of public administrators in some of these areas is limited (Chen, 2007). The expected roles of public administrators in e-democracy practices in the MFPS will be discussed in Chapters 10 and 11.

Apart from public administrators, citizens’ expectations about e-democracy should also be catered for. Chen (2007) further maintains that responsiveness to communities’ expectations of government communications requires an awareness of not only technological developments, but community norms and expectations. Chen stresses the importance of being responsive to changing technological and

social environments, having appropriate policy frameworks to support the active role of the public in policy development, and appropriately developing, managing and targeting e-democracy practices to address issues of public dissatisfaction with government concepts. However, Chen does not disregard the importance of recognizing the value of traditional forms of community consultation and engagement and the necessity for new methods to be introduced within the context of parliamentary democracy. Chen's argument about communities' expectations of the practices of e-democracy in policy development in the MFPS is significant and such expectations will be explored in Chapter 10.

Macintosh (2003) argues that ICTs are only the enabler for e-democracy in policy development. She highlights the issue of the digital divide as a constraint in applying e-democracy in such processes. The issue of the digital divide refers to "unequal access, lack of proper ICT infrastructure, and low adoption of technology" (Macintosh, 2003, p. 60). Some authors (e.g., Harris, 2002) argue that the digital divide should not be limited to access to technology, but should include other societal concerns including education, capacity building, social and gender equity, and the appropriateness of technology to socio-economic context. Harris (2002) further suggests that such concerns must be addressed for effective approaches to the digital divide. Lack of initiatives to address the digital divide could result in limited citizen access to information and create a barrier for engagement with the government through e-democracy. The issue of the digital divide in Malaysia and relevant initiatives to bridge such a divide by federal government will be discussed in Chapter 4.

The characteristics of e-democracy practices between government and citizens are diverse. The following section will explore a few constructive models of e-democracy practices.

2.5.1. Possible models of e-democracy

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2001, 2003), outlines three types of interaction between government and citizens, namely information, consultation, and active participation. These types of

interaction are based on the level of participation by citizens in the policy development of the government. Information refers to a one-way dissemination of information from governments to citizens. Consultation concerns a two-way relation with citizens providing feedback to government. Active participation refers to citizens' partnership with government, whereby citizens set the agenda for policy and are involved in the policy-making process. These types of interaction outlined by the OECD ignore any possibilities of any two or all three types co-existing in a particular practice of e-democracy.

Coleman and Gøtze (2001) maintain that e-democracy needs to go beyond the one-way model of e-government which concentrates on service delivery (see Chapter 1). They suggest at least four models of how e-democracy might work. First, they address the notion of direct or plebiscitary democracy. Based on the evidence that direct democracy is positively correlated with dissatisfaction with institutions of representative democracy, they reject this as an alternative model of governance. Gronlund (2001) argues that such a model has the potential to enhance lower level political discourse which creates an unclear role for representatives that could lead to unstable democratic institutions. In keeping with this rejection is the argument (e.g., Coleman & Gøtze, 2001; Snellen, 2001a) that the direct democracy model is frequently declined by institutions of representative democracy for fear of populism and its tendency to introduce a situation where successive majorities on a single issue will result in incompatible policies within and across sectors.

Second, Coleman and Gøtze (2001) acknowledge the existence of online communities. To these authors, online communities produce an autonomous civic network which is healthy for democracy. The model raises the issue of how governments connect, but also the question of whether governments can initiate and sustain e-democracy exercises aimed at citizen participation in policy development.

Third, Coleman and Gøtze (2001) observe that governments are increasingly using online techniques as a means of gauging public opinion. Although activities

ranging from online surveys and online polls to local referendums and citizen-initiated petitions, are the focus of many governments, these authors feel that such activities fail to test the capacity of the Internet to facilitate a broader and deeper approach to the process of what they term 'public opinion formation'.

Having identified and criticized these models, Coleman and Gøtze (2001) introduce a fourth possible model of e-democracy called online public engagement in policy deliberation. The emphasis of this model is on the deliberative element of democracy. Online citizen participation is expected to encourage preference formation through acts of scrutinizing, discussing, and weighing up competing values and policy options. As deliberation is very much related to developing new ways of thinking about how to enrich the democratic process, Coleman and Gøtze concede that this model is "the most difficult to generate and sustain" (2001, p. 5). All four models put forward by Coleman and Gøtze are generic, do not specifically refer to a particular country, and focus on government initiatives to engage citizens in policy development. Such models are benchmarked for the identification of e-democracy practices in this study (see Chapter 11).

Apart from government-initiated models, Lincoln Dahlberg (2001) outlines how citizens engage with government through three e-democracy camps. The camps refer to democratic models based on citizens' understanding of democratic legitimacy, namely liberal individualism, communitarianism, and deliberative democracy. He asserts that each camp pursues different objectives. While the liberal individualism camp pursues private interests, the communitarian camp reinforces values that bind community. The deliberative democracy camp however pursues democratic interaction towards understanding and agreement, despite differences.

The characteristics of e-democracy practices put forward by Dahlberg are useful, but seem oversimplified. He ignores consideration of the possibilities of characteristics between camps converging and new characteristics emerging to support the development of a particular public policy. For example, in developing an environmental protection policy, inputs are analyzed from three different

sources, namely a personal web log (blog) maintained by a blogger who is an academic passionate about environmental issues, a non-governmental organization (NGO) advocating forest conservation through an online forum, and a government official portal providing space for policy deliberation on environmental protection policies. All three camps, i.e., liberal individualism (blogger), communitarianism (NGO), and deliberative (government), are represented and involved in the development of the environmental protection policy. The present study will investigate whether the practices of e-democracy in Malaysia involve any of the models discussed and possibilities for new models to emerge for e-democracy practices in the policy development.

All e-democracy practices, regardless of any preferred model, will employ at least one ICT tool. These tools are described in the following section.

2.5.2. ICT tools for e-democracy

A number of ICT tools can be employed, by both governments and citizens, for citizen participation through e-democracy at any stage of the policy development process. The OECD (2003) establishes a collection of tools that governments can utilize at each stage of the policy-making cycle, as shown in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1 Tools for e-democracy at each stage of the policy-making cycle

Stage in policy-making cycle	Information	Consultation	Participation
Agenda-setting	Search engines, e-mail alerts for new policy issues, translation support for ethnic languages, and style checkers to remove jargon.	Online surveys and opinion polls, discussion forums, monitoring e-mails, bulletin boards and Frequently Asked Questions.	E-petitions, e-referenda, and e-communities.
Analysis	Translation support for ethnic languages and style checkers to remove jargon.	Evidence-managed facilities and expert profiling to assist government to know who the experts are.	Electronic citizen juries and e-communities.
Formulation	Advanced style checking to help interpret technical and legal terms.	Discussion forums, online citizen juries and e-communities' tools.	E-petitions and e-referenda to amend policy.

Stage in policy-making cycle	Information	Consultation	Participation
Implementation	Natural language style checkers and e-mail newsletters.	Discussion forums, online citizen juries and e-communities' tools.	E-mail distribution lists for target groups.
Monitoring	Online feedback.	Online surveys and opinion polls, discussion forums, monitoring e-mails, bulletin boards and Frequently Asked Questions.	E-petitions and e-referenda.

Source: Reproduced from the (OECD, 2003, p. 97)

A few of these tools are used in different stages and are not exclusive to any stage of the policy-making cycle. For example, e-petitions can be utilized in agenda-setting, formulation and monitoring stages. It is highly likely that only a selection of these tools is being employed at any particular stage of policy-making in some countries. The types of ICT infrastructure provided by government in a particular country often vary due to limitations, such as cost. The Malaysian ICT provisions and initiatives are discussed in Chapter 4. Identification of ICT tools provided by the Malaysian Government and utilized by both government and citizens in this study will provide insights into the nature of e-democracy for policy development in a setting outside OECD countries (see Chapter 7).

2.5.3. Challenges for e-democracy in policy development

The application of e-democracy in policy development is not issue free. Macintosh (2003) argues that e-democracy practices face five challenges, specifically: challenge of scale; building capacity and active citizenship; ensuring coherence; evaluating e-democracy; and ensuring commitment. First, challenge of scale refers to the need to ensure that all individual voices are heard and for government to listen, as well as respond to each individual. She suggests that a technology develops citizens' individual voices into a community voice and that governments should encourage the development of online communities' tools to take a more collective approach. Second, the challenge is how to build citizens' capacity to

deliberate on public issues. She proposes tools to enable disenfranchised citizens, particularly the younger generation, to engage with government. Third, the challenge is to ensure policy coherence. Macintosh (2003) argues that ICT could be utilized to support every stage in policy development through ensuring that inputs at any stage are made available at other stages. Such support enables better development of policy and well-informed citizens. Fourth, the challenge is about evaluating e-democracy practices to make sense of any achievements or shortcomings. She stresses that government should evaluate such practices to determine whether all set objectives are achieved, but falls short of suggesting a way to conduct the evaluation of e-democracy practices in policy development. Fifth, the challenge is in ensuring commitment to e-democracy practices at all levels. She acknowledges that government needs to adapt the structures and policy development to ensure that inputs from e-democracy practices are analyzed and effectively utilized for policy development. All five challenges and possible solutions, as outlined by Macintosh, are applicable to most democratic countries. The same challenges or emergent challenges specific to the Malaysian context will be investigated in this study and discussed in Chapter 10.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the concepts of e-democracy, public administration, citizen participation, democracy, and Malaysian democracy. These concepts are significant in providing the context for e-democracy practices and developing a research framework for this study (see Chapter 5). The identification of issues surrounding these concepts, such as the expectations of players of e-democracy for: new procedures to regulate e-democracy, building of trust between government and citizens, and a shift in public administrators' positions for e-democracy practices, highlights areas for further examination in this study (see Chapter 10).

Chapters 3 and 4 will further elaborate these concepts and issues in the Malaysian context.

3. The Malaysian Federal Public Service and policy development

Seperti pucuk dengan pelepah⁷

The main aim of this chapter is to contextualize policy development within the ambit of public administrators in the Malaysian Federal Public Service (MFPS). This context informs the research framework to examine e-democracy in the present study (see Chapter 5). As discussed in Chapter 1, Malaysian Government structure is divided into three tiers, namely, federal, state, and local governments or authorities. In order to keep the scope practicable, the present study will focus on policy development at the federal level of government. This chapter opens with a discussion on the structure of federal government and then discusses characteristics and major reforms, as well as functions of the MFPS focusing on policy development. The last section of this chapter discusses the inclusion of stakeholders – citizens, civil society organizations, and private sectors – in policy development in Malaysia. Issues surrounding online citizen participation in policy development are revisited in Chapter 10.

The government sources are an important integral part of the 'literature' in this chapter and Chapter 4. They should not be differentiated from the rest of the review, because they provide essential knowledge of the status quo. They are probably more significant to the current state of knowledge than the limited commentary on the Malaysian situation by outsiders. Consideration was given to treating the government sources as a separate entity, but because they are of core relevance, and better reviewed along with all of the literature as a group, they remain part of the main review.

⁷ “Like the shoot and the frond of the palm” – Malay saying (Brown, 1959, p. 120). The English equivalent is “Interdependent” (Brown, 1959, p. 119). The saying envisages the close relation between public administrators in the public service and policy development tasks, which depend on each other to the extent that one is almost useless without the other.

3.1. Structure of federal government

The governmental system of Malaysia is based on the Westminster model. Federal government administrative structure comprises of the *Yang diPertuan Agung* (the King), the Conference of Rulers, cabinet ministers, central agencies, ministries, departments, statutory bodies, and various councils and commissions established under the federal constitution (A. S. Ahmad, Mansor, & Ahmad, 2003b; Institut Tadbiran Awam Negara, 2006). This structure is illustrated in Figure 3-1.

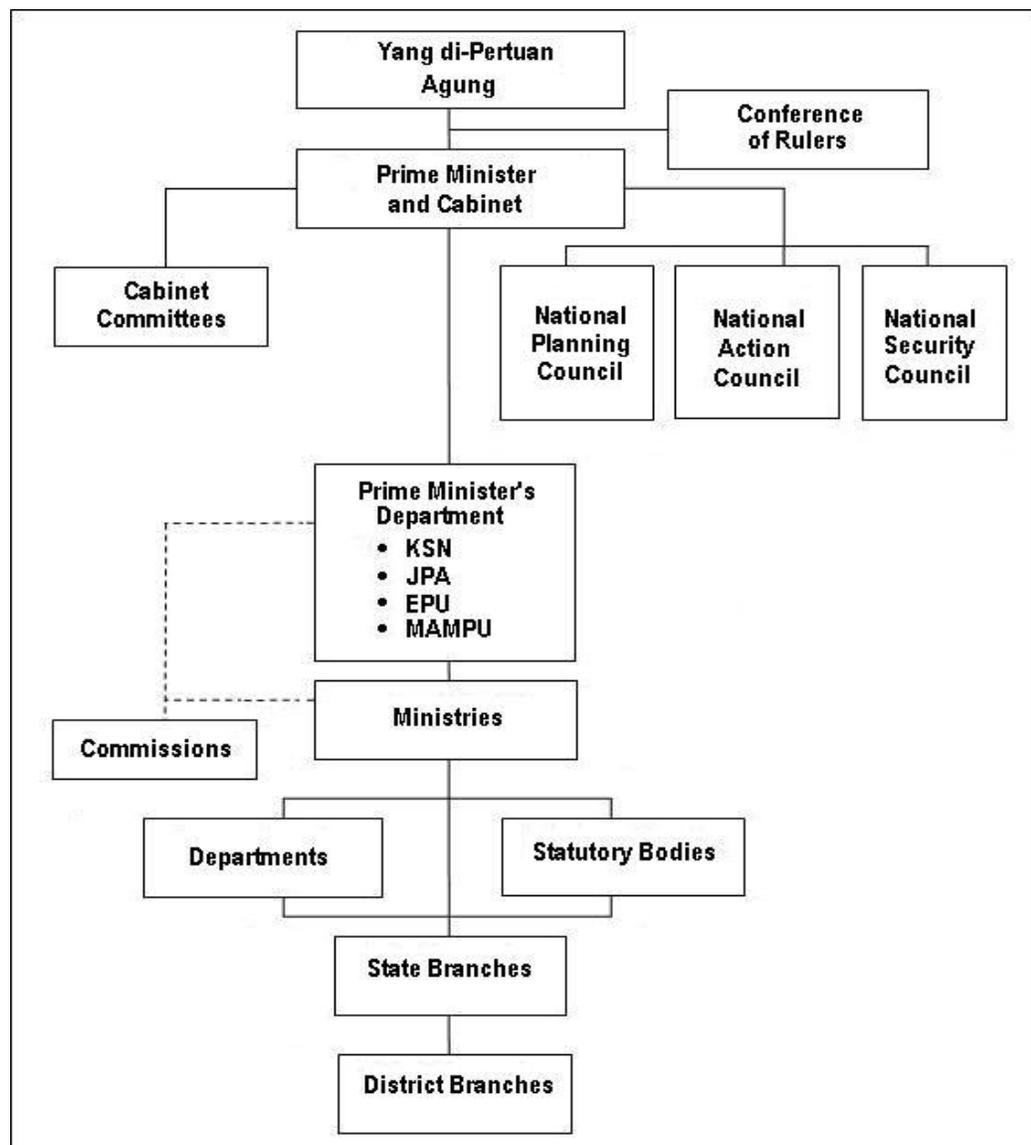


Figure 3-1 Structure of federal government administration

The party that controls the *Dewan Rakyat* (House of Representative) forms the Cabinet, which is headed by the Prime Minister (see Chapter 1). The Cabinet is the highest Executive body. The Cabinet comprises “Ministers who are experienced in the field of public administration” (Sarji, 1996, p. 159) and they are collectively responsible for decisions made by the Cabinet (Sarji, 1996). There are three Ministerial Councils to support the decision-making process at the federal level of government: 1. the National Planning Council (NPC) which considers major public policy in the economic and social field, 2. the National Action Council (NAC) which considers matters on implementation of development programs and projects, and 3. the National Security Council (NSC) which deals with security aspects. All three Councils are chaired by the Prime Minister and made up of key ministers (Economic Planning Unit, 2010a). The Cabinet may establish committees to study public issues in-depth in order to ensure decisions are well informed.

While councils are responsible for co-ordinating activities of ministries at the federal level, commissions are established to ensure impartiality of government agencies in discharging activities. As discussed in Chapter 1, the Public Service Commission (PSC) is one example of such commissions. The present study discusses the expectations of public administrators in the role of these councils and commissions in the implementation of e-democracy practices at the federal level of government in Chapter 10.

The government has a federal framework with the balance of effective power lying with the federal government. Painter (2004) observes there is an executive dominance in the country’s system of government and a concentration of power in the office of prime minister as leader of the entrenched ruling coalition, with little resistance from society or states. To a certain extent, Painter finds there is a tradition of bureaucratic subservience to the political executive. It is rare that ministers’ orders are resisted by public administrators in Malaysia (Painter, 2004). Such a concentration of power shapes a distinctive process of policy development in the country (see section 3.1.2).

Political leaders, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, may outline general directions and preferences for the determination of public policies. However detailed proposals, funding and other related matters are entrusted to the public service. The following section discusses the structure and functions of the MFPS.

3.2. The Malaysian Federal Public Service (MFPS)

The MFPS is headed by the Chief Secretary to government (whose Malay abbreviation is KSN) with a Secretary General appointed for each ministry. As of 1 December 2005, there were 212 federal agencies with 951,556 public administrators (Public Service Department Malaysia, 2006b). The agencies are classified into central and operating agencies. The main central agencies are the Public Service Department or JPA (the common Malay abbreviation), Economic Planning Unit (EPU), the Treasury and Malaysian Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit or MAMPU (the common Malay acronym). Other ministries, departments, statutory bodies, and branches are referred to as operating agencies. The central agencies are considered powerful due to their control over operating and development budgets, as well as personnel matters of the operating agencies (A. S. Ahmad, Mansor, & Ahmad, 2003a). All central agencies and operating agencies are accountable to the KSN and ultimately, the Cabinet (Sarji, 1996).

The central agencies, which fall under the Prime Minister's Department, also coordinate government policy development through various Cabinet secretariats (A. S. Ahmad, et al., 2003a). These secretariats normally consist of representatives from all relevant parties and agencies involved in a particular program or initiative. The co-ordinating role of central agencies will ensure effective implementation of programs and initiatives of government, which involve participation from several operating agencies.

The vertical relationship between central agencies and operating ministries is significant. The expectations of e-democracy players for an efficient co-ordinating role by these central agencies in the implementation of e-democracy in the policy

development are discussed in Chapter 10. Only a few central agencies and operating agencies – namely ministries and departments – are selected in the present research due to the size of the study. The identification and selection of relevant central agencies and operating agencies for the implementation of e-democracy in policy development are discussed in Chapter 6.

The MFPS (made up of central and operating agencies) has certain characteristics that require explanation. The following section discusses key characteristics of the MFPS to highlight their importance to public administrators in policy development.

3.2.1. Key characteristics of the MFPS

A number of authors outline three significant characteristics of the MFPS (e.g., A. S. Ahmad, et al., 2003a; Sarji, 1996) which require some discussion to relate them to the policy development process. The first characteristic concerns the impartiality of the public service. Various measures have been stipulated in the Malaysian Federal Constitution to ensure public administrators appointed to the MFPS are non-partisan. The role of the independent service commission, the Public Service Commission (PSC), is an important measure to ensure the neutrality of public administrators (see Chapter 1).

The second characteristic is the diverse areas of expertise among public administrators. The public administrators who operate within the federal agencies are divided into 19 classifications of scheme of service (see Chapter 1). These public administrators are clustered into three main groups, namely top-management, management and professional (M&P), and support (Public Service Department Malaysia, 2006a). Top-management and M&P groups of the MFPS are the focus of the present study due to their direct function in developing public policy and ICT policy in the MFPS. Identification and selection of such groups are discussed in Chapter 6.

The third characteristic involves the personal position of public administrators around the prestige and assurance of job security offered by the post. A demand to fill the post in the MFPS shows its prestigious status compared to the private

sector (A. S. Ahmad, et al., 2003a). The public administrators in Malaysia are also protected under Article 135 of the Federal Constitution from any interference from their political masters (Sarji, 1996, p. 246). Weber's external patterns of public administrators' personal positions in bureaucratic organizations, e.g., a distinct social esteem, a secure position, income, and old age security, are also applicable to public administrators in the MFPS (as discussed in Chapter 2).

All three characteristics of public administrators – impartiality, expertise, and personal position – place a high expectation on them to develop good policies in the MFPS. Such characteristics embody cultural features which shape e-democracy practices in policy development at the federal level of government. Chapter 8 revisits these characteristics to discuss emerging cultural features surrounding such practices. Whether these cultural features limit public administrators in implementing e-democracy in policy development in Malaysia is discussed in Chapter 12.

A number of continuous reforms and innovation has been introduced in the MFPS. These reforms and innovations have shaped the organizational culture of the MFPS, which is significant to the present study. The following section discusses major reforms and innovations of the MFPS when Malaysia gained its independence in 1957 until the present.

3.2.2. Key changes in the MFPS

In discussing major reforms and innovations in the MFPS, this section aims to outline its institutional capacity in facing future changes to undertake growing developmental functions, like the implementation of e-democracy in policy development.

The Malaysian Government has actively pursued the policy of administrative reform and modernization since 1957 (A. S. Ahmad, et al., 2003a; Hussain, 2001; Siddiquee, 2002, 2006, 2007). The wide variety of reforms and innovations introduced in the public service

shows that they are not only in tune with contemporary political and business environment, they also demonstrate the government's willingness to learn and adopt from other contexts in its quest for enhanced public service performance (Siddiquee, 2007, p. 84).

Noore Alam Siddiquee (2006), an analyst of Malaysian public administration, divides these administrative reform efforts into three major phases, namely 1. development administration and institution-building (1957–1980), 2. towards an efficient and effective administration (1981–1990), and 3. excellence in service provision, ethical and accountable administration (1990 onwards). These phases accentuate the changes in themes of public service reforms. Reform efforts which concentrate on growth and expansion of the public service have eventually turned to “privatization and corporatisation of state institutions, downsizing of bureaucracy, quality and productivity, excellence and client focused administration as themes of reforms” (Siddiquee, 2006, p. 1).

While reforms undertaken in phases 1. and 2. continue, 1990 marked the beginning of a new approach. The New Economic Policy (NEP), introduced in 1971 and aimed at reducing poverty and inequality in society, ended in 1990. Two major documents were subsequently introduced as guidelines to national development in the following three decades. First, Vision 2020 (1991– 2020), which envisions Malaysia achieving an industrialized and fully developed nation status by 2020 through “sustaining growth at 7 per cent per annum and initiating structural changes in the economy as well as within the manufacturing sectors” (Economic Planning Unit, 2010e). Second, the National Development Policy (NDP) (1991– 2000), which built on the framework of NEP with several shifts in policy, such as more emphasis on human resource development. These documents are complementary in nature and envisage industrialization and the private sector as the base of development. More importantly, they highlight the importance of public–private cooperation to maintain Malaysia's competitive edge in a global market place. Currently, from 2000 to 2010, the National Vision Policy is being launched through the Third Outline Perspective Plan (OPP3), which focuses on building a resilient and competitive nation. This policy incorporates key strategies of NEP and NDP while introducing new policy dimensions, such as developing Malaysia into a knowledge-based society (Economic Planning Unit,

2010d). The policy and initiatives to transform Malaysia into a knowledge-based society are discussed in Chapter 4.

In the 1990s, the New Public Management (NPM), also known as 'managerialism', was also taking place within the public service in Malaysia. It advocates for "the application of market logic and principles in the business of government" (Siddiquee, 2006, p. 6). The government also employed a number of leading NPM experts as consultants to improve the public service. This is one of the reasons that "many of the themes of NPM became core to the reform measures introduced subsequently under the government's 'excellent work culture' movement" (Siddiquee, 2007, p. 83).

It was also in the 1990s that Total Quality Management (TQM) and the ISO 9000 series were adopted. Malaysia became the first country in the world to embark on ISO for the entire government machinery. This requires that government agencies undergo a comprehensive process of review to evaluate their operations. The reviews ensure that all their systems and processes are aimed towards achieving objectives and customer requirements. In general, reform measures during this period were undertaken to indicate growing public orientation. These measures include:

the formulation of management integrity panels at federal, state and district levels, strengthening of public complaints management system and the introduction of "Meet the Customers Day" programme. The agencies are encouraged to observe a day at least once a month when the heads of departments and other officials will make themselves available to have face-to-face meeting with clients receiving complaints and suggestions. Clearly, this is an innovative way of making public organizations more directly accountable to their clients" (Siddiquee, 2006, p. 8).

Reforms, such as TQM, are often adopted to streamline organizational resources to meet customer requirements. These steps represent a major reorientation from generating outputs and services to that of meeting customer expectations (George, 2002, p. 29).

More recently the government introduced a concept called one-government-many-agencies, to integrate all government agencies for a well-coordinated service delivery. Such a concept employs a "No Wrong Door" (NWD) approach to provide

an efficient and easy delivery system to the public (MAMPU, 2008). This approach allows citizens and customers of the public service to deal with the government through one focal point or centre, which facilitates access to various public services. The aim of the one-government-many-agencies concept is to strive towards more coordinated government agencies in delivering services to the public. This concept is similar to the whole-of-government concept discussed in Chapter 2. A number of focal points, e.g., the one-stop service counter at all postal offices and one-stop centers at Local Authorities throughout the country, are provided to support the implementation of the NWD approach (Jin, 2008; MAMPU, 2008). Apart from these focal points, the NWD approach also utilizes ICTs through some online initiatives, discussed in Chapter 4.

Over the years, considerable progress has been made by the public service to rationalize and reengineer systems and work procedures. A comprehensive study of outcomes of reforms and innovation, however, was not made available in the public domain. The capacity of the MFPS to undertake innovation, like the practice of e-democracy in the policy development process, is not apparent. This present study will examine the needs and players' expectations of e-democracy in Chapter 10. The MFPS and its ICT capacity is considered in Chapter 4.

3.3. Federal policy development and citizen participation

As discussed in Chapter 1, the main functions of the public service concern “the implementation and administration of policy decided upon and legislated for by Parliament” (Sarji, 1996, p. 159). Both central and operating agencies implement policy legislated by the parliament, as well as developing new draft policies within their scopes of functions and areas of specialization. For example, the Treasury, a central agency, is in charge of monitoring fiscal policy and drafting the annual budget. The Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MoSTI), which is an operating agency, executes the policy on bridging the digital divide promulgated in the Eighth Malaysia Plan (see Chapter 4). MoSTI is also responsible for proposing policies, e.g., a policy to encourage participation by those with creative

talents in Malaysia to create local content for the ICT industry. The steps involved in policy making at the federal level are described in the following section.

3.3.1. Federal policy-making process

This section discusses policy-making processes, which include the policy development stage at the federal level of government in Malaysia. Such a discussion aims to provide context for the practices of e-democracy in such processes and to provide insight into the implementation of e-democracy, should such practices be mandated as policy in the MFPS.

As discussed in Chapter 2, policy-making processes in the MFPS differ from the Australian and Macintosh's (2004) policy-making cycles. At the federal level, policy-making is administered through a cycle, called the System of Planning and Implementation, which involves five stages including policy development, planning, implementation, co-ordination, and evaluation (Institut Tadbiran Awam Negara, 2006), as shown in Figure 3-2.

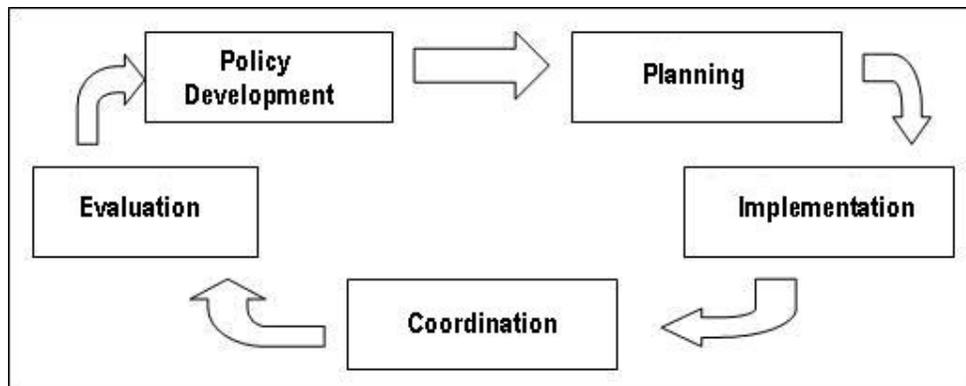


Figure 3-2 System of planning and implementation at the federal level

(1) The first stage of policy-making is the development of a public policy. A public policy can be developed through three channels: political, administrative, and a combination of these two channels. The political channel refers to a directive to develop a policy from the Cabinet, normally aligned with national policy (policy-based). The administrative channel denotes an issue-based policy, whereby an agency proposes a policy to deal with emerging issues. The combination channel represents a development of either a policy-based or issue-based policy as

proposed by relevant National Councils or Cabinet Secretariats (Institut Tadbiran Awam Negara, 2006).

The steps involved in developing a policy are not well-documented. Public administrators involved in preparing a draft policy at a federal agency are normally expected to anticipate the outcomes and whenever possible to test the policy. All matters which relate to policy, such as law and finance, and its immediate and long-term implications are studied. A comprehensive proposal is then presented to the Cabinet for approval (A. S. Ahmad, et al., 2003a). The approved policy will then be presented to the Parliament, if there is a requirement to legislate the policy as a form of law.

The present study will investigate the application of interactive ICTs for e-democracy practices in the MFPS at this stage of policy-making. The nature of emergent e-democracy practices in policy development is described in Chapters 9 and 11.

(2) The second stage of policy-making is planning. This stage concerns the planning of activities and programs for all public policy. In Malaysia, planning is divided into three tiers, namely long-, medium-, and short-term planning (Economic Planning Unit, 2010a). Long-term planning is called the Outline Perspective Plan (OPP). It sets the broad thrust areas and strategies in the development agenda for Malaysia over a long-term period. OPP was first introduced from 1971 to 1990. It was subsequently followed by OPP2 for 1991 to 2000, and OPP3 for 2001 to 2010. Apart from OPP, Malaysia also promulgated Vision 2020 in 1991, as discussed, which positions the country to achieve an industrialized and fully developed nation status by 2020, as part of its long-term planning.

Medium-term planning is for a period of five years and called the Malaysia Plan (MP). MP sets out macroeconomic growth targets, as well as size and allocation for development programs of the public sector and indicative roles envisaged for programs of the private sector. Malaysia is currently in the Ninth Malaysia Plan

(9MP) for 2006 to 2010. A review is conducted in the middle of the five-year cycle of MP to determine whether the plan is being implemented and its strategies require adjustment (Economic Planning Unit, 2010a). Both OPP and MP are managed by EPU. Allocation and programs for the communication sector, which deals with ICTs, is discussed in Chapter 4.

Short-term planning comes in the form of the annual budget undertaken by the Ministry of Finance (MoF). All agencies submit their requirements to MoF for approvals and budget allocation. The present study will explore whether e-democracy practices should be included in any of the planning tiers in Chapter 10.

(3) The third stage of policy-making is implementation. This stage concerns the actual implementation of all projects and initiatives stated in the MP. Each agency is responsible for implementing any project or initiative approved under its jurisdiction, or monitoring the implementation of projects by private sectors (Institut Tadbiran Awam Negara, 2006). For example, the Public Works Department or JKR (the common Malay abbreviation), plays the most important role in building and maintaining all physical infrastructure at all levels of government. The Ministry of Energy, Water, and Communication or KTAK (the common Malay abbreviation), which provides ICT infrastructure for the whole country, monitors the provision of mobile services by telecommunication companies. The nature of e-democracy implementation in policy development is one of the areas under investigation in the present study (see Chapters 7 and 11).

(4) The fourth stage of policy-making is co-ordination. The implementation of programs and initiatives requires co-ordination to ensure their effectiveness, as discussed in Chapter 2. Central agencies, such as the EPU, play an essential co-ordinating role at the federal level, particularly in the implementation of programs or projects involving several federal agencies (Institut Tadbiran Awam Negara, 2006). A good example of such initiatives is bridging the digital divide. This involves at least five federal agencies, namely KTAK, MoSTI, the Ministry of Information (Moi), the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development (KKLBW), and JKR, as well as state agencies, such as the Office of the State Secretary (see

Chapter 4). At agency and state levels, the Chief Secretary (or its Head of Department) and the State Secretary are required to coordinate strategies and actions in accordance with strategies adopted by central agencies. The need for a central agency to coordinate the implementation of e-democracy is discussed in Chapter 10.

(5) The fifth stage of policy-making is evaluation. The success or failure of any program or initiative is measured during the evaluation stage, by operating agencies or the central agency in charge of its co-ordination. The results and outcomes of such a program or initiative will be utilized to further improve future programs and initiatives, as well as recommend adjustment or termination of the policy in place. In order to manage the risk of a program or initiative failing, it is best practice in the MFPS to implement a pilot project to assess its viability and suitability for nationwide roll-out (Institut Tadbiran Awam Negara, 2006). Whether pilot projects are required for e-democracy practices in the MFPS is explored in Chapter 10.

The preceding discussions about policy-making processes provide a context for the utilization of ICTs for e-democracy in such processes, discussed in Chapters 9 and 11. The inclusion of various stakeholders in policy development in the MFPS is discussed in the following section.

3.3.2. Key frameworks for inclusion of stakeholders in the policy development process

As discussed in Chapter 1, the MFPS has been engaging stakeholders in policy development since the inception of the Malaysia Incorporated concept in 1983. These stakeholders normally comprise citizens (often represented by Civil Society Organizations (CSO), private sector representatives including captains of industries and managers of businesses, academics, as well as relevant government agencies. Three key frameworks which include stakeholders in policy development in the MFPS – economic and social councils, taskforces, and citizens' feedback – are significant and require further elaboration.

First, by means of the Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) program, federal agencies are encouraged to include private entities (CSO and businesses) in participating and contributing ideas in policy development. A good example is the formation of MTEN (the common Malay abbreviation for the National Economic Action Council), to promote multi-stakeholders participation to counter the adverse impact of the Asian Financial Crisis in 1998. MTEN was chaired by the Prime Minister and comprised the Deputy Prime Minister, Chief Ministers, Cabinet Ministers, Chief Secretary and representatives from the private sector. The main function of MTEN was to look at immediate short-term measures to overcome the crisis. MTEN was replaced by a new body, called the National Economic Advisory Council (NEAC), which aims to provide a fresh long-term perspective to transform the Malaysian economy to a high income economy by 2020. Members of the NEAC are primarily non-governmental representatives, including academics, research think tanks, and representatives from the private sector (National Economic Advisory Council, 2009). Inputs from MTEN and the NEAC were incorporated into the federal policy by EPU. The establishment of MTEN and the NEAC is in accordance with the Malaysia Incorporated policy discussed in Chapter 1. It is significant for the present study that the NEAC recently encouraged feedback and inputs from ordinary citizens to the council through its website.

Second, taskforces are formed to study a particular issue and provide recommendations to relevant federal agencies for appropriate policy development. A recent example is the Special Taskforce to Facilitate Business or PEMUDAH (the common Malay acronym). PEMUDAH is a taskforce co-chaired by the KSN and the Chairman of the Federation of Manufacturers Malaysia (FMM). The vision of PEMUDAH is “to achieve a globally benchmarked, customer-centric, innovative and proactive public service in support of a vibrant, resilient and competitive economy” (PEMUDAH, 2007). The taskforce collects and evaluates relevant inputs from private entities and the public to realize such a vision.

Third, Malaysia is also a member of the United Nations (UN). The UN is committed to implementing the comprehensive plan of action for sustainable development of the environment, called Agenda 21. This plan emphasizes citizen

participation in the development planning processes to ensure sustainability of the environment. In 1992 Malaysia adopted Agenda 21 with more than 178 governments at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The Department of Town and Country Planning of Peninsular Malaysia or JPBD (the common Malay abbreviation), a federal department under the purview of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government or KPKT (the common Malay abbreviation), has adopted citizen participation in its development planning since 1992. JPBD (2007b) incorporates inputs from citizens in formulating development policies, such as the National Urbanization Plan (NUP), which outlines policies and guidelines to drive, manage and coordinate urban development and planning.

The government-sanctioned examples of participation in the policy development process, as discussed, suggest formalized partnership initiatives between government and stakeholders. These initiatives promote interdependency and collaboration for mutual benefit among multi-stakeholders, termed 'network governance'. This type of governance facilitates decision-making through negotiation, without any party having a deterministic power over the other (United Nations, 2008b).

The councils, task-forces, and federal agencies are also starting to utilize ICTs to accumulate and disseminate feedback from stakeholders. The extent of ICT utilization and its nature are not clear. Whether such agencies or other emerging federal agencies practice e-democracy in engaging citizens are discussed in Chapters 9 and 11.

3.4. Conclusion

The chapter has examined the structure of the federal government and the MFPS as the focus of the present study. It has also discussed key characteristics, major reforms, and functions of the MFPS in developing policy, which include three citizen participation frameworks, namely councils, taskforces, and federal agencies. The frameworks incorporate stakeholders, namely citizens, civil society organizations, and private sectors in policy development in Malaysia. The existing framework for citizen participation is limited, to a certain extent, for representative groups of citizens and key stakeholders. The practices of e-democracy within these processes and their issues are examined and discussed in Chapters 9 and 11. The chapter has contextualized policy development within the ambit of public administrators in the MFPS. The context of policy development in the MFPS informs the research framework of this study, discussed in Chapter 5.

4. Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) and e-democracy in Malaysia

*Kalau gajah nak pandang gadingnya,
kalau harimau nak pandang belangnya⁸*

This chapter aims to describe the provisions of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) in Malaysia. It provides context for the implementation of e-democracy in the Malaysian Federal Public Service (MFPS) and informs the research framework to examine e-democracy in the present study (see Chapter 5). The chapter starts with a discussion of key policies and initiatives by the Malaysian Government to promote ICTs, which includes descriptions of the digital divide initiatives for marginalized citizens in the country (see Chapter 2). The chapter goes on to describe ICT policy in the public service of Malaysia. The last section of this chapter discusses the lack of policy for e-democracy and amorphous implementation of e-democracy in Malaysia. The provision of ICTs through initiatives guided by these key policies were utilized to inform the research framework, discussed in Chapter 5. The thesis revisits the provisions of ICTs and issues surrounding such technologies for the practices of e-democracy in Chapters 7 and 11.

4.1. Key federal ICT policies

The current coverage and penetration of ICTs in Malaysia is good. This is supported by indicators for ICT coverage and services, provided by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), discussed in Chapter 1. Two key federal policies significantly guide the development of ICT in Malaysia, namely the

⁸ Brown (1959) translated this saying as, “An elephant, you say? I want to see its tusks first. A tiger, you say? Then let me see its stripes”, with the English equivalent of “Seeing is believing” (p. 186). The saying envisages the importance of building and implementing physical infrastructure as prescribed in the development plan. The plan is only considered as successful when it materializes.

National Information Technology Agenda (NITA) and the Knowledge-based Economy (KBE). Each policy is discussed in the following sections.

4.1.1. National Information Technology Agenda (NITA)

Most ICT development in Malaysia is realized through strategic planning. The National Information Technology Council of Malaysia (NITC), established in 1994, serves as a principal advisor to government on matters pertaining to the development of ICTs. The Council formulated the National Information Technology Agenda (NITA), a framework for a coordinated and integrated approach to ICT development through three strategic elements comprising human resources, 'infostructures' (defined as hard and soft infrastructures (International Telecommunication Union, 2002)) and applications (National Information Technology Council, 1999). It is argued that for NITA to succeed, the element of human resources must be taken advantage of and

the entire nation would have to be mobilized into using ICT as a strategic development tool ... [through formation of a] tri-sectoral smart partnership between the public, private and non-governmental/non-profit sectors (National Information Technology Council, 2000, p. xiv).

The NITC identifies five key areas to be developed, namely e-economy, e-public service, e-community, e-learning, and e-sovereignty. Each area focuses on specific objectives. E-economy focuses on the development of Malaysia's economy by optimal ICT utilization; e-public services focuses on enhancing social justice and preservation of law via efficient and effective delivery of services to citizens; e-community focuses on building a resilient society, which is capable of advocating Malaysian ideals and is able to interact with global communities on a level playing field (NITC, 2000); e-learning focuses to accelerate the pace of growth of Malaysia's intellectual capital; and e-sovereignty focuses on building a resilient national identity to enhance its sovereignty in the cyber world (NITC, 2009b). Clearly, the NITA emphasizes the importance of both human elements and the effective use of technologies.

There is a tension in the NITA about the introduction of e-community and e-public service activities. Even though both concepts are closely related to the actual practice of e-democracy, the focus of e-community concerning "participatory and

inclusive governance processes for quality of life” (NITC, 1999, ¶ 5.3) is not aligned with the focus of e-public services that is limited to a “delivery mode of public goods and services” (NITC, 1999, ¶ 5.2). The function of the public service in acquiring information resources and using ICTs in governance (particularly in policy-making processes) is at odds, creating a significant gap between these two concepts. There is no specific policy for e-democracy in the NITA. The absence of the term e-democracy to connect e-public services as a means to achieve e-community in the NITA is likely to lead to amorphous implementation of e-democracy among its key players in Malaysia (discussed in section 4.3).

The agenda, set by the NITC was transformed into the Outline Perspectives Plans (OPP), as well as being closely monitored and implemented through the Malaysia Plan (MP), as discussed in Chapter 3. The following section discusses one significant policy set out through the OPP and the MP, the knowledge-based economy policy, which embodies implementation strategies of all five thrust areas envisioned in the NITA.

4.1.2. Knowledge-based Economy (KBE) policy

The Knowledge-based Economy (KBE) policy was promulgated in the Third Outline Perspectives Plan (OPP3) for 2001 to 2010. The main aims of KBE are to provide a platform for the rapid rate of economic growth and to increase the country’s international competitiveness to achieve the objectives of Vision 2020, discussed in Chapter 3. The implementation of the KBE policy is facilitated by several programs in the key areas of human resource development, science and technology, research and development, infostructure, and financing. More importantly, the KBE policy emphasizes the utilization of the Internet as the key driver of ICTs to acquire and disseminate knowledge (EPU, 2001).

Chapter Five of the Ninth Malaysia Plan (9MP) for 2006 to 2010 is dedicated to ICT development and implementing initiatives for key areas in the KBE. The objectives set in the 9MP are to encourage ubiquitous access to ICT services and facilities, as well as to promote the wider adoption and utilization of ICTs in all aspects of citizens’ lives. The spirit of 9MP is to empower Malaysians for

equitable access to ICTs in order to participate in new and emerging knowledge-driven economic opportunities (EPU, 2006). Access to ICTs also provides opportunities for citizens in Malaysia to engage with government, like providing their feedback to public administrators regarding policy development. The nature of public administrators' employment of such opportunities at federal government level is examined in the present study and discussed in Chapters 9 and 11.

In 9MP, the Malaysian Government allocates budgets for the implementation of programs under the KBE policy. These programs include the computerization of government agencies, Bridging the Digital Divide (BDD), and ICT research and development. From the total budget allocation for ICTs, the government's computerization program received the highest allocation of RM 5,734.2 million (Malaysian Ringgit; US\$ 1,509 million); the second highest allocation was for BDD which amounts to RM 3,710.2 million (Malaysian Ringgit; US\$ 976.4 million). It is interesting to note that ICT research and development only received a small allocation, RM 474.0 million (Malaysian Ringgit; US\$ 124.7 million), as shown in Table 4-1. The small budget for research and development could be compensated by other allocations in other sectors, such as education. The high budget allocations for government agencies and BDD suggest commitment by government in augmenting the ICT capacity of the public service and improving ICT access to citizens, particularly those in rural areas.

Table 4-1 Selected development expenditure and allocation for ICT programs, 2001 to 2010

Programs	8MP Expenditure (Ringgit Malaysia (RM) million)	9MP Allocation (Ringgit Malaysia (RM) million)
Computerization of Government agencies	2,125.0	5,734.2
Bridging the Digital Divide	2,433.1	3,710.2
ICT research and development	727.5	474.0

Source: Adapted from (Economic Planning Unit, 2006, p. 154)

The implementation of all initiatives of NITA and KBE will ensure good provision of ICT infrastructure in Malaysia, which is vital for effective implementation of e-democracy practices, as discussed in Chapter 7. The present study will also explore the expectations of players of e-democracy and whether there is any requirement for a dedicated ICT infrastructure for e-democracy (see Chapter 10).

Both NITA and KBE set out a robust policy for ICT development in Malaysia. The implementation of these policies requires carefully planned initiatives to fulfil policy objectives. The following section discusses ICT initiatives in Malaysia.

4.1.3. ICT initiatives in Malaysia

The federal government introduced three major ICT initiatives: the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC), National Broadband, and the BDD initiative, to realize the objectives of policies to develop ICTs in Malaysia. These initiatives are targeted to further develop ICT infrastructure and increase ICT usage among public administrators in the public service, citizens, and the private sector, as prescribed in 9MP. Each initiative is discussed in the following sub-sections.

4.1.3.1. Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC)

The Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) was introduced in 1996. It was part of the development of infrastructure and application elements of the NITA, as discussed. The vision of MSC is to transform Malaysia into a knowledge-based society driven by the new economy. The MSC is a corridor of 75 square kilometres, covering cities, like Putrajaya, Cyberjaya, and the Kuala Lumpur International Airport. The MSC promotes the development of facilities and applications of ICTs through its flagship applications, such as e-government, which is aimed at transforming the public administration using ICTs as the enabler (Karim & Khalid, 2003; Multimedia Development Corporation, 2007). The MSC also develops “hard infrastructure (such as fiber-optic telecommunications network and modern transportation networks) and soft infrastructure” (Z. A. Yusof & Bhattasali, 2008, p. 21) in order to attract international companies into the corridor. The comprehensive development of ICTs within the MSC is projected to continue beyond the MSC and throughout Malaysia. Provisions of ICTs and MSC flagship applications potentially empower

citizens to engage with the government. Whether such provisions of ICTs and applications facilitate online citizen participation is discussed in Chapter 7.

The MSC also provides a number of assurances to investors through the Bill of Guarantees (BoG). The BoG ensures the MSC remains competitive for international businesses. Besides providing guarantees for a high-class infrastructure in the MSC, one significant guarantee involves a pledge of non-censorship of the Internet. As discussed in Chapter 1, such a guarantee also potentially promotes online activities, including e-democracy practices in policy development. The present study discusses the influence of the BoG in e-democracy in Malaysia in Chapter 10.

4.1.3.2. National Broadband Plan (NBP)

The Ministry of Energy, Water, and Communications or KTAK (the common Malay acronym) and the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) formulated a ten-year plan for the nation's ICT infrastructure, called the National Broadband Plan (NBP). The aim of the NBP is to guide the implementation of broadband infrastructure by private telecommunication companies, such as Telekom Malaysia Berhad (TM), for supporting e-government and e-commerce applications (Ministry of Energy Water and Communication & Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission, 2006). In 2007 the government set its target to achieve 50% household broadband penetration by the end of 2010. This is one of the strategies for the implementation of NBP (National Information Technology Council, 2009a). The provision of ICT infrastructure and services through initiatives, like NBP, are being monitored by the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), as discussed in Chapter 1. Although the effectiveness of this strategy is yet to be determined, the strategy proposes a solid ICT infrastructure for online activities, such as e-government and e-democracy.

An effective implementation of the NBP can ensure high accessibility to ICTs for all citizens. Malaysia, however, still needs to address issues of the digital divide for its citizens through specific ICT initiatives, discussed in the following section.

4.1.3.3. Bridging the digital divide

The issue of the digital divide has been a focus in 9MP and a huge amount of government spending for ICTs is allocated to improving ICT infrastructure in all areas. From the regulatory aspect, the *Communication and Multimedia Act 1998* (CMA) provides a system of Universal Service Provision (USP) to ensure high accessibility of ICTs, under Section 202(1). The USP is defined as

a system to promote the widespread availability and usage of network services and/or applications services throughout Malaysia by encouraging the installation of network facilities and the provision of network services and/or applications services in underserved areas. (Government of Malaysia, 1998)

The MCMC deems underserved areas as having Public Switched Telephone Network subscribers' penetration at 20 percent below the national penetration rate. MCMC has identified 89 of 137 districts in the country as underserved. These districts have a population of 6.237 million and represents 27 percent of Malaysia's population (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2001; MCMC, 2006). The provision of ICTs in Malaysia is mainly provided by a government-linked company, Telekom Malaysia Berhad (TM) and private telecommunications companies, such as Maxis Communications Berhad (Maxis), however, the telecommunications industry is driven by market forces. Areas, such as the underserved, which provide a low return of investment often becomes the lowest priority for telecommunication companies. The USP projects are initiated to overcome such phenomenon.

The USP projects are financed either through the establishment of the Universal Service Provision Fund (USPF) provided under Section 204(1) of CMA (1998) or through budget allocation in the MP. Every year, licensees under the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia industry are required to contribute six percent of their net profit to USPF, which is managed by the MCMC (2006). Apart from USPF, the Malaysian Government allocates a grant to be specifically used for USP projects by KTAK in MP. Under 8MP for 2000 to 2005, RM293 million (Malaysian Ringgit; US\$ 76.18 million) was allocated (Government of Malaysia, 2001). Currently, under 9MP, KTAK receives RM150 million (Malaysian Ringgit; US\$ 39 million) to develop USP projects for 2006 to 2010 (Government of Malaysia, 2006a). The USP projects managed by KTAK represent a significant portion of the project covering various locations across Malaysia.

The USP project of KTAK (2007b) commenced in 8MP. The first phase of spending began in 2002 with 220 schools, which include 110 in the states of Sabah and Sarawak. The following subsequent phases were targeted for the whole country. The second phase of the project started in 2003 with 226 sites, including 50 clinics and rural clinics as well as 176 rural libraries. The third phase started in 2004 with 496 sites, including 309 clinics and rural clinics, as well as 187 rural libraries. The fourth phase started in 2005 with 147 rural, branch, and district libraries. The overall number of USP sites in the 8MP totals 1089, spread over schools, clinics and libraries all over the country as shown in Table 4-2.

Table 4-2 USP project sites under the 8MP

Phase	Year	Schools	Clinics	Libraries	Total
1	2002	220	-	-	220
2	2003	-	50	176	226
3	2004	-	309	187	496
4	2005	-	-	147	147
Grand Total					1089

Source: Adapted from the official website of KTAK (2007b).

The functionality of USP sites increases throughout the implementation phase. In the first phase, these sites only provide basic telephony and Internet access to the community without any specific programmes to extend functionality. The function of these sites is then enhanced by training of users and a close monitoring mechanism to ensure greater utilization of USP sites by the local community in the following three phases (MEWC, 2007b). Under 9MP, KTAK (2007c) plans to develop another 250 USP sites and has introduced the concept of Community Services and Knowledge Centres (CSKCs). CSKCs emphasize development of human capital as well as physical facilities of USP sites. The aim of CSKCs is to create a knowledge community (or k-community) that “will be able to improve its economy and know-how of online delivery systems” via electronic applications like e-government, e-commerce and e-learning (Ministry of Energy Water and Communication, 2007c). The utilization of electronic applications at CSKC can be

extended to other online applications of government websites and portals. The continuous development of USP sites, including CSKC, could empower citizens in underserved areas to participate in the online policy development process.

The USP sites equip local communities with skills, means and guidance to benefit from ICT infrastructure in their own surroundings. These advantages could be utilized to improve their quality of life and further enhance their participation in national development. Although provisions of ICTs will not “significantly increase socio-economic inclusion of the underserved communities” (Harris, Yogeesvaran, & Lee, 2007), these communities are being presented with an opportunity to exploit facilities and services at USP sites to voice their concerns to government at federal, state and local levels. The knowledge of these communities about their surroundings is very valuable in policy-making processes (Bakar & Johanson, 2010). The significance of such knowledge to public administrators in policy development is discussed in Chapter 10.

There are many issues surrounding the digital divide faced by a developing country like Malaysia. These issues are not limited to access to technology, but include other societal concerns: education; capacity building, including ICT skills and awareness, and local content; social and gender equity; and the appropriateness of technology to socio-economic context. These concerns must be addressed for effective approaches of the digital divide (Harris, 2002). Whether these concerns are considered as constraints to e-democracy practices, particularly among the underserved communities, are discussed in Chapter 10.

4.2. ICT initiatives and the Malaysian Public Service

ICT development and usage in the public sector is guided by a blueprint for future development and usage of ICTs in ‘The Malaysian Public Sector ICT Strategic Plan’ (Government of Malaysia, 2003). The plan was introduced by the Government Information Technology and Internet Council (GITIC), which is responsible directly to the NITC, as illustrated in Figure 4-1.

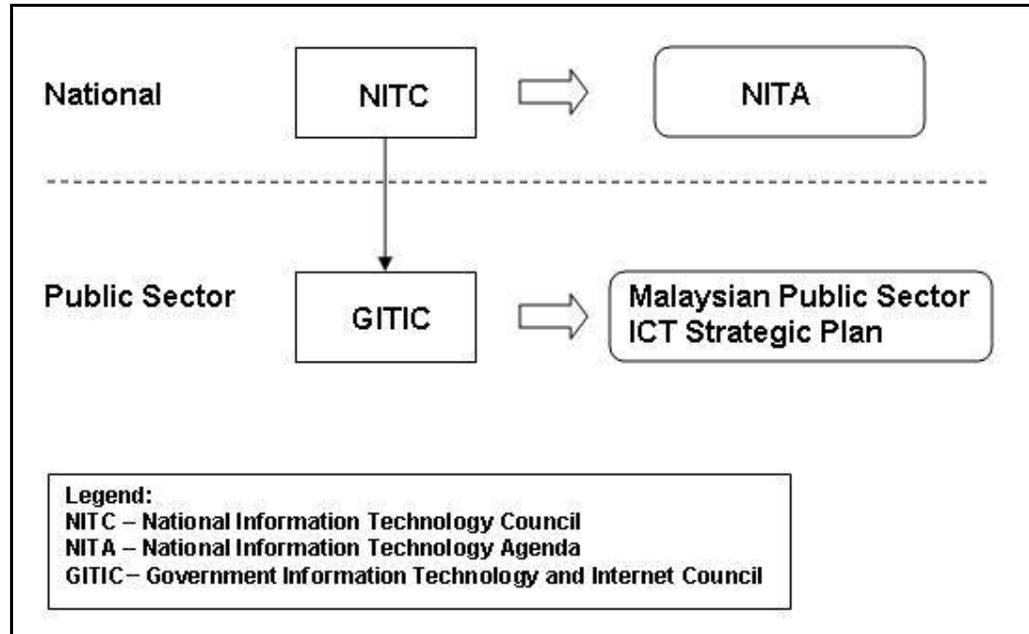


Figure 4-1 Relationships of ICT councils and policies in Malaysia

Source: Reproduced from (Bakar & Johanson, 2010, p. 62)

The strategic responses outlined in the plan, among others, emphasize the need to further improve service delivery through a single gateway or main portal as an entry point to government. The outcome of this framework was the launching of the main government portal in late 2005, now available both in Malay and English at <http://www.gov.my>. This portal provides access to over 900 federal, states and local government websites and over 400 online services. Users can download online forms and perform interactive services via the e-transaction center (Government of Malaysia, 2007).

The framework and government portal demonstrate obvious characteristics of e-democracy, namely giving out information, voting, polling, and discussion online. However, they fall short of any explicit statement about e-democracy for the public service in Malaysia. The present study examines the need for a written policy for e-democracy practices in the policy development process. Many of the issues raised in this chapter will be further explored in Chapter 10.

The provisions of ICT in the public service have been implemented since 1967, as shown in Figure 4-2. While government computerization programs continue, new

initiatives, such as e-government, were introduced in 1997 to improve service deliveries of government. Currently, the public service is in the preparatory stage for integrated government via the 'No Wrong Door' (NWD) approach, as discussed in Chapter 3.

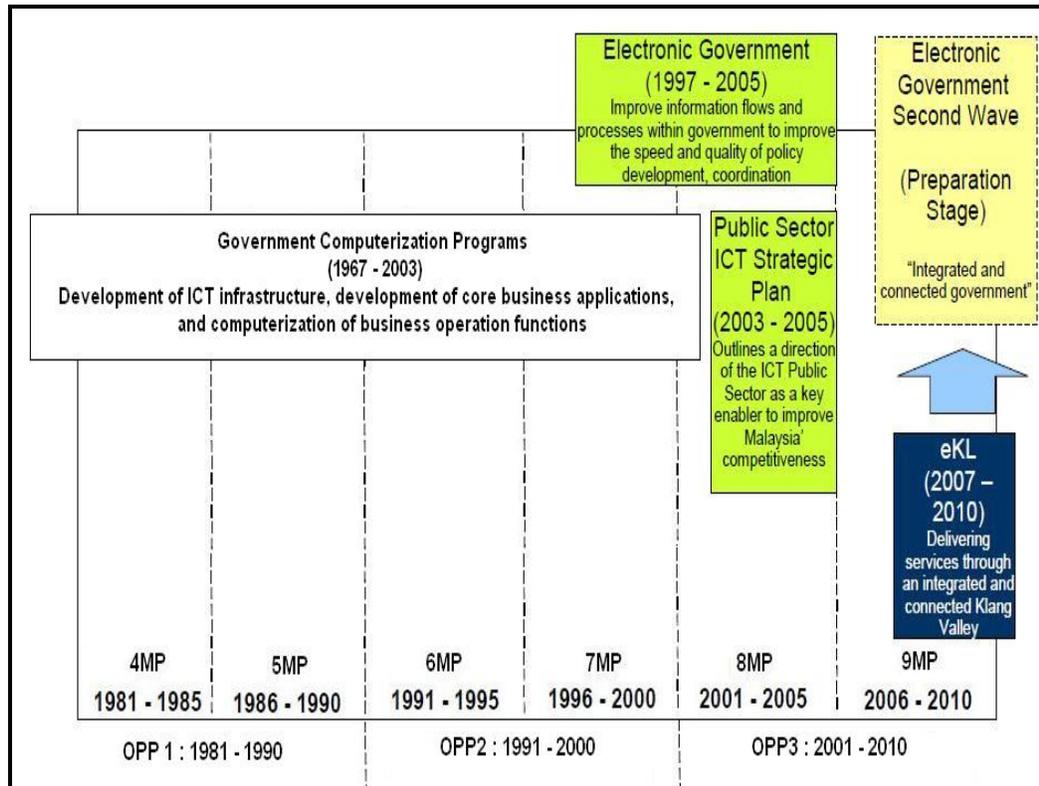


Figure 4-2 Public service strategic direction for ICTs

Source: Adapted from (Zahri, 2008a, p. 8)

A new initiative called eKL (electronic Kuala Lumpur), was launched in 2007. This initiative aims to support the NWD approach through integrated and connected government agencies within the Klang Valley. A concept termed 'horizontalization' has been introduced in the public service, which refers to the capability of online application to transact across agencies, in order to provide a seamless, end-to-end online service to the public (MAMPU, 2007).

As discussed in Chapter 2, public bureaucracy, including the Malaysian Public Service, often follows most of Weber's bureaucratic principles and by doing so limits its functions. Public administrators in a bureaucratic structure are restricted from rapid adoption of new concepts, such as horizontalization, and innovative

functions such as e-democracy. E-democracy practices require new processes, which are not clearly defined in any existing administrative regulations; create disintermediation in the bureaucratic structure; and involve electronic documents, which require specialized methods of handling as opposed to files. Whether some of these principles need to be adjusted, in order to reposition public administrators' roles for effective practices of e-democracy, is discussed in Chapter 10.

The discussion on ICT policies and initiatives in Malaysia and the Malaysian public service suggests good ICT provisions. The policies, however, lack a written policy for e-democracy. The following section discusses the amorphous implementation of e-democracy in Malaysia in the absence of a clear e-democracy policy framework.

4.3. The amorphous utilization of ICTs for e-democracy

International forums and organizations such as the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS, 2003 2005) and the United Nations (UN) play the role of e-democracy advocates, and provide platforms for attainment of mutual goals and commitments to the ICT applications in Malaysia. The Division for Public Administration and Development Management (United Nations, 2007), a division in the UN, through its publications like the *UN E-Government Survey 2008: From e-Government to Connected Governance (2008c)* highlight the status of the member country's commitment to adopt ICTs in public administration. Reports such as this put pressure on the Malaysian Government to improve e-democracy services to remain globally competitive. Several attempts by government to engage citizens in policy development, and citizen-led initiatives were evident online and described in the following sub-sections.

4.3.1. Government-sanctioned online initiatives

It is evident that government agencies are starting to implement e-democracy and interact with citizens online. A preliminary search revealed that a few government websites are collecting inputs on policy and development planning at different levels of government. Some examples are:

- My Water Voice website by KTAK (the common Malay abbreviation for the Ministry of Energy, Water, and Communication to engage citizens in the national water management's policy development for a period of one month in 2006 (MEWC, 2006).
- Selangor state government created a dedicated website for continuous online citizen engagement in sustainable development planning (Selangor State Government, 2006).
- Subang Jaya Town Council in Selangor created an official website in 2002 to engage its community with local development of the municipality (Majlis Perbandaran Subang Jaya, 2007).

These examples suggest that the Malaysian Government is implementing some form of online citizen participation. However, the nature of e-democracy practices in such online activities remains unclear. Most websites neglect any elaboration on the usage of inputs in their policy development. The present research investigates how inputs from such practices are utilized (see Chapters 9 and 11).

4.3.2. Citizens online initiatives

Apart from government initiatives, civil society organizations and individual citizens also contribute towards the realization of e-democracy in Malaysia by participating online through websites, online forums, and web log or 'blog'. Information about their activities are being published to educate and rally support from the general public as well as to advocate their cause to the government, for example:

- Center for Orang Asli Concerns (COAC), which focuses on advancing the cause of the *Orang Asli* or the indigenous minority of Peninsular Malaysia (COAC, 2006);
- Malaysian Environmental NGOs (MENGO), supporting and facilitating a more effective interaction between MENGO and the Government of Malaysia on environmental policies (MENGO, n.d.);
- a community in Subang Jaya municipality in Selangor to promote a knowledge-based community that leverages on ICTs (Oii, 1999); and
- blogs maintained by Jeffery Oii (2003) and Raja Petra Kamarudin (2007).

The function of electronic media like online forums and blogs in e-democracy practices in Malaysia is of particular concern of the present study. The Malaysian electronic media has been relatively free in utilizing the Internet, as discussed. Blogs maintained by A.Kadir Jasin (2006), Ruhanie Ahmad (2007) and Ahiruddin Atan (2007) are good examples of the way blogs discuss public policies and operate in the country. All three bloggers are from different backgrounds – a former senior journalist, a former Member of Parliament, and a journalist as well as Protem President of the National Alliance of Bloggers (All-Blogs), respectively – they each present a diverse outlook on current issues to their readers. Citizens who frequent these blogs are able to voice their concerns and acquire information about current issues and alleged misconduct on the part of government. These blogs are repeatedly brought to the public's attention by local and international media due to their sharp criticisms of various issues related to public administration and politics.

These websites and blogs demonstrate a growing interest by citizens to participate in public administration. However, the extent of influence fashioned by websites and blogs on government decision-making and policy development is still not known. This study also explores the expectations of public administrators in utilizing inputs from citizen-led websites and blogs to develop policy, as discussed in Chapter 10.

4.4. Conclusion

The chapter has discussed two key ICT policies, namely the National Information Technology Agenda (NITA) and the Knowledge-based Economy (KBE). These policies set a number of initiatives, e.g., the Multimedia Super Corridor, the National Broadband Plan, and the Bridging Digital Divide to promote ICTs in Malaysia. The chapter has also described the policy of ICTs in the public service of Malaysia which introduced the concept of horizontalization to deliver end-to-end online services to the public. The key policies, both at national and public service levels, neglect any policy for e-democracy, which contribute towards an amorphous implementation of e-democracy in Malaysia. The chapter provides insights into the provision of ICTs through initiatives under the key policies and issues surrounding such provisions. These insights inform the research framework by revealing social structures and influences on public administrators in their e-democracy practices in the MFPS, as discussed in Chapter 5.

5. Theoretical and research framework

*Jangan ditentang matahari condong,
takut mengikut jalan tak berentas⁹*

This chapter discusses the theoretical basis that informs and constructs the research framework for this study. It starts with a discussion about previous studies on e-democracy practices and suggests the need for a new perspective to examine e-democracy practices. The chapter goes on to discuss Parvez's Double Loop Structural framework to examine e-democracy, which draws on Structuration Theory to study social practices, as well as a Structural Model of Technology and Technology-in-Practice Lens, to study Information Communications Technologies (ICTs) in organizations. The last section of this chapter discusses the research framework, which aims to address the research questions, as set out in Chapter 1. Social structures and issues around policy development and access to ICTs which influence human actors in e-democracy practices are brought together to construct the research framework (see Chapters 2 to 4).

5.1. Previous studies of e-democracy

Earlier research about e-democracy is mostly centered on its various social actors. Some researchers focus on the role of citizens (e.g., Fikes, 2005) and community (e.g., A. Williamson, 2008), while others focus on the intermediary organizations, namely political parties (e.g., Francoli, 2005), and interest groups (e.g., Bullinger, 2003). Research concentrating on the relationship between e-democracy and public administrators however is still lacking. The rationale according to Snellen (2001b) is that

the democracy theory that forms the foundation and legitimacy of the democratic practice, does not take those intermediary roles of the bureaucracy into account. It

⁹ Brown (1959) translated this Malay saying as "Stand not facing the setting sun or you may find yourself following [unclear] paths" (p. 173). The English equivalent is "Prudence" (Brown, 1959, p. 173). This saying envisages the importance of following a particular construct in conducting a task in order to carefully manage it.

recognizes only the role of intermediary organizations, such as political parties and interest groups (p. 47).

Kim Chan-Gon (2005), conducted research on e-democracy and public administrators at the national government level in South Korea. Kim's research explores public administrators' acceptance of online policy forums. The research employed a quantitative methodology based on the Theory of Planned Behavior and Technology Acceptance Model. However, the scope of the research is limited to identifying public administrators' intentions to use online forums. Kim disregards the way public administrators actually use the technology in developing public policy. The intermediary role of public administrators, between citizens and elected government, in policy development and their practical utilization of interactive ICT for e-democracy in such processes represent a significant gap for e-democracy research. The present study aims to redress this gap to identify the nature of e-democracy practices in policy development at federal level in Malaysia (see Chapter 1).

Research on e-democracy and public administrators should take into account what public administrators actually do with the technology in their recurrent and situated practices of e-democracy in different settings. The existing literature on earlier research on e-democracy indicates that it requires an interdisciplinary approach and a new perspective, as discussed in the following section.

5.2. A new perspective to examine e-democracy practices

Parvez and Ahmed (2006), advocates of structural perspectives for e-democracy research, argue that existing perspectives for examining e-democracy are unable to provide "a balanced account of e-democracy" (p. 613). They outline four major shortcomings of existing perspectives, e.g., technological determinism, social shaping of technology, social constructivism and informatization, as follows:

- narrowness of perspectives – the existing perspectives focus on single factors and ignore the interplay of different factors;
- static accounts – the context of ICTs is assumed to be static and disregards the dialectic role of ICTs in social practices;

- generality of implication – inferences of ICTs are being generalized and neglecting account for ICT usage by different actors in different contexts; and
- partial assumptions and agendas of e-democracy – the existing perspectives fail to reveal the underlying assumptions and agendas behind the development and usage of ICTs in social practices.

In order to overcome these shortcomings, Parvez and Ahmed (2006) suggest an integrated perspective to examine e-democracy practices. This perspective applies the Structuration Theory (ST) by a contemporary sociologist, Anthony Giddens (1984). Three significant concepts in the ST, namely human agency, structure, and duality of structure, require discussions to provide a background for their analytical application in the present study.

Giddens (1984) argues that social structures – distinct patterns and structured human actions – are regularities in the ways humans behave in their relationships with one another, and terms the process of active making and remaking of social structure ‘structuration’. ST emphasizes knowledgeable human actors and agency – human capability of action – for particular social practices, as well as their reflexivity or “monitored character of the ongoing flow of social life” (Giddens, 1984, p. 3). For example, public administrators with knowledge in policy development enact a recursive pattern, while developing a particular public policy. Giddens stresses that the reason for recursive social practices is due to reflexivity of knowledgeable human agents.

According to Giddens (1984), the structure in ST refers to rules and resources drawn in the making and remaking of a social system, which comprises situated activities of human actors across time and space. However, the structure is “out of time and space, save in its instantiations and co-ordination as memory traces” (p. 25). The rules and resources both enable and constrain social practices. Giddens’ conceptualization of structure also stresses the duality of structure, whereby structure acts both as medium and outcome of recursive practices.

For analytical purposes, Giddens outlines three elements of social practices: structure, modality, and interaction. Structure is divided into three structural properties, namely signification or meaning of social action; domination or allocated resources for social practices; and legitimation or ethical conduct in social practices. The modality of structuration is categorized into:

- interpretive schemes which include existing knowledge of prior action and assumption of the current situation;
- facilities which refer to facilities available to actors; and
- norms which inform how actors should act.

In social practices, human actors draw upon these modalities in the course of interaction with properties, like communication, power, and sanction. For instance, human actors communicate the meaning of their social action by drawing upon their existing knowledge. While human actors sanction themselves to follow the expected norm to conduct and maintain ethical social practices, they also exercise certain control over facilities allocated to them for social practices. These interactions concurrently reconstitute structure, as illustrated in Figure 5-1 (see also Loyal's discussion, 2003, p. 76).

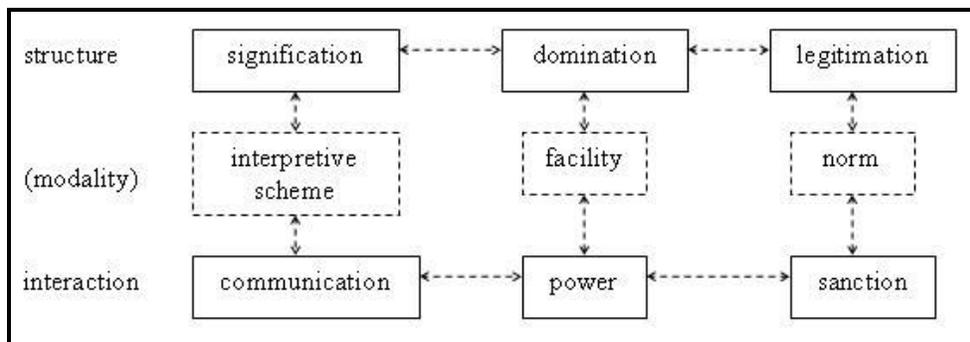


Figure 5-1 The dimensions of the duality of structure

Source: Reproduced from (Giddens, 1984, p. 29).

Parvez and Ahmed (2006) argue that Giddens' notions of structuration and duality of structure are useful to frame and analyze social practices, like democratic practices. This is because ST avoids both technological and social determinism and shifts the focus to e-democracy practices, i.e. what actors can do or enabled to do through ICT facilities. The structural approach thus allows an analysis, which brings to attention the interplay of institutional context and social structures,

as well as human agency dimensions in these practices, resulting in a more rounded account of the role and implications of e-democracy.

Zahid Parvez (2006) subsequently establishes a framework for examining e-democracy practices called the Double Structuration Loop (DSL). The DSL framework emphasizes the structural perspective on e-democracy practices through the interaction of three dimensions: institutional context, social structures surrounding e-democracy practices and human agency. The following section provides an overview of the theoretical basis and elements of the DSL framework. These elements inform the research framework of the present study discussed in section 5.4.

5.3. Double Structural Loop (DSL) framework

Parvez (2006) proposes the DSL framework for examining e-democracy, by drawing upon Wanda J. Orlikowski's (1992, 2000) work. Both of Orlikowski's texts are based on Giddens' ST as described. Orlikowski (1992, 2000) argues that while Giddens' theory has the potential to explain various outcomes associated with the use of given technologies in different contexts, it lacks the ability to account effectively for ongoing changes in both technologies and their use. This lack of explicit treatment of technology has led Orlikowski to suggest extensions to ST using the Structural Model of Technology (SMT), which focuses on technology-shaping process (Orlikowski, 1992), and her more recent Technology-in-Practice (TiP) lens focuses on technology-use process (Orlikowski, 2000).

Both the SMT and TiP lens require elaboration to provide context for their application in the DSL framework. First, the main concept of the SMT is duality of technology, which refers to the "recursive notion of technology" (Orlikowski, 1992, p. 405). This concept suggests that human actions not only create and change technology, but also use technology to realize action. Orlikowski (1992) outlines three components of the SMT: institutional properties (organizational dimensions, such as structural arrangement, strategies, ideology, and culture); human agents (technology users, designers and policy makers); and technology, which refers to

“material artifacts mediating task execution in the workplace” (Orlikowski, 1992, p. 409). The interplay of these components (as shown in Figure 5-2) emphasizes that:

- Arrow a – technology is a product of human action.
- Arrow b – technology is the medium of human action.
- Arrow c – organizational contexts shape the nature of human action in organization.
- Arrow d – human action on technology produces consequences on organization.

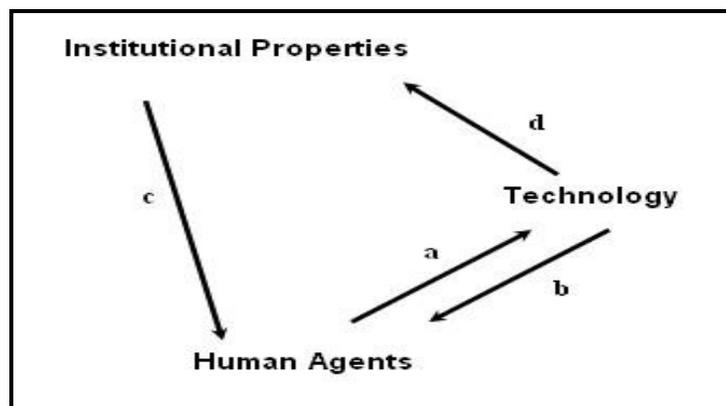


Figure 5-2 Structural Model of Technology

Source: Adapted from (Orlikowski, 1992, p. 410).

The SMT is useful in the present study to describe the shaping process of particular ICT applications in the Malaysian Federal Public Service (MFPS), discussed in Chapter 3. For example, public administrators in a government agency design an interactive online system (arrow a). The system is utilized for completing a particular process (arrow b), which both enables and constrains public administrators, due to the procedures of the agency (arrow c). The online system is acknowledged and institutionalized as an official way to complete the process (arrow d). Parvez (2006) argues that Orlikowski’s SMT assists in understanding the technology shaping process without determining the impact on social actors, such as public administrators in the MFPS. This is because the structures of social processes and human utilization of the technology moderate the impact. The SMT model can be utilized to examine “how the objective technological infrastructure that supports e-democracy projects is developed and shaped” (Parvez, 2006, p. 334). Even though there is no objective technological

infrastructure for e-democracy in Malaysia, e-democracy practices still take place and operate using the existing infrastructure (see Chapter 4).

Second, Orlikowski's TiP lens, which focuses on the study of technology use in organizations, emphasizes two aspects of technology that are imperative for analytical purposes:

- technology as artifact, which means technology as “the bundle of material and symbol properties packaged in some socially recognizable form, e.g., hardware, software, techniques” (2000, p. 408); and
- the use of technology that is the actual ongoing and situated usage of the technological artifact.

Structuration process occurs when human actors interact recursively with certain properties of a technology artifact and form the structure or set of rules, and resources that serve to shape their future interactions with the technology (Orlikowski, 2000). For instance, public administrators' regular interaction with certain ICT properties while engaging citizens in policy development, is an example of what Orlikowski calls technology-in-practice: “the specific structure routinely enacted as we use the specific machine, technique, appliance, device, or gadget in recurrent ways in our everyday situated activities” (Orlikowski, 2000, p. 408). She argues that technology-in-practice is a kind of structure that mediates social action through three modalities, namely, facilities, norms, and interpretive schemes similar to Giddens' ideas of structure. The enactment of technology-in-practice is as illustrated in Figure 5-3.

