CRITICISM, INNOVATION, AND ADAPTATION OF GOVERNANCE: FROM CLASSIC TO NEW PUBLIC AND DIGITAL AMID GLOBAL CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

This study examines significant developments in the field of governance, tracing its transition from a classical paradigm dominated by hierarchical structures and rigid bureaucracy to a more dynamic and responsive model. Amidst the complexity of global challenges such as economic uncertainty, environmental crises, and technological disruptions, traditional governance approaches are often sharply criticized for their limitations in providing adaptive and sustainable solutions. This abstract analyzes how criticism of the classical model has become a catalyst for innovation, driving the adoption of New Public Governance (NPG), which emphasizes partnerships, multi-actor networks, and the creation of shared public value. In addition, this study explores the transformative role of Digital Governance in revolutionizing the way governments interact with citizens and provide services, increasing efficiency, transparency, and inclusion through the use of information and communication technology. With a focus on innovation and adaptation, this article aims to understand how governance systems strive to remain relevant and effective amid an ever-changing global landscape. This analysis not only highlights the historical and conceptual journey but also provides crucial insights into the need for a flexible, collaborative, and future-oriented governance framework to address the multidimensional challenges of the 21st century.

INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of government and public administration around the world have undergone fundamental transformations in recent decades. From rigid, hierarchical bureaucratic structures that dominated the classical paradigm, we are now witnessing a shift towards more flexible, adaptive, and network-oriented models of governance. This evolutionary journey has been accompanied by sharp criticism of the limitations of traditional

approaches, constant innovation, and the urgent need to adapt to an increasingly complex and interconnected global landscape. This article aims to describe this transformative journey, highlighting the criticism of the classical governance paradigm, the emergence of New Public Governance (NPG) as an innovative response, and the crucial role of Digital Governance in shaping the future of public administration amid global turmoil.

Good Governance The classical governance paradigm, rooted in Weberian principles of rational-legal bureaucracy, emphasizes efficiency, objectivity, and impersonality. This model assumes that the state is the dominant actor with a monopoly on the provision of public services and regulation. Hierarchical structures, clear division of tasks, strict formal rules, and meritocracy are the main pillars that are expected to ensure accountability and certainty (Weber, 1922, as cited in Rhodes, 1996) . At its peak, this model succeeded in creating stability and state capacity in managing post-World War II industrial society.

However, over time, the effectiveness and relevance of the classical paradigm began to be questioned. Criticism arose from various perspectives. First, the rigid bureaucratic model was considered unresponsive to rapid changes in society. Slow decision-making processes, lack of flexibility, and a tendency to maintain the status quo hindered the government's ability to respond to the increasingly diverse and dynamic needs of citizens (D . Second, criticism was also directed at the inherent inefficiency of large bureaucracies. Monopolies in service provision often result in a lack of incentives for innovation, waste of resources, and poor service quality. The concepts of "faceless bureaucracy" and "binding rules" are often associated with unsatisfactory public services that are far from meeting individual needs.

Third, the emergence of "complex problems" – complex, cross-sectoral, and difficult-to-define public issues, such as climate change, structural poverty, or global pandemics – has exposed the limitations of the classic bureaucratic silo approach. These problems transcend traditional departmental boundaries and require cross-sectoral coordination and the involvement of various actors outside the state. Fourth, criticism of democratic legitimacy has also become more prominent. In the classical model, citizen participation is often limited to the electoral process, with little room for direct involvement in policy-making or oversight (Fung & Wright, 2003) .

On the other hand, the emergence of New Public Governance (NPG) as an innovation In response to these criticisms and the need to find more effective solutions, the concept of New Public Governance (NPG) began to emerge in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. NPG is not merely a reform of public administration, but a broader paradigm shift in the way we understand and practice governance ((Kooiman, 2003) . Unlike New Public Management (NPM), which focuses on market-style efficiency and privatization, NPG emphasizes collaboration, networking, and the creation of shared public value. In essence, NPG recognizes that the government is no longer the only actor with the authority to solve public problems. Instead, NPG views governance as an interactive process involving various actors: central and local governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, communities, and citizens (Stoker, 1998) .

Within the NPG framework, the government acts as a facilitator, coordinator, and partner, not merely as a service provider. This approach encourages the formation of complex governance networks, where decisions and actions are generated through negotiation, consensus, and shared responsibility.

