INSTITUTIONAL TRUST AND E-GOVERNMENT ADOPTION IN THE EU: A CROSS-NATIONAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

It has been argued that e-government adoption lags behind compared to e-commerce and empirical research points out that Europeans are often unwilling or reluctant to engage to e-government. This paper adopts a neo-institutional perspective and attempts to shed light on some of the underlying factors of this behaviour by examining the political nature of e-government. More specifically, this research examines the role of institutional trust in e-government adoption while mapping the patterns of e-government adoption in the EU. Methodologically, sequential triangulation is the adopted method of study, and both a cross-national and a longitudinal analysis of the e-government adoption levels are performed. E-government and e-commerce usage levels are analysed in parallel in order to highlight the factors that lead in the observed differences. The analysis shows that e-government in Europe often follows paradoxical adoption patterns that cannot be explained by the existing, individual-level, studies. In contrast, this paper adopts a national-level perspective and it analyses technology adoption through the lenses of a neo-institutional theoretical framework. The research findings show that confidence in government and public institutions have a significant impact on citizens’ attitudes towards e-government. Accordingly, the observed differences in the EU are, to a large extent, explained by the different levels of institutional trust.

Author’s bio

Georgia Foteinou is an expert in IT strategy, working in EU development projects in South and East Europe. She has studied Business Administration and Computer Science at the University of Patras, Greece. Currently, she is completing her studies in ‘European Politics and Society’ at the University of Oxford, UK. Her research interests include e-Government adoption analysis, networked governance, trans-national e-Government systems and re-organization of the public sector using ICT.