



SOCIAL NETWORKS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: A Look at Primary, Secondary and Vocational Education

David Ciza*

Teacher-Researcher, Higher Institute of Development Techniques of Kalehe, DR Congo.

***Corresponding Author**
David Ciza

Teacher-Researcher, Higher
Institute of Development
Techniques of Kalehe, DR
Congo.
Email: davidrubona@gmail.com

Article History

Received: 19.10.2024
Accepted: 14.11.2024
Published: 08.12.2024

Summary: E-government applications are instruments in the search for solutions to the real problem of state reform and strengthening the efficiency and capacities of the administration.

The latter can testify to a working instrument at the service of a management carried out with evolutionary, efficient, transparent and participatory rigor. For this reason, the Congolese authorities should seriously consider social networks as a means of modernizing the Congolese public administration is one of the instruments to get the country out of the chronic and pathological territorial under-administration, which has characterized it for several years.

Despite the problems (hacking, indiscretion) that they generate and the challenges they face, this practice should be encouraged.

Keywords: Social Networks, Reform, Public Administration.

Cite this article:

Ciza, D., (2024). SOCIAL NETWORKS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: A Look at Primary, Secondary and Vocational Education. *ISAR Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(12), 1-7.

Introduction

Public administration in the DRC is a colonial fact. It remains incontestably the product of "political and socio-cultural factors that are part of a historical continuity from the colonial period to the current phase". But since decolonization the process has run out of steam, and gradually the system has become a heavy bureaucracy, the term bureaucracy taken pejoratively here designates the excessive power of the public administration in public affairs or in the politics of the country, mainly the slowness, the heaviness, the lack of flexibility, the inefficiency, the corruption, the cronyism, the tribalism and the inability to deal with the specific cases of the administration of development since independence.

She has had difficulty dressing in the national costume since the decorationlonization, and be adopted by the community as a provider of public goods and services because it was dictatorial for the colony, and uncontrolled and elusive for national executives.

The discourses on the problems that overwhelm it are multiple and multifaceted - economic problems, political underdevelopment, underadministration and the notorious unconsciousness of those who do public service - described from all sides by intellectuals both Congolese and foreign: theorization, sometimes based on surveys, difficult clarifications, sometimes contradictory on the part of jurists, specialists in administrative science, political

scientists, sociologists and field practitioners, even philosophers and economists, without omitting the contributions of international organizations.

A study on the "Administrative Fact and Perspective of the Development of Zaire in 1991", at the same time as the dictatorship of President MOBOTU was disintegrating, allowed us to trace the milestones on the vicissitudes and dysfunctions of an administrative system imported for the management of the colony, transmuted into a public administration of the nascent State at decolonization. It is well known that colonization was a work of traders (private sector) of industrialized countries in search of new markets, the States having only had to accompany this expansion.

It is fair to say that the colonial administration was a public administration for the colonizer and nothing at all for the colony. But this meaning is at another level of the debate.

However, the institutional shift at decolonization is at the origin of a cultural shock, and the postcolonial Congolese governments have only distinguished themselves by actors who, affected for years by a syndrome, a sort of "St. Vitus' dance" disease in the exercise of public office, perpetually distinguish themselves sometimes as guardians of the concession, sometimes as national organizers, and biased towards predation or even as eternal beneficiaries of independence.

Firstly, the new leaders did not master the workings of the colonial administration, and it was therefore complicated to think about

administrative development which is a condition of performance of the system.

Secondly, the nationalization of executives was not followed by that of policies capable of building a new country in the image, either precolonial (which would be a return to the sources, but what sources? since the return or recourse to the authenticity of the 70s remains the example of this traditional nothingness?) or modern, in the postcolonial image, but there again, what modernity? Very often lost between a distant past more than perfect, a simple past of sad memories, and an elusive, uncontrolled present, and a vague and moreover unpredictable future, they preferred the status quo, and adopted neopatrimonialism and colonial clientelism with the strategic support of poorly negotiated Western technical assistance, and the evils and dysfunctions appeared.