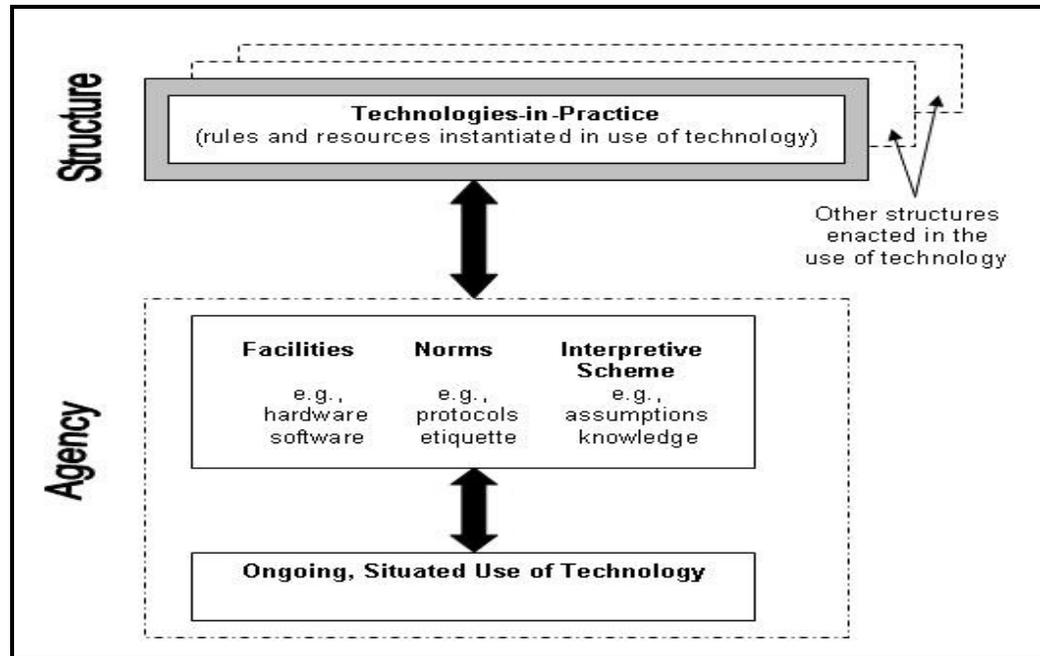


Figure 5-3 Enactment of technologies-in-practice

Source: Reproduced from (Orlikowski, 2000, p. 410).

Parvez (2006) argues that Orlikowski's TiP lens is useful to examine social practices mediated by technology. The lens helps to reveal how human actors interact with technological infrastructure to enact e-democracy practices. A good example of the enactment of technologies-in-practice is when public administrators draw upon their existing knowledge and assumptions about the technology they use, like interactive ICTs and the Internet, in policy development in the MFPS. They also draw on their knowledge of institutional context, such as protocols or norms of the department in which they operate. The lens is useful for the identification of such structures of technologies-in-practice, which embody the nature of e-democracy practices in the present study, discussed in Chapters 9 and 11.

Parvez (2006) combines both the SMT and TiP lens to propose an integrated framework for examining e-democracy in order to maximize their structuration effects. Parvez (2006) argues that both Orlikowski's SMT and TiP lens "are not independent, but exert influence on each other and hence shape each other" (2006, p. 336). Drawing upon this argument, Parvez develops the DSL

framework, as shown in Figure 5-4. The outer loop of the framework represents the enactment process of e-democracy practices, denoted by arrows A, B, C, D, E, and F. The inner loop represents the technology shaping process, denoted by arrows 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

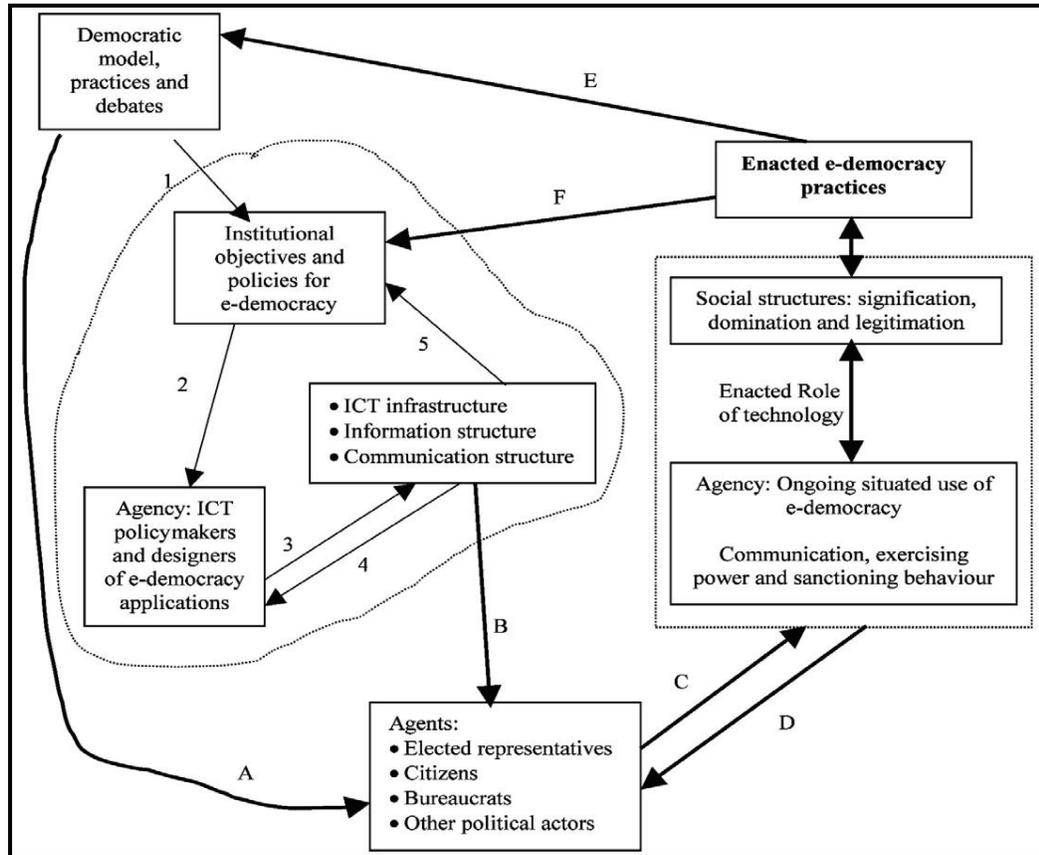


Figure 5-4 The Double Structural Loop framework for examining e-democracy

Source: Reproduced from (Parvez, 2006, p. 337).

The DSL framework emphasizes identification of activities, social influences, and their dialectic interaction that fall along each arrow in Figure 5-4, to examine the impact and role of ICTs in e-democracy. For analytic reasons, Parvez (2006) divides social structures and agency issues (indicated by the arrows) into four dimensions, namely institutional mediation structure (Institutional), ICT mediation structure (Technological), agency, and consequences of enacted e-democracy practices, as shown in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1 Categories of 11 key social structures and agency issues

Category	Arrows
Institutional	Arrows - 1,2, and A
Technological	Arrows - 4,B, and D
Agency	Arrows - 3 and C
Consequences	Arrows – 5, E, and F

Each dimension focuses on a specific analytical function:

- The institutional dimension focuses on identifying essential assumptions, significant drivers, pressures and institutional purposes surrounding e-democracy practices.
- The technological dimension focuses on the structuring effects of ICT infrastructure and information flows formed by human actors in e-democracy practices.
- The agency dimension focuses on the meaning, purposes, and strategies for human actors to engage in e-democracy practices. These include identification of structures of technology enacted by human actors in recurrent and situated practices of e-democracy.
- The consequences dimension focuses on the implications of e-democracy practices on the established democratic model and practices including policies and ICT infrastructure supporting e-democracy practices.

These dimensions are useful in developing a research framework for identifying social structures and agency issues surrounding e-democracy practices in the present study. ICT enabled democratic practice among public administrators is frequently enacted in certain structures in policy development. Policy-making in Malaysia is shaped by its particular rules and cultural features which are different from other countries, as discussed in Chapter 3. Public administrators interact among themselves and to a certain extent with citizens, such as during online citizen participation. The research framework for this study is described in the following section.

5.4. Research framework

The research framework focuses on e-democracy practices in policy development at the federal level. Parvez (2006) suggest that 11 elements of the DSL framework should be employed to identify underlying social structures and strategies human actors employ in these processes.

The researcher employed these 11 elements in the present research framework by referring each element to their activities and influences. This is to clarify their analytical function. Each element and its functions are outlined as follows:

- Arrow 3 refers to (Designer – Infrastructure), the design of ICT infrastructure by the PTM (the common abbreviation for the Information Technology Officer) in the MFPS.
- Arrow 4 refers to (Infrastructure – Designer), the influence exerts by ICT infrastructure on the PTM.
- Arrow B refers to (Infrastructure – Actors), the influence of ICT infrastructure on human actors, public administrators and citizens.
- Arrow C refers to (Actors – Practices), the ongoing utilization of ICTs by public administrators and citizens.
- Arrow D refers to (Practices – Actors), the influence of enacted e-democracy practices on public administrators.
- Arrow 1 refers to the influences of the established democratic model and practices on institutional policies.
- Arrow 2 refers to the influence of the institutional policies on the PTM;
- Arrow A refers to the influences of the established democratic model and practices on public administrators and citizens.
- Arrow 5 refers to the influence on institutional policies exerted by feedback of issues by designers, public administrators, and citizens.
- Arrow E refers to the influence exerted by the enacted practices of e-democracy on the established democratic model and practices.
- Arrow F refers to the influence exerted by the enacted practices of e-democracy on institutional policies.

As discussed, four dimensions of social structure and agency issues – technological, institutional, agency, and consequences – are critical in shaping the practices and roles of e-democracy. The first part of this research framework is aimed at identifying social influences and activities in each dimension and their dialectical interactions. These influences and activities will assist to answer three subsidiary questions, discussed in Chapter 1. The four dimensions of social structures and agency issues are regrouped to answer each question, as shown in Table 5-2.

Table 5-2 Application of 11 elements into the research framework

Subsidiary research questions	Influences and activities	Dimensions of social structures and agency issues
What does e-democracy mean in Malaysia?	B, C, and 3	Technological and Agency
What are significant cultural dimensions that shape conceptions of e-democracy in the MFPS?	1, 2, and A	Institutional
What are the key expectations of human actors of e-democracy in Malaysia?	D, E, F, 4, and 5	Technological and Consequences

Technological, institutional, and agency dimensions were grouped to answer the question, what does e-democracy mean in Malaysia? The institutional dimension was utilized to answer the question, what are significant cultural dimensions that shape conceptions of e-democracy in the MFPS? The nature of e-democracy practices was subsequently identified, as discussed in Chapters 9 and 11.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the lack of policy for e-democracy results in its amorphous implementation in Malaysia. As such, the present study examines the expectations of amorphous and future implementation of e-democracy practices in Malaysia. The needs and requirements of ICT infrastructure for e-democracy, as well as their potential consequences, are investigated in the technological and consequences dimensions. These dimensions were grouped to assist in

answering the question, what are the key expectations of human actors (public administrators and citizens) of e-democracy in Malaysia?

A body of literature discussed in Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4 was utilized to inform the research framework and assists in answering subsidiary research questions. The key literature that informs the four dimensions is shown in Table 5-3.

Table 5-3 Matrix of research framework dimensions and key literature

Dimensions of social structures and agency issues	Key literature
Technological	About the provisions and initiatives of ICTs in Malaysia (Economic Planning Unit, 2001, 2002, 2010e; Government of Malaysia, 1998, 2003; Multimedia Development Corporation, 2007, 2008a; National Information Technology Council, 1999, 2009a, 2009b), discussed in Chapter 3.
Institutional	About the democratic model and practices (Held, 1996; Lijphart, 1977; Neher, 1994, 2002; Samad, 2008) discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.
Agency	About the public administration and institutional policies (A. S. Ahmad, et al., 2003a; Althaus, et al., 2007; Lindblom, 1959, 1979; Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit, 2007, 2008; Sarji, 1996; Siddiquee, 2006; Weber, Gerth, & Mills, 1991) discussed in Chapters 1, 2, and 3.
Consequences	About the concepts of e-democracy, citizen participation, and ICTs in organization (Barber, 1998; Baum, et al., 2001; Coleman & Gøtze, 2001; Heeks, 1999b; Korac-Kakabadse & Korac-Kakabadse, 1999; Macintosh, 2003; Orlikowski, 2000; Rheingold, 2000) discussed in Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Evidence of each dimension from the analysis of data collection is respectively discussed in Chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10.

The second part of the research framework is aimed at explaining the role of e-democracy in policy development in the MFPS. Such an explanation assists in answering the primary research question of this study: how do interactive Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) (as part of e-democracy) inform Malaysian public administrators in developing policies? Parvez (2006)

suggests that by utilizing the DSL framework, the role of ICT in social processes can be drawn from evidence collected in the present study. A number of authors (e.g., Heeks, 1999a; Orlikowski, 2000) provide a few typologies for the role of ICT in social processes.

Heeks (1999) outlines three basic changes potential for reform supported by ICTs. The first change is supplant. It involves a situation where ICTs “automate existing human-executed processes which involve accepting, storing, processing, outputting or transmitting information” (Heeks, 1999b, p. 17). The second change is support, when ICTs “assist existing human-executed process ... [such as] assisting existing processes of government decision-making, communication, and decision implementation)” (Heeks, 1999b, p. 17). The third change is innovate. It represents a situation where ICTs “create new IT-executed processes or support new human-executed processes ... [such as] creating new methods of public service delivery” (Heeks, 1999b, p. 17).

Orlikowski (2000) also offers three types of enactment that show how humans use ICTs to enact different technologies-in-practice, namely inertia, application, and change. The enactment of inertia occurs when users decide to utilize ICTs to “retain their existing way of doing things ... [which] results in the reinforcement and preservation of the structural status quo, with no discernable changes in work practices or the technological artifact” (Orlikowski, 2000, p. 421). The enactment of application typology occurs when users opt to utilize ICTs

to augment or refine their existing ways of doing things ... [which] results in the reinforcement and enhancement of the structural status quo, noticeable changes to the data and/or tool aspects of the technological artifact, as well as noticeable improvements to work process (Orlikowski, 2000, p. 422).

The enactment of change typology occurs when users choose to utilize ICTs “to substantially alter their existing way of doing things ... [which] results in transformation of the structural status quo, and significant modifications to users’ work practices as well as the technological artifact” (Orlikowski, 2000, p. 423).

Both Heek’s and Orlikowski’s typologies could be exploited to speculate upon the role of ICTs in social processes. The second part of this research framework

therefore employs these typologies and discusses the role of ICTs for e-democracy in policy development in the MFPS in Chapter 11.

5.5. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the research framework of this study. The framework utilized 11 elements of Parvez's DSL framework. The analytical functions of some elements were adjusted. The adjustments are aimed at matching the research framework to address the research questions about situated usage of ICTs by public administrators for e-democracy in policy development in the Malaysian Federal Public Service (see Chapter 1). The research framework was informed by Giddens' ST, Orlikowski's SMT and TiP lens, and the body of literature discussed in Chapters 1 to 4. The research framework guides the methodology, as discussed in Chapter 6.

6. Research design

*Memanjat bersengkelit*¹⁰

This chapter describes the research design for this study. As discussed in Chapter 1, this study aims to identify the nature of e-democracy implementation for policy development in Malaysia, which is a relatively new phenomenon. The chapter begins with a discussion of the research strategy and rationales for an exploratory, ethnographic, qualitative, and case study approach. The chapter then discusses the employment of the purposive sampling technique to identify the unit of analysis. The researcher's management of conducting in-depth interviews, including methods of entry and ethics, is discussed. The last section of this chapter describes the management and recording of data along with data analysis strategies using NVivo software. The research design assists the researcher to conduct data collection and to analyze the data of the present study.

6.1. Research strategy

E-democracy is a relatively intricate and unfamiliar subject in Malaysia. The literature review has established that the concept of e-democracy is not acknowledged in any policy documents and the processes involved in its implementation in Malaysia have not been researched before (see Chapters 2, 3, and 4). Where research involves relatively unexplored territory, a research design which remains open to new findings and some degree of emergence will best serve the purpose of attaining findings of high quality, depth and richness (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). An exploratory design is necessary in order to better understand complex interactions as well as processes, which are to some extent implicit in nature.

A qualitative approach assists in identifying and understanding hidden beliefs and values, which are widely shared in the organizational life of subjects in this study

¹⁰ Brown (1959) translated this Malay saying into "Climbing a tree with climbing-irons" with the English equivalent "The right method" – "Sengkelit is the loop used by climbers for their feet, the Asiatic equivalent of climbing-irons" (Brown, 1959, p. 181).

(Berg, 2007; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The meaning of e-democracy, as conceptualized by public administrators at the federal level of government in Malaysia, is investigated to discover how interactive Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) inform their policies. A lack of literature on e-democracy in Malaysia supports the applicability of Yin's statement that the situation "does not lend itself to the development of good theoretical statements, and any new empirical study is likely to assume the characteristic of an "exploratory" study" (Yin, 2003b, p. 30, emphasis in original).

As a requisite to addressing the question of how conceptualization and e-democracy practices occur among Malaysian public administrators, their insights into usage of e-democracy in policy development are essential. Case studies serve such a purpose. Yin (2003b) argues that case studies will be advantageous when "a 'how' ... question is being asked about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has little or no control" (p. 9). The researcher is also able to concentrate on the "experiential knowledge of the case and [pay] close attention to the influence of its social, political, and other contexts" (Stake, 2005, p. 444).

Berg (2007) and Yin (2003a, 2009) argue that an exploratory case study requires a framework for guidance. The 11 elements of the Parvez structural framework are utilized in this case study to focus on the practices of e-democracy at the federal level of government in Malaysia (see Chapter 5). These elements facilitate the identification of public administrators' activities and social influences in e-democracy practices. The case study design is illustrated in Figure 6-1.

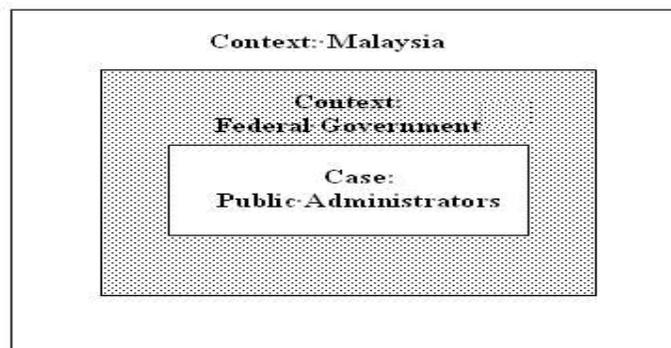


Figure 6-1 Case study design

The research questions – which seek to identify (1) the meaning of e-democracy, (2) cultural dimensions that shape conceptions of e-democracy, and (3) key expectations of human actors of e-democracy in Malaysia – demand an ethnographic strategy (see Chapter 1) which

places researchers in the midst of whatever it is they study. From this vantage, researchers can examine various phenomena as perceived by participants and represent these observations as accounts (Berg, 2007, p. 172).

It must be appreciated that human behavior cannot be understood without understanding the framework within which individuals interpret their thoughts, feelings and actions. As behavior must be studied in situations, research must be conducted in the setting where all contextual variables such as cultures, traditions and roles are operating (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Public administrators operating in several government agencies at the federal level were identified as a case study. A detailed description of these public administrators as a unit of analysis is described in 6.3.1.

Taking the above factors into consideration, as a whole, a qualitative paradigm will allow for in-depth data collection, where the researcher can discuss in detail cultural changes, and trace the way public administrators make sense of the concept and practices of e-democracy in Malaysia. The analysis of ethnographic data also provides flexibility in determining findings and “avoids oversimplifications in description and analysis because of the rich descriptions” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 93). It is hoped that this study will identify important variables in the nature of e-democracy for subsequent research.

6.2. Method for literature review

Scholarly literature, government documents, as well as print and online contents, were employed throughout the present study. The method used in surveying the literature that created the research framework, as well as supporting the analysis and discussion of findings, involves four significant steps, as follows:

- Step one: Literature pertaining to the concepts of e-democracy, democracy, citizen participation, and public administration is surveyed to provide

background as well as an overview of issues of e-democracy practices in the public administration.

- Step two: Literature concerning Malaysia's key features (geographic location, population (including literacy, language, and religion), government structure, public service, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), socio-economic indicators, democratic models and practices, existing frameworks for citizen participation, as well as public service and policy-making, is surveyed to provide a context for analyzing e-democracy practices in the Malaysian Federal Public Service (MFPS). Government documents and online materials about the MFPS were limited to before and during the era of the former Prime Minister, Abdullah Badawi (2003 to 2009), in order to streamline fieldwork (December 2007 and May to August 2008) and to standardize terms, such as the names of federal agencies involved in the fieldwork, throughout the thesis.
- Step three: Literature on e-democracy research is surveyed to develop the research framework for this study. Key literature from steps one and two were utilized to inform the framework (which focused on four dimensions, namely technological, institutional, agency, and consequences) to provide structure for an analysis of e-democracy practices in the MFPS, discussed in Chapter 5.
- Step four: Relevant literature from steps one to three is reviewed to provide a discussion of the nature of enacted e-democracy practices in the policy development in the MFPS. Current government documents and online materials about the MFPS were included to provide a comprehensive account of e-democracy practices in Malaysia.

The following section describes in-depth interviews as the main technique of data collection employed in this present study.

6.3. Data collection technique – in-depth interview

Corbin and Strauss (2008) argue that one of “the virtues of qualitative research is that there are many alternative sources of data” (p. 27). Besides literature, the present study relies on in-depth interviews to collect qualitative data to gain a

deeper understanding of the use of ICTs for e-democracy among public administrators in the policy development processes in the Malaysian Federal Public Service (MFPS). This section describes the interview technique, which include the unit of analysis, the questions, limitations, pilot interviews, and the researcher's role in managing interviews.

6.3.1. Unit of analysis

As discussed in Chapter 1, the unit of analysis in this study is public administrators in the Malaysian Federal Public Service (MFPS). To identify them, Berg (2007) suggests a practical approach, which emphasizes a reasonable size of population and keeping within the limited resources available to the researcher. The researcher, being a public administrator himself, believed that the interviews could be conducted effectively with reasonable access to government agencies at the federal level. The size of MFPS and its intricate nature call for a pragmatic sampling. This study employed a purposive sampling strategy, as described in the following section.

6.3.2. Purposive sampling

It is almost impossible to select a random sample that is inclusive of all public administrators with specific areas of specialization, such as PTD (Malay abbreviation for the Diplomatic and Administrative Officer) or PTM (Malay abbreviation for Information Technology Officer). Williamson (2002) suggests that purposive sampling be applied when "it seems impossible to select a random sample and/or it is important to include specific groups in a sample" (p. 231). The purposive sampling technique will ensure that specific public administrators and agencies that deal with the online policy development process are included. Being a public administrator, the researcher utilized his "special knowledge or expertise" (Berg, 2007, p. 44) about the MFPS to select interviewees for the sample.

The choice of agencies is also important for relevance and richness of research data. The agencies must possess two features, namely web presence, and ready exploitation of interactive ICTs in dealing with citizens. A yearly assessment (since 2005) of all government portals and websites in Malaysia conducted by the

Multimedia Development Corporation (MDeC), a government owned company which oversees the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC), is significant in determining such criteria. 1,133 websites were assessed in 2007 by MDeC across a set of five criteria, namely: (1) citizen interactive capability; (2) citizen insight generation; (3) citizen online services; (4) citizen support; and (5) content management. Such criteria were developed in-house, based on global practice established by international bodies such as the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN) and Accenture. The portals and websites were assessed and ranked. The ranking was reported in the “Government Portals and Websites Assessment 2007” and KPKT (Malay abbreviation for the Ministry of Housing and Local Government) was ranked first (Multimedia Development Corporation, 2008b). Thus KPKT was identified as a key ministry for this study.

Interviewees were identified from the key ministry as well as those with the following criteria:

- Public administrators serving at the federal level in operational ministries and central agencies, which are involved in the management of related ICT initiatives and policies (as discussed in Chapter 3).
- Commentators – individuals who are: (a) managers of civil society organizations that deal with the MFPS; and (b) identified as having insights into the subject of this study such as academics, business interest groups, IT experts and government consultants.

The interviewees were then recruited through e-mails and by telephone. E-mail addresses and phone numbers were obtained from public domain websites of respective agencies and organizations. A detailed description of interviewees is provided in the following section.

6.3.3. Descriptive statistics of interviewees

Two cycles of interviews were conducted in this study. Two periods of in-depth interviews were conducted in December 2007 and over a three months period from May to July 2008, as shown in Table 6-1.

Table 6-1 Interview periods

Interview period	Number of agencies	Number of interviewees (n)
1st period – December 2007	2	9
2nd period – May to July 2008	8	40*
Total		49

(* inclusive of 11 commentators)

12 candidates, at two agencies: KTAK (the common Malay abbreviation for the Ministry of Energy, Water and Communication) and MAMPU (the common Malay acronym for the Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit), were identified in the first cycle in December 2007. Nine out of 12 candidates agreed to be interviewed. 52 candidates were identified in the second cycle from May to July 2008 and 40 interviews were then conducted, at eight agencies listed in Table 6-2.

Table 6-2 List of agencies for the second cycle of interview

No.	Agency ¹¹
	Key Ministry
1.	Ministry of Housing and Local Government (KPKT)
	Operational Ministries
2.	Ministry of Energy, Water and Communication (KTAK)
3.	Ministry of Science Technology and Innovation (MoSTI)
4.	Ministry of Information (Mol)
5.	Ministry of Rural and Regional Development (KKLWB)
	Central Agencies
6.	Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department (EPU)
7.	Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department (MAMPU)
8.	Public Complaints Bureau, Prime Minister's Department (BPA)

¹¹ The federal agencies were restructured in April 2009. Some agencies were merged to fit their new functions. The restructuring process resulted in a reduction of the number of agencies with the merged agencies being renamed. For example, the function of communication from KTAK being transferred to the Mol and resulted in the Mol renamed as the Ministry of Information, Communication, and Culture. For the purpose of consistency, names of all agencies involved in this study are recorded as during the interview processes prior to April 2009.

The total number of interviews conducted was 49 (N=49). The interviewees consisted of 71 percent ($n=35$) males and 29 percent ($n=14$) females as shown in Table 6-3. The percentage of interviewees selected from both genders for this study is representative of the top management population in the MFPS (Public Service Department Malaysia, 2009).

Table 6-3 Gender of interviewees

Gender	No. (n)	Percentage
Male	35	71%
Female	14	29%
Total (N)	49	100%

The interviewees were categorized into three age groups, namely 25-35, 36-45 and 46 and above. These age groups allow deeper analysis of each group's understandings of e-democracy. Of 49 interviewees, 24 percent ($n=10$) were in the 25-35 age group, 29 percent ($n=16$) were in the 36-45 age group, and 47 percent ($n=23$) were in the 46 and above age group, as shown in Figure 6-2. A higher percentage of interviewees selected from the age group of 46 and above was deliberate to benefit from their long experience in the MFPS or their areas of expertise.

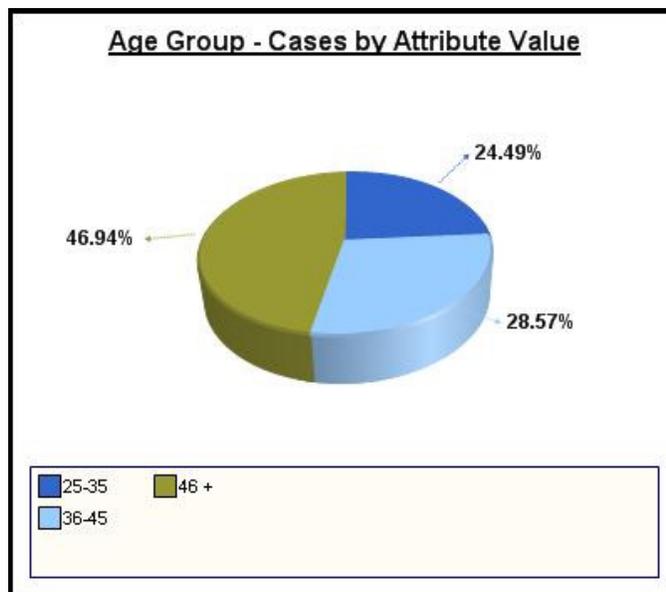


Figure 6-2 Age groups of interviewees

Interviewees were divided into Group A and Group B. Group A consisted of 38 public administrators ($n=38$) and Group B consisted of 11 commentators ($n=11$).

(i) Group A: Public administrators

The public administrators in Group A were from three categories: a central agency, an operational ministry or a key ministry: 32 percent ($n=12$) of public administrators were from central agencies, 44 percent ($n=17$) from operational ministries, and 24 percent ($n=9$) from the key ministry (Figure 6-3). The selection of interviewees from each agency was carefully considered to include all key informants based on their job functions at the agency.

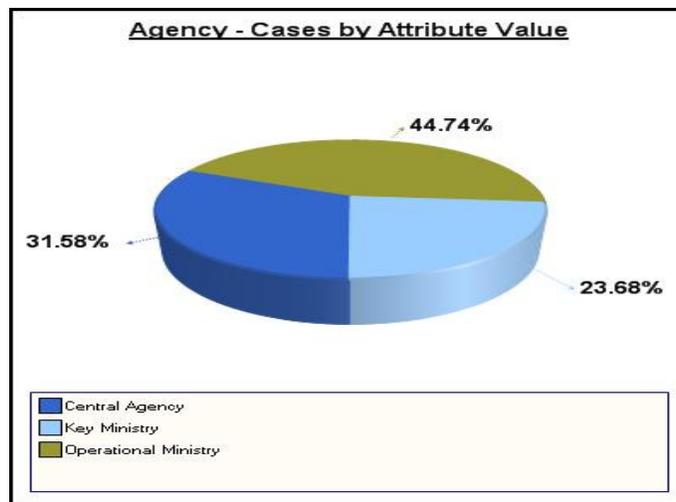


Figure 6-3 Breakdown by agency

The public administrators were: 47 percent ($n=18$) from the PTD Service; 40 percent ($n=15$) from the PTM Service; eight percent ($n=3$) from the Social Service; and five percent ($n=2$) from the Engineering Service (Figure 6-4). A balanced distribution of interviewees selected from the PTD and PTM Services was intentional to examine their similarities and differences in understanding e-democracy, as suggested by Parvez (2006) (see Chapter 5).

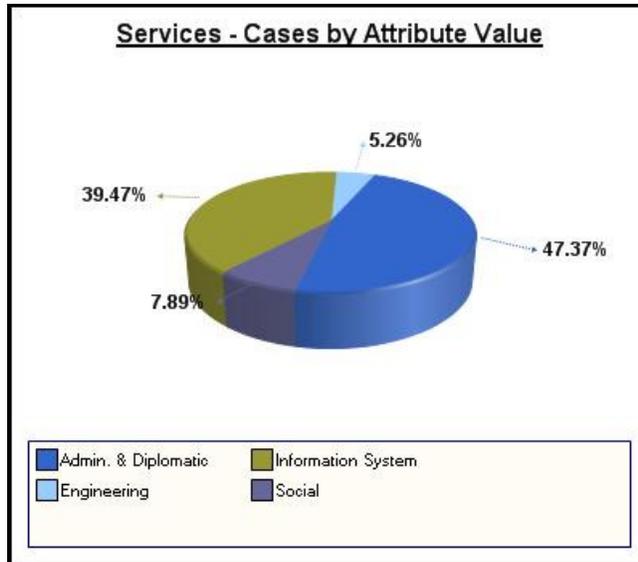


Figure 6-4 Public administrators' services

In relation to length of service, public administrators were represented by: eight interviewees (n=8) each, from less than five years of service and more than 25 years of service; seven interviewees (n=7) from 21-25 years of service; five interviewees (n=5) from 16-20 years of service; six interviewees (n=6) from 11-15 years of service; and four interviewees (n=4) from 6-10 years of service. The equally high number of interviewees selected from, 1-5 years of service and 26 years and above was guided by preliminary findings of pilot interviews, which suggests a comparison between the two groups' views on e-democracy (see section 6.3.5). The public administrators' years of service distribution is depicted in Figure 6-5.

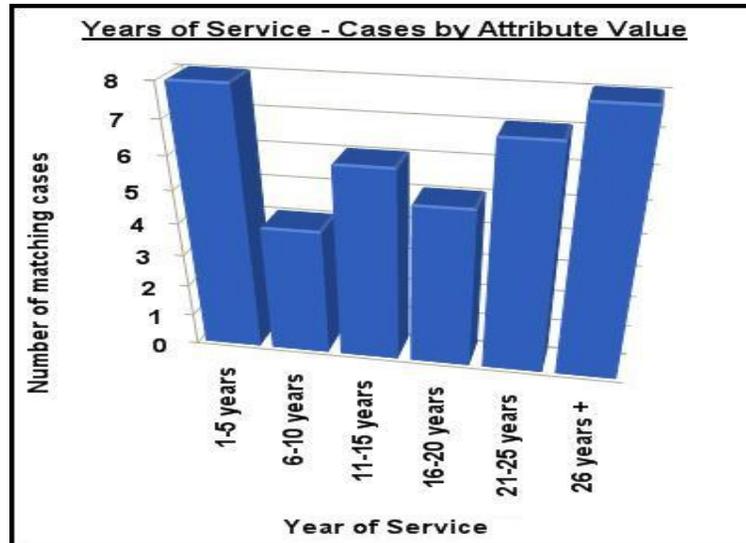


Figure 6-5 Public administrators' years of service

The hierarchical structure in the public administration is arranged according to the public administrators' grade in an organization (see Chapter 3). The public administrators interviewed were selected to include different grades. The grades ranged from time-scale grade 41 to super-scale grade (Malay acronym is JUSA). Of 38 public administrators, 31 percent ($n=12$) were from grade 48, 21 percent ($n=8$) from grade 52, 13 percent ($n=5$) each from grades 41 and JUSA, as well as 11 percent ($n=4$) each from grades 44 and 54. The breakdown is shown in Figure 6-6. The high number of interviewees selected from grade 48 was due to their main functions in developing public policy in the MFPS.

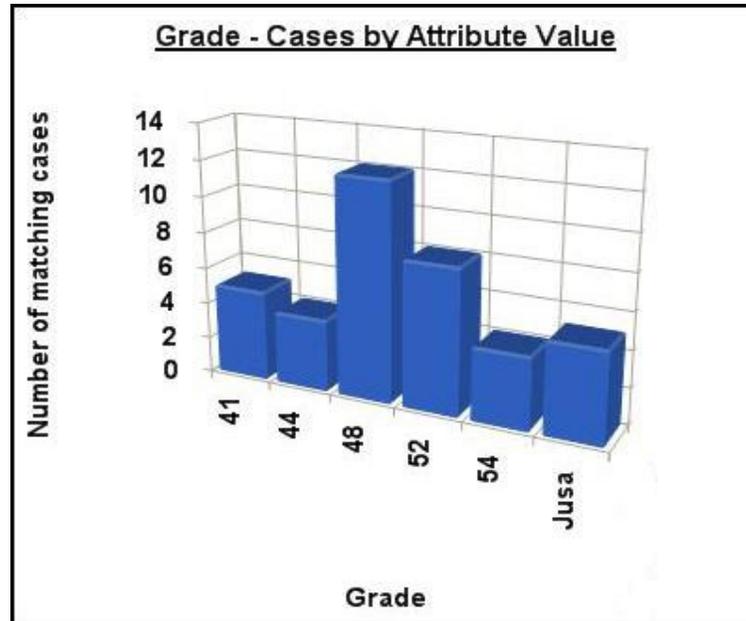


Figure 6-6 Public administrators' grades

(ii) Group B: Commentators

During the second cycle of interviews, 11 commentators were also included. The commentators were 36 percent (n=4) academics, 27 percent (n=3) managers of civil society organizations, and 18 percent (n=2) for both business managers and consultants (as shown in Figure 6-7). The commentators were selected to represent their area of expertise and to present different views from public administrators in the present study.

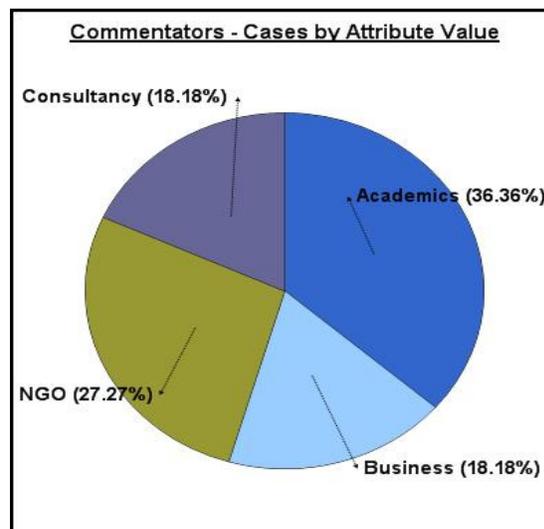


Figure 6-7 Commentators' areas of expertise

Careful consideration was given by the researcher to the selection and recruitment of interviewees.

6.3.4. Interview questions

The purpose of in-depth interviews is to have interviewees reflect on recent behavior, events, and cultural changes (Marshall & Rossman, 1989), in relation to tracing the development of e-democracy practices at the federal level of government. Of particular interest to the researcher are their accounts of e-democracy practices in policy development processes.

An open-ended, semi-structured interview questionnaire was developed to gather primary data from in-depth interviews in relation to the research questions and to seek insights into bias and truthfulness. The design of the interviews was based on Parvez’s double structuration loop framework, which attempts to uncover relevant social influences surrounding e-democracy design and practices (see Chapter 5). Interview questions suggested by Parvez were adapted to fit this study (Parvez, 2006, pp. 340-341). For fieldwork in Malaysia, three sets of interview questions were developed to cater for two different categories of interviewees in Group A: (1) ICT designers and policymakers; and (2) the players of e-democracy, and Group B. Table 6-4 illustrates some of these questions. The full set of interview questions is provided in Appendix C.

Table 6-4 Examples of interview protocol

Group of interviewees	Questions
Group A – Public administrators: ICT designers/policymakers	What ICT infrastructure is provided for supporting e-democracy and why? Who exercises control over the ICT infrastructure? What do you think ICT infrastructure means? What are its purposes? In your opinion, how is ICT infrastructure (supporting e-democracy) expected to be designed? What are the objectives of ICT infrastructure? What facilities are provided to you for implementing ICT infrastructure? What do you perceive as right and wrong in designing ICT infrastructure within institutional boundaries?

Group of interviewees	Questions
Group A – Public administrators: E-democracy players	In your opinion, what would be the most likely objective for a government agency to provide for online participation in a policy-making process? Why? Civic participation in online forums and blogs initiated by nongovernmental bodies or individuals sometimes point out issues regarding policies. Would you consider them as useful sources for picking up issues to be addressed by your agency? In your opinion, what is the correct practice of e-democracy? What types of policy are being developed employing e-democracy? Why?
Group B – Commentators	A mixture of the above questions matching the commentators' area of expertise

The Parvez framework was aimed at a specific and ordered e-democracy project, as opposed to this study which aims to explore the unstructured implementation of e-democracy practices at the federal level of government. Additional questions were also developed to investigate the perceived cultural dimensions that shape e-democracy practices and the expectations of human actors in e-democracy. This questionnaire was submitted to the Monash University Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans (SCERH) and approved in November 2007 (Appendix D).

6.3.5. Pilot interviews

A number of pilot interviews were undertaken in order to test the effectiveness of interviews (including interview organization and questions), prior to fieldwork in Malaysia. Interviews assist the researcher to conduct qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The pilot interviews were conducted from 29 to 31 October 2007 among Malaysians in Melbourne. Seven candidates were identified from the public website for the Malaysian Student Association in Victoria. Four out of seven candidates recruited through e-mails and phone calls agreed to be interviewed. These candidates consisted of public administrators (Group A), and Group B, which consisted of an academic and a manager of an NGO (as shown in Table 6-5).

Table 6-5 List of interviewees – pilot interview

Group of interviewees	Identifier	Occupation/Position
Group A – Public administrators	A1	English teacher
	A2	Education officer (State of Sarawak)
Group B – Commentators	B1	Lecturer, Media Centre, National University of Malaysia
	B2	President of Malaysian Postgraduate Association, Victoria

Although these pilot interviews did not capture the full characteristics of the informants to be interviewed in Malaysia, the feedback was very useful and enabled the researcher to finetune the interview questions. Initially interview questions were amended and reduced to 15 questions to shorten the duration of the interview session. After two interview sessions, four questions were combined and refined, which further reduced the total number of questions to 11 for each group.

The average duration of each interview session was less than one hour, between 26 minutes and 50 minutes. Each interview session was conducted in English and audio-recorded with the consent of the interviewee. Transcripts for each session were prepared. Each transcription took more than five hours to complete.

The researcher noted some useful observations from pilot interviews:

- Interviewees were inclined to share their thoughts more if the researcher listened attentively and showed interest in what they wanted to say, rather than taking notes.
- Sometimes when candidates simply could not find the right English words to express their thoughts, it was better to allow them to express such thoughts in Malay.
- The researcher needed to avoid conducting interviews at the interviewee's home to avoid distractions, such as children playing or crying in the background, which affected the quality of audio-recordings.

These observations were applied in the actual fieldwork. The researcher found that interviewees were more enthusiastic in expressing their thoughts and the quality of audio-recordings was good.

The researcher managed to gather preliminary data and potential new insights into e-democracy research in Malaysia from the pilot interviews. Five significant insights were identified about issues surrounding e-democracy practices, including the role of the younger generation in e-democracy, transparency, the digital divide, deference to authorities, and required ICT skills for e-democracy. These insights are not exhaustive, as no actual deep analysis was carried out on all data collected, but they represent some “intriguing patterns” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 58) that the researcher identified for further examination during the actual fieldwork.

6.3.6. Role management: issues of ethics, entry, and reciprocity

As mentioned, the research project was approved by the Ethics Committee of Monash University (SCERH), (see Appendix D). As required by SCERH, anonymity of participants had to be ensured. Each interviewee in Group A and Group B was allocated an identifier code. Tables 6-6, 6-7, and 6-8 provide the individual identifier and code reference for all 49 interviewees and their respective organizations. These identifiers are utilized throughout Chapters 7 to 11 in reporting the findings of this study.

Table 6-6 Group A – public administrators’ identifier

Inventory Code	Identifier	Role	Inventory Code	Identifier	Role
A01F1	A1	Middle manager	A20F2	A20	Senior manager
A02F1	A2	Middle manager	A21F3	A21	Senior manager
A03F1	A3	Middle manager	A22F3	A22	Middle manager
A04F1	A4	Middle manager	A23F4	A23	Senior manager
A05F1	A5	Middle manager	A24F4	A24	Middle manager
A06F1	A6	Middle manager	A25F5	A25	Middle manager
A07F1	A7	Middle manager	A26F5	A26	New appointee

Inventory Code	Identifier	Role	Inventory Code	Identifier	Role
A08F1	A8	Middle manager	A27F6	A27	Middle manager
A09F2	A9	Middle manager	A28F6	A28	Senior manager
A10F1	A10	New appointee	A29F7	A29	Senior manager
A11F1	A11	New appointee	A30F7	A30	Middle manager
A12F1	A12	New appointee	A31F7	A31	New appointee
A13F1	A13	New appointee	A32F7	A32	Middle manager
A14F2	A14	Middle manager	A33F7	A33	New appointee
A15F2	A15	Middle manager	A34F7	A34	Senior manager
A16F2	A16	Middle manager	A35F7	A35	Middle manager
A17F2	A17	New appointee	A36F7	A36	New appointee
A18F2	A18	Senior manager	A37F7	A37	Middle manager
A19F2	A19	Senior manager	A38F8	A38	Middle manager

Table 6-7 Group B – Commentators’ identifier

Inventory code	Identifier	Inventory code	Identifier
B01	C1	B07	C7
B02	C2	B08	C8
B03	C3	B09	C9
B04	C4	B10	C10
B05	C5	B11	C11
B06	C6		

Table 6-8 Organizations’ inventory code

Organization	Inventory code
KTAK	F1
MAMPU	F2
EPU	F3
BPA	F4
Mol	F5
MoSTI	F6
KPKT	F7
KKLBW	F8

The researcher also became aware that as a condition to conduct research in Malaysia, the Malaysian Government requires approval be obtained through the

Economic Planning Unit (EPU) of the Prime Minister's Department. An application to perform fieldwork was filed and approved for a period of three years (Appendix E). At the organizational level, the researcher's first task was to obtain written or verbal permission from the administrative department. Where possible, such permissions were obtained and forwarded to SCERH.

All identified interviewees' details were obtained from the public domain, namely organizational websites and annual reports, to conform to the ethical standards required by SCERH. These interviewees were then contacted through e-mails or telephone to arrange interview appointments.

At the beginning of every interview, the interviewee was given a copy of the Explanatory Statement (Appendix F) which described the nature of the research project. The researcher also presented the permission letter from the administrative office (see examples in Appendix G). If only a verbal agreement from the organization's administrative office was granted, the researcher presented the official Research Pass from EPU as evidence of permission to conduct the interview (Appendix H). The interviewee was requested to sign a Consent Form for his or her participation and for the interview to be audio-recorded (Appendix I). 48 interviewees gave their consent, but one refused. Comprehensive notes were taken for the unrecorded interview. All interviews were conducted face-to-face and mostly in English with the exception of two interviewees who preferred to be interviewed at a café of their choice. All other interviews took place at the interviewee's office.

During the interview session the researcher was mindful of conveying the importance of interviewee's information as acceptable and valuable. A fundamental assumption is that the interviewee's perspective on the subject of enquiry should unfold as the interviewee reviews it, rather than the researcher's anticipation (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). This is the rationale for applying the ethnographic interviewing technique for this study. Interviews were constructed to be more formal lengthy interactions in order that interview topics are standardized

and would include general questions. Differing from a conversation in both structure and purpose,

the ethnographic interview is not balanced as most conversations are; rather, the [interviewer] asks most of the questions ... [and] ... uses repetition to clarify subjects' responses. ... [The interviewer also] encourages subjects to expand on their responses (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 92).

The researcher was aware that public administrators might be reluctant to discuss certain topics due to limitations imposed by the *Official Secrets Act* and the *Constitution*, as discussed in Chapter 1. The researcher began most interviews by disclosing that as a public administrator he was mindful of such limitations. Such disclosure and assurance facilitated a more open conversation and instilled trust. In some instances, the researcher was annoyed by interviewees who did not keep to their appointments. Those who refused to talk about things other than their job function and those who failed to understand questions made the interview harder. The researcher learned gradually to overcome these issues as the interviewing progressed.

6.3.7. Reliability of data

The researcher is aware that interviews have weaknesses. Interviewees may not be willing to share information and conversely, the researcher may not ask appropriate questions or will fall short of fully comprehending answers (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The likelihood of understanding public administrators' views and their organizational complexities is increased with the researcher being a public administrator in the MFPS, with an existing insight and understanding of the world of public administrators in Malaysia. However, this factor also raises an issue of personal bias. Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggest that the researcher utilizes his "experiences to bring up other possibilities of meaning" (p. 80) rather than imposing his experience upon the data to ensure its reliability.

The interview technique, despite being used extensively, is not a neutral tool for data gathering. This is because the "spoken or written word has always a residue of ambiguity, no matter how carefully [researchers] word the questions and how carefully [researchers] report or code the answers" (Fontana & Frey, 2003, p. 61).

As discussed above, the design of the fieldwork was carefully developed to ensure that the data collected was valid and reliable, including:

- careful selection of government agencies at the federal level of government to ensure reasonable representation of public administrators from all relevant agencies;
- careful selection of interviewees within the identified agencies to ensure balanced perceptions of all categories of public administrators were captured; and
- pre-testing of research questions prior to fieldwork.

The concerns which raise the question of quality of data were also mitigated, during both data collection and data analysis, through consultation with the researcher's supervisors. The trustworthiness or validity of the original data was crosschecked through such consultation.

6.4. Data management and analysis

Two main types of data were collected during the described fieldwork, namely audio-recorded interviews and documents. These were then analyzed using the structurational research framework, discussed in Chapter 5, to develop a theory of the nature of e-democracy practices in the MFPS (see Chapter 11). Such data had to be organized before it could be analyzed (Berg, 2007). The researcher faithfully transcribed all interviews into conversational English. Although this was a time-consuming process, the transcription enabled the researcher to assess the quality of data and to learn more from the data (Richards, 2005). All transcripts and research notes were carefully edited, indexed, and saved as Word documents in a dedicated folder labelled 'research data'.

The main technique employed to analyze the research data was content analysis – the method to examine, describe, and interpret artifacts of a society (Berg, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). In the analysis process, concepts were derived and developed from raw data, termed 'coding' (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The transcripts were read in context to identify codeable topics and themes. QSR NVivo, (Nvivo) software was utilized in data coding and analysis, described in the following sections. Initially Version 7 was used and then upgraded to Version 8.

6.4.1. Primary data analysis tools – NVivo software

The reason for choosing NVivo software as a primary tool for data analysis is pragmatic. The researcher prefers to work with a Personal Computer (PC) rather than manually sorting data using 3x5 paper cards. Such software also enabled the researcher to systematically analyze and document all research data in one place. Key terms of the NVivo software are defined in Table 6-9.

Table 6-9 Definition of NVivo key terms

Key terms	Description
Project	A file that contains all research data.
Sources	A collective term for research materials, such as interview transcripts and audios. The sources are stored in Documents (Version 7) – a part of Internals which also include Video, Audio, and Picture (in Version 8). Other sources are stored at Externals – research materials that cannot be imported into NVivo, and Memos.
Memo	A type of source to record thoughts and observations of the analyzed data. A memo can be linked to a particular source or node.
Node	A container for a collection of references under a theme or topic within research data.
Case	A node with attributes such as gender or age. Such a node can represent a person or entity involved in the research.
Attribute	A classification of a case, such as gender or age. The attribute consists of name, like gender, and value, like female or male.
Set	A flexible grouping of Sources by creating references or shortcuts to the original Sources.
Annotation	Text that can be linked to selected content in a source, similar to scribbled notes in the margin.
Casebook	A matrix displaying cases, attributes and attribute values. A casebook can be created in NVivo or imported from a tab-separated text file.

Source: Adapted from the website of NVivo online help (2007)

The analysis processes conducted using NVivo software is illustrated in Figure 6-8.

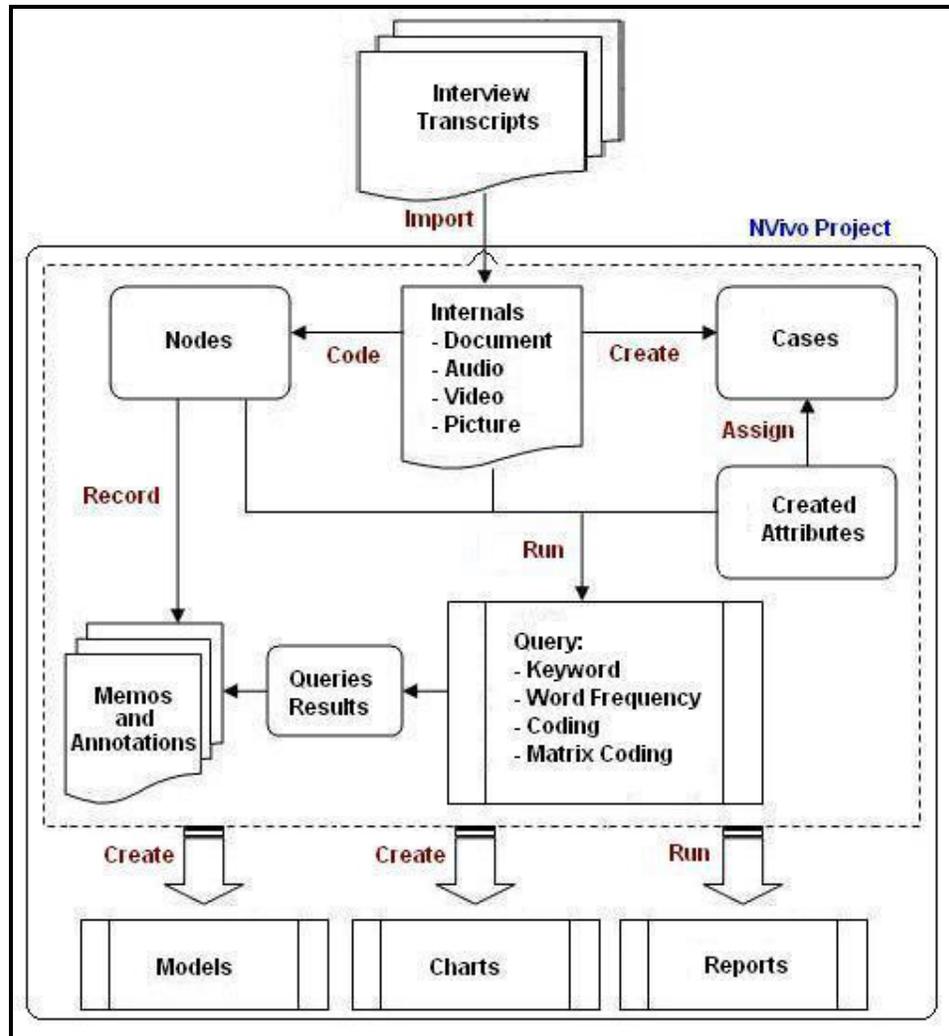


Figure 6-8 Data analysis processes using NVivo software

Detailed descriptions of each process are elaborated in nine steps, as elaborated in Appendix J. Screenshots of NVivo windows for the processes are shown in Appendix K.

All nine steps were crucial in the analysis process. The raw data was efficiently categorized in Nodes for analysis. Queries were conducted on Cases and Documents to generate insights which were organized and managed in Memos. Models were utilized to construct hierarchies and relationships. Emerging patterns from the data were synthesized into an integrated picture and presented through

refined Models, Charts, and Reports to answer research questions (as discussed in Chapter 1).

6.4.2. Reflections on NVivo software

At the beginning, the researcher was excited but wary at the prospect of utilizing NVivo software to analyse the research data. Being a novice in qualitative research and with limited exposure to NVivo, the researcher was overwhelmed by a plethora of features offered. The researcher benefited from the software manual, books, websites, the QSR helpline, and his supervisors to explore and manage NVivo throughout the analytical process. From a process of trial and error, the researcher also learned a number of lessons about NVivo software: (1) it is fairly easy to learn and use; (2) it is an excellent organizer; and (3) it is a mere tool.

(1) Fairly easy to learn and use.

The researcher found that the overall graphical user interface of the software was user-friendly and simple to navigate. The capability of the software to interface with Microsoft Word, and a spreadsheet like Excel, was extremely useful for manipulating Reports and Queries results in the analysis process. The latest software version (Version 8) also allows non-text information, such as audios, videos, and pictures, to be imported and manipulated. Resources and support provided through NVivo's official website were also good.

(2) An excellent organizer.

The researcher maintained a research journal in NVivo. Such a journal facilitates keeping track of thoughts and ideas, as well as capturing and analyzing data throughout the study. The information recorded in this journal assisted the researcher with thesis writing. The search feature in NVivo also allows for information in this journal to be searched and queried for exploring ideas and insights generation.

(3) A mere tool.

The researcher realized that the abundant features offered by the software should be strategically managed to maximize benefits to the study due to limited time and resources made available to the researcher. A careful selection of some features, based on their capability and usefulness, produced a comprehensive result and generated useful insights. Some of the useful features include:

- Keyword Query for a different perspective insights development;
- Matrix Coding Query for testing ideas from different groups of interviewees with different attributes;
- Models creation from any properties of items associated with the project for better presentation of insights generated from data analysis;
- Copy and Paste facility from the Node to its linked Memo is very useful to keep track of any quote used from any Node; and
- all coded data under each Node can be viewed individually, which is useful for generating insights from its specific context.

The researcher was also mindful that some of the features were not helpful and to a certain extent annoying. The researcher tried to avoid utilizing such features or engaged the helpline to rectify the problem. Some of the troublesome features encountered by the researcher were:

- The 'undock all windows' facility is useless. This is because the software keeps crashing while shifting view from one window to the other. The helpline was referred to in order to rectify this problem, however, it still persists. The researcher resorted to working from docked windows to avoid any further software crashes.
- The software was subjected to slow performance at one point during data analysis. Any Query took more than five minutes to be completed. The helpline representative advised a Compact and Repair feature to be conducted on the saved project file. The software performance was restored.
- Most of the features offered in the software were not customizable. For example, the Chart can only produce certain types of chart with limited options for presentation.

6.5. Conclusion

This chapter has described the research design for this study. This design includes a detailed discussion of research strategies and their rationales for an exploratory, ethnographic, qualitative case study approach. The chapter has also discussed the employment of purposive sampling technique to identify the unit of analysis. The researcher's role management in conducting in-depth interviews was explained, including methods of entry and reciprocity, as well as ethics. Management and recording of collected data was described along with data analysis strategies with the utilization of NVivo software. Discussions of findings are presented in the next five chapters (Chapter 7 to 11).

7. Findings: The technological dimension

7.1. Overview of findings

*Pucuk dicita ulam mendatang*¹²

The findings of this study are reported in Chapters 7 to 11. As discussed in Chapter 5, three dimensions – technological, institutional, and agency – are critical in shaping the practices and roles of e-democracy. Chapters 7, 8, and 9 describe evidence about each respective dimension. These dimensions and four identified practices of e-democracy, namely ‘inputs collection’, ‘information exchange’, ‘communication’, and ‘electronification’, constitute the nature of e-democracy at the federal government level in Malaysia (see summary in Box 7-1). Initial uncertainties about the meaning of e-democracy are also discussed in Section 9.2 in Chapter 9. Chapter 10 describes the expectations for such e-democracy practices. Finally, Chapter 11 discusses the emerging nature of enacted e-democracy practices and the way it informs public administrators in policy development in Malaysia.

7.2. Technological facilities

This chapter discusses the technological dimension. Human actors – both public administrators and citizens – are enabled to exercise or not exercise their power through technological facilities usage and capability (Orlikowski, 2000). As discussed in Chapter 5, the technological dimension is denoted by Arrows B, and D, and Arrow 4 of Parvez’s framework (Parvez, 2006), as shown in Figure 7-1.

¹² “A shoot is willed, a vegetable appears” – Malay saying (translated, Brown, 1959, p. 17). This saying envisages the outcome of something better than one hoped for. Brown (1959) illustrates this saying as “of a hungry man hoping at best for, but quite glad to get, a [*pucuk*] ... to appease the pangs of hunger, and actually getting *ulam* ... which at least [is] higher in the gastronomic scale than [*pucuk*]” (pp. 17-18).

Box 7 - 1 The nature of e-democracy at the federal level of government in Malaysia

Agency dimension (Ch. 9)		Institutional dimension (Ch. 8)		Technological dimension (Ch. 7)				
E-democracy practices	Interpretive schemes	Norms	Culture	Hardware	Software	Systems	Networks	Management
Inputs collection	For policy development. For service delivery improvement.	Mutual benefit. Target groups. Self-censorship.	Deference to authority. Patron-client communitarianism. Non-partisan and expert public service.	Phones (fixed and mobile). Desktop computer (DC). Television.	Website or portal.	Electronic mail (e-mail). Short Messaging System (SMS).	Local Area Network (LAN). Wide Area Network (WAN). The Internet.	Managed by the government and vendors appointed by government.
Information exchange	For fast information-seeking and sharing.	Mutual benefit. Target groups. Self-censorship.	Non-partisan and expert public service. Information culture. Integration.	Phones (fixed and mobile). DC.	Website or portal. Weblog or blog. Online forum.	Electronic mail (e-mail).	LAN. WAN. The Internet.	Managed by government, private companies, and online forum creator.
Communication	For direct access to the authority.	Mutual benefit. Target groups. Self-censorship.	Personalism. Activism.	Phones (fixed and mobile). DC.	Website or portal. Weblog or blog.	Electronic mail (e-mail).	LAN. WAN. The Internet.	Managed by government.
Electronification	For gauging popularity. For good governance indicator.	Mutual benefit. Target groups. Self-censorship.	Patron-client communitarianism. Non-partisan and expert public service. Incrementalism. Information culture.	Phones (fixed and mobile). DC.	Website or portal. Online voting. Online polling.	Electronic mail (e-mail).	LAN. WAN. The Internet.	Managed by government.

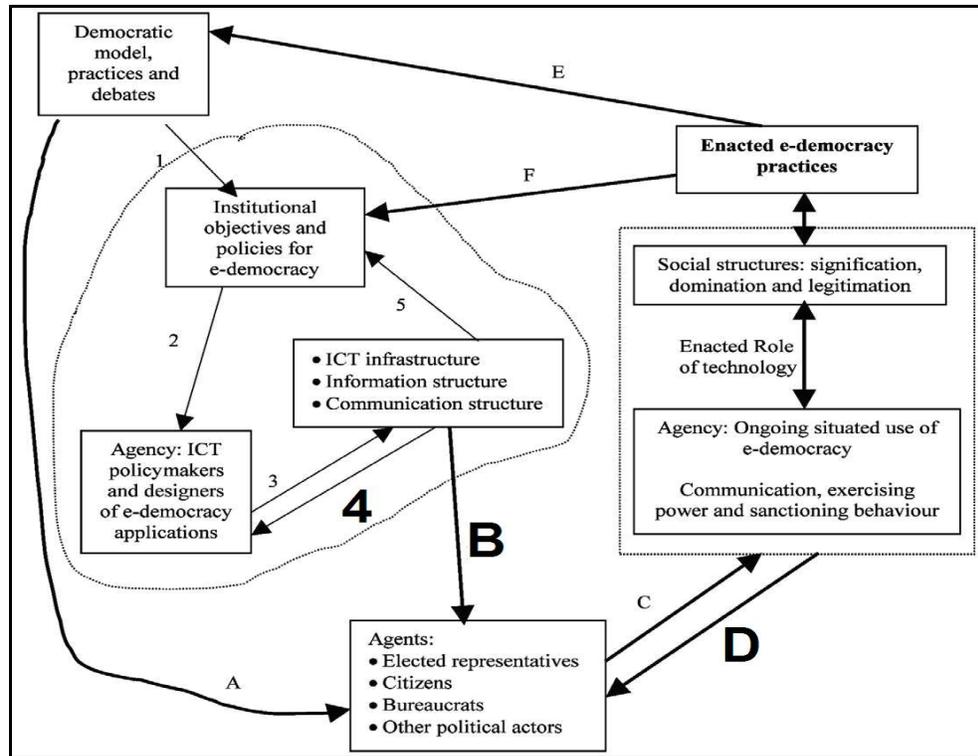


Figure 7-1 Parvez's Framework – Technological Dimensions

Three categories of technological or Information Communications Technologies (ICTs) facilities emerged from the analysis of interview transcripts, namely purpose (which includes enhancing work process and providing access), types of infrastructure (which include hardware, software, network, and systems), and control (which includes government, private companies, and the online forum's creator), as illustrated in Figure 7-2

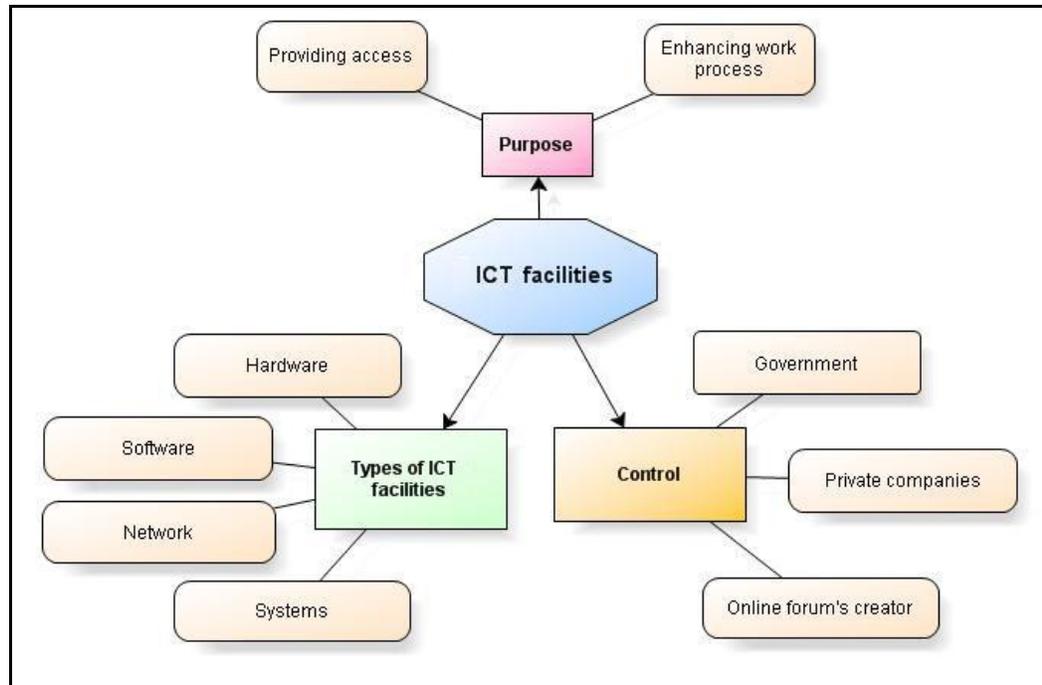


Figure 7-2 The ICT facilities of e-democracy

This chapter begins with a discussion of the purpose of ICT facilities, followed by a description of the types of ICT facilities available to human actors, and finally the forms of control over such facilities.

7.2.1. Purpose of ICT facilities

As identified in the analysis, the purposes of ICT facilities are to provide access and enhance work process.

7.2.1.1. Providing access

Five public administrators (A14, A18, A19, A27, and A30) were of the opinion that ICT infrastructure is for access to the Internet and enables utilization of online applications.

A14, a middle manager at a central agency, felt that “ICT infrastructure is to provide networks for ICT applications, or to have access to the Internet” (A14).

A senior head of department, A18, believed that ICT infrastructure is provided “to support and enable the operability of applications” (A18).

Reiterating these views, A30, a middle manager in charge of ICT infrastructure management, observed that ICT infrastructure is vital "to ensure the [government] activities reach the public at all levels of life" (A30).

In A19's view, ICT infrastructure will provide access to the Internet which facilitates online activities such as e-democracy. To him, "the public must be provided with ICT facilities to enable this e-activity and every household must have internet access as well" (A19).

A term repeatedly used to refer to ICT infrastructure by five interviewees (A17, A27, A28, C2, and C10) was 'enabler'. The frequency of its utilization is possibly due to the existence of numerous ICT policy documents, which promulgate ICT as an enabling tool for public administrators (as discussed in Chapter 4).

As pointed out by A27, a senior middle manager, ICT "infrastructure is just the enabler" (A27). A17 was also of the opinion that the purpose of ICT infrastructure "is to enable people to take action based on their opinions. This is the channel for people to make transactions ... [and] to get information" (A17).

C10, an ICT consultant who was a former Chief Executive Officer of a government-linked company and involved in a number of major ICT policy developments, stated that ICT infrastructure is an enabler to emphasize the role of information in driving change towards the formation of a knowledge society in Malaysia (as discussed in Chapter 4):

Knowledge is the vehicle to transform, ICT is merely the enabler. That is how we frame it from the very beginning. We don't say that ICT is the most important. It is an enabler. What is important is information and knowledge which are the transformative agents (C10).

The purpose of ICT facilities is seen by interviewees as an enabler or tool to access the Internet and its applications.

7.2.1.2. Enhancing work process

The next purpose is to enhance the work process of public administrators. Three public administrators (A14, A30, and A35) believed that ICT facilities enhance their work process through online service delivery. This view may have been shaped by the abundance of e-government initiatives, which aim to automate government service delivery to the public (as discussed in Chapters 1 and 4).

A14, a middle manager who is involved in numerous e-government initiatives, strongly believed that ICT infrastructure “will help the government to improve its service delivery” (A14).

In a more general context, A35, a middle manager involved in ICT infrastructure design and management, was of the opinion that the purpose of ICT infrastructure is “to facilitate the implementation of the ICT agenda [as discussed in Chapter 4] and to enhance the service delivery of the government” (A35).

Some public administrators conceptualized the purpose of ICT facilities to enhance their work process, particularly in delivering services via the Internet to the public.

7.2.2. Types of ICT facilities

As discussed in Chapter 4, there is no written e-democracy policy in Malaysia. Public administrators instead utilized the existing ICT facilities meant for e-government initiatives to enact e-democracy practices. It is significant to cite mundane quotations in this section and the following four subsections (7.2.2.1 to 7.2.2.4), to uncover the types of ICT made available to human actors and utilized by them for e-democracy practices.

The purpose of ICT facilities, as discussed, can be achieved through equitable provision of such facilities (discussed in Chapter 10). Seven interviewees (A17, A18, A28, A30, A35, C2, and C6) observed that the types of ICT infrastructure provided to human actors, public administrators and citizens for e-democracy, “consists of hardware, software and networking” (A17).

A middle manager involved in ICT infrastructure design and management, A35, felt that ICT "infrastructure includes software like applications and systems, hardware and the Internet. All of these are centralized and provided by the ICT division at the ministry" (A35). Such an infrastructure must include "servers, application and peripherals" (A30) to function.

An effective ICT infrastructure "will have to comprise of three things: content, network and coverage" (C2) and "allow the widest number of people to participate would be appropriate" (C6).

The common view of these interviewees was that the types of ICT infrastructure made available to human actors are hardware, software, network, and systems, discussed in the following sections.

7.2.2.1. Software

Four types of software, namely the website or portal, weblog or blog, online forum, and online voting or polling emerged from the analysis, which interviewees identified as important for e-democracy.

(1) Website or portal:

63 percent of public administrators (A1, A2, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9, A10, A12, A15, A16, A19, A20, A23, A24, A25, A27, A29, A30, A31, A33, A34, A35, and A37) stated that websites or portals are being utilized currently by government and citizens for e-democracy practices. Five of these 24 public administrators were aged 25-35 years, eight were aged 36-35 years, and 11 were aged 46 years and over. Seven were from central agencies, seven from the key ministry, and ten were from operational ministries, as shown in Table 7-1. It appears that the older public administrators, especially those from the operational ministries, prefer the use of websites or portals compared to the younger generation. This view may have been influenced by their appreciation of the wealth of information to be found on websites or portals. To the older generation of public administrators, these

websites and portals facilitate the information-seeking process, which could facilitate e-democracy practices.

Table 7-1 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and websites or portals for e-democracy

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning website/portal		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	
Age group	No.	%	% (*)
25-35 years	5	21%	45% (11)
36-45 years	8	33%	73% (11)
46 years and over	11	46%	69% (16)
Total	24	100%	63% (38)
Types of organization	No.	%	% (*)
Central Agency	7	29%	58% (12)
Key Ministry	7	29%	78% (9)
Operational Ministry	10	42%	26% (17)
Total	24	100%	63% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

A6, a middle manager at an operational ministry, pointed out that "we have this portal [called] 'myGovernment' that's one example of how e-democracy came into place to facilitate the decision-making process" (A06). A senior public administrator in charge of an ICT department, A29, was pleased that his ministry maintains an "official website ... to disseminate information to the public" (A29).

A15 observed that most government agencies use websites and portals to disseminate information to the public. For him, the functionality of such websites and portals could be maximized for e-democracy:

Government agencies usually have their own websites or portals which can be used for e-democracy. I think this is an effective way to get information through to public opinion (A15).

A31 echoed A15's sentiments and believed that most "government information is found on websites. Websites are avenues for people to gain information" (A31).

A34, a senior public administrator, observed that in

government agencies we use a lot of web pages to interact with the public... [We] try to use these interactive features. Apart from giving information, we are also getting suggestions from the public (A34).

A1 was of the opinion that the government has started to utilize websites “specifically dedicated to get the public views” (A1).

Reiterating A1’s view, A30 pointed out that his ministry has embarked on e-democracy through “our website like one-stop-center portal for local authorities and we also have our online services on the official government portal” (A30).

According to A19, the government is collecting feedback from the public, not only “through meetings and discussions, but we still continue receiving inputs on our portal” (A19).

For A33, who was newly appointed to the PTD service, the

people in Malaysia do understand that they can actually express their opinions not only by writing in papers or publishing on printed materials, but they can also publish it on websites (A33).

C5, who was supportive of open discussions in the public sphere to promote understanding and maturity between social groups, believed that e-democracy would be beneficial, “by the fact that we have got websites ... that enable citizens to discuss issues” (C5).

C9, an academic at a branch campus of an international university, strongly felt that government websites in Malaysia are seen as favorable by Malaysians, especially by those in urban areas:

I think in the urban area people easily get access, and some government websites are very good. People use ICT for taxes, road tax, and checking for summons, and for all those things people use the websites (C9).

As will be discussed in Chapter 10 (section 10.2.5), C9 expressed his worries about government websites which are not regularly updated. To him, such websites and portals inhibit e-democracy practices in Malaysia:

One of the problems in developing countries, including Malaysia, is that lots of government websites are not updated. They don’t benchmark on world standards in updating websites (C9).

(2) Blog:

74 percent of public administrators (A1, A2, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9, A10, A12, A13, A14, A15, A19, A20, A21, A22, A23, A24, A25, A26, A27, A28, A31, A32, A33, A34, and A38) saw blogs as another type of software that is beneficial for e-democracy in Malaysia. Of these 28 public administrators, eight were from the 25-35 years age group, eight were from the 36-45 years age group, and 12 were from the 46 years and over age group. 18 were from key and operational ministries, as shown in Table 7-2. The significance of blogs for e-democracy is expressed by young and old public administrators. As expected, public administrators at key and operational ministries are more concerned with blogs, since most bloggers brought forward issue-based postings, which are related to the functions of their ministries (as discussed in Chapter 3).

Table 7-2 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and blogs for e-democracy

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning blog		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	
Age group	No.	%	% (*)
25-35 years	8	28%	73% (11)
36-45 years	8	28%	73% (11)
46 years and over	12	44%	75% (16)
Total	28	100%	74% (38)
Types of organization	No.	%	% (*)
Central Agency	10	36%	83% (12)
Key Ministry	4	14%	44% (9)
Operational Ministry	14	50%	82% (17)
Total	28	100%	74% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

A manager of the Regulatory Division of a local telecommunications company, C7, provided a brief description of a blog:

Currently, a lot of interaction is going on through ... blogs. Basically 'blog' comes from the words 'web log'. It is a web portal whereby you put down your comments and the general public can provide comments or feedback to the articles ['posts'] that you have put up (C7).

A22 felt that blogs are "still new to the public and are not official channels. Blogs represent a media where the public can write freely. Perhaps it is more of a chit-chat space" (A22).

A23, who was a head of department, pointed out that "now we have administrative direction to read blogs. Blogs give more details on some issues" (A23).

An ICT consultant, C6, shared A23's view:

Blogs have value in terms of being able to offer a wider opinion, a wider perspective so that you have a more informed or make a more informed participation. So your decision to act on certain issues and so forth sometimes is from a very specialized or focal viewpoint, which you would not get in the mainstream press or in the media. That is what the blogs do (C6).

A38 and A15, observed that government has changed its policy on blogs and supports public administrators to disseminate information about government initiatives through blogs:

Now, the public administrators are encouraged to create blogs to explain public policy and give their views (A38).

A15 felt that blogs

are useful sources. All this while, the government may be satisfied with what they are doing and with their existing procedures. Decision makers were quite reluctant to get opinions through websites, portals or blogs, at least until recently, when a lot of issues have come up in blogs and private web sites. This development has become an eye opener to the top management or decision makers to open up and consider such inputs to be included and considered in the decision-making. That is why now some government agencies have their own blogs not only to gauge public opinion, but also to disseminate information to the public (A15).

A commentator, C9, strongly believed that blogs are becoming more accepted

because the traditional media do not highlight some of the deficiencies within the government system. This is why blogs are more relevant. I think the government agencies are very sensitive [to these changes] and looking at the blogs very seriously. They themselves are creating blogs now (C9).

When answering the question, 'What ICT infrastructure is provided for supporting e-democracy?' A10, a newly appointed public administrator to the PTD Service, replied "Blogs can be a popular facility" (A10).

A31 felt that blogs are favorable because "Malaysians are already used to bloggers, they have become very common" (A31).

While the opinions of public administrators described above are in support of blogs for e-democracy, there was also a faction which felt that blogs facilitate misinformation and could be easily abused in the absence of a comprehensive regulation (see Chapter 10, subsection 10.4.1.6). When asked about the possibility of using blogs for e-democracy, both A8 and A1 felt that to a certain extent, blogs may not be trustworthy.

A8 observed:

In my opinion, blogs are not very reliable, but it will serve the purpose of finding out concerns and issues raised by the public (A8).

A1 pointed out that

we do know that there are people who write on blogs and put up their views that certain policies are done without considering a few things [, which could result in instability, as discussed in Chapter 1] (A1).

A senior public administrator, A24, was greatly worried because “some of the blogs that [he] ... accessed, [are] promoting lies and providing false evidence to tarnish someone’s image” (A24).

However, contrary to the feeling of A17, A8, A1, and A24, another interviewee, A26, who was involved in monitoring blogs for the government, observed that content in some blogs is convincing and honest,

for example, blogs called, ‘Rocky’s Bru’ which is maintained by an ex-journalist, Ahiruddin Attan, and ‘Kuda Kepang’ by a former MP [Member of Parliament], Datuk Rohani Ahmad. They did some study on issues that they wrote themselves on their blogs and mostly, the content is true. They are intelligent and experienced bloggers. I believe there are less than 20 blogs on political and current issues in Malaysia that have these qualities. Other blogs sometimes just cut-and-paste content from other blogs or provide links to it, so they are not genuine and trustworthy (A26).

A32 shared A26’s view and believed that

if the blog’s maintained by organizations and NGOs [non-governmental organizations] like civil society organizations, it should be okay, but individual blogs, I’m not quite sure about. It might incline towards the personal interest of that individual (A32).