Some of the key characteristics of NPG include: Network Governance: Emphasis on cross-sector and inter-organizational collaboration to achieve common goals; Multi-Stakeholder Engagement: Recognition that solutions to public problems require contributions from various stakeholders; Focus on Results and Public Value: More than just process efficiency, NPG is oriented towards achieving desired results and increasing value for society; Flexibility and Adaptability: The ability to adjust policies

and programs to changing conditions, avoiding bureaucratic rigidity; Learning and Innovation: Encouraging experimentation, evaluation, and continuous learning to find new solutions. Therefore, NPG offers a more realistic and adaptive framework for addressing contemporary challenges, promising a more responsive, inclusive, and effective government.

Meanwhile, the Transformative Role of Digital Governance: Along with the shift towards NPG, the revolution in information and communication technology (ICT) has given rise to a new dimension in governance known as Digital Governance. Digital Governance is not merely the use of technology in government (e-government), but rather the strategic integration of ICT to transform the relationship between government, citizens, and the private sector, as well as to improve efficiency, transparency, and participation in the governance process . Digital Governance is a crucial innovation that facilitates the implementation of NPG principles on a broader and more effective scale.

The use of digital technology enables governments to: Improve Accessibility of Public Services: Through online platforms, mobile applications, and integrated service portals, citizens can access government information and services anytime and anywhere, reducing bureaucracy and waiting times (Layne & Lee, 2001) . Improve Transparency and Accountability: Open government data, online complaint platforms, and project tracking systems enable greater public oversight of government performance, reduce corruption, and increase trust. Encouraging Citizen Participation: Electronic participation through online forums, digital surveys, and public consultation platforms allows citizens to express their opinions and contribute to policy-making, strengthening democratic legitimacy (Macintosh, 2004) . Improving Operational Efficiency: Automating internal processes, using *big data* for policy analysis, and integrating systems across departments can reduce operational costs and increase decision-making speed. Creating Service Innovation: Technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), *blockchain,* and *the Internet of Things*

*(*IoT) open up new opportunities to develop more personalized, predictive, and proactive public services.

 al Challenges and the Need for Adaptation: The journey of governance from the classical paradigm to NPG and Digital Governance did not occur in a vacuum. Rather, this evolution was driven and shaped by a series of unprecedented global al challenges. These challenges are multidimensional and interrelated, creating a highly uncertain and complex environment for policymakers.

First, economic challenges include global market volatility, widening income inequality, recurring financial crises, and the need to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Governments must adapt to their changing roles in the global economy, balancing regulation, facilitation, and the provision of social safety nets. Second, social challenges include rapid urbanization, global migration, population aging, changing family structures, and increasing demands.

For social justice and human rights. This requires more responsive, inclusive, and personalized public services. Third, environmental challenges such as climate change, resource scarcity, loss of biodiversity, and pollution threaten the sustainability of the planet and human well-being. This requires global coordination, bold policies, and the participation of all sectors to transition to a green economy. Fourth, geopolitical challenges involve regional conflicts, terrorism, cross-border crime, and competition between major powers. This requires strong governance capacity to maintain security, promote peace, and collaborate in international diplomacy. Fifth, continuous technological disruptions, such as artificial intelligence (AI), *big data,* and automation, bring both opportunities and risks. Governments must understand and regulate these technologies to maximize their benefits while mitigating their potential negative impacts on employment, privacy, and ethics.

Amid these challenges, the ability to adapt and innovate has become urgent for governance systems. Rigid classical paradigms are no longer capable of providing adequate solutions. NPG, with its

emphasis on collaboration and networking, and Digital Governance, with its ability to increase efficiency and participation, offer a way forward. Adaptation is not just about reforming structures, but also about changing organizational culture, developing new capacities, and building trust among various stakeholders. Identifying research gaps and building a solid conceptual framework without the need for primary data collection.