Indeed, we noted throughout our research that the public administration of Zaire (Congo) was underdeveloped and less efficient in the production of collective goods and services as a result of the poor governance of the country since decolonization.

We concluded that there is indeed a correlation between the administrative underdevelopment and the economic underdevelopment of underadministered States, including our country, on the one hand; and on the other hand, between the economic and social development of industrialized countries, and the performance of the public administrations of these States.

It follows that the geography of administrative development corresponds to the state of development of the economy of a country, generally industrialized states. Also, P. Moussa was right to confirm this relationship.

We must remember that if we have not lost track of time, more than fifty years have already passed without anything having changed. The reconstruction of the country, particularly of the public administration, paradoxically rhymes with deconstruction, despite the technical assistance and the quantities of funds that are drained there, as well as the immense natural resources of the country. The population is increasingly poor and deprived, the administration increasingly disintegrated and disjointed, ineffective and inefficient. We have noticed since independence that the more the country changes its political regime, the more it engenders a neo-patrimonial and clientelist political class beyond national understanding.

The more armed conflicts, democratic crises and electoral farces there are, the more the country is mired in underdevelopment, with the population becoming increasingly poor and deprived. The more the international community boosts the country with financial resources, the more there is waste, unrealistic or ostentatious development plans, new rich people, and a new nomenclature appears in the image of the regime. Finally, "the more doctors there are, the worse the dispensaries, health centers and hospitals function. The more teachers and primary school teachers are trained, the less well education functions and its level declines over time. The more agricultural engineers there are, the more agriculture goes backwards. The more specialists in political and administrative sciences are registered, the more political and administrative institutions sink into dysfunction."¹ And there are a swarm of civil servants and political-administrative decision-

makers who are unaware, even incompetent in the exercise of public office.

All the more so since it evolved in a very disturbed historical process, after the end of the Party-State and its institutional mergers, as well as the advent of the Party-State, a conglomerate of political parties at the top of the State as devastating and very serious as the first, with its opportunistic political groupings. Thus, the Administration collapsed. The institutions were personalized and the State devoted to the service of parties or groups of friends, cronies and rogues, with states of mind, without a state spirit.

The administrative system has become a disaster for public service, counterproductive and very controversial for the development of public management and good administration.

It is characterized, during its long postcolonial life, by its extreme under-equipment, unstructured and disorganized, amorphous, less or non-performing and without any virtue of public service and the general interest. While in the countries of its origins, Western countries in this case, Public Administration has experienced spectacular development on all levels, and has become omnipresent in the economic, social and industrial life of the latter, like the large industrial and commercial groups on planet Earth.

The following study allows, through the key elements highlighted, to make an overall critique of the few correlations between under-administration and the problems preventing the DRC Public Administration from transforming itself after several decades. I note the many reforms and political upheavals, independence in 1960, the military coup in 1965, followed by the institutionalization of the Party-State in 1973, the AFDL rebellion in 1997, democratization including the orientations of the international community since 2001 which have marked it throughout its evolution, to rise to the height of the responsibilities of a development administration with an institutional capacity capable of defining strategic orientations. Then to develop and implement adequate public policies, as well as to monitor the results of its action, so that administrative action is truly effective, and ideally efficient. The question of the performance of public action is raised.

More than sixty years after independence, the problems of public administration are unequivocal: underdevelopment of the economy, political underdevelopment, administrative underdevelopment and the general unconsciousness of those who perform the civil service. They have become factors that hinder the development of the administrative system in the DRC. It is true that the evolution towards such an objective is slow and progressive. The observation of the Congolese case is unfortunately negative, whether in terms of slowness or progressiveness. There is no evolution. Indeed, this situation may regress.

She tries to shed light on the "unspoken", "hearsay", and "what will people say" which would be obstacles to the establishment of a modern-day public administration, resolutely prospective, actively dynamic and explicitly revealing the myth or reality of the Development Administration. It will be limited to the examination of a few very general aspects, characteristic of the administrative problems of the Congolese State, to avoid the minor slippages which could appear. It is true that these problems are multiple and multidimensional.