A senior department head with a vast experience in developing ICT initiatives, A21, summed up what public administrators can identify as the overarching issues in blogs:

I think blogs and all that are good sources of feedback. Look at what they are saying and look at points for improvement (A21).

(3) Online forum:

About 29 percent of public administrators (A2, A5, A6, A10, A11, A12, A13, A17, A36, A37, and A38) were of the view that the online forum is another good use of software for e-democracy. Of the 11 public administrators who favored this view, six were aged 25-35 years; two were aged 36-45 years; and three were aged 46 years and over. Ten were from the key and operational ministries. Younger public administrators felt strongly that online forums are useful for e-democracy. This may have been shaped by F&F generation characteristics, to be discussed in Chapter 10 (subsection 10.4.5.1). As with blogs, public administrators from key and operational ministries favored online forums for e-democracy. A detailed analysis of their attributes is shown in Table 7-3.

Table 7-3 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and online forums for e-democracy

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning online forum		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	
Age group	No.	%	% (*)
25-35 years	6	55%	55% (11)
36-45 years	2	18%	18% (11)
46 years and over	3	27%	19% (16)
Total	11	100%	29% (38)
Types of organization	No.	%	% (*)
Central Agency	1	9%	8% (12)
Key Ministry	2	18%	22% (9)
Operational Ministry	8	73%	47% (17)
Total	11	100%	29% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

A young and newly appointed public administrator to the PTD Service, A12, believed that online forums are significant for e-democracy. To him, such forums facilitate open discussions on issues because access is made available to all users.

A2, a middle manager at an operational ministry, pointed to one good example of an online forum which he encountered:

There is one forum which we call an e-forum, introduced through our [Malaysian Communication and] Multimedia Commission (A2).

A5, a senior public administrator at the same ministry as A12, felt that

on these [online] forums, people seem to be more active and are more free to write what they have on their minds. They are freer to express their opinion as compared to using traditional methods such as the telephone or writing letters (A5).

The reason for such bravery, according to A5, is because these people know that there are other people who share their opinion and ideas in the same forums without any repercussions.

A newly appointed public administrator, A13, whose job functions were dealing with initiatives to bridge the digital divide, observed that citizens are utilizing online forums to post their opinions on the latest public issues:

There are lots of voices, like the recent hike in oil price... [Citizens] are voicing their feelings on these online forums (A13).

A11 expressed her concerns about government-initiated online forums which lack maintenance. To her, such forums could provide useful inputs, but they need to be properly managed (see Chapter 10 subsection 10.4.2.4):

We do have an online forum for the last three years, but it is being shut down because nobody is managing it. We are in the process of setting it up again (A11).

(4) Online voting or polling:

Some 18 percent of public administrators (A4, A6, A9, A13, A14, A21, and A35) observed several other kinds of software, such as online voting, and polling, provided for e-democracy. As shown in Table 7-4, one of these public administrators was aged 25-35 years, four were aged 36-45 years, and two were aged 46 years and over. Of the seven public administrators, three each were from the central agency and the operational ministry respectively, while one was from the key ministry. It seems that the view is common across all age groups and types of organization represented, which may be attributed to the frequent use of such software.

Table 7-4 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and online voting or, polling for e-democracy

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning online voting/polling		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	
Age group	No.	%	% (*)
25-35 years	1	14%	9% (11)
36-45 years	4	57%	36% (11)
46 years and over	2	29%	13% (16)
Total	7	100%	18% (38)
Types of organization	No.	%	% (*)
Central Agency	3	43%	25% (12)
Key Ministry	1	14%	11% (9)
Operational Ministry	3	43%	18% (17)
Total	7	100%	18% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

A13, who was involved with rural ICT initiatives, strongly believed that through equitable ICT provision (see Chapter 10 subsection 10.2.1), the public is empowered to exercise its rights through online voting:

From my point of view, [citizen's empowerment is through] ... providing the telecenters in the rural areas. With the Internet, we provide the opportunity for the rural folks to interact with government and take part in ... online voting (A13).

A4 and A6 A4 were of the view that "e-democracy [has] something to do with software applications; maybe the public can vote via online or online voting" (A4). A4 was convinced that e-democracy is capable of supporting such practices, but remained sceptical about their effectiveness due to lack of official online voting practices in Malaysia.

Most public administrators with varying degrees of enthusiasm noted four types of software, namely websites or portals, weblogs or blogs, online forums, and online voting or polling, as important means for the operation of e-democracy in Malaysia.

7.2.2.2. Hardware

Three existing types of hardware, namely phones (fixed and mobile), the personal computer (PC) and television (TV), were mentioned by interviewees, which human actors, public administrators and citizens can utilize for effective e-democracy.

(1) Phones:

Some 34 percent of public administrators (A5, A8, A10, A11, A12, A13, A17, A21, A30, A31, A32, A34, and A37) pointed out that phones are important for e-democracy. Eight of these 13 public administrators were aged 25-35 years, one was aged 36-35 years, and four were aged 46 years and over, as shown in Table 7-5. It seems that younger public administrators favor phones compared to the older generation, possibly due to F&F generation characteristics, i.e., free spirited and fast learners (see Chapter 10 subsection 10.4.5.1).

Table 7-5 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and phones for e-democracy

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning phones		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	
Age group	No.	%	% (*)
25-35 years	8	62%	73% (11)
36-45 years	1	8%	9% (11)
46 years and over	4	30%	25% (16)
Total	13	100%	34% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

A31, a newly appointed public administrator to the PTM (Malay abbreviation for Information Technology Officer) Service, felt that phones facilitate access, irrespective of one's location, especially "mobile phones ... [which] make it easier for people to get connected anywhere" (A31).

Some public administrators believed that "[m]obile phones can also be accepted as a medium" (A37) for e-democracy, since "a lot of services now are multiple channel [and accessible] through mobile phone ... [which] give more freedom to the people" (A21).

Government agencies are providing “hotlines where people can call in to [lodge] complaints” (A34). A senior middle manager who was involved in managing public complaints, A24, pointed out that his department “also receive faxes and phone calls” (A24) from the public.

A32, a middle manager involved with ICT programs and policy for local authorities, strongly believed that “people normally use the phone to call and speak directly to the officer-in-charge” (A32).

The counterargument is that some public administrators (A5, A10, A12, and A17) felt that Malaysians may be reluctant to utilize mobile phones for e-democracy. They stated that issues like limited access to applications, cost incurred, and privacy, were reasons for them not to utilize mobile phones for e-democracy.

A12, a newly appointed public administrator to the PTD (Malay abbreviation for the Diplomatic and Administrative Officer) service, was of the view that mobile phones are less significant for e-democracy in comparison to the Internet. To him, access to e-democracy applications through mobile phones is limited, since most of these applications only promote feedback for one single issue via Short Messaging Systems (SMS) – discussed in subsection 7.2.2.3 – as compared to access to numerous applications and issues with substantial information on the Internet:

Mobile phones could be used as one of the facilities but the impact is not as much as [with] the Internet (A12).

A10 believed that the “[m]obile phone can be part of [e-democracy] if it’s free” (A10).

A17 expressed her concerns that the “mobile phone is a private thing unless the phone is provided by the agency for official use” (A17). For her, only an officially designated mobile phone could be suitably utilized for e-democracy.

(2) Desktop Computer (DC):

Some 21 percent of public administrators (A6, A13, A17, A18, A21, A26, A29, and A30) said that DCs could be classified as another type of hardware commonly utilized for e-democracy. Of this group, three were from the 25-35 years age group, two were from the 36-45 years age group, and three were from the 46 years and over age group, as shown in Table 7-6. This view is common across all age groups, possibly due to their familiarity with utilizing DCs in their daily work routine.

Table 7-6 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and DC for e-democracy

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning DC		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	
Age group			% (*)
25-35 years	3	37%	27% (11)
36-45 years	2	26%	18% (11)
46 years and over	3	37%	19% (16)
Total	8	100%	21% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

A18, a senior head of department at a central agency, expressed his deep concerns for uniform DCs to be provided at all government agencies. To him, effective e-democracy practices could be realized only after all government agencies are provided with DCs of the same set standard:

When we talk about ICT infrastructure within the government, we must first begin by looking at the government agencies. Government agencies have the responsibility to ensure their employees are provided with ICT equipment which is of a certain standard. Their DCs should allow them to receive or send documents fast, which means that the DCs must have high storage capacity and high speed processors (A18).

When answering the question, ‘What ICT infrastructure is provided for supporting e-democracy?’ A13, a newly appointed public administrator, replied:

For now I think they will most probably use personal computers ... that [is] what I’m aware of. Even at the telecenters and kiosks, they still use [desktop] computers (A13).

A6, A21, and A29 echoed A13’s sentiments and provided examples of kiosks and telecenters, which are provided to the public in Malaysia:

Now we can even go to the kiosk to air certain views on certain things without going through the conventional way of writing on paper [which is] forwarded to

various departments ... This could be one of the ways that e-democracy can play a part in public administration at large, I would say (A6).

According to A6,

under [the] ...USP fund [Universal Service Provision fund discussed in Chapter 4] where we put up various telecenters in rural areas, that's one of the ways [that] we can get people to come and participate in decision-making in government (A6).

A21, a senior department head who had much experience in developing ICT initiatives, pointed out that in "areas where the government knows people do not have access, the access is provided through telecenters with trained supervisors" (A21).

A senior public administrator in charge of an ICT department, A29, observed that under "the department of local governments we have six locations [of telecenters] all over the country for bridging the digital divide program, targeting the urban poor within local authority" (A29).

(3) TV:

Some 18 percent of public administrators (A5, A8, A11, A12, A14, A21, A24, A28, A30, A34, and A37) felt that TV is a significant type of hardware for e-democracy. Three of these 11 public administrators were aged 25-35 years, two were 36-45 years, and six were 46 years and over, as shown in Table 7-7. The impression was that the older generation, compared to the younger generation, favors TV as a medium for e-democracy practices.

Table 7-7 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and TV for e-democracy

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning TV		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	
Age group	No.	%	% (*)
25-35 years	3	27%	18% (11)
36-45 years	2	18%	27% (11)
46 years and over	6	55%	13% (16)
Total	11	100%	18% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

A senior public administrator, A28, said that TV is a very effective tool for e-democracy due to the high number of citizens possessing such hardware, which corresponds to a high accessibility:

TVs are more for disseminating information ... It used to be for the government alone but now we also have these private stations. When we talk about bridging the digital divide, now the government also includes TV as one medium beside PCs, satellite, and so on. TV ownership is the highest among Malaysian ... [in which almost] ... all household owns it [in comparison to other communication devices, such as telephone]. I suppose when we talk about the e way it will include TV as well with convergence of technologies (A28).

Other public administrators (A11, A12, and A14) observed that TV is a very effective tool for promotion through advertisements.

A14 felt that

on television, communication is usually only one way, such as promotions of government services (A14).

A11 strongly believed that the government could use TV to “make people aware about [e-democracy] through crawlers on TVs and advertisements. So people can get more information about it” (A11).

A24 observed that TV could be utilized for e-democracy “because a TV channel like AWANI through ASTRO [see Glossary] is a bit more open than other channels” (A24). To him, some private TV stations provide balanced news reporting, with different perspectives on issues than public free-to-air TV channels.

Like A21, C6 expressed his concerns that TV might not be suitable for e-democracy unless some forms of interactivity are included through the medium:

I think the idea of e-democracy is that you must be able to participate. If you haven't got a channel by which you can actually send information back or make your views known, then it defeats the point. So, broadcasting in its conventional sense, no, but broadcasting through cable operations and satellites perhaps yes (C6).

A37, a senior public administrator nearing retirement, observed that “TV can be included as well [for e-democracy] with programs like dialogues and discussions.” (A37).

A34 concurred, providing an example of a TV discussion program which supported e-democracy practices:

On TV also we have programs where our Secretary General was interviewed on our policy regarding housing issues and local government services. People can then call in to interact with him ... [like] asking questions and so on (A34).

C1 observed that

e-democracy should not be limited to the use of computers or be only portal-based. It should also be allowed via other technologies, such as interactive TV and mobiles. The mobile phone itself is the cheapest means of communication for the rural communities and the marginalized (C1).

Thus, three types of hardware, namely phones, DC, and TV, are seen to provide e-democracy in Malaysia.

7.2.2.3. Systems

55 percent or 21 public administrators (A3, A6, A11, A12, A14, A15, A16, A17, A22, A23, A24, A26, A28, A29, A30, A32, A33, A34, A35, A36, and A37) referred to two existing systems, namely electronic mail (e-mail) and the Short Messaging System (SMS) which human actors can utilize for e-democracy. Eight of these 21 public administrators were aged 25-35 years, seven were aged 36-45 year, and six were aged 46 years and over. Eight of 21 were from the key ministry, seven from the central agency, and six from the operational ministry, as shown in Table 7-8. It seems that almost all of the younger generation of public administrators interviewed favored e-mail and SMS for e-democracy. This view may have been influenced by F&F generation characteristics (see Chapter 10 subsection 10.4.5.1). Almost all of the public administrators from the key ministry preferred e-mail and SMS, possibly due to regular utilization of such systems in their daily work routines.

Table 7-8 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and e-mail and SMS for e-democracy

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning e-mail and SMS		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	
Age group			% (*)
25-35 years	8	38%	73% (11)
36-45 years	7	33%	64% (11)

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning e-mail and SMS		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	
46 years and over	6	29%	38%(16)
Total	21	100%	55% (38)
Types of organization	No.	%	% (*)
Central Agency	7	33%	58% (12)
Key Ministry	8	38%	89% (9)
Operational Ministry	6	29%	35% (17)
Total	21	100%	55% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

(1) E-mail:

When asked about the types of ICT facilities used for e-democracy, A36 simply replied, “Basically they are using e-mails” (A36) and A32 answered, “The common one is e-mail” (A32).

A senior middle manager at a central agency, A24, stated that the inputs that he received “are mostly via e-mails” (A24).

E-mail is favorable for e-democracy because “through e-mails, communication can take place easily” (A24). A35 felt that e-mail is “the easiest, where [the public] can send anything through e-mails” (A35). For public administrators, A34, a senior public administrator nearing retirement, observing the continuing changes of ICT adoption in the Malaysian Public Service, felt that “with e-mail I think [public administrators] can respond quite [fast] as well” (A34).

A17 provided an example of how public administrators utilize e-mail for e-democracy:

For example, in my line of work e-mail is a priority which I’ve to check and need to reply to within two hours. Most of my e-mails came from other government agencies, which require feedback, opinion and advice from [this agency] (A17).

According to C3, the disadvantage for utilizing e-mail for e-democracy was lack of interactivity between the sender and receiver of e-mail with the public at large

(This issue is discussed further in Chapter 9 by reflecting on the way e-mail is utilized for inputs collection).

I am of the understanding that, if you are talking about democratic process, it has to be interactive and involves an exchange of ideas and opinions which are issue related. We do not know to what extent e-mails actually create debates or arguments, because e-mail is not public. It is not a democratic input in the sense that it is open enough for everyone to share (C3).

(2) SMS:

Seven public administrators (A14, A15, A16, A28, A29, A30, and A35) felt that SMS is a significant system for e-democracy in Malaysia. A16, a middle manager at a central agency, established that

through 'DAPAT' [a private company, see also Glossary], the government will provide an SMS gateway. Facilities, such as the SMS gateway are completed by a back-end system of dissemination which allows [inputs gathering from citizens and] complaints to be attended to by relevant authorities (A16).

A35, a middle manager at an operational ministry, pointed out that his ministry "also receive feedback through SMS services on the ministry website" (A35).

A senior public administrator, A28, believed that citizens are more alert to their surroundings due to ease of access to information through SMS. For him, SMS can be utilized for effective e-democracy:

Nowadays, people are getting more aware, especially when information can reach their mobile phones easily through SMS and so on (A28).

These interviewees observed that two existing systems, namely electronic mail (e-mail) and the Short Messaging System (SMS), support e-democracy in Malaysia.

7.2.2.4. Networks

58 percent of public administrators (A5, A6, A9, A11, A13, A14, A17, A18, A19, A20, A21, A22, A25, A26, A28, A30, A31, A33, A34, A35, A36, and A38) said that three types of network, namely the Local Area Network (LAN), the Wide Area Network (WAN), and the Internet, were useful for e-democracy in Malaysia. Of these 22 public administrators, eight were aged 25-35 years, five were aged 36-45 years, and nine were aged 46 years and over, as shown in Table 7-9. This view was common across all age groups, which suggests the importance of networks in supporting e-democracy practices.

Table 7-9 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and network for e-democracy

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning network		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	
Age group			% (*)
25-35 years	8	36%	73% (11)
36-45 years	5	23%	45% (11)
46 years and over	9	41%	56% (16)
Total	22	100%	58% (36)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

(1) LAN:

The first network component is the LAN. A head of department at a central agency, A20, stated that the LAN provided for public administrators in Putrajaya is called the 'Public Campus Network (PCN)'.

A18, another Head of Department at the same central agency as A20, said that the

LAN must be speedy... [and the] infrastructure provided must be able to support a speedier online communication between ministries and with other entities outside the government structure [throughout the whole country] (A18).

(2) WAN:

The second component of network provided for e-democracy is the WAN. A14, a middle manager at a central agency who was involved in several e-government initiatives, said that the WAN to support the implementation of such initiatives is provided by "EGnet [acronym for the E-Government Network] for places [all government offices] outside Putrajaya" (A14).

For the public, A18 stated that "Telekom Malaysia [(TM) a government-linked telecommunications company] is responsible for providing infrastructure for the whole nation" (A18).

A18's view was shared by A38, a senior public administrator, involved with ICT initiatives for the rural population. She observed that the "government is encouraging the telecommunication companies to provide access through

broadband, especially in the rural areas" (A38). TM (and other private telecommunication companies) also provide "Streamyx [broadband service, see also Glossary] for home and wireless [access] at cafes" (A20) throughout Malaysia.

A17 strongly believed that:

In Malaysia we have the national broadband infrastructure for all to access the Internet and also telecenters for rural areas. It is wrong to say that the rural folks cannot access the Internet now. For example, in my hometown Langkawi, even 'makcik-makcik' [Malay words for the elderly women] know how to use Yahoo and so on (A17).

As will be discussed in Chapter 10, subsection 10.3.3, regarding the expectation for a critical mass for participation in e-democracy, A22 felt that the

most important infrastructure [for e-democracy] I think is the broadband services. The current roll-out of broadband projects is important to government to increase the number of participants in e-democracy practices (A22).

A5 was of the view that government tries "to make sure that everybody in Malaysia can have access to broadband" (A5). For him, provision of equitable access would ensure effective e-democracy (see Chapter, subsection 10.2.1).

A manager of a local telecommunication company with prior experience serving in two government-linked companies, C7 believed that broadband services will be significant for e-democracy. To him, since

in Malaysia alone you have one million broadband users...[and] ... the probability of 50% of [these one million] broadband users reading some kind of blog from which their mind or opinion is being formulated, you are talking about a higher penetration level than the normal newspaper (C7).

As discussed in Chapter 4, a middle manager from the PTD Service, A9, was of the opinion that the coverage and quality of broadband services in the country still require enhancement. For him, the "infrastructure should continuously be improved. Currently, our broadband is not that fast as compared to other countries ... [particularly] uptime and radius [of service area]" (A9).

A18 pointed out that access to the network must be regulated through the implementation of the Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) to ensure network security:

Another important part of ICT infrastructure is that concerning security such as the Public Key Infrastructure (A18).

A18 felt that the inclusion of citizens in the government's ICT network exposes it to external threats. To him, such risk must be attended to ensure a safe e-democracy:

We are here to serve the public. ICT must give support to the ministry's core business. So, we must be equipped with all the facilities. At the same time we must also take care of the network security because we are dealing with the public (A30).

(3) Internet:

50 percent or 19 public administrators (A5, A6, A11, A13, A14, A17, A19, A20, A21, A25, A26, A28, A30, A31, A33, A34, A35, A36, and A38) observed that the Internet is another component of the network which provides for e-democracy in Malaysia.

A junior public administrator in the PTM Service, A31, felt that the "most important [ICT facility] is of course the Internet, which is provided through the ISPs [Internet Service Providers]. Without the Internet we cannot get information" (A31). A19 emphasized that "the public must be provided with ICT facilities ... and every household must have Internet access as well" (A19).

Reiterating A31's view, A11 observed that "people can gain information from the Internet. For example, information about a ministry or about certain government projects, like the USP [Universal Service Provision discussed in Chapter 4] and [about other] ... projects at the Ministry of Energy, Water and Communication" (A11).

A33 and A36 observed that the government is utilizing the Internet for most of its ICT initiatives. A36 stated that his department "uses the Internet as the platform [for its applications]" (A36).

A33 felt that:

The government is very keen on using the Internet or e-mails to reduce paper documents (A33).

C2 pointed to an example of a local government in Malaysia which utilized the Internet to engage with citizens:

For example, the Klang Municipality provides communication through the Internet (C2).

A38 and A33 strongly believed that citizens are comfortable with the Internet as a medium for e-democracy, because "citizens normally use the Internet" (A38), and it "seems that people in Malaysia now are well versed with the Internet and multi-media technology" (A33).

A senior public administrator, A25, felt that "in the last five years ... more and more people are engaged with the Internet, looking at websites, [and] creating their own blogs" (A25), as discussed in section 7.3.2 above.

Two commentators, C5 and C8, agreed that the Internet is one of the facilities favored by the public for e-democracy because "a lot of people are using the Internet" (C5).

A5, however, was worried about citizens' skills and civic competency for participating in e-democracy over the Internet (as discussed in Chapter 10, subsection 10.4.1.4):

I think Malaysia is still in the early stage of using the Internet ... to get inputs from the people (A5).

It appears that some interviewees believed that the LAN, WAN, and the Internet are essential for e-democracy in Malaysia.

7.2.3. Management of ICT infrastructure

This section describes the management of ICT infrastructure, as observed by interviewees and identified in the data analysis, which illustrates the forms of control applied to such an infrastructure for e-democracy practices in Malaysia. The common view of most interviewees was that government, private companies, and an online forum's creator exert a form of control over ICT infrastructure. Each form of control is described in the following subsections.

7.2.3.1. Government

As discussed in Chapter 4, most of the ICT infrastructure in Malaysia is controlled by government. Some public administrators (A14, A17, A18, A31, and A38)

pointed out that major ICT networks (discussed in section 7.2.2) are managed by government.

A14, a middle manager whose job functions were dealing with e-government initiatives, pointed out that ICT infrastructure

for government is controlled by MAMPU [Malay acronym for the Malaysian Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit] through vendor-like GSB [a privatized government-linked company, see Glossary] for the Public Campus Network [PCN] in Putrajaya and 'EGnet' for [government agencies] outside Putrajaya (A14).

Reiterating A14's point, A17, a newly appointed public administrator at a central agency, observed that in

Putrajaya, we have the PCN ... and MAMPU is looking after it [through GSB]. As for the national broadband infrastructure, it is under the purview of KTAK [Malay abbreviation for Ministry of Energy, Water and Communication] and we also have the GITN (A17).

A senior head of department, A18, stressed that "MAMPU has control over their [government agencies'] entitlement to networks' bandwidth and therefore controls the network infrastructure" (A18).

At the ministry level, A29, a senior public administrator in charge of an ICT department, described

a committee chaired by KSU [Malay abbreviation for Chief Secretary] called JKICT [Malay acronym for ICT Committee], which oversees all infrastructures within our ministry. Any requirement related to ICT will be forwarded to this committee for approval, besides projects identified in the ISP [a common abbreviation referring to the ICT Strategic Plan] (A29).

When asked the question, 'Who exercises control over the ICT infrastructure?', A30 replied "Mostly, I would say, the public administrators" (A30), and A35 answered "That would be the ICT division of the ministry" (A35). To them, the government is in control of such an infrastructure through assigned public administrators of a particular unit, normally those in the ICTs unit in a department.

7.2.3.2. Private companies

Private telecommunications companies, as ICTs service providers, are another entity which controls ICT infrastructure. Two public administrators were of the

opinion that the commercial ICT infrastructure provided for the general public is within the control of the telecommunications companies.

A14, observed that an ICT infrastructure for the public at large, which is beyond "government structure ... will be controlled by telecommunications companies" (A14).

A newly appointed public administrator to the PTM Service, A31, felt that "the main one controlling the infrastructure is TM. Others would include TM's partners like Jaring" (A31), the first internet service provider in Malaysia (see also Glossary).

7.2.3.3. Online forum's creator

A junior PTD officer, A12, was of the opinion that the creator of an online forum has control over the forum. To him, the creator will be responsible for allowing or denying user access to discussion in the forum. He provided an example of an online forum created by a group of officers from the PTD Service:

[W]e have this portal for PTDs to discuss issues and to get information. Some of the discussion threads are opened to the public, especially for those seeking information about the service. Currently, the portal is maintained by [administrators from] our batch (A12).

Most public administrators observed that government, private companies, and online forum creators exert a form of control, to varying degrees, over ICT infrastructure. These forms of control may influence enacted practices of e-democracy (see Chapter 9).

7.3. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed purposes, types of infrastructure, and forms of control over ICT facilities for e-democracy in Malaysia. The evidence suggests that human actors perceive ICT purposes as enhancing the work process and providing access to applications. Four types of infrastructure, namely hardware, software, network, and systems, are identified as available to human actors to enable them to exercise or not exercise their power through ICT usage and capability. These ICT facilities are controlled by the government, private companies, and the online forum's creator.

The findings uncover the types of ICT made available to human actors and utilized by them for e-democracy practices. Despite the lack of written e-democracy policy in Malaysia, public administrators utilize the existing ICT facilities meant for e-government initiatives to enact e-democracy practices. The identified technological dimensions contribute to an understanding of the nature of enacted e-democracy practices in Malaysia, discussed in Chapter 9.

8. Findings: The institutional dimension

8.1. Introduction

*Masuk kawan ayam, berkokok,
 masuk kandang kambing, mengembek,
 masuk kandang kerbau, menguak*¹³

This chapter discusses significant institutional dimensions which contribute to conceptions of e-democracy in Malaysia. As discussed in Chapter 5, the institutional dimension is denoted by arrow A, arrow 1, and arrow 2 of Parvez's (2006) framework, as shown in Figure 8-1.

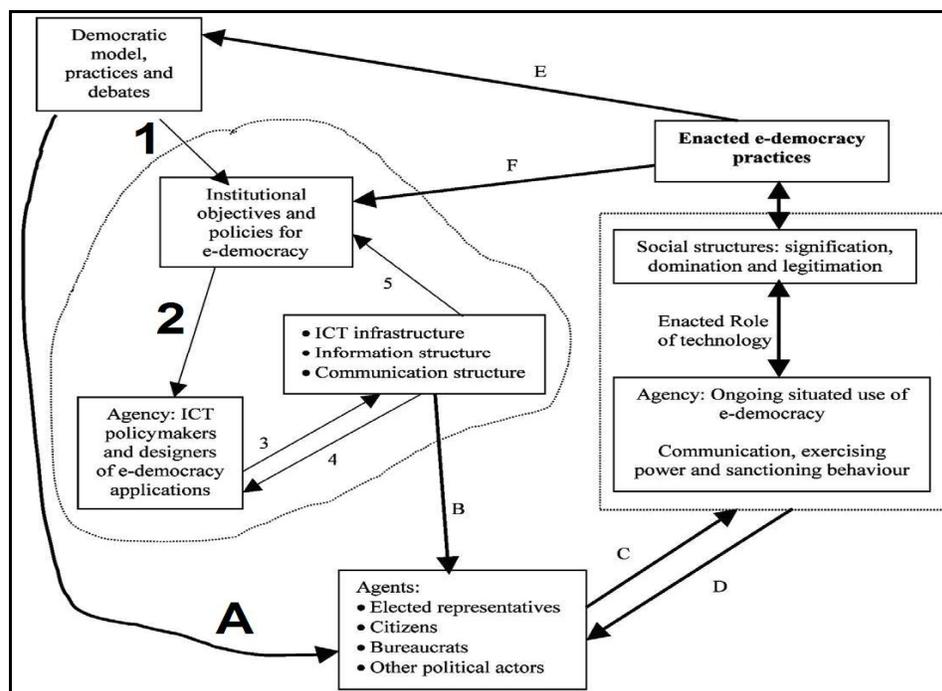


Figure 8-1 Parvez's Framework – Institutional dimensions

¹³ If you find yourself with a lot of cocks, crow; if you find yourself in a sheep-fold, bleat; if you find yourself in a buffalo-byre, bellow Malay saying. This saying envisages the need to conform to norms and cultural values of a society to be accepted as a member of such society. The English equivalent for this saying is "When in Rome, do as the Romans" (Brown, 1959, p. 182).

The identification of the institutional dimension contributes towards answering the subsidiary question of the study, ‘What are significant cultural dimensions that shape conceptions of e-democracy in the Malaysian Federal Public Service (MFPS)?’ From the analysis of interview transcripts, three relevant categories of institutional dimensions emerged, namely norms, national culture, and organizational culture. Norms are identified as including mutual benefit, the target group, and self-censorship. Public administrators draw upon these norms to enact e-democracy practices at the federal level of government (Orlikowski, 2000).

Three national cultural features, viz., deference to authority, patron-client communitarianism, and personalism, and five organizational cultural features, viz., non-partisan and expert public service, incrementalism, integration, information culture, and activism, are also identified from interviews (as illustrated in Figure 8-2). As discussed in Chapter 5, the national culture (denoted by arrow A of Parvez’s framework) represents social influences drawn on by human actors, public administrators and citizens, to enact e-democracy practices, and shape institutional policy for e-democracy (denoted by arrow 1 of Parvez’s framework). The identified national cultural features are supportive of Neher’s (1994) three characteristics of Asian-style democracy (see Chapter 2). The organizational cultural features (denoted by arrow 2 of Parvez’s framework) characterize social influences which human actors employ for designing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure (as discussed in Chapter 5). Non-partisan and expert cultural dimension is aligned with the characteristic of the Westminster model (see Chapter 3), while other organizational cultural dimensions, namely incrementalism, integration, information culture, and activism, emerged from data analysis.

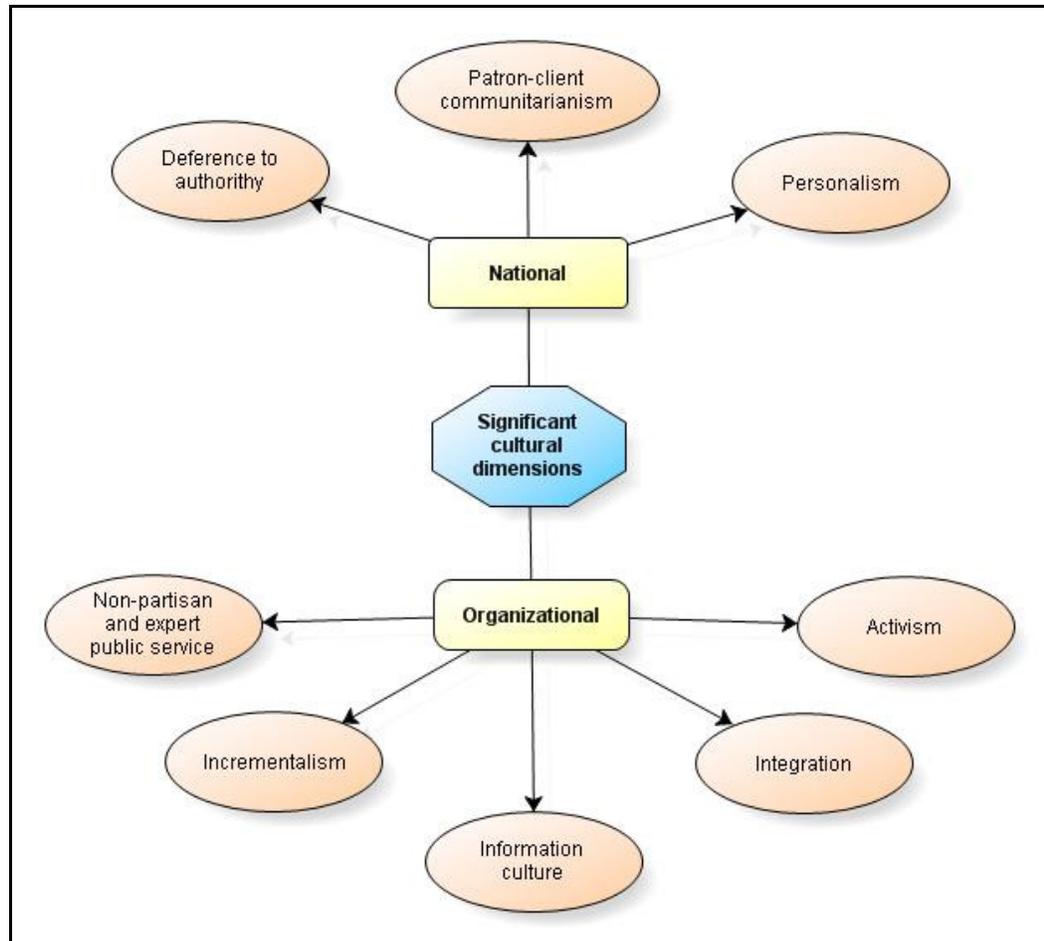


Figure 8-2 Cultural dimensions that shape e-democracy in Malaysia

This chapter begins with a discussion of norms followed by a description of national culture. Finally, the chapter discusses organizational culture.

8.2. New norms

The broad view of interviewees on norms, is that there were three types, namely for mutual benefit, for exercising self-censorship, and to work with identified target groups. Each norm is discussed in the following sections.

8.2.1. Mutual benefits

Eight public administrators (A1, A4, A5, A6, A10, A16, A24, and A32) felt that e-democracy practices should be mutually beneficial to both citizens and public administrators.

A32, a middle manager, involved with ICT programs and policy for the local authority, strongly believed that e-democracy is “for mutual benefit without any prejudice and personal interest ... The government and private sectors should continue to boost their co-operation” (A32).

A middle manager at an operational ministry, A4, felt that any electronic system introduced by government should also benefit the public at large:

Government should encourage the new system as long as the system will benefit the government and public. It should not make harm, that’s very basic, you know. If it’s harmful then it’s the failure of the system. The system must serve in good manner in this new way of life in the future (A4).

Like A4, A24 was of the opinion that e-democracy “should be for mutual benefit and it’s a must now, we have to go further” (A24).

A16 expressed his concerns about the actual advantage of e-democracy to both government and the public. To him, a thorough study should be conducted to identify the advantages and disadvantages of e-democracy before its implementation in Malaysia:

We must look to the trend and changes or development implemented by other countries; we must see what kind of benefit it will bring to the country. If it is good, then why not adopt it? (A16).

A newly appointed public administrator to the PTD Service, A10, observed that e-democracy can be beneficial to both public administrators and citizens by facilitating mutual understanding:

[S]ome policy being formulated doesn’t benefit its target group initially because it doesn’t consider all factors. This issue has been raised by end users at various government forums. I think it’s good because sometimes the person in charge of the policy is not really involved in it, so this activity will open up his or her mind (A10).

A1, a middle manager in the Social Service who was involved in policy development at an operational ministry, strongly believed that “every policy which is being drawn up by the government it is for the benefit of the public, so I suppose all policies [should benefit from e-democracy]” (A1).

A6 was of the opinion that “e-democracy brings more benefit to the government. You have really got to put the personal sentiment aside and look at the benefit of e-democracy” (A6). While sharing A6’s view, A5 expressed his worries and cautioned that

some of those ideas written [online] are based on individual interests or the interest of certain NGOs or a small group of people, whereas as government officers, we must think about the benefit to the general public and as much as possible, our decisions must be balanced (A5).

8.2.2. Self-censorship

Self-censorship was another norm identified. Seven interviewees (A1, A4, A9, A20, A25, A31, and C2) observed that individuals and institutions practise self-censorship in e-democracy. Public administrators limited themselves from accessing certain websites and blogs, which they considered as harmful to them as public administrators or their agencies. They felt that such a practice is important to protect themselves or their institutions from possible repercussions due to constitutional limitations and other laws (see Chapter 1 section 1.5.3).

A4, a senior public administrator, believed that in Malaysia

when we say bloggers, it connotes to negative things and I don’t know whether we can use it. The problem is to list all the bloggers that we can trust. For example, Jeffrey Oii is very famous, when you read his articles he always condemns the government and he attacks on the personal level. Our public insisted on negative things rather than positive things; it’s a challenge to filter these things (A4).

C2 shared A4’s sentiment and attributed the bad reputation of blogs to poor management. According to him:

If you take blogs, they are usually more negative than positive. However, I have found a few which are positive. Once a blog is opened, you open up for anyone to provide their opinion or views. Some bloggers do not censor negative comments or opinions which appear on their blogs. Sometimes these entries are not intellectual enough and to a certain extent even demoralizing (C2).

All government agencies are being officially proscribed from accessing websites and blogs which are deemed obscene and offensive (see Chapter 4). A senior public administrator, A20, was of the view that in order for e-democracy to be effective, institutions should not prohibit access to any websites on the Internet:

Since our Bill of Guarantee for MSC [the Multimedia Super Corridor] includes non-censorship of the Internet ... that’s e-democracy. But at MAMPU there is no e-democracy because we ban most of the websites like pornography and blogs ... even though it promotes negative things, but that’s e-democracy (A20).

Similarly, A9 felt that public administrators have to access ‘negative’ websites, which he referred to as “maybe the blog site is hosted by someone who is against the government. So whatever they say may be against the government” (A9). To him, “even though it is negative, the government will [have to] take what the citizen has to say into consideration” (A9).

A1, a middle manager, strongly believed that public administrators should not be restricted from accessing negative websites. To her:

You cannot be very negative and say that whatever is being posted is actually going to kill the government. It could actually help the government to understand what is happening at the ground level. It would actually become a burden to the government if they were actually to investigate in depth why these statements are made. It should be analysed (A1).

Two public administrators, A25 and A31, observed that self-censorship may have been influenced by pessimistic perception of online content, particularly from blogs.

A31 strongly believed that:

How a person perceives the information as authentic or false is an individual’s right. It depends on whether you want to trust or you don’t want to trust [the information]. This is difficult to control, as usually people [including public administrators] would take more interest in negative rather than positive issues. The final decision should lie with them, and we should give them the freedom to decide. Of course there must be a limit but there is no use telling people that this is wrong and this is right. Perhaps we can intervene to give our side of the story but in the end we cannot say that just because we are afraid that there are more negative rather than positive discussions or news, they must be stopped. Such actions are not suitable anymore. The world is already flat and with ICTs you can get any information you want (A31).

A25, a senior public administrator who passionately described his job function dealing with blogs, pointed out that government has started to engage with bloggers to ensure a balanced content on the Internet:

We want to listen to other peoples’ opinions too so we got engaged ourselves and said ‘Look, what you said according to you may be true but according to me that is not true because I feel what the government has done is correct’. So that is how we engage. Opinions can be in any form, and are not necessarily always positive. It can be negative to another person. It is all about how you accept a fact. We engage daily and if they say anything wrong, we go in and explain the truth (A25).

8.2.3. Target groups

The last norm identified was target groups. Ten interviewees (A2, A10, A16, A26, A28, A32, A36, C1, C7, and C11) said that e-democracy should include target groups as intended audience or respondents.

A senior public administrator with an extensive experience in policy development, A16, strongly believed that feedback on issues would be effectively accumulated through target groups. To him, target groups would deliberate on each feedback to ensure validity and only comprehensive inputs would be submitted to government. Such comprehensive inputs provided by target groups are important to sustain e-democracy and viable policy development:

In my opinion if every single citizen were to participate, the system will perhaps be jeopardized. This is because every individual has their own interests and to comply with all of them is just impossible for the government. Therefore, it has to be done through representatives. The representative component can be NGOs, professional bodies, community-based organizations. These bodies represent group opinions which can then be forwarded to the government for consideration (A16).

For C1, an academic at a local university who researches ICT and community, the inclusion of specific groups, especially the marginalized (see Chapter 4) in e-democracy will

make them feel that they are part of the policy that is going to be implemented. With this, the government can avoid a lot of criticism or negativity once the policy is implemented ...This group of people should also be listened to as policies would also generally affect them. We have to give them a chance to participate (C1).

A32, who was involved in several initiatives with a local authority, believed that for “every government project there must be target groups, but we may need to get feedback from the professionals and NGOs [as well]” (A32). To him, public administrators “can gain more ideas from the public, especially the target group or those who are affected directly” (A32) by such a policy.

Some interviewees (A2, A10, A36, and C11) observed that public administrators should be diligent in selecting target groups for e-democracy. They felt that such selection should be made in accordance with intended e-democracy objectives (see Chapter 11, section 11.2.3).

A middle manager at an operational ministry, A2, said that e-democracy should include particular target groups for issues which require certain levels of skill. To him, other issues which concern citizens should be opened to all citizens:

When we want to talk about a national issue like the economy and so on, it should be a proper forum, traditional forum, like a meeting, because the target group is very specific. Let us say for budget, [it should be opened to all] because the public at large can give opinions about budget, but at the end of the day the country should be about everybody (A2).

Reiterating A2's view, A36 pointed out that a policy like the National Urbanization Plan (NUP) "does not involve individual public directly but, we do have target groups from NGOs especially for inputs on the environment" (A36).

A10 believed that the selection of target groups by government agencies would be dependent on issues and the nature of its intended policy:

[The choice of group] depends on the target group that you access and the type of policy. For example, for water management policy we need to access lots of target groups because their opinions will provide value added to our policy (A10).

C11, a secretary general of a civil society organization with a legal background, observed that his organization plays the role of facilitator for citizens to organize themselves in promoting their concerns as a group to the government.

We help them to organize the group, consolidate their problems and ask them to move out [from our website]. We've limited resources; that is what we can do (C11).

For A26 and A28, the most important thing is for public administrators to manage inputs from identified target groups for their policy. A26 was of the view that

when we communicate we expect to relay the message to our target group, the citizens through technology. When it reaches the target group, we expect to get responses in any form either through ICT or display of emotions (A26).

A28 felt that public administrators should be able

to differentiate between the correct signals and the wrong signals. As you know, the e-way of doing things is so vast and policy making is not an overnight thing. It is not about listening to one group and making decisions because it will reflect badly if you have to change the policy again and again. I think because people are into this e-thing, the way forward is through the e-way but how the government handles this is important... [It] ...should not favor any particular group. It needs to look at it on a broader view and then zero in to the exact issue. For example, when we talk about cost of living issues, we must not only look at the middle and lower income groups, but we must also consider the business community (A28).

Three types of norm, namely for mutual benefit, to work with identified target groups, and exercising self-censorship were observed in practice at the federal level of government in Malaysia. These norms may have been influenced by national and organizational culture within which public administrators operate to enact the practices of e-democracy. These cultural features are discussed in the following sections.

8.3. National culture

This section describes three identified features of national culture, namely deference to authority, patron-client communitarianism, and personalism.

8.3.1. Deference to authority

The first feature of national culture is deference to authority. As discussed in Chapter 2, Neher (1994) establishes that authorities are revered by citizens in the Asian-style democracy, practised in Malaysia. Some 18 percent of public administrators (A2, A4, A7, A8, A9, A10, and A12) observed there is a high respect for authority in Malaysia, particularly in the MFPS. Of this group, two were from the 25-35 years age group, three were from the 36-45 years age group, and two were from the 46 years and over age group. Six were from operational ministries and only one from a central agency, as shown in Table 8-1.

Table 8-1 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and deference to authority

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning this feature of national culture		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	
Age group			% (*)
25-35 years	2	29%	18% (11)
36-45 years	3	42%	27% (11)
46 years and over	2	29%	13% (16)
Total	7	100%	18% (38)
Types of organization	No.	%	% (*)

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning this feature of national culture		% of the 38 public administrators
	No. of public administrators	%	
Central agency	1	25%	17% (12)
Operational ministry	6	75%	23% (17)
Total	7	100%	18% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

It seemed that these public administrators from operational ministries are more aware of the need to follow orders from higher authorities (central agencies). They are appreciative that such deference will ensure a smooth implementation of an initiative like e-democracy in the MFPS.

A2, a middle manager at an operational ministry, felt that any directive from the higher authority to implement an e-initiative like e-democracy has to be observed by public administrators at lower levels. To him,

those implementers themselves, the public administrators and so on, they have to follow whatever the government decides to do. Let's say, now is the time to deliver service through electronic means, then they have to do it. If these things are being done, then the public service program via ICT will be done successfully (A2).

When answering the question, 'Do you think public administrators will resist incorporating inputs from e-democracy?' A9, a middle manager from a central agency, simply replied "No!" His function at the central agency, which manages ICT initiatives for the whole country, may have influenced his deep conviction that all public administrators at lower levels of public service will adhere to any directive from a central agency. A9's sentiment was shared to some degree by two public administrators: A4, a senior public administrator and A10, a newly appointed public administrator from an operational ministry.

I think they will follow the instruction (A4)

I think they will consider it, but to accept it will need to go through a different process (A10).

A7, a middle manager from the PTM (Malay abbreviation for Information Technology Officer) Service, observed that a clear directive from top management to incorporate e-democracy into the policy development process will be accepted by public administrators. To her, such a directive will emphasize the significance

of e-democracy practice and elicit dedication from public administrators. She felt that e-democracy practices will thrive only

if it is done as an order which makes it part of your work. There must be an order and it must be done with full commitment as then only would it be given due importance by the public administrator (A7).

Three commentators – C4, an academic who was critical of public administration, C5, an editor of an electronic media organization, and C6, an experienced ICT consultant – echoed A7's sentiments and identified the important role to be played by higher authorities in the MFPS to coerce public administrators to implement e-democracy. To them, such coercion is anticipated and will be respected by public administrators. It will motivate them to embrace e-democracy, moving beyond its perceived disadvantages.

C4 felt that public administrators need “a good leadership to force them into doing something and to not remain complacent” (C4). C5 observed:

From the public administrators' side I think definitely there will be some resistance, because if anything, you have to do more work. Therefore, there is a need for a strong leadership for them to realize that the world has changed and things are not the same as they were 10 years ago (C5).

C6 believed that public administrators would be obliged to implement e-democracy without any dissension (see Chapter 10 subsection 10.4.2.2). To him, public administrators are only concerned for their established roles in policy development, which affects their adoption of such practice:

I think that up to a certain point, people may be fearful of the fact of what does this mean for my role. I suppose in the best case you are looking at the fact of people saying, well OK, fine, I am willing to become a champion of this thing because I now understand it fully and I am going to participate myself (C6).

8.3.2. Patron-client communitarianism

Another feature of national culture is patron-client communitarianism. Neher (1994) establishes that the culture of patron-client communitarianism is characterized by three patterns of interaction: face-to-face, a superior inferior relationship of reciprocity, and hierarchical interaction (see Chapter 2). 39 percent of public administrators (A4, A5, A6, A8, A11, A12, A14, A15, A16, A17, A22, A25, A27, A30, and A33) noted these characteristics of patron-client communitarianism in the MFPS. This view was common among public administrators in all age

groups. Six of these 15 public administrators were aged 25-35 years, five were 36-45 years, and four were 46 years and over. A further analysis of their attributes of these 15 public administrators revealed that six have served less than ten years and nine have been in the MFPS for 11 years or more, as shown in Table 8-2.

Table 8-2 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and patron-client communitarianism

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning this feature of national culture		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	
Age group	No.	%	% (*)
25-35 years	6	40%	55% (11)
36-45 years	5	33%	45% (11)
46 years and over	4	27%	25% (16)
Total	15	100%	39% (38)
Year of service	No.	%	% (*)
Less 10 years	6	40%	50% (12)
11 years and over	9	60%	35% (26)
Total	15	100%	39% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

The impression is that senior public administrators (with more than 11 years service) are more attuned to the patron-client communitarianism cultural dimension as compared to junior public administrators. Their longer service period may have influenced this reflection. To them, the implementation of e-democracy in MFPS should complement the patron-client communitarianism cultural dimension to emerge as an effective tool for the policy development process.

Face-to-face interaction is the first characteristic of patron-client communitarianism (Neher, 1994). Face-to-face interaction is regarded as important for Malaysians. According to A5, a senior public administrator at an operational ministry, such interaction is much faster than electronic communication. His strong impression may have been shaped by his experience meeting directly with a public administrator in charge of a particular function at a government agency. To him, a lot of issues can be discussed through face-to-face meetings. Providing the same

inputs electronically may require more time when certain issues need further clarification from the relevant public administrators:

I think our people are not ready enough to use the electronic system to give feedback to the government, as the electronic method is slower as compared to going face-to-face (A5).

A11, a newly appointed public administrator, was of the opinion that some people favor face-to-face meetings, especially those in rural areas who lack access to ICTs:

I would say the mentality of the people [in the rural areas is different]. They love to do something conventional such as meeting in person. Some rural folks who did not have the connection would prefer the meeting (A11).

A25, a senior public administrator in charge of monitoring blogs, put forward the need for public administrators to meet with some citizens who are discontented with electronic feedback, e.g., through the official government blog. To him, inputs collection through e-democracy must be complemented with personal communication:

We feel as though these people are not given room to write their opinion. Now we give them the opportunity to write in our blogs, and if you are still not satisfied, we'll have a face-to-face discussion (A25).

A14, a middle manager involved with e-government initiatives, observed that some Malaysians favor face-to-face communication with the officer-in-charge because they believe it provides opportunities which are not available through online interaction, such as the possibility to reduce the amount to be paid for a traffic summons:

Sometimes they prefer a process which comprises the element of human face-to-face interaction, as this gives them room for further interaction, for example, the possibility to reduce summons. Data from JPJ [Malay abbreviation for 'the Road Transport Department'] and the Police has shown that as of now, the number of traffic offenders paying summons at counters is still much higher than those performing payment through the online system (A14).

To A14, such a perception about personal interactions must be rectified – through proper promotion (see Chapter 10, subsection 10.4.1.3) – for effective e-democracy practices, since citizens are conveniently empowered to exercise their rights via electronic means.

A27, a middle manager who had just completed her doctoral degree, echoed A14's sentiments and believed that e-democracy practices would reduce the amount of time which citizens require to provide inputs to government:

If people want to make complaints, they can access the government [websites] directly rather than having to make an appointment and face-to-face meeting. Those styles do not work anymore, I think, because people can save time through this sort of interaction (A27).

Another characteristic of patron-client communitarianism, as Neher (1994) describes, concerns the relationship of reciprocity between superiors and subordinates. Seven public administrators (A4, A6, A8, A12, A14, A15, and A16) observed that such a reciprocal relationship is important in the MFPS, and should be understood and utilized for effective e-democracy practices to occur. A middle manager, A6, believed that it is a norm in the MFPS for lower-ranking public administrators not to antagonize higher-ranking public administrators. To him, ICTs can facilitate open discussions between these public administrators. However, he felt that young public administrators seem to benefit more from practices like e-democracy, as compared to the older generation:

Office culture encourages openness, open discussion... maybe for the younger generation which is exposed to information and ICTs, and they might welcome this. For the older generation, I would say in a protective kind of environment, they might view this as something that goes against the norm, challenge your superior, that kind of thing. Again this is some kind of clash of civilizations (A6).

A8, a middle manager from the PTM Service, outlined a lower-ranking public administrator's position in providing input to top management as merely making a proposition for consideration:

I am in middle level management, therefore, I am only in the position to suggest such a thing (utilizing inputs from NGO's website) but maybe, my idea or suggestion might not be taken up (A8).

A young and newly appointed public administrator, A12, agreed with A8 and felt that lower-ranking public administrators in the MFPS are to a certain extent restricted from providing ideas and inputs.

From my experience, in the public service, the young public administrators could not voice their views freely in the organization (A12).

Five public administrators (A4, A6, A14, A15, and A16), expressed the view that the reciprocal relationship between superiors and subordinates in the MFPS

facilitate e-democracy practices in a number of ways. They felt that top managers in the MFPS should provide direction and endorse e-democracy practices.

In the public service, the culture can be developed when there are guidelines and instructions from the top. If our top management is willing to look into this matter and provide guidance to the rest, then the culture can be developed within the public administration (A15).

A4 believed that for e-democracy to be effective,

we must have support from the top. The head of department must know the system, the benefit of the system and then they can support from the financial, staff and so on. They must be the champion of the system (A4).

A6 and A14 felt that top management's endorsement of e-democracy will assist its implementation:

From the top, the cabinet to the ministry, KSU [Malay abbreviation for Chief Secretary] levels, division levels and the unit levels right down to the people. They must be seen supporting e-democracy. E-democracy must be seen as valuable to all (A6).

In my opinion, e-democracy implementation can be good if it is implemented correctly and is highly supported by the top management (A14).

Reiterating A6 and A14's views, A16 felt that "e-democracy can be successful but of course it will also need commitment from the top management" (A16).

A2 observed that top management's support for e-democracy will occur when "leaders believe that certain changes have to be made, to monitor and implement it properly" (A2).

C2, a vice president of a private telecommunications company involved in a few government ICT initiatives, expressed his full agreement about top management's support for e-democracy practices in the MFPS. He believed that for e-democracy to be effective, it "will depend very much upon government officers, especially those with higher authority changing their mentality towards being more appreciative of the positive impact [of e-democracy]" (C2).

Seven interviewees (A17, A22, A25, A30, A33, C9, and C10) outlined several barriers placed by hierarchical interaction, which is another characteristic of patron-client communitarianism (Neher, 1994). This hierarchical characteristic covers Malaysian society at large and the MFPS, which is inclusive of the

hierarchical characteristic of the Weberian bureaucratic organizations (see Chapter 2). There is a vague differentiation between national hierarchy and organizational hierarchy – in the context of public administration – because the chain of command in the MFPS lies with the minister in charge of a particular organization and ultimately, the Cabinet (see Chapter 3). The undercurrent of such a chain of command in the MFPS was strong when both public administrators and commentators interchangeably outlined the barriers for e-democracy placed by the hierarchies in Malaysia.

A22, a middle manager who has had experience at a government-linked company, was of the opinion that

there is still a constraint where public administrators cannot explain themselves directly to the public. We need a mechanism to overcome this. For example, certain issues raised by the public need clearance from certain level of managers, as a result there can be a delay in providing responses, so this is not good (A22).

A30, a middle manager in charge of ICT infrastructure management at a ministry, expressed her deep apprehension that the ability to provide swift replies through e-democracy practices may be limited by the strong hierarchy. She observed that public administrators must present a draft of their reply for their superiors' approval before it can be sent to the citizen concerned:

It's not easy to provide a response in three days because you have to go through the organizational hierarchy for approval. We cannot go direct and bypass this (A30).

C4, an academic who seldom dodged an issue, felt that public administrators lack determination to discharge their duty due to a strong sentiment surrounding the chain of command in the decision-making process in the MFPS:

Public administrators shouldn't be so scared of making decisions about simple issues and always feel the need to play safe. I don't understand why everything needs to be discussed in meetings and answers could not be given on the spot, even if these issues are already within the public administrator's jurisdictional power. Why should it take so long for public administrators to respond to public complaints or to reply to letters? (C4).

A17, a newly appointed public administrator to the PTM Service, felt that some superiors in the MFPS are inclined to filter information not in their favor before promoting it in the hierarchy. In her view, e-democracy can limit information filtration in the public administration:

[For example,] our strategic plan is where we prepare the draft and circulate it to all government agencies for their feedback electronically. Before this, we send the draft through normal mail and somehow the feedback provided by the desk officer is filtered by the management. Later on we hear problems from the implementation agencies. So, I'm sure with e-democracy there will be transparency on decisions and government policy (A17).

C9, an academic at an international university in Malaysia, and C10, an ICT consultant, shared A17's sentiments and observed that such a hierarchical characteristic hinders good ideas from being promoted up the hierarchy. To them, e-democracy can advance these ideas for the common good of the country and help prevent the brain-drain in the MFPS.

Pertinent to Malaysian culture, or one of the fabrics of Malaysian society, is the hierarchical society. You have to agree with your boss and that is a cultural norm here. There are positives and negatives. There are lots of negatives because if the leader does not want to move, even if you have a good dynamic person, they leave. What e-democracy allows here is essentially to break way from the hierarchy, to allow equal access and contribute to development, so it's flattening the world. That's what e-democracy does. Every voice counts, not only that of the leaders (C9).

With the public service ... however, there are considerations of a very strong hierarchy where young people cannot really move. The situation is more top-down than anything else. Information flattening hierarchies has not happened in the public ... or anywhere in Malaysia, inclusive of the private sector. There is a demand for it to be flattened, but it has not (C10).

8.3.3. Personalism

The third feature of national culture is personalism. Neher (1994) outlines that the characteristic of personalism puts emphasis on leaders rather than laws (see Chapter 2). National leaders, particularly the Prime Minister, is the focus of Neher's (1994) argument in his assumptions about Asian-style democracy in South-East Asia. Four interviewees (A6, A23, A27, and C2) believed that the style of governance promoted by the former Prime Minister (PM) of Malaysia, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, facilitates the augmentation of e-democracy practices in Malaysia. To them, the emergence of such practices lack any clear policy for e-democracy, but is mostly attributed to the "work with me" concept championed by Abdullah (see Chapter 1).

A middle manager, A6, felt that the PM was supportive of alternative sources of information and open to citizens' voices:

I think under this current PM, right, you see there is a merging of alternative sources of information... you've got internet, blogs, online forums and things like that (A6).

A6 felt that “the government is promoting transparency; even our PM said that ‘I’m willing to listen to all kind of grievances’” (A6).

A23 strongly believed that e-democracy practices will take center stage, “maybe because of the space given by our PM. Now, people are willing to talk” (A23).

A27 was of the opinion that e-democracy is already being practised in Malaysia because the government and the PM are starting to open up electronic channels for citizens to express their views.

For now, I think we already started it. The government is going into blogging and putting up website for people to e-mail and voice out their concerns. Our PM [is] ...asking for people to e-mail to them to know their problems (A27).

An academic who was sceptical about technology utilization in e-democracy practices, C3, expressed his anxiety concerning Abdullah’s sincerity about encouragement of citizens providing their feedback through e-democracy.

Although his whole tone was of regret rather than condemnation, he felt that Abdullah’s encouragement of e-democracy without clear guidance would result in social instability.

The challenge in Malaysia is not only economic development but how do we maintain our social stability. The irony about [Abdullah] is that he is so nice and so ignorant that he allows what could be bad for him. I would say it is not out of openness in the true sense but openness in the ignorant sense (C3).

Deference to authority, patron-client communitarianism, and personalism were three features of national culture observed in this study. These features are supportive of Neher’s (1994) characteristics of Asian-style democracy and shape the practices of e-democracy in Malaysia.

8.4. Organizational culture

This section describes the features of organizational culture which human actors employ for designing Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) infrastructure denoted by arrow 2 and arrow B of Parvez’s framework (see Chapter 5). Emergent organizational cultural features from data analysis are a non-

partisan and expert public service, incrementalism an information culture, integration, and activism.

8.4.1. Non-partisan and expert public service

As discussed in Chapter 3, the MFPS is identified as a non-partisan and expert public service, which is one of the characteristics of the Westminster model of governance (A. S. Ahmad, et al., 2003a). Some 21 percent of public administrators (A1, A7, A9, A16, A21, A26, A34, and A36) observed that public administrators in the MFPS are non-partisan and expert public service. Seven of these public administrators were aged 36 years and over and only one was from the 25-35 years age group. Six of these eight public administrators have served more that 11 years in the MFPS, as shown in Table 8-3.

Table 8-3 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and a non-partisan and expert public service

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning this feature of organizational culture		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	
Age group	No.	%	% (*)
25-35 years	1	12%	9% (11)
36 years and over	7	88%	26% (27)
Total	8	100%	21% (38)
Year of service	No.	%	% (*)
10 years or less	2	25%	17% (12)
11 years and over	6	75%	23% (26)
Total	8	100%	21% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

It appeared that the older and longer-serving public administrators are more acquainted with the impartiality and expertise issue in discharging their functions as compared with younger, newly appointed public administrators. The non-partisan and expert public service culture of public administrators facilitates e-democracy implementation in the MFPS.

According to A9, a middle manager at a central agency, public administrators will remain impartial in e-democracy practices because they are focused on “the positive side of e-democracy” (A9).

A senior department head, A21, said that e-democracy is being stigmatized by public administrators because of its directness, which may influence or favor certain groups of people or certain opinions. For her, such an inclination will result in poor public policy as opposed to one which is balanced and mutually beneficial to all stakeholders:

I think the public administrators are afraid to engage with [citizens] for fear of being branded as non-impartial (A21).

According to A16, a senior public administrator who had extensive experience in policy development, public administrators can remain non-partisan in e-democracy practices. However, they have to have the final say in their area of expertise, like policy development. He believed that public administrators should be in full command of the policy development process while e-democracy supplements input to such a process:

E-democracy can be done in the smartest way but the element of decision-making remains with the government. Public opinions can have some influence but decision-making has to be with the government due to controls placed by acts which have been passed by Parliament (A16).

Echoing A16’s view, A36, a newly appointed public administrator to a federal department, observed that public administrators who are experts in their field should decide on the outcome of a policy under their jurisdiction. This should be undertaken with proper consideration of inputs from e-democracy:

It depends on the subject matter. In town planning, for example, comments for our plan would really improve our plan, but we still have our say (A36).

A26, a public administrator in charge of monitoring blogs at a ministry, felt that public administrators should strategically decide information provision limits for e-democracy practices. He believed that for e-democracy to be effective, “we cannot open up all to the public; there are certain things that must be kept within the government” (A26). For him, the experts in public administration should avoid providing too much information to citizens, which might contribute to social instability.

C9, on the other hand, raised an example where certain information must be provided – by public administrators – to citizens to maintain accountability. He believed that every decision made by public administrators must be supported by relevant evidence and sound arguments. If e-democracy practices are to be implemented effectively, the culture of “we are the expert and we know better” should be changed.

There is a culture in Malaysia where a government department can reply to your letter stating that your application is unsuccessful without any reasons. Actually, they need to explain why it’s not successful and the steps to take to make it successful. Where is the accountability? If you want to be a global player and a developed country, you have to help citizens to meet the quality of lifestyle, which means providing information assisting them. By the way, government is also known as a public servant, not public master. So e-democracy is reinforcing this, everybody is equal in accessing information (C9).

A middle manager from the PTM Service, A7, asserted that public administrators will oppose incorporating input (from e-democracy practices) into policy development processes because it is being perceived as an additional burden. She felt that public administrators possess ample expertise within their scheme of services to develop policy (see Chapter 3):

Yes, public administrators will resist and look at this exercise as an extra workload (A7).

C9 shared A7’s sentiments and emphasized that public administrators should accept input from e-democracy practices to remain relevant in public administration:

Of course there will always be resistance. If they don’t change, whether the ministry, the people, the government or the country itself, they will go extinct like the dinosaurs (C9).

For A1, who spoke candidly about the MFPS, “being the public sector doesn’t mean that you have to be in control of everything, without taking into consideration all [views]” (A1).

A13 and A16 provided reasons for a non-partisan and expert public service to adopt e-democracy practices, namely to fill the local knowledge gap in the public service, and to better manage expectations of the increasingly educated citizens they intend to serve. A13 felt that public administrators should engage citizens through e-democracy for their local knowledge. This would enable them to develop a policy that is more relevant to citizens’ needs:

We have to listen to what people are trying to tell us. At the executive level they do not exactly understand the way of life of people all over Malaysia, what are their real needs and conditions. Sometime when they are developing the policy they do not see the whole picture. ... They need the real life situation, the real inputs and feedback, at least to consider the suitability of the policy (A13).

A16 observed that public administrators are aware about the growing needs of educated citizens to voice their views via e-democracy to the government. He felt that public administrators will accept that these inputs are significant to policy development:

I don't think [public administrators] will resist incorporating inputs from e-democracy. They understand that with a higher level of education, the community is now becoming more intelligent and has ideas and opinions which need to be heard and considered. They accept that these ideas from outside of the service can be useful. Sometimes though, some public administrators are tied to past experiences. The situation today demands public administrators to be more open and understand the role which can be played by the public to contribute towards decision making (A16).

A senior public administrator nearing retirement, A34, passionately described the continuing changes towards ICT adoption in the MFPS. He stressed that public administrators can easily adapt to changes and be flexible and sensitive to their surroundings. For him, such an ability to adapt is part of the expertise of public administrators in the MFPS:

I believe our public service is quite flexible. We're responding quickly to the environment ... I think we should be able to sustain [the changes] ... Since I joined the service we have changed quite a lot, the way we do our business, we listen to people ... whatever our stakeholders say, we do (A34).

8.4.2. Incrementalism

Another feature of organizational culture (which public administrators draw on) that emerged from the data analysis surrounds e-democracy implementation. This feature is called 'incrementalism', related to Lindblom's (1959) pragmatic approach to policy development normally practised by public administrators. It is known as the method of successive limited comparisons or the branch method (see Chapter 3). Some 26 percent of public administrators (A2, A5, A6, A8, A16, A18, A25, A27, A31, and A35) observed that e-democracy should be implemented in small projects and over a period of time, in order to assess its effectiveness, before a national roll-out. Nine of these ten public administrators were from the more than 11 years service group and only one from the less than 5 years service group.

Eight were from the key ministry and operational ministries and only two were from the central agencies, as shown in Table 8-4.

Table 8-4 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and incrementalism

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning this feature of organizational culture		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	% (*)
Year of service			
5 years of less	1	10%	13% (8)
11 years and more	9	90%	35% (26)
Total	10	100%	26% (38)
Types of organization	No.	%	% (*)
Central agency	2	25%	17% (12)
Key ministry	2	25%	22% (9)
Operational ministry	6	50%	35% (17)
Total	10	100%	26% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

The impression given is that those public administrators who have been in service longer and work at operational ministries appreciate more of the need to execute e-democracy through an incremental approach. This view may have been influenced by the similar method which they apply to policy development (see Chapter 3).

A middle manager who was directly in charge of the development of the Water Services policy, A2, stressed that the implementation of e-democracy

has to be done slowly. It cannot be done based on trends, now is the trend, everybody go for the online ... Then everybody go for that, then for certain time it'll lose steam and they will forget about that (A2).

A5, a senior public administrator, and A6, a middle manager, felt that more time is needed for e-democracy implementation:

I think [public administrators] will be receptive. There are indications that people like to use electronic systems but we still need more time (A5).

A6 stressed that the implementation of e-democracy can be realized because the “top-management commitment is there, that can be trickled down to the level of management in the office. It takes time” (A6).

A16 felt that “adjustment to changes, will take time” (A16). In a similar vein, A25 believed that e-democracy implementation will require a long phase of adaptation among public administrators in the MFPS:

I think it is good. It will bring some positive changes among government staff and at the same time, in the long run, it can benefit the government, the public and the country. We are talking about long run because anything we introduce, we need time to adjust to it. This is called the adjustment period (A25).

Intricacies of e-democracy concept and practices may have influenced seven public administrators (A6, A8, A16, A18, A27, A31, and A35) to outline several reasons for its incremental implementation. Such reasons include ICT readiness, awareness by government, and capacity building (see Chapter 10).

A31 expressed his concern that e-democracy “in Malaysia has still got a long way to go. It will take time and there are still a lot of things which have to be developed” (A31).

For A6, e-democracy should be implemented

slowly because the first thing it involves [are] computers and ICT. You have got to get people to embrace the technology first before [they] really start using it. I think people are really trying to understand the use of ICT and I think that will contribute towards 100 percent use of ICT in years to come (A6).

A8 was of the opinion that public administrators

still need more time to create such a culture. We must start by providing awareness and also by measuring the readiness of our personnel, and only then can we proceed with the implementation of e-democracy (A8).

E-democracy is going to be a big challenge for the government and therefore, may take some time to implement. We must understand that first, we must educate the public administrators on what e-democracy is all about. Secondly, we have to educate the public, the professionals and the rest of the clients. Once every component understands what e-democracy is, only then will each be able to play their part in it responsibly (A16).

I would like to also touch upon the human factor whereby change management would need to take place. Acceptance of new approaches and concepts do not come easily. With new things comes the necessity to convince people. This is a big challenge (A18).

A middle manager who was involved in ICT infrastructure design and management at a ministry, A35, believed that

there is still lots of room for improvement. There are public administrators who will immediately use any system that we introduce, but some are reluctant. We

provided training for them, but some still choose not to use it ... But, now you can see that they start to use it (A35).

C8 echoed A35's sentiments and he felt e-democracy

acceptance to be slow. Firstly, the use of ICT itself has not become a widespread practice in our daily lives. Having a computer each at the office and using it only for word processing, for example, does not necessarily mean that public administrators are IT savvy. Most are still not properly trained and do not have the knowledge and skills to make the most of ICT (C8).

For a middle manager, A27, public administrators

need to work out all the small issues and problems but keep working for the bigger thing. Start small and gradually increasing it so that we won't waste money and not having to do fire fighting now and then (A27).

Three interviewees (A27, A16, and C3) identified elements of e-democracy practices which should be taken into consideration by public administrators.

These elements cover focus areas and pilot projects:

I suppose for e-democracy we should come up with terms of reference, what are the focus areas to concentrate on. For example, the urban and rural areas, what are the infrastructures for these people and so on (A27).

In A16's opinion, public administrators

will have to [implement e-democracy] with just a few pioneer projects and from then on see how it works and determine whether it can be expanded further. It definitely cannot be implemented to all policies in the first instance (A16).

In support of these views, C3 tentatively agreed that citizens who have access to the most advanced ICT facilities and readily understand e-democracy should be the main focus in its implementation. To him, the success or failure of e-democracy projects in these areas can be determined and if needed, improved for future implementation (see Chapter 10, section 10.2.1):

I would say, the government will be most effective if they want to do something with the urban people who are already used to responding to public policies and public activities through the web (C3).

8.4.3. Information culture

The next feature of organizational culture considered by the interviewees was information culture. Six interviewees (A2, A6, A8, A19, A38, and C10) felt there was a form of organizational culture surrounding information usage in the MFPS, which could influence e-democracy practices. A common feeling observed among these interviewees was that public administrators utilize restricted information in the policy development process.

A19, a senior public administrator whose doctoral research was about information management in the Malaysian Public Service, identified a pattern of data usage in policy development. His earlier research may have shaped his strong concerns about non-organized data utilization:

I think in Malaysia, when we formulate policy, we just use some basic information through surveys and e-mails to gauge public opinions. I think we are not really using it ... Now, the culture is... we still do not widely use the information, sometime when we formulate policy, we do not really use data, resulting in not a good policy. This is based on my research last time; I found that there is no good and systematic data culture in government. So, we cannot analyze the data for better policy making (A19).

A middle manager, A2, was of the same opinion, saying that public administrators “don’t have channels to gather proper input to analyze our policy” (A2).

A38, a senior public administrator, was concerned that there is an insufficient culture of information-seeking for policy development in the public service. To her, public administrators are not taking full benefit of ICTs in performing their functions:

Now, I don’t think there are many public administrators really using the Internet and they are still not IT savvy. They don’t use that means to look at the inputs to improve their service delivery and so on. There should be a change of mindset among the public administrators as well. The public should also take advantage and use the facility properly and make the most out of it (A38).

A38 was also frustrated by public administrators who

use the Internet only for certain things, like personal e-mails and not making it a working culture to study other country’s practices and such [to enrich their knowledge for discharging their duties] (A38).

A middle manager from the PTM Service, A8, expressed frustration at the lack of enthusiasm among public administrators to utilize ICTs for seeking new information related to their job functions:

I don’t see the [information] culture here. Here it is more like we only get what we see in front of us and we do not go beyond the ways that we are used to in getting information (A8).

A8, however, admitted that she independently frequents a few websites hosted by NGOs to gauge the sentiments surrounding her policy development task:

Looking into such websites, however, is my own personal initiative, which initially was because I wanted to find out about current issues on broadband in Malaysia

when I started work here. I have raised or suggested it to my superior, but I do not see any sign that the idea is being taken up (A8).

As discussed in Chapter 10 (section 10.4.2.3), A19 emphasized that for e-democracy to be effective, public administrators

should have what I called information culture and it should be inculcated in our society. Through e-democracy we receive a lot of information that we must accept with an open mind, rightly or wrongly. As government servants we should analyze this information and if it can be used for policy formulation, we should use it and if it's not, we use it for future planning. I think we should have this culture rather than neglecting it. Through e-democracy we receive a lot of data every day, we should analyze and use it (A19).

8.4.4. Integration

Integration was another feature of organizational culture identified. This feature is closely related to the Weberian characteristic of bureaucratic organization, the division of labor (see Chapter 2). This characteristic results in horizontal differentiation within the MFPS structure and creates a form of working culture, which focuses on one's organizational objectives and not the entire public service. Seven interviewees (A6, A8, A14, A16, A27, C2, and C5) observed that public administrators in the MFPS are still lacking an integrated culture of implementation for its programs. They believed that this lack must be addressed to facilitate e-democracy implementation and enhance its practices in Malaysia.

A middle manager from the PTM Service, who was involved in the policy development process of a ministry, A8, admitted that she was not aware of e-democracy practices in the ministry. She later concurred with the researcher that there were a few e-democracy initiatives conducted by other units in the same ministry. This account illustrates a case of a public administrator who is only focused on her own unit's objectives.

So far I have not seen any instances where we have used e-democracy in our policy-making processes. Even though there are channels provided for us to give inputs and feedback, generally I have not seen if these inputs are used for policy making (A8).

A14, a middle manager whose job function was dealing with e-government initiatives, expressed his concerns over a lack of cohesive planning associated with e-government projects. In his opinion, e-democracy implementation should

assist the seamless interaction between government agencies to encourage effective interaction:

As I see it, there is a lack of integration in planning for ICT development in the country. Ministries and states perform their own planning and implementation of ICT projects. For example, even though projects are planned for under RMK9 [the Ninth Malaysia Plan discussed in Chapter 4], when it comes to implementation, each ministry or state would in some cases appoint their own contractors and vendors to develop systems. Problems arise when these vendors cannot fulfill their promise of their system being able to integrate with systems which would come up in later stages. Some of these applications are stand-alone ones. This raises the issue of integration which hinders future collaborations, for example between ministries (A14).

C2 shared A14's sentiments and expressed his concern about the lack of organization in the content and applications of e-democracy. To him, effective e-democracy practices will not be realized if agencies in the MFPS are promoting different applications:

Coming from the private sector, my experiences working with a number of government departments have shown that there are some good as well as bad points. The public administration in Malaysia has tools which to me are already 70 to 80 percent in place. However, in my opinion the content and applications are not integrated enough ... The most important thing is the consolidation of efforts. I can say that generally there is a lack of consolidated efforts between the public and the private sector. Even within the public sector, each ministry has its own projects ... Basically efforts have not been consolidated (C2).

A middle manager, A6, observed that some government agencies are protective of their organizational boundaries. For him, the main obstacle for an effective e-democracy is for government agencies "to come in and share information. Local government is too secretive of their information" (A6).

A27 felt that an integrated channel should be provided for citizens to voice their concerns. She believed that such a channel would facilitate information flow and promote better interaction between government agencies:

We don't have a common platform where we can link to all departments for the public to write in their complaints and problems. People do not know where to speak out and sometimes being redirected to several different agencies and so are wasting lots of time (A27).

An experienced public administrator in policy development, A16, observed numerous improvements being implemented in the MFPS to facilitate government e-initiatives. For him, introduction of new concepts, like horizontalization (see Chapter 3) – which integrates functions of several departments into one

streamlined process for a particular task– will enhance e-democracy practices in the MFPS:

There have also been changes in the public administration whereby old processes and practices involving people being present at counters have lessened. More and more services are now provided online in order to provide easier access for the public. Internal processes are also being improved by introducing inter-department online services. We are now talking about horizontalization or end-to-end services across agencies. Basically, one stop service portal, which will act as a single entry point for... let's say, setting up a business in Malaysia (A16).

C5, an editor of electronic news, felt that e-democracy practices in Malaysia can be improved if an integrated approach is taken by government departments. For him, this integrated approach, which is similar to the whole-of-government concept discussed in Chapter 2, will encourage more participation from citizens:

From our experience with bloggers and all, I think a lot of people would want to give inputs ... I think they will state their opinion. So it's just a question of government departments managing these opinions which differ from one to the other (C5).

8.4.5. Activism

The final feature of organizational culture considered by interviewees was activism. Five public administrators (A1, A24, A26, A28, and A30) expressed their views on organizational activism surrounding e-democracy practices in the MFPS. They felt that constant advocating, by their organizational heads of the importance of ICTs and citizen feedback would facilitate the implementation and effective utilization of input from e-democracy practices.

A26 was a newly appointed public administrator to the Social Service who was initially in the Agricultural Service. He observed that “public administrators must change to accept and use ICTs. Our culture now is business not as usual, as preached by our top managers in the public service” (A26). The impression was given that top managers in the MFPS play an important role as activists to promote e-democracy implementation.

A1 felt that e-democracy in the MFPS will be easily adapted with constant pressure from top managers attuned to ICTs, advocating its utilization to public administrators.

With the present KSN [Malay abbreviation for the 'Chief Secretary to the Government'] we have a different way of approaching things. Before, we had this notion that policies are made to be accepted as it is but with this changing of guards who have different views and approach and more technology savvy, probably it would be easier to embark on and to accept the changes in the public sector (A1).