METHOD

This research is a study using the literature review method. In this study, the author used the summarize method. The data used in this study came from the results of research that had been conducted and published in national and international online journals using the Google Scholar search engine with the keywords Kritik, Inovasi, Dan Adaptasi Tata Kelola: Klasik Menuju Publik Baru Dan Digital Di Tengah Tantangan Global. The summaries of these journals were then analyzed in terms of their content in relation to the research objectives and results/findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Criticism, Innovation, and Adaptation of Governance: From Classic to New Public and Digital Governance Amid Global Challenges

This section presents a synthesis of the literature review, describing the journey *of governance* from criticism of the classical paradigm, through innovation *in New Public Governance* (NPG) and *Digital Governance*, to efforts to adapt to complex global challenges. This discussion will integrate key findings from various academic sources to construct a coherent narrative about *the* evolution *of* contemporary *governance*.

In-Depth Criticism of the Classical Paradigm: Roots of Change, Literature reviews consistently show that the classical *governance* paradigm, dominated by the Weberian bureaucratic model, despite once being the backbone of effective public administration, began to face fundamental criticism in the mid-20th century. This criticism is not merely a minor adjustment, but a re-examination of the basic assumptions and capabilities of the model in

dealing with increasingly complex social, economic, and political realities (Peters & Pierre, 1998:. 22–25) . One of the main criticisms is its rigidity.

The literature highlights how rigid hierarchical structures, excessive rules, and slow processes often hinder the government's responsiveness to the dynamic needs of citizens (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992: 12-15) . The "one size fits all" model applied by classical bureaucracies fails to accommodate the diversity of public issues and citizen preferences. This leads to public frustration and a negative perception of the government as a slow and inefficient entity. In addition, limitations in dealing with "complex problems" have come under intense scrutiny. Issues such as climate change, multidimensional poverty, or global pandemics cannot be solved by a single department or level of government alone. *The silo-based* approach of classical bureaucracy, which tends to separate issues into narrow categories, has proven inadequate for these cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder challenges (Rittel & Webber, 1973: 155-169) . The need for greater coordination and the involvement of various stakeholders has become very clear.

Criticism is also directed at the deficit of democracy and accountability. Although classical bureaucracy promises objectivity and meritocracy, in practice it is often associated with a lack of transparency and limited public participation. Citizens are often seen as passive recipients of services, rather than active partners in the *governance* process (Fung & Wright, 2003: 7-10) *.* This raises questions about the legitimacy of public decisions and the extent to which the government truly represents the interests of all citizens.

Finally, the inability to adapt to globalization and technological disruption has exacerbated criticism. The flow of information, capital, and people across national borders demands a form *of governance* that transcends traditional national boundaries. Internal, nationally oriented bureaucracies struggle to respond to the external pressures and opportunities offered by an increasingly connected world (Rhodes, 199655-57) . In short, criticism of the classical paradigm has become the

intellectual and practical foundation driving the search for more innovative and adaptive models *of governance*.

NPG Innovation: Towards Collaborative Governance and Networking, As a direct response to criticism of classical bureaucracy and the limitations of *New Public Management* (NPM), which is overly market-oriented, the concept of *New Public Governance* (NPG) has emerged as a significant innovation in public administration thinking and practice. NPG marks a fundamental shift from the model *of government* as a single actor (   ) to governance as a multi-actor process *( )* 2003:18–20) .

The literature review highlights the core characteristics of NPG that distinguish it from its predecessors. First, the emphasis on *network governance* is the most prominent feature. NPG recognizes that solving public problems requires collaboration between the government, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and civil society (Stoker, 1998: 17–19) . The government in NPG acts as a facilitator, coordinator, and partner in this network, not as a sole commander. This allows for broader resource mobilization, sharing of expertise, and risk sharing.

Second, NPG focuses on creating shared public value. Unlike NPM, which emphasizes efficiency and *monetary* value, NPG is more oriented toward outcomes desired by society and the improvement of collective well-being (Moore, 1995: 30–35) . This encourages a more holistic approach to public policy, where success is measured not only in terms of costs or outputs, but also in terms of broader social impacts.

Third, NPG promotes flexibility and adaptability. In an uncertain environment, the ability to quickly adjust policies and programs is crucial. NPG encourages experimentation, continuous learning, and formative evaluation to ensure that *governance* interventions remain relevant and effective (Osborne, 2006: 382–358) . This is the opposite of classic bureaucratic rigidity.