¹Long Term Strategy for African Governance and Public Administration Programme. September 2008, p.4

In this context, it proposes to clarify and modestly recall, in the first point, the few guiding concepts that guide the spirit and the proposed development, in order to facilitate its understanding, without ambiguity or incongruous interpretations. It will then give, in the second, third and fourth points, the role of the infernal triangle of underdevelopment - economic underdevelopment by which the Public Administration (the Congolese State) is deprived, cut off from the precious resources for its proper functioning; Political underdevelopment by which the Congolese State is simply transformed into a State serving particular interests, following excessive nationalization of the administrative function (patrimonial State, neo-patrimonial, clientelism), and administrative underdevelopment by the loss of the reason for being of the Public Administration in a State in the making like the DRC, and at the origin of the profound confusion of its external and internal missions, source of the decay of the civil service - which is the characteristic feature of the under-administration or bad governance of the country since decolonization.

Finally, the last point will be devoted to the obvious problem of widespread unconsciousness at all levels of public action, the State and its entire constellation of services, including public companies and its men. This is a catastrophe for the development and performance of the Congolese administrative system.

Chapter. I

Quick Overview of Administration and New Information and Communication Technologies

The modernization of public administration today indisputably involves the definition of a public policy on information technology. This fact has not escaped the attention of governments, who know that they can legitimize their actions through better public knowledge of the actions they pursue. It is true that the technological and information revolution could not remain external to the administration.

In addition, the State, which must remain a model for its society, must anticipate, as much as possible, the expectations of users in this area. This is undoubtedly the most important project of the State reform, in that it involves an upheaval of working methods. The modernization of the civil service and the State must indeed involve the discovery of more effective and faster ways of responding to the expectations of citizens. Finally, we must not forget that computerization gives rise to new risks, particularly in terms of the protection of personal data, confidentiality, and storage of information.²...

I.1 Public Interactivity

I.1.1 Computer integration

a. Computer access by third parties to the administration

New technologies, linked to the computer or telematics revolution, now offer effective tools for improving communication between the administration and users. These mainly include: new telephone services (voicemail), fax, telematics (the Minitel will be used until the generalization and accessibility of computers are comparable), electronic signature, telepayment, in the broad sense, the "information highways".

Internet and Intranet are now known and assimilated by the majority of administrations. In some time, the majority of "administrative" civil servants, working on computers, will be networked and provided with an electronic address. The management of assets or human resources also now involves computer processing.

This technological development is of major interest with regard to the renovation of public skills. Many repetitive processing operations, previously carried out by the administration, will be able to be avoided in the future, thanks to the multiplication of tele-procedures, which should facilitate the administrative procedures of users. Integrated administration is, in this perspective, defined by the OECD as "the minimum number of transaction points, without the end user needing to know the internal structures and functions of the administrative services with which he is dealing"³.

IT integration also leads to the bringing together, within the administration, of professions which become complementary.

Thus, the development of a public website requires the collaboration of IT specialists, documentarians, and communication managers. The recruitment of high-level engineers is essential in this context. This ambitious policy also generates, now that it has been initiated, concrete expectations from users. Public sites will have to be regularly updated (which implies ongoing training for staff) and continually improved. This is therefore not a short-term policy but a real redefinition of the modes of relationship between the administration and users.

In addition, this new mode of communication eliminates traditional administrative barriers. With the electronic address, a senior official becomes as easily "reachable" as the local agent. Responsiveness and participation are completely disrupted. Indeed, "electronic mail" will require faster responses to questions asked. We can see that technological progress can lead to new expectations.