A24, a senior middle manager, echoed A1's sentiments and believed that public administrators will be compelled to adopt ICTs and e-democracy with constant advocacy from their superiors. "I think we are fortunate because our D.G. [Director General] is very much into ICT, so we have to keep up" (A24).

A17, A28, and A30 believed that promotion of new ways to communicate via ICTs – between top managers and public administrators or top managers and citizens – are creating a new culture within the MFPS, which will support an effective implementation of e-democracy. For these three public administrators, the direct and noticeable actions favoring ICTs and e-democracy by top managers in the MFPS acclimatize public administrators to such practices:

In our current situation, the KSN is really supportive towards using e-mails to communicate. For example, in my line of work e-mail is a priority which I've to check my e-mails and need to reply within two hours. Most of my e-mails came from other government agencies, which require feedback, opinion and advisory (A17).

KSN is giving access to everybody through e-mails ... it gives a sense that somebody is hearing them so they are encouraged to give more feedback. Rather than you write in and wait, just like drop something in the ocean and forget about it. I think now people are looking at what is happening around and people are encouraged to voice their opinions ... Just compose a few words and send it via SMS. Currently, with commitment from the top they know it will get somewhere and they will get a reply. There is a two way feeling between the government and citizens (A28).

I think we have improved a lot; it is dependent on the KSN as well. Now, we have the directive to respond to feedback within three days and even the KSN welcomes direct e-mails, so we at the low level [in comparison to the KSN] must be proactive (A30).

Non-partisan and expert public service, incrementalism, an information culture, integration, and activism were five emergent features of organizational culture identified from data analysis. These features shape the practices of e-democracy in Malaysia.

8.5. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed three institutional dimensions that shape the conceptions of e-democracy in the MFPS, namely norms, national culture and organizational culture. Mutual benefit, target groups, and self-censorship are the identified norms which inform acceptable e-democracy practices. The national culture deals with social influences that public administrators and citizens draw on to design and enact e-democracy practices, which include deference to authority, patron-client communitarianism, and personalism. Organizational culture covers non-partisan and expert public administration, incrementalism, information culture, integration, and activism, which public administrators draw on to design ICT infrastructure for e-democracy.

The evidence discussed in this chapter suggests that enacted e-democracy practices were influenced by characteristics of Asian style democracy. Factors, such as a non-partisan and expert public service are also significant. This perception was also initially held by the researcher. The inclusion of key informants from selected federal agencies in the design of this study assures the quality and reliability of evidence discussed (see Chapter 6). The accounts presented by evidence in this chapter short of generalization for the whole population in the MFPS due to the nature of qualitative study. The evidence also suggests that the MFPS utilized restricted information in the policy development process and e-democracy practices would reinvigorate such process. This perception was influenced by the expert public service which operates within organizational boundaries.

The identified institutional dimensions shape conceptions of e-democracy practices in the MFPS, to be discussed in Chapter 9.

9. Findings: The agency dimension

9.1. Introduction

*Lain dulang, lain kakinya;
 Lain orang, lain hatinya*¹⁴

This chapter discusses the agency dimension which covers understandings and shared meanings of agents or human actors to make sense of their utilization of interactive Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for e-democracy in Malaysia. The concept of duality of structure (Orlikowski, 2000) emphasizes that material technology only represents a particular symbol and material properties, which are used by agents in social practices to enact particular structures of technology use. As discussed in Chapter 5, agents employ facility, norm, and interpretive scheme modalities to enact e-democracy practices, as denoted by arrow C and arrow 3 of Parvez's (2006) framework (shown in Figure 9-1).

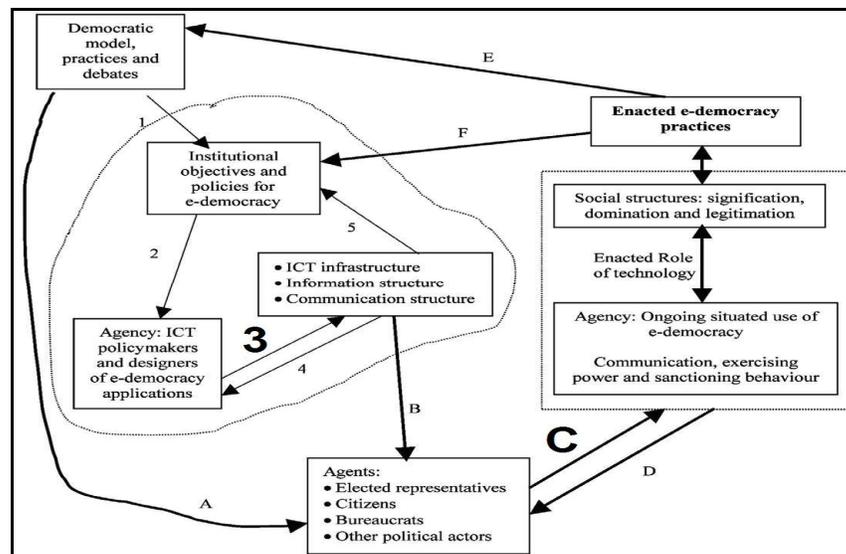


Figure 9-1 Parvez's framework – Agency Dimensions

¹⁴ A Malay saying – literally translated as “Different trays, different stands, different men, different dispositions” (Brown, 1959, p. 54). This saying envisages the inevitability of different interpretations of human actors about any given scenario or phenomenon based on their knowledge of such a scenario or phenomenon.

From the data analysis, six categories of interpretive scheme, namely policy development, service delivery improvement, fast information-seeking and sharing, disintermediation, good governance indicators, and gauging popularity were identified, as shown in Figure 9-2.

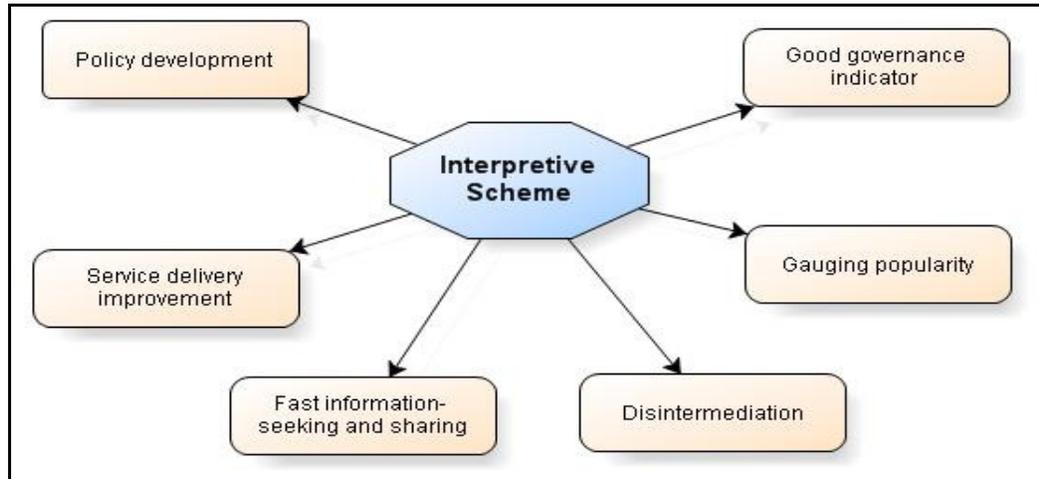


Figure 9-2 The interpretive schemes

Agents with different knowledge of ICT properties and purposes will draw on different material properties of ICT to enact structures of e-democracy. Four enacted e-democracy practices emerged from the interview transcripts: inputs collection, electronification, information exchange, and communication, as shown in Figure 9-3. The classification of each practice includes its interpretive scheme, players involved, facilities used, and instances enacted by the public administrators. These practices contribute towards an understanding of enacted e-democracy practices in Malaysia.

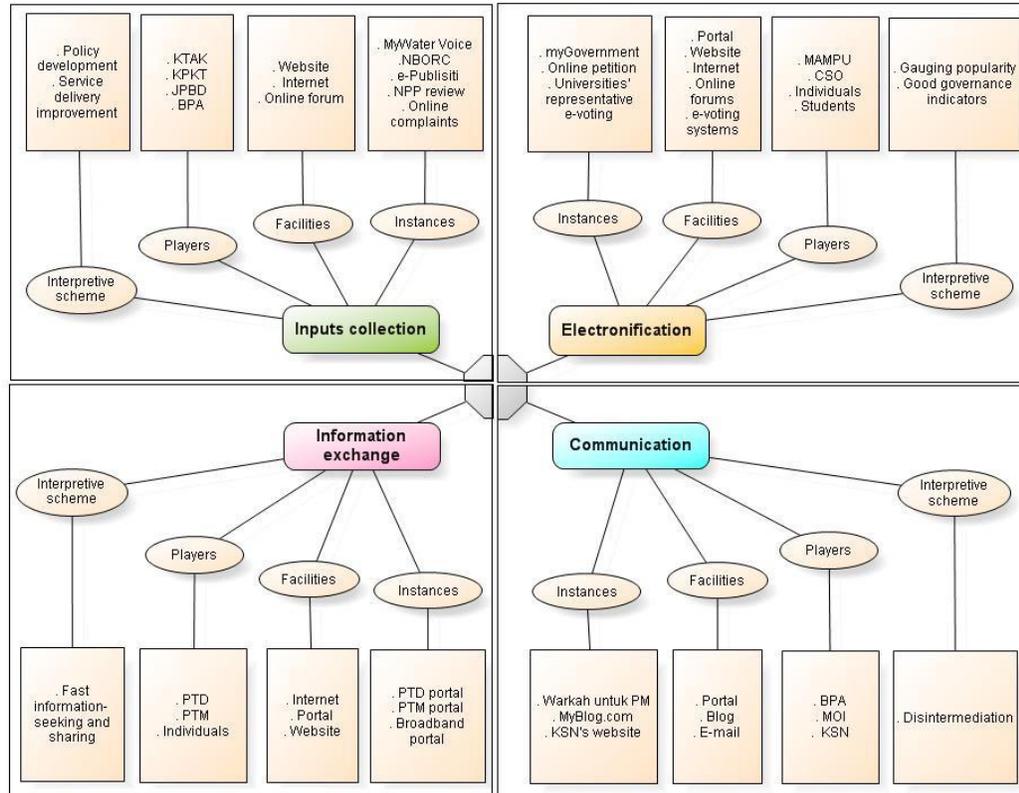


Figure 9-3 Four enacted e-democracy practices

This chapter starts with the discussion of a general, nebulous idea about e-democracy as described by some interviewees. This is followed by a description of six interpretive schemes, namely policy development, service delivery improvement, fast information-seeking and sharing, disintermediation, good governance indicator, and gauging popularity. Enacted e-democracy practices in Malaysia, namely ‘inputs collection’, ‘information exchange’, ‘communication’, and ‘electronification’ are then discussed.

9.2. Initial uncertainties about e-democracy

As mentioned in Chapter 7, 14 public administrators (A4, A14, A15, A17, A18, A19, A25, A29, A30, A32, A34, A35, A36, and A38, or 37 percent) were not sure about the meaning of e-democracy. Of these 14 public administrators, four were aged 25-35 years, three were aged 36-45 years, and seven were aged 46 years and over. Five of 14 public administrators were from the central agency, six from the key ministry, and three from the operational ministry, as shown in Table 9-1. It

would appear that the older generation of public administrators interviewed were not familiar with the term e-democracy compared to the younger generation of public administrators. This may have been influenced by F&F generation characteristics (see Chapter 10, subsection 10.4.5.1). Most of the public administrators who were quite unaware of e-democracy came from the key ministry. Compared to those from the central agency, these public administrators were possibly preoccupied with the division of labour and their job functions in the organization (a characteristic of Weberian bureaucracy discussed in Chapter 2).

Table 9-1 Attributes analysis: Public administrators who are not sure about e-democracy

Attributes	Public administrators who are not sure about e-democracy		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	
Age group	No.	%	% (*)
25-35 years	4	29%	36% (11)
36-45 years	3	21%	27% (11)
46 years and over	7	50%	44% (16)
Total	14	100%	37% (38)
Types of organization	No.	%	% (*)
Central Agency	5	36%	42% (12)
Key Ministry	6	43%	67% (9)
Operational Ministry	3	21%	18% (17)
Total	14	100%	37% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

Seven interviewees (A4, A18, A25, A29, A30, A32, and A38) admitted to hearing the term e-democracy for the first time. Some public administrators (A14, A15, A17, A34, A35, and A36), had some notion of its meaning. A35, a middle manager involved in ICT infrastructure design and management at an operational ministry, expressed such uncertainty:

I'm not sure. I think it's basically about democratic government-citizens interaction via electronic means (A35).

A14 and A18 seemed reluctant to discuss e-democracy. Instead, their preference initially was to describe e-government projects which focus online service delivery to facilitate transactional interaction between government and citizens (see

Chapter 1). This may be because the subject is more familiar and related more to their job functions or perhaps e-government to them is the closest approximation of e-democracy.

A14 pointed out that:

I am not sure about e-democracy, but I can talk about e-government (A14).

A18, a senior head of department felt “more comfortable with e-government because that’s my work” (A18).

C10, an ICT consultant who was a former chief executive officer of a government linked company, was also not sure what e-democracy meant. To him, e-democracy is related to other concepts, like the knowledge society.

I don’t know what e-democracy means in Malaysia. However, we tried to bring in the idea of a knowledge society which does include democracy (C10).

Some interviewees are initially not clear about e-democracy. They tend to make sense of e-democracy by associating it with forms of ICT usage they are familiar with. As discussed in Chapter 4, this general uncertainty about e-democracy, to a certain extent, could be attributed to the absence of an e-democracy policy. Further analysis revealed four enacted e-democracy practices with six interpretive schemes, discussed in the following sections.

9.3. Interpretive schemes

As discussed in Chapter 5, agents draw upon interpretive schemes to enact social practices. Analysis of the present study data revealed that, most interviewees took the view that agents, public administrators, draw upon six interpretive schemes (policy development, service delivery improvement, fast information-seeking and sharing, disintermediation, good governance indicators, and gauging popularity) to enact e-democracy practices. These schemes serve as rules that outline the purpose of e-democracy at the federal level of government in Malaysia. Each is discussed in the following sections. Their significance and the role of ICTs in e-democracy practices are discussed in Chapter 11.

9.3.1. Policy development

The first interpretive scheme considered by the interviewees was 'policy development'. Six interviewees (A1, A6, A10, A16, A37, and C5) observed that e-democracy is meant to support the policy development process.

A senior public administrator nearing retirement, A37, strongly believed that e-democracy is "of great use to policy makers... [, because] we need inputs from the public to formulate our plans and policy" (A37). A16, a senior public administrator who had extensive experience in policy development, expressed his agreement that "some online activities do influence the policy-making process" (A16).

Like all these public administrators, C5, agreed that the objective of e-democracy is to collect input for policy development:

I think [e-democracy] is basically to get feedback ... They [the public administrators] need feedback on whether there is a need for them to change policies (C5).

An academic who was critical of the public administration, C4, observed that the objective of e-democracy is for public administrators "to be able to formulate policies which are in line with the people's wishes" (C4).

9.3.2. Service delivery improvement

The second interpretive scheme considered by interviewees was service delivery improvement. Seven interviewees (A14, A19, A22, A34, C2, C4, and C5) believed that the objective of e-democracy was to improve service delivery. To them, most input from e-democracy practices are related to services offered by the government, both online and offline.

When asked the question, 'What would be the most likely objective for a government agency to provide for e-democracy?' A34 simply replied, "[It is] basically to improve our service delivery" (A34).

Both A22 and A19 were of the view that e-democracy could provide inputs for the government to improve its service delivery. A22, a middle manager with previous

work experience at a government-linked company, felt that with e-democracy "we can get more ideas to improve our services and it is important to the government" (A22).

A19 observed that the objective of e-democracy

is to get comments on the standard and performance of our services whether it already fulfilled its need and requirement. Maybe it can be used to suggest new procedures and policy (A19).

C5, a commentator, said that the objective of a government agency to provide for e-democracy is "to know what the citizens think on certain issues and that they need to improve their service delivery" (C5).

According to C2, a vice-president of a private telecommunication company who was once a public administrator in the Engineering Service, the objective of e-democracy for government is "definitely to be more effective, to ensure that the number of complaints become lesser [sic] as time goes by" (C2).

9.3.3. Fast information-seeking and sharing

The third interpretive scheme considered by the interviewees was fast information-seeking and sharing. 12 interviewees (A6, A14, A15, A25, A26, A27, A33, C4, C5, C7, C9, and C11) were of the opinion that e-democracy facilitates such practices among users.

A25 strongly believed that e-democracy

makes way for the public to get access to information. The Ministry therefore will have to see ... that people get access and the right information. If before they feel that not everybody can have access to information from a particular department. Now that government feels that as long as this information does not fall under the OSA [Official Secrets Act], it should be accessible to everyone (A25).

Like A25, A27 felt that

[w]ith e-democracy you can get the actual information on the Net rather than filtered and structured information in official reports. I think with e-democracy you get the real information. People can get information faster and they are forced to be IT savvy and all (A27).

A14 observed that "public administrators do use the Internet to get information and this of course will assist them in their work as policy makers" (A14).

A15, a middle manager at a central agency, suggested that government could also seek information from citizens through e-democracy. To him, "[g]overnment agencies usually have their own websites or portals, which can be used for e-democracy. I think this is an effective way to get information" (A15).

A6 believed that e-democracy "gives [him] the opportunity to share [his] experience" (A6) with other users. His view was shared by A33, a newly appointed public administrator to the PTD Service with a legal background. A33 felt that e-democracy

does not simply mean expressing your ideas each and every time but it also means applying ideas coming from others. It is more like sharing. They give you the information, you think and you apply. If you are not in favor of the ideas, you do have the choice not to apply it, then simply sit back and do nothing (A33).

C5 felt that e-democracy practices over the Internet

have actually enabled them [the citizens] to link up and to know that they are not the [only] person feeling that way about a certain issue, that there are others who share their views (C5).

9.3.4. Disintermediation – eliminating intermediaries in communication

The fourth interpretive scheme considered by interviewees was disintermediation. Five interviewees (A13, A14, A19, A35, and C2) felt that e-democracy facilitates direct communication with the authority. For them, such a direct communication is a form of disintermediation, which is traditionally almost impossible in Malaysian society with the patron-client communitarianism characteristic (see Chapters 2 and Chapter 8, section 8.3.2).

A14, a middle manager at an operational ministry, felt that the "objective of e-democracy is [for government] to interact with the public" (A14).

A middle manager involved in ICT infrastructure design and management, A35, observed that e-democracy is "basically about democratic government-citizens interaction via electronics" (A35).

C2 echoed A35's view and strongly believed that

[w]hen people are able to voice their opinions online, they have more direct access to persons in charge, a public administrator, a council member, or a Member of Parliament (C2).

A newly appointed public administrator to the PTM Service, A13, pointed out that e-democracy is supported through provision of "telecenters in the rural areas. With internet, we provide the opportunity for the rural folks to interact with government and take part in online forums and online voting" (A13).

Sharing A13's view, A19 also observed that the government portal provides information on procedures, policy... so that it would be easier for citizens to interact with government ... So, basically the portal is a gateway to the public. It is also a compulsory feature on all government websites, where they must provide space for public to send feedback and provide suggestions to the organization for all services provided to the public (A19).

9.3.5. Gauging popularity

The fifth interpretive scheme considered by interviewees was gauging popularity. Two public administrators, A4 and A12, were of the view that the purpose of e-democracy practices was to measure the popularity of a particular policy and indirectly, the popularity of the current government.

A12, a newly appointed public administrator to the PTD Service, strongly believed that with e-democracy the government "can gauge the situation outside before we implement a policy" (A12).

A senior public administrator with a Masters degree in Information Systems, A4, observed that the objective of e-democracy is for government "to know whether it is still popular or not. A strong government will be reflected by certain amount of votes" (A4).

9.3.6. Good governance indicators

The sixth interpretive scheme considered by interviewees was good governance indicators. Four interviewees (A3, A6, A26, and C9) observed that e-democracy could be utilized as such an indicator. To them, e-democracy facilitates better governance and promotes integrity in public administration. Citizens would be

able to evaluate the performance of government because all information is available for public scrutiny.

A3 strongly believed that e-democracy "is one of the ways to prove that Malaysia is properly managed, to show the world how sincere and transparent we are" (A3).

C9 observed that e-democracy facilitates

better governance, best practices, and greater transparency. Similarly, there are lots of people who started writing blogs, right or wrong, so that the information is out. When they [the public administrators] are aware that people are watching, I think people are toning down their behavior to meet the best practices (C9).

A6 related his experience of utilizing one of the online applications to illustrate the way e-democracy could facilitate good governance. To him, e-democracy would circumvent face-to-face communication, which could encourage more transparency and reduce corruption:

With e-democracy, you use the computer and just follow the steps and do things by yourself. Yesterday I did one application through the Internet ... so this is something again ... [W]ith this faceless communication, you're doing away ... with so-called bribe activity, because when you involve less people the chances for bribery are lower (A6).

A26 was of the opinion that e-democracy facilitates transparency, which in turn results in better governance. To him, e-democracy would empower citizens to make informed decisions while also providing feedback to government.

I think [e-democracy is] for sure to explain about government policies. So that the public [understand] ... a particular government policy [well] and provide responses to evaluate its effectiveness (A26).

As mentioned earlier, agents draw upon six categories of interpretive scheme, namely policy development, service delivery improvement, fast information-seeking and sharing, disintermediation, gauging popularity, and good governance indicators, to enact e-democracy practices in Malaysia. Agents or human actors with different knowledge of ICT properties and interpretive schemes will draw on different ICT material properties to enact different structures of e-democracy. The various enactments of e-democracy practices identified in the present study are discussed in the following section.

9.4. Four enacted e-democracy practices

Four enacted practices – inputs collection, information exchange, communication, and electronification – emerged from data analysis. ‘Inputs collection’ was enacted by public administrators to inform, discuss, and obtain feedback from the public about a draft policy or issues arising from policy implementation.

‘Information exchange’, involved two forms of online discussion: (1) enacted among public administrators in the same service (sharing of information about their job functions and skills), and (2) enacted between public administrators and the public – discussing expectations surrounding a particular public policy and swapping information about new technologies. ‘Communication’ was enacted by public administrators to open up a direct line of communication between public administrators, particularly young administrators, and top management, as well as between top management in the public service and government, including the Prime Minister, and the public. ‘Electronification’, was enacted by public administrators to gauge public acceptance of their implemented policy, through quick online voting or polling. These practices of e-democracy draw upon interpretive schemes, facilities, and norms (see Chapter 7). These practices are presented in this fashion in the following sections to position the importance of a particular practice over other practices in policy development. Each practice is discussed in detail in the following sections.

9.4.1. Inputs collection

The first identified enactment of e-democracy practices was ‘inputs collection’. Inputs entail any form of online feedback, ideas, suggestions, and comments provided by stakeholders to public administrators for policy development, as discussed in Chapter 4. 47 percent of public administrators (A1, A2, A6, A7, A8, A10, A12, A14, A16, A18, A19, A22, A24, A32, A34, A36, A37, and A38) observed that e-democracy practices collect inputs from citizens, individuals and civil society organizations. These inputs are utilized to develop policy and to improve service delivery by government (see Chapter 7, sections 7.4.1 and 7.4.2). Of this group, five were from the 25-35 years age group, six were from the 36-45 years age group, and seven were from the 46 years and over age group. Six of these 18 public administrators were from central agencies, four from the key ministry, and

eight from operational ministries, as shown in Table 9-2. As expected, this view is widely held by older public administrators and those from the operational ministries. The practice of ‘inputs collection’ may have been influenced by them being more appreciative of the importance of information provided by such inputs in discharging their job functions, which in operational ministries usually involve more interaction with the public. To the older generation of public administrators, these inputs are useful for facilitating policy development and providing insights into the way in which the public perceives government delivery system, its successes and shortcomings.

Table 9-2 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and practice of ‘inputs collection’

Attributes	Public administrators and inputs collection		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	
Age group	No.	%	% (*)
25-35 years	5	28%	45% (11)
36-45 years	6	33%	55% (11)
46 years and over	7	39%	44% (16)
Total	18	100%	47% (38)
Types of organization	No.	%	% (*)
Central agency	6	33%	50% (12)
Key ministry	4	22%	44% (9)
Operational ministry	8	45%	47% (17)
Total	18	100%	47% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

As shown in Figure 9-4, the identified practice of e-democracy, termed inputs collection, consists of ‘policy development’ and ‘service delivery improvement’ interpretive schemes and facilities (see Chapter 7), as well as instances like MyWater Voice, and relevant players such as KTAK (Malay abbreviation for the Ministry of Energy, Water and Communications).

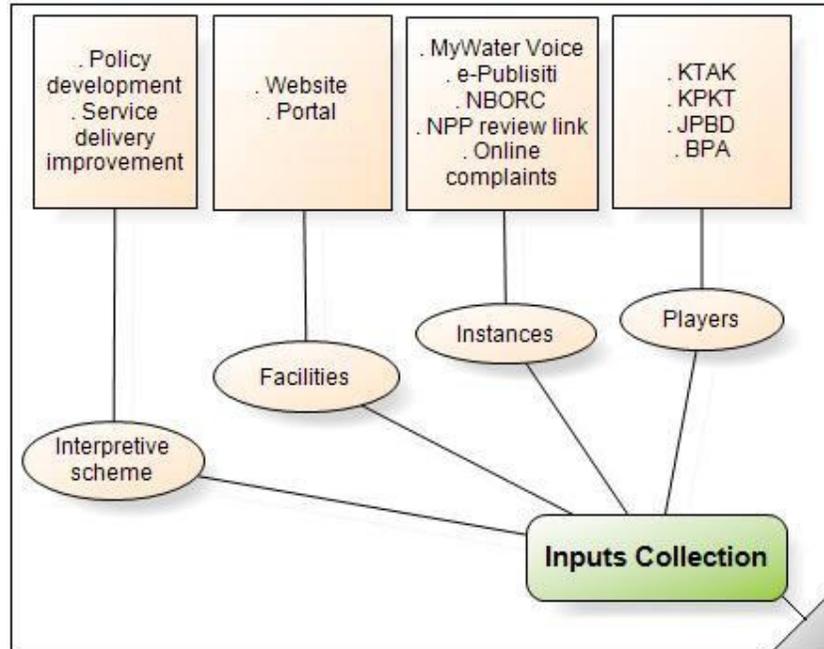


Figure 9-4 The 'inputs collection' practice

'Inputs collection' is divided into two categories, namely policy-based and issue-based inputs, relating to two interpretive schemes. Policy-based inputs refer to inputs collection for particular policy ideas, drafts and plans, which support the policy development process. Issue-based inputs favor inputs collection of issues surrounding service delivery, which aim to improve service delivery.

9.4.1.1. Policy-based inputs

Policy-based inputs category was one of the categories identified in the practice of inputs collection. Eight public administrators (A8, A10, A16, A18, A32, A34, A36, and A37) believed that e-democracy is significant for collecting citizen inputs for the policy development process.

A middle manager from the PTM (Malay abbreviation for Information Technology Officer) Service, A8, believed that e-democracy "is about getting information or inputs from the general public, NGOs [non-governmental organizations] and specific bodies in order for us [public administrators] to formulate policies" (A8).

Like A8, A37 strongly believed that e-democracy is “of great use to policy makers. We need inputs from the public to formulate our plans and policy” (A37).

A18, a senior head of department, shared the opinions of A8 and A37 in saying that:

All government planning and activities must be done based on the actual needs of citizens. They cannot be imposed as that will lead to people’s dissatisfaction (A18).

A1, a middle manager in the Social Service who was involved in policy development in a ministry, felt that e-democracy could “actually help the agency that is responsible to draw up a policy so that, it would be balanced and offer the best for both government and citizens” (A1).

Reiterating A1’s sentiment, A10 and A6 were of the view that e-democracy could be utilized for policy development by collecting evidence of the actual needs of citizens, such as an approximation of demand for broadband services.

A10, a newly appointed public administrator to the PTD Service, pointed to an important example of input from e-democracy: “to estimate the demand of broadband in the country” (A10).

A middle manager at an operational ministry, A6, observed that input from e-democracy

might not be 100 percent correct but it provides the feeling of the grassroots, [indicative that] ...the policy is really a people-friendly kind of a policy... [and it] provides a second opinion to the government ... [Because] these people are the consumer of the policy, they know best (A6).

For A10 and A16, inputs from e-democracy provide important evidence about a particular policy. These inputs suggest the way a policy performs in a practical sense. Gauging how citizens feel about the policy and its effect on their lives may contribute to enhancing policy implementation.

A10, a newly appointed public administrator to the PTD (Malay abbreviation for the Diplomatic and Administrative Officer) Service, observed that e-democracy

promotes “easy acceptance of the policy by the public... [, because] opinions gathered will provide a broader perspective” (A10) for policy context.

A senior public administrator with extensive experience in policy development, A16, stressed the importance of achieving a suitable policy:

I would say from the administrator’s point of view, this is a positive side of it. It would give a second opinion to the government of what people on the ground really think about the government policy. It might not be 100 percent correct but it provides the feeling of the grassroots, if the policy is really a people-friendly kind of a policy. (A16)

According to C10, an ICT consultant involved in major ICT policy development, inputs collection through e-democracy is not an alien concept to government. It relates to the concept of citizen participation (see Chapter 2):

We have been using ‘inclusive’ society, ‘participative’ society or ‘democratized’ society for ages, which means that you cannot draft a policy without consulting the people, and there is a ... tool or platform to allow you to do that, which is the Internet or the web (C10).

A12, A34, and A36, observed that inputs from e-democracy could facilitate concurring on objectives of policies between public administrators and citizens in order to address related issues with possible solutions.

A34 observed that with e-democracy

we can know what the public think about our policy. When we talk about public policy it is based on ... problems that we need to address. We can get direct feedback from [the public] through this means and we can identify the areas or programs [for the policy] (A34).

A12, a young public administrator at an operational ministry, believed the

objective [of e-democracy] is to get feedback from the public on matters regarding a policy, like before increasing tariff for telecommunication services, and before increasing prices for certain goods (A12).

A36 observed that “any plan prepared by the government can get a consensus from the public through [e-democracy]” (A36).

Five public administrators (A1, A10, A12, A36, and A37) identified four examples of ‘inputs collection’ practice under the category of policy-based inputs. A detailed description of each example is provided in Appendix M.

a) My Water Voice website:

Website:	My Water Voice website
URL:	www.ktak.gov.my/mywatervoice
Host:	KTAK
Duration:	One month in 2006.
Objective:	Inputs collection for the water services policy.
Description:	Relevant information was posted on the website under various threads relating to water services themes, namely water tariffs, water quality and availability, benchmarks, funding and investment, non-revenue water, operation, structure, and sewerage services

Box 9 - 1 My Water Voice

A1, a middle manager in the Social Service who was involved in the policy development process of a ministry, noted an official government website called 'My Water Voice', which was created by KTAK to collect inputs about water management services policy in 2006 (see Box 9 - 1 and Appendix M):

The government first initiated this [My Water Voice] website, specifically dedicated to get the public views. I thought that was a good opening where the public are welcome to post their views and put up their concerns. Their views and concerns actually help the agency that is responsible to draw the policy so that it would be balanced, and offer the best for both government and citizens (A1).

Another public administrator, A10 pointed out that:

From a public point of view, a website like My Water Voice that we have on our [ministry] website some time ago is a channel of e-democracy (A10).

For both A1 and A10, My Water Voice was a significant example of a specialized website created to support inputs collection for the formulation of the *Water Services Industry Act (2006c)*.

b) National Broadband Online Registration Centre (NBORC) portal:

Website:	National Broadband Online Registration Centre (NBORC) website
URL:	www.broadband.gov.my
Host:	Independent vendor for KTAK
Duration:	Since September 2006
Objective:	Inputs collection for broadband services
Description:	Registering all broadband users in Malaysia and collecting information about their requirements for broadband services

Box 9 - 2 National Broadband Online Registration Centre

A10 said that a link provided on KTAK's website, for an online survey on the demand for broadband services was an example of e-democracy (see Box 9 - 2 and Appendix M).

[W]e do have this online registration and survey on our website as part of the promotion process. On the demand side, we have a portal created for broadband alone so that we can match it with the [broadband services provided by the telecommunication companies]. We call it, the National Broadband Online Registration Centre [NBORC] portal and we link it to the ministry (KTAK) website (A10).

Like A10, A12 observed:

At this ministry, we have a broadband portal to collect information and opinions from public on broadband services in the country (A12).

According to A10, inputs collected from NBORC will be utilized to shape broadband policy in Malaysia was utilized "to estimate the demand of broadband in the country" (A10).

Both A10 and A12, acknowledged the importance of NBORC in facilitating inputs collection for the National Broadband Plan (2006).

c) ePublisiti website:

Website:	ePublisiti website
URL:	www.3d.townplan.gov.my
Host:	JPBD
Duration:	Since 2008
Objective:	Inputs collection for spatial development plans
Description:	JPBD publishes drafted spatial development plans online, for a period of one month, for collection of feedback

Box 9 - 3 ePublisiti

A36 and A37, two public administrators from the Engineering Service who were posted at JPBD (Malay abbreviation for the Department of Town and Country Planning), pointed out that ePublisiti was an instance of e-democracy (see Box 9 - 3 and Appendix M). For them, ePublisiti facilitates collection of inputs for all spatial development plans drafted by JPBD.

A36 observed that at JPBD:

Traditionally, we have to publicize a prepared plan for Shah Alam, for example, at the local council [office in] Shah Alam, but with this e-Publisiti we use internet as the platform. It provides better access for the public (A36).

Sharing A36's sentiments, A37 said that

when we formulate our development plan and local plan, we encourage public participation in our planning. We also encourage the public to participate in our e-Publisiti, which is available on our website. The public can view our plan and give their comments through e-Publisiti (A37).

According to A36 and A37, ePublisiti provides features like reviews of draft plans and visual navigation to guide users through the feedback process. A37 pointed out that

[o]n e-Publisiti, we provide the executive summary of the plan and online feedback form for the public to give their comments. All plans prepared by JPBD are uploaded onto e-Publisiti (A37).

A36 noted that ePublisiti "uses a map to navigate the public through our prepared future development plans" (A36).

Both A36 and A37 claimed that the introduction of ePublisiti provides an alternative channel for the public to voice their concerns about new development plans. To them, such a channel makes development planning more inclusive.

d) National Physical Plan (NPP) website:

Website:	National Physical Plan (NPP) – the Peninsular of Malaysia strategic policy on the physical development and conservation
URL:	www.kpkt.gov.my and www.townplan.gov.my
Host:	KPKT and JPBD
Duration:	Since 2007
Objective:	Inputs collection for NPP review
Description:	Citizens are invited to voice their concerns on issues surrounding NPP

Box 9 - 4 National Physical Plan

A36, a young public administrator who was involved with the abovementioned ePublisiti initiative, was of the opinion that the National Physical Plan (NPP) website, to which a link is provided through JPBD's website, is another example of e-democracy (see Box 9 - 4 and Appendix M). For him, citizens are provided with an online opportunity, via the link to respond and voice their concerns about NPP, such as environmental issues surrounding a particular planned development. More important was his assurance that citizen inputs will be incorporated into the review of NPP:

For NPP, we do create an online forum to engage the public ... now we are doing the review and we provide a link called publicity for the NPP Review on KPKT (Malay abbreviation for the Ministry of Housing and Local Government) and JPBD websites for the public and government agencies to provide their feedback (A36).

9.4.1.2. Issue-based inputs

Issue-based inputs was another category identified in the practice of inputs collection. This category focuses on improving government service delivery through collection of implementation issues, as discussed. Eleven public administrators (A4, A12, A19, A16, A22, A23, A29, A32, A34, A36, and A37)

observed that e-democracy is important for collecting citizen inputs on issues surrounding service delivery. For them, these issue-based inputs could be utilized to identify shortcomings of government service delivery and facilitate prompt rectification. An issue-based inputs collection is managed partly via official government portals and websites. The public is encouraged to lodge any complaint about service deliveries such as time taken to respond to a citizen's inquiry, through these portals and websites.

A14, a middle manager involved with e-government initiatives at a central agency, strongly believed that e-democracy "will help the government to improve its service delivery" (A14).

Sharing A14's sentiments, A7 said that government has

to look into and consider the inputs [from e-democracy] in order to increase the quality of service. For example e-democracy can help them pick up issues on water services which are very important to individuals as well as corporations. From there we can try to improve and see whether we meet consumer expectations (A7).

A very senior public administrator, A19, observed that

[s]ince our government is focusing on the efficiency of online service delivery, our objective is to get comments on the standard and performance of our services whether it already fulfilled its need and requirements. Maybe it can be used to suggest new procedures (A19).

A16 felt that "some online activities do influence the policy-making process, such as complaints lodged by the public online" (A16).

A22, a middle manager with previous work experience at a government-linked company, was of the view that government should utilize all viable inputs from citizens to improve its service delivery. He viewed the public as an invaluable source of ideas:

Through e-democracy, we can get more ideas to improve our services and it is important to the government. Malaysians are becoming intelligent and they have brilliant ideas that government needs to tap (A22).

For A32 e-democracy facilitates inputs collection for monitoring and assuring smooth implementation of government initiatives.

A senior public administrator, A34, observed that

[m]ostly, the main objective [of e-democracy] is to get first-hand information from the public on the effectiveness of government programs. If so many people are talking about the same thing then you must improve in that area and basically improve your service delivery (A34).

A vice-president of a private telecommunication company, C2, echoed A34's sentiments.

C4 observed that the objective of e-democracy is

definitely to deliver. It is to listen and to understand them [the public], to be able to deliver their [the government] promises to the people, to be able to address their [the public] complaints and for them [the government] to be able to formulate policies which are in line with the people wishes (C4).

Like C4, C5 said that e-democracy enables government to quickly solicit inputs about its service delivery. It may also be a more cost effective way to do so.

I think it is basically to get feedback. They need to know what the citizens think on certain issues and they need to improve their service delivery. They need feedback on whether there is a need for them to change policies. E-democracy allows them to get that feedback quite fast. Before, they used to do surveys, which needed major efforts. But now they have the ability to get some feedback fast [through e-democracy] (C5).

Two examples of 'inputs collection' practice under the category of issue-based inputs were put forward by four public administrators (A12, A16, A23, and A29). A screenshot of each example is provided in Appendix M.

a) Biro Pengaduan Awam or Public Complaints Bureau website:

Website:	Biro Pengaduan Awam or Public Complaints Bureau website
URL:	www.pcb.gov.my
Host:	BPA
Duration:	Ongoing
Objective:	Inputs collection from complaints
Description:	Citizens can lodge their complaints through this website about the public service, which include complaints about any delay or non-delivery of services, lack of public facilities and other inefficiencies.

Box 9 - 5 Biro Pengaduan Awam or Public Complaints Bureau

A23, a senior public administrator at Biro Pengaduan Awam (commonly known as BPA – Malay abbreviation for the Public Complaints Bureau), pointed out that

[w]e have put in place several channels to enable the public to voice their complaints ... [including] e-mail at aduan@bpa.jpm.my, [online form on the] interactive website at www.bpa.jpm.my [see Box 9 - 5 and Appendix M], and via telephone and facsimile. Complainants can [also] check the status of their complaints on our website (A23).

According to A16, BPA manages the

second-layer complaints. This means that the complainant would have to complain to the relevant agency first and only if no action had been taken, he or she can [then] direct his or her complaint to the BPA (A16).

A23 strongly believed that complaints made through the online complaint form and e-mails on the BPA website are becoming an important channel of inputs collection for the federal government. The number of complaints received through such channels is steadily growing – an increase from only 597 in 2006 to 2,022 complaints made online in 2007 (Public Complaints Bureau, 2006, 2008a):

There is an increasing trend of about 50 to 60 percent of public sending their complaints electronically. I think they are aware about this channel and they want their complaints to be resolved faster (A23).

When answering a question about the way e-democracy facilitates changes in policy development in Malaysia, A23, said that two laws, namely the *Housing Tribunal Act* and the *Housing Developers Act*, were amended, as well as one law, the *Highway Authority Malaysia (Set Backs of Highway) Regulations* was

developed. The set backs of highway is defined as the minimum distance between highways and residential houses within city limits (Public Complaints Bureau, 2006). A large number of complaints about issues surrounding these laws were received from the public which resulted in changes.

For example, a new legislation was passed to cover illegal money lending activities, which had affected a large number of people and the Housing Tribunal Act legislation, passed by the Parliament to address the grievances of house-buyers who were frequently exploited by developers, by taking advantage of certain loopholes in the Housing Developers Act. These legislative changes were brought about largely due to the increasing number of [both manual and online] complaints received regarding these issues. Recently, the government also passed regulations on the set backs of highway (A23).

b) Online Complaints website:

Website:	Sistem Aduan Bersepadu (Centralized Online Complaints System) website
URL:	www.ehome.kpkt.gov.my/aduan-online/entry
Host:	KPKT
Duration:	Ongoing
Objective:	Inputs collection from complaints
Description:	Citizens can lodge their complaints through this website about the housing-related complaints and non-housing-related complaints

Box 9 - 6 Sistem Aduan Bersepadu or Centralized Online Complaints System

A12, a newly appointed public administrator, said that his ministry provides a link on its website for the public to make complaints. For him, such a link is an example of e-democracy because it empowers citizens to voice their concerns to government.

[W]e have a link on our website for the public to make complaints or give suggestion (A12).

Like A12, C2 believed that the practice of opening up for submission of complaints to government is a form of e-democracy. For C2, the channel provided by ICT for citizens to exercise their rights, is a foundation of e-democracy. Whether or not these channels are actively utilized or efficient is a moot point:

A person who makes complaints online on their [government] services, for example, will get a reply on what action will be taken and when. These activities

show an existence of e-democracy, whereby the citizen at large can file complaints to the authorities online. Although I am not very sure how effective these activities are, it nevertheless shows that there is some level of e-democracy activities going on (C2).

A29, a senior public administrator heading an ICT department at KPKT, pointed out a centralized complaints system created at KPKT. The system was made available online through a link on KPKT's website (see Box 9-6 and Appendix M). He revealed that all complaints, irrespective of whether they originated online or offline, must be recorded in this system by a Public Relation Officer (PRO) of the ministry, as part of PRO's job function. For him, a specialized manager or moderator is required for a more effective inputs collection by the ministry (see Chapter 10, subsection 10.4.2.4):

The PRO then will record everything into our Sistem Aduan Bersepadu [Centralized Online Complaints System] ... [C]omplaints made through phone calls must also be [recorded by the PRO] in this system (A29).

All complaints through the centralized system were forwarded to the respective public administrators for further action. The PRO also produces a scheduled monthly report about the status of all complaints to top management.

The policy-based category utilizes a top-down approach and the issue-based category employs a bottom-up approach to inputs collection. Both categories indicate that government engages individuals or groups to promote their views on issues concerning policy development.

9.4.2. Information exchange

The second identified enactment of e-democracy practices was 'information exchange'. This e-democracy practice favors online interaction among public administrators and between public administrators and citizens to provide and acquire information about a particular public issue or policy. 37 percent or 14 public administrators (A6, A7, A8, A11, A12, A17, A20, A21, A25, A26, A27, A31, A33, and A35) observed that public administrators utilize interactive ICTs for the purpose of information-seeking and sharing among themselves and with citizens (see section 9.3.3). Of this group, five were from the 25-35 years age group, four were from the 36-45 years age group, and five were from the 46 years and over age group. Three of these 14 public administrators were from central agencies,

three from the key ministry, and eight from operational ministries, as shown in Table 9-3. It appears that younger public administrators (45%) and those from operational ministries felt that e-democracy practices facilitate information exchange among users. This was in contrast to the older generation as well as those from central agencies and the key ministry. This prevalent view among the younger generation of public administrators may be shaped by F&F generation characteristic (see Chapter 10, subsection 10.4.5.1). As for those from operational ministries, their views may have been influenced by the significance of information, which they gather through e-democracy to complete their job functions.

Table 9-3 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and practice of ‘information exchange’

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning information exchange		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	
Age group	No.	%	% (*)
25-35 years	5	36%	45% (11)
36-45 years	4	28%	36% (11)
46 years and over	5	36%	31% (16)
Total	14	100%	37% (38)
Types of organization	No.	%	% (*)
Central agency	3	21%	25% (12)
Key ministry	3	21%	33% (9)
Operational ministry	8	58%	47% (17)
Total	14	100%	37% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

From the data analysis, an emergent practice of ‘information exchange’ was identified. This practice of e-democracy is characterized by ‘fast information-seeking and sharing’ interpretive schemes and relevant facilities (see Chapter 7), as well as ePBT, and relevant players like the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (KPKT), as shown in Figure 9-5.

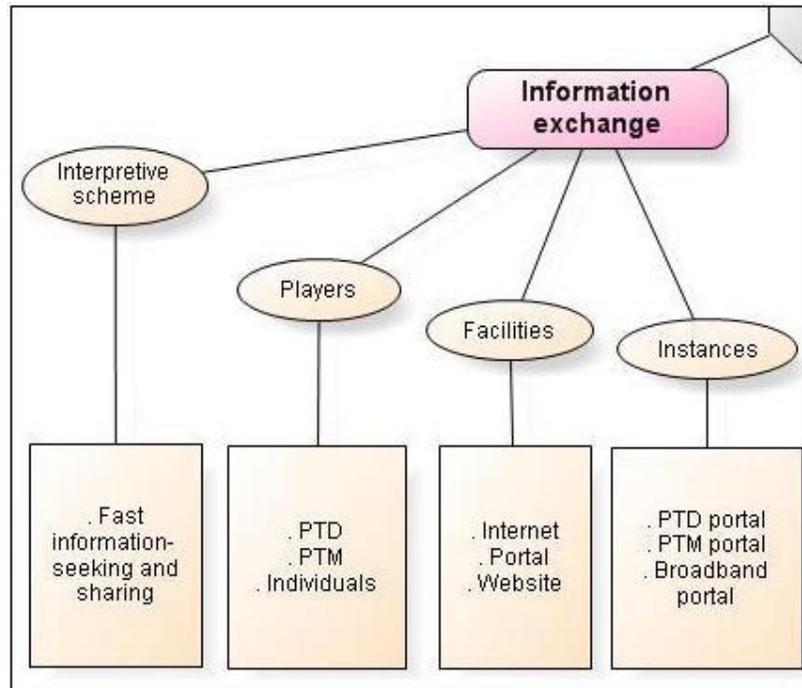


Figure 9-5 'Information exchange' practice

The practice of 'information exchange' focuses on e-democracy facilitating information-seeking and sharing among users.

For A11 and A31, government websites and portals provide a wealth of information on public issues, which the public may obtain and utilize for e-democracy practices.

A11, a young public administrator at an operational ministry, pointed out that the Internet offers varied information on government: "people can gain information from the Internet... [like] information about a ministry or certain government projects" (A11).

A31 echoed A11's view and stated:

Most government information is found on websites. Websites are an avenue for people to gain information (A31).

Like A11 and A31, A21 was of the opinion that e-democracy "liberalizes access to information through [the] giving [of] opinions, getting feedback and discussion" (A21).

For C7, a manager of a local telecommunications company with prior work experience with two government linked companies, e-democracy affords citizens an effortless information-seeking experience with “the ability to access information electronically” (C7).

A20, a senior head of department, strongly believed that e-democracy does not only mean accessing information on the Internet, it also “means an open and wise use of information” (A20).

Reiterating A20’s sentiments, C9 believed that e-democracy offers the ability to pool ideas, it “provides a network where we could give and tap into collective intelligence of everybody and that is much stronger than one person making a decision” (C9).

For A7, a middle manager from the PTM Service, e-democracy enables “online discussion and information exchange on public issues” (A7).

A26 and A33 observed that the abundance of information available online through government websites and portals is shared among internet users. To them, e-democracy facilitates sharing of information online and makes available information which may not have been available otherwise.

A33 said that e-democracy “involves sharing of ideas and information and getting information which you cannot get through printed materials” (A33).

A26 observed the probability of increasing transparency and speed when information is provided by government on the Internet:

With e-democracy you can get [and share with other users] the actual information on the net rather than filtered and structured information in official reports. I think with e-democracy you get the real information. People can get information faster (A26).

A6 appreciated that e-democracy can apportion experience among users:

For me, I’m really interested in this kind of thing because it really gives me the opportunity to share my experience [with other users] (A6).

An academic at a local university, C3, believed that e-democracy

involves the use of the electronic media or online communication which allows people to express opinions, have access to public facilities, share their feelings with others, and share their attitude towards government, their criticisms and so on (C3).

C5 echoed C3's views and felt that

websites and blogs ...enable citizens to discuss issues. Before that I think, people or citizens are mostly isolated in the sense that they may think that they are alone on certain issues. The Internet has actually enabled them to link up and to know that they are not the [only] person feeling that way about a certain issue, that there are others who share their views and that they can actually communicate and have discussions.

Seven interviewees (A8, A12, A17, A33, A35, C5, and C11) acknowledged examples of 'information exchange' practice. A brief description of each follows here and a detailed description of each example is provided in Appendix M. In line with the focus of this study and the preliminary result of examples of e-democracy (see Chapter 4), these examples are presented in the following order – government-sanctioned initiatives (e.g., ePBT website), citizen-led initiatives (e.g., RedesignMalaysia website, Che Det blog, Precinct 11 House buyers blog, and bangkit.net blog), as well as emergent initiatives by groups of public administrators (e.g., PTD portal and PERJASA online forum).

Government-sanctioned initiative:

a) ePBT website :

Website:	ePBT website
URL:	www.epbt.gov.my
Host:	KPKT
Duration:	Ongoing
Objective:	Information-sharing among citizens, public administrators and all local authorities in Malaysia
Description:	A one-stop-center for information and services of local authorities', like licenses and rental of public amenities

Box 9 - 7 ePBT

A33, who was directly involved with the management of ePBT (Malay abbreviation for electronic Local Authority, see Appendix M), pointed out that

e-PBT is an application in this department [a department at KPKT] which we have introduced sometime in 2003. Its usage now has been widened to all local authorities in Malaysia. One of the elements is that people can access information on local authorities from this one webpage (A33).

To her, the ePBT website facilitates convenient access to online information. She provided an example of the way public administrators and citizens exchange information about local authorities on the ePBT website.

For example, if a person intends to set up business in Shah Alam, he can go to the website and find out what he has to do to set up a business in that [area under a] particular local authority and information like relevant contact numbers are also given (A33).

Another public administrator, A35, revealed that the ePBT website also

provides local authorities services to the public. It is a one-stop-center portal that collects submissions from the public for development plans. People can monitor the progress of their applications online. We can also monitor the performance of local authorities through this portal. We also have feedback forms on the portal for people to voice their concerns (A35).

Citizen-led initiatives:

b) RedesignMalaysia website:

Website:	RedesignMalaysia website
URL:	www.redesignmalaysia.com
Host:	A group of individual citizens
Duration:	Ongoing
Objective:	Information-sharing among citizens and broadband users in Malaysia
Description:	First-hand information about citizens' needs and problems with existing broadband services

Box 9 - 8 RedesignMalaysia website

A8, a middle manager from the PTM Service who was involved in policy development processes of a ministry, felt that information on RedesignMalaysia, was a good example of e-democracy (see Box 9-8 and Appendix M). To her, this website provides an avenue for the public to voice their concerns about the broadband service in Malaysia.

For example, there is a website hosted by an NGO, called RedesignMalaysia, which discusses issues on broadband, including public complaints and suggestions on the development or provision of broadband in Malaysia. I, myself, would frequent this website for regular update on issues regarding broadband (A8).

She strongly believed that information from this website, such as the “status or performance of the current [broadband] services and if there are requirements for changes or other developments” (A8), are shared and utilized by public administrators in the development of broadband policies.

c) Che Det blog:

Website:	Che Det blog
URL:	www.chedet.co.cc/chedetblog/
Host:	Dr Mahathir Mohamad
Duration:	Ongoing
Objective:	Information-sharing between the former prime minister of Malaysia, Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his blog’s users
Description:	Online discussion about current and past issues ranging from public administration, politics, and the economy

Box 9 - 9 Che Det blog

A33 observed that a number of former ministers created their own blogs to contribute ideas and share opinions with the public. She believed that blogs, such as Che Det (see Box 9-11 and Appendix M) allow these knowledgeable and experienced individuals to share their views on matters, especially those concerning public affairs:

For example, politicians who have left the Parliament and are no longer involved in the front line politics in Malaysia, set up their own blogs. Through these blogs, they express themselves, and people visiting the blogs can share information and share their views and ideas with the bloggers and other visitors. To me that is e-democracy in Malaysia (A33).

d) Precinct 11 house buyers' blog:

Website:	Precinct 11 House buyers blog
URL:	putrajaya11.blogspot.com
Host:	A group of house buyers of an abandoned project at Precinct 11 in Putrajaya
Duration:	Since March 2008
Objective:	Information-sharing among house buyers of an abandoned project at Precinct 11 in Putrajaya
Description:	A blog to update house buyers with the latest information about the abandoned housing project

Box 9 - 10 Precinct 11 house buyers' blog

C11, a top post holder in a civil society organization, explained that his organization assisted house buyers of abandoned housing projects to share information. House buyers in Malaysia sometimes select their houses based on layout plans and specifications offered by housing developers. A sale and purchase agreement between house buyers and developers is signed upon selection of specific units. The developers then start building houses and buyers normally pay for houses through banks as the work progresses. Some housing developers face financial difficulties and stop working on these houses and leave the buyers serving the interest with the bank for the amount that the bank has already disbursed to the developer. Creating a blog helps these house buyers meet and communicate online (see Appendix M). To C11, public administrators should frequent such a blog in order to appreciate and understand various problems faced by interest groups, such as these unfortunate house buyers:

[F]or example there are buyers who are affected like buyers at Precinct 11. They came to the online forum on the HBA website and the number kept growing to 30 people already... We tell them to set up their own blog, so these buyers set up their own blog. Anything that came in later about the same issue will be diverted to that blog, where the buyers chit-chat and exchange information. It would be good for the ministry to understand their problem by going to these websites (C11).

e) bangkit.net blog:

Website:	bangkit.net blog
URL:	www.bangkit.net
Host:	A group of volunteers
Duration:	Ongoing
Objective:	Information-sharing among NGOs and individuals in Malaysia
Description:	A blog which assists ad hoc collective actions to be organized among its users and the public at large

Box 9 - 11 bangkit.net blog

An editor of an electronic media organization, C5, stated that blogs, such as bangkit.net, have been utilized by individuals and civil society organizations to share information about their concerns (see Box 9 - 13 and Appendix M). For him, such bloggers were able to collectively arrange activities through the Internet to pursue their causes:

I think the Internet is a completely different medium because of its ability to actually provide the platform for people to join in and discuss issues and to actually take action on issues which they feel very strongly about. For example, on Sunday they are going to organize a Walk for Press Freedom, an event actually organized by the bloggers. Before the bloggers came on to the scene, it was very hard for people to link up and organize themselves. The bloggers have somehow managed to create a community of their own. Things like that could not have been organized in such a manner before had the Internet not come into the picture (C5).

Emergent initiatives:

f) PTD portal:

Website:	PTD portal
URL:	www.forum.ptdportal.com
Host:	A group of PTD officers
Duration:	Ongoing
Objective:	Information exchange among PTDs
Description:	The portal features an online forum for its members to discuss issues relating to public administration as well as other current issues

Box 9 - 12 PTD portal

A newly appointed public administrator to the Administrative and Diplomatic (PTD) Service, A12, was of the view that a portal created by a group of PTD officers, called the PTD portal, is an example of e-democracy (see Appendix M). For him, an online forum provided on such a portal is actively utilized and enables public administrators in the PTD Service to share information among themselves and also, offers relevant information about the PTD Service to the public:

[F]or example, in PTD Service; we have this portal for PTDs to discuss issues and to get information. Some of the discussion threads are open to the public especially for those seeking information about the service...Topics discussed on this portal cut across all [issues], from administration to politics and so on (A12).

g) PERJASA online forum:

Website:	PERJASA website
URL:	www.perjasa.org.my
Host:	PTM's Association
Duration:	Ongoing
Objective:	Information exchange among PTMs
Description:	An online forum with several discussion threads on the latest developments in PTM's area of expertise, namely application, data management, data center, networking, and multimedia

Box 9 - 13 PERJASA online forum

A young public administrator from the Information Technology (PTM) Service, A17, pointed out an online forum, created by PERJASA (Malay acronym for the PTM association), is one way for PTM officers to share information (see Box 9 -13 and Appendix M). For her, such an online forum facilitates sharing of information about job functions and required skills.

In our scheme of service we have this association called PERJASA which provides online forums for us to discuss issues (A17).

The identified examples of 'information exchange' practice support better sharing and understanding of issues related to public policies. The emergence of such practice among public administrators, which focuses on sharing the latest developments in their areas of expertise, can contribute towards building their

ICTs skills and expertise in job functions. Emergent roles of this practice are discussed in Chapter 11.

9.4.3. Communication

The third identified enactment of e-democracy practices was 'communication'. 32 percent of public administrators (A13, A14, A16, A22, A24, A25, A27, A28, A32, A35, A37, and A38) highlighted that e-democracy involves electronic interaction between government and citizens. Three of these 12 public administrators were aged 25-35 years, three were aged 36-45 years, and six were aged 46 years and over. Four of these 12 public administrators came from central agencies, three from the key ministry, and five were from operational ministries, as shown in Table 9-4. The older public administrators and those from the operational ministries are more appreciative of the capacity to communicate in e-democracy as compared to the younger generation. This view may have been influenced by the patron-client communitarianism characteristics (discussed in Chapters 2 and 9). Those in the operational ministries are more receptive to 'communication', possibly due to their role as front-liners in dealing with the public.

Table 9-4 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and practice of 'communication'

Attributes	Public administrators and communication		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	% (*)
Age group	No.	%	% (*)
25-35 years	3	25%	27% (11)
36-45 years	3	25%	27% (11)
46 years and over	6	50%	38% (16)
Total	12	100%	32% (38)
Types of organization	No.	%	% (*)
Central agency	4	33%	33% (12)
Key ministry	3	25%	33% (9)
Operational ministry	5	42%	29% (17)
Total	12	100%	32% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

An emergent practice ‘communication’, was identified from the data analysis. ‘Communication’ consists of the ‘disintermediation’ interpretive scheme, which facilitates direct communication with the authority and relevant facilities (discussed in section 9.3.4 and Chapter 7), as well as MYBLOG, and relevant players like the Ministry of Information (MoI), as illustrated in Figure 9-6.

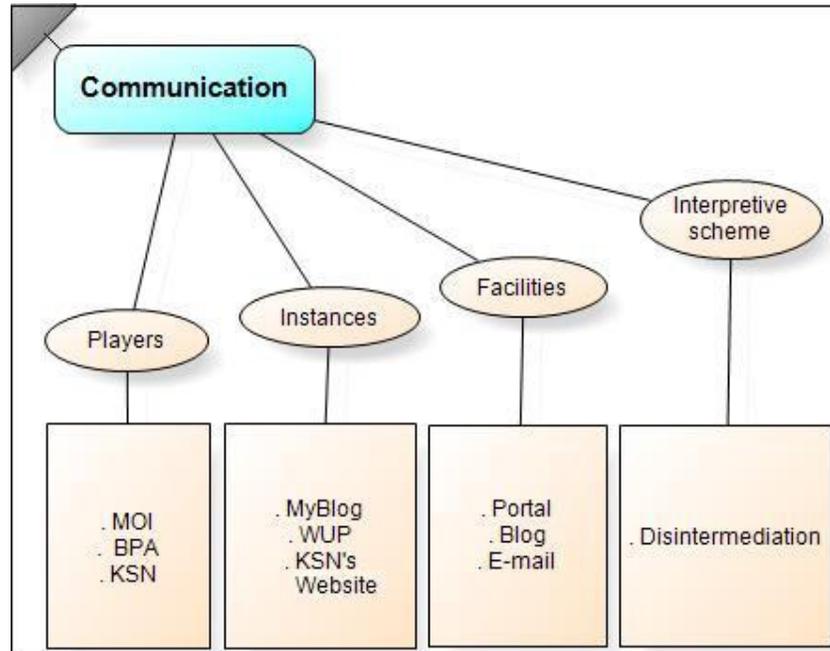


Figure 9-6 ‘Communication’ practice

The enacted ‘communication’ practice emphasizes interaction and direct access to higher authorities by users of e-democracy.

Some public administrators (A13, A14, A16, and A35) observed that e-democracy facilitates online interaction between government and citizens. For these administrators, ICTs assist citizens to communicate with government in a more convenient and accessible way.

A middle manager at an operational ministry, A35, believed that e-democracy is “basically about democratic government-citizens interaction via electronic [means]” (A35).

A16, a senior public administrator with extensive experience in policy development, strongly believed that “e-democracy is a process of online or

electronic communication involving parties with vested interests participating in discussing issues which are of importance to all” (A16).

A23 and A37 shared A16’s sentiments. To them, ICTs allow citizens, irrespective of their location, to interact with government online and voice their concerns.

For A23, “citizens are able to voice their opinion electronically [and] ... it’s all about voicing their dissatisfaction and ... seeking clarification and information about their concerns” (A23).

C1, an academic at a local university, felt that e-democracy should be two-way communication. For her, citizens can express their concerns to government through e-democracy, and relevant government authorities should respond to such expressions of concern and improve any shortcomings:

E-democracy is the opportunity for the public to voice out their opinion and to get people in the higher authority to look into problems that they have. (C1)

A senior public administrator at an operational ministry, A25, felt that e-democracy can flatten the organizational and societal hierarchy to allow direct access to higher authorities (see Chapter 3). For him, citizens are empowered to voice their concerns openly to those who are responsible for a particular issue:

Hierarchies are strong in the government whereby if a person wants to meet or convey a message to the PM, he has to undergo many processes. These processes kill democracy. Therefore, we now see some changes taking place because of the Internet, whereby people can have easier access to anybody (A25).

Reiterating A25’s sentiments, A27 strongly believed that through e-democracy citizens

can access the government directly rather than having to make appointment [for a] face-to-face meeting. Those styles do not work anymore. I think ... people can save time through this sort of interaction (A27).

Like A27, C2, a manager of a telecommunications company, observed that when “people are able to voice their opinions online, they have more direct access to persons in charge, a public administrator, council member or Member of Parliament” (C2).

Three interviewees (A24, A25, and A27) acknowledged examples of ‘communication’ practice. A detailed description of each example is provided in Appendix M. A brief description of each follows. These examples, namely MYBLOG, KSN’s website, and Warkah Untuk PM website, are presented in this order to emphasize the immediacy of one example over the other, in relation to policy development processes in the MFPS.

a) MYBLOG:

Website:	MYBLOG
URL:	www.myblog4.dapat.com
Host:	Moi
Duration:	Since 2008
Objective:	To provide direct access to the federal government
Description:	A blog which offers official details about a particular policy, including its mission, target group, as well as available funds and programs. The blog also provides links to relevant agencies which implement the policies and the federal government’s official portal

Box 9 - 14 MYBLOG

A25, who was involved with monitoring blogs at a ministry, pointed out that the government created an official blog, called MYBLOG in 2008, to facilitate online interaction with the public (see Appendix M). He also stated that all government agencies were directed to create their own blog to engage citizens in discussions about public policy:

MYBLOG is going to be the government’s official blog. The government, through the Ministry of Information (MOI), has sent circulars to all ministries to ask them to start their own blogs. MYBLOG will be the official blog of the government with all addresses for government blogs published. Now the public will be able to go to the blog and give their views (A25).

Reiterating A25’s point, A27 acknowledged that the “government is going into blogging” (A27) to improve its online presence for an alternative interactive channel.

b) KSN's website:

Website:	KSN's Official Website
URL:	www.pmo.gov.my/ksn
Host:	KSN
Duration:	Ongoing
Objective:	To provide direct access to the KSN
Description:	A detailed list of e-mail addresses of the KSN and all personnel in his office is provided on this website

Box 9 - 15 KSN's official website

A27, a middle manager with a PhD degree, pointed out that the KSN (Malay abbreviation for the Chief Secretary to the government) is promoting access to him personally via e-mail to the public on his website (see Appendix M). To her, such a provision of direct communication between the KSN and citizens will promote e-democracy practices. A27 observed that the KSN is "putting up [a] website for people to e-mail and voice out their concerns" (A27).

c) Warkah Untuk PM website:

Website:	Warkah Untuk PM website
URL:	www.warkahuntukpm.com.my
Host:	A private company
Duration:	Since 2008
Objective:	To provide direct access to the Prime Minister of Malaysia
Description:	A blog which assists ad hoc collective actions to be organized among its users and the public at large

Box 9 - 16 Warkah Untuk PM

A middle manager at a central agency, A24, pointed to a website called Warkah Untuk PM (WUP) – literally translated as A letter to the Prime Minister (PM) – as an example of e-democracy (see Box 9 - 16 and Appendix M). Citizens are provided with an avenue to voice their concerns directly to the PM. A24 felt that

with the recent launching of Warkah Untuk PM, I think citizens are allowed to criticize the government, including public agencies and politicians alike. Citizens criticize government policies, reporting abuse of power and corruption through this website (A24).

The 'communication' practice revolves around government's online interaction with citizens. The government provides a direct online access for citizens to exercise their rights and voice concerns to influence policy development.

9.4.4. Electronification

The fourth identified enactment of e-democracy practices was 'electronification'. Not surprisingly, some 37 percent of public administrators (A4, A6, A9, A11, A12, A15, A17, A19, A21, A22, A26, A32, A34, and A38) were of the opinion that the letter 'e' in e-democracy denotes an electronic element, which mechanizes the practice of democracy, or is simply an 'electronification'.

When asked the question, 'What does e-democracy mean in Malaysia?' A12 simply replied:

From my perspective, the word means using ICT for some form of electronic democratic system (A12).

A22, a middle manager with an experience at a government-linked company, observed that e-democracy is about electronification of voting processes.

A38, a senior public administrator who was involved with ICT initiatives for the rural population, believed that e-democracy facilitates government "getting feedback [through e-voting] from the public, electronically" (A38). Reiterating A38's view, A32 believed that e-democracy "could be related to e-voting or electronic process of voicing opinions and views freely without any barrier" (A32).

C1, an academic who researches ICT and community, felt that

[e]-democracy should represent whatever is the meaning of democracy but in the electronic format (C1).

Five of these 14 public administrators were aged 25-35 years, four were aged 36-45 years, and five were aged 46 years and over. Six of these 14 public administrators came from central agencies, four from the key ministry, and six

from operational ministries, as shown in Table 9-5. It appears that younger public administrators, especially those from central agencies, are more appreciative of the element of electronics in e-democracy compared to the older generation. This is shown by the higher percentage of younger public administrators, i.e., five of 11 in the 25-35 years age group or 45%, and those in the central agency, i.e., six of 12 or 50%. This view may have been influenced by the F&F generation characteristic (see Chapter 10, subsection 10.4.5.1). Those in the central agencies were more receptive to electronification, possibly due to high exposure to the automation of services provided under e-government initiatives (see Chapters 1 and 4).

Table 9-5 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and practice of 'electronification'

Attributes	Public administrators and electronification		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	% (*)
Age group			
25-35 years	5	36%	45% (11)
36-45 years	4	28%	36% (11)
46 years and over	5	36%	31% (16)
Total	14	100%	37% (38)
Types of organization	No.	%	% (*)
Central agency	6	43%	50% (12)
Key ministry	2	14%	22% (9)
Operational ministry	6	43%	35% (17)
Total	14	100%	37% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

The identified practice of e-democracy, referred to here as electronification, consists of 'gauging popularity' and 'good governance indicator' interpretive schemes and relevant facilities discussed in Chapter 7, as well as myGovernment and relevant players like MAMPU, as shown in Figure 9-7.

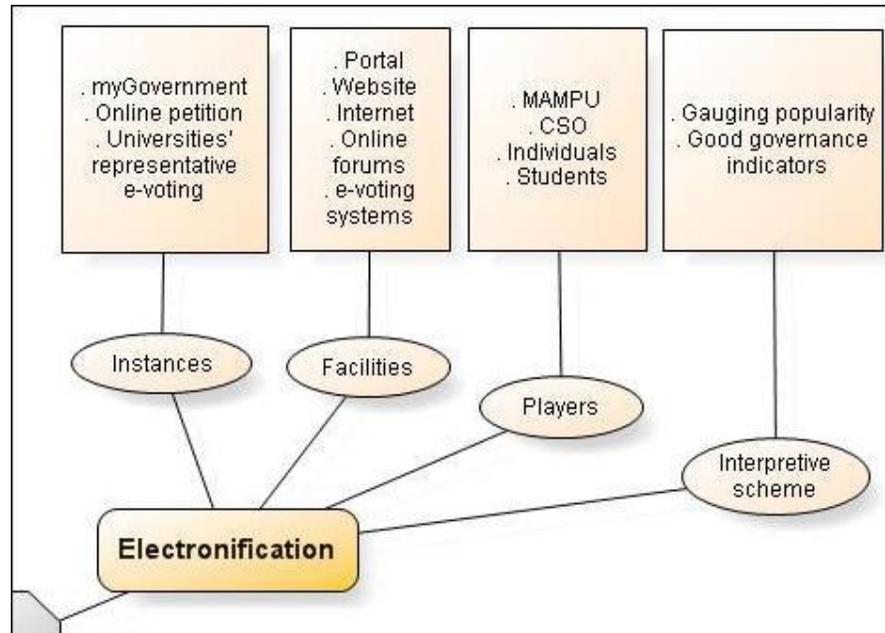


Figure 9-7 The 'electronification' practice

From data analysis, two categories, namely acceptance and inculcation, emerged under the 'electronification' practice based on 'gauging popularity' and 'good governance indicator' interpretive schemes. Acceptance covers the estimation of popularity of particular policies, initiatives, and programs among citizens. Inculcation refers to the dissemination of ideas about good governance through e-democracy practices among users. Each category is discussed below.

9.4.4.1. Acceptance

The first identified category of the electronification practice was acceptance. Five public administrators (A11, A12, A15, A21, and A26) observed that e-democracy is significant to gauge citizens' acceptance of government policies and initiatives. To them, both government and citizens could initiate online polling or an online petition to identify the level of citizens' acceptance of a particular policy or initiative. Findings, from such an official and a citizen-initiated online polling or petition, are utilized by or forwarded to government for further action.

A newly appointed public administrator to the PTD Service, A11, strongly believed that e-democracy is vital to government for estimating public sentiment

because when we do something, we want to gauge people opinions. We want to know the surroundings before we do something. So, e-democracy is the best way to channel the information (A11).

A15, a middle manager at a central agency, observed that cost efficiency and time-saving are the two main advantages to government to facilitate gauging public opinion on a particular policy or initiative. For him, e-democracy permits quick online polling before a policy or initiative is implemented. A clear indication of acceptance of this policy or initiative could ease its realization and reduce the possibility of a total rebuff from the public.

If the government is trying to implement a project or develop something, the government might want to get public opinion on it. The government could do a survey through conventional means by having a public gathering of some sort but in this age, by voting or by asking public to go to the Internet and give their opinion, would probably help a lot and the government will get the result or the public opinion faster than through the conventional way. It will save time, save energy and help to expedite the implementation of the project if it is line with public opinion. However, if it is not, probably the government would need to do some adjustments to the initial plan, to be in line with public needs. I think in that way e-democracy would help government to develop the country (A15).

A21, a senior department head involved in developing numerous ICT initiatives, echoed A15's sentiments. For her, e-democracy removes the physical barriers between government and public. It allows the latter to conveniently express views about a particular government policy or initiative:

If we look at it from traditional point of view, if you want to access a government survey ... or something like that, you have to wait for the counter to be opened or through phone the person has to be there. But with e-democracy you can do it [the online survey] at your own pace, anytime from where you are. So that gives you a liberalized feeling ... not having to wait for the other person to be at the other end. That's to me is what e-democracy is all about (A21).

A26 and C8 provided two examples of the practice of 'electronification' under the acceptance category. A brief description of each follows and a more detailed description of each example is provided in Appendix M. These examples are presented in the following order – government-sanctioned initiative (e.g., myGovernment portal), and citizen-led initiatives (e.g., PEMBELA online petition and online voting at the university level) to provide consistency with earlier examples of e-democracy initiatives.

Government-sanctioned initiative:

a) myGovernment portal:

Website:	myGovernment portal
URL:	www.gov.my
Host:	MAMPU
Duration:	Since 2005
Objective:	To gauge public opinion on current issues and government policy
Description:	This portal features, among other activities, an online poll for the public to voice opinions

Box 9 - 17 myGovernment website

A26, a newly appointed public administrator to the Social Service, observed that the official government portal, created by MAMPU (Malay acronym for the Malaysian Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit) in 2005, is utilized to disseminate information about government policies and initiatives. The portal also conducted online polling to gauge the efficacy of a particular policy or initiative (see Appendix M).

A26 believed that e-democracy is useful “to explain government policies [electronically on government portals], so that the public understands a particular government policy well and provides responses to evaluate its effectiveness” (A26) through such practices.

Citizen-led initiatives:

b) PEMBELA online petition:

Website:	MyIslamNetwork.net website
URL:	www.myislamnetwork.net
Host:	PEMBELA
Duration:	Several months in 2006
Objective:	To gauge public opinions on the apostasy policy
Description:	An organized online petition to seek a better protection of Muslims from apostasy in Malaysia

Box 9 - 18 MyIslamNetwork.net

According to C8, a key post holder of a Civil Society Organization (CSO) with a legal background, a group of CSOs called PEMBELA organized online polling and an online petition on a website to gauge the views of the public about an existing policy on apostasy in Malaysia (see Box 9-18 and Appendix M). The apostasy policy in the country circumscribes Muslims from converting to other religions. C8 felt that these online polling and petition practices were quite successful in gauging public sentiment, and was quite amazed with the number of hits and level of participation achieved:

[We] had an online polling on the issue of murtad [apostasy], whereby we had up to 900,000 hits. We also had an online petition exercise for the same issue, where 200,000 of 700,000 signatures were obtained online through myislamnetwork.net website (C8).

9.4.4.2. Inculcation

The second identified category of the electronification practice was inculcation. Six interviewees (A6, A26, A12, C2, C6, and C8) observed that e-democracy inculcates ideas of good governance in Malaysia. For them, e-democracy assists the government in strengthening the implementation of democratic ideals (see Chapter 2).

A26 felt that “e-democracy is about the implementation of democratic ideals in our country’s administration, electronically” (A26).

C6, an ICT consultant, observed that e-democracy enhances access to participation in policy development, which without ICT may have only been available to certain segments of the society. C6 believed that e-democracy

as it is understood here [in Malaysia] would be the ability for citizens and community groups or stakeholder groups to participate through electronic channels in the process of governance ... that typically would otherwise only be available to the lawmakers or to parliamentarians (C6).

A6, a middle manager at an operational ministry, believed that ICT augments democratic processes:

E-democracy means using the ICT tools to facilitate public participation in a democratic kind of set up ... [, like] using the ICT for people to cast their vote or e-voting, may be one of the way of how we can use e-democracy to support

democratic process in a country like Malaysia. That is my understanding of e-democracy (A6).

Reiterating A6's view, C2, a vice-president of a private telecommunications company, strongly believed that e-democracy could "include having the process of voting available online" (C2).

However, there was no evidence provided by interviewees of any form of e-voting being practised nationally or conducted by any government agency. Two interviewees, A12 and C8, acknowledged that they were involved in e-voting when attending university. A12 pointed out:

During my university years ... I used to vote for the student representative councils via electronic [means, see Box 9 - 19 and Appendix M] (A12).

Website:	UM ICT Services website
URL:	www.ict.um.edu.my
Host:	University of Malaya
Duration:	2008
Objective:	Introduction of online voting at local universities in Malaysia
Description:	There is no clear evidence of the actual e-voting webpage as only registered students at the university are allowed access to such a webpage

Box 9 - 19 UM ICT Services

C8 described e-voting at university level:

I had an experience with online voting during my tertiary years at the International Islamic University in 2003 and in the context of the university community, such practice was also known as electronic democracy (C8).

C6 provided a reason for lack of evidence in e-voting practices in Malaysia. He strongly believed that e-democracy never included the idea of online voting:

[E]-democracy in Malaysia as it has been touted; I don't think it is ever translated into e-voting, whereas in other countries, people have equated democracy with the idea of voting. I have never actually seen that discussed here. Perhaps it has been suggested, but it has never been debated (C6).

C6's view underscored the issues of building citizens' trust in e-democracy and the expectation of e-voting replacing the traditional general election (see Chapter 10, subsection 10.4.1.2 and section 10.5.1).

Two categories were identified for the practice of ‘electronification’, namely acceptance and inculcation. The acceptance category focuses on gauging the popularity of a particular policy or initiative, and the inculcation category emphasizes the promotion of democratic ideals through e-democracy practices.

9.5. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed four enacted e-democracy practices, namely ‘inputs collection’, ‘information exchange’, ‘communication’, and ‘electronification’. Each consists of interpretive schemes, players involved, facilities used, and instances enacted by public administrators. Public administrators at the federal level of government in Malaysia draw upon three norms, including mutual benefit, target groups and self-censorship to enact each practice of e-democracy.