Fourth, increased participation and inclusion are important elements of NPG. Through mechanisms such as public consultation, multi-stakeholder forums, and co-production of services, NPG seeks to involve citizens and community groups in decision-making and service provision (Bovaird, 2007, pp. 846-848). This not only increases legitimacy, but also brings diverse perspectives and local knowledge into the *governance* process.

Although NPG offers a promising framework, the literature also identifies challenges in its implementation. These include difficulties in managing complex networks with diverse actors, accountability issues in multi-actor structures, and resistance from traditional bureaucracies that may be reluctant to relinquish control (Rhodes, 1997: 105–107) . Nevertheless, NPGs have become a crucial innovation that is changing our understanding of how *governance* can operate more effectively in the 21st century.

Governance: Catalyst for Transformation and Efficiency, Along with the development of NPG, the revolution in information and communication technology (ICT) has introduced another innovative dimension to *government*: *Digital Governance*. A review of the literature confirms that *Digital Governance* is not merely the digitization of government services (*e-government)*, but rather a strategy for using technology to transform the relationship between the government, citizens, and various stakeholders, to enhance efficiency, transparency, and participation in *governance* processes *2020*: 3) . *Digital governance* acts as a powerful catalyst in realizing NPG principles. First, in terms of improving the accessibility and efficiency of public services, digital platforms enable citizens to access government information and services anytime and anywhere, reducing geographical and bureaucratic barriers (Layne & Lee, 2001, pp. 122–124) . This increases citizen satisfaction and frees up government resources for more complex tasks.

Second, transparency and accountability are significantly strengthened through *Digital Governance*. *Open data* initiatives, online complaint portals, and project performance monitoring systems enable greater public oversight, reduce opportunities for corruption, and build trust

between the government and citizens (Bertot et al., 2010: 310–312) . The availability of easily accessible information empowers citizens to demand accountability from the government. Third, *Digital Governance* has paved the way for broader and more inclusive citizen participation. Through *e-participation (*e.g., online discussion forums, digital surveys, and policy *crowdsourcing)*, citizens can express their opinions, provide input, and contribute to the policy-making process (Macintosh, 2004: 3-5) . This strengthens democratic legitimacy and ensures that policies are more responsive to community needs. Fourth, innovation in government operations is also a key outcome. The use of *big data analytics,* artificial intelligence (AI), and *blockchain* can optimize decision-making, identify hidden patterns, and improve internal efficiency (Janssen & Van der Voort, 2016: 1–3) . This technology enables governments to be more proactive, predictive, and personalized in their service delivery.

However, the literature also highlights significant challenges in the implementation *of Digital Governance.* These include issues *of the digital divide*, which can exacerbate inequality if access to and literacy in digital technologies are unevenly distributed (Heeks, 200:9–11) . Data privacy and security issues are a major concern, requiring a robust regulatory framework and advanced cybersecurity infrastructure (Dawes, 2008: 203–205) . In addition, cultural resistance within bureaucracies and the need for large investments in infrastructure and human resource capacity development are also obstacles that need to be overcome. Nevertheless, *Digital Governance* remains an inevitable transformative force in the journey *of* modern *governance*.

Adaptation Amid Global Challenges: The Convergence of Criticism and Innovation, Criticism of the classical paradigm and the emergence of NPG innovation and *Digital Governance* cannot be separated from the context of ever-evolving global challenges. A review of the literature clearly shows that the evolution of *governance* is an essential form of adaptation to increasingly complex, uncertain, and interconnected global challenges (Pierre & Peters, 2000: 1–5) .

Global economic challenges, such as financial crises, market volatility, and widening inequality, demand more agile and adaptive governance. NPG, with its emphasis on cross-sector collaboration, facilitates government partnerships with the private sector and international organizations to stabilize the economy, promote inclusive growth, and build resilience. *Digital Government* supports this through better data analysis for economic policy and platforms for more efficient digital financial services. Social challenges, including mass urbanization, migration, and increasing demands for social justice, require *a* more inclusive and responsive *governance approach*. NPG promotes multi-stakeholder participation to design solutions that are more tailored to local contexts and diverse community needs. *Digital Government* facilitates this participation through *e-participation* platforms and facilitates the provision of more personalized and targeted social services.