The major difficulty for the administration, faced with this new technology project, lies in its ability to react to technical developments, because the implementation of technical solutions is becoming increasingly complex.

b. The development of public websites

The integration of websites into administrative action is also becoming a priority. It must involve the multiplication of training actions in each administration in order to mobilize hierarchical managers in the challenges of deploying websites and defining their missions vis-à-vis the public, as well as the redeployment of human resources and the training of Internet teams and administration agents.

c. Administrative interconnection

The integration of public administrations within supranational structures will change their relationship with efficiency. Interconnection gives them the opportunity to accelerate decision-making, through an instantaneous exchange of information. Computer communication abolishes certain hierarchical barriers by allowing direct access to the desired interlocutor, once identified. An emulation must naturally result from this "competition" between services, now open to each other.

²Charles DEBBASCH & Frédéric COLIN, Public administration, Economica, Paris, 2005, p.1061

³Charles DEBBASCH and Frédéric COLIN, idem, p.1068.

d. Technology and human rights: decision support

Advances in information technology have led, since the end of the 1970s, to specific and well-known legislation relating to the protection of "personal" data. Some of the resulting consequences are currently undergoing regulatory redefinition, such as the issue of electronic signatures. The problem is now being renewed with the creation of new technical solutions made available to public authorities.

The "Geographic information systems" developed in the United States in particular are analytical decision-making tools that organize, compare, and analyze disparate data to bring them together in an organized system. These systems offer hitherto unequalled potential to provide means of visualizing social, economic, or political problems, combining spatial analysis with temporal analysis.

The development of such technology raises new questions, linked to individual freedoms: at what stage should we consider that we are dealing with exploitable data, can the public sector monetize the data in its possession, under what conditions can decision-making assistance develop, when do we move from raw data to analysis, does the decision-maker, who did not design the system, remain in control of the solutions he takes with the assistance thus provided.

Chapter. II

Congolese Public Administration and Social Networks

The multifaceted crises that have shaken the Democratic Republic of Congo for more than a decade have had significant repercussions on the functioning of public institutions.⁴. In the context of post-conflict national reconstruction, the implementation of a new reform of the Congolese public administration has proven to be a requirement, a conviction shared by both the Congolese government and development partners, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank in particular.

II.1 On the reform of the administration

To materialize this idea, the Congolese government has requested the assistance of development partners with the aim of undertaking studies for an in-depth reform of the state apparatus, whether it be the central administration or the provincial and local administrations.

According to the United Nations Development Programme, the four major objectives targeted by the said reform were in particular to:

- establish a healthy, modern and efficient administration capable to ensure the missions of the State and contribute to the development of the country;
- encourage the emergence of a new type of State agents, well trained, efficient and revalued;
- make this administration capable of offering a quality public service;
- promote good governance and ethics within State services.

⁴ UNDP (2007). *Support for public administration reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, www.cd.undp.org/projet.aspx?titre=Appui%20%C3%A0%20la%20reform%20de%20l'administration%20publique&projetid=31 (page consulted on March 1, 2024).

To achieve these objectives, several strategies have been considered, among others, the development and implementation of a national policy on social networks and/or ICT so that they serve as tools for modernizing the administration, through the emergence of an electronic government.

II.2 On the establishment of electronic government

Aware of the important role that social networks can play in establishing a healthy, modern, efficient administration capable of providing quality service to citizens, the Congolese government organized, in collaboration with the Regional Office of the United Nations Economic Commission for Eastern Africa, a government seminar on ICT⁵. The seminar, which had the theme "ICT, growth, poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals", brought together all the ministers of the central government with the aim of making them understand and internalize the importance of using ICT in the economic development of the country and to raise their awareness of the importance of setting up an electronic project. According to the Minister of Posts, Telephones and Telecommunications and the Minister of Planning, both responsible for implementing this project, given the state of the existing infrastructure, it would take a period of five years to set up a new national information and communication infrastructure. In the meantime, it had been suggested to each minister to consider and implement ministerial initiatives related to social networks. It is in this context that the Minister of EPSP decided to deliver the results of the 2008 edition of state examinations electronically.