These identified practices are supportive of the concept of duality of structure (Orlikowski, 2000) which emphasizes that material technology only represents a particular symbol and material properties, which are used by agents in social practices to enact particular structures of technology use (see Chapter 5). Such practices also contribute towards an understanding of e-democracy practices in Malaysia.

The researcher’s initial perception that there was a limited number of e-democracy practices in the MFPS was not justified. The evidence given in this chapter suggests that four e-democracy practices were enacted to fit different purposes of human actors in such practices. The cited websites, online forums, blogs, online polling and online voting were clear examples of e-democracy practices. The observed practices presented by evidence in this chapter are not generalized for future practices. This is due to the structural perspective on technology. Such a perspective proposes that generalization about human social conduct holds only in “historically and contextually specific circumstances” (Orlikowski, 2000, p. 421).

The identified practices of e-democracy offer a new framework for e-democracy practices in Malaysia. The expectations of all stakeholders in these practices are discussed in Chapter 10.

10. Findings: The consequences dimension – notable expectations of e-democracy in Malaysia

10.1. Introduction

*Lempar batu sembunyikan tangan*¹⁵

This chapter describes notable expectations of e-democracy practices in Malaysia that emerged from the analysis of interview transcripts. The identified expectations are divided into three categories – design, process, and roles of key players, which include government, public administrators, citizens, bloggers, and the younger generation as illustrated in Figure 10-1.

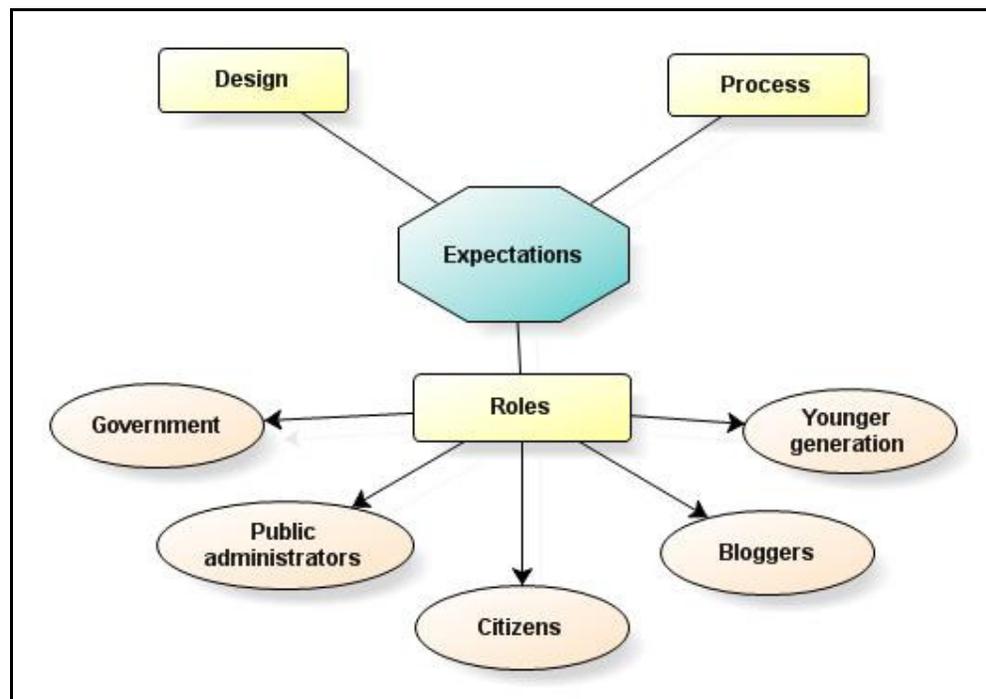


Figure 10-1 Expectations of e-democracy in Malaysia

As discussed in Chapter 5, these expectations represent changes brought about in ICT infrastructure design (denoted by arrow 5 of Parvez's framework) in the institutional objectives and policies for e-democracy (denoted by arrow F of

¹⁵ To throw a stone and hide the hand that threw it – Malay Saying. It envisages a situation in which one's true intention for certain actions is hidden and the importance of wisdom to identify the good and the evil of such actions. The English equivalent for this saying is "dissembling" (Brown, 1959, p. 57).

Parvez’s framework) in Malaysia’s democratic practices and model (denoted by arrow E of Parvez’s framework), as well as in agents – key players such as public administrators and citizens (denoted by arrow D of Parvez’s framework), as shown in Figure 10-2.

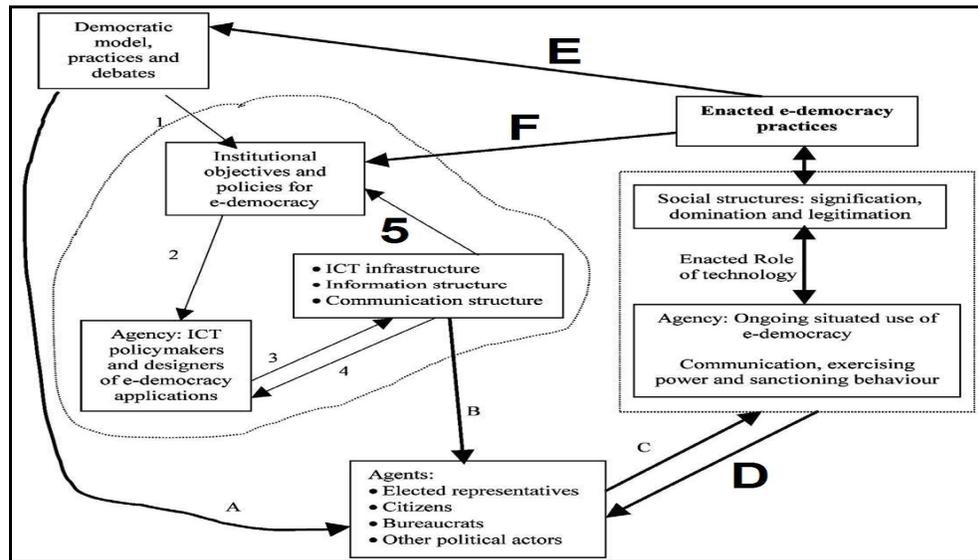


Figure 10-2 Parvez’s Framework – Consequences Dimensions

This chapter begins with a discussion on expectations of e-democracy design. Expectations of e-democracy process are then described and finally, expectations of roles of key players in e-democracy in Malaysia are discussed.

10.2. Design

This section describes expectations for e-democracy design that revolve around two elements of design, namely accessibility, and ease of use. The expectations are: equitable access; maximum utilization of existing ICT infrastructure; employment of ubiquitous equipment (for accessibility); user-friendly applications; development of relevant content; a well-balanced application; and alternative channel for inputs (ease of use). Each expectation is discussed in the following sections.

10.2.1. Equitable access to e-democracy

First, the design of e-democracy is expected to be equitably accessed by the public. Eight public administrators (A2, A5, A17, A18, A19, A21, A30, and A36) anticipated that a design for e-democracy in Malaysia should consider the availability of ICT infrastructure to enable access from any location in the country. Such accessibility should be equitable for all citizens irrespective of their location. As is apparent throughout the interviews, this expectation is derived from interviewees' firsthand experience in dealing with citizens through various ICT initiatives of the federal government (see Chapter 4).

A2, a middle manager who developed the Water Services policy through the MyWater Voice initiative (see Chapter 9, subsection 9.4.1.1), provided an achievable vision for e-democracy design in Malaysia:

I would expect that every citizen in Malaysia can participate and can talk to the agency directly from every corner of the country. Hopefully that will be our way of communicating to the government later on (A2).

A senior department head, A21, who had vast experience in developing ICT policy and initiatives at several operational ministries – the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) and the Ministry of Energy, Water, and Communication (MEWC) – before she was posted to a central agency, was of the opinion that infrastructure is important for citizens to access and participate in e-democracy practices:

If you want people to respond, the infrastructure has to be there hand-in-hand with services and it has to be together (A21).

In A5's view, it is obligatory for the design of e-democracy to include an equitable access provision to citizens, particularly those in rural areas. He seemed cautious, limiting his appreciation of ICT initiatives in public administration, while relating his own experience in utilizing one of government's ICT initiatives:

I am not so technology savvy but I do have interest in using electronic services, for example to pay my bills. Therefore at my level, I hope that the government would use as much ICT as we can. However, in doing so, we also have to think of those in the rural areas who do not have access ... For example, the problem that arose when the Ministry of Higher Education decided to offer places in universities through the Internet, many [potential candidates] in the rural areas could not get the information or offers. Therefore whatever new technology is introduced will have to take this problem into account (A5).

A30, who believed strongly that ICTs support service delivery of government, stated that e-democracy “should be designed in such a way that all people including those in the rural areas are able to access and utilize it” (A30).

For A36, issues of the digital divide (see Chapter 4) should be tackled and every citizen enabled to participate in e-democracy practices from the comfort of their homes.

I hope the coverage for activity of e-democracy is for the whole of Malaysia because now some people still do not have access. They also do not have computers and the right infrastructure at home (A36).

A17 and A19 went on to elaborate on their expectations for provision of ICT facilities for e-democracy practices, which include internet connection, PC, and mobile phone:

My expectations would be that one family has one facility to access any channel that they want, at least one PC or one mobile phone and so on (A17).

[T]he public must be provided with ICT facilities to enable this activity and every household must have internet access as well (A19).

A18 observed that ICT infrastructure in Korea is an example which Malaysia could emulate for standardized access for e-democracy irrespective of citizens’ location:

We still have to further develop the infrastructure, for example, in terms of network so that all Malaysians, regardless of where they are, whether in urban or rural areas, will have access to the same standard of infrastructure and therefore have access and are able to enjoy online services. If we look at Korea, the country is able to provide its citizens with internet access anywhere in the country. Therefore, we must figure out how we will also be able to do that and actually achieve a borderless world (A18).

10.2.2. Maximum utilization of existing infrastructure

Second, the design of e-democracy is expected to utilize existing ICT infrastructure, which in Malaysia seems to appropriately serve e-government initiatives. As discussed in Chapter 4, ICT infrastructure provides support for multiple initiatives such as e-Services. Three public administrators (A14, A29, and A31) took the view that infrastructure design for e-democracy should be “the same as other systems that we have developed” (A29).

A31, a newly appointed public administrator to the PTM Service with less than three years experience, tentatively agreed that the design for e-democracy infrastructure could emulate the design of e-government infrastructure:

Possibly, it can be the same design [for e-democracy] (A31).

A middle manager, A14, who initially refused to discuss topics outside his present job function dealing with e-government initiatives, reflected on existing e-government initiatives. He suggested that e-democracy can share the same infrastructure provided for e-government initiatives:

I do not see any problem in using the same infrastructure. It can ride on the current infrastructure (A14).

A14's reflection provides an insight into the capability of existing ICT infrastructure, which is useful for future implementation of e-democracy initiatives.

10.2.3. Employment of ubiquitous equipment

Third, the design of e-democracy is expected to exploit ubiquitous equipment such as mobile phones. Seven interviewees (A6, A11, A15, A16, A18, A29, and C1) were concerned with customer premises equipment (CPE), a term used in the telecommunications industry to describe any form of telecommunication equipment, which can be utilized by the customer for e-democracy practices. According to A18, government agencies should identify equipment, which can benefit most users right at the beginning of their Information Technology Strategic Plan (commonly known as ISP).

We now have the ISP for the government sector. At the ministry level they are also supposed to have their own ISP which lists the ministry's ICT requirements... In terms of equipment, they should identify technologies which are suitable to the applications (A18).

The main argument is that e-democracy design, which includes ubiquitous CPE, can achieve a higher number of participants. A29 provided an example of CPE:

I hope the activities could be accessible through the lowest level, like mobile phones (A29).

Other public administrators, A11 and A6, believed that e-democracy design should include ubiquitous CPE to provide multiple channels for citizens to participate:

As a citizen, I would expect there would be more channels for me to give my suggestions and my complaints to those who are related (A11).

[T]here should be more forums for citizens to take part (A6).

A15, a middle manager with experience in an overseas post, which may have formed his appreciation of e-democracy practices, suggested employing applications readily available in most mobile phones e.g., the Short Messaging Systems (SMS) to increase accessibility. To him, such applications will overcome issues of the digital divide:

[If] we also include SMS as one of the means to get public opinion, we probably would get faster results and from a lot more people, from all walks of life and level of education. Perhaps if we concentrate on e-democracy through websites, the pool of opinion gathered becomes biased due to non-accessibility because of the digital divide (A15).

One commentator, C1, an academic who researches ICT and community, shared the same views. Her experience working with communities in rural areas afforded her the ability to consider the issue through the communities' perspective. For C1, ease of use is the key to wider participation and inclusion of marginalized citizens (see Chapter 4) in ICT initiatives. In her view, introduction of e-democracy practices via SMS application is more affordable and comprehensible to this section of society:

[E]-democracy should not be limited to the use of computers or be only portal based. It should also be allowed via other technologies such as interactive TV and mobile. The mobile phone itself is the cheapest means of communication for the rural communities and the marginalized. With mobiles people are able to communicate via SMS ... This group of people should also be listened to as policies would also generally affect them. We have to give them a chance to participate by not making it so complicated ... The mobile phone I think is one of the best channels of communication which is simple to use and cheap (C1).

The ubiquity, ease of use, and affordable characteristics of mobile phones are appealing to citizens. As claimed by A16, an ICT initiative called mySMS – the Government SMS Gateway initiative supported by a private company (DAPAT) for complaints and feedback collection (see also Glossary) – has “become an element to influence decision-making” (A16).

10.2.4. User-friendly applications

Fourth, the design of e-democracy is expected to be user-friendly for people of all skill levels. Several interviewees focused on the way citizens actually utilize e-democracy. Moving away from infrastructure and equipment for e-democracy,

these interviewees stressed the importance of “user-friendly applications across all platforms” (A30).

First hand experience in developing and dealing with ICT initiatives to bridge the digital divide in rural areas has convinced A13 to anticipate a design that can benefit every citizen in e-democracy practices. A13 observed that e-democracy applications should be designed to accommodate citizens and public administrators as users who have a different conceptualization of e-democracy and a different skill set for such practices. These differences may be adequately addressed through a user-friendly design (see Chapter 2):

We have different levels of users and they have different interpretation of the applications and different kinds of ability. The application should be tailored to be used by all (A13).

According to C1, a citizen’s level of education is another reason for such design. A deliberative design for e-democracy may only be suitable for citizens in urban areas who are well educated. C1 suggested that e-democracy design could, for example, include a multiple choice option, which is perhaps more suitable to gauge the opinion of marginalized on any policy. C1 was of the opinion that since such design has been widely utilized for quick opinion polls – conducted on the national television network with support from the local telecommunication companies – and applications of similar design for e-democracy practices could easily be adopted by most citizens:

Usually, those taking part in giving opinions would come from the urban community and are highly educated, basically because they know where and how to find the portal. They know what to tell and usually have good supporting data to refute or accept a proposition or policy. However, we should also allow the public who have minimal literacy, who are with a different academic background, who are just commoners to also play a role in policy-making. Therefore, simple questions that require ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ answers should also be put up. This you can see already happening not only on portals but through television and mobile technology (C1).

Yet another public administrator felt that a user-friendly design should require less from its user. A middle manager, A22, whose previous work experience at a government-linked company may have formed his reflections of government policy development and e-democracy, observed that most e-initiatives introduced by government necessitate numerous inputs from their users. He felt that it would be

advantageous if information such as age, gender, and race, which is obtainable from some government departments, be made available to others:

For me an e-democracy system should not burden citizens. For example, most government's e-system is what the public have to give to the public, not the other way around. People don't want to do more jobs, but the government should provide most of the things, like enough information online and so on (A22).

Minimal information, like the national identification number, should be required of citizens who wish to participate in e-democracy practices. This number can be utilized as a foreign key – a field that points to values for retrieval in a database – for other necessary information available from government agencies such as the Department of Registration. Doing away with providing this information will ease the process and make it more attractive to citizens (see subsection 10.4.2.5).

10.2.5. Development of relevant content

Fifth, the design of e-democracy is expected to be provided with relevant and useful content. It emerges from interviews that content is important for a good e-democracy design. Some public administrators held the view that, regardless of the choice of application for e-democracy (websites, online forums or blogs), it is content that determines its effectiveness. As stated by A27, “the most important thing is the content” (A27).

A23, a senior public administrator with a PhD degree who headed a department at a central agency, stressed that “public administrators must focus on the content of their website and not only its appearance” (A23).

In support of this view, a commentator, C8, agreed that to attract more citizens to participate in e-democracy practices, public administrators “have to develop the right content” (C8).

For A 20, the content for e-democracy should include more news, which is constantly updated. To him, these types of content will attract a wider audience, especially among youth.

Our focus is news and continuous update which could attract the younger generation to use our portal. Information provided by the government could not

reach them effectively through our portal until we do all these... We have to publish more news and services to the public (A20).

Referring to his experience in dealing with e-government initiatives, A20 came to the conclusion that the content should depend “on the age group... For example, when we introduce e-government, I don’t think the youth are interested, that’s the reason for news and other links on our government portal” (A20).

As discussed in Chapter 4, one of the suggested strategies to alleviate poverty and bridge the digital divide is through the creation of local content in users’ language. A senior public administrator in charge of an ICT department, A29, believed that precise content should be developed for any ICT initiative to achieve its objective and this includes e-democracy initiatives. He provided an example of bridging the digital divide initiative, in which specific types of content were developed for six locations chosen from all over the country. The initiatives aimed to provide access to the urban poor within the local authority of such locations:

Under the Department of Local Governments we have six locations all over the country for bridging the digital divide program targeting the urban poor within a local authority. We also develop content specific for that particular location and community (A29).

Good content is useful for e-democracy practices only if it is valid and current.

Although not as enthusiastic as A29, C11 felt that information on some government websites is outdated. He gave an example of a government agency website which neglected to post some information, i.e., a list of abandoned housing projects. He insisted that

the information on the website is not up-to-date ... The most important thing in the housing industry in Malaysia is the abandoned projects ... Buyers and public are not informed [and] people have suffered from the abandoned projects (C11).

For C8, content should also promote Asian values and draw on factual knowledge of an issue. To him, such content will better inform citizens and provide background about a particular issue, as well as encouraging them to reflect on the issue.

Asian values, knowledge based, and so on, should be incorporated into our content (C8).

10.2.6. A well-balanced application

Sixth, the design of e-democracy is expected to produce a well-balanced application, which assures its acceptability and effectiveness. Two public administrators, A30 and A35, anticipated the design for e-democracy application to suit its objectives and capability to adapt to rapid technological changes:

Technologies keep changing, so the design must be suitable for that period of time and fulfil our current stakeholders and users' requirements (A30).

A middle manager, A35, involved in ICT infrastructure design and management at an operational ministry, expressed his concern for e-democracy design. His experience in managing various applications may have structured his reflection for suggesting a robust design for e-democracy to avoid any application being forsaken by its users, especially public administrators.

The design must be robust enough to benefit all government agencies. We must also ensure that what has been planned, is implemented. Sometime the scope of a project is too narrow, which limits its application. As a result the project is abandoned by its intended users (A35).

Commentator C8, a key post holder of a civil society organization, observed that generally e-initiatives lack what he termed "the human touch". He believed that both public administrators and citizens are deprived of some values when interacting using electronic platforms. He suggested that some aspects of face-to-face communication, one of the characteristics of patron-client communitarianism (see Chapters 2 and 9), need to be maintained for e-democracy:

I am of the opinion that not everything necessarily needs to use ICTs or be digitized. There are some which should remain as it is, whereby perhaps traditional methods which involve human touch and human interaction would bring out better results. For example, some people do tend to get obsessed with teleconferencing to the extent of doing away with actual face-to-face meeting. Therefore, in the context of our government the use of ICT and retaining traditional methods of interaction with the masses should be balanced to retain some values which can only be achieved by face-to-face interactions (C8).

For A7 and A16, the design for any form of application for e-democracy in Malaysia must be adapted to Malaysian culture:

E-democracy should be customized to suit Malaysia because things like customs are not the same here as in another part of the world (A7).

For A16, the designers of e-democracy must “understand that the nature of the Malaysian society is quite different due to us being multiracial, from different religious backgrounds and so on” (A16).

In support of the Malaysian-style design for e-democracy, C7 claimed that other democratic countries, like the United States, implement e-democracy in different ways. To him, the design for e-democracy in Malaysia must be adapted according to Malaysian values:

So you may say for example, for e-democracy, in terms of let's say the voting process, what is recommended in the USA might be different here slightly, maybe in terms of implementation, so you need to look at the implementation, understand the implementation ... I would say the openness that you want for that particular society, because at the end of the day it concerns access of information and that is openness. What constitutes openness for that society would be dependant on the variables (C7).

10.2.7. An alternative channel for inputs

Seventh, the design of e-democracy is expected to highlight e-democracy as an alternative channel for citizens' inputs to government. A point repeatedly made in interviews was that e-democracy applications are expected to supplement existing mechanisms for obtaining feedback from citizens, e.g., via face-to-face meetings. Some 26 percent or ten public administrators (A2, A4, A5, A6, A9, A12, A15, A24, A28, and A36) insisted that e-democracy practices should be designed as an alternative channel for citizens to provide feedback for policy development. Nine were from the PTD Service. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 8, these public administrators believe they are the experts in policy development and inputs from outside the public service are to be considered, but not necessarily accepted. Seven of ten public administrators, who favored the alternative channel view, were from operational ministries and key ministry, while the other three were from central agencies, as shown in Table 10-1.

Table 10-1 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and expectations for an alternative channel

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning expectation		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	
Schemes of Service	No.	%	% (*)
PTD	9	90%	50% (18)
PTM	1	10%	7% (15)
Total	10	100%	26% (38)
Types of Organization	No.	%	% (*)
Central agency	3	30%	25% (12)
Operational ministry	7	70%	41% (17)
Total	10	100%	26% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

Public administrators at operational ministries are seemingly more apprehensive about e-democracy practices being institutionalized as the main channel of inputs. This is possibly due to the fact that such ministries are more involved in the policy development process as compared to public administrators in central agencies.

For A2, e-democracy should be utilized “as a channel for communication, channel for getting inputs as an alternative to whatever channel that we use” (A2).

E-democracy is expected to be “a medium for people to the government” (A4).

For A36, e-democracy provided

an alternative for the public to voice their opinions besides the conventional ways like meeting and so on... [and] ...it functions as a second media to the public. It provides an alternative way to communicate (A36).

Other public administrators, A5 and A6, agreed that inputs from citizens in e-democracy practices should be appreciated because they provide “a second opinion to the government of what people on the ground really thinks about government policy” (A6).

A9, a technology savvy middle manager from the PTD Service, was of the opinion that public administrators will even consider negative inputs – the word used by A9 to describe adverse inputs to the ruling government – from e-democracy. For him, even though it is negative, the government will take what the citizen has to say into consideration... [because] ...the issues are there and the inputs can still be used whether it is positive or negative (A9).

In the same vein, C9 observed that e-democracy provides alternative views but of course people [both citizens and public administrators] have to make their own judgment. You have access to multiple tiers of information but it's up to the person to make the decision, that's what democratic society is all about. Every individual has a choice of accessing the knowledge and making their own judgment of the knowledge. That's how I see it (C9).

A12 pointed out that some inputs from e-democracy practices are deemed unreasonable. Public administrators are required to conduct further analysis to benefit from such inputs:

Some points from the blogs are useful but we cannot take it as a whole. For example, recent announcement by the government on restrictions to sell fuel to foreigners within 50 KM radius from our borders had been argued from different angles in blogs. I think that is good and we can take certain good points from the discussions, but certain points are unreasonable and we need to analyze it further (A12).

A senior public administrator, A28, who had vast experience in policy development, cautioned about the intricate analysis required for inputs from e-democracy for policy development. For A28, the iterative nature of policy making demanded a careful consideration of the nature of inputs for a particular policy (see Chapter 3):

I think we have to differentiate between the correct signals and the wrong signals. As you know, the e way of doing things is so vast and policy making is not an overnight thing. It is not about listening to one group and making decisions because it will reflect badly if you have to change the policy again and again (A28).

The essence of A28's view is that e-democracy should not be disruptive to the policy development process to ensure policy coherence.

For A24, e-democracy practices should be utilized for the common good and become a necessary channel for public administrators. According to him, the potential manipulation by political parties was another reason for designing e-democracy as an alternative channel:

I hope that e-democracy activities will not be used by political parties to garner support for their cause. It should be for mutual benefit and it is a must now, we have to go further (A24).

As argued by A15, government should

proceed with these kind of activities, [but] at the same time we should not neglect the conventional way of getting public opinion. Therefore, it is good to have [e-democracy] but we cannot solely depend upon it (A15).

10.3. Process

This section describes expectations for future changes to the institutional objectives and policies for e-democracy. These expectations cover the need for a centralized co-ordinating agency, providing neutral space and process, as well as achieving critical mass for participation in e-democracy.

10.3.1. A centralized co-ordinating agency

As discussed in Chapter 2, Kettl (2007) argued that co-ordination is imperative in public administration. He also suggested that the increasing complexity of inter-organizational networks in the public bureaucracy be managed along authority-driven structures for better co-ordination. The same point emerged repeatedly from interviews, especially among public administrators, whereby e-democracy initiatives are expected to be managed by a central agency for a more coherent and efficient implementation process.

A newly appointed public administrator to the PTM Service, A17, who confined her reflections to her role as an ISP planner for government agencies, felt that some technical problems in e-initiatives, like systems compatibility can be easily managed through a central agency. She suggested that a central agency should be appointed to oversee the implementation of e-democracy practices.

I think there should only be one agency controlling the network to ensure smooth operation. Sometimes the current PCN and GITN operate on different speeds which affect some of our applications. If possible these two should be standardized to ensure every transaction like e-mail reaches the intended users (A17).

A3, a middle manager who is absorbed in her job functions as a system analyst, felt that a central agency for e-democracy is important for

determining and deciding upon the processes which are involved. For example, in implementing a system, there has got to be a certainty and centralization of decisions for the system to work. Even if technically a system can be designed, it will not be effective if we are not sure of the processes involved (A3).

A27, a middle manager from the PTM Service who recently completed her PhD degree in Knowledge Management, was very insistent in expecting that a central agency should lead and manage e-democracy practices in Malaysia:

I think what's missing is the lead agency to look after these practices. It should be a central agency so that a strong directive can be given. If you leave it to the ministries, it would be limited because of its boundaries (A27).

Her reflection on this may have been fashioned by the principle of fixed and official jurisdictional areas of Weberian bureaucratic authority (see Chapter 2) whereby regular activities of a bureaucratically governed structure are rigid. In her view, public administrators in government agencies will accede to such authority as part of the 'deference to authority' (see Chapters 2 and 8).

For A35, who expressed his deep concern for redundancy of data in government agencies, the main reason for needing a centralized co-ordinating agency was "to minimize its cost. Just like our centralized data center here and the official government portal managed by MAMPU [Malay acronym for the Malaysian Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit]" (A35). A35 claimed that it is cost-effective to manage a centralized data centre for multiple applications at the ministry. For him, centrally managed servers for the official government portal can effectively minimize the cost required for its implementation.

For A13, a central agency for e-democracy will coordinate a simpler approval process for its system design. She expressed her frustration and concern that important features of an application or a system may be excluded if there are too many layers of approval required. She conceded that the approval process may impose some degree of limitation to the overall design of e-democracy because

when we design something we need approval from certain parties, but sometimes the parties could not see the whole picture, so we cut out portions of the whole thing we want to do. Sometimes when people do not have enough knowledge about the system, they will perceive it from one point of view. We may miss some

important points going through these levels of approval in designing the system (A13).

According to A21, a senior department head of a central agency in charge of ICT policy and co-ordination, e-democracy requires a consolidated plan:

[The plan] should be progressive and go through all levels including governments, businesses and society. It must be a wholesome plan to infrastructure design and I think it must tell the players when to come in and participate with expected specifications. The plan must be a consolidated plan (A21).

10.3.2. A neutral space and process

E-democracy practices are expected to be neutrally implemented. Neutrality is seen as an impetus to augment such practices in the public sphere (see Chapters 1 and 2). This, however, was not a unanimous view. A7, a middle manager from the PTM Service involved in the policy development process of a ministry, believed that e-democracy should be “a channel which provides an avenue for voicing complaints which are put on record and unfiltered” (A7).

Another senior public administrator, A28, equated neutrality for e-democracy practices by not extending any favors to a particular group. His reflection was based on the recent (the first two quarters of 2008) fuel price hike that resulted in a drastic increase in the cost of living. While relating his experience, A28 provided an example of government deferring some projects due to demands made through online forums and blogs by middle and lower income groups and business communities:

[The government] should not favor any particular group, they need to look at it on a broader view and then zero in to the exact issue. For example, when we talk about cost of living issues, we must not only look at the middle and lower income groups but we must also consider the business community. So the government is reprioritizing projects in the 9th Malaysia Plan because not all projects need to be done now (A28).

In support of these views, one commentator, C1, asserted that a neutral platform for e-democracy will ensure its effectiveness and will encourage wide participation from citizens. For C1, e-democracy

has to be a platform that is neutral enough, which enables the majority of people to feel that they belong and feel that the system is actually listening to them. What people want is action and a system that can help them voice their opinions or problems ... To ensure that the implementation is successful, I foresee that the platform has to be neutral (C1).

There is a general agreement then that a neutral space and process is important for e-democracy to be effectively implemented in Malaysia. Such a space could invigorate wide participation from citizens.

10.3.3. A critical mass for participation

A successful e-democracy practice reflects wide representation of citizens. A small representation is seen as a failure and not significant for policy development process. A10, a newly appointed public administrator to the PTD Service who used to work as a lecturer in engineering at a local university, asserted that inputs from less than 100 people were insufficient for e-democracy practice. Her engineering background, which requires an exact number in an ideal setting for any process to work efficiently, may have influenced such a reflection.

I think it depends on the inputs and the volume of information collected. Let's say you only have inputs from 100 people, I do not think that is a big number to push for decision-making (A10).

According to commentator C6, who was skeptical about e-democracy practices in Malaysia, the critical mass for e-democracy should be approximated to the expected voter turn out at a given election. To him, only if such critical mass is achieved will the inputs be representative of all aspects of voters including education and locality:

The important thing would be that you should be able to mimic at least the percentage of the electorate that you would hope to be the voters' turn-out. Whether or not they are voting, you need to hit that number. If you are only going to be concentrating on a particular section of society, which is within the highly affluent areas of the country or within a certain education bracket, then you have defeated the purpose of what you are trying to do in terms of voting channels (C6).

A22, who focused on the needs of citizens for an efficient e-democracy practice, believed that broadband services are important for achieving critical mass and government is expected to continue its nationwide implementation:

The most important infrastructure I think is the broadband services. The current roll out of broadband projects is important to government to increase the number or participants in e-democracy activities (A22).

Inclusion of an identified group of representatives for e-democracy, like target groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (see Chapters 3 and 8), is another way to ensure critical mass is achieved. According to A32 and A34, representatives, like interest groups and professional groups, should be invited to

provide inputs. For A32, “there must be target groups, but we may need to get feedback from the professionals and NGOs” (A32).

Inputs from these groups is especially important in a situation when

only a small number participate in the activity. Then you must talk to representative groups or the professional groups to get their opinions, like for housing issues, we talk to the developers and buyers association and so on (A34).

Two public administrators, A16 and A33, suggested that citizens must be valued for taking part in e-democracy practices:

We should have a good system ... a form of appreciation to those that contribute good ideas and opinions, so that the public will really feel that they are included in the policy development process. (A16).

A33, a newly appointed public administrator to the PTD Service, with a legal background, thought that a form of acknowledgement is called for to encourage higher participation from citizens:

We should have a good system to answer all public questions and a form of appreciation to those that contribute good ideas and opinions, so that the public will really feel that they are included in the policy development process (A33).

C2, who was once a public administrator in the Engineering Service before joining the private sector, felt that good input must be rewarded. To him, such reward will encourage future participation:

The public can also be given incentives for giving good opinions (C2).

He believed that such a reward may result in obtaining the best inputs from citizens and a viable e-democracy practice.

10.4. Roles of key players of e-democracy

As discussed in Chapter 9, (section 9.4), e-democracy practices are enacted by a number of key players. This section describes their expectations of key players in e-democracy, namely government, public administrators, citizens, bloggers, and the younger generation. These expectations reveal social issues surrounding e-democracy practices to provide deeper understanding of such practices in the MFPS.

10.4.1. Government

This section discusses expectations of government for e-democracy. The identified expectations are: encouragement of sincere participation; building citizens' trust; promoting e-democracy to all stakeholders; developing ICT skills and civic competency; providing substantial information; regulating e-democracy; and listening to citizens.

10.4.1.1. Encouragement of sincere participation

Citizens' discussions are circumscribed by limitations promulgated in the constitution, as discussed in Chapter 1. A general perception that government is watching all discussions in the public sphere may have created self-censorship practices. Four public administrators (A1, A6, A19, and A37) were concerned about any sort of repercussion for participants in e-democracy. These public administrators were from groups of more than ten years service and more than 36 years of age. The younger generation of public administrators is seemingly not concerned with such issues. This is possibly due to this generation possessing characteristics similar to the F&F generation (see subsection 10.4.5.1).

A1 is a middle manager in the Social Service. She is one of very few instances where a public administrator from such a scheme of service is involved in policy development of a ministry. These posts are usually filled by PTD officers. Her previous job function, which involved disseminating information about government policies, initiatives, and programs, may have influenced her views on e-democracy practices. Her reflections frequently contained qualifier phrases, such as “there were times when...”, implying self censorship (see Chapter 8). She expected government to allow citizens to participate freely in e-democracy practices:

An e-democracy site should be a place where I could put my views regardless of whether it is pros or cons. It is somewhere I could be given a chance to put something across but I should not be penalized if my view is not in line with that of the government (A1).

A37, a senior public administrator nearing retirement, hoped that “the government can accept any comments from the public” (A37).

A6, who experienced the My Water Voice initiative first hand, held the view that in e-democracy practices government “should look at issues raised, not other things” (A6).

For A19, a senior public administrator who headed a department in a central agency, government should analyze opinions and feedback disseminated in online applications like blogs regardless of whether such blogs are critical of the government. For him, this is “because sometimes the blogs have good points even though they are condemning the government” (A19).

For A6 and A19, government will benefit immensely by focusing on the relevant issues put forward by citizens online, as significant insights towards policy development, rather than channeling its resources to indict the creators of such online sites.

10.4.1.2. Building citizens trust

Trust is an important element in public governance (see Chapter 2) and government is expected to build citizen trust in e-democracy practices for citizens to effectively contribute (A3, A15, A22, A32, and C6). A22, a middle manager whose previous work experience at a government-linked company shaped his reflections of government policy development and e-democracy, argued that “trust should be built with the public” (A22) for e-democracy to be useful to government in policy development.

For A3, a middle manager of the PTM scheme of service who was excited about e-democracy, building of trust in e-democracy should be a concerted effort from all players:

I am looking forward to it [e-democracy], but of course as I said, there must be trust of parties, citizens and government (A3).

Elaborating on A3’s concerted effort, A15 suggested that all players “involved in e-democracy should be sincere and give an honest opinion on whatever issues they are discussing, and not manipulate the situation” (A15).

In support of this view, C6, an experienced ICT consultant both locally and internationally, provided an example of e-democracy practices – e-voting to illustrate his point. He explained that trust was important for e-democracy to be successful and that it could be potentially troublesome for government.

I think that if we take e-voting as an example, to do that you must have an implicit trust and confidence in your system of governance, and we don't have that yet... To say that okay, we are having an e-democracy system, and to suggest that and come back and say, so many people participated in this referendum, and they say this, you know that would be in the courts for next three years. So we must have this kind of stability and confidence before we can move to that level (C6).

As suggested by Kettl (2007) (see Chapter 2), government should gain citizen trust to build bridges in government-citizens relation. C1 believed that e-democracy “has got to get people interested to participate and give them the confidence that their participation would result in something useful or contribute towards something” (C1).

10.4.1.3. Promoting e-democracy to all stakeholders

A point made repeatedly throughout interviews was that government should promote e-democracy to all stakeholders (A1, A9, A11, A15, A21, A27, C1, and C6). All three age groups (i.e., 25-35 years, 36-45 years, and 46 years and over) were equally represented among six public administrators who favored this view. It seemed unanimous that a well-planned promotion for e-democracy is a vital strategy for government to ensure its effectiveness. Such a strategy is similar to that of engaging citizens to use telecenters (see Chapter 4).

For A9, A15, and A21, e-democracy practices have the potential to support public governance and should be promoted to reach a broader section of society:

The government should encourage more the use of this because it is one of the cheapest and easiest ways to get information. It should be promoted. We should have more awareness campaigns (A9).

With the wider use of the Internet in the country and the familiarization of people with the Internet, I would say that if we promote this to the public, e-democracy will help the government better manage the country (A15).

I think in terms of using it, there must be ease of use for people, it must be promoted (A21).

The main reason for promotion, according to A1, was awareness. Citizens as the largest body of stakeholders, need to understand the benefits of e-democracy to appreciate the value of such practices and effectively contribute. A1 claimed that without promotion, e-democracy practices will be treated by citizens as misinformation by government:

I would think firstly we have to create awareness. If people do not understand why there is a need for e-democracy, then it would be another platform that is going to be underutilized or a white elephant for that matter. So you have to first create awareness of the benefits of e-democracy and what we can gain out of it ... If people are not aware of what it is, then people might say that this is just another one of government's propaganda (A1).

A11, who only had three year's experience in the PTD Service, believed that the promotion of e-democracy is lacking in the public service. She felt that public administrators are generally not aware of most government e-initiatives:

As a public administrator, we are alert but we were not aware about government e-applications and systems. So, it's good if government creates some kind of awareness to the public and [among] the public administrators ... regarding e-democracy practices that they have now (A11).

A27, a middle manager from the PTM Service, came to know about e-democracy through an article that she stumbled upon in her leisure time. This experience convinced her that awareness of e-democracy in the public service is scarce. She felt that the government must appoint an agency to lead the promotion of e-democracy:

We should have more exposure to these activities, because awareness is really lacking. I only knew about this from articles I read, you know. So, identify an agency to lead this and this agency should conduct awareness programs to inform the public about what they can do and what the benefits are (A27).

In support of A11 and A27's views, C6 argued that e-democracy promotion must consider public administrators in the entire public service. For him, a higher number of public administrators being aware of e-democracy will significantly ensure the success of its implementation:

[If] you look at the proportion of public administrators that we have as a part of the electorate, it is going to be a fairly significant chunk. If you can get the public administration to buy into the idea, you solve a fairly big chunk of the problem (C6).

A11 also suggested that government agencies upgrade their websites and advertise e-democracy practices on national television networks for a wider audience. Government agencies

may enhance their own websites and blogs, create more online services and make people aware of it through crawlers on TVs and advertisement. So people can get more information about it (A11).

For C1, e-democracy promotion can only be considered effective when its application becomes a household branding. True to her interest in e-community research, C1 believed that e-democracy can achieve its objectives when a strong connection can be made between ICT application and function in any community. For her, such a connection is similar to people making a call to 999 numbers in Malaysia which are similar to 000 in Australia and 911 in the United States – for emergency assistance:

It needs to become something familiar like when you need emergency help, you call 999, so when you want to comment or give your opinion, you go to a certain e-democracy website. It needs to become a household branding which means there has to be proper promotions (C1).

10.4.1.4. Developing skills and civic competency

Citizens and public administrators who participate in e-democracy are expected to have certain skills. Prerequisites are literacy, knowledge of societal matters, and ICT skills (see Chapter 2). Six interviewees (A15, A16, A27, A31, A33, and A38) held the view that the fulfilment of such prerequisites is the responsibility of government:

People must be educated and we [the government] must make sure that everybody is ready (A31).

A31 insisted that “not all Malaysians are computer literate or have the ability to use ICTs” (A31).

As argued by A38, a senior public administrator involved in ICT initiatives in rural areas, government must educate citizens about e-democracy irrespective of group affiliation. She claimed that the success of ICT initiatives, in Korea resulted from a good education about the way ICT can be utilized, and its benefits to citizens, including those in rural areas. The majority

of our population are still not IT savvy, so we need to educate the population first. It defeats the purpose to only focus on certain groups of people if we want to

implement e-democracy. We need to include all, like the Korean case, where the rural folks are really using the Internet to do lots of things (A38).

For A27, literacy and ICT skills are important for e-democracy, particularly marginalized groups (see Chapter 4). These people will normally gain access to e-democracy practices at telecenters. A27 felt that they must be educated about ICT skills to benefit from such facilities.

We also need to educate these people, literacy plays an important role, otherwise they would have problems in using the Internet at the telecenters. Those are the basic things, no point of having good infrastructure without these (A27).

As well as ICT skills, players are expected to be competent in their practices of e-democracy. The government can utilize ICTs to educate such players about civic competency (Bakar & Johanson, 2009). This competency includes knowledge about the concept of e-democracy, the way they conduct themselves, and their responsibilities in such practices. According to A15, the government “has to educate the public [about] how to behave when they want to get involved in the [e-democracy] process” (A15).

A16, whose experience in the public service had been about policy development, stressed that “for e-democracy to achieve its objectives, everyone must be educated on what the concept is all about, be made to understand their roles and responsibilities” (A16).

A newly appointed public administrator to the PTM Service, A31 felt that citizens still do not understand electronic democracy in terms of its usage, its purpose, its benefits and also its disadvantages. If we want to implement whatever system, be it e-government or e-democracy, we must make sure that the users understand enough. Whether the system is good or bad therefore would depend on persons using it, whether they know its advantages and disadvantages. A system, although it is good, can still be misused (A31).

A33 stressed that government must also educate citizens about the do’s and don’ts of e-democracy, for effective practice:

If the government is serious about e-democracy and wants the citizens to apply it in a decent manner then they have to educate the public as to what e-democracy means, [and] what democracy itself means (A33).

For two commentators, C8 and C9, the government must educate citizens to effectively utilize the information obtained from e-democracy practices. C8, a

young key post holder of a civil society organization, pointed out that citizens should identify useful information in accordance with the concept of 'ilmu' (a Malay word for knowledge), which emphasizes good values as a prerequisite for knowledge. To C8, only information with good values is useful for e-democracy and citizens should be educated about an ethical way to use such information for online communication. C8 put forward the view that government must

educate users about the need to filter information received through the net. In Islam not all information provides knowledge, as knowledge must always come with good values ... They should be educated on the concept of knowledge or 'ilmu' [Malay for knowledge] which also involves the ability to filter out bad things ... Although people should be free to express themselves on the net, they should be educated about the ethics of net communication (C8).

For C9, an academic attached to a branch of an international university in Malaysia who was involved with the bridging the digital divide initiatives, government must educate citizens about effective participation in e-democracy practices. For C9, citizens "also require lots of education of how to use [e-democracy] because sometimes they [citizens] have to substantiate some of the arguments" (C9).

10.4.1.5. Providing substantial information

Provision of information (see Chapter 2) is vital for e-democracy practices. The government is expected to provide substantial and relevant information on issues surrounding a policy (A6, A22, A25, and C11). Such information will effectively empower citizens to participate in e-democracy practices.

A6, a middle manager at an operational ministry, stressed that "citizens should be given the right information for them to make certain decisions [in e-democracy practices]" (A6).

A22, a middle manager with previous work experience at a government-linked company, was of the opinion that citizens should not be held back in e-democracy practices. He provided examples of encumbrances like lack of user personalization on some government websites, which results in citizens having to key personal particulars in for each visit to the websites, and lack of vital information on issues being discussed. For him, government must encourage

citizens' participation in e-democracy practices by providing relevant information online. Streamlining inter-departmental information may ease providing personal particulars for e-democracy:

For me an e-democracy system should not burden citizens, for example, most of the government's e-system is about what the public have to give to the government, not the other way around. People do not want to do more jobs. The government should provide most of the information online (A22).

For A25, a senior public administrator who passionately described his job function dealing with blogs, government agencies should allow citizens to access information about their functions, provided such information is not classified as confidential:

E-democracy will make a way for the public to get access to information. The Ministry therefore will have to see whether its delivery system is good, see that people get access and the right information. If before they feel that not everybody can have access to information from a particular department, now the government feels that as long as this information does not fall under the OSA (*Official Secrets Act*), it should be accessible to everyone (A25).

Lack of information made available on government websites is deemed a problem. A related comment made by C11 about lack of information on a ministry website is a case in point. C11 claimed the website neglected to publish information about housing developers who are problematic. For him, such information will provide insights for citizens to effectively participate in e-democracy practices.

[There] are no lists of rogue developers and lists of developers who have been charged and fined. ... Without this information, how are the public to get involved? ... Government websites must be people friendly. Whatever the information you keyed in, you should get the answer, but if it's not up-to-date, it defeats the purpose...With limited changes down there, we get limited insights. If they give us more, the public will be more informed. With limited answers to questions you get limited supplements (C11).

10.4.1.6. Regulating e-democracy

A point repeatedly made in interviews by 24 percent of public administrators (A7, A8, A9, A13, A15, A22, A29, A31, and A36), was that government must regulate e-democracy. Four of these nine public administrators were aged 25-35 years, three were 36-35years, and two were 46 years and over. Six of those nine public administrators came from the PTM Service, two from the PTD Service, and one from the Engineering Service, as shown in Table 10-2.

Table 10-2 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and expectations for regulating e-democracy

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning the expectation		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	
Age group	No.	%	% (*)
25-35 years	4	44%	36% (11)
36-45 years	3	33%	27% (11)
46 years and over	2	23%	13% (16)
Total	9	100%	24% (38)
Schemes of Service	No.	%	% (*)
PTD	2	22%	11% (18)
PTM	6	67%	40% (15)
Engineering	1	11%	50% (2)
Total	9	100%	24% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

It seemed that younger public administrators are more concerned for e-democracy to be regulated by government, as compared to older public administrators (i.e., those in the 46 years and over age group). Such a preference by younger public administrators may be caused by their high expectation for e-democracy practices to be officially institutionalized in the public administration.

Most of these public administrators were from the PTM Service. This is possibly because they expected regulated e-democracy practices to be easily transformed into application, as compared to an ad hoc process (which is still subject to numerous uncertainties).

A7 pointed out that government must attend to e-democracy with a clear policy. A detailed allocation of funds for manpower and facilities is also expected from such a policy. She emphasized that for government

to implement e-democracy, there must be a mandate ... and we will need policies, trained personnel and proper facilities. The government can't simply say that we are now going to embark upon e-democracy without providing trained manpower and facilities (A7).

As argued by A8, government "would need to come up with proper rules and guidelines" (A8).

An important point emphasized by A15 was that a policy for e-democracy will ensure its implementation in the public service. Such a policy will curtail any government agency from not implementing e-democracy:

If there is a policy from the government, it can be implemented. Without a policy from the government, it will only be implemented by certain agencies but others would come up with reasons not to implement it. The obstacle would be not having any policy for us to use (A15).

One commentator, C2, who was familiar with the culture and policy development process in public administration, insisted that a clear process must be formulated for e-democracy. For him,

there must be a process whereby the government will and can actually entertain these online complaints or inputs at anytime, anywhere. This has to be instilled in the public sector (C2).

A9's passion for new ICT gadgets and social network applications compelled his strong suggestion for minimal government control over social interaction via ICT. To him, a symbiotic relationship between government-initiated e-democracy and negative initiatives – e-democracy initiatives by opposition parties – must be allowed to augment such practices in Malaysia:

The government should still allow the negative blogs. The government should introduce e-democracy on government websites and at the same time allow other websites to have such activities as well and they should be allowed to co-exist. We have to govern but loosely (A9).

While these negative initiatives are allowed, government is expected to curb abusive practices undertaken through such initiatives. As argued by A13, there "still need to be limitations to e-democracy because sometimes people just like to make false claims and sedition, so there must be some control over that" (A13).

A31 believed that ICT can be manipulated for the better and opposed the notion of having stricter control over ICTs usage, insisting that government must not impose unnecessary limitations on e-democracy.

there must be a clear policy ... Limits should not be too excessive. However, we must also accept that to open up to the extent of becoming harmful to the country is also not good (A31).

For A22, e-democracy policy must include protection of privacy for both citizens and government.

The policy must be firm and transparent ... E-democracy is new to the public so it must be supported by a policy which consists of data privacy and guarantees for both government and citizens alike (A22).

For A36, government must control discussions on issues related to ethnic sensitivities (see Chapter 1). For him, “certain controls must be taken for issues that relate to ethnic sensitivities and so on. I think it should not be over-controlled” (A36).

A related comment made by C1 about e-democracy policy was that government must regulate e-democracy practices with new rules. She felt that such rules will clearly guide public administrators in e-democracy practices with a specified time period for inputs collection and the significance of incorporating such inputs into policy. To C1, government

would have to come up with guidelines and rules ... there always has to be a cut off point whereby you know when to listen and when to stop listening and when to implement ... Nowadays, many organizations fail because the think-tanks are not doing their work well (C1).

10.4.1.7. Listening to citizens

The key thing for the government to do is to listen. People just want to have their voices heard and they would be happy to know that their suggestions are being considered (A23).

Listening to the voices of citizens is important to government, as expressed by A23. This view is also shared by other public administrators, including A19, A26, and A28.

For A19, who strongly emphasized that policy development must be based on evidence, freedom of expression is vital for a democratic country and government

must listen to all feedback from citizens. Its value for policy development should be determined:

We live in a democratic country, so we are free to express our opinions and the relevant party should listen and evaluate it ... [It is] an interesting scenario where interest groups write issues on their blogs and disseminate it to the public. To me, the government must listen to all these blogs irrespective of whether it's politically motivated (A19).

According to A13, A26, and A28, there are several reasons for government to listen and benefit from citizens' inputs in e-democracy practices. The government can better understand citizens' needs, take swift action and take them into consideration when formulating policies. For A13, government has

to listen to what people are trying to tell us. At the executive level they do not exactly understand the way of life of people all over Malaysia, what are their real needs and conditions. Sometimes when they are developing the policy they do not see the whole picture ... they need the real life situation, the real inputs and feedback, at least to consider the suitability of the policy (A13).

A26 argued that

when we communicate we expect to relay the message to our target group, the citizens through technology. When it reaches the target group, we expect to get responses in any form either through ICTs or display of emotions. The government must be sensitive to these responses because it proliferates in great speed through hand phones, e-mails and so on. They must be sensitive to the responses, take actions, and not push it aside (A26).

For A28,

when people are getting more responsive toward the environment ... they are more aware of what's happening and they start asking questions, and the government starts to hear people's voices. Government policy will be more reflective of people's needs and desires rather than a top-down policy (A28).

Commentator C1, who focused her reflections on e-democracy practices from the community's perspective, claimed that citizens want government to listen to their voices and take necessary action. For her, e-democracy should enable

the majority of people to feel that they belong and feel that the system is actually listening to them. What people want is action and a system that can help them voice their opinions or problems and be assured that somebody is actually listening and taking action at the other end ... It is something positive if a government is not feeling overly sensitive and would allow people to comment on policies and issues, is willing to listen to grievances and differing views and opinions, and then sincerely take necessary actions (C1).

10.4.2. Public administrators

This section describes what is expected of public administrators for e-democracy. Evidence from fieldwork demonstrates that public administrators in the MFPS are expected to: adopt e-democracy practices; redefine their roles in public administration; build capacity for e-democracy; assign moderators for e-democracy; simplify the process for e-democracy; and utilize all sources of information.

10.4.2.1. Adopting e-democracy practices

32 percent of public administrators (A1, A6, A7, A10, A11, A15, A16, A19, A23, A25, A26, and A28) expected they would adopt e-democracy practices in public administration. Of the 12 public administrators who favored this view, five were 46 years and over; five were from 36-45 years group; and two were from 25-35 years group. Older public administrators felt strongly that e-democracy should be institutionalized in the public service. The public administrators in charge of policy development, eight from the PTD Service and three from Social Service (who will eventually manage such practices in their job functions), deemed e-democracy as more important, compared to one PTM officer who was more concerned about ICT support for such practices. A detailed analysis of these attributes is shown in Table 10-3.

Table 10-3 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and expectations for adopting e-democracy practices

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning the expectation		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	
Age group			% (*)
25-35 years	2	16%	18% (11)
36-45 years	5	42%	45% (11)
46 years and over	5	42%	31% (16)
Total	12	100%	32% (38)
Schemes of Service			% (*)
PTD	8	67%	44% (18)
PTM	1	8%	7% (15)

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning the expectation		% of the 38 public administrators
	No. of public administrators	%	
Social	3	25%	100% (3)
Total	12	100%	32% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

A6 felt that public administrators “should look into [e-democracy] seriously and try to adapt and adopt whatever is possible and may be to a certain extent put it into policy development ... We shouldn’t brush it aside” (A6).

As argued by A1, public administrators will adopt e-democracy if they know that e-democracy is “meant to help [them] come up with better policies, will help to expedite certain things because [they] are getting a lot of help from the people outside” (A1).

For A10 and A15, the utilization of inputs from policy-based e-democracy practices, as discussed in Chapter 8, is expected to generate better policies by virtue of policy makers having a fuller view of issues surrounding such policies:

They also urge the government to formulate policies that stand the test of time. So, I hope that e-democracy will contribute towards better policy formulation (A10).

[Public administrators] need feedback from all stakeholders. I would say that a good policy is designed by considering all factors involved (A15).

For A19 and A26, public administrators must adopt e-democracy to benefit from the wealth of inputs obtainable from such practices. To A19, who favored an evidence-based policy development, public administrators “should use all the data ... [because the] ... data might suggest a different approach to the policy” (A19).

To A26, who was very excited with the development of ICTs, something which he was not exposed to while working at the district level, departments which are involved in policy development must utilize inputs from e-democracy because

there is a wealth of information provided through ICTs ... [and] all public administrators must have interest to use ICTs to improve their knowledge. We must promote to these public administrators that information is just at their finger tips ... They must take advantage of that (A26).

A16 asserted that adopting e-democracy “will also allow public administrators to develop their knowledge” (A16) about issues surrounding a particular policy.

A26 and A28 argued that public administrators must adopt e-democracy to avoid failure in service delivery and develop better policies.

[Public] administrators must change to accept and use ICTs ... because they are the front liners who will implement and deliver government’s policy. Failure of public administrators to deliver will reflect on the leadership badly (A26).

I think a government agency cannot formulate a policy without the views of citizens. People are going to make comments and complaints about government’s policy, activities, and the way they spend money nowadays ... so government cannot avoid public consultation (A28).

The utilization of inputs from issue-based e-democracy practices (see Chapter 8) is expected to improve service delivery and related policy development (A7, A11, A23, A25, C4, and C7).

A7 pointed out that public administrators

have to look into and consider the inputs in order to increase the quality of service. For example, e-democracy can help them pick up issues on water services which are very important to individuals as well as corporations. From there, we can try to improve and see whether we meet consumer expectations (A7).

A23, a senior public administrator with a PhD degree, felt that when public administrators adopt e-democracy, they can benefit from such practices. He believed that citizens can “help to provide feedback and ultimately [there will be] better services to the public” (A23).

As argued by A25, government agencies, especially operational ministries, must capitalize on ICTs to improve their service delivery. To him, public administrators must utilize e-democracy to acquire inputs about issues surrounding a particular service delivery in order to improve it.

Service oriented departments such as JPJ [a Malay acronym for Road Transport Department], Customs, Income Tax, and Immigration are not hearing praises because the public undergo process of humiliation, of waiting, rudeness, which is why they don’t appreciate these departments. People are still very skeptical about them as they are not up to the mark yet; unlike services which have been privatized such as the post offices ... I think these departments especially those which are service-oriented need to overcome their shortcomings [and focus on] ...

the delivery system of the government where departments should optimize on the use of ICTs (A25).

C4, an academic who was critical of public administration, anticipated that public administrators should “use ICTs in their daily activities ... [and] utilize ICTs in order to improve their services, to increase their ability to respond to all complaints faster and more effectively” (C4).

For C7, adoption of e-democracy by public administration will strengthen the decision-making process of government. For him, public administrators can benefit from fast information-gathering afforded by e-democracy practices to formulate a new policy for any service delivery:

[The] electronic media can be used to facilitate and get feedback quickly and enable [the government] to formulate a new strategy quickly ... From a public perspective, basically they just want something to be done efficiently. The decision process is done efficiently, public services is done efficiently ... [For] example now, you can get your passport within two hours and for those with experience of having to wait seven to 14 days before, that is a vast difference (C7).

10.4.2.2. Redefining roles in public administration

As discussed in Chapter 2, Kettl (2007) suggested that public administrators reposition themselves, by adapting to changes brought by e-democracy, to effectively bridge relation between citizens and government in the new public governance. Some 21 percent of interviewees (A16, A18, A21, A24, A26, A28, C1, C2, C4, C7, and C9), believed that public administrators are expected to reorganize their roles for e-democracy. Two of six public administrators who favored this view were aged 36-45 years and the balance were 46 years and over, as shown in Table 10-4.

Table 10-4 Attribute analysis: Public administrators and expectations for redefining roles in public administration

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning the expectation		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	
Age group			% (*)
36-45 years	2	33%	18% (11)
46 years and over	6	67%	38% (16)
Total	8	100%	21% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

It seemed that younger administrators saw a need to redefine expert and strategic roles of public administrators in public administration (as discussed in Chapter 9).

A16, a senior public administrator whose experience in the public service was about policy development, felt that the public administrators' function in e-democracy should be clearly defined. To him, recognition of this function, as complex policy activists or analysts compared to collectors of inputs, will encourage such practices in public administration:

[Some] traditional functions played by administrators will need adjustments ... If we can highlight the role of public administrators in e-democracy, to be more than just processing which will bring down the image of the public service, then it will increase support towards its implementation (A16).

A senior public administrator, A28, believed that ICTs had been very influential in shaping the working culture of public administrators (see Chapter 9). For him, public administrators must create a new strategy to justify their roles in a new more open environment:

[The] public administrators are forced to change their [roles] and adapt to the culture of openness (A28).

A18, A21, and A26 asserted that ICTs and the introduction of e-democracy will benefit public administrators in the policy development process. Public administrators must adapt to and utilize such technologies:

[When] we introduce new technologies, people on the receiving end must accept that things are changing and it is for the better. They must adjust themselves to it (A18).

For A21, public administrators should adapt to existing policies – on non-censorship of the Internet which is parallel to the provision of better ICT infrastructure (see Chapter 4) – to remain relevant in public administration:

We've said that there is no censorship of the Internet, right. Public opinions are important – we cannot put these aside. When we provide the infrastructure, we cannot say that you cannot do blogging and so on. You can't sustain that for very long, you know. The world is moving, we've to open up and we have to improve (A21).

As argued by A26, “public administrators must change to accept and use ICTs ... because they are the front liners who will implement and deliver government's policy” (A26).

C4 believed that public administrators must accustom themselves to ICTs and e-democracy practices.

I hope the public administrator will understand the current market trend of the people towards the government or towards them, and enable them to reposition themselves accordingly. If they are not good, they have to learn, if they do not know how to use the e-mail for example, then they have to start using it and make it part of their daily practice (C4).

While relating his personal experience with ICT in a remote district, before being transferred to a ministry at federal level, A24 felt that public administrators must reposition themselves.

Public administrators must accept that it's a borderless world now. They will be swept aside if they do not keep up with current changes... Public administrators must change from not using ICT to embrace and utilize it to the fullest. I was posted at Kuala Pilah district five years ago where I did not use much PC and internet, but here I've to use e-mails everyday otherwise I cannot complete my tasks effectively (A24).

C2, who was once a public administrator in Engineering scheme of service before he joined the private sector, argued that an appreciation of e-democracy practices must be led by public administrators at top management level. For him, these public administrators must believe that such practices are useful for policy development before any rethinking about changing public administrators' roles can happen. The success

of any e-project will depend very much upon government officers, especially those with higher authority, changing their mentality towards being more appreciative of the positive impact of these projects (C2).

For C9, in terms of transformation and redefining their roles, public administrators

have no choice, they have to because the world is changing rapidly. If Malaysia is to be a developed country, there is no choice but to adhere to global standards, which means that using the latest technology to make life here as what Australia and Finland have (C9).

C9 also observed that public administrators are responsible for citizens' wellbeing. For him, Malaysia's transformation into a developed country is at stake if they fail to redefine their roles in the information age (as discussed in Chapter 2). To C9, the MFPS can spearhead change in style of governance through strategic positioning by public administrators in utilizing inputs from e-democracy practices. C9 asserted that only the MFPS can lead such change.

The government needs to move away from the mindset of the public as the servant, but they are there to serve the public. The biggest public provider is government, if they don't put their act together nobody else will. The government sets the tone for the transformation (C9).

For C7, a manager of the regulatory division of a local telecommunications company with prior experience in two government-linked companies, a takeover is the main reason for public administrators resisting e-democracy practices. For him, the existence of public administrators is validated by control over their traditional role in public administration (as discussed in Chapter 2):

I think certain quarters of the administration may not be ready to relinquish control ... [and] the fear is that you lose control and then you have no recourse ... [This is because] if the system takes over your job, what is your existence? (C7).

C7 further suggested that public administrators must position themselves as facilitators of e-democracy practices. In his opinion, public administrators will be more likely to accept e-democracy as a tool when they have developed a new approach to maximizing inputs utilization from such practices:

I think the public administrators themselves, they need to see their role as a facilitator or a strategic thinker. Because what e-democracy would do is actually, when you use e-democracy or the electronic media as a tool for you to get feedback. So if you see your role as facilitator, changing skill sets from maybe conducting meetings to facilitating a discourse or getting feedback, then I have a role to play. Then the electronic device becomes a tool. In implementing certain systems, you need to think ahead, because you need to plan. If this role is taken up by the public administrator, then the fear to implement such a tool becomes depleted. Then I think the acceptance will then accelerate the implementation (C7).

10.4.2.3. Building capacity for e-democracy

Public administrators in the MFPS are anticipated to be experts in policy development process (see Chapters 3 and 8). Two points related to capacity building for e-democracy in Malaysia emerged from data analysis, namely understanding of e-democracy concepts and required skills, as well as public administrators' capacity for a fast response.

A point made by six interviewees was that public administrators who are given the responsibility to conduct and manage e-democracy practices must be well-versed in such practices (A4, A18, A33, C2, C7, and C9). A high expectation for an understanding of concept and related skills is placed on public administrators for the employment of e-democracy.

As argued by A4, a senior public administrator with a Masters degree in Information Systems, these public administrators must be skilled in utilizing a particular e-democracy system and understand the system to avoid potential repercussions.

The administrators must know exactly what this e-democracy is all about and they must use it before they can implement it (A4).

In support of this view, C7 asserted that a lack of conceptual understanding about such a concept will lead to potential failure of e-democracy implementation:

Now I think the fear of the unknown is usually a hindrance to the implementation, because the big picture may not be there (C7).

In A33's opinion, public administrators appointed to the public service are very capable. This is due to a stringent process of recruitment, which is heavily based on individual qualifications (see Chapter 2). It is the responsibility of public administrators however to keep up with the latest developments in service delivery. Skills and knowledge about e-democracy must be acquired by public administrators. A33 argued that if

[y]ou do know what you are doing, you do know why you are here, why you joined the service, why you become a public administrator, you understand the needs of e-democracy or e-government or electronic communication, the barriers to it, the accessibility of information and the limitation if such information. If you know all these and you understand the whole thing, then [e-democracy] shouldn't be a problem (A33).

For C4, public administrators' complacency about expanding their horizons is unacceptable. He asserted that ICT utilization in public administration is below average. For him, public administrators must improve their ICT skills to effectively engage with citizens who are more exposed to online information:

In terms of learning, they need to use ICT to gather information, generate knowledge and to improve themselves to be able to increase their understanding of public expectation and the changes towards public involvement ... To me, even with the present usage of ICT, there is still a problem of lack of information and the management of information in the public administration is still far from the mark. To become a good administrator requires us to have a high level of awareness, sensitivity, efficiency, effectiveness and the willingness to use new technologies, in order to improve our capability and expedite delivery. It is a shame that some public administrators do not have the drive to learn and they lack initiative to improve themselves (C4).

A18, a senior head of department whose reflections were mostly based on ICT project management experience, insisted that public administrators must learn about best e-democracy practices from their counterparts in the United States, Finland, and Australia. For him, public administrators can master e-democracy skills from sharing their experiences:

We need to learn from countries that have had experience, how they have developed and adapted e-democracy systems for citizens (A18).

The importance of having skilled public administrators to conduct e-democracy for policy development was also observed by C2, vice-president of a private telecommunications company. To him,

Enablers and tools without people at the receiving end being responsive to the inputs, will not make e-democracy effective. This will need a revolution whereby not only are tools in place but also the capacity [of the public administrators] (C2).

Another point repeatedly made by interviewees (A7, A14, A21, A23, C1, C2, C4, and C5) was the capacity of public administrators to rapidly respond to citizens with valid information in e-democracy practices. A senior public administrator, A23 observed that public administrators are expected to equal citizens' rate of response. For him, such commitment must be made compulsory to ensure the effectiveness of e-democracy practices:

Nowadays people want everything to be fast and this includes when they are communicating with the government. Therefore they would expect their contributions to be acknowledged and they also would want to know what actions have been taken. It is expected that the government be equally fast paced. Therefore, response time must be fast and our commitment to this must be reflected by our clients' charter (A23).

C11, an outspoken commentator, put the matter of public administrators' commitment via client charter less subtly than most:

Every government department has the client charter, only if they properly carry out the pledges. Mean what you say. They are there for a reason, as a yardstick so that we can perform. If you're nearly there, we accept it (C11).

A14 observed that for e-democracy the most

important things which have to be considered after providing such channels for the public [is] how quickly can the [public administrators] reply or take actions pertaining to issues raised in [such] interactions (A14).

A21 and A7 agreed that citizens "want there to be changes and information or feedback and improvement" (A21, A7).

C1, an academic who researches on ICT and community, pointed to some recent missing children cases in which citizens were asked to provide inputs to local newspapers:

We read in newspapers that it is being discussed, but the action needs to be very fast as this is a public concern. That is why, when we implement e-democracy and get people to voice their opinion, we must make sure that there are immediate follow-ups and these actions have to be seen to be taken. Therefore, whatever system we implement, the bottom line is fast results (C1).

Another commentator, C4, believed that for e-democracy to be effective, public administrators must improve their ICT skills. Relating his own experience in communicating with KSN (the common Malay abbreviation for the Chief Secretary to government) via the electronic mailing system, C4 felt that the response he received was poor. For him, the KSN responded quickly to his request, but the follow-up from relevant public administrators charged with the task was slow. Such weaknesses will affect the way citizens value e-democracy practices in future:

The only thing which I don't think we will be able to resolve in the near future is in terms of implementation, in terms of the response from the government and the officials towards the complaint that we make. It is very slow. I just wrote to the KSN two days ago, complaining again regarding an application made in April by a person who is asking for a transfer, but has received no reply. The KSN replied to me immediately and promised and that the ministry will respond the latest by 16th May. When the reply did not come I wrote again but have yet to receive a reply. Then again about promises, you keep ensuring people about delivering good service using ICT but in terms of implementation it is still very slow. This affects the government (C4).

C5, an editor of an electronic media organization, believed e-democracy can facilitate communication between citizens and government:

I think e-democracy will allow people to give feedback, and provide their views on certain issues more efficiently and easily, and it will allow government to respond to those issues faster. However, this would also depend on the credibility of the government, whether actual actions are being taken. If the government shows that they are actually responding to the issues brought up then people would write in or participate (C5).

In C2's opinion, a prompt response from public administrators to issues raised through e-democracy must be formalized and become a standard in such practice. The public administrators are expected to respond within a reasonable time frame.

10.4.2.4. Assigning moderators for e-democracy

Moderators play an important role in e-democracy practices (as discussed in Chapter 2). Eight interviewees (A7, A14, A33, C1, C2, C7, C8, and C11) argued that the MFPS should employ moderators to efficiently manage e-democracy in Malaysia.

C7, whose prior experience in two government-linked companies enabled him to reflect on e-democracy practices and policy development from a public and private sector view, was of the opinion that e-democracy poses a challenge to public administrators in managing mass inputs for policy development.

The electronic media or originally the advent of the Internet basically has at least, from my observation, democratized the minds of the people ... Because of the electronic form, our opinions are affected almost on an hourly basis because of what we read or how we are influenced by the electronic media. The only challenge at the moment from the government perspective is how to collate and manage this opinion in order to form relevant policies (C7).

For A7, a middle manager from the PTM scheme of service who was involved in the policy development process of a ministry, moderators should be specifically assigned for e-democracy practices in public administration to meet the challenge put forward by C7 above. In her opinion, this step will ensure better attainment of e-democracy objectives and the possibility of moderators performing as distribution managers can be minimized:

There should be personnel in charge specifically of gathering, managing and analyzing the inputs and not act merely as postman. Data should be gathered and analyzed in such a way that we are able to detect its performance in the management of public services (A7).

A12, who was articulate despite only three years of service, stressed that moderators should be neutral. For him, moderators can promote viable e-democracy practice and encourage more citizens to participate.

I think there should be transparency in e-democracy practices. The moderators should not be someone with personal interest on issues discussed (A12).

In A14's opinion, moderators must be trained to identify useful and relevant suggestions from the bad. He suggested that a specialized unit similar to the Customer Relations Management unit – which manages all public relations for a particular agency by Public Relation Officers (PRO) – be assigned as the moderator for e-democracy practices. In his view, moderators must be provided with adequate training related to managing and analyzing inputs from e-democracy.

Practices such as having Customer Relations Management units and call centers are good back office support for these e-democracy practices. [They] must be ... trained on how to handle online interactions, be it from people who actually give good suggestions or those who are only voicing out their anger or dissatisfaction (A14).

Supporting this view was C11, whose whole tone was of regret rather than condemnation. In his opinion, e-democracy will only provide a limited channel for citizens to voice their concerns if supervised by unqualified moderators who are not mandated to effectively manage such practices:

I don't see why they need [e-democracy] if they don't have qualified people to manage it, when you have people who are not empowered to answer the question. Just to accept the question and provide proof of acceptance, but down the line nobody is interested with it. It only gives us a limited avenue (C11).

For A33, a newly appointed public administrator to the PTD Service with a legal background, the moderators of e-democracy must "scan through" issues which are put forward online. She further explained this process as

reading through everything in order to identify and decide on the issue's relevancy or importance. Therefore, we have to get the expertise and the right people to do it (A33).

Elaborating on this view, A33 emphasized that moderators must prevent emotionally charged discussions from clouding their judgments. In her view, moderators must intervene and correct such discussion to avoid negative assumptions on the part of the public administration and government:

The chit-chats on blogs are sometimes rubbish and [the moderator] shouldn't be getting too emotional about them. [They] have to think them through and then using decent words, in a diplomatic way try to rebut discussions which are not good or detrimental. I think that is what the government should do (A33).

In support of this view, C8, who held a key post in a civil society organization, felt that moderators must "take actions in ensuring that the information being provided on the net is true and those which are not true must be rebutted" (C8).

Other commentators, C5 and C11 – from two different NGOs – pointed out that their organizations appointed moderators to manage online forums on their respective websites. For them, such a process is necessary to avoid repercussion from any false claims made by users of these forums:

[W]e get attacked by people, so we have a search engine that will pick up postings that mention [our site's name] so that we can track if someone says that we were wrong on an issue, for example. We can accept disagreements but if someone says that we are factually wrong we will respond and not ignore it. The same thing should apply with government departments and also companies. They have got to track the Internet, they have got no choice, and whatever the issues brought up, they will have to respond (C5).

Because sometimes people speak with emotion ... we don't want to jeopardize our website and organization. We've moderators who surf our website everyday to remove the nonsense. We don't want to get into any unnecessary legal mitigation (C11).

The general agreement is that the appointment of moderators for e-democracy in the MFPS is vital to ensure inputs can be effectively incorporated in policy documents.

10.4.2.5. Simplifying the process for e-democracy

Two characteristics of a bureaucratic organization (as discussed in Chapter 2) are a systematic division of labor, and functions of public administrators governed by a set of precise and extensive rules. These characteristics pose a substantive barrier to efficient e-democracy practices. Some interviewees (A5, A16, A35, and C2) expected simplification of public administration processes to overcome such barriers. Three points made by these interviewees were: information-sharing among government agencies should be increased; there should be uniform implementation of e-democracy across government agencies; and red tape in the MFPS should be minimized.

A35, a middle manager involved in ICT infrastructure design and management, who was concerned about redundancy of data in government agencies, believed that data sharing among government agencies should be improved for e-democracy. He admitted that some forms of data sharing have already occurred, but he felt that the situation should be improved to the point where all information from different government agencies could be accessed by citizens from one point or website. For him such a situation will ensure the success of e-democracy due to legitimacy of data made available to citizens:

I hope that everything will be at our fingertips and data sharing among government agencies is increased. Even though the data sharing part is happening, it's not extensive. These will ensure data validity (A35).

A senior public administrator, A5, observed differences in the implementation of e-democracy among government agencies.

For example, some government websites provide interactive spaces while others still have that 'traditional' website which only provides information which is a one way communication (A5).

To A5, various forms of e-democracy practices should be organized into coherent and standardized practices across all government agencies to project 'horizontalization' (see Chapter 3) or 'whole-of-government' concepts (see Chapter 2).

Acknowledging the importance of clear sets of rules for bureaucratic organizations, A16 was of the opinion that red tape surrounding e-democracy practices should be minimized. Excessive red tape may hinder effective implementation of e-democracy in the public administration.

Bureaucracies cannot be avoided in the public administration in order to maintain standards between processes. No doubt, red tape is also problematic but they must exist in intelligent ways and no more than necessary (A16).

C2, who was familiar with the culture and the policy development process in public administration, suggested that a number of bureaucratic practices should utilize electronic means to facilitate rapid communication within an organization. According to C2, such practices include sending electronic mails (e-mails) and SMS to replace hand-written memos as official documents. The impression was

that the capacity of public administrators to effectively engage with citizens can be improved (as discussed in 10.4.2.3). For him, public administration should embrace the paper less concept (see Chapter 4) to ensure successful implementation of e-democracy:

There are current processes which have to be looked into to lessen bureaucratic red tape. In the private sector, e-mails and SMS are already acceptable methods of communicating, thereby making communication faster while doing away with writing long memos or filling up forms. There is no question of things being in black and white only when it is written and signed. E-mails and SMS are considered black and white. The rule has to be that these processes are recognized as official enough or perhaps legalized enough for action to be taken (C2).

10.4.2.6. Utilizing all sources of information

As discussed in 10.4.1.7, government is expected to listen to citizens' voices in an e-democracy. It is assumed that public administrators will accept and analyze all inputs comprehensively, to realize such an expectation. Three interviewees (A1, A7, and A8) felt that all sources of information from e-democracy practices should be considered by public administrators with an open mind.

A middle manager in the Social Service, A1, believed that public administrators

need to be open minded about whatever is being put online ... It should be something for us to weigh whether there is some truth to it. [Public administrators] cannot just say that whatever is being posted on the blogs, if it doesn't belong to the government, it is something that is bad for the country. Democracy means you must be very open to any suggestion, any view, any criticism, because certain criticism actually helps the country. You cannot be very negative and say that whatever is being posted is actually going to kill the government (A1).

In support of this view, A7 and A8 observed that information found on some websites or blogs – hosted by opposition parties to government – is useful for policy development. For her, public administrators should be critical in analyzing this information and utilize it to sense the overarching themes of citizens' concerns. This is because such a

website might be hosted by those with a hidden agenda but you can still see citizen's views from there. The issues may be sensitive but it is up to the readers to evaluate their validity (A7).

In my opinion, blogs are not very reliable, but it will serve the purpose of finding out concerns and issues raised by the public. Information cannot be taken per se and would have to be filtered (A8).

Seven interviewees (A9, A21, A33, C2, C5, C8, and C11) took the view that blogs should be utilized as a source of bottom-up feedback for issue-based ‘inputs collection’ practice (see Chapter 9). A9 observed that public administrators should monitor blogs because they are “important to the government and these sites or blogs perhaps may act as their first source of information” (A9).

In support of this view, C11 emphasized it “would be good for the ministry to understand their problem by going to these websites [and blogs]” (C11).

A21, who monitors blogs as his main job function, observed that most blogs responded to shortcomings of objectives set for a particular policy and service delivery. For him, these blogs are significant for policy development:

You can now see that most blogs are actually very straight-forward. They are not criticizing the government but they are telling what they feel is not right and whether promises are fulfilled. They are telling what has to be corrected. They are giving constructive opinions which to me are very good for the government (A21).

A21 believed that public administrators who are sceptical about utilizing inputs from blogs should be encouraged to do so. A21 was of the opinion that such engagement will facilitate wide dissemination of government policies to citizens.

I think the blogs and all that are good sources of feedback, look at what they are saying and look at points for improvement ... I feel that government should just go in and engage with them. May be we can let them know what are the government policies ... but we must be transparent with integrity. There is nothing to hide (A21).

A33 asserted that information on some blogs is obtained from government websites. This information is presented with bloggers’ comments and threads of discussion contributed by readers of blogs. To A33, such blogs may be useful in policy development due to multiple perspectives or insights.