Environmental challenges, such as climate change and resource scarcity, are classic examples of "hard problems" that require collaborative *governance*. NPG provides a framework for building partnerships between governments, scientists, industry, and civil society to develop sustainable policies and implement green solutions. *Digital Governance* contributes through *real-time* environmental monitoring, climate information sharing platforms, and tools to manage resources more efficiently. Geopolitical and security challenges, such as terrorism and global pandemics, also highlight the importance *of* adaptive *governance*. The response to the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, demonstrates a powerful combination of NPG and *Digital Governance:* cross-border and cross-sector collaboration (NPG) supported by digital contact tracing, health information platforms, and telemedicine services (Digital Governance) (OECD, 2020: 10–15) . This shows how *governance* innovation is critical to maintaining public safety and well-being in the midst of a crisis.

Overall, the *governance* journey

discussed in the literature on the New Public *Governance* ( ) is a dynamic response to the inadequacy of old models in facing the new world. Criticism of classical bureaucracy has opened the door for NPG innovations that emphasize collaboration and public value, which have been further strengthened and accelerated by the transformative capabilities *of Digital Governance.* The convergence of these three elements has shaped *a governance* model that aims not only to survive, but also to thrive and adapt amid an ever-changing landscape of global challenges.

Discussion and Synthesis: Towards Flexible and Sustainable Governance, This discussion synthesizes the above findings, highlighting the reciprocal relationship between criticism, innovation, and adaptation in the evolution *of governance*. It is clear that *governance* is not a static entity, but rather a social and institutional construct that is constantly being reshaped by internal and external pressures. Criticism of the classical paradigm not only identifies weaknesses but also triggers the search for new solutions, largely embodied in NPG and *Digital Governance.* NPG, with its emphasis on networks and collaboration, directly responds to the limitations of classical bureaucracy in terms of responsiveness, flexibility, and the ability to handle complex problems that transcend organizational boundaries. This is a shift from control by a single government to cooperation between various actors 1996: 65–67).

Meanwhile, *Digital Governance* has emerged not only as a tool but also as a new paradigm that enables NPG to operate at a scale and speed that was previously unimaginable. Digital technology provides infrastructure for networks, facilitates multi-directional communication, and facilitates the collection and analysis of data that is crucial for adaptive decision-making. However, this journey is not without challenges. The shift towards NPG and *Digital Governance* raises new questions about accountability in complex networks, the risk *of digital divide*, data privacy issues, and challenges in managing high public expectations for digital services. (Dunleavy et al., 2006: 10–12) . Therefore, adaptation does not only mean adopting new models,

but also continuously evaluating, refining, and addressing unwanted side effects. Essentially, the evolution of *governance* observed in this literature relates to the search for adaptive capacity. In an era of global challenges marked by uncertainty (VUCA: *volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity)*, the ability *of governance* systems to learn, experiment, and adapt is key to their survival and effectiveness (Kettl, 2002: 15–18) . NPG and *Digital Governance* offer mechanisms that facilitate this adaptation by promoting more flexible institutional design, more decentralized decision-making, and broader stakeholder engagement.

The implication of these findings is that *the future of governance* will likely continue to move toward hybrid models that combine the best elements of various paradigms. This will involve ongoing efforts to balance bureaucratic efficiency, network flexibility, and the transformative potential of digital technology, while proactively addressing global challenges. Further research is needed to explore how different countries implement and adapt these models in their unique socio-political and economic contexts, as well as to develop more sophisticated metrics for measuring *governance* effectiveness in this new era.

CONCLUSION

The journey of governance from the authoritarian and hierarchical classical paradigm to a collaborative NPG model and digital governance integrated with technology reflects ongoing efforts to create a more effective, responsive, and adaptive system of government in an ever-changing world. Criticism of the limitations of the classical model has sparked innovation that has led to the recognition of the need for multi-stakeholder engagement and the creation of shared public value. Meanwhile, the digital revolution has provided tools and platforms that facilitate this transformation, paving the way for more efficient, transparent, and participatory public services. However, these changes are not without obstacles. Complex global challenges demand continuous adaptation, requiring governments to keep learning, experimenting, and collaborating. Understanding this journey—from criticism,

innovation, to adaptation—is key to designing a future governance framework capable of addressing 21st-century complexities and effectively meeting citizens' needs.

Amid complex global challenges, the shift towards new and digital public governance is not just an option, but a necessity to achieve greater effectiveness, transparency, and responsiveness in modern government.

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