Even blogs administered by the NGOs or the opposition parties in fact sometimes point out issues which are very relevant and should be taken up or considered. These issues are sometimes taken from government-administered websites or blogs, for example, even from crawlers appearing on websites and the television (A33).

C5 agreed that blogs are useful for policy development in providing an overview of the general sentiment on an issue. However, he felt that public administrators

should be cautious about the influential nature of such blogs – and exercise impartiality:

I think the blogs and discussion groups on the Internet are good indications of how a section of people feel and they are quite influential in some ways (C5).

C2, who was enthusiastic about the potential of e-democracy for policy development, stressed that blogs

are usually more negative than positive. However, I have found a few which are positive. Once a blog is opened, you open up for anyone to provide their opinion or views. Some bloggers do not censor negative comments or opinions which appear on their blogs. Sometimes these entries are not intellectual enough and to a certain extent even demoralizing. Therefore, for policy development, we have to be careful and choose blogs which are suitable and bloggers who are able to control their participants and are good administrators of online discussions (C2).

C2's view underscores the importance of public administrators' diligence in utilizing blogs as one of the resources of information in an e-democracy. For him, a thorough analysis of the blog's content and the inclination of the blogger to influence certain perspectives should be conducted before this information could be incorporated in a policy.

A8, a middle manager from the PTM scheme of service who was involved in policy development in a ministry, suggested that public administrators create their own blogs, which follow clear predetermined objectives. For her, these blogs may provide more consistent inputs for policy development.

If you want blogs that are reliable, the government can offer or start such blogs which are implemented or run under proper guidelines (A8).

A20 shared A8's sentiments on public administrators running their own blogs for effective e-democracy. He provided an example of government bloggers in the United States, which may be applicable in the Malaysian context:

Our government lacks bloggers. It is not necessary to use blogs but I like the US government's website where they hired seven bloggers for each day of the week to write and mediate online discussions. Maybe we could have something like that in the future (A20).

10.4.3. Citizens

This section describes expectations for citizens to contribute to e-democracy practices, i.e., to participate and conduct themselves maturely..

10.4.3.1. To participate in e-democracy

Some 13 percent of public administrators (A19, A21, A26, A28, and A36) expected citizens to participate in e-democracy. This view is common across all schemes of service – two of the five public administrators from the PTD Service, one from the PTM Service, one from the Engineering Service and one from Social Service. Three of these five public administrators were aged more than 46 years, one aged 36-45 years, and one aged 25-35 years, as shown in Table 10-5.

Table 10-5 Attributes analysis: Public administrators and expectations for citizens to participate in e-democracy

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning the expectation		% of the 38 public administrators	
	No.	%	No.	% (*)
Age group				
25-35 years	1	20%	11	18% (11)
36-45 years	1	20%	11	18% (11)
46 years and over	3	60%	16	19% (16)
Total	5	100%	38	13% (38)
Schemes of service	No.	%	No.	% (*)
PTD	2	40%	18	11% (18)
PTM	1	20%	15	7% (15)
Engineering	1	20%	2	50% (2)
Social	1	20%	3	33% (3)
Total	5	100%	38	13% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

It seemed that the older generation of public administrators felt strongly about citizens' enthusiasm to participate in e-democracy practices. Their experience in managing offline citizen participation may have shaped such expectations.

A senior public administrator, A28, observed that Malaysian citizens are more open to the notion of providing inputs via e-democracy than traditional means, e.g., giving feedback in face-to-face meetings. For him, citizens want to be heard in determining public policy that affects them, particularly through NGOs and interest groups.

I think people are getting more open and responsive to the surroundings and government. They want to be able to voice their view and to be heard. The NGOs want to have their say in government decision-making through committees. I think they might want more representation from their organizations (A28).

For A19, e-democracy is

two way [communication] between public and government. The public should be free ... [E]ven as of now the KSN already introduced the open e-mail concept where they can write e-mails directly to him for feedback and complaints ... There should not be barriers between government and citizens. In a democratic country, citizens should be free to express [themselves] ... with ICT as a medium (A19).

A26 emphasized that the most important part of e-democracy is citizens' responses: "What we want is the response on these policies from the public" (A26).

The main motivation for citizens to participate in e-democracy practices, according to A36, is their consensus on policy drafted for them:

[We] prepared the plans for them so their awareness and participation is really needed. We want the consensus on what they need (A36).

As well as consensus, citizens are expected to participate with a certain level of education or knowledge about the issues or policy discussed. This is because policy development is a craft (as discussed in Chapter 2) and public administrators require feedback and inputs from e-democracy practices to be of a high quality to produce best policy. For A21, citizens should include sound evidence to support inputs:

I think with e-democracy, there must be participation from people with higher education because we want something constructive to paint a better future for our country (A21).

C2 echoed A21's sentiments and stressed that citizens should provide enough information in their feedback through e-democracy practices:

[Opinion-]giving needs a person to think through what he or she wants to put forward and also provide sufficient facts or information on the issue for the opinion to become valuable (C2).

10.4.3.2. To conduct themselves maturely

Public administrators expected citizens to act maturely in e-democracy practices. As discussed in Chapter 1, the population of Malaysia is a plural society whereby sensitive issues should be handled delicately by citizens who participate in e-

democracy. A19 stressed that citizens must exercise caution when voicing their concerns to avoid ramifications from other racial or interest groups:

We live in a democratic country, so we are free to express our opinions ... But, in our country you must also think about a sensitive issue, whether to discuss it publicly or not. We need mature writers (A19).

A33, who was generally less phlegmatic, shared A19's outlook:

I do hope that Malaysians will be well educated so that sharing of information, spreading of ideas or expression of ideas, must always be done in a very decent manner. Don't get too emotional, always think wisely and be diplomatic in whatever you do. You have to think twice before doing anything, be it online or otherwise. You have to know what e-democracy really means because it doesn't simply mean expressing your ideas each and every time, but it also means applying ideas coming from others. It is more like sharing. They give you the information, you think and you apply. If you are not in favor of the ideas, you do have the choice not to apply it, then simply sit back and do nothing, rather than create chaos (A33).

A33's view accentuated the need for a high level of understanding among citizens who participate in e-democracy. She outlined the concept of sharing one's opinion in a public domain, which requires self-discipline to avoid pandemonium in such practices.

10.4.4. Bloggers

We give bloggers freedom but constitutional rights should be respected. If you go beyond that then the government says, I'll catch you (A25).

A25's view of bloggers was based on his of experience monitoring blogs. He firmly believed that bloggers should adhere to the limitations set in the constitution (as discussed in Chapter 1).

A13, a newly appointed public administrator, was not as vocal as A25, but felt that "there is still needs to be a limitation to e-democracy because sometime people just like to make false claims and sedition, so there must be some control over that" (A13).

A33, a newly appointed public administrator to the PTD Service with a legal background, observed that in e-democracy practices

you shouldn't go beyond the limits. You need to be aware that there are limitations to everything and we have laws for them. Under the constitution for example, we

have the right to express ourselves, but in doing so we must realize that there are limitations to the freedom (A33).

A33 felt that bloggers should control themselves in e-democracy practices to avoid a negative impression. She strongly believed that bloggers

need to balance and not get emotional about everything. You have to think before expressing yourself online because there is always the possibility of people from foreign countries reading what you have written and having the impression that Malaysia is a bad country (A33).

In support of this view, C5, an editor of an electronic media organization, observed that some bloggers ignore such limitations and to a certain point, abuse the freedom provided by ICTs. C5's whole tone was admonitory as he voiced his expectation that bloggers should be more responsible in making accusations of malpractice, and should only do so when they have validated facts:

Some bloggers go overboard and I think in a few more years there will be a process where people will get a bit more responsible in terms of when they comment on things or when they are pointing out mistakes. They must realize that they also need to double check on their facts (C5).

Bloggers in Malaysia should exercise their rights responsibly through e-democracy. They should adhere to the limits within the law to benefit from e-democracy practices.

10.4.5. The younger generation in Malaysia

This section describes the role of the younger generation. As identified in the data analysis, the younger generation is expected to adopt e-democracy practices and bridge the gap that exists between them and the older generation.

10.4.5.1. The younger generation for e-democracy: 'F&F'

An observation repeatedly made by ten public administrators or 26 percent (A1, A3, A4, A11, A12, A13, A16, A20, A25, and A31), was that the role played by the younger generation for e-democracy in Malaysia was significant. Four of ten public administrators who held this view were from the 25-35 years age group, three from the 36-45 years age group, and three from the 46 years and over age group, as shown in Table 10-6.

Table 10-6 Attribute analysis: Public administrators and expectations for the younger generation for e-democracy

Attributes	Public administrators mentioning the expectation		% of the 38 public administrators
	No.	%	
Age group			% (*)
25-35 years	4	40%	36% (11)
36-45 years	3	30%	27% (11)
46 years and over	3	30%	19% (16)
Total	10	100%	26% (38)

(*) No. of public administrators with the attribute

It seemed that this view was unanimous – among representatives from all age groups – on the important role of the younger generation to realize e-democracy practices.

Malaysia’s demographic trend (as discussed in Chapter 1) is concentrated around those aged 15 to 64 years. C8 observed that such a concentration should facilitate the implementation of e-democracy:

Something good about Malaysia is that it has a big number of people in the middle class. Within this group IT [Information Technology] literacy is high. Therefore, the possibilities for extracting opinions from this group are high (C8).

The younger generation mentioned in this study – loosely referred to as those below 40 years – will adopt e-democracy practices with relative ease due to emerging generational characteristics. Three such characteristics – fast learner, free spirit, and free agent – were identified in this study, discussed below.

(1) Fast learner:

Five interviewees believed that the younger generation is faster at learning new technologies and practices (A12, A13, A16, C8, and C10). For them, this characteristic should facilitate the adoption of e-democracy practices. According to A12, a newly appointed public administrator to the PTD Service, the younger generation – especially those born in the 1990s – should be able to relate to e-democracy easily.

I think the younger generation ... that born in the 90s [which] has been exposed to ICT, [will] adopt [e-democracy] faster compared to the older generation. It may

take some time for them to adapt, but I think they will not resist. I think the younger generation will definitely take up these practices (A12).

The reasons for a rapid uptake of e-democracy, according to A11, are awareness of new technologies and frequency of technology usage by the younger generation:

The younger ones are more alert about the new technologies like broadband. We are used to using e-mails and the Internet. There are certain older public administrators who use the Internet, but not as often as the younger ones in gaining information and creating new ideas from citizens' opinions (A11).

However, A20 and A25 believed that the younger generation is always in a hurry and frequently in a state of excitement or confusion. They pursue the most recent information updates and naively accept the latest news without verifying its source.

A20, a senior public administrator involved in many government e-initiatives, observed that websites or portals providing constant updates, which include current news, will attract a higher number of younger users.

Our focus is news and continuous update which could attract the younger generation to use our portal (A20).

A25, who was involved in monitoring blogs, viewed that the energetic younger generation aspires to always be in the know about their surroundings. He provided some examples of younger users who frenetically search for information about Malaysia's current issues on blogs and disseminate such information through their own blogs without verifying content. Most contents in blogs created by young bloggers derive information from other blogs which they frequent. While expressing his anxiety over such practices, he felt that

e-democracy has motivated the public or the younger generation to support what [the oppositions] are saying [as] the truths. In other words they feel that the oppositions are the right people that they are telling the truth and are fighting for them. For them the government is full of cronies and corrupted people. Perhaps they feel that whatever is happening in the outside world is also happening in Malaysia (A25).

For C8, such a fervent belief about the younger generation should be managed through proper education (see section 10.4.1.4). For him, compared to the older generation, the younger generation conducts itself differently online and view issues from a different angle.

We are tackling the younger generation, a group which has its own perspectives, which may be very different from the older generations. Therefore ... educating the public [in civic competency], starting from the younger ones, is of utmost importance (C8).

(2) Free spirit:

The younger generation is also associated with a free spirit in adapting to ICTs. They are seen as experimenting with ICTs in daily life and at work. A middle manager, A1 believed that this generation will be a catalyst in the future implementation of e-democracy. For her, the younger generation simply does what they want and does not feel limited by social norms (see Chapters 2 and 3):

With the younger generation coming up who are open to new approaches, I think we will embark on it (A1).

For A3, the younger generation “would be more susceptible to [e-democracy], especially those below 40 years of age, as the Internet has somehow become a way of life, something which they cannot live without” (A3).

A4 was of the opinion that the younger generation’s ability to freely test and utilize new interactive ICTs enables them to easily adopt e-democracy practices.

[The] younger generation can use all [ICTs] new equipment to give their view all over the world (A4).

(3) Free agent:

Two interviewees (A20 and A31) observed that the younger generation can be described as a free agent in their online activities. This generation prefers their actions not being limited or controlled by anyone else, such as the government. This generation frequently forms online communities (as discussed in Chapter 1 at 1.5.5), which exist for a particular purpose and dissolve once that purpose is fulfilled.

A31, a newly appointed public administrator to the PTM Service, was opposed to the notion of imposing stricter control over ICTs usage, particularly among the younger generation. To him, “if you are too strict, with the younger generation, things can become worse” (A31).

For A20, who has experience implementing many government ICT initiatives, the younger generation should be facilitated by wireless mobile technology. In A20's view, e-democracy application should include such mobile technologies (as discussed in 10.2.3) to encourage participation from the younger generation:

ICT infrastructure should be wireless. For the government it can be fixed line but for the younger generation it must be wireless (A20).

All three emergent characteristics of the younger generation facilitate e-democracy adoption in the country. The researcher proposes this young group of people be called the "Fast and Free generation" (*F&F generation*), as described above.

10.4.5.2. Closing the generational gap between users

A point made by seven interviewees (A3, A6, A16, A17, A10, C4, and C10) was that there is a gap in ICT adoption between the F&F generation and the older generation in the country. They expected the gap would need to be bridged, for effective implementation of e-democracy. C10, an ICT consultant who was a former chief executive officer of a government-linked company and involved in major ICT policy development in the country, expressed his concern over this situation:

The young people are taking it up very well, there is this generational gap. They are doing very well whereas the older generation is not doing too well. I fear for those in the rural areas ... and those who still have this rural mindset and cannot see ... the ICT ways (C10).

A3 observed that some "of the older generation has still not gotten used to things like reading e-mails and the news online and would prefer the newspapers" (A3).

A17, a newly appointed public administrator involved in the ISP of government agencies, felt that it is difficult for some older public administrators to adopt ICTs. She provided an example from her own experience of such difficulty in ICT adoption among the older generation:

For example, in our strategic plan we mentioned that there must be a one-to-one PC for all public administrators to enable online administrative applications like annual leave and so on. But, some public administrators still continue using the manual forms even though they've the PC in front of them. There are instances where these older public administrators who do not even know how to operate the keyboard and mouse, but after some training they are getting used to it (A17).

A senior public administrator, A16, observed a promising development in public administrators' appointments (see Chapter 3). He believed that

most of those appointed ten or 15 years back, who are now becoming executive managers and top managers, are more appreciative of ICTs and are more able to appreciate and adjust themselves to new technologies (A16).

A16's view underscores the paradigm shift between different generations of public administrators. The younger generation of public administrators, holding higher posts in the MFPS, are more willing to experiment with ICTs and the recent directive from the Chief Secretary to use more ICT excites them. The older generation, however, remains sceptical of the effectiveness of ICTs.

For A10, a young and newly appointed public administrator to the PTD Service, the older generation of public administrators should be comfortable with e-democracy, because the applications are easy to use. According to A10, "there are some older public administrators who are a bit open and want to learn as long as the system is user friendly" (A10).

She believed there is no assurance that the F&F generation will utilize e-democracy applications any more than the older generation. For her, the F&F generation's enthusiasm for browsing online forums, blogs, and websites will not guarantee a higher degree of participation in e-democracy practices.

They might be interested to access the portals or the blogs, but in contributing ideas it would be just like the older generation (A10).

C4, a political science academic, echoed A10's sentiments and asserted that e-democracy may be less appealing to some of the younger generation, especially those from a social sciences background. He observed that e-democracy will not attract participation, "even those in the younger generation, what's more those who graduated from the social sciences ... some are just not interested" (C4). For him, regardless of age, an individual must possess an awareness of the importance of ICTs to be involved in the practices of e-democracy.

10.5. Other expectations of e-democracy practices

This section describes other expectations of e-democracy in Malaysia. The identified expectations are for e-democracy to: replace the traditional general election; provide a supplementary channel for young public administrators; promote transparency to reduce corruption; and create a robust society.

10.5.1. Replacing the traditional general election

Two interviewees (A12 and C2) anticipated that e-democracy will replace the manual general election in Malaysia. A newly appointed public administrator, A12, expected that in the future the traditional general election, which requires voters to visit polling stations to cast their votes, will be replaced by e-voting. In his view, e-voting should be able to promote transparency.

I hope we can have online voting replacing our manual general election ... so that questions about transparency can be avoided (A12).

C2 suggested introducing e-voting. He believed that Malaysia has sufficient ICT infrastructure to implement e-voting and it will facilitate the election:

We can start off with online elections. In the US for example, online elections were already in place back in 1987. People are updated on vote counts as the voting is taking place. The process is faster with no long queues and there are minimal incidents of spoiled votes. We can have this in Malaysia because ... networks and equipment are sufficiently in place (C2).

10.5.2. A supplementary channel for young public administrators

A12, a younger public administrator, felt that e-democracy should be utilized as a channel for younger public administrators in the MFPS to voice their views. His reflection was linked to a number of disappointments when expressing his ideas in numerous meetings with top management:

From my experience, in public service the young public administrators could not voice out their views in the organization freely. I hope with the implementation of e-democracy, there would be more opportunities for the young public administrators to give their views. Sometime it might be useful for [top managers] to listen to what [the young public administrators] have to say before making any decision (A12).

In support of A12's view, A27 felt that e-democracy may facilitate better expression of ideas. She was of the opinion that sometimes "it's better to express one's thoughts in writing" (A27) such as online forums and blogs.

10.5.3. Promote transparency to reduce corruption

Five interviewees (A3, A6, A20, A28, and C9) expected e-democracy practices to increase transparency in public administration by minimizing face-to-face interaction to eventually reduce corruption. This view is common for any ICT initiatives, especially e-government (as discussed in Chapter 4). A3, a middle manager from the PTM Service, strongly believed that e-democracy "will make the processes [of public administration] more transparent and more sincere" (A3).

A6, a middle manager, felt that "the positive side to e-democracy is about integrity and transparency" (A6). A28, a senior public administrator, observed that citizens are becoming more aware of the way government performs its functions. In his opinion, e-democracy may facilitate greater transparency in public administration and policy development:

I think a government agency cannot formulate a policy without the views of citizens. People are going to make comments and complaints about the government's policy, activities, and the way they spend money nowadays. Now, citizens want transparency, they want the government to be transparent on what they are doing (A28).

In support of these views, C9 strongly believed that e-democracy may "instil better governance, best practices, and greater transparency [in public governance]" (C9).

A20, a senior public administrator involved in several e-government initiatives, asserted that e-democracy practices may reduce corruption in the MFPS. He felt that e-democracy facilitates greater online interaction between government and citizens, which indirectly results in a reduction of corrupt practice:

When we talk about democracy, there must be transparency so that corruption can be minimized, so when we leverage on ICT and increase online government-citizens interaction, we can achieve that. Some agencies are focusing on reducing corruption alone but if we can increase these online interactions I think we can reduce corruption. That's what we hope for the future (A20).

10.5.4. Creating a robust society

Three interviewees (A25, C6 and C10) were of the opinion that e-democracy practices may contribute towards facing one of the challenges – creation of a robust society – set in Vision 2020 (as discussed in Chapter 4). By ‘robust’, interviewees meant harmonious, knowledgeable, and confident. To them, e-democracy practices may restore peace in relations between government and citizens, lead to the formation of a knowledge society and eventually the creation of a robust society.

A25 observed that e-democracy

will bring some positive changes among the government staff and at the same time, in the long run, it can benefit the government, the public and the country. We are talking about the long run because anything we introduce, we need time to adjust to it. This is called the adjustment period... Therefore, maybe in the long run, this will bring some positive results to the country and it will bring good harmony between public and the government (A25).

C10, who was passionate about the concept of a knowledge society, observed that current online practices promote many opportunities for citizens to acquire new knowledge and apply such knowledge in their daily life. For him, a knowledge society will be empowered to exercise its rights:

I wouldn't say e-democracy. I would be interested in the knowledge society. The knowledge society would be a society where every individual really has the opportunity to be heard, not based on his politics, religion or inclinations but it depends on how fast [a person] can learn and how fast [a person] can apply the knowledge. I am not talking about economic sense alone but everything else. We must be learners, fast learners. That is what a knowledge society is all about (C10).

C6 was reluctant to identify any e-democracy practices in Malaysia which fulfil his ideals of such practices. He believed that e-democracy should facilitate the formation of a robust society in Malaysia via promotion of more proactive and confident citizens.

I think at the end the expectation would be to develop a more robust society ... I think that the way that our society operates, if we can become more confident, if we think that we have more of a role in the way that things are said and done, than that would put in better stead to affect everything around us, we would become less reactive and more proactive. So I think e-democracy will give us just that kind of confidence (C6).

10.6. Conclusion

This chapter has identified three major categories of expectations of e-democracy practices in Malaysia, namely design, process, and roles of key players. The expectations of e-democracy design cover the importance of infrastructure for access, maximization of existing infrastructure, ubiquitous equipment, user-friendly applications, relevant content, well-balanced application, and alternative channels for inputs. The categories of e-democracy process include a centralized coordinating agency, a neutral space and process, as well as critical mass for participation. The main category of expectations involves the role of key players in e-democracy: government to effectively administer e-democracy practices, public administrators to organize the design and processes of e-democracy, and citizens, bloggers, and the younger generation (or the F&F generation) to perform and participate in e-democracy practices.

As discussed in Chapter 5, these expectations represent changes brought about in ICT infrastructure design, the institutional objectives and policies for e-democracy in Malaysia's democratic practices and model, as well as in key players, such as public administrators and citizens. These expectations reveal social issues surrounding the design, processes, and practices of e-democracy to provide deeper understanding of such practices in the MFPS.

Chapter 12 revisits a number of these expectations to propose recommendations for future implementation of e-democracy practices in Malaysia.

11. Making sense of e-democracy and public administrators in Malaysia

11.1. Introduction

*Bumi jangan lembang, pemalu jangan patah, ular biar mati*¹⁶

This chapter discusses two themes: (i) the emerging nature of enacted e-democracy practices and emergent roles of e-democracy practices in policy development. Key findings from data analysis as described in the preceding four chapters are brought together. They are synthesized to characterize the emerging nature of enacted e-democracy practices and answer the question, ‘What does e-democracy mean in Malaysia?’ (see Chapter 1). These findings allow a deeper understanding of how e-democracy practices informs public administrators in policy development in Malaysia, and consequently contributes to addressing the primary question of this study:

- How do interactive ICTs (as part of e-democracy) inform Malaysian public administrators in developing policies?

11.2. Nature of enacted e-democracy practices in Malaysia

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, e-democracy in this study is generally defined as, the utilization of interactive Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) between public administrators and citizens to inform, vote, poll, and discuss public policy. Chapters 7, 8, and 9, have described how public administrators draw upon the modalities – facility, norm, and interpretive scheme – to enact four practices of e-democracy, namely inputs collection, information exchange, communication, and electronification. These practices are enacted by public administrators to make sense of two ICT purposes.

¹⁶ A Malay saying – “Let not the earth be depressed, or the stick be broken, but let the snake be killed.” According to Brown (1959), the English equivalent is “Husband your resources”, which envisages the notion of achieving one’s objective, “but see that there is no needless waste of the means you employ, and ‘make a neat job of it’” (p. 109).

The first purpose can be categorized as the equitable provision of access to the Internet and its application. The focus is on ICTs being fairly accessible to all citizens (see Chapter 4), as evidenced by expressed concerns that design of e-democracy initiatives should consider the provision of equitable access to the Internet and its applications and the employment of ubiquitous equipment (see Chapter 10, sections 10.2.1 and 10.2.3). A number of interviewees agreed that these factors enhance inputs collection and generally assist the move towards a more democratic inclusion of citizens in the policy development process.

The second purpose is related to the enhancement of the work of public administrators. More particularly, this purpose refers to ICTs improving the quality of government service delivery via the Internet. Public administrators in interviews agreed that ICTs in general enhance government service delivery. Especially evident are augmentations of efficiency in service delivery, which have been achieved through implementation of initiatives for e-government projects (see Chapter 1). Utilizing government online services provide citizens with the ability to give feedback and file complaints. Citizens are thus being empowered to voice their concerns and raise issues with regard to government service delivery. This enhances inputs collection for policy development and further supports a move towards more democratic inclusion of citizens.

11.2.1. Interactive ICTs for e-democracy practices

The findings suggest that the websites and portals of federal government were essentially utilized for all four practices of e-democracy. Public administrators, especially older ones, were astounded by the wealth of information to be obtained. Their exposure to websites and portals through e-government initiatives reinforced the significance of such software for e-democracy practices for public administrators. In relation to this realization, the findings suggest that the design of e-democracy must be able to adapt to rapidly evolving technology and further increase the effectiveness and usability of government websites and portals (see Chapter 10, section 10.2.6). It was also suggested that e-democracy websites and portals publish substantial and relevant information on policies to make the

gathering of feedback for policy development more effective (see Chapter 10, section 10.2.5 and subsection 10.4.1.5).

Separate from government-initiated websites and portals, a few private websites hosted by non-governmental organizations or groups of citizens were recognized as beneficial for public administrators. A number of interviewees admitted that these sites have content that may help broaden the perspectives of public administrators on public policy issues. Some pointed out that such sites also provide platforms for public administrators and citizens, as users, to exchange information on issues surrounding a particular public policy. Information obtained from these discussions may generate valuable insights and contribute to ensuring that the needs of various parties and groups are taken into consideration when developing new public policy.

The findings also indicate five applications as significant for the enacted practices of e-democracy, namely weblog or blog, online forum, online voting, online polling, and online petitions. Weblogs or blogs were found to be important for 'information exchange' and 'communication' practices, especially when public administrators were instructed to read blogs which discuss issues related to their job functions. It was observed that public administrators themselves were expected to utilize all available sources of online information to assist in their policy development role (see in Chapter 10, subsection 10.4.2.6). There was general agreement among public administrators however that some bloggers tended to abuse blogs by publishing libelous accusations about public administrators and government in general. In order to curb such abuse, it was expected that government regulate blogs (see Chapter 10, subsection 10.4.1.6).

Recently, the Prime Minister Datuk Najib Razak (2009a) in his blog called 1Malaysia, advised that online material should always be published with integrity. He suggested that bloggers in Malaysia adopt the Bloggers' Code of Ethics (as promoted by CyberJournalist.net, with a modification from the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics), which encourages bloggers to ensure

honesty and fair publication. Bloggers are also expected to minimize harm and be accountable for their publications.

The online forum is important for e-democracy practices, particularly 'information exchange'. A few public administrators, especially the F&F generation, agreed that online forums facilitate fast information sharing, for example, among colleagues in the same service (see Chapter 9, section 9.3.3). Through online forums public administrators are able to discuss issues that are important to them, such as, new skills required or strategies to be implemented in relation to their service. Online forums generally allow them to keep abreast with the latest developments in their area of expertise, which they recognize as vital to maintaining their role as expert public service, to be able to develop comprehensive public policies (see Chapter 2). Such information-sharing practices which were previously limited or lacking due to physical and time barriers are now made possible by online forums.

'Electronification' practice involved the utilization of online voting, polling or petitions. The sentiment among public administrators was that such software was utilized in most government websites to gauge public opinion on public policies. Online voting or polling featured simple steps like clicking the mouse to choose a multiple choice answer. Most felt that these simple features encouraged citizens to engage with government. Inputs collected are also structured, which are more convenient for public administrators to consider and subsequently incorporate in policy documents. Simple steps in online voting or polling are aligned with the expectation that design of e-democracy should be user-friendly (see Chapter 10, section 10.2.4). Two interviewees also expressed their expectation that online voting should in future replace the manual method of voting in general elections. While some acknowledged and experienced online voting practices conducted for elections of student representatives at university level, there was no mention of any other evidence of e-voting practices at any level in Malaysia. Most agreed that 'electronification' practice acclimatizes Malaysians to online voting. It may assist in eventually realizing the future replacement of the manual method of voting in general elections (see Chapter 10, section 10.5.1).

Since e-democracy practices involve citizens' participation, the findings show that public administrators and citizens could enact e-democracy practices via other ICT elements:

- hardware – phones (both fixed and mobile), desktop computers (DC), and (television (TV), mainly for promoting some initiatives of 'inputs collection' practice);
- systems – electronic mail (e-mail), and Short Messaging System (SMS) for 'inputs collection' practice; and
- networks – Local Area Network (LAN), Public Campus Network (PCN) in Putrajaya, Wide Area Network (WAN), EGnet (E-Government Network) outside Putrajaya and the Internet.

(i) Hardware:

The findings suggest that ease of use is the main reason public administrators and citizens prefer to utilize phones (both fixed and mobile) for e-democracy practices. Another reason for such a preference was the phone technology's capability to provide faster access. Both these factors further accentuate young public administrators' preference for mobile phones, specifically those who fall under the F&F generation category (see Chapter 10, subsection 10.4.5.1).

Phones allow direct access to the public administrator in-charge. Recognition of this factor suggests an extension of the preference for face-to-face communication, which is one of the characteristics of patron-client communitarianism (see Chapters 2 and 8). The expectation that e-democracy design initiatives should employ ubiquitous customer premises equipment (CPE), like mobile phones, revealed the importance of CPE widely available and easy to access by the public for e-democracy practices in Malaysia (see Chapter 10, section 10.2.3).

Some public administrators admitted that the use of personal mobile phones for e-democracy practices is limited by issues of privacy and additional expenditure. Several public administrators were provided with official mobile phones based on

their status. Such provision enabled, and to certain extent obligated, public administrators to utilize the phone for such practices. It is understandable that those who were not provided with official mobile phones were reluctant to use their personal phones for e-democracy practices. They were anxious about maintaining their privacy and reluctant to incur any additional personal expenditure.

The utilization of the desktop computer (DC) for e-democracy practices was viewed as more practical for public administrators at the federal level of government as they were adequately provided with up-to-date ICT facilities (see Chapter 4). A number of public administrators, who were involved with digital divide initiatives throughout Malaysia, recognized the significance of DCs provided at telecenters to citizens in rural areas (see Chapter 4). It was expected that maximum utilization of existing ICT infrastructure such as telecenters should be considered in e-democracy design for wider inclusion of citizens in underserved areas (see Chapter 10, section 10.2.2).

TV was identified as a significant facility for e-democracy practices due to its accessibility to most citizens. Besides disseminating information, some public administrators observed the feasibility of TV programs involving them in televised dialogue and discussion, promoting e-democracy practices. The researcher personally took part in a TV program, called 'Hot on 2' on national TV, in November 2006, to discuss a new policy requiring pre-paid mobile phone users to register with their respective telecommunications providers. The program provided the opportunity for viewers to call in, and allowed inputs to be utilized in the ongoing development of policy for national registration of pre-paid mobile phone users. Several issues relating to the management of the registration process were mentioned during the show. These issues were addressed by the final policy draft which incorporated ways to rectify them.

(ii) Systems:

Electronic mail (e-mail) and Short Messaging System (SMS) were recognized as the two most popular systems for e-democracy practices in Malaysia, especially among the F&F generation. Some public administrators acknowledged these

systems as effective facilities for e-democracy practices due to immediacy of access and speed (see Chapter 7, subsection 7.2.2.4). The availability of both systems were accessed via PCs and mobile phones. It was generally felt that through these systems citizens could engage in faster interactions with public administrators. Related e-mail addresses are generally easily accessible from government websites and portals and phone numbers, publicized for public SMS, are simple to memorize.

(iii) Networks:

Public administrators enacted e-democracy practices over the same networks, namely Public Campus Network (PCN) in Putrajaya; a Local Area Network (LAN); EGnet (E-Government Network) outside Putrajaya; a Wide Area Network (WAN); and the Internet. These networks (both fixed and wireless) are provided throughout Malaysia to support e-government initiatives. The findings of this study identified these networks as being utilized for e-democracy. This view is supported by the expectation that design of e-democracy initiatives should maximize the utilization of existing infrastructure (see Chapter 10, section 10.2.2).

Public administrators at the federal level of government in Malaysia accessed and enacted e-democracy practices via a suite of interactive ICTs including mainly websites and portals, as well as other elements of ICT software, hardware, systems, and networks. At the same time, citizens also participated in such practices via the same suite of interactive ICTs.

11.2.2. Control over ICT facilities

As identified in data analysis, the LAN, WAN, and the Internet in Malaysia are controlled by government. All networks at the federal level, like the Public Campus Network (PCN) in Putrajaya and EGnet, which supports government agencies outside Putrajaya, are managed by MAMPU. The operational management of these networks was privatized to GSB (a privatized government-linked company; see Glossary) and MAMPU manages the regulation and policies of such networks. Some public administrators agreed that central agencies, like MAMPU, are in a better position to monitor these networks. They felt that MAMPU

as a federal agency is better equipped and capable of overseeing and coordinating activities of all stakeholders involved in e-democracy practices (see Chapter 10, section 10.3.1).

The related ICT facilities utilized for e-democracy practices over networks, such as the DC, are managed by JKICT (Malay acronym for ICT Committee) of ministries and departments. The ICT infrastructure operating outside government structure, including broadband and telephony services, is controlled by private telecommunications companies, with Telekom Malaysia (TM) – a government-linked telecommunications company – being the major controller (see Chapter 4).

Exercised control over these ICT facilities suggests that government has a final say over their design and utilization. Therefore it can be considered that enacted practices of e-democracy over government-sanctioned websites and portals are managed by government. Management of online forums by the creator of such forums is applicable within the forum itself. The fact that such forums run over government-controlled networks means that all users, public administrators and citizens involved in e-democracy practices come under the purview of government. The control over ICT facilities shaped identified norms surrounding e-democracy practices. The importance for government to allow e-democracy practices to take place in a neutral space and process was generally agreed upon (see Chapter 10, section 10.3.2).

11.2.3. Institutional influences in e-democracy practices

The findings suggest three norms, namely mutual benefit, self-censorship, and target groups, which influence e-democracy practices at the federal level of government in Malaysia. Some public administrators observed that e-democracy practices should result in mutual benefits for both public administrators and citizens. Public administrators are provided with different perspectives for policy development and citizens are empowered to exercise their rights. This argument is supported by the expectation for public administrators to adopt e-democracy practices, and for citizens to participate and conduct themselves maturely in order to benefit from e-democracy practices (see Chapter 10, subsections 10.4.2.1 and

10.4.3.1). Non-partisan and expert public service culture also influences public administrators to frame their e-democracy practices for maximum benefit for both public administrators and citizens (see Chapter 8, section 8.4.1). The government is expected to regulate e-democracy practices to ensure both public administrators and citizens uphold common welfare and refrain from championing personal interests (see Chapter 10, subsection 10.4.1.6).

The self-censorship norm surrounding e-democracy practices was also observed by several public administrators. They felt that public administrators generally abstain from accessing obscene, offensive and negative sites – websites or blogs hosted by individuals or organizations associated with adverse postings – while at the office (see Chapter 8, section 8.2.2). Some ministries at the federal level ban public administrators from accessing such websites. This scenario is attributed to the characteristic of non-partisan public service, which strives to objectively serve the current government (see Chapter 3 and Chapter 8, section 8.4.1). Some public administrators felt that government agencies should not obstruct public administrators from accessing ‘negative sites’. These obstructions hinder the possibility for a broader perspective on public issues, which is supported by the expectation that public administrators must utilize all sources of information towards better policy development (see Chapter 10, subsection 10.4.2.6). Public administrators also have access to negative sites outside their office environment. Information on particular public issues obtained via these websites sometimes requires further explanation from government. Limiting public administrators’ access to such sites (excluding pornographic sites) is counterproductive to government as public administrators are not given the chance to rebut negative views or correct factual inconsistencies. A comprehensive regulation for e-democracy practices will be formulated by the government in Malaysia. This regulation will address self-censorship effectively to ensure future productive e-democracy practices (see Chapter 10, subsection 10.4.1.6).

The inclusion of target groups was another identified norm in e-democracy practices in Malaysia. Some public administrators observed the importance of identifying and engaging specific groups of people. For a specific public policy

such target groups may include those directly affected by the policy, individual experts, and organizational representatives in a policy's area of specialization. The specific nature of an intended policy assists public administrators in the identification of relevant target groups (see Chapter 3). The significance of inputs obtained from a target group ensures a purposeful collection of inputs in e-democracy and facilitates the development of balanced policy. The inclusion of such target groups is not at the expense of inputs from the general public. Some public administrators agreed that inputs from the general public also contribute significantly towards a robust public policy. Such inputs are needed in instances, such as the disbursement of annual budgets, in general affects everyone. The MFPS has been described as an expert public service, which accommodates skilled and expert public administrators in its agencies, but requires local knowledge (see Chapters 1 and 3). Feedback from target groups in e-democracy practices supplies local knowledge surrounding a particular policy to complement policy development.

11.2.4. The agents and enacted e-democracy practices

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 6, public administrators at the federal level of government in Malaysia were the agents under examination in this study. The findings show that public administrators are expected to adopt e-democracy practices to assist policy development. Four steps, namely redefining roles in public administration, building capacity, assigning moderators, and simplifying processes for e-democracy should be adopted by public administrators to enhance e-democracy practices at the MFPS (see Chapter 10, section 10.4.2). Such steps are significant to avoid any lackadaisical implementation of e-democracy in policy development. The culture of deference to authority in the MFPS compels public administrators to adopt such practices with a clear mandate via a written policy on e-democracy (see Chapter 8, section 8.3.1).

Top managers in the MFPS were also identified as advocates of e-democracy practices under the organizational culture of activism (see Chapter 8, section 8.4.5). Such a culture focuses on influences by top managers on public administrators towards practising e-democracy, in the absence of a clear policy

(see Chapter 4). This culture suggests a new element, which is absent in the Parvez’s framework. The inner loop of Parvez’s framework embodies the technology-shaping process in an organization, whereby public administrators utilize specific objectives and policy for e-democracy to shape ICT infrastructure. In the absence of a written policy, this organizational culture is not represented by any of the 11 elements in Parvez’s framework. The researcher proposes to call this new element “Institutional Leadership”. This is denoted by Arrow γ in a modified framework, as shown in Figure 11-1.

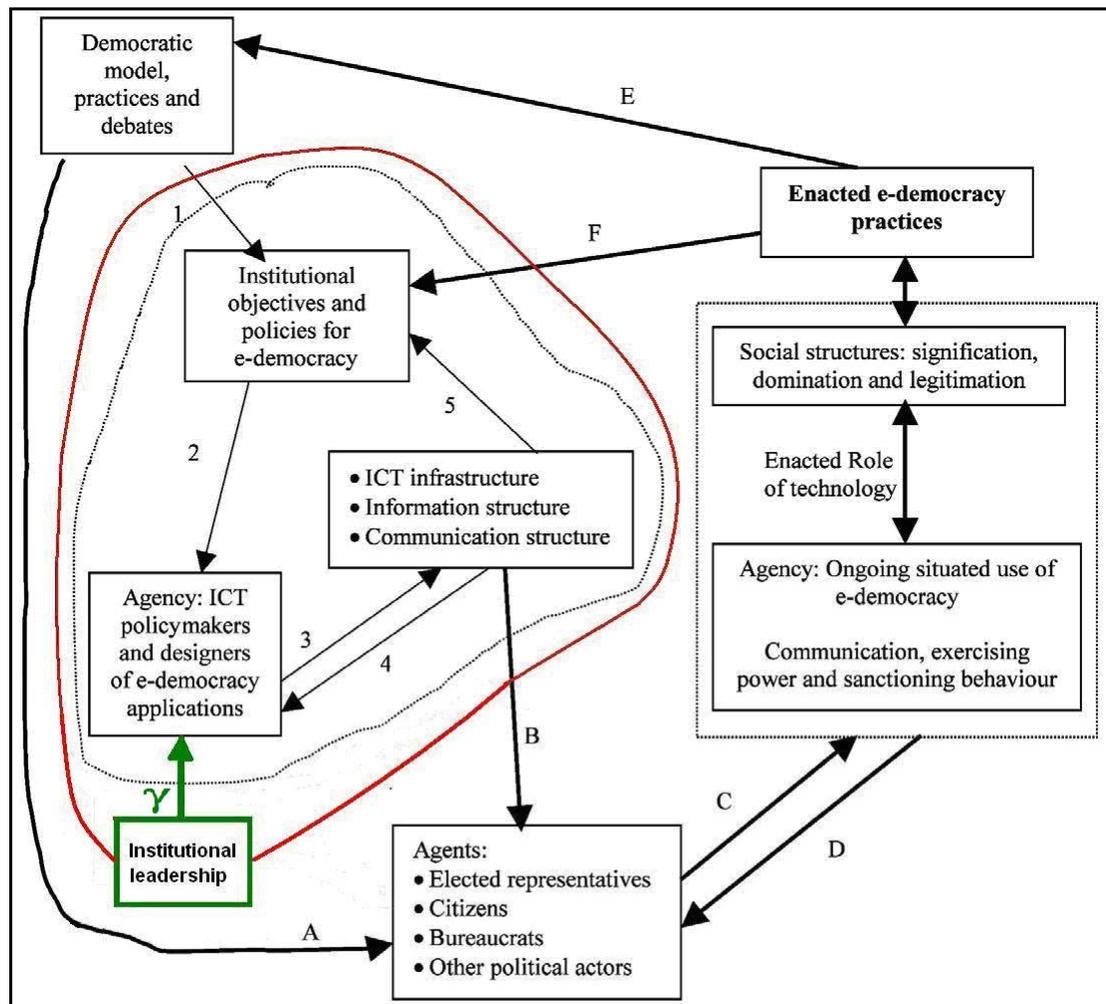


Figure 11-1 A modified triple loop framework

The modified framework consists of three loops – two existing loops from Parvez’s framework – and an additional Institutional Leadership loop – denoted by a red loop in between the original two loops – which exerts social influences on public administrators who are involved in the design of infrastructure for e-democracy

without a clear policy directive. As for public administrators who are enacting e-democracy practices, they will be influenced by the same information and communication structure denoted by arrow B. This modified framework can be used to examine unstructured e-democracy practices in multiple organizations under one main entity (such as different government ministries and departments under a federal public service). The proposed triple loop framework is different from Parvez's framework, which aims to examine a specific e-democracy project in a specific organization with a clear policy for e-democracy practices (see Chapter 5).

The findings revealed the important role played by the younger generation in Malaysia, referred to as the F&F generation (see Chapter 10, section 10.4.5). The F&F generation is expected to spearhead the practices of e-democracy in Malaysia, derived from their characteristics of fast learner in learning and adapting to new technologies, free spirit in seeking for online information, and free agent in associating themselves online. These characteristics enable the F&F generation to adopt e-democracy practices with ease, as compared to the older generation.

The agents (public administrators) draw upon six interpretive schemes, namely policy development, service delivery improvement, fast information-sharing, disintermediation, gauging popularity, and good governance indicators, to enact e-democracy practices. These schemes serve as rules that outline the purposes of enacted e-democracy practices. The recurrent enactment of e-democracy practices over time results in such practices becoming "stabilized for now" and permits the researcher to seek "bounded generalizations" (Orlikowski, 2000, p. 421) about enacted practices (see Chapter 5). Each practice is discussed in the following sections to provide a context for speculating the roles of e-democracy practices in the MFPS.

11.2.4.1. 'Inputs collection' for policy development and service delivery improvement

Public administrators agreed that the purpose of e-democracy is for policy development. As discussed in Chapter 8, public administrators draw upon the 'policy development' interpretive scheme under the policy-based inputs category –

which refers to inputs collection for particular policy ideas, drafts and plans – to enact the ‘inputs collection’ practice of e-democracy. For instance, it was evident in this study that government agencies post a number of proposed policy ideas or a copy of policy draft or a development plan, on their websites and portals for a specific period of time. Four examples were observed in this study, namely ‘My Water Voice’ for the Water Services Industry policy; the National Broadband Online Registration Centre (NBORC) for broadband services policy; ePubliti for spatial development plans; and National Physical Plan (NPP) for infrastructural development plan (see Chapter 9, subsection 9.4.1.2). Citizens were invited to provide online feedback on the proposed policy or plans. The findings suggest the need for critical mass to participate in e-democracy to ensure an effective collection of inputs from the public. As such, active promotions as well as encouragement for sincere participation are expected from government (see Chapter 10, subsections 10.3.3, 10.4.1.3 and 10.4.1.1).

The general feeling among public administrators in this study was that inputs which contribute to a common good are usually considered and incorporated in the policy or plan. It is expected that public administrators will adopt e-democracy practices in the policy development process (see Chapter 10, subsection 10.4.2.1). The organizational culture of non-partisanship adds to the tendency that public administrators utilize feedback as evidence of recognizing citizens’ needs and sentiments without actually acknowledging specific contributors. Being an expert public service, some public administrators argued that such inputs require further analysis and synthesis before being incorporated into a policy or plan (see subsection 10.4.2.4). Realizing the possibility of being subjected to extra workloads, public administrators expected that their roles in e-democracy practices should be clearly defined by government. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 8, this view is shaped by the culture of deference to authority, whereby unauthorized initiatives threaten to affect a department’s productivity. The Weberian bureaucratic features in the MFPS indicated that public administrators are governed by a set of rules which limit them in discharging their job functions (Weber, 2007). Top management in the MFPS needs to specify whether public

administrators are to engage in these practices and how inputs from such practices should be utilized (see Chapter 10, subsection 10.4.2.2).

Another purpose of 'inputs collection' practice identified under the issue-based category refers to collection of issues surrounding government service deliveries. Public administrators draw upon the interpretive scheme for service delivery improvement to enact this practice. The culture of patron-client communitarianism, which emphasizes the "superior-inferior relationship of reciprocity" (Neher, 1994) influenced this practice, whereby government as service provider require citizens, with users as the target group, to voice their concerns about services. Most government agencies maintain official websites or portals which provide online complaint links and e-mail addresses for citizens to provide feedback. These links and e-mail addresses complement manual complaints management processes in government agencies and they are made available to citizens without the limitations of time, i.e., office hours and the need for physical attendance.

Two examples of this practice were identified in this study, namely the website of BPA (Malay Abbreviation for the Biro Pengaduan Awam or Public Complaints Bureau), which provides centralized online complaints management at the federal level of government, and the online complaints website at KPKT (Malay abbreviation for the Ministry of Housing and Local Government), (see Chapter 9, subsection 9.4.1.2). Inputs from BPA's website were evidently utilized to develop the *Highway Authority Malaysia (Set Backs of Highway) Regulations*, as well as to amend the *Housing Tribunal Act* and the *Housing Developers Act* (see Chapter 9, subsection 9.4.1.2).

More recently, after the interviews, an example of 'inputs collection' practice is observed through a newly established unit under the Prime Minister's Department, called the Performance Delivery and Management Unit (PEMANDU). The objective of PEMANDU is to oversee the implementation of the government transformation program and to assess its progress, as well as to support the delivery of the National Key Results Areas (NKRA). There are six identified

NKRA, namely: reduce crime; fight corruption; widen access to affordable and good quality education; raise living standard of the poor; improve infrastructure in rural areas; and improve public transport in the medium term. Inputs on the NKRA were gathered by PEMANDU through a series of closed discussions with professionals from public and private sectors to produce thrust areas to achieve each NKRA. Citizens are invited to provide their feedback on the identified NKRA and their thrust areas at the Open Day Program or via the PEMANDU website (Government of Malaysia, 2009, see also Appendix D). PEMANDU has indicated that inputs from such channels are being considered and incorporated to improve the NKRA's policy.

11.2.4.2. 'Information exchange' for fast information-seeking and sharing

The findings show that public administrators draw upon the 'fast information-seeking and sharing' interpretive scheme to enact the 'information exchange' practice. Some public administrators, mostly the F&F generation, observed that the purpose of e-democracy was for seeking and sharing information among themselves and with other citizens. Most information about government and its programs and initiatives is published on government websites and portals. Both public administrators and citizens are provided with access to such online information to complement information acquired through print media. The capability of interactive ICTs to facilitate this practice is aligned with the F&F generation. Both generations of public administrators favor the 'information exchange' practice of democracy, with the older generation focusing on utilizing online information available on official government websites to complete their job functions. The free spirit F&F generation tends to extend the practice outside government-sanctioned sites, particularly on websites and portals hosted by individuals and NGOs, which are relevant to their job functions.

In total, seven examples 'information exchange' practice, were identified in Chapter 8. Three examples represent public administrators' initiatives: (1) the ePBT website created by KPKT hosts a one-stop-centre for information exchange between public administrators and citizens about local authorities and their activities; (2) the portal created by PTD (Malay abbreviation for the Diplomatic and

Administrative Officer) as a platform to exchange information about their service and job functions; and (3) the PERJASA online forum created by an association for the PTM (Malay abbreviation for Information Technology Officer) called PERJASA, to facilitate online information exchange among members, including information about new skills and development in PTM's areas of specialization. The public administrators' online forums (which are created and accessible to the members of their service group or association) and public administrators frequenting the sites hosted by individuals and groups, raise the expectation of a neutral space for e-democracy as mentioned by some public administrators (see Chapter 10, section 10.3.2).

Five other examples represent initiatives by individuals or organizations which serve as both an online archive and meeting points for users, citizens and public administrators to exchange information, discuss issues, and even organize activities online. Sites such as these provide online information and inputs for the consumption of the general public and public administrators: (1) RedesignMalaysia, a website created by a non-governmental organization (NGO) about broadband services; (2) Che Det blog, by the former Prime Minister (PM) of Malaysia which discusses public and current affairs; (3) Precinct 11 house buyers' blog, by a group of house buyers to voice their concerns to the relevant housing developer and government agencies; and (4) bangkit.net blog, by an NGO for sharing information and organizing activities among citizens. Some public administrators keenly frequent these online initiatives to seek a different perspective of issues and share their thoughts, as well as unofficially-utilized information and inputs from such sites in formulating policy development. The change of preference to seek and share information – , from government-sanctioned sites to private sites – reinforces the Structuration theory (Giddens, 1984; Orlikowski, 2000) as public administrators' knowledge and assumption about such sites changes.

Evidence for the uptake of new social networking software, le.g., Facebook (which was not mentioned during the data collection period), has emerged in Malaysia. A recent example, of 'information exchange' practice, involves an ongoing public

discussion on an issue about a High Court decision, (31 December 2009), to lift the ban for non-Muslims in Malaysia from utilizing the term 'Allah' as a translation of the word 'God' in their religious publication. As discussed in Chapter 1, Islam is the official religion of Malaysia, a country with a population that is more than 60 percent Muslim. The usage of the term 'Allah' was exclusive to Islamic publications and has never been allowed to be used for other religious publications since independence. The High Court ruling to overturn the ban has drawn stiff opposition from Muslims in the country, and a few Facebook groups, were created by individuals and NGOs to discuss and exchange information about the decision. One of the most popular Facebook group is called "Menentang Penggunaan Allah oleh golongan bukan Islam" ("Against the use of the name 'Allah' by non-Muslims") (A. Razak, 2010, see also Appendix D). This group was created on 3 January 2010 and has 210,509 registered members (as of 13 January 2010). Citizens and users subscribe to this group and engage in discussion on the issue. Public administrators, especially those from the Ministry of Internal Security, have access to an abundance of inputs and information from this online group, which could be utilized in the development of policy to manage such an issue.

The 'information exchange' practice is similar to the model of e-democracy called "online communities" (Coleman & Gøtze, 2001) and Rheingold's online or a virtual community (Rheingold, 1995, 2000). Such online communities can easily be formed to provide a platform for public administrators and citizens to provide and share information. The lack of regulation for online communities in Malaysia is supportive of this practice of information exchange in future (see Chapter 1).

11.2.4.3. 'Communication' for disintermediation

Public administrators draw upon the 'disintermediation' interpretive scheme to enact the 'communication' practice of e-democracy. The findings suggest that the objective of e-democracy was for direct access to those in authorities and as a form of disintermediation to communicate with the higher echelons of authority. Traditional barriers in communicating with authority, like having to make prior appointments and communicating through the lower ranks of officers and representatives, can be flattened when top managers in the public service and the

PM engage directly with citizens through websites and blogs. Those belonging to the older generation of public administrators were appreciative of the 'communication' practice for levelling the social hierarchy. They considered such a practice as an evolution of the patron-client communitarianism culture, which emphasizes the importance of the hierarchical relationship between authorities and the governed (see Chapters 2 and 9). The F&F generation was interested in the opportunity provided by communication practice through which they expect to be able to contribute their ideas to top management without trampling upon the in-built organizational hierarchy and structure (see Chapter 10, section 10.5.2).

Three examples of 'communication' practice were identified in Chapter 8. First, the MYBLOG, an official blog created by the Ministry of Information (Moi) to engage in direct communication with citizens on public policy. Second, the KSN's website promotes a direct communication through e-mail with the KSN. Third, the Warkah untuk PM website enables the public to voice their concerns directly to the PM. These examples of 'communication' practice provide inputs to top managers and the PM, who synthesizes the inputs and provide top-down feedback to public administrators for policy development. The culture of deference to authority in the public service compels public administrators to incorporate these inputs in to draft public policies (see Chapters 2 and 9).

The current PM, Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Razak, is utilizing new social networking software like Facebook, Twitter, and a blog to engage directly with citizens (Razak, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d). The utilization of this software was not observable during the interview period. The researcher subscribes to both Facebook and Twitter accounts (see Appendix N for the screenshots) to examine the way in which such accounts facilitate direct communication between the PM and citizens. The PM is addressing those subscribed to his Facebook and Twitter accounts as 'friends', which indicates the levelling of hierarchy between authority and citizens. His 'friends' on these accounts are encouraged to provide direct online feedback. In October 2009, 400 comments were made in response to the PM's request for feedback on the year 2010 budget on his Facebook and blog (N. Razak, 2010). The PM responded with gratitude and gave his commitment to analyze and utilize

such feedback for the proposed budget. This ‘communication’ practice of e-democracy provides feedback to which the PM responded through a posting with a promise to incorporate the feedback in the annual budget for the year 2010.

11.2.4.4. ‘Electronification’ for gauging popularity and good governance indicators

Public administrators draw upon the interpretive scheme for gauging popularity to enact the ‘electronification’ practice under the acceptance category – it refers to the estimation of acceptability of particular policies, initiatives, and programs (see Chapter 9, subsection 9.4.4.1). Some public administrators observed that the purpose of e-democracy was to measure the popularity of a policy or initiative among citizens through electronic means. Public administrators conducted online polling over a particular policy idea or implementation strategies on websites and portals to identify the level of citizen acceptance. Inputs from such polling are considered in the development of a new policy or amendment of an existing policy. Citizens’ participation in the ‘electronification’ practice is not limited to taking part in government-initiated online polling or online voting. Citizens also conducted online polling about a particular policy through NGO websites and forwarded their findings to government. The ‘electronification’ practice is similar to Coleman and Gøtze’s model of “online techniques for gauging popularity” (2001). The electronification practice, however, neglects any form of citizen-led initiatives (see Chapters 2 and 9).

Cost efficiency and time-saving are the two main advantages for government and NGOs to utilize e-democracy to gauge public opinion for a particular policy. Citizens are attracted to ‘electronification’ practice due to its convenience. A user-friendly design enables the wide participation (see Chapter 10, section 10.2.4). Two examples of ‘electronification’ practice under the acceptance category were identified: (1) myGovernment portal, created by MAMPU, which conducted much online polling to gauge the efficacy of policy; and (2) the PEMBELA online polling and online petition organized by a group of Civil Society Organizations (CSO) on a website to gauge the views of the public about an existing policy on apostasy in Malaysia. Inputs from the online petition were submitted by the group of CSOs to the government for consideration.

The Muslim Consumers' Association recently organized an online petition to gauge citizens' opinions about the use of the term 'Allah' by non-Muslims (as discussed in subsection 11.2.4.2). This is further evidence of the utilization of the online petition as a practice of 'electronification' in Malaysia.

Another purpose of 'electronification' practice was identified under the inculcation category, which refers to the dissemination of ideas about good governance through e-democracy practices. Public administrators draw upon the 'good governance indicator' interpretive scheme to enact 'electronification' practice. The government is required to provide substantial information about a particular policy to enable citizens to make informed decisions by means of online votes. Such a provision of information will open up government functions for public scrutiny to promote transparency and build integrity in government agencies (Rourke, Neil, & Paul, 2001). Some public administrators stated that a higher transparency in government agencies will inculcate good governance among public administrators in discharging their duties in the MFPS. Citizens are also empowered to participate in the governance process through e-democracy, which was traditionally available only to members of parliament. The conduct of online voting for student representatives' elections by two local universities was mentioned by a few interviewees, categorized as examples of the 'electronification' practice under the inculcation category. The findings also suggest that e-voting, to replace the manual general election, is an expected step for government to inculcate good governance (see Chapter 10, section 10.5.1).

These research findings have confirmed that the four enacted practices, namely 'inputs collection', information exchange', 'communication', and 'electronification', by public administrators at the federal level of government constitute e-democracy. The identified technological dimensions, institutional influences, and agency dimensions constitute the nature of e-democracy practices in Malaysia. As such, the emergent roles of e-democracy practices can be discussed in the following sections.

11.3. The emergent roles of e-democracy practices in policy development

The identified four practices of e-democracy, as discussed, suggest three emergent roles referred to as augmentation, modulation, and retention. These roles are parallel to Heek's 'support', 'innovate', and 'supplant' typologies (Heeks, 1999a, p. 17) and Orlikowski's 'application', 'change', and 'inertia' typologies (Orlikowski, 2000, pp. 421-423), as discussed in Chapter 5. The emergent roles of e-democracy help to answer the question as to how interactive ICTs (as part of e-democracy) inform Malaysian public administrators in developing policies. Each category is discussed in the following sections.

11.3.1. Augmentation

The category augmentation embodies the role of e-democracy practices as a means to support policy development for a balanced public policy. This role of e-democracy is represented by 'inputs collection' and 'information exchange' practices of e-democracy.

The practice of 'inputs collection' supports existing policy development through efficient feedback from the public. Similar to Heeks' (1999a) support and Orlikowski's (2000) application typologies for the role of ICT in social processes, the augmentation category emphasizes human actors utilizing ICT to assist existing decision making processes. The MFPS benefits from a low-cost and speedy gathering of inputs through the enactment of 'inputs collection' practice for a particular policy idea or plan by public administrators, as well as from issues surrounding a particular policy. The augmentation role of this practice suits the MFPS, which is described as a non-partisan and expert public service, to complement and enhance existing inputs collection. E-democracy is expected to be designed as an alternative channel for inputs in policy development and not as a replacement of existing methods such as face-to-face meetings (see Chapter 10, section 10.2.7). Critical mass is required to reflect an acceptable representation of citizens' inputs through e-democracy, and thus reinforces the supportive role of 'inputs collection' practice in the policy development process (see Chapter 10, section 10.3.3).

The 'information exchange' practice supports policy development process through perspectives which broaden public administrator ideas on issues surrounding a given policy. The organizational culture of expert public service is enhanced by public administrators acquiring new skills and local knowledge through such practice. The findings suggest that an improved information culture within government agencies and better integration between agencies are two expected outcomes of the 'information exchange' practice in the MFPS. A seamless interaction between public administrators and government agencies supports the policy development process and contributes towards integrating the implementation of programs (see Chapter 8, sections 8.4.3 and 8.4.4).

11.3.2. Modulation

The category of modulation embodies the generation of a new role of e-democracy to enable a direct communication among public administrators and between citizens and authorities in the public service. This category is characterized by the enacted 'communication' practice and resembles Heeks' (1999a) and Orlikowski's (2000) proposed innovate and change typologies for the role of ICT in social processes. Such typologies put emphasis on human actors utilize ICT to refine and enhance their existing work processes to transform the status quo.

A change of communication pattern by means of e-democracy is advocated by top managers in the MFPS and by the PM. The culture of activism in the MFPS and the national culture of personalism of the PM promote the practice of 'communication' (see Chapter 8, sections 8.4.5 and 8.4.3). A new channel is provided to citizens to voice their concerns directly to the highest authorities, as government is expected to listen to citizens (see Chapter 10, subsection 10.4.1.7). The readiness of the highest authorities to entertain citizens directly in e-democracy practices assists towards building citizen trust (see Chapter 10, section 10.4.1.2). The general sentiment among interviewees was that effective feedback via e-democracy will be achieved once the trust between citizens and government is established (see Chapter 10, subsection 10.4.1.2).

11.3.3. Retention

The category of retention embodies minimal use of e-democracy in policy development. Heeks' (1999a) and Orlikowski's (2000) typologies for the role of ICT in social processes, namely supplant and inertia, are closely related to the retention category, which focus on the automation of existing work processes without any changes. This category allows public administrators to preserve the existing process of policy development without any major adjustment utilizing ICTs. This category is characterized by the 'electronification' practice of e-democracy.

The 'electronification' practice is supportive of the incrementalism culture of the MFPS (as discussed in Chapter 8 at 8.4.2). The general concern among public administrators was that ICT readiness and capacity building of both citizens and public administrators are to be addressed by government before the implementation of e-democracy. As discussed in Chapter 1, the absence of a written policy for e-democracy has a number of serious consequences. These include ad hoc implementation of e-democracy initiatives, mostly treated by a number of federal agencies as pilot projects to estimate their effectiveness. The 'electronification' practice also shows that the effort to familiarize citizens with simple e-democracy practices for future complex practices, like deliberative e-democracy, is powerful. The findings in this study suggest that such practice develops citizens' skills and civic competency (see Chapter 10, subsection 10.4.1.4)

11.4. Conclusion

Public administrators enacted four practices of e-democracy, namely 'inputs collection', 'information exchange', 'communication', and 'electronification'. These practices add up to e-democracy at the federal level of government in Malaysia. Citizens participated in these practices by providing feedback, as well as creating their own online initiatives to advocate their concerns to government. The identified practices of e-democracy inform public administrators in the policy development process in three ways: (1) by augmenting policy development

through effective inputs collection, information-seeking, and information-sharing; (2) by modulating a new platform for citizens to provide their feedback for policy development directly to the highest authorities in the MFPS; and (3) by retention of the existing habits of policy development with minimal practice of e-democracy.

12. Conclusion and recommendations

*Rambut ditarik jangan putus,
tepung pun jangan terserak¹⁷*

The aims of this chapter are to draw conclusions from the study, present recommendations for future e-democracy practices and policy in Malaysia, as well as provide suggestions for future research.

Through a primary research question which asks ‘How do interactive Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) (as part of e-democracy) inform Malaysian public administrators in developing policy?’ this study sought to identify the nature of e-democracy practices for policy development in the Malaysian Federal Public Service (MFPS) and to show how it functions. The main objective was to discover how the ideals of e-democracy can be nurtured to enhance the policy development process in Malaysia (see Chapter 1).

Through the literature review it was identified that Malaysia’s key features: population, socio-economic indicators, government structure, democratic practices, and public service provide a good case for an e-democracy study. Three key elements, namely the absence of policy for e-democracy; the constitutional limitations on discussing the subject matters of citizenship, the national language, *Bumiputera* special privileges, and the sovereignty of the rulers; and a guarantee for non-censorship of the Internet, are among factors which make Malaysia a distinctive choice and focus for the study.

The research question was examined through a qualitative paradigm. An exploratory, ethnographic, and qualitative case study strategy was employed to make sense of e-democracy and interpret the concept in the Malaysian context.

¹⁷ Brown (1959) translated this Malay saying as “When you pull a hair (out of flour), do it in such a way that the hair isn’t broken or the flour scattered” (p. 87). The English equivalent is “Gently does it” (Brown, 1959, p. 87). This saying envisages the importance of all players of e-democracy to be prudent in exercising their rights through e-democracy to reap its benefit.

This chapter begins with a summary of the research findings. It goes on to reflect on the application of the qualitative paradigm and Parvez's double structuralist loop (DSL) framework. The chapter then revisits the research questions to discuss research outcomes and contributions. The final part of this chapter discusses recommendations, and limitations. It continues to suggest future research opportunities in e-democracy study.

12.1. Significant research findings

Two significant findings focused on the emerging nature of enacted e-democracy practices in the MFPS, and emergent roles of e-democracy practices in policy development process. The study established four practices of e-democracy, enacted by public administrators at the federal level of government, as outlined below:

- 'inputs collection' referred to government-sanctioned online initiatives to engage individuals or groups of citizens to promote their views on issues concerning the development of a particular public policy. Two categories of this practice were identified. The policy-based category utilized a top-down approach and the issue-based category employed a bottom-up approach to inputs collection;
- 'information exchange' focused on online information-seeking and information-sharing among public administrators and between public administrators and citizens. This practice enhances sharing of information of issues related to public policies to assist in understanding the objectives of those policies;
- 'communication' revolved around a direct online access for citizens to interact with the government. Such a direct channel of communication reaffirms government's commitment to empower citizens to exercise their rights and voice concerns to influence policy development processes; and
- 'electronification' emphasized enhancing the existing processes of policy development through electronic means. Two categories were identified for this practice, namely acceptance and inculcation. The acceptance category focused on gauging the popularity of a particular policy via online and the

inculcation category focused on the promotion of electronic democratic practices, such as e-voting.

The analysis of data in this study shows that all four practices of e-democracy are enacted, by public administrators and citizens, on the existing ICT infrastructure. The infrastructure is provided through three key ICT initiatives, namely the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC), the National Broadband initiative and the Bridging Digital Divide initiative. These initiatives targeted increase ICTs usage among public administrators in the public service and citizens, as well as the private sector.

Four major elements of ICT facilities are identified as having been provided for other government ICT projects, such as e-government, but utilized for e-democracy practices. These facilities are:

- software (websites or portals, weblogs or blogs, online forums, and online voting, or polling);
- hardware (phones (both fixed and mobile), desktop computer, and television);
- systems (electronic mail (e-mail) and Short Messaging System (SMS)); and
- networks (Local Area Network (LAN) – Public Campus Network (PCN) in Putrajaya –, Wide Area Network (WAN) – EGnet (E-Government Network) outside of Putrajaya, and the Internet).

These findings suggest that e-democracy practices can co-exist with other electronic applications in the existing ICT infrastructure. They emphasize the importance of ensuring that future design of e-democracy applications should include user-friendly applications. Relevant content is important and the applications should also be easily accessible through ubiquitous equipment, such as mobile phones.

In order to ensure an effective future implementation of e-democracy, the findings suggest that government should build citizens' trust in e-democracy practices. Not only should they welcome constructively worded comments, but those which are

negatively presented or worded should not invite unwanted repercussions for the commentator. Citizens in turn are expected to trust that government will utilise inputs from e-democracy processes for the mutual benefit of all Malaysians. From one perspective, trust will possibly lead to greater participation in public governance and provide critical mass for participation. When citizens trust government, they may feel freer to directly voice their concerns through e-democracy. The role of the Fast and Free (F&F) generation (those below 40 years old) in Malaysia was also identified as an important catalyst for a more vibrant participation in e-democracy.

Three characteristics of public administrators in the MFPS – impartiality, expertise, and personal position – shape e-democracy practices in policy development in the MFPS. The findings show that public administrators accept inputs from citizens which develop well-balanced policies. The decision whether to incorporate such inputs in policies however is the sole discretion of government. The capacity of public administrators in a Weberian bureaucratic structure is restricted from rapid adoption of innovative functions such as e-democracy. E-democracy practices require new processes which are not clearly defined in any existing administrative regulations in the MFPS, create disintermediation in the bureaucratic structure, and involve electronic documents, which require specialized methods of handling as opposed to physical files. The findings suggest that public administrators' capacity in e-democracy needs to be improved and traditional roles in policy development process should be adjusted for effective e-democracy practices in the MFPS.

The findings suggested that e-democracy can be nurtured to inform public administrators in policy development. The identified four practices of e-democracy, as discussed, were categorized to outline the three emergent roles of e-democracy, namely augmentation, modulation, and retention. First, practices of inputs collection and information exchange augment the existing processes in policy development by providing wider opportunities for participation from stakeholders. These practices afford public administrators with the opportunity to conduct a comprehensive analysis of issues surrounding a particular policy.

Second, the practice of communication modulates the existing process of policy development by providing a direct channel of communication between citizens and those in authority, a feature of the national culture (see Chapter 8). The findings show that authorities, like public administrators in charge of a particular policy, are accommodating transformation and directly engaging with citizens, without citizens having to go through the traditional intermediaries, such as lower ranked officers. Third, the practice of electronification retains the existing processes of policy development by employing minimum electronic means. Public administrators are utilizing simple online voting applications to gather feedback on the popularity of a particular policy or issues surrounding it. The findings suggest that public administrators favoring this practice considered e-democracy only as an alternative channel for inputs.

The thesis shows that there are a number of practices of e-democracy taking place in the MFPS and that these are still experimental learning curves (experiences), rather than evolved models. Some recommendations are made in section 12.4 for the future implementation of e-democracy in Malaysia. The following section discusses the researcher's reflections on the research framework and design of this study.

12.2. Reflections on research framework and design

This study focused on the intermediary role of public administrators between citizens and elected government. As discussed, the study employed a structural perspective to examine the public administrators' utilization of ICTs in the policy development process. The choice of this perspective helped provide the researcher with a focus on what public administrators actually do with ICTs in their recurrent and situated practices of e-democracy in the MFPS.

The development of the research framework which incorporates four dimensions of social structures and agency issues – technological, institutional, agency, and consequences – is critical in identifying the practices and roles of e-democracy. These dimensions and their dialectic interactions provided structure for the

analysis process. They facilitated the identification of social structures and agency issues surrounding e-democracy practices in the MFPS.

The research framework also guided the exploratory strategy employed in the study. It was important to maintain focus on particular areas, such as social activities and influences, since e-democracy in Malaysia is a relatively unexplored territory of research. A qualitative paradigm allowed for in-depth data collection, enabling the researcher to trace how public administrators make sense of the concept and practices of e-democracy in the MFPS. The analysis of rich ethnographic data provided some flexibility in determining findings and helped to avoid oversimplified descriptions.

The case study technique served the purpose of addressing the question of how conceptualization and practices of e-democracy occur among public administrators in the MFPS. Insights from public administrators in the MFPS into their use of e-democracy in policy development process are essential. The employment of the purposive sampling technique to identify the unit of analysis was vital to ensure all relevant key informants were included in the study.

As described in Chapter 6, the utilization of NVivo software in managing and recording collected data was useful and timesaving. The researcher learned that NVivo software may be used to better organise a qualitative study. It is also relatively easy to learn and use. The researcher realized however that this software is merely a tool, and the abundant features it offers should be strategically managed to maximize benefits.

The following section revisits the research questions of the study, discussed in Chapter 1.

12.3. Revisiting research questions

This section briefly summarizes the outcomes of the research in the context of each research question. Starting with secondary questions, arguments are built towards answering the primary question.

Secondary questions:

What does e-democracy mean in Malaysia?

E-democracy can mean different things to different people. Six categories of interpretive schemes were identified in this study, namely policy development, service delivery improvement, fast information-seeking and sharing, disintermediation, good governance indicators, and gauging popularity. Agents, public administrator and citizens draw on interpretive schemes of policy development and service delivery improvement to enact the practice of inputs collection. The practice of information exchange was drawn from the fast information-seeking and sharing interpretive scheme. The practice of communication was drawn from the disintermediation interpretive scheme and the practice of electronification benefited from both good governance indicators, and gauging popularity interpretive schemes.

What are the significant cultural dimensions that shape conceptions of e-democracy in the MFPS?

Three cultural dimensions, namely norms, features of national culture, and features of organizational culture shaped the conceptions of e-democracy in the MFPS. Norms are identified as mutual benefit, target groups, and self-censorship. Public administrators draw upon these norms to enact e-democracy practices at the federal level of government. The identified national cultural features, deference to authority, patron-client communitarianism, and personalism, are supportive of Neher's (1994) three characteristics of Asian-style democracy (see Chapter 2). As discussed in Chapter 5, the national culture represents social influences drawn on by human actors, public administrators and citizens to enact e-democracy practices, as well as shape institutional policy for e-democracy. Five features of organizational culture – non-partisan and expert public service, incrementalism, integration, information culture, and activism – are also identified. The non-partisan and expert cultural dimension are aligned to characteristics of the Westminster model (see Chapter 3), while incrementalism, integration, information culture, and activism, emerged from data analysis. The features of

organizational culture characterize social influences, which human actors employ for designing ICT infrastructure (see Chapter 5).

What are the key expectations of human actors (public administrators and key informants) of e-democracy in Malaysia?

The identified expectations are divided into three categories: design, process, and roles of key players (government, public administrators, citizens, bloggers, and the younger generation). ‘Design’ emphasized equitable access to all Malaysians to participate in e-democracy and maximize utilization of existing ICT infrastructure. The design of e-democracy applications should employ ubiquitous equipment; be user-friendly; and include relevant content for a well-balanced application. The design of e-democracy application should also accentuate the application as an alternative channel of providing inputs to government. ‘Process’ focused on the need for a centralized co-ordinating agency in the implementation of e-democracy for better management. At the same time, the process involved in e-democracy is expected to be neutral in order to encourage critical mass of citizens to participate in e-democracy.

‘Roles of key players’ starts with government. The government is expected to encourage citizens’ participation by supporting sincere participation; building citizens’ trust; promoting e-democracy to all stakeholders; developing ICT skills and civic competency; and providing substantial information for informed practices of e-democracy. The government is also expected to regulate e-democracy practices and listen to citizens in order to facilitate better outcomes of such practices. At the same time, public administrators in the MFPS are expected to adopt e-democracy practices in policy development, and utilize it as another source of information. In order to ensure better implementation of e-democracy, public administrators are also expected to redefine their roles in public administration to suit e-democracy practices, build capacity for e-democracy, assign specific moderators for e-democracy, and simplify the process for e-democracy. As well as government and public administrators, citizens are expected to participate and conduct themselves maturely in government-sanctioned initiatives of e-democracy. Bloggers who dominate the citizen-led

initiatives of e-democracy are expected to respect rules of law and exercise their rights wisely. Finally, the younger generation in Malaysia is expected to adopt e-democracy practices most readily. The gap that exists between them and the older generation should be bridged.

Primary question:

How do interactive ICTs for e-democracy inform Malaysian public administrators in developing policy?

The enactment of four practices of e-democracy by public administrators in the MFPS, namely 'inputs collection', 'information exchange', 'communication', and 'electronification' are supported by citizens' participation in the practices. Citizens provide feedback, as well as create their own online initiatives to promote their concerns to government. The identified practices of e-democracy inform public administrators in policy development in three ways:

- by augmenting the policy development process through effective inputs collection, information-seeking, as well as information-sharing;
- by modulating a new platform for citizens to provide their feedback for policy development directly to the highest authorities in the MFPS; and
- by retention of the existing habits of policy development process with minimal practice of e-democracy.

12.4. Recommendations

This section describes recommendations which can be drawn from research findings. The recommendations are divided according to areas of responsibilities of key players of e-democracy in Malaysia: the government, public administrators, and citizens.

The government:

The Malaysian Government should consider the following:

- Institutionalizing e-democracy in the policy development process of the MFPS through a clear written policy. E-democracy requires a clear mandate from the government and well-defined procedures to be effective.

- Including specific budget allocations towards building capacity and civic competency for e-democracy in the Malaysia Plan.
- Appointing a lead agency to spearhead the promotion, development, and implementation of e-democracy in Malaysia.

The public administrators:

It is important for public administrators to consider the following:

- Defining new processes in the existing administrative procedures and regulations to include specialized methods for handling inputs through e-democracy, as opposed to hard copy files, to facilitate systematic incorporation of inputs from citizens' participation through e-democracy into policy.
- Creating a dedicated website for e-democracy to emphasise its crucial role in policy development in Malaysia.
- Capitalizing on e-democracy practices by engaging citizens and focus groups to test policy ideas.

The citizens:

The main responsibility of citizens in e-democracy is to participate and provide inputs. E-democracy is not a panacea; it does not offer a solution to all problems. Nevertheless, it is a potential medium for citizens to exercise their democratic rights. It is expected of citizens that they do not misuse e-democracy to champion personal interests and to always hold dear their values. Their inputs may have effect on the policy-making processes of the MFPS and Malaysia in general.

12.5. General contributions

The identification of e-democracy practices and emergent roles in the MFPS is significant. The findings offer a number of important contributions.

First, through the identification of administrative dimensions of e-democracy, the perceptions of the researcher about the virtues of e-democracy and the MFPS as a bureaucratic organization have been enriched. The findings strengthen the researcher's view that public administrators in the MFPS must be equipped with

skills to effectively implement e-democracy. Training must be provided over and above the provision of just access to ICTs in all agencies. A clear mandate to implement e-democracy in the MFPS is imperative. Proper procedures should be put in place in order that inputs from the public are systematically managed to assist with the development of public policies. The thesis findings suggest that information culture in policy development processes could be enhanced through rich data accumulation from citizens' inputs. The data provides an important part of evidence to support the drafting of public policy. Public administrators' insistence that any decision to include, or exclude particular citizens' inputs in policy development should rest with government reaffirms the expert functions of the MFPS as an effective public service.

Second, the findings of this study enrich knowledge about how use of technology shapes e-democracy practices. Four identified practices of e-democracy were supportive of the structural perspective of technology proposed by Orlikowski. Public administrators in the MFPS enacted these practices in policy development by drawing upon existing knowledge and assumptions about the technology they use. These include interactive ICTs and the Internet. The findings also suggest three emergent roles of e-democracy practice in policy development: augmentation, modulation, and retention. These roles can be accommodated with the roles of ICTs in organizations as outlined by Heeks (1999a) and Orlikowski (2000).

Third, the findings provide a sound foundation for understanding e-democracy in the context of Malaysia. The country's contextual features, such as an absence of e-democracy policy in the MFPS, constitutional limitations on public discussions of issues relating to *Bumiputera* preferential rights, and a guarantee of non-censorship of the Internet, offer a unique setting for this study. The lack of e-democracy policy leads to an unstructured implementation of e-democracy practices in Malaysia. The findings also suggest that the constitutional limitations of public discussion of sensitive issues have been bent through online discussion by means of the guarantee of non-censorship of the Internet. The practice of information exchange is an example. The findings show that public administrators

enacted the practices of e-democracy within these limitations by exercising self-censorship to ensure such practices are mutually beneficial in developing policy. The significance of three Asian style characteristics – deference to authority, patron-client communitarianism, and personalism – has been noted in this study as shaping the practices of e-democracy. The challenges of issues surrounding the digital divide were identified as barriers, which the government has to overcome to ensure e-democracy practices are effective. All these would set a foundation for a ‘typical’ landscape of e-democracy in Malaysia that would allow for future comparison of similarities and differences between e-democracy practice in different countries.

Fourth, the findings contribute towards laying out clear advantages of e-democracy for public administrators in the policy development process. The practice of e-democracy allows inputs to be collected within acceptable costs to the government. Availability of data from citizens’ inputs offers public administrators a wider perspective on issues surrounding a particular policy. The probability of citizens’ acceptance of such a policy can be expected to increase through incorporation of inputs. Through the implementation of e-democracy, public administrators can reposition their roles and expertise to strategically moderate e-democracy practices for effective collection of inputs from stakeholders. These advantages help to counter public administrators’ misconceptions about e-democracy being an extra burden to their workload in the policy development process.

Fifth, findings provide a foundation for guiding the implementation of e-democracy for government. The identified practices of e-democracy present a selection of different models of e-democracy for the purposes of inputs collection. The findings also suggest that government should effectively promote these practices and build citizens’ trust in order to ensure active citizen participation. A proper code of practice should also be developed by government for bloggers to constructively participate in such practices. The importance of the younger generation or the F&F generation has been highlighted in the study as providing future key players of e-democracy in Malaysia. The findings show that younger public administrators in

the MFPS are excited about using e-democracy as a supplementary channel for promoting their inputs into policy development. It is likely that the F&F generation within and outside of the MFPS will perpetuate the practices of e-democracy and extend them further.

12.6. Limitations of research

This study is constrained in a number of ways, particularly due to the size of the project. Limited time and resources compelled the study to focus on two main social actors in e-democracy, namely public administrators and key informants. The selection of public administrators was made from the few identified agencies of the MFPS. The choice of key informants was carefully considered to represent, to a certain extent, the stakeholders of e-democracy practices. A priority, in this thesis, was understanding how public administrators at the federal level of government and key informants consider e-democracy. The perceptions of Malaysian citizens could not be fully addressed, given the limited resources and choice of qualitative methodology.

Another constraint faced by the researcher was the lack of access to official documents and statistics. Certain information about government studies, statistics, and ICT initiatives are not made available to the public. The researcher was able to collect some statistics through painstaking research. For example, statistics on total population in the underserved areas in Chapter 4 was collated from several sources to produce an estimate of the total population in those areas. In order for Malaysia to inculcate e-democracy practices, provisions of public information should be given priority. Such provision will ensure easier and better access to more detailed and comprehensive data for future scholars researching Malaysia.

12.7. Future study

This study has documented the nature of e-democracy practices in the MFPS. It helps to explain the role of ICTs for e-democracy in policy development. However, the nature of these practices and their roles remain untested. An opportunity

exists for future studies to focus on a particular practice and test its role in the policy development process.

This study has pointed out the importance of achieving critical mass for e-democracy to succeed. In Malaysia, as well as other jurisdictions, a broad range of factors exists affecting whether citizens are more willing to participate in online democratic practices. An example in the Malaysian context is the role of law, which regulates speech and influences possibilities for mediated public debates and media speech. As discussed in Chapter 1, the constitution limits discussion on subject matters relating to citizenship, including the national language, *Bumiputera* special privileges and the sovereignty of rulers. How laws condition the environment for citizen participation towards achieving critical mass in e-democracy is worthy of further exploration.

The research framework of this study was developed to examine e-democracy at the federal level of government in Malaysia (see Chapter 5). Further research could utilize this framework to examine e-democracy at other levels of government, such as state or local authority. The research could also include other agents, including elected representatives and other political actors.

The modification of Parvez's framework in Chapter 11 was a result of research findings. The proposed triple loop framework is different from Parvez's framework, which aims to examine a specific e-democracy project in a specific organization and with a clear policy for e-democracy practices (see Chapter 5). The modified framework consists of three loops – two existing loops from Parvez's framework – and an additional Institutional Leadership loop – which exerts social influences on public administrators who are involved in the design of infrastructures for e-democracy without a clear policy directive. This modified framework suggests that future applications for the study of unstructured e-democracy practices in multiple organizations under one main entity e.g., different government ministries and departments under a federal public service) would be more beneficial.

References

- Agil, S. O. S. (1994). Civic education : a perspective from Islam. In M. Pathmanathan & R. Haas (Eds.), *Civic education : the role of religion* (pp. 99-121). Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Friedrich Naumann Foundation and Centre for Policy Sciences.
- Ahmad, A. S., Mansor, N., & Ahmad, A. K. (2003a). *Malaysian bureaucracy: four decades of development*. Petaling Jaya, Selangor: Prentice Hall, Pearson Malaysia Sdn.Bhd.
- Ahmad, A. S., Mansor, N., & Ahmad, A. K. (2003b). The structure of contemporary Malaysian public bureaucracy *Malaysian bureaucracy: four decades of development* (pp. 43-78). Petaling Jaya, Selangor: Prentice Hall, Pearson Malaysia Sdn.Bhd.
- Ahmad, R. (2007). Gerbang Ruhanie (Kuda Kepang). Retrieved 12th November 2007, from <http://www.kuda-kepeng.blogspot.com/>
- Althaus, C., Bridgman, P., & Davis, G. (2007). *The Australian policy handbook* (4th ed.). Crows Nest, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin.
- Anttiroiko, A.-V. (2003). Building strong e-democracy: the role of technology in developing democracy for the information age. *Communication ACM*, 46(9), 121-128.
- Atan, A. (2007). Rocky's Bru. Retrieved 3 September, 2007, from <http://www.rockybru.blogspot.com/>
- Bakar, A. G. A., & Johanson, G. (2010). Information and communications technologies and policy development for e-democracy in Malaysia. In A. T. Ragusa (Ed.), *Interaction in communication technologies and virtual learning environments : human factors* (pp. 57-72). Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference.
- Barber, B. R. (1998). Three scenarios for the future of technology and strong democracy *Political Science Quarterly* 113(4), 573-589.
- Baum, H. S., Neil, J. S., & Paul, B. B. (2001). Citizen participation *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 1840-1846). Oxford: Pergamon.
- Bazeley, P. (2007a). Examples of hierarchical coding systems. Retrieved 7 May, 2009, from http://www.researchsupport.com.au/Tree_coding_examples.pdf
- Bazeley, P. (2007b). *Qualitative data analysis with NVivo*. Los Angeles ; London: SAGE.
- Berg, B. L. (2007). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education Inc.
- Brown, C. C. (1959). *Malay Sayings*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Limited.
- Bullinger, H. (2003). *Public participation and Chesapeake Bay Watershed restoration policies mechanisms and development of E-participation*. George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia.

- Caddy, J., Vergez, C., & Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2001). *Citizens as partners : information, consultation and public participation in policy-making*. Paris: OECD.
- Casa Gemilang (2008). Casa Gemilang. Retrieved 15th December, 2008, from <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/casagemilang/>
- Castells, M. (2002). *The Internet galaxy : reflections on the Internet, business, and society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Catinet, M., & Vedel, T. (2000). Public policies for digital democracy. In K. L. Hacker & J. v. Dijk (Eds.), *Digital Democracy: Issues of Theory and Practice* (pp. 184-208). London, Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications.
- Center for Orang Asli Concerns (2006). Center for Orang Asli Concerns. Retrieved 3 August, 2007, from <http://www.coac.org.my/codenavia/portals/coacv2/code/main/main.php>
- Chadwick, A. (2006). *Internet politics : states, citizens, and new communication technologies*. New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chen, P. (2007). *E-engagement : a guide for public managers*. Canberra, Australia: ANU E Press, The Australian National University.
- Clift, S. (2003). *E-Democracy, E-Governance and Public Net-Work*. Paper presented at the Workshop: Considerations on the Proposed ACP Fish II Fisheries Management Knowledge Exchange System – FMKES from <http://stevenclift.com/?p=104>
- Coleman, S., & Gøtze, J. (2001). *Bowling together: Online public engagement in policy deliberation*. London: Hansard Society.
- Coleman, S., & Norris, D. F. (2005). A New agenda for e-democracy. *SSRN eLibrary*.
- Corbin, J. M., & Strauss, A. L. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research : techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Dahl, R. A., Neil, J. S., & Paul, B. B. (2001). Democracy *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 3405-3408). Oxford: Pergamon.
- Dahlberg, L. (2001). Democracy via Cyberspace: Mapping the Rhetorics and Practices of Three Prominent Camps *New Media & Society*, 3(2), 157-177.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 1-32). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Department of Statistic (2001). Population And Housing Census 2000. Retrieved 17 May, 2007, from http://www.statistics.gov.my/english/frameset_census.php?file=pressdemo
- Department of Statistics Malaysia (2001). *Population Distribution By Local Authority Areas and Mukims*. Putrajaya: Department of Statistic Malaysia.
- Department of Statistics Malaysia (2007). Key Statistics. Retrieved 4 May 2007, from http://www.statistics.gov.my/english/frameset_keystats.php

- Department of Statistics Malaysia (2010a). Key Statistics. Retrieved 25 May 2010, from http://www.statistics.gov.my/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=54%3Apopulation-updated-31072009&catid=35%3Akey-statistics&Itemid=53&lang=en
- Department of Statistics Malaysia (2010b). Key Statistics. Retrieved 25 May 2010, from http://www.statistics.gov.my/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=447%3Agross-domestic-product-gross-national-income-updated-13052010&catid=35%3Akey-statistics&Itemid=53&lang=en
- Department of Town and Country Planning (2007). Town Planning. Retrieved 15 May, 2007, from <http://www.npptownplan.gov.my/survey>
- Economic Planning Unit (2001). *The Third Outline Perspective Plan, 2001-2010*. Putrajaya, Malaysia: Percetakan Nasional.
- Economic Planning Unit (2002). *Knowledge-Based Economy Master Plan*. from <http://www.epu.jpm.my/New%20Folder/publication/knoweco.htm>.
- Economic Planning Unit (2006). *Ninth Malaysia Plan 2006-2010*. Putrajaya, Malaysia: Percetakan Nasional.
- Economic Planning Unit (2010a). Development planning machinery. Retrieved 3 Jan, 2010, from <http://epu.gov.my/web/guest/machinery>
- Economic Planning Unit (2010b). Malaysian Economy in Figures 2009. Retrieved 16 May, 2010, from <http://www.epu.gov.my/malaysianeconomyfigures2009>
- Economic Planning Unit (2010c). Malaysian Economy in Figures 2009. Retrieved 16 May, 2010, from <http://www.epu.gov.my/malaysianeconomyfigures2009>
- Economic Planning Unit (2010d). Recent economic history. Retrieved 3 Jan, 2010, from <http://www.epu.gov.my/recenteconomichistory>
- Economic Planning Unit (2010e). Vision 2020, 1991-2020. Retrieved 3 Jan, 2010, from <http://www.epu.gov.my/184>
- Embong, A. R. (2007). Islam and democracy in Malaysia. In Z. Hasan (Ed.), *Democracy in Muslim societies : the Asian experience* (pp. 266 p.). New Delhi: Sage Publications India.
- Fikes, T. L. (2005). *Electronic Democracy and Citizen Participation: The Challenge of the Digital Divide*. Southern California, the University of Southern California, Southern California.
- Fishkin, S., Neil, J. S., & Paul, B. B. (2001). Democratic Theory *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 3422-3425). Oxford: Pergamon.
- Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2003). The interview: From structured questions to negotiated text. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (2nd ed., pp. 61-106). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- Francoli, M. M. (2005). *Toward a digital commons?: An examination of the use of information and communication technology by Canadian parliamentarians*. The University of Western Ontario, Ontario.

- Gallie, W. B. (1964). *Philosophy and the historical understanding*. London: Chatto and Windus.
- George, T. (2002). Developing a culture of competence. *Jurnal Pengurusan Awam*, 1(1), 19-37.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society : outline of the theory of structuration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gordon, R. G., Jr. (ed.), (2005). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. Retrieved 17 May, 2007 from http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Malaysia
- Government of Malaysia (1963). *Federal Constitution of Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Government Press.
- Government of Malaysia (1998). *Universal Service Provision Communication and Multimedia Act 1998 (Act 588)*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Percetakan Nasional Berhad.
- Government of Malaysia (2001). *The Eighth Malaysia Plan 2001-2005*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Percetakan Nasional Berhad.
- Government of Malaysia (2003). *The Malaysian Public Sector ICT Strategic Plan*. from <http://www.mampu.gov.my/mampu/bm/program/ICT/ISPlan/>.
- Government of Malaysia (2006a). *The Ninth Malaysia Plan 2006-2010*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Percetakan Nasional Berhad.
- Government of Malaysia (2006b). *Societies Act 1966 (Act 335)*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Percetakan Nasional Berhad.
- Government of Malaysia (2006c). *Water Services Industry Act Watern Services Industry Act 2006*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Percetakan Nasional Berhad.
- Government of Malaysia (2007). *Government of Malaysia Portal*. Retrieved 5 April, 2007, from <http://www.gov.my>
- Government of Malaysia (2009). *Tell Us What You Think*. Retrieved 5 January, 2010, from http://www.transformation.gov.my/index.php?option=com_chronocontact&Itemid=84&lang=en
- Gronlund, A. (2001). Democracy in an IT-framed society. *Association for Computing Machinery. Communications of the ACM*, 44(1), 22-26.
- Hacker, K. L., & Dijk, J. v. (2000). What is digital democracy. In K. L. Hacker & J. v. Dijk (Eds.), *Digital democracy : issues of theory and practice* (pp. 1-10). London Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications.
- Hansard Society (2003). *e-democracy Programme*. Retrieved 5 May, 2009, from <http://web.archive.org/web/20030401184724/www.hansard-society.org.uk/eDemocracy.htm>
- Harris, R. W. (2002). *ICT for Poverty Alleviation Framework*. Paper presented at the UNDP ICT for Development in Asia-Pacific: Programme Officers/Focal Points Workshop. from <http://rogharris.org/ICTforPovertyAlleviationFramework.pdf>

- Harris, R. W., Yogeesvaran, K., & Lee, L. W. Y. (2007). *Telecentres for National e-Inclusion in Malaysia*. Paper presented at the e-Asia Conference: Asian Telecentre Forum 2007. from http://i4donline.net/ATF/2007/fullpapers/Roger_ATF07ABS113.pdf
- Heeks, R. (1999a). Reinventing government in the information age. In R. Heeks (Ed.), *Reinventing government in the information age : international practice in IT-enabled public sector reform* (pp. xxi, 386 p.). London: Routledge.
- Heeks, R. (1999b). *Reinventing government in the information age : international practice in IT-enabled public sector reform*. London: Routledge.
- Held, D. (1996). *Models of democracy* (2nd ed.). Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- Horowitz, D. L. (1985). *Ethnic groups in conflict*. Berkeley, Calif. ; London: University of California Press.
- Hussain, A. A. (2001). Pembaharuan pentadbiran awam *Pengantar pentadbiran awam: paradigma baru* (pp. 295-309). Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Utusan Publications & Distributors Sdn.Bhd.
- Hussin, M. (1990). *Islam and ethnicity in Malay politics*. Singapore ; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Inoguchi, T. (1998). Asian-Style Democracy? In T. Inoguchi, E. Newman & J. Keane (Eds.), *The changing nature of democracy* (pp. 173-183). Tokyo ; New York: United Nations University Press.
- Inoguchi, T., Newman, E., & Keane, J. (1998). Introduction. In T. Inoguchi, E. Newman & J. Keane (Eds.), *The changing nature of democracy* (pp. 1-19). Tokyo ; New York: United Nations University Press.
- Institut Tadbiran Awam Negara (2006). Bab 6 Struktur Pemerintahan Kerajaan Persekutuan *Pentadbiran dan Pengurusan Awam Malaysia* (pp. 99-123). Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Institut Tadbiran Awam Negara (INTAN).
- International Telecommunication Union (2002, March 2002). Multimedia Malaysia: Internet Case Study. Retrieved 20 May, 2007, from <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/cs/>
- International Telecommunication Union (2003). ITU Digital Access Index: World's first Global ICT Ranking. Retrieved 16 May, 2007, from http://www.itu.int/newsarchive/press_releases/2003/30.html
- International Telecommunication Union (2010). *Measuring the Information Society 2010*. Geneva, Switzerland: International Telecommunication Union (ITU).
- Irvin, R. A., & Stansbury, J. (2004). Citizen Participation in Decision Making: Is It Worth the Effort? *Public Administration Review*, 64(1), 55-65.
- Jasin, A. K. (2006). The Scribe A Kadir Jasin. Retrieved 3 September, 2007, from <http://kadirjasin.blogspot.com/>
- Jin, S. E. (2008). Serve with integrity. *The Star: Star Special*, pp. 2-3.

- Johnston, J., Neil, J. S., & Paul, B. B. (2001). Public Administration: Organizational Aspects *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 12507-12512). Oxford: Pergamon.
- Kamarudin, R. P. (2007). No holds barred. Retrieved 3 August, 2007, from <http://malaysia-today.net/blog2006/holds.php>
- Karim, M. R. A. (1996). Public-Private Sector Cooperation for Development in Malaysia. *Asian Review of Public Administration*, VIII(1), 13-24.
- Karim, M. R. A., & Khalid, N. M. (2003). *E-government in Malaysia : improving responsiveness and capacity to serve*. Subang Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia and Putrajaya, Malaysia: Pelanduk Publications and MAMPU.
- Kettl, D. F. (2002). *The transformation of governance : public administration for twenty-first century America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Kettl, D. F. (2007). The Transformation of Governance: Who Governs and How? In J. M. Shafritz & A. C. Hyde (Eds.), *Classics of public administration* (6th ed., pp. 577-587). Boston: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Kim, C.-G. (2005). *Public administrators' acceptance of the practices of digital democracy: a model explaining the utilization of online policy forums in South Korea*. Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, Newark, New Jersey.
- King, J. (2005). Democracy in the Information Age. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 65(2), 16-32.
- Korac-Kakabadse, A., & Korac-Kakabadse, N. (1999). Information Technology's Impact on the Quality of Democracy Reinventing the Democratic Vessel. In R. Heeks (Ed.), *Reinventing Government In The Information Age International Practice In IT-enabled Public Sector Reform* (pp. 211). London and New York: Routledge.
- Lijphart, A. (1977). *Democracy in plural societies : a comparative exploration*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Lindblom, C. E. (1959). The Science of "Muddling Through". *Public Administration Review*, 19(2), 79-88.
- Lindblom, C. E. (1979). Still Muddling, Not Yet Through. *Public Administration Review*, 39(6), 517-526.
- Lindblom, C. E. (2007). The Science of "Muddling Through". In J. M. Shafritz & A. C. Hyde (Eds.), *Classics of public administration* (6th ed., pp. 164-173). Boston: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Loyal, S. (2003). *The sociology of Anthony Giddens*. London ; Sterling, Va.: Pluto Press.
- Macintosh, A. (2003). Using information and communication technologies to enhance citizen engagement in the policy process. In Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Ed.), *Promise and problems of e-democracy challenges of online citizen engagement* (Vol. 2007, pp. 140). Paris: OECD (Online service).

- Macintosh, A. (2004, 5-8 January 2004). *Characterizing E-Participation in Policy-Making*. Paper presented at the 37th Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Science, Hawaii.
- Majlis Perbandaran Subang Jaya (2007). Local Agenda 21. Retrieved 6 June 2007, from http://ocps.mpsj.gov.my/cms/content.jsp?id=com.tms.cms.section.Section_3ddb9d01-a020f414-1eb717e0-4bffdf1c
- Majone, G. (1989). *Evidence, argument, and persuasion in the policy process*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (2010). Trade Performance: April 2010 and January - April 2010 Retrieved 16 June, 2010, from http://www.matrade.gov.my/cms/content.jsp?id=com.tms.cms.article.Article_1e81d810-7f000010-29b829b8-362c0f50
- Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (2007). eKL Strategic Plan. Putrajaya, Malaysia: Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU).
- Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (2008). Towards one service, one delivery, no wrong door. Putrajaya, Malaysia: Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU).
- Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (2006). Commission Determination on Universal Service Provision: Determination No.6 of 2002. Retrieved 5 June, 2007, from <http://www.mcmc.gov.my/registers/cma/comdeter/pdf/usp.pdf>
- Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (2008). *Communication and Multimedia selected facts and figures* (No. Q4 2008). Cyberjaya: Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC).
- Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (2010). Statistics and records. Retrieved 6 June, 2010, from http://register.skmm.gov.my/facts_figures/stats/ViewStatistic.asp?cc=36702694&srId=50919742
- Malaysian Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (n.d.). Malaysian Environmental NGOs. Retrieved 3 August, 2007, from http://mengo.org/about_overview.htm
- Management Advisory Committee (2004). *Connecting Government: Whole of Government Responses to Australia's Priority Challenges* (No. ISBN 0 97510151X). Canberra, Australia: Commonwealth of Australia 2004.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1989). *Designing qualitative research*. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2006). *Designing qualitative research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Meyer, M., Neil, J. S., & Paul, B. B. (2001). Bureaucracy and Bureaucratization *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 1402-1406). Oxford: Pergamon.

- Ministry of Energy Water and Communication (2006). My Water Voice. Retrieved 15 May, 2007, from <http://web.archive.org/web/20060613214432/http://mywatervoice.ktak.gov.my/>
- Ministry of Energy Water and Communication (2007a). Universal Service Provision. Retrieved 16 July, 2007, from <http://www.ktak.gov.my/template01.asp?contentid=204>
- Ministry of Energy Water and Communication (2007b). USP: K-Community. Retrieved 16 July, 2007, from <http://www.ktak.gov.my/template01.asp?contentid=205>
- Ministry of Energy Water and Communication, & Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (2006). *The National Broadband Plan*.
- Multimedia Development Corporation (2007). MSC Flagship Applications. Retrieved 15 May, 2007, from <http://www.msc.com.my/msc/flagships.asp>
- Multimedia Development Corporation (2008a). Bill of Guarantees. Retrieved 15 August, 2008, from <http://www.msomalaysia.my/topic/12073058097925#bog>
- Multimedia Development Corporation (2008b). *Malaysia Government Portals and Websites Assessment 2007*. Cyberjaya: Multimedia Development Corporation (MDeC).
- MyEG Services (2006). Driving License Renewal. Retrieved 26 August, 2008, from <http://www.myeg.com.my/>
- National Economic Advisory Council (2009). About NEAC. Retrieved 15 January, 2010, from <http://www.neac.gov.my/background>
- National Information Technology Council (1999). Strategic agenda providing an integrated platform into the e-world. Retrieved 16 March, 2007, from http://www.nitc.gov.my/images/Integrated_platform_2.pdf
- National Information Technology Council (2000). Toward Malaysia's Knowledge Empowerment in the 21st Century *Access, Empowerment and Governance in the Information Age* (Vol. 1, pp. xii-xvi). Kuala Lumpur: The National Information Technology Council.
- National Information Technology Council (2009a). National Broadband Initiative. Retrieved 2009, 25 June, from <http://www.nitc.my/index.cfm?&menuid=106&parentid=31>
- National Information Technology Council (2009b). Strategic thrust areas. Retrieved 2009, 16 February, from <http://www.nitc.my/index.cfm?&menuid=45&parentid=24>
- Neher, C. D. (1994). Asian Style Democracy. *Asian Survey*, 34(11), 949-961.
- Neher, C. D. (2002). *Southeast Asia in the new international era* (4th ed.). Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.
- Oii, J. (1999). Subang Jaya e-Community Portal. Retrieved 3 August, 2007, from <http://www.usj.com.my/>
- Oii, J. (2003). Screenshots: Thinking Allowed. Thinking Aloud. Retrieved 3 August, 2007, from <http://www.jeffooi.com/>

- Okot-Uma, R. W. O. (2000). Electronic governance: Reinventing good governance. Retrieved 6 June 2007, from Commonwealth Secretariat, London: - tlatlauquitepec.gob.mx
- Ooi, K. B., Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, & Strategic Info Research Development (2008). *Lost in transition : Malaysia under Abdullah*. Singapore and Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies and Strategic Info Research Development.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2001). Citizens as partners. Retrieved 11 Dec, 2007, from <http://browse.oecdbookshop.org/oecd/pdfs/browseit/4201131E.PDF>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2003). Promise and problems of e-democracy challenges of online citizen engagement. Retrieved 9 Oct, 2007, from <http://ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/login?url=http://www.sourceoecd.org/9264019480> Full text available from SourceOECD
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development., & SourceOECD (Online service) (2003). Promise and problems of e-democracy challenges of online citizen engagement. Retrieved 9 Oct, 2007, from <http://ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/login?url=http://www.sourceoecd.org/9264019480> Full text available from SourceOECD
- Orlikowski, W. J. (1992). The Duality of Technology: Rethinking the Concept of Technology in Organizations. *Organization Science*, 3(3), 398-427.
- Orlikowski, W. J. (2000). Using Technology and Constituting Structures: A Practice Lens for Studying Technology in Organizations. *Organization Science*, 11(4), 404.
- Painter, M. (2004). The Politics of Administrative Reform in East and Southeast Asia: From Gridlock to Continuous Self-Improvement? *Governance*, 17(3), 361-386.
- Parliament of Malaysia (2007). Introduction. Retrieved 4 May, 2007, from <http://www.parlimen.gov.my/eng-pengenalan-lblakng.htm>
- Parvez, Z. (2006). Examining e-democracy through a double structuration loop. *Electronic Government*, 3(3), 329-346.
- Parvez, Z., & Ahmed, P. (2006). Towards building an integrated perspective on e-democracy. *Information, Communication & Society*, 9(5), 612-632.
- PEMUDAH (2007). Background: Values. Retrieved 25 January, 2010, from <http://www.pemudah.gov.my/297>
- Plumptre, T. (2001). Governance in an era of transformational change: how the scientific revolution may reshape our institutions and our lives. [Speech]. *INTAN Executive Series*, 4(1), 43-71.
- Prime Minister of Malaysia (2003). Inheriting Success and Building A Future of Excellence, Glory and Distinction. Retrieved 23 June, 2008, from <http://www.pmo.gov.my/ucapan/?m=p&p=paklah&id=2816>
- Public Complaints Bureau (2006). *Annual Report 2006*. Putrajaya, Malaysia: Public Complaints Bureau, Prime Minister's Department, Malaysia.

- Public Complaints Bureau (2008). *Annual Report 2007*. Putrajaya, Malaysia: Public Complaints Bureau, Prime Minister's Department, Malaysia.
- Public Service Commission (2007). Public Service Commission of Malaysia. Retrieved 4 May, 2007, from http://www.spa.gov.my/portal/page?_pageid=113,63180&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL
- Public Service Department (2001). *Istilah Perkhidmatan Awam- Perjawatan*. Retrieved 4 May, 2007, from <http://www.jpa.gov.my/v3/informasi-jpa/istilah/perjawatan/>
- Public Service Department Malaysia (2006a). *Strategic human capital management-policies, strategies and practices*. Putrajaya, Malaysia: Public Service Department Malaysia.
- Public Service Department Malaysia (2006b). *Unleashing human potential*. Putrajaya, Malaysia: Public Service Department Malaysia.
- Public Service Department Malaysia (2009). *Annual report - driving transformation*. Putrajaya, Malaysia: Public Service Department Malaysia.
- QSR International (2007). NVivo 8 Online Help. Retrieved 14 June, 2009, from http://help-nv8-en.qsrinternational.com/NVivo_8_Help.htm
- Queensland Government (2004). *eDemocracy Policy Framework 2004* (pp. 4). Brisbane, Queensland Australia: Strategic Policy Directorate, Department of Communities, Queensland Government.
- Rawls, J. (1997). The Idea of public reason revisited. *The University of Chicago Law Review*, 64(3), 765-807.
- Razak, A. (2010). Netizens speak up on 'Allah'. Retrieved 6 Jan, 2010, from <http://www.malaysiakini.com.ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/news/121285>
- Razak, N. (2009a). The Blogger's Code Retrieved 15 Dec, 2009, from http://www.1malaysia.com.my/index.php?option=com_myblog&show=the-bloggers-code.html&Itemid=54&lang=en#readmore
- Razak, N. (2009b). NajibRazak. Retrieved 11 January, 2010, from <http://twitter.com/NajibRazak>
- Razak, N. (2009c). The official Facebook page of the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Najib Razak. Retrieved 11 January, 2010, from <http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/najibrzak?v=wall&ref=nf>
- Razak, N. (2009d). Welcome to 1Malaysia. Retrieved 10 October, 2009, from http://www.1malaysia.com.my/index.php?option=com_myblog&Itemid=54&lang=en
- Razak, N. (2010). Thank you for your budget responses. Retrieved 10 October, 2009, from http://www.1malaysia.com.my/index.php?option=com_myblog&archive=October-2009&Itemid=54&lang=en
- Registrar of Society (2010). Statistik pertubuhan dan laporan. Retrieved 25 March, 2010, from <http://www.ros.gov.my/report.php>
- Rheingold, H. (1995). *The virtual community : finding connection in a computerized world*. London: Minerva.

- Rheingold, H. (2000). *The virtual community : homesteading on the electronic frontier* (Rev. ed.). Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Richards, L. (2005). *Handling qualitative data : a practical guide*. London: Sage.
- Rourke, F. E., Neil, J. S., & Paul, B. B. (2001). Public Bureaucracies *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 12519-12521). Oxford: Pergamon.
- Samad, P. A. (2008). *Abdullah Ahmad Badawi : a new breeze in Malaysia's politics : a political analysis*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Partisan Publication & Distribution.
- Sarji, A. H. A. (1996). *The Chief Secretary to the Government, Malaysia*. Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia: Pelanduk Publications.
- Selangor State Government (2006). Selangor Government Consultation with the Rakyat towards sustainable development. Retrieved 15 May, 2007, from <http://selangor.agenda21.gov.my/>
- Shamsul, A. B. (2005). The construction and management of pluralism: sharing the Malaysian experience. *International Centre for Islam and Pluralism (ICIP) Journal*, 2(1).
- Sheehan, J. J., & Neil, J. S. a. P. B. B. (2001). Democracy, History of *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 3408-3413). Oxford: Pergamon.
- Sheridan, L. A., Groves, H. E., Vohrah, K. C., Koh, T. N. P., & Ling, P. S. W. (2004). *Sheridan & Groves the Constitution of Malaysia* (5th ed.). Kuala Lumpur: Malayan Law Journal.
- Siddiquee, N. A. (2002). Administrative reform in Malaysia: Recent trends and developments. *Asian Journal of Political Science*, 10(1), 105 - 130.
- Siddiquee, N. A. (2006). *Administrative reforms and innovations in Malaysia: an historical overview*. Paper presented at the International Conference for the 50th Anniversary of KAPA, Seoul, South Korea.
- Siddiquee, N. A. (2007). Public service innovations policy transfer and governance in the Asia-Pacific region: The Malaysian experience. *JOAAG*, 2(1), 81-91.
- Singh, H., & Narayanan, S. (1989). Changing Dimensions in Malaysian Politics: The Johore Baru by-Election. *Asian Survey*, 29(5), 514-529.
- Snellen, I. (2001a). ICTs and the future of democracy. *International Journal of Communications Law and Policy*, Winter 2000-01(6). Retrieved from http://ijclp.net/files/ijclp_web-doc_6-6-2001.pdf. doi:IJCLP Web-Doc 6-6-2001
- Snellen, I. (2001b). ICTs, bureaucracies, and the future of democracy. *Association for Computing Machinery. Communications of the ACM*, 44(1), 45-48.
- Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 443-466). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

- Street, J., & Neil, J. S. a. P. B. B. (2001). *Electronic Democracy International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 4397-4399). Oxford: Pergamon.
- Suruhanjaya Pilihanraya Malaysia (2009). *Komposisi Dewan Rakyat dan Dewan Undangan Negeri*. Retrieved 20 April, 2009, from <http://www.spr.gov.my/>
- Thomas, J. C. (1995). *Public Participations in Public Decisions*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- United Nations (2003). *World Public Sector Report 2003: E-Government at the crossroad* (No. ST/ESA/PAD/SER.E/49). New York: United Nations.
- United Nations (2007). *DPADM Mission Statement*. Retrieved 3 August, 2007, from <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan021302.pdf>
- United Nations (2008a). *People Matter Civic Engagement in Public Governance* (No. ST/ESA/PAD/SER.E/108). New York: United Nations.
- United Nations (2008b). *People matter: Civic engagement in public governance* (No. ST/ESA/PAD/SER.E/108). New York: United Nations.
- United Nations (2008c). *UN E-Government Survey 2008: From E-government to Connected Governance* (No. UNPAN/028607). New York: United Nations.
- United Nations Development Programme (2006). *Human Development Report 2006*. New York, U.S.A: United Nations.
- University of Texas at Austin (2008). *Perry-Castaneda Library Map Collection*. Retrieved 9 November, 2008, from http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/malaysia_adm98.jpg
- Weber, M. (2007). *Bureaucracy*. In J. M. Shafritz & A. C. Hyde (Eds.), *Classics of public administration* (6th ed., pp. 43-48). Boston: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Weber, M., Gerth, H. H., & Mills, C. W. (1948). *From Max Weber : essays in sociology*. London: Routledge & K. Paul.
- Weber, M., Gerth, H. H., & Mills, C. W. (1991). *From Max Weber : essays in sociology* (New ed.). London: Routledge.
- Williamson, A. (2008). *A Model for emergent Citizen-Focused Local Electronic Democracy*. Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.
- Williamson, K. (2002). *Research techniques: Sampling Research methods for students, academics and professionals : information management and systems* (2nd ed., pp. xvii, 352 p.). Wagga Wagga, N.S.W.: Centre for Information Studies, Charles Sturt University.
- World Summit on Information Society (2003). *Declaration of Principles - Building the Information Society: a global challenge in the new Millennium*. Retrieved 9 May, 2007, from <http://www.itu.int/wsis/basic/about.html>
- World Summit on Information Society (2005). *Tunis Commitment*. Retrieved 9 May, 2007, from <http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs2/tunis/off/7.html>

- Yin, R. K. (2003a). *Applications of case study research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Yin, R. K. (2003b). *Case study research : design and methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research : design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Yusof, A. M. (2008). Transformasi sistem penyampaian perkhidmatan sektor awam Malaysia melalui pendekatan ICT: dulu, kini dan selamanya.
- Yusof, Z. A., & Bhattasali, D. (2008). *Economic growth and development in Malaysia: policy making and leadership*. Washington D.C., U.S.A: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank on behalf of the Commission on Growth and Development.
- Zahri, N. A. M. (2008a, 24 April). *ICT initiatives in public sector*. Paper presented at the UiTM Information Technology Conference, Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia.
- Zahri, N. A. M. (2008b). *The Malaysian Model of E-Government Development*. Paper presented at the 1st Annual E- Gov Asia-Pacific Forum.

List of political parties in Malaysia

Name in Bahasa Malaysia	Name in English
1. Barisan Nasional	: National Front
2. Barisan Jemaah Islamiah SeMalaysia (BERJASA)	: -
3. Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (PGRM)	: Malaysian People's Movement Party
4. Parti Kebangsaan Sarawak (SNAP)	: Sarawak National Party (SNAP)
5. Parti Pusaka Bumiputera Bersatu Sarawak (PBB)	: United Sarawak Native Inheritance Party (PBB)
6. Parti Progresif Penduduk (PPP)	: People's Progressive Party (PPP)
7. Parti Perpaduan Rakyat Sarawak	: Sarawak United People's Party
8. Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS)	: Islamic Party Of Malaysia (PAS)
9. Parti Kongres Indian Muslim Malaysia (KIMMA)	: Malaysian Indian Muslim Congress Party
10. Parti Pekerja-Pekerja Malaysia	: Malaysian Workers Party
11. Parti Rakyat Malaysia (PRM)	: Malaysian People's Party
12. Parti Tindakan Demokratik	: Democratic Action Party (DAP)
13. Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS)	: Sabah United Party
14. Parti Kongres Penyatuan Masyarakat	: Community Coalition Congress Party
15. Parti Liberal Demokratik-Sabah	: Liberal Democratic Party-Sabah
16. Parti Barisan Rakyat Sabah Bersekutu (BERSEKUTU)	: Federation Sabah People Front Party (BERSEKUTU)
17. Parti Keadilan Rakyat	: People's Justice Party
18. Parti Demokratik Setiasehati Kuasa Rakyat Bersatu Sabah (SETIA)	: United Sabah People Force Democratic Party (SETIA)
19. Parti Maju Sabah (PMS)	: Sabah Progressive Party
20. Parti Reformasi Negeri Sarawak (STAR)	: State Reform Party (STAR)
21. Pertubuhan Pasok Momogun Kadazandusun Bersatu (UPKO)	: United Pasok Momogun Kadazandusun Organisation (UPKO)
22. Parti Angkatan Keadilan Insan Malaysia (AKIM)	: Malaysian People Justice Force Party (AKIM)

Appendix A

23. Parti Demokratik Malaysia (MDP)	: Malaysian Democratic Party (MDP)
24. Parti Barisan Kemajuan India Se-Malaysia (AMIPF)	: All Malaysian Indian Progressive Front (AMIPF)
25. Parti Punjabi Malaysia (PPM)	: Malaysian Punjabi Party
26. Parti Demokratik Progresif Sarawak	: Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party (SPDP)
27. Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu (UMNO)	: United Malays National Organisation
28. Parti Persatuan China Malaysia (MCA)	: Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA)
29. Parti Kongres India Malaysia (MIC)	: Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC)
30. Parti Kongres Ceylonese Malaysia	
31. Parti Sosialis Malaysia	

Source: Reproduced from the official website of SPR (the common Malay abbreviation for the Election Commission) (SPR, 2010)

Classification of schemes of service

No.	Classification	Function and role
1.	A	Transport
2.	B	Art and Talent
3.	C	Science
4.	D	Education
5.	E	Economy
6.	F	Information System
7.	G	Agriculture
8.	J	Engineering
9.	K	Security and Civil Defense
10.	L	Judiciary and Legal
11.	M	Administrative and Diplomatic
12.	N	Administrative and Support
13.	Q	Research and Development
14.	R	Skilled, Semi-Skilled, and Non-Skilled
15.	S	Social
16.	U	Medical and Health
17.	W	Financial
18.	X	Maritime Enforcement
19.	Y	Police
20.	Z	Armed Force

Source: Reproduced from the website of JPA (2001)

References:

Public Service Department (2001). Istilah Perkhidmatan Awam- Perjawatan. Retrieved 4th May, 2007, from <http://www.jpa.gov.my/v3/informasi-jpa/istilah/perjawatan/>

Suruhanjaya Pilihanraya Malaysia (2010). Senarai Parti-parti Politik di Malaysia. Retrieved 20 May, 2010, from <http://www.spr.gov.my/>

Interview questions

1. What do you think e-democracy mean in Malaysia? Can you provide some examples?
2. In your opinion, will these practices eventually bring about significant changes to facilitate better management of public policy in Malaysia? In what way?
3. In your opinion, what would be the most likely objective for a government agency to provide for online participation in a policy-making process? Why?
4. Civic participations in online forums and blogs initiated by nongovernmental bodies or individuals sometimes point out issues regarding policies. Would you consider them as reliable sources for picking up issues to be addressed by your agency?
5. Do you think that the culture of Malaysian public administration is inclined to sustain effective use of inputs from e-democracy participation? Why?
6. Do you think e-democracy should be utilised for all types of policy? Why or why not?
7. What type of support is needed to facilitate effective use of e-democracy in Malaysia?
8. Do you think public administrators will resist incorporating inputs from e-democracy? Why / Why not?
9. In your opinion, what is missing from the current practices of e-democracy in Malaysia?
10. Thinking of yourself as a citizen. What would you say are your expectations of e-democracy implementation in Malaysia?

What sort of issues would benefit more from e-democracy? Why?

Ethics approval from SCERH

 MONASH University	
Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans (SCERH) Research Office	
Human Ethics Certificate of Approval	
Date	26 November 2007
Project Number	2007001928 - CF07/4438
Project Title	E-Democracy and public administrators: The Malaysian case
Chief Investigator	Assoc Prof Graeme Johanson
Approved	From 26 November 2007 to 26 November 2012
<hr/>	
Terms of approval	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University. 2. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all pending information (such as permission letters from organisations) is forwarded to SCERH. Research cannot begin at an organisation until SCERH receives a permission letter from that organisation. 3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by SCERH. 4. You should notify SCERH immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project. 5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number. 6. Amendments to the approved project: Requires the submission of a Request for Amendment form to SCERH and must not begin without written approval from SCERH. Substantial variations may require a new application. 7. Future correspondence: Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence. 8. Annual reports: Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval. 9. Final report: A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. SCERH should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion. 10. Monitoring: Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by SCERH at any time. 11. Retention and storage of data: The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years. 	
	
Dr Souheir Houssami Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics (on behalf of SCERH)	
Cc: Mr Larry Stillman	
Postal – Monash University, Vic 3800, Australia Building 3E, Room 111, Clayton Campus, Wellington Road, Clayton Telephone +61 3 9905 5490 Facsimile +61 3 9905 1420 Email scerh@adm.monash.edu.au www.monash.edu/research/ethics/human/index/html ABN 12 377 614 012 CRICOS Provider #00008C	

Approval to conduct research in Malaysia

	UNIT PERANCANG EKONOMI <i>Economic Planning Unit</i> JABATAN PERDANA MENTERI <i>Prime Minister's Department</i> BLOK B5 & B6 PUSAT PENTADBIRAN KERAJAAN PERSEKUTUAN 62502 PUTRAJAYA MALAYSIA	 EPU <small>ECONOMIC PLANNING UNIT</small> Telefon : 603-8888 3333 Telefax : 603-888
		Ref. Tuan: Your Ref.: Ref. Kami: UPE: 40/200/19/2196 Our Ref.: Tarikh: Date: 28 February 2008
<p>Abdul Gapar bin Abu Bakar 18 Jalan Kristal 3 Taman Kristal 43800 Dengkil Selangor</p>		
APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MALAYSIA		
<p>With reference to your application dated 17 November 2007, I am pleased to inform you that your application to conduct research in Malaysia has been approved by the Research Promotion and Co-Ordination Committee, Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department. The details of the approval are as follows:</p>		
Researcher's name : Passport No. / I. C No: Nationality : Title of Research : Period of Research Approved:	ABDUL GAPAR BIN ABU BAKAR 711009-04-5055 MALAYSIA "E-DEMOCRACY AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS: THE MALYSIAN CASE" THREE YEARS	
<p>2. Please collect your Research Pass in person from the Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department, Parcel B, Level 4 Block B5, Federal Government Administrative Centre, 62502 Putrajaya and bring along two (2) passport size photographs. You are also required to comply with the rules and regulations stipulated from time to time by the agencies with which you have dealings in the conduct of your research.</p>		
<p>3. I would like to draw your attention to the undertaking signed by you that you will submit without cost to the Economic Planning Unit the following documents:</p>		

a) A brief summary of your research findings on completion of your research and before you leave Malaysia; and b) Three (3) copies of your final dissertation/publication.	4. Lastly, please submit a copy of your preliminary and final report directly to the State Government where you carried out your research. Thank you.
<p>Yours sincerely,</p>	
 (MUNIRAH ABD. MANAN) For Director General, Macro Economic Section, Economic Planning Unit, E-mail: munirah@epu.ipm.my Tel: 88882809/2818/2958 Fax: 88883798	
ATTENTION	
<p>This letter is only to inform you the status of your application and <u>cannot be used as a research pass</u>.</p>	
<p>C.c:</p>	
Ketua Setiausaha Kementerian Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan Blok K Paras 5 Utama Pusat Bandar Damansara 50782 Kuala Lumpur (u.p: En Liew Swee Liang)	(Ruj. Tuan: (2)d/m. KPKT.BP/19/510)
Ketua Setiausaha Kementerian Sains, Teknologi dan Inovasi Aras 6 Blok C6 Parcel C Pusat Pentadbiran Kerajaan Persekutuan 62502 Putrajaya	



Explanatory Statement

Title: **E-democracy and Public Administrators: The Malaysian Case**

This information sheet is for you to keep.

My name is Abdul Gapar Abu Bakar and I am conducting a research project with Dr. Graeme Johanson, an Associate Professor in the Department of Information Technology, towards a degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Information Technology at Monash University. This means that I will be writing a thesis which is the equivalent of a 300 page book.

Your name and contact details were acquired from public domain websites on the Internet and you have been chosen to participate based on your job function at your organization.

The aim of this study is to reveal a set of critical success factors for better management of public policy through means of e-democracy. The identification of these factors can ensure the success of interactive adoption of information and communication technologies in public organizations and across levels of government, lay out clear advantages of e-democracy for public administrators and remove their misconceptions about such activities being extra workloads which further complicate their functions.

The study involves audio recording semi-structured interviews and it will take approximately one hour. We believe that the research will not involve any harm, discomfort or inconvenience to you. If a participant feels any personal distress as a result of participation, then the interview will be stopped by the interviewer.

Being in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. However, if you are willing to participate, you may withdraw at any time or avoid answering questions which you feel are too personal or intrusive. There will be **NO** consequences if you decide not to participate.

Your information is completely de-identified. No potentially identifying information will be included in any analysis. However, your organization will be coded according to its type and functions.

Storage of the data collected will adhere to the University regulations and kept on University premises in a locked filing cabinet for 5 years. Reports of the study will be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such reports.

If you would like to be informed of the research findings, please contact **Abdul Gapar Abu Bakar** on +613 99032445 or email: abdul.gapar@infotech.monash.edu.au. The findings will be accessible from December 2010.

<p>If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:</p>	<p>If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research CF07/4438 - 2007001928 is being conducted, please contact:</p>
<p>Associate Professor Dr. Graeme Johanson Faculty of Information Technology, Caulfield School of I.T., Monash University VIC 3145, Australia Tel.: +613 99032414 Fax: +613 99031077 e-mail: graeme.johanson@infotech.monash.edu.au</p>	<p>Human Ethics Officer Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans (SCERH) Building 3e Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800, Australia Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Fax: +61 3 9905 1420 Email: scerh@adm.monash.edu.au</p>

Thank you.



.....

Abdul Gapar, Abu Bakar

Centre for Community Networking Research
Caulfield School of Information Technology
Monash University
PO Box 197,
Caulfield East VIC 3145
Telephone +61 3 99032414 Facsimile +61 3 9903 2564 Email graeme.johanson@infotech.monash.edu.au
Web <http://www.ccnr.net>
ABN 12 377 614 012 CRICOS provider number 00008C

Examples of permission letters from government agencies in Malaysia

	<p>UNIT PEMODENAN TADBIRAN DAN PERANCANGAN PENGURUSAN MALAYSIA (MAMPU) JABATAN PERDANA MENTERI ARAS 2 - 6, BLOK B2 KOMPLEKS JABATAN PERDANA MENTERI PUSAT PENTADBIRAN KERAJAAN PERSEKUTUAN 62502 PUTRAJAYA</p>	 <p>PENGITRAFAN MS ISO 9001:2000 NO SIJIL KLR 0500311 Telefon : 03-88881199 Faks : 03-88883721 Laman Web : www.mampu.gov.my</p>
<p>Our ref: UPTM 159/505/2-1 KIT.2 (54) Date: 27th September 2007</p>		
<p>To: Human Ethics Officer Standing Committee on Ethics In Research Involving Humans (SCERH) Building 3e, Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800 Australia</p>		
<p>Dear Sir,</p>		
<p>Re: E-democracy and Public Administrators: The Malaysian Case Chief Investigator Associate Professor Dr. Graeme Johanson and Student Researcher Abdul Gapar Abu Bakar, Centre for Community Networking Research, Monash University, Australia</p>		
<p>I wish to refer to the above mentioned subject matter and inform you that the Malaysian Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU) agrees to participate in the case study / interviews or individual interviews for the above mentioned research project, subject to us being informed prior to the scheduled interview dates.</p>		
<p>Thank you.</p>		
<p>Yours sincerely,</p>		
		
<p>[RAJWAN BIN MOHD DIN] Director Human Resource & Management Services Division, Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU)</p>		

	<p>KEMENTERIAN SAINS, TEKNOLOGI DAN INOVASI MALAYSIA Aras 1-7, Blok C5, Parcel C, Pusat Pentadbiran Kerajaan Persekutuan 62662 Putrajaya, Malaysia MINISTRY OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION, MALAYSIA Level 1-7, Block C5, Parcel C, Federal Government Administrative Centre 62662 Putrajaya, Malaysia</p>	<p>603-8885 8000 (Tel.) 603-8888 9070 (Fax) www.mosti.gov.my</p>
<p>Date: 27th September 2007</p>		
<p>To: Human Ethics Officer Standing Committee on Ethics In Research Involving Humans (SCERH) Building 3e, Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800 Australia</p>		
<p>Dear Sir or Madam</p>		
<p>Re: E-democracy and Public Administrators: The Malaysian Case Chief Investigator Associate Professor Dr. Graeme Johanson and Student Researcher Abdul Gapar Abu Bakar, Centre for Community Networking Research, Monash University, Australia</p>		
<p>My organization is the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Malaysia.</p>		
<p>As Principal Assistant Director in Human Resource Management Division, I have agreed that my organization participate in case study / interviews or individual interviews for the abovementioned research project, subject to informed consent requirements.</p>		
<p>Thank you.</p>		
<p>Yours truly,</p>		
		
<p>(ZAHARIAH BINTI MOHD SARIF) b.p Secretary General Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation MALAYSIA</p>		

Ethics Approval Number:

CF07/4438 – 2007001928

**Consent Form
(Interview)**

Title: E-Democracy and Public Administrators: The Malaysian Case

NOTE: This consent form will remain with the Monash University researchers for their records.

Date: _____

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Group: _____

I _____, agree to take part in the above Monash University research project. I have read and understand the Explanatory Statement attached.

I understand that:

- being in this study is voluntary and I am under no obligation to consent to participation. However, if I am willing to participate, I may withdraw at any time or avoid answering questions which I feel are too personal or intrusive. There will be NO consequences if I decide not to participate.
- any data that the researcher extracts from the interview session for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.
- any information I will provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual in any reports on the project, or to any other party.
- data from the interview session will be kept in a secure storage and accessible to the research team. I also understand that the data will be destroyed after a 5 year period unless I consent to it being used in future research.

I understand that agreeing to participate, means that I am willing to:

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Be interviewed by the researcher | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Allow the interview to be audio-recorded | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Make myself available for further interview if required | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Allow the information provided by me to be used in further research projects which have ethics approval as long as my name and contact information is removed before it is given | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

Signed by _____ Date / /

Nine-step analysis processes conducted using NVivo software

Step 1: Interview transcripts were imported into an NVivo project. A Case was created for each Document (by selecting an option to code the sources at new Cases – see Step 1 in Appendix K). Matching identifiers, as discussed, were assigned to the respective Cases of the Documents, for easy data management. Cases assist in “establishing units of analysis” (Bazeley, 2007b, p. 133) from the Sources. The reference made between Cases and the Documents enhanced the data management and enabled deeper analysis through running of Queries, creating of Charts and running of Reports, as described in the following steps.

The researcher initially overlooked selecting the option to code each Document as a new Case, but separately created each Case to represent each unit of analysis. As a result, no connection was established between Documents and Cases. This glitch was rectified, with a guided instruction from the QSR helpline, via four steps: (1) the existing Casebook was exported to a folder in the PC hard drive; (2) all cases were deleted; (3) all Documents were highlighted to create new Cases; and (4) the Casebook was imported back into NVivo. Connections between Documents and their respective Cases were established.

Step 2: A set of Attributes, such as age and gender, were created to record known information about a Case. These attributes were assigned to each associated Case. The main functions of these Attributes are to allow comparisons, such as sentiments expressed between older and younger public administrators, and to assist in filtering Cases with specific Attributes (Bazeley, 2007b). A detailed Report of these Attributes is attached in Appendix L.

Insights from pilot interviews, as discussed, guided the researcher to collect complete demographic data from interviewees, particularly age. Some interviewees were reluctant to mention their actual age, but agreed to be included into one of three age groups provided by the researcher. The researcher found that Attributes in NVivo project add value to the analysis of data through effortless comparisons of views among interviewees from different age groups or group of services. Attributes also allow for the Cases to be grouped into Sets for further

analysis to bring forward a different perspective of the emerging themes within Sets.

Step 3: Before a coding process could be performed, a list of Nodes was created. Nodes are crucial in the analysis process because "data are recontextualized in terms of the concept rather than the [C]ase" (Bazeley, 2007b, p. 155), which facilitates the pattern finding from raw data. A list of concepts from the literature was employed to create a priori or theoretically derived codes. These concepts were derived from the literature, discussed in Chapters 2 to 5, to be explored, developed or tested with new data (Bazeley, 2007b). Such concepts enhance a researcher's sensitivity to the data, which allows the researcher to examine their similarities or differences from any emerging concept in the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). These codes were transformed into Nodes and hierarchically structured into tree Nodes, adapted from examples suggested by Bazeley (2007a).

Tree Nodes functioned "as a filing or classification system or catalogue for [N]odes" (Bazeley, 2007b, p. 102). These tree Nodes assist in organizing concepts (to clarify ideas and identify the structure of research data) and prompting for rich coding (Bazeley 2007b). In order to maximize the functions of tree Nodes, the researcher followed Bazeley's suggested rules of thumb in working with hierarchical coding systems:

"Organize trees based on conceptual relationships (the same 'sorts of things'), not observed or theoretical associations;

Use a separate node for each element (who[?], what[?], how[?], when[?], etc.) of what the text is about;

Each node should encompass one concept only;

Each concept appears in only one tree in the whole system;

A particular passage of text will be coded at multiple nodes; and

Keep the system 'light', be flexible." (Bazeley, 2007b, p. 105)

The researcher also found that it was useful to limit tree Nodes from exceeding "more than about ten trees and that trees ... [should not be] ... more than two or three layers deep" (Bazeley, 2007b, p. 122). A detailed Report of tree Nodes is shown in Appendix L.

Any new themes or concepts that were identified during the analysis process were also captured under a free Node. Free Nodes were created by either capturing the actual expression of the interviewee as the title, in-vivo code, or creating a new title for the concept (Bazeley, 2007b).

The researcher documented any creation, merger, and deletion of Nodes in a journal (with a time and date stamp), created as a Memo in the NVivo project. Such a journal acts as a historical archive for the researcher to review the development of the project.

Step 4: Each transcript was read in context to identify and interpret codeable topics, themes and issues, to be coded into relevant Nodes. Coding is viewed "as a tool to explore what the data are saying and to identify patterns within them" (Bazeley, 2007b, p. 155). As the coding process continued, all Nodes were cross-checked for links and related free Nodes were merged and refined to ensure all possible data that relates to this newly found theme was captured. Text Search Queries were also conducted to support this checking process, where all Documents would be searched for, by keying-in a word that described, or was a synonym of, the newly identified theme. This is a reflexive process. The researcher also monitored all coding processes via coding stripes, a useful feature in NVivo to keep track of the analysis process. The coding process was conducted on all Documents.

Step 5: After all transcripts were coded, each Node was read in context. The researcher then recorded any reflections or comments about the Node as Annotations in the Node. Memos were utilized to record any "[i]deas and thoughts stimulated by the [D]ocuments" (Bazeley, 2007b, p. 15) and Nodes. Memos were also created on key literatures that formed the research framework in order to make comparison with emerging patterns from the research data (Bazeley, 2007b). Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggest that Memos should be written "with the first analytic session and continue throughout the analytic process" (p. 118), since qualitative research involves "complex and cumulative thinking that would be very difficult to keep track without the use of memos" (p. 119). The researcher

found that Memos in this NVivo project are practical in organizing emerging patterns, particularly with the capability to search through multiple Memos simultaneously and reflect on the resulting concepts in respective Memos.

Step 6: According to Bazeley (2007b), "[c]oding is not an end in itself; it makes sense only if [researchers] can use it to search and test the ideas that have been coming out of [their] data" (p. 178). Consequently, four types of queries – text search query, word frequency query, coding query, and matrix coding query – were conducted in this NVivo project. The result of a query, i.e., the number of times a theme was specifically mentioned, was captured as evidence supporting emerging patterns. These counts were extracted into a spreadsheet (Microsoft Excel) where necessary to illustrate a holistic view across multiple Nodes and to gain further insights from the data in different perspectives. The researcher conducted the queries to answer his questions about the data and to provide evidence for the thesis. All queries were saved in folders for further re-running. Reflections on the queries were recorded in their respective Memos.

The researcher found that the Text Search Query was useful to examine and extract quotes following a hunch on certain ideas "to check through remaining documents to locate and explore any passage that confirm or are at odds with provisional findings" (Bazeley, 2007b, p. 170). Such a query was conducted to identify whether an expression or a word, such as awareness, was widely applied, as well as to investigate when and how a metaphor, idiomatic expression or other linguistic feature of interest is utilized (Bazeley, 2007b).

The Word Frequency Query was performed on all Documents to identify the human actors and agencies mentioned by interviewees. The result of the query was analyzed and respective free Nodes were created for each actor and agency. The free Nodes were categorized as insiders or outsiders and placed in the tree Nodes under a parent Node, called Players. The Word Frequency Query ensured that all Players mentioned by interviewees were captured.

The researcher also conducted the practice of scoping a query – "to restrict the search to particular sources, node(s) or case(s)" (Bazeley, 2007b, p. 148) for

focused analysis. The Coding Query and Matrix Coding Query are useful features to scope a query. The NVivo software Version 8 improved on the Coding Query feature, which facilitates the analysis process. While running the Coding Query on a particular Node, three options are provided for the result: summary, reference, or text, as opposed to only summary and reference in Version 7. The text option illustrates coded references for each interviewee, which allows the researcher to simply examine who actually says, admits, or denies something.

A deeper analysis was conducted on the data employing the Matrix Coding Query. Such a query “produces a kind of 'qualitative cross tabulation' in which coding items (usually a node or multiple nodes) define the rows of the resulting table, and the values of an attribute define the columns” (Bazeley, 2007b, pp. 143-144) (see Step 6 in Appendix K). The result of this query is presented in tabular form with counts of items in each cell, which contained the referenced text.

The researcher found that the Matrix Coding Query was useful to examine “a series of associations, such as those between an action and a number of possible actors, or a series of issues and a number of possible responses to those issues” (Bazeley, 2007b, p. 204). An example of such a query was conducted for the ‘Events’ Nodes and ‘Time of Interview’ Attributes. The results were saved. Reflections on similarities and differences of events mentioned in both interview periods memos were recorded in a Memo. A number of Matrix Coding Query were performed on other related Nodes and relevant Attributes, such as ‘hardware’, ‘software’, ‘systems’, and ‘network’ Nodes with ‘Age Group’ Attributes.

Step 7: Models were built from combinations of concepts or insights derived from NVivo project items, like Memos, Attributes, Cases, Nodes, and Query results, to make sense of emerging patterns from data analysis. Such Models assist to clearly illustrate connections across project items to tell the story of the research questions (Bazeley, 2007b). The creation and revision of Models is reflexive. As with Memos, the researcher kept track of all changes made on Models in a Memo, to monitor the development of ideas and patterns.

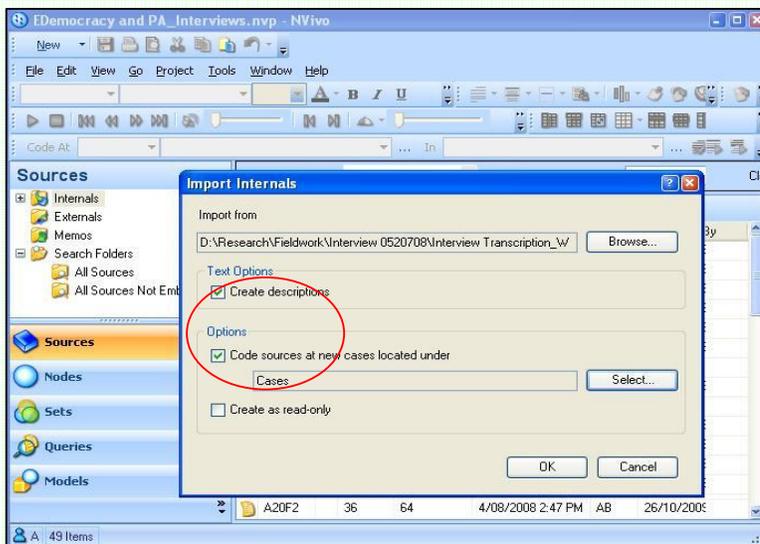
Bazeley (2007b) suggests that Models can assist in identifying missing links in presenting concluding patterns from the analysis and enable the researcher to rectify such defects. The researcher favors Models to show emerging patterns and synthesizing such patterns for better illustration of findings.

Step 8: Chart is a new feature in Version 8 of NVivo software. The researcher initially conducted a Matrix Coding Query and transferred the result to Excel to create charts in Version 7. The new feature allows direct creation of Charts from NVivo project through Chart Wizard; see Step 8 in Appendix K. The researcher found Chart facilitates in illustrating a balanced distribution of interviewees' attributes.

Step 9: The Report feature in NVivo is useful for extracting descriptive statistics of interviewees. A Set was created from Cases of interviewees and a Report on its Attributes summary was created. This report was exported into Excel for further analysis, e.g., percentage calculation. These percentages represent frequency of matching, e.g., Cases to Attributes, but could not be assumed as a direct correspondence (Bazeley, 2007b).

Screenshots of the analysis processes flow utilizing NVivo

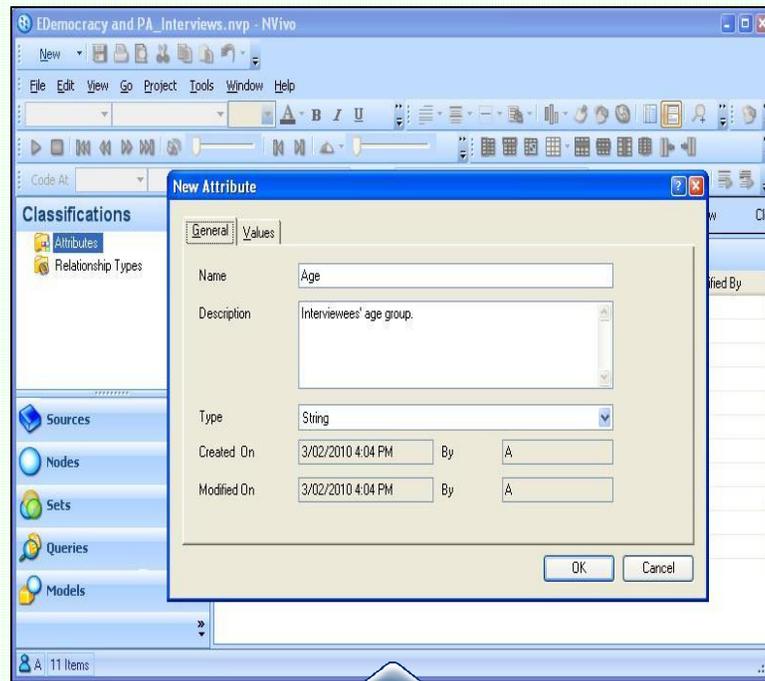
Step 1: Importing Documents into Internals and creating Cases



Internals						
Name	Nodes	Reference	Created On	Created	Modified On	Modified By
A01F1	34	79	5/03/2008 4:27 PM	AB	10/11/2009 5:4	A
A02F1	48	88	5/03/2008 4:27 PM	AB	10/11/2009 8:0	A
A03F1	25	38	5/03/2008 4:27 PM	AB	10/09/2009 5:2	A
A04F1	36	58	5/03/2008 4:27 PM	AB	28/10/2009 2:5	A
A05F1	43	65	5/03/2008 4:27 PM	AB	28/10/2009 3:2	A
A06F1	80	132	5/03/2008 4:27 PM	AB	20/11/2009 6:4	A
A07F1	30	60	5/03/2008 4:27 PM	AB	9/09/2009 1:39	A
A08F1	47	102	5/03/2008 4:27 PM	AB	23/11/2009 7:0	A
A09F2	24					
A10F1	28					
A11F1	46					
A12F1	52					
A13F1	38					
A14F2	52					
A15F2	37					
A16F2	62					
A17F2	54					
A18F2	59					
A19F2	63					
A20F2	36					

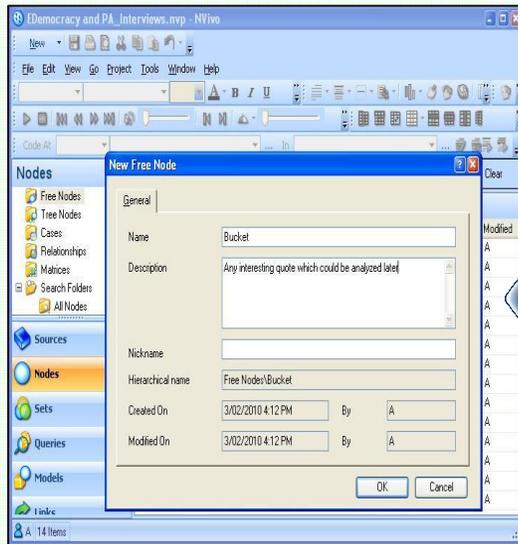
Cases						
Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created B	Modified O	Modified
A01F1	17	27	21/11/2008 3:52 PM	AB	10/11/2009	A
A02F1	15	26	21/11/2008 3:52 PM	AB	26/10/2009	A
A03F1	7	12	21/11/2008 3:52 PM	AB	10/09/2009	A
A04F1	13	21	21/11/2008 3:52 PM	AB	28/10/2009	A
A05F1	12	17	21/11/2008 3:52 PM	AB	28/10/2009	A
A06F1	17	39	21/11/2008 3:52 PM	AB	20/11/2009	A
A07F1	9	19	21/11/2008 3:52 PM	AB	9/09/2009	A
A08F1	10	18	21/11/2008 3:52 PM	AB	23/11/2009	A
A09F2	9	13	21/11/2008 3:52 PM	AB	22/10/2009	A
A10F1	12	20	21/11/2008 3:52 PM	AB	11/11/2009	A
A11F1	10	24	21/11/2008 3:52 PM	AB	19/10/2009	A
A12F1	15	25	21/11/2008 3:52 PM	AB	11/11/2009	A
A13F1	10	20	21/11/2008 3:52 PM	AB	28/10/2009	A
A14F2	17	24	21/11/2008 3:52 PM	AB	23/10/2009	A
A15F2	10	23	21/11/2008 3:52 PM	AB	11/09/2009	A
A16F2	17	33	21/11/2008 3:52 PM	AB	13/11/2009	A
A17F2	16	24	21/11/2008 3:52 PM	AB	5/10/2009	A
A18F2	14	22	21/11/2008 3:52 PM	AB	13/10/2009	A
A19F2	12	26	21/11/2008 3:52 PM	AB	8/10/2009	A
A20F2	10	24	21/11/2008 3:52 PM	AB	26/10/2009	A

Step 2: Creating Attributes

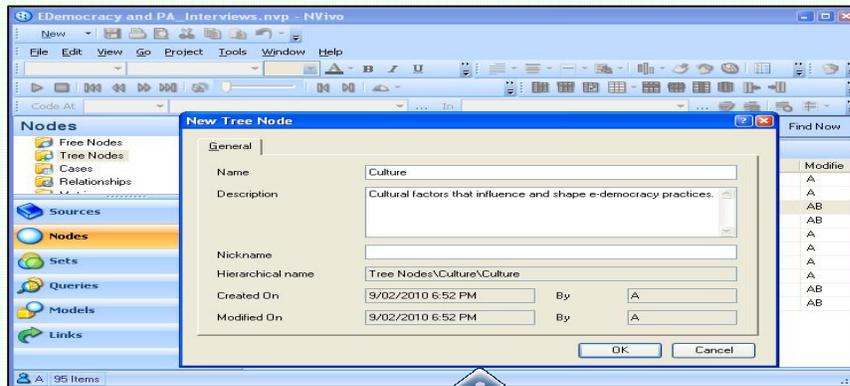


Attributes						
Name	Type	Created On	Created	Modified On	Modified By	
Age Group	String	30/01/2008 11:16 AM	AB	24/04/2009 6:26	A	
Agency	String	30/01/2008 11:18 AM	AB	24/04/2009 6:54	A	
Commentators	String	4/08/2008 3:36 PM	AB	24/04/2009 6:27	A	
Gender	String	30/01/2008 11:20 AM	AB	30/01/2008 11:20	AB	
Grade	String	14/03/2008 4:51 PM	AB	14/03/2008 4:54	AB	
Group	String	30/01/2008 11:21 AM	AB	30/01/2008 11:21	AB	
Public Administrator	String	30/01/2008 11:22 AM	AB	24/04/2009 6:28	A	
Time of Interview	String	14/02/2008 12:21 PM	AB	4/08/2008 3:13 P	AB	
Year of Service	String	7/08/2008 1:51 PM	AB	4/02/2010 3:21 P	A	

Step 3: Creating Nodes



Free Nodes						
Name	Source	References	Created On	Created	Modified On	Modifi
Bucket	30	49	26/09/2008 5:44	AB	20/11/2009 7:	A
complaints	29	91	5/11/2008 4:26	AB	20/11/2009 7:	A
electronic enabler	32	129	7/10/2008 6:17	AB	28/10/2009 3:	A
governing acts	12	20	7/10/2008 6:37	AB	13/11/2009 12	A
non-peralized	9	15	5/06/2009 3:34	A	20/11/2009 6:	A
not sure	22	43	5/11/2008 7:34	AB	1/12/2009 3:0	A
service delivery	19	40	5/11/2008 6:57	AB	11/11/2009 8:	A
trust	10	10	5/06/2009 3:39	A	1/12/2009 3:1	A
ubiquitous	37	213	10/07/2009 11:3	A	11/11/2009 3:	A
younger generatio	30	56	6/10/2008 3:50	AB	20/11/2009 7:	A



Tree Nodes						
Name	Sou	Reference	Created On	Crea	Modified On	Modifie
Culture	0	0	26/09/2008	AB	26/09/2008 4:57 PM	AB
deference to authority	30	75	29/09/200	A	23/11/2	
Emerging Organizational Culture	0	0	12/02/200	A	12/02/2	
lack of integration	10	17	12/02/2009 6:50	AB	13/11	A
information culture	16	36	12/02/2009 6:50	AB	23/11	A
Incremental	19	39	12/02/2009 6:50	AB	23/11	A
non-partisan and expert public service	24	58	29/09/200	A	13/11/2	
patron-client communitarianism	23	58	29/09/200	A	20/11/2	
Personalism	15	32	26/09/200	A	20/11/2	
Dimensions	0	0	26/09/2008	AB	26/09/2008 4:34 PM	AB
Actors - Practices	62	322	26/09/200	A	20/11/2	
Designer - Infrastructure	33	134	26/09/200	A	20/11/2	
Infrastructure - Actors	53	188	26/09/200	A	23/11/2	
Infrastructure - Designers	22	66	2/10/2008	A	1/12/20	
Institutional - Actors	25	62	6/10/2008	A	20/11/2	
Practices - Actors	50	151	2/10/2008	A	20/11/2	
Events	61	246	26/09/2008	AB	23/11/2009 7:07 PM	A
Expectations	75	519	26/09/2008	AB	23/11/2009 7:07 PM	A

Step 4 Coding into Nodes

Coding a selection of text into a Node.

The screenshot shows the 'Internals' application window with a document titled 'A01F1'. A context menu is open over a selected text block. The 'Code Selection' option is highlighted, and a sub-menu is displayed with 'At Existing Nodes' selected. Other options in the sub-menu include 'At New Node' and 'At Current Nodes'. The background text includes phrases like 'because I am not certain at the moment. There were times when we are not very open to criticism or opinion from people outside when it comes to drawing up a policy.'

Coding 'In Vivo' of a word or words.

The screenshot shows the 'Internals' application window with the same document. A context menu is open over a different text block. The 'Code In Vivo' option is highlighted. The background text includes phrases like 'change mindsets. Civic participation sometimes point out picking up issues to... There are times that being subscribed in some truth to it. We the government, it is open to any sugges...'

Viewing all coded text and their respective Nodes.

The screenshot shows the 'Internals' application window with the document. A vertical sidebar on the right side of the window displays a list of nodes and their associated metadata. The nodes are color-coded and include labels like 'Coding Density', 'A01F1', 'non-penalized', 'Expectations', 'Nodes', 'Infrastructure - Actors', 'Events', and 'Issues'. The background text includes phrases like 'Do you see it as being important to public administrators in policy-making? You are saying whether we would embark on this?'

Step 5: Recording reflections into Memos and Annotations

New Memo

General

Name: Deference to authority

Description: The nature of deference to authority for e-democracy in Malaysia.

Location: Memos

Size: 0 KB

Created On: 12/02/2010 12:43 PM By: A

Modified On: 12/02/2010 12:43 PM By: A

Read-only

OK Cancel



Memos

Name	Nodes	Referen	Created	Created B	Modified	Modified
_Glossary	0	0	27/12/20	AB	22/03/20	AB
_Journal	1	3	5/02/200	AB	22/10/20	A
_Research Questions	0	0	18/03/20	AB	22/03/20	AB
Actors-Practices	188	2148	21/11/20	AB	21/04/20	A
Awareness	1	1	11/02/20	AB	22/03/20	AB
Barriers	0	0	8/04/200	AB	22/03/20	AB
Catalyst	0	0	25/03/20	AB	22/03/20	AB
Complaints	128	405	12/02/20	AB	22/03/20	AB
Deference to authority	163	384	23/12/20	AB	17/08/20	A
Designer - Infrastructu	149	779	27/01/20	AB	5/06/200	A
Double-edged sword	11	16	5/12/200	AB	22/03/20	AB
electronic enabler	77	151	13/02/20	AB	22/03/20	AB
Events	234	1337	30/01/20	AB	22/03/20	AB
Expectations	218	2445	5/02/200	AB	5/06/200	A
Facilitators	2	2	9/04/200	AB	22/03/20	AB
Governing Acts	50	78	12/02/20	AB	22/03/20	AB
Hardware	122	412	1/01/200	AB	22/03/20	AB
ICT Facility	58	97	25/03/20	AB	22/03/20	AB
Incremental	79	195	19/02/20	AB	17/08/20	A
Info War	11	15	5/12/200	AB	17/08/20	A
information culture	62	158	19/02/20	AB	22/03/20	AB
Infrastructure - Actors	157	819	28/01/20	AB	5/06/200	A
Infrastructure - Design	92	389	29/01/20	AB	5/06/200	A
Institutional - Actors	109	280	29/01/20	AB	5/06/200	A
integration	49	62	19/02/20	AB	22/03/20	AB

Internals

Item	Node	References	Created On	Created B	Modified On	Modified B
A01	34	79	5/03/2008 4:27 PM	AB	10/11/2009 5:49	A
A02	48	88	5/03/2008 4:27 PM	AB	10/11/2009 8:04	A

Context Menu:

- Cut (Ctrl+X)
- Copy (Ctrl+C)
- Paste (Ctrl+V)
- Paste As See Also Link
- Delete
- Select All (Ctrl+A)
- Links
- Code Selection
- Code In Vivo (Ctrl+F8)
- Unicode Selection
- Memo Link
- See Also Link
- Annotation (highlighted)
- Hyperlink
- Open Linked Query...
- Open Linked External File...
- Open From Item...
- Open To Item...
- Open Referenced Source...



Annotations

Source Name	Number	In Folder	Created On	Created	Modified O	Modified
A01F1	1	Internals	6/10/2008 2:52	AB	8/10/2008	AB
A01F1	2	Internals	6/10/2008 3:55	AB	19/02/2009	AB
A01F1	3	Internals	6/10/2008 4:09	AB	19/02/2009	AB
A02F1	1	Internals	7/10/2008 6:38	AB	8/10/2008	AB
A02F1	2	Internals	7/10/2008 6:43	AB	30/01/2009	AB
A02F1	3	Internals	7/10/2008 6:57	AB	30/01/2009	AB
A02F1	4	Internals	9/10/2008 6:58	AB	30/01/2009	AB
A05F1	1	Internals	24/10/2008 6:27	AB	24/10/2008	AB
A06F1	1	Internals	28/10/2008 4:50	AB	20/01/2009	AB
A07F1	1	Internals	28/10/2008 6:05	AB	28/10/2008	AB
A07F1	2	Internals	28/10/2008 6:22	AB	10/02/2009	AB
A08F1	1	Internals	28/10/2008 7:12	AB	16/02/2009	AB
A08F1	2	Internals	28/10/2008 7:38	AB	16/02/2009	AB
A09F2	1	Internals	29/10/2008 3:47	AB	20/01/2009	AB
A09F2	2	Internals	29/10/2008 4:21	AB	20/01/2009	AB
A11F1	1	Internals	5/11/2008 4:27	AB	13/01/2009	AB
A11F1	2	Internals	5/11/2008 4:45	AB	16/02/2009	AB
A12F1	1	Internals	5/11/2008 5:07	AB	5/11/2008	AB
A12F1	2	Internals	5/11/2008 5:24	AB	5/11/2008	AB

Step 6: Running Queries

Keyword Query



Word Frequency Query

Word	Length	Count	Percentage (%)
sense	5	21	0.05
talking	7	21	0.05
though	6	21	0.05
allow	5	20	0.04
answer	6	20	0.04
bpa	3	20	0.04
definitely	10	20	0.04
designed	8	20	0.04
down	4	20	0.04
economic	8	20	0.04
especially	10	20	0.04
faster	6	20	0.04
implemented	11	20	0.04



Coding Query

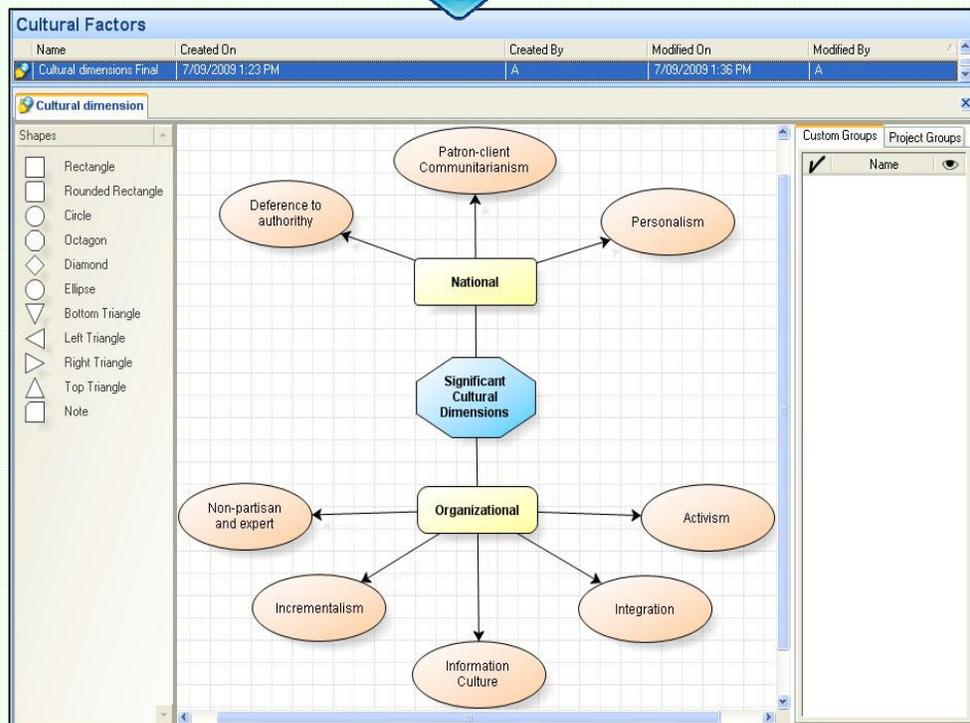
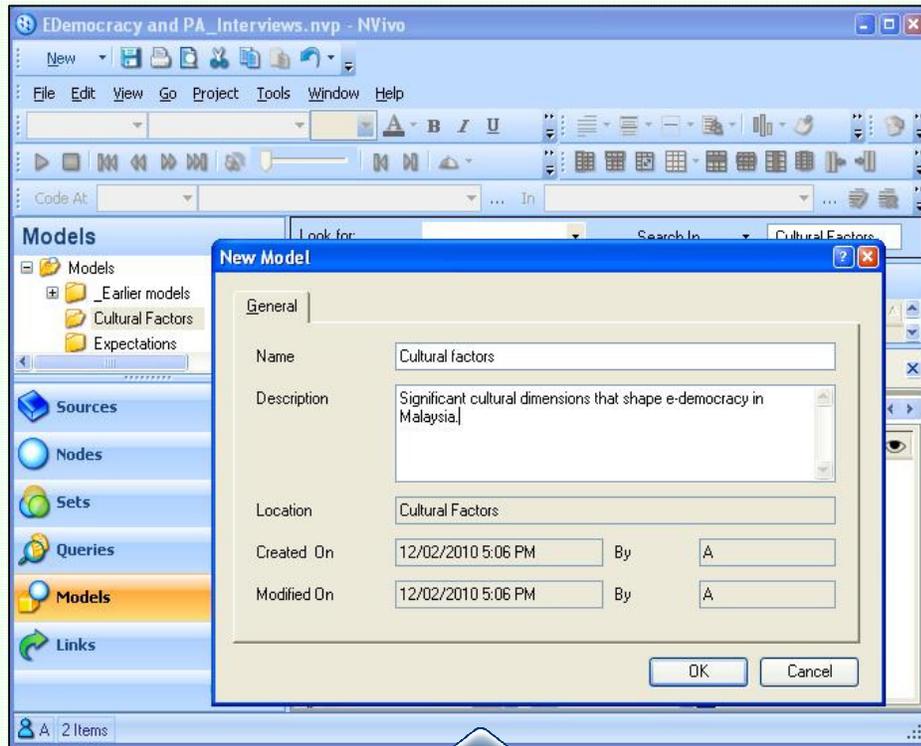


Matrix Coding Query

	A: Age Group = 25-35	B: Age Group = 36-45	C: Age Group = 46+
1: complaints	9	8	19
2: electronic enabler	14	12	24
3: not sure	10	6	12
4: service delivery	4	5	14



Step 7: Creating Model

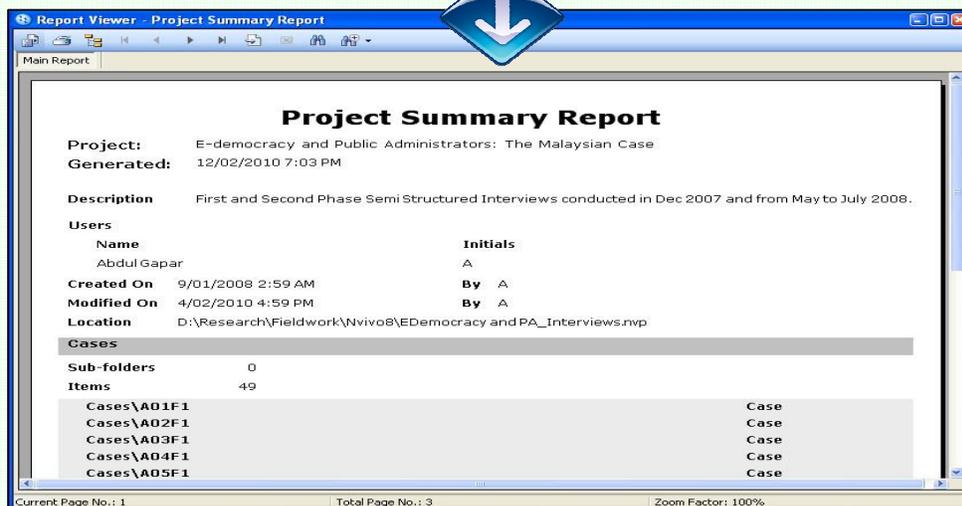
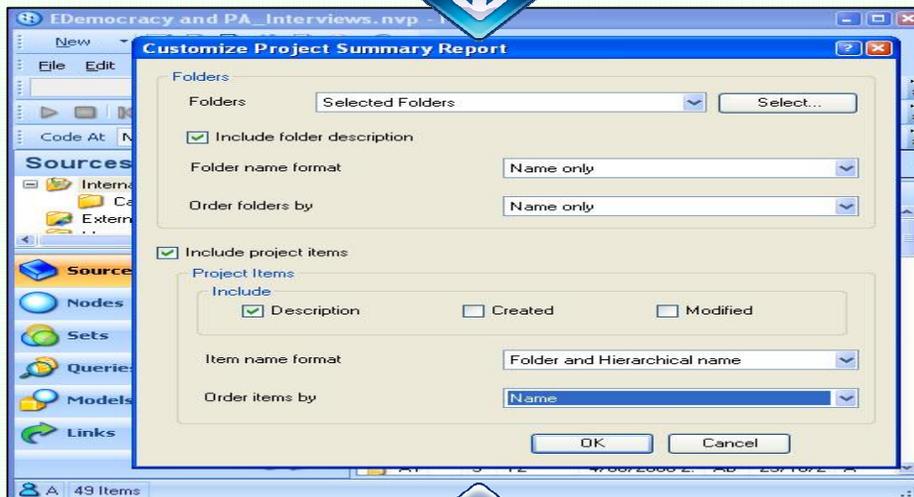
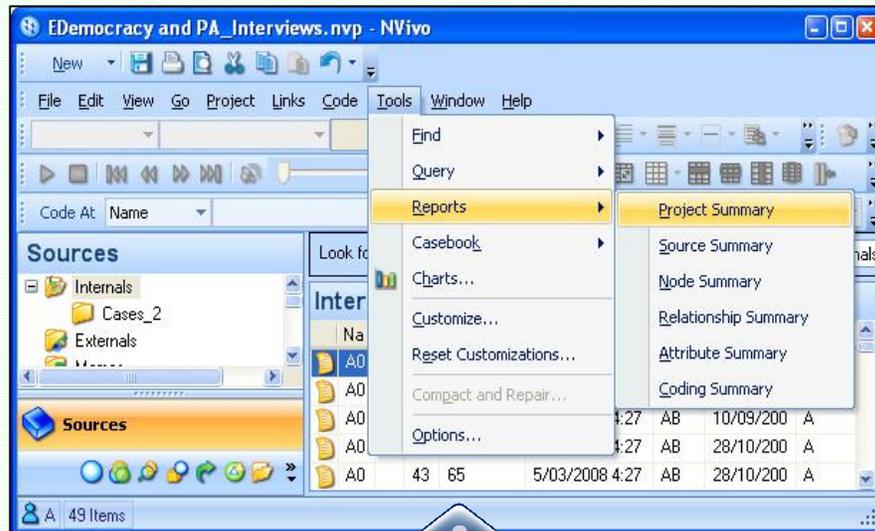


Step 8: Creating Chart

The screenshot illustrates the steps to create a chart in NVivo. It starts with the 'Tools' menu where 'Charts...' is highlighted. This leads to the 'Chart Wizard' dialog box, where 'Cases by attribute value for an attribute' is selected. The configuration window shows 'Year of Service' as the X-axis attribute and 'Number of matching cases' as the Y-axis. The chart type is set to 'Bar'. The final output is a 3D bar chart titled 'Year of Service - Cases by Attribute Value' showing the number of cases for different service year ranges.

Year of Service	Number of matching cases
26 years +	8
21-25 years	7
16-20 years	6
11-15 years	5
6-10 years	4
1-5 years	3

Step 9: Running Report



Attribute Summary Report	
Project:	E-democracy and Public Administrators: The Malaysian Case
Generated:	24/03/2009 1:04 PM
Age Group	
Range of age for interviewees	
Attribute Values	Total Cases
25-35	12
36-45	14
46 +	23
Agency	
Types of organization	
Attribute Values	Total Cases
Central Agency Coordinating, formulating, implementing and evaluating ICTs policy and initiatives	12
Key Ministry Identified as high ranking web presence	9
Operational Ministry Formulating, implementing and evaluating ICTs policy and initiatives	17
Commentators	
The commentator's area of expertise.	
Attribute Values	Total Cases
Academics	4
Business	2
NGO	3
Consultancy	2
Gender	
Gender of interviewees	
Attribute Values	Total Cases
Male	35
Female	14

Grade	
Grade of the interviewee in Public service	
Attribute Values	Total Cases
41 - Time scale	5
44 - 1st promotion	4
48 - 2nd promotion	12
52 - 3rd promotion	8
54 - 4 th promotion	4
Jusa - Super scale	5
Group	
Interviewees grouping	
Attribute Values	Total Cases
A	38
B	11
Public Administrators	
Area of specialization based on interviewee's schemes of service.	
Attribute Values	Total Cases
Admin. & Diplomatic	18
Engineering	2
Information System	15
Social	3
Time of Interview	
Indication of the time of interview for each interviewee based on the month and year	
Attribute Values	Total Cases
December 2007 - Interview conducted on the 3rd to 19th December 2007	9
May-July 2008 - Interview conducted in the month of May to July 2008	40
Year of Service	
Interviewee's number of year in service.	
Attribute Values	Total Cases
1-5 years	8
6-10 years	4
11-15 years	6
16-20 years	5
21-25 years	7
26 years +	8

Node Summary Report

Project: E-democracy and Public Administrators: The Malaysian Case

Generated: 29/07/2009 1:33 PM

Tree Nodes\Dimensions of activities\Actors - Practices						Tree Node
Description	Actor's enactment of e-democracy activities.					
Created On	26/09/2008 4:45 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	20/11/2009 6:03 PM	By	AB			
Users	2					
Cases	46					
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs		
Total	62	322	13566	443		
Tree Nodes\Culture						Tree Node
Description	Cultural factors that influence and shape e-democracy practices.					
Created On	26/09/2008 4:57 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	26/09/2008 4:57 PM	By	AB			
Users	0					
Cases	0					
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs		
Total			0	0		
Tree Nodes\Culture\deference to authority						Tree Node
Description	Characteristics of the Asian-style democracy which emphasize respect for authority and hierarchy (Neher, 1994)					
Created On	29/09/2008 2:40 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	23/11/2009 7:07 PM	By	AB			
Users	2					
Cases	20					
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs		
Total	30	75	3798	93		

Tree Nodes\Dimensions of activities\Designer - Infrastructure						Tree Node
Description	Activities of designers to design and shape ICT infrastructure for e-democracy activities.					
Created On	26/09/2008 4:37 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	20/11/2009 7:06 PM	By	AB			
Users	2					
Cases	21					
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs		
Total	33	134	5131	171		
Tree Nodes\Dimensions of activities						Tree Node
Description	Designing and enacting e-democracy activities.					
Created On	26/09/2008 4:34 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	26/09/2008 4:34 PM	By	AB			
Users	0					
Cases	0					
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs		
Total			0	0		
Tree Nodes\Culture\Emerging Organizational Culture						Tree Node
Created On	12/02/2009 6:49 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	12/02/2009 6:49 PM	By	AB			
Users	0					
Cases	0					
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs		
Total			0	0		

Tree Nodes\Events						Tree Node
Description	Things that happen at a point in time.					
Created On	26/09/2008 4:52 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	23/11/2009 7:07 PM	By	AB			
Users	2					
Cases	37					
	Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs	
	Total	61	246	18004	294	
Tree Nodes\Expectations						Tree Node
Description	The expectations of PA and commentators for the implementation of e-democracy in Malaysia.					
Created On	26/09/2008 3:56 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	23/11/2009 7:07 PM	By	A			
Users	2					
Cases	49					
	Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs	
	Total	75	519	32631	661	
Tree Nodes\ICT Resources\Hardware						Tree Node
Description	Instances of ICT hardware used in design and/or practices of e-democracy.					
Created On	26/09/2008 5:04 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	20/11/2009 7:06 PM	By	A			
Users	2					
Cases	27					
	Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs	
	Total	40	110	5322	145	

Tree Nodes\ICT Resources					Tree Node
Description	Types of ICT used in the design and practices of e-democracy.				
Created On	26/09/2008 4:01 PM	By	AB		
Modified On	23/11/2009 7:07 PM	By	A		
Users	2				
Cases	14				
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs	
Total	22	49	1987	66	
Tree Nodes\Culture\Emerging Organizational Culture\Incremental					Tree Node
Description	Incremental implementation of e-democracy to suit the Malaysian PA culture.				
Created On	12/02/2009 6:50 PM	By	AB		
Modified On	23/11/2009 7:07 PM	By	A		
Users	2				
Cases	15				
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs	
Total	19	39	2189	51	
Tree Nodes\Culture\Emerging Organizational Culture\information culture					Tree Node
Created On	12/02/2009 6:50 PM	By	AB		
Modified On	23/11/2009 7:07 PM	By	A		
Users	2				
Cases	10				
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs	
Total	16	36	2265	46	

Tree Nodes\Dimensions of activities\Infrastructure - Actors					Tree Node
Description	Actor's enactment of e-democracy activities drawing on the ICT infrastructure.				
Created On	26/09/2008 4:39 PM	By	AB		
Modified On	23/11/2009 7:07 PM	By	A		
Users	2				
Cases	36				
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs	
Total	53	188	10484	220	
Tree Nodes\Dimensions of activities\Infrastructure - Designers					Tree Node
Description	Influences on designers to change or improve the ICT infrastructure.				
Created On	2/10/2008 12:45 PM	By	AB		
Modified On	1/12/2009 3:15 PM	By	A		
Users	2				
Cases	17				
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs	
Total	22	66	3183	88	
Tree Nodes\Players\Insiders					Tree Node
Description	Players who are within government organizations.				
Created On	26/09/2008 3:50 PM	By	AB		
Modified On	23/11/2009 7:07 PM	By	A		
Users	2				
Cases	49				
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs	
Total	81	699	40093	901	

Tree Nodes\Dimensions of activities\Institutional - Actors						Tree Node
Description	Additional nodes to cater for influences from institution on actors					
Created On	6/10/2008 3:52 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	20/11/2009 6:42 PM	By	A			
Users	2					
Cases	18					
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs		
Total	25	62	2651	69		
Tree Nodes\Issues						Tree Node
Description	Matters raised about e-democracy in policy development / Malaysia.					
Created On	26/09/2008 4:54 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	23/11/2009 7:07 PM	By	A			
Users	2					
Cases	48					
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs		
Total	65	434	28084	524		
Tree Nodes\Culture\Emerging Organizational Culture\lack of integration						Tree Node
Created On	12/02/2009 6:50 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	13/11/2009 12:30 PM	By	A			
Users	2					
Cases	7					
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs		
Total	10	17	1390	20		

Tree Nodes\Narratives\Metaphors-idioms						Tree Node
Description	Collection of methaphors and idioms used by both PA and commentators.					
Created On	26/09/2008 3:58 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	11/11/2009 11:04 AM	By	A			
Users	1					
Cases	2					
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs		
Total	4	4	70	4		
Tree Nodes\Narratives						Tree Node
Description	Collections of metaphors, idioms, and quotes.					
Created On	26/09/2008 4:55 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	26/09/2008 4:55 PM	By	AB			
Users	0					
Cases	0					
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs		
Total			0	0		
Tree Nodes\ICT Resources\Networks						Tree Node
Description	Instances of ICT networks used in design and/or practices of e-democracy.					
Created On	26/09/2008 5:06 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	23/11/2009 7:07 PM	By	A			
Users	2					
Cases	44					
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs		
Total	58	228	11706	287		

Tree Nodes\Culture\non-partisan and expert public service						Tree Node
Description	Characteristic of the implanted Westminster system which emphasizes on apolitical and proficient bureaucracy. (Weller et.al.)					
Created On	29/09/2008 2:40 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	13/11/2009 12:30 PM	By	A			
Users	2					
Cases	16					
	Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs	
Total		24	58	4189	72	
Tree Nodes\Players\Outsiders						Tree Node
Description	Players who are outside of government organizations.					
Created On	26/09/2008 3:54 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	23/11/2009 7:07 PM	By	A			
Users	2					
Cases	49					
	Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs	
Total		79	742	43943	918	
Tree Nodes\Culture\patron-client communitarianism						Tree Node
Description	Characteristic of the Asian-style democracy which emphasizes on the place of individuals in terms of their status with others and the principal pattern of exchange interaction is the superior –subordinate relationship.					
Created On	29/09/2008 2:41 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	20/11/2009 6:42 PM	By	A			
Users	2					
Cases	14					
	Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs	
Total		23	58	4326	78	

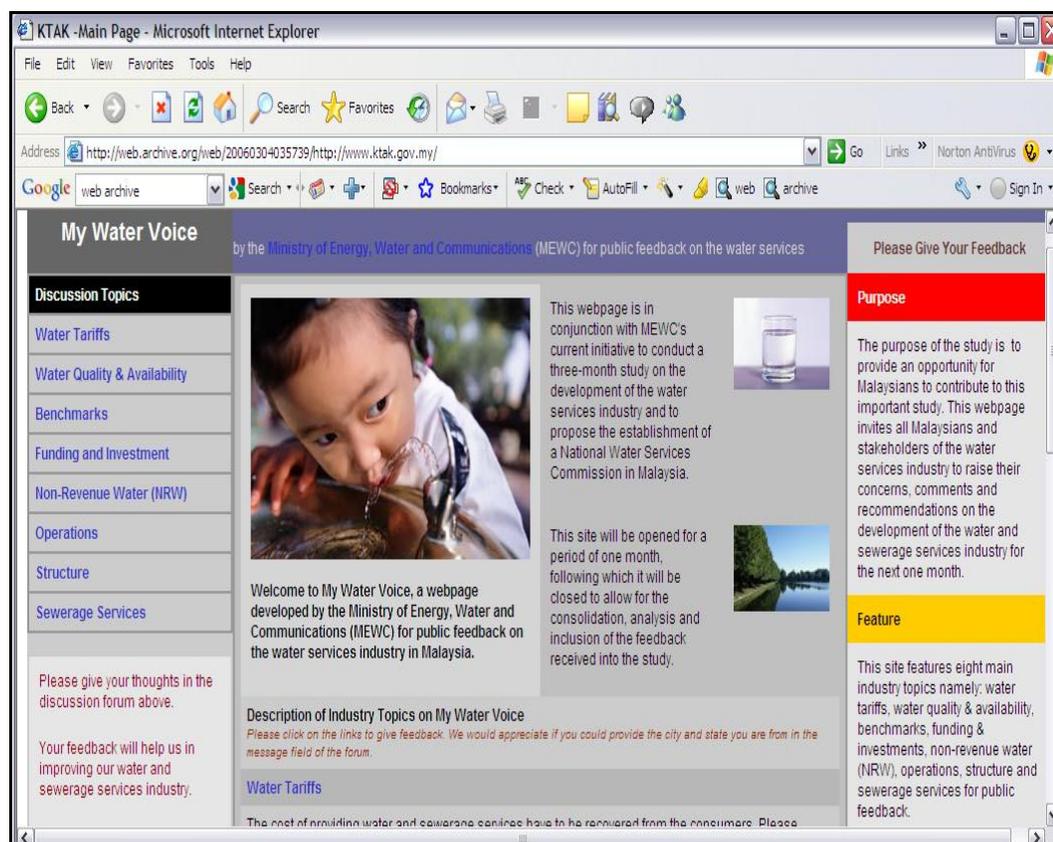
Tree Nodes\Culture\Personalism						Tree Node
Description	Characteristics of the Asian-style democracy which emphasizes on leaders rather than laws. (Neher)					
Created On	26/09/2008 5:03 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	20/11/2009 6:42 PM	By	A			
Users	2					
Cases	9					
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs		
Total	15	32	1834	41		
Tree Nodes\Players						Tree Node
Description	Human actors i.e. people, groups or organizations to whom reference is made.					
Created On	13/02/2008 12:31 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	3/02/2009 4:43 PM	By	AB			
Users	0					
Cases	0					
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs		
Total			0	0		
Tree Nodes\Dimensions of activities\Practices - Actors						Tree Node
Description	Influences of e-democracy activities on actor.					
Created On	2/10/2008 12:47 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	20/11/2009 6:42 PM	By	A			
Users	2					
Cases	34					
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs		
Total	50	151	6989	209		

Tree Nodes\Narratives\Quotes						Tree Node
Description	Collection of quotes from PA and commentators.					
Created On	26/09/2008 3:59 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	23/11/2009 7:07 PM	By	A			
Users	2					
Cases	49					
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs		
Total	81	725	42981	868		
Tree Nodes\ICT Resources\Software						Tree Node
Description	Instances of ICT software used in design and/or practices of e-democracy.					
Created On	26/09/2008 5:06 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	23/11/2009 7:07 PM	By	A			
Users	2					
Cases	49					
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs		
Total	73	325	19314	436		
Tree Nodes\ICT Resources\System						Tree Node
Description	Instances of ICT systems used in design and/or practices of e-democracy.					
Created On	26/09/2008 5:06 PM	By	AB			
Modified On	20/11/2009 7:06 PM	By	A			
Users	2					
Cases	28					
Type	Sources	References	Words	Paragraphs		
Total	49	101	6378	135		

Examples of e-democracy in Malaysia

Box 9 - 1 My Water Voice website

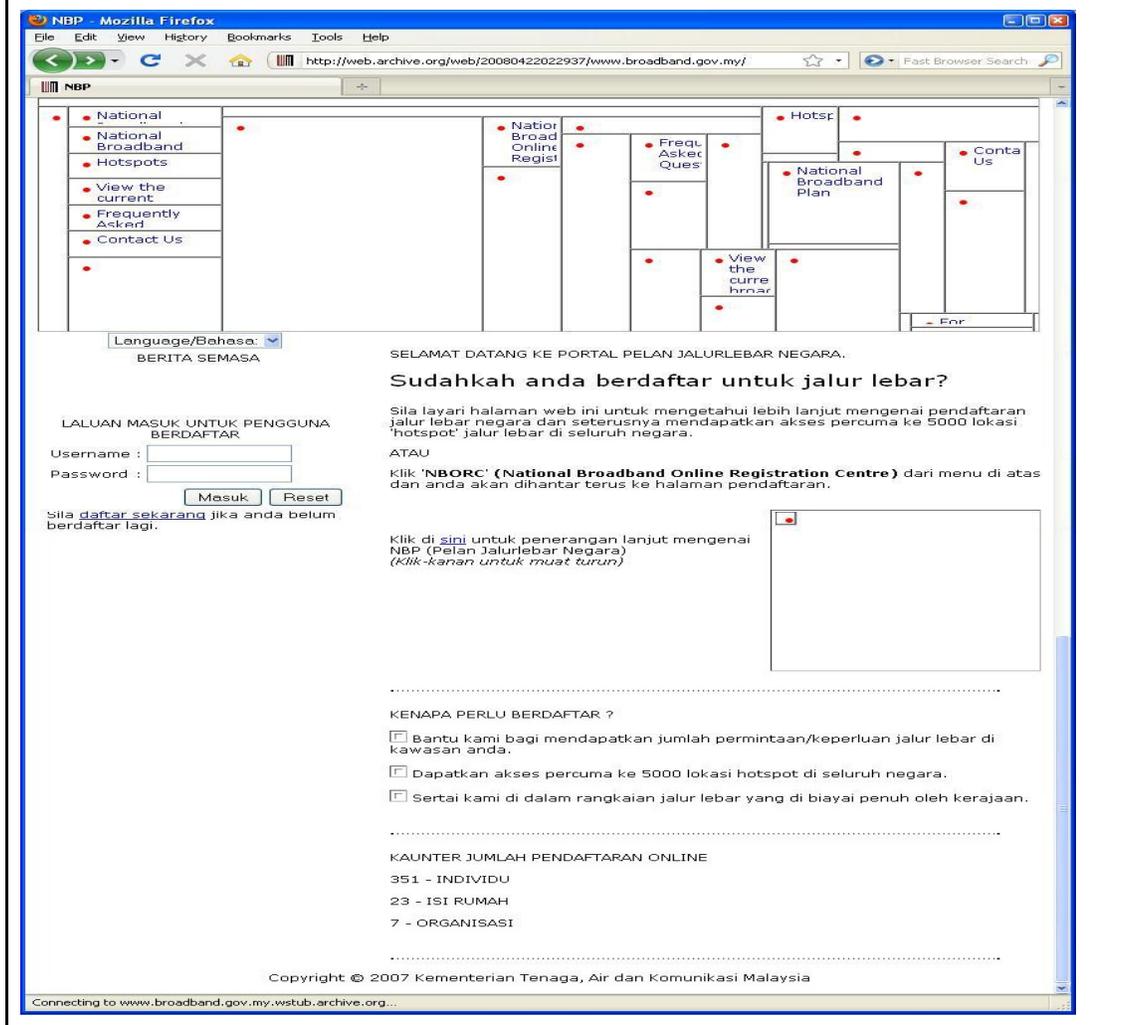
KTAK (Malay abbreviation for the Ministry of Energy, Water and Communications) launched a website in 2006, called 'My Water Voice' at [www.ktak.gov.my/mywatervoice\(2006\)](http://www.ktak.gov.my/mywatervoice(2006)), as shown below.



My Water Voice website was commissioned, for a period of one month, to collect inputs for the development of the water services policy. Relevant information was posted on the website under various threads relating to water services themes, namely water tariffs, water quality and availability, benchmarks, funding and investment, non-revenue water, operation, structure, and sewerage services. Citizens were requested to contribute their inputs under these themes. Other users can read the comments and respond to them. These inputs were analyzed by public administrators in charge to complement inputs from stakeholders and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which were gathered manually through meetings, working groups, and seminars. However, no detailed report about this initiative was made available to the public.

Box 9 - 2 National Broadband Online Registration Centre (NBORC) portal

KTAK (Malay abbreviation for the Ministry of Energy, Water and Communications) launched a portal in September 2007 to collect inputs about the demand for broadband services in Malaysia (2007a). The portal was managed by an independent vendor appointed by KTAK and a link was provided on KTAK's website for direct access to the portal. The NBORC portal (depicted below), requested all broadband users in Malaysia to register. As an incentive to registration, all registered broadband users on NBORC will have access to 5000 broadband hotspot locations free. These users were also required to provide inputs about broadband services, such as acceptable service fees as well as their broadband bandwidth and speed requirement. Such inputs were not publicized but they were utilized by KTA to project the demand for broadband service in the country and to formulate the broadband policy.



Box 9 - 3 ePublisiti website

JPBD (Malay abbreviation for the Department of Town and Country Planning (Peninsular Malaysia)) under the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (KPKT) created the ePublisiti website to collect inputs from citizens about spatial development plans (2009), as shown below. These development plans were drafted by JPBD for all local authorities in the Peninsular Malaysia lack of resources at the local authorities level. Each drafted spatial development plan – normally displayed at the relevant local authority's office – is required by law for public viewing and feedback before such a plan is formalized. The introduction of ePublisiti allows for an online publication and collection of feedback. Citizens can visually scan through each plan using a digital three-dimensional (3D) map provided on the website. Citizens are requested to provide any suggestion or objection through feedback forms.

3D Publisiti Jabatan Perancangan Bandar dan Desa Semenanjung Malaysia - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

http://3d.townplan.gov.my/3d/

3D Publisiti Jabatan Perancangan Ba...

3D PUBLISITI

JABATAN PERANCANGAN BANDAR DAN DESA SEMENANJUNG MALAYSIA
JALAN CENDERASARI, 50646 KUALA LUMPUR, WILAYAH PERSEKUTUAN
TEL: 2698 9211 FAX: 2692 9994
http://www.townplan.gov.my

Selamat Datang Ke Laman Web 3D Publisiti JPBD Thursday 26th of November 2009 09:47:28 AM

BORANG BANTAHAN AWAM ONLINE

SENARAI 3D PUBLISITI

Draf Rancangan Tempatan Negeri Selangor
Draf Rancangan Tempatan Majlis Perbandaran Ampang Jaya 2020
Draf Rancangan Tempatan Majlis Perbandaran Selangor 2020
Draf Rancangan Tempatan Majlis Perbandaran Kajang 2020
Draf Rancangan Tempatan Kuala Langat 2020
Draf Rancangan Tempatan Daerah Hulu Selangor 2020

Rancangan Tempatan Daerah Alor Gajah 2020
1 Mei 2009

Rancangan Tempatan Daerah Yan 2020
8 Mac 2009

Rancangan Tempatan Daerah Jasin 2020
5 Mac 2009

Rancangan Tempatan Daerah Kota Setar 2020
Rancangan Tempatan Daerah Langkawi 2020
Rancangan Tempatan Daerah Kubang Pasu 2020
Rancangan Tempatan Daerah Baling 2020
Rancangan Tempatan Padang Terap 2020

Rancangan Tempatan Daerah Pendang 2006-2020
9 Februari 2009

Dikemaskini pada 27 April 2009

Anda adalah pengunjung ke:

003188

Tracing Visitor

Copyright © 2009
Jabatan Perancangan Bandar Dan Desa Semenanjung Malaysia, Jalan Cenderasari, 50646 Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA.
Tel: 03-26989211 Faks: 03-26989994 Emel: Wabmas@townplan.gov.my
Paparan terbaik Internet Explorer 5.0 ke atas, resolusi 1024 x 768 piksel.

PENAFIAN: Kerajaan Malaysia dan Jabatan Perancangan Bandar Dan Desa Semenanjung Malaysia tidak akan bertanggungjawab bagi sebarang kehilangan dan kerugian yang disebabkan oleh penggunaan maklumat yang diperolehi dari laman ini.

Box 9 - 4 National Physical Plan (NPP) website

JPBD provided a link on its website for citizens to access the website of the National Physical Plan (NPP) (2007a), as shown below. NPP is a strategic policy on the physical development and conservation throughout Peninsular Malaysia. NPP was approved in 2006, by the National Physical Plan Council, and due for a review in accordance to the mid-term review of the five-year Malaysia Plan. Citizens can participate in online survey provided on this website to voice their concerns on issues surrounding NPP.



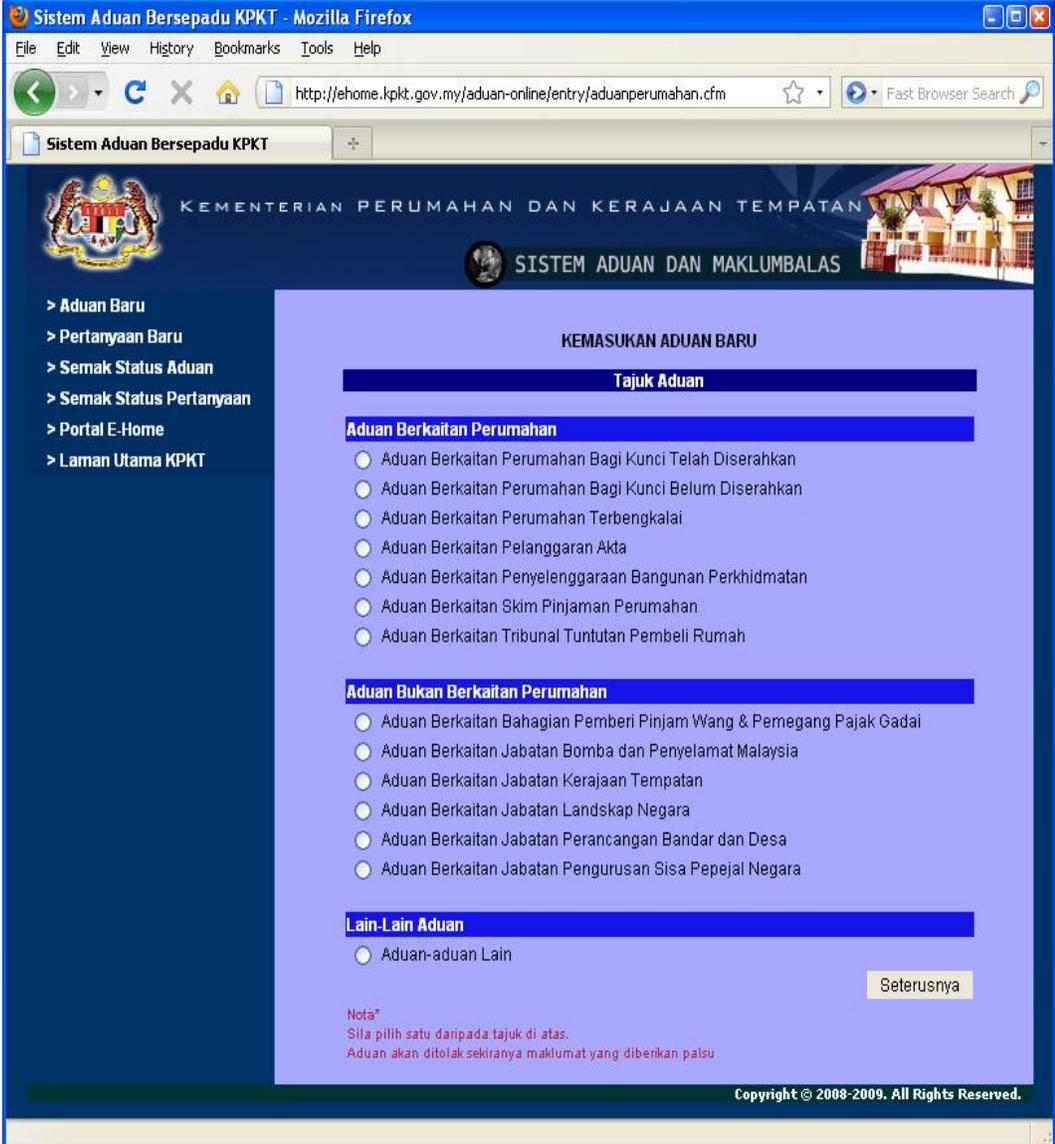
Box 9 - 5 Biro Pengaduan Awam (BPA) website

Biro Pengaduan Awam (commonly known as BPA – Malay abbreviation for the Public Complaints Bureau) was established in 1971. BPA is entirely an administrative arrangement and draws its authority from federal government circulars and letters. BPA reports to a committee responsible to the Cabinet which is chaired by the KSN (Malay abbreviation for the Chief Secretary to the government), called the Permanent Committee on Public Complaints (PCPC). BPA's main functions are investigating complaints made against the public service, which include complaints about any delay or non-delivery of services, lack of public facilities and other inefficiencies. Any complaint not associated with the Government and complaints that fall under the jurisdiction of Public Accounts Committee, Anti-Corruption Agency and Legal Aid Bureau would not be entertained by BPA. Recently, a growing number of complaints were made through emails and online feedback forms on the Public Complaints Bureau's website at www.pcb.gov.my (Public Complaints Bureau, 2008b), as shown below. In 2007, BPA reported that 2,022 online complaints (37.8 percent – the highest percentage of the total complaints) were made through this website (Public Complaints Bureau, 2008a). These complaints were analyzed and considered for a new policy formulation or an amendment of the existing policies and procedures of government service delivery.



Box 9 - 6 Sistem Aduan Bersepadu (Centralized Online Complaints System)

KPKT (Malay abbreviation for the Ministry of Housing and Local Government) created a website to centralize receipt of complaints made by citizens (2008b), as shown below. A link is provided on KPKT's website to enable citizen to access this website. Citizens may lodge complaints under two categories, namely housing-related complaints and non-housing-related complaints. Each complaint will be directed to the relevant public administrators at the ministry for further actions. However, no detailed report about this initiative was made available to the public.



Sistem Aduan Bersepadu KPKT - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

http://ehome.kpkt.gov.my/aduan-online/entry/aduanperumahan.cfm

Sistem Aduan Bersepadu KPKT

KEMENTERIAN PERUMAHAN DAN KERAJAAN TEMPATAN

SISTEM ADUAN DAN MAKLUMBALAS

> Aduan Baru
> Pertanyaan Baru
> Semak Status Aduan
> Semak Status Pertanyaan
> Portal E-Home
> Laman Utama KPKT

KEMASUKAN ADUAN BARU

Tajuk Aduan

Aduan Berkaitan Perumahan

- Aduan Berkaitan Perumahan Bagi Kunci Telah Diserahkan
- Aduan Berkaitan Perumahan Bagi Kunci Belum Diserahkan
- Aduan Berkaitan Perumahan Terbengkalai
- Aduan Berkaitan Pelanggaran Akta
- Aduan Berkaitan Penyelenggaraan Bangunan Perkhidmatan
- Aduan Berkaitan Skim Pinjaman Perumahan
- Aduan Berkaitan Tribunal Tuntutan Pembeli Rumah

Aduan Bukan Berkaitan Perumahan

- Aduan Berkaitan Bahagian Pemberi Pinjam Wang & Pemegang Pajak Gadai
- Aduan Berkaitan Jabatan Bomba dan Penyelamat Malaysia
- Aduan Berkaitan Jabatan Kerajaan Tempatan
- Aduan Berkaitan Jabatan Landskap Negara
- Aduan Berkaitan Jabatan Perancangan Bandar dan Desa
- Aduan Berkaitan Jabatan Pengurusan Sisa Pepejal Negara

Lain-Lain Aduan

- Aduan-aduan Lain

Seterusnya

Nota:
Sila pilih satu daripada tajuk di atas.
Aduan akan ditolak sekiranya maklumat yang diberikan palsu

Copyright © 2008-2009. All Rights Reserved.

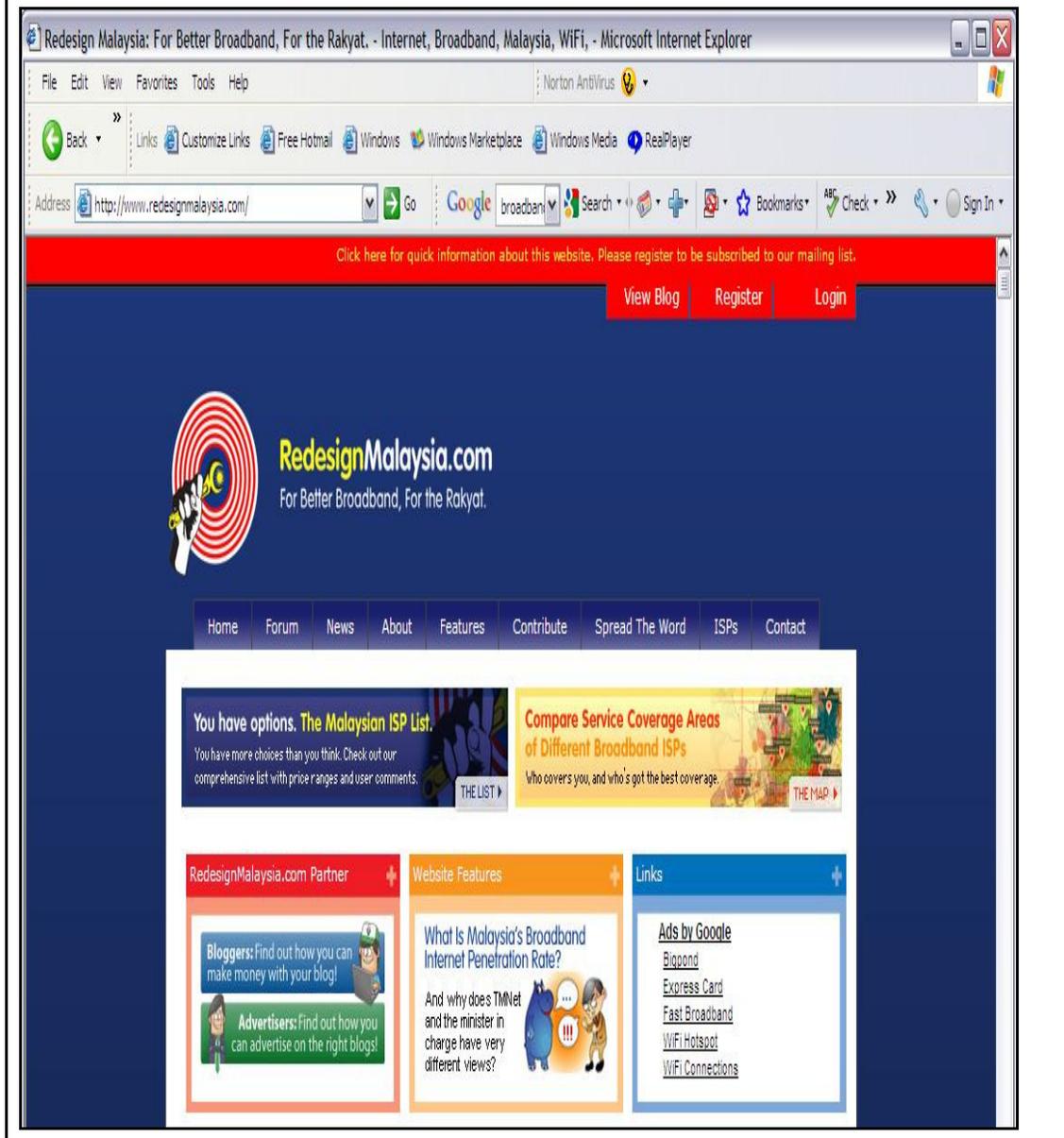
Box 9 - 7 ePBT website

KPKT (Malay abbreviation for the Ministry of Housing and Local Government) created a website, called ePBT (Malay abbreviation for electronic Local Authority), to facilitate information sharing among citizens, public administrators and all local authorities in Malaysia (2008a), as shown below. The website features a one-stop-center for local authorities' information and services, like licenses and public amenities rental. A detailed report for this website was not made public.

The screenshot shows the ePBT website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for PBT WEBSITES, KPKT WEBSITE, GUIDELINES, CONTACT US, FEEDBACK, and SITEMAP. Below this is a search bar and a 'GO' button. The main header features the 'eLocalGovernment' logo and the website URL 'www.epbt.gov.my'. A banner image shows a modern residential building. Below the banner, the 'Services' section is divided into two columns. The left column includes 'license', 'valuation & property management', and 'town planning & landscape'. The right column includes 'building & infrastructure', 'rental & public facilities', and 'advertising'. Each service category has a brief description and a 'More' link. To the right of the services is a 'LATEST NEWS' section with a scroll bar. Below that is a 'LINKS' section with a dropdown menu. At the bottom right, there is a 'KITAR SEMULA' logo and a visitor count of 32768. The footer contains the copyright information: 'Copyright © 2003 Kementerian Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan, Malaysia (KPKT)'.

Box 9 - 8 RedesignMalaysia website

An group of individuals created a website, called RedesignMalaysia.com at www.redesignmalaysia.com (2008), as depicted below. This website provides a channel for citizens and broadband users in Malaysia to share their broadband services experience. Citizens' needs and problems with the existing broadband services in the country are discussed on the website which provides a wealth of first hand information. Public administrators who are in charge of broadband policy development frequent this website to gauge understanding of issues at the ground.



Box 9 - 9 Che Det blog

The former prime minister of Malaysia, Dr Mahathir Mohamad created a blog, called Che Det (2008), as shown below. In his speech at the Bloggers United Malaysia (BUM) dialogue in Subang Jaya, on May 16 2009, he revealed that there are more than 19 millions hits on his blog since the 1st day he started his blog on 1 May 2008 till 1 May 2009 (malaysiakini.tv, 2009). His blog includes discussion about current and past issues ranging from public administration, politic, and economy. Users who frequent his blog were provided with a different perspective and his own insights of issues discussed.

Che Det - Mozilla Firefox
 File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help
 http://chedet.co.cc/chedetblog/
 mywebsearch Search myWebFace Webfetti Zwinky Games GirlSense Smiley Central
 Google Yahoo! SEARCH bing Search Add Buttons
 Che Det

DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD

Make **Borders Bookstore** Your Place For Knowledge And Entertainment **BORDERS**

DEMOCRACY IN POLITICAL PARTIES

By Dr. Mahathir Mohamad on November 23, 2009 10:00 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)

1. All praise for democracy, the best system for politics ever invented by man. But being invented by man, it is not free from imperfections. It works only if you know these imperfections and their limitations.
2. It is fine to determine everything by majority vote and not by consensus. It is fine only if the loser accepts the winner. But when the loser refuses to accept the decision of the majority and launches a campaign to undermine the party, the only result would be a split and therefore a weakening of the party.
3. With UMNO the loser took the case to court and the party was made illegal. When revived it lost a huge chunk of the members.

Continue reading [DEMOCRACY IN POLITICAL PARTIES.](#)

Read static.2mdn.net

About Me
 Dr. Mahathir Mohamad
 Putrajaya, Malaysia
 Prime Minister of Malaysia
 1981 - 2003

FOLLOW ME @ [twitter](#)

FIND ME @ [facebook](#)

Box 9 - 10 Precinct 11 House buyers blog

A group of house buyers of an abandoned project at Precinct 11 in Putrajaya created a blog in March 2008 (P11 Group, 2008), as shown below. These house buyers were advised by the House Buyers Association to create such a blog to exchange information among themselves. The blog enables all affected buyers to update themselves with the latest information about the project.

Precinct 11 Putra Jaya House Owners

A homeowners blog started in March 2008 is to disseminate correct and updated information on the P11 Putrajaya and its building progress. Pls read our FAQ blog for more information.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2009

P11 UPDATES -- 28 October 2009

* Garden Resorts Homes (Zone 10A-1)

- Letters , dated 20thOct.09, for handing over of vacant possession have been sent out to the buyers.

Buyers please note of the following before the keys can be handed over by the developer.

- The last 20% payment of the purchase price will need to be settled first. Invoice and demand have been sent out and , to avoid any delay, please laise with the financiers.
- Need to settle the assessment fees for year 2009 , esp. those that on financing facilities.
- The TNB and Syabas deposits and processing fees need to be settled within 14 days of the date of the notice.

- LAD Claim from insolvent ACSB.

The Protem comm. is in the process of preparing the guidelines for the above purpose. Please be prepared with the details and documents for the same. We need to consider whether to claim as a group or individually and whether to go through the Housing Tribunal or the Courts.

- Shoplots/ Office:

The proposed meeting with PJH is scheduled for:

Tuesday 3 Nov. 09 @ 9 am.

Marketing Suite, Ground Floor, Block 1, Menara PJH

P11 Garden Resort 08 2009

Countdown Calendar

November 2009						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Amber Homes 08 2009

Read video.google.com

Box 9 - 11 bangkit.net blog

A group of volunteers created a blog, called bangkit.net which provides a channel for NGOs and individuals in Malaysia to exchange information and organize activities, like the Walk for Media Freedom (Tan, 2007), as depicted below. The existence of such blogs assists ad hoc collective actions to be organized among its users and the public at large.

Walk for Media Freedom Dataran Merdeka to National Press Club, KL at bangkit.net - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

http://www.bangkit.net/2008/05/26/walk-for-media-freedom-dataran-merdeka-to-national-press-club-k

Walk for Media Freedom Dataran Me...

bangkit.net
participate, cooperate, activate!

Home About Advanced Search For Organisations Upcoming Events Job Postings

About

Hi! This site is a shared communications platform for Malaysian NGOs and activist groups. It's maintained by [nat tan](#) and (in greater part) a team of super volunteers. See more information for [readers & organisations](#). Terima kasih!

Pages

About
Advanced Search
For Organisations
Announcing Upcoming Events
Publishing Posts
Registration and Login
Uploading Images and Files
Job Postings
Upcoming Events

Ads by Google
View ads about:

◻ ▶

◀ HRC Responds: Deaths and anguish unacceptable, National Service in breach of international human rights obligations Appeal on Myanmar ▶

search blog archives go

Upcoming Events

Recent Comments

Job Vacancy @ Empower Malaysia: Administrative Assistant at ... | Lowongan Pekerjaan Hari Ini on Job Vacancy @ Empower Malaysia: Administrative Assistant
Leonardo Alluso on Job Opening: Consumers International Project Co-ordinator in Malaysia
logan on CANDLE LIGHT VIGIL FOR ISA DETAINEES
Dataran Merdeka, KL
What Can We Really Do To Protest Against The ISA? | Malaysians Say The Darndest Things! on CANDLE LIGHT VIGIL FOR ISA DETAINEES
Dataran Merdeka, KL
Shauna on Job Vacancy: Legal Services Officer

Walk for Media Freedom
Dataran Merdeka to National Press Club, KL

Published by bangkit.net May 26th, 2008 in Freedom of Information.
0 Comments

Date: 1 June 2008
Time: 9.00am
Place: Dataran Merdeka to National Press Club (NPC)

Democracy in Malaysia is evolving and maturing.

Growth means change and growth often calls for one to leave behind zones of comfort and venture into unknown places. While some changes are slower to materialise, other changes that we can observe already taking place are truly refreshing.

One of those changes which will profoundly and positively impact democratic growth is the move towards Information Freedom.

From 9 am on Sunday the 1st of June 2008, Malaysian journalists and their fellow citizens will, together, demonstrate their keen desire for Media Freedom by taking a symbolic Walk at Dataran Merdeka.

Google

Search

Box 9 - 12 PTD portal

A group of young PTD (Malay abbreviation for the Diplomatic and Administrative Officer) created a portal, called PTD Portal.com (2008), as shown below. The objective of this portal is to exchange information among PTDs. The portal features an online forum for its members to discuss issues relating to public administration as well as other current issues.

Komuniti Pegawai Tadbir dan Diplomatik

PTDPortal.com Help Search Members Calendar Photo Gallery

Welcome Guest ([Log In](#) | [Register](#)) [Resend Validation Email](#)

Komuniti Pegawai Tadbir dan Diplomatik

[Latest Discussed Topics in the Forum]

Forum	Topic	Replies	Views	Last Post
Sembang PTD Assessment Centre (PAC)	PAC General Discussion - STRICTLY for PAC discussion only	3449	76434	nmu
Sembang PTD Assessment Centre (PAC)	PAC @ INTIM - Kemaman, Terengganu	1626	32342	rumaizah
Sembang PTD Assessment Centre (PAC)	PAC @ INTAN SABAH -	399	4391	jesse
Sembang PTD Assessment Centre (PAC)	Persediaan Untuk Pre-PAC akan datang - Perbincangan utk lulusan exam PTD 8/8/09	225	6262	cheesebaby
Sembang PTD Assessment Centre (PAC)	PAC@INTENGAH on 12 Dec 09 -	4	33	hafiefah
Sembang PTD Assessment Centre (PAC)	PrePAC di INTAN, KK - Kongsi Pengalaman	4	47	jesse
Sembang PTD Assessment Centre (PAC)	PAC @ IKWAS - Kluang, Johor	911	17558	nikkuntum
Sembang PTD Interview	SECARA PEMINJAMAN / PERTUKARAN SEMENTARA - kita punya mcam mane plak	233	3179	wannabe

Done

Box 9 - 13 PERJASA online forum

PERJASA (Malay acronym for the Association of Information Technology Officer (PTM)) created an online forum, called Forum PERJASA (2008), as shown below. This online forum includes several discussion threads on skills, namely application, data management, data center, networking, and multimedia. PTM who are registered members of this forum will be able to exchange information about the latest developments in their field.

The screenshot shows the Forum PERJASA website. The browser title is "Forum PERJASA - Index page - Mozilla Firefox". The address bar shows the URL: http://www.perjasa.org.my/index.php?option=com_jfusion&Itemid=42. The page features a search bar, a navigation menu with items like "Laman Utama", "Info PERJASA", "Kerjaya PTM", "Senarai Aktiviti", "Pendaftaran", "Muat Turun", "Forum", and "Info PTM". The main content area is titled "Forum PERJASA" and includes a "Board index" section. Below this, there are several forum categories with a table of topics, posts, and last posts.

FORUM UMUM	TOPICS	POSTS	LAST POST
Suaikan Ahli Baru Khas buat ahli baru PERJASA. Kenalkan diri anda disini.	3	6	by tomz > on Mon Nov 02, 2009 9:12 am
Forum Tukar Suka Sama Suka Canangkan kemahuan tukar suka sama suka anda ke seantero PTM disini.	4	7	by farhanazainol > on Tue Nov 10, 2009 3:04 pm
Forum Komen & Cadangan Beri komen atau cadangan mengenai PERJASA	2	4	by interferens > on Tue Oct 13, 2009 3:02 pm
Kongsi Tips/Ilmu Sharing is caring...	4	4	by perjasa > on Fri Nov 13, 2009 2:28 am

FORUM APLIKASI	TOPICS	POSTS	LAST POST
eGovernment Bincangkan mengenai aplikasi eGovernment seperti HRMIS, ePerolehan, eSILA dll di sini.	0	0	No posts
Pengaturcaraan PHP Bincangkan tentang coding PHP di sini.	0	0	No posts
Pengaturcaraan ASP/ASP.Net Bincang coding ASP/ASP.net	3	8	by interferens > on Tue Nov 10, 2009 10:55 am
Pengaturcaraan Java/JSP Perbincangan mengenai coding Java di sini..	0	0	No posts

FORUM PANGKALAN DATA	TOPICS	POSTS	LAST POST
RDBMS Forum pangkalan data RDBMS seperti MySQL, MS SQL 2005 dll yang berkaitan.	0	0	No posts

LOGIN
Username: Password: | Log me on automatically each visit Login

WHO IS ONLINE
In total there is 1 user online :: 0 registered, 0 hidden and 1 guest (based on users active over the past 5 minutes)
Most users ever online was 6 on Fri Oct 02, 2009 3:30 pm
Registered users: No registered users
Legend: *Administrators*, *Global moderators*

STATISTICS
Total posts 38 • Total topics 20 • Total members 127 • Our newest member **fuziah**

Board index [The team](#) | [Delete all board cookies](#) | All times are UTC + 8 hours

Powered by phpBB © 2000, 2002, 2005, 2007 phpBB Group.
Designed by Yacqueslav Triebkin for Free Forums/QuestionCore.
Translated by Mael Souzeza © 2009 phpBB.fr

Box 9 - 14 MYBLOG

The Ministry of Information (MOI) launched an official web log or blog, called 'MYBLOG' (2008), as shown below. The blog – which is available at www.myblog4.dapat.com - provides information about federal government policies. Citizens access the blog to acquire official details about a particular policy including its mission, target group, as well as available fund and programs. The blog also provides links to relevant agencies which implement the policies and the federal government's official portal, myGovernment portal. These links offer further information about government machinery for a particular policy. Citizens can respond to any policy by keying in their inputs to relevant thread of discussion in the blog. Other citizens can read these responses and offer their comments. There is no clear evidence of the way inputs from this blog will be used by MOI or other government agencies.



Box 9 - 15 KSN's website

The office of KSN (Malay KSN's website abbreviation for the Chief Secretary to the government) created a website for communication with citizens (2008), as shown below. The KSN encourages all citizens to email him directly to voice their concerns about the public service. A detailed list of email addresses of all personnel in the KSN's office is provided on this website.

Official Website of CHIEF SECRETARY to the GOVERNMENT of MALAYSIA

Language: Bahasa Malaysia | English | Display: A+ A A- Theme: Search

Client Charter
The Office of the Chief Secretary pledges to serve with unyielding credibility, courtesy and integrity. We will serve everyone promptly to the commitments given.

Any Comments
Post any feedbacks

Monthly Poll
What would make for ultimate innovation in service delivery? A service that:
 Is largely technology driven and slick?
 Ensures quick, fast and accurate delivery?
 Delivers to the customer even before the service is sought by the customer?
 Is transparent (you know what is expected) and consistent in its delivery outcome?
 Offers undivided human attention to the customer?
 [Vote] [Show Result] [Results of Previous Polls]

Need to Contact Us?
Office of the Chief Secretary to the Government
Level 4, East Wing, Perdana Putra Building, Federal Government Administrative Centre, 62502 Putrajaya, Malaysia.
Tel: +603-8888 1480
Fax: +603-8888 3382

Contact us

Name of Staff	Contact Info
Tan Sri Mohd. Sidek Hassan Chief Secretary to the Government	Email : sidek@pmo.gov.my
Ms. Rahmah Ramli Special Functions Officer	Tel : +603 - 8888 1481 Email : rahmah@pmo.gov.my
Ms. Firoz Abdul Hamid Special Functions Officer	Tel : +603 - 8888 1854 Email : firoz@pmo.gov.my
Mr. Mohd. Zafir bin Ibrahim Senior Private Secretary	Tel : +603 - 8888 1483 Email : ksnzafir@pmo.gov.my
Mr. Zureen bin Zubir Special Functions Officer	Tel : +603 - 8888 1804 Email : zureen@pmo.gov.my
Ms. Nordziah bt. Mohamed Private Secretary	Tel : +603 - 8888 1480 Email : nordziah@pmo.gov.my
Ms. Zuriani bt. Mohammed Zain Personal Assistant to the SUSK	Tel : +603 - 8888 1483 Email : ksnzuria@pmo.gov.my
Ms. Efy Mashuri bt Abd Aziz Personal Assistant to the Special Functions Officer	Tel : +603 - 8888 1823 Email : efy@pmo.gov.my
Ms. Puteri Farah binti Megat Musa Personal Assistant to the Special Functions Officer	Tel : +603 - 8888 1841 Email : puterifarrah@pmo.gov.my
Ms. Khairul Wardah Ahmad Salehuddin Personal Assistant to the Special Functions Officer	Tel : +603 - 8888 1813 Email : khal@pmo.gov.my
Ms. Siti Norziela Shamsudin Personal Assistant to the Special Functions Officer	Tel : +603 - 8888 1840 Email : norziela@pmo.gov.my
Mr. Mahayudin Fitri bin Salim Bodyguard	Tel : +603 - 8888 1486 Email : fitri@pmo.gov.my
Mr. Mohd Rusna bin Mohd Ali General Office Assistant	Tel : +603 - 8888 1486 Email : ksnrusna@pmo.gov.my
Mr. Md. Firdaus bin Hussain General Office Assistant	Tel : +603 - 8888 1485 Email : firdaus@pmo.gov.my
Mr. Ridza bin Salleh Driver	Tel : +603 - 8888 1485
Mr. Junaldi bin Marfi Driver	Tel : +603 - 8888 1485

Prominent Links
 PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE OF MALAYSIA | HANAPATI MINISTRE OFFICE | My Government | RSS Feed
 BERSEKUTU MALAYSIA | PEMUDAH | EKL | WC3 Disability Access

[Terms and Conditions | Privacy Policy | Copyright Notice]
Visitors Statistics | Currently Online : 6 | Today : 208 | This Week : 601 | This Month : 5,361 |
 This Year : 21,138 | Total : 21,138 | Last updated: 17-11-2009
 Best viewed 1024 x 768 with Internet Explorer 7+ and Mozilla Firefox 3+
 © 2009, Copyright Reserved SMPKE, Prime Minister's Office

Box 9 - 16 Warkah Untuk PM website

A website, called Warkah Untuk PM (WUP) – literally translated as, “A letter to the Prime Minister (PM)” was created in 2008 by a private company (Malaysian Directory, 2008), as shown below. WUP aims to provide an online channel for citizens to directly communicate with the PM. WUP allows citizens to voice their concerns in four different languages, namely Bahasa Malaysia (the national language), English, Chinese, and Tamil. Chinese and Tamil are spoken by two major indigenous groups in Malaysia (as discussed in Chapter 1). The website, however, ignores any explanation of how such feedback is going to be utilized by the PM or the government in general.

Warkah untuk PM - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

http://www.warkahuntukpm.com.my/

Warkah untuk PM

Bahasa Malaysia English Chinese Tamil

Name :

Gender : Age :

Race :

Occupation :

Org./Company :

Tel / Mobile :

E-mail :

Address :

Postcode : City :

State :

Purpose :

Subject :

Comments :

Submit

GRAB THE OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUR VOICE TO BE HEARD

E-mail your feedback and views to the Prime Minister in the form of your statement of support, complaint, suggestion, wish and hope as regards the performance and pledges of the Prime Minister, the national and state government leaders. Let us work together to preserve security, peace and prosperity for the people of Malaysia and the Nation.

Your feedback is very much appreciated. Thank you.

Please provide valid e-mail address and phone number so as not to miss your opportunity to get response from PM

Or, you may direct e-mail us at, info@warkahuntukpm.com.my

Done

Box 9 - 17 myGovernment portal

MAMPU (Malay acronym for the Malaysian Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit) created the Malaysian government's official portal, called myGovernment (2006), as depicted below. This portal features, among others, an online polling for the public to vote on current issues and policy of the government. The portal, however, disregards any explanation of the way results from such polling will be utilized by MAMPU or the government.

The screenshot shows the myGovernment portal homepage. The browser window title is "myGovernment - Mozilla Firefox" and the address bar shows "http://www.gov.my/MyGov/BI/Directory/Citizen/Home.htm". The page header includes the myGovernment logo and the tagline "The Malaysia Government's Official Portal". Navigation links include "Bahasa Malaysia", "Home", "News", "Events", "Site Map", "Polling", "Register", and "Login". A search bar is located in the top right corner.

The main content area is titled "Citizen Information & Services" and is organized into several columns:

- Left Sidebar:** Contains "MY PAGE" (MyHome), "E-TRANSACTION CENTER" (Online Services, Downloadable Forms), "QUICK LINKS" (Government Machinery, Government Directory, Government Tenders, Government Job Vacancies, Information & Policies, Feedback and Enquiry, Public Complaints, Weather, SMS Services), and "ANNOUNCEMENTS" (E-LODGE MENT NOTIFICATION ON COMPANIES' E-LODGE MENT (ROC)).
- Education:** Pre-school Education, Primary School Education, Secondary School Education, Higher Education, Adult Education.
- Legal Matters:** Acts, Legal Aid, Constitution, Consumer Rights, Insurance.
- Employment:** Finding a Job, Training, Employee Benefits and Contribution, Termination, Retirement.
- Public Amenities and Utilities:** Public Amenities, Public Utilities, Waste Management.
- Security and Safety:** National Identity, Crime Prevention, Fire and Rescue, Health Related Emergency, National Defence.
- Health:** Personal Health, List of Hospitals and District Health Offices.

Below the main content, there are sections for "OTHER LINKS" (HRD Portal, MyHEALTH, MSC MALAYSIA, PEMUDAH) and "ADVERTISEMENT" (KECEMASAN 999). A red circle highlights the "Polling Center" link in the left sidebar, which includes "Voice Your Opinion" and "Polls Archive".

At the bottom of the page, there are links for "Terms & Conditions", "Privacy Policy", "Copyright Notice", "FAQ", "About Us", and "Contact Us". The page also displays the visitor number "8,559,348" and the best viewed browser "Internet Explorer 6 and above".

Box 9 - 18 PEMBELA online petition

PEMBELA (Malay acronym for a consortium of more than 50 Islamic Civil Society Organizations) organized an online petition for a better protection of Muslims from apostasy in Malaysia. The online petition was published on www.myislamnetwork.net for several months in 2006 (PEMBELA, 2006), as shown below. According to C8, a commentator from one of the organization under PEMBELA, more than 200,000 signatures were collected from this website, which were submitted to the government for further action.

The screenshot shows a Mozilla Firefox browser window displaying the website [myislamnetwork.net](http://www.myislamnetwork.net). The page title is "MyIslamNetwork.net - Halaman Web Rasmi Pertubuhan-Pertubuhan Pembela Islam (PEMBELA)". The main content area features a section titled "PETISIYEN ONLINE" (Online Petition). Below this title, there is a description of PEMBELA and a list of two points regarding the petition. A form for submitting a petition is visible, with fields for "Nama Penuh" (Full Name), "No Kad Pengenalan" (National ID Number), and "Email". A "Hantar Petisyen Online" (Submit Online Petition) button is located below the form. On the left side of the page, there is a "Menu Utama" (Main Menu) with various navigation links such as "Home", "Petisyen Online", "Senarai Badan Gabungan", "PEMBELA", "Petisyen Online", "Soalan-Soalan Lazim", "Artikel & Berita", "Forum", "Album Foto", "Muat Turun", "Aktiviti & Program", "Undian Anda", "Hubungi Kami", "Buku Pelawat", "Sitemap", "Ahi Online", "Keahlian", "Statistik Online", and "Senarai Online [Popup]". The "Statistik Online" section shows 0 visitors, 24 members, and 24 total posts. The "Senarai Online [Popup]" section includes a login form with fields for "Username:" and "Password:", a "User Login" button, and a "Lost Password?" link.

Box 9 - 19 Online voting at the university level

Local universities in Malaysia has started to organize elections for universities representative council via electronic or commonly known as e-voting. The University of Malaya is one of the universities which has introduced such an initiative (2008), as shown below. There is no clear evidence of the actual e-voting webpage as only registered students at the university are allowed access to such a webpage.

The screenshot shows a Mozilla Firefox browser window displaying the UM ICT Services website. The page is titled "ADMINISTRATIVE APPLICATIONS DIVISION 2008" and is part of the "ICT Projects 2008" section. The page content includes a navigation menu, a sidebar with links like "RULES & GUIDELINES" and "CONTACT US", and a main content area with two sections: "Maintenance of projects" and "Completed Development Projects".

Maintenance of projects

1. Integrated Student Information System (ISIS)
2. Integrated Human Resource Information System (iHRIS)
3. UM Responsibility Centre Information System (UMRCIS)

[view more...](#)

Completed Development Projects

1. e-Attendance System [view details...](#)
2. Integrated Human Resource Information System (iHRIS) [view details...](#)
3. Responsibility Centre Information System (UMRCIS) [view details...](#)
4. UMPortal Staff e-Services [view details...](#)
5. e-Application for Elective Posting [view details...](#)
6. Elective Posting Module, Integrated Student Information System (ISIS) [view details...](#)
7. e-Industrial Training System [view details...](#)
8. Industrial Training Module, Integrated Student Information System (ISIS) [view details...](#)
9. e-voting System [view details...](#)
 - First phase of system facilitates the capturing of attendance of voters at the specified polling stations
 - Voting was still using ballot papers
10. Grafic designs and multimedia presentations [view details...](#)

New Examples of E-democracy in Malaysia (Chapter 11)

1. Screenshot of the Performance Delivery and Management Unit (PEMANDU) website (as discussed in Chapter 11 at 11.2.4.1).

Box 11 - 1 PEMANDU's inputs collection website

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the 'Tell Us What You Think' website. The browser's address bar shows the URL: http://www.transformation.gov.my/index.php?option=com_chronocontact&Itemid=84&lang=en. The website features a dark blue header with the title 'Tell Us What You Think' and navigation links for 'ENGLISH' and 'BAHASA MALAYSIA'. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Government Transformation Program (GTP) Logo:** Located in the top left, featuring the Malaysian flag and the text 'The Transformation to I Malaysia' with the tagline 'People First. Performance Now.'
- Navigation Menu:** A vertical list of links including 'Home Page', 'Big Results Fast', 'About PEMANDU', 'Transforming Government, Changing Lives', 'The Path to Progress', 'The National Key Result Areas', 'GTP Open Day', 'Tell Us What You Think', and 'Media Centre'.
- Open Day Information:** A section titled 'You are invited to the Government Transformation Program Open Day' with details for two events: 'Borneo Convention Centre, Kuching' (16 Jan 2010, 9.00 am - 5.00 pm) and 'The Magellan Sutera, Kota Kinabalu' (22 Jan 2010, 9.00 am - 5.00 pm).
- Feedback Form:** A section titled 'Tell Us What You Think' with a form for 'E - Mail' and 'Feedback / Suggestions'. It includes a text input field, a 'Submit' button, and a 'Reset' button.
- Additional Information (Optional):** A section with fields for 'Name', 'Age Group' (a dropdown menu), and 'Your Location' (a dropdown menu). It also includes a checkbox for 'Would you like to receive email updates on the Government Transformation Programme?' with 'Yes' and 'No' radio button options.
- Privacy Notice:** A paragraph stating: 'We are committed to protecting your privacy and security. Information you provide via this website will not be made public without your explicit, prior consent.'
- Latest News:** A section with two news items: 'A mere fine is not fine with us' (20/12/2009) and 'Public cooperation needed to stamp out graft' (19/12/2009). Each item includes a 'Full Story' link.
- Search the site:** A search bar with a 'Search' button.
- Tell a friend:** A section with social media sharing icons (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and a 'Write to us' button.

At the bottom of the page, there are logos for 'Malaysia', 'PEMUDAH', and 'YAYASAN IMALAYSIA'. The footer contains the following text: 'Terms and Conditions | Privacy Policy | Copyright Notice', 'Best viewed 1024 x 768 with Mozilla Firefox 3+ & Internet Explorer 8', '©2009 Copyright Reserved PEMANDU', and 'Design & Manage by eKL Division, MAMPU'.

2. Screenshot of the Facebook Group, called 'Menentang Penggunaan Allah oleh golongan bukan Islam' – which translates into 'Against the use of the name 'Allah' by non-Muslims' (as discussed in Chapter 11 at 11.2.4.2).

Box 11 - 2 Facebook Group - 'Menentang Penggunaan Allah oleh golongan bukan Islam'

Facebook | MENENTANG PENGGUNAAN NAMA ALLAH OLEH GOLONGAN BUKAN ISLAM - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

http://www.facebook.com/search/?ft=1&q=Menentang penggunaan Allah&o=69&sid=907055033

Facebook | MENENTANG PENGGUNAAN NAMA ALLAH OLEH GOLONGAN BUKAN ISLAM

Home Profile Friends Inbox Abdül Gapar Abu Bakar Settings Logout Search

MENENTANG PENGGUNAAN NAMA ALLAH OLEH GOLONGAN BUKAN ISLAM [Join](#)

Wall Info Photos Video Events

Basic Info

Name: MENENTANG PENGGUNAAN NAMA ALLAH OLEH GOLONGAN BUKAN ISLAM

Category: Common Interest - Religion & Spirituality

Description: Kumpulan ini adalah kumpulan yang MENENTANG PENGGUNAAN NAMA ALLAH OLEH GOLONGAN BUKAN ISLAM.

Baru-baru ini, akhbar Katholik "The Herald" telah menang dalam kes saman mereka lwn Kerajaan Malaysia @ KDN untuk membenarkan penggunaan perkataan "Allah" di dalam akhbar mereka. Bagi umat Islam yang sedar bahawa ini adalah salah satu propaganda mereka bagi mengelirukan umat Islam dimasa sekarang dan akan datang.

Saya ingin menyatakan bahawa kumpulan kami tidak sesekali mempergunakan isu ini demi... (read more)

Privacy Type: Open: All content is public.

Contact Info

Office: Kuala Lumpur

Location: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Recent News

News: **PEMBERITAHUAN:**

1- PIHAK ADMIN KAMI MENYOKONG DENGAN PETISIYEN YANG DIWUJUDKAN OLEH: <http://www.muslimconsumer.org.my/herald/index.php>
SEMOGA INI ADALAH MATLAMAT SEMUA AHLI.

2- DIDAPATI KALANGAN AHLI KUMPULAN INI TIDAK MEMPUNYAI MATLAMAT YANG SAMA DENGAN ASAS PENUBUHAN KUMPULAN. PIHAK KUMPULAN KAMI INI MEMOHON AGAR AHLI-AHLI TERSEBUT BOLEHLAH MENINGGALKAN KUMPULAN INI DENGAN BAIK. PIHAK ADMIN TIDAK MAHU SEBARANG KEKACAUAN DAN GANGGLI-GUGAT KEHARMONIAN SESAMA AHLI DISINI. ADMIN INGIN MENYATAKAN BAHAWA KUMPULAN INI TIDAK MEMPUNYAI SEBARANG AGENDA POLITIK TETAPI UNTUK MEMPERTAHAKAN KESUCIAN NAMA ALLAH SWT SERTA PENYATUAN SELURUH UMMAT ISLAM KHASNYA DI MALAYSIA, DI INDONESIA, DI BRUNEI, DI SINGAPURA, DITHAILAND SERTA SELURUH NUSANTARA.

3- JIKA TERDAPAT AHLI-AHLI YANG TIDAK SEHALUAN DENGAN MATLAMAT KUMPULAN, SILA LAH MENINGGALKAN KUMPULAN INI.

4- PIHAK ADMIN JUGA MEMOHON JASA BAIK KESEMUA AHLI AGAR DAPAT MEMBANTU DARI SEGI PANDANGAN, CADANGAN SERTA IDEA UNTUK MEREALISASIKAN BENTUK PENENTANGAN KITA INI. SEMOGA KITA BOLEH MENUNJUKKAN KEPADA MASYARAKAT KHASNYA BUKAN ISLAM BAHAWA UMMAT ISLAM SEBENARNYA BERSATU.

Information

Category: Common Interest - Religion & Spirituality

Description: Kumpulan ini adalah kumpulan yang MENENTANG PENGGUNAAN NAMA ALLAH OLEH GOLONGAN BUKAN ISLAM.

Baru-baru ini, akhbar Katholik "The Herald" telah menang dalam kes saman mereka lwn Kerajaan Malaysia @ KDN untuk membenarkan penggunaan perkataan "Allah" di dalam akhbar mereka. Bagi umat Islam yang sedar bahawa ini adalah salah satu propaganda mereka bagi mengelirukan umat Islam dimasa sekarang dan akan datang.

Saya ingin menyatakan bahawa kumpulan kami tidak sesekali mempergunakan isu ini demi... (read more)

Privacy Type: Open: All content is public.

Members

6 of 210,509 members See All

Applications Chat (6)

<http://www.muslimconsumer.org.my/herald/index.php>

3. Screenshots of Najib's Facebook and Twitter accounts (as discussed in Chapter 11 at 11.2.4.3).

Box 11 - 3 Najib's Facebook



Box 11 - 4 Najib's Twitter