II.3 An overview of social networks in Congolese public administration

While it is true that some computer applications are operational on the Congolese administration side, they are essentially linked to office automation, particularly in relation to the expenditure chain, civil servants' pay, taxes. No national program for computerizing all state services exists⁶. As for the establishment of a new national information and communication infrastructure recommended in 2007 during the ministerial seminar, it remains to this day, five years later, a pious wish and the advent of an electronic government, a distant dream. The portals of some existing sites leave something to be desired, both in terms of presentation and content. Indeed, it is not always easy to find reliable information on these portals on the activities and services offered by administrations; they are most often limited to providing general information on the country and the minister's agenda, when they do not praise the Head of State. Another serious problem is that of updating the few data available on these sites.

According to the 2009 statistics of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the low level of the Web index and the telecommunications infrastructure index would be the main cause of the glaring delay that the country is experiencing in terms of the development of electronic governance⁷ compared to other countries in the region. It would also compete for last place with Chad and the Central African Republic⁷. All things considered, the

⁵ Tshibambe, L. (2007). *Effective management of public affairs: electronic government* envisaged in Congo-Kinshasa, www.balancingact-africa.com/node/16937 (page consulted on February 20, 2024).

⁶ Adam, L. et al., Feasibility study for an open Internet backbone in the Democratic Republic of Congo, *Alternatives*, June 2007, p.36

⁷ International Telecommunication Union (2009). *World Telecommunications/ICT Database*, www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/statistics/, 2009 (page consulted on 06/March 2024).

Congolese public administration makes little or no use of social networks to improve the provision of public services at both the national and inter-ministerial levels. Furthermore, manual processing of files still predominates at present with the following consequences:⁸:

- the slowness in processing data and the ease of falsifying them;
- the relative conservation of data and archives;
- the difficulty of consulting documents and the loss of time in processing files;
- the long delays in obtaining administrative documents;
- the difficulty of transmitting and communicating information between the different administrations and within each one. In short, the country still has a long way to go before it can implement public services within the framework of electronic government, especially in its interactional and transactional phases.

Chapter. III

Publication of State Examination Results Transmission of Mails by Electronic Means: Innovation and Challenges

To everyone's surprise, the Minister of EPSP, in his capacity as Chairman of the National Committee for State Examinations, announced in July 2008 that the publication of results would henceforth be done electronically, on the Ministry's website and by text message.

III.1 Innovations in correction and delivery of results

The year 2008 marked a turning point in the history of state examinations in the Democratic Republic of Congo. While until now the exam papers were marked manually, the ministerial authorities have decided to set up a new marking system, namely computerised marking. In order to avoid any collusion, the papers are marked by inspectors in a "blind" manner, that is to say that the candidates' papers are coded and that, consequently, the markers do not know the identity of the candidates whose papers they are marking by digital reading. With regard to the publication of results, the EPSP has signed a partnership with mobile phone operators in the country, under which students can find out their fate even before the full results are available on the ministry's website². All students have to do is enter their name, province, the code of the centre where they took their exams and the name of their school using their mobile phone with an alphanumeric keypad, and their results (in percentage) are sent to them instantly. However, the EPSP website remains the main channel for communicating results. The address of this site is communicated to all candidates during the tests and is constantly recalled in the media as the date of publication of the results approaches. It is therefore since this 2008 edition that ICT, Internet and mobile telephony, have become the obligatory channel by which the EPSP publishes the results of the State examinations, thus abandoning the traditional channel, namely the EPSP rankings (printed version).

III.2 The benefits of social media

There are obvious benefits to be gained from the electronic publication of administrative results and correspondence. These include, among others, accelerated publication and/or rapid facilitation of communication, minimization of the risk of fraud and cheating, saving money and preserving archives.

a. Accelerated publication of results (time saving)

On July 31, 2008, the various cities of the country were in a state of excitement. While it is true that the publication of the results of the state examinations has always generated excitement, given the reputedly difficult nature of the composition of the tests, but also and especially the theatrical way in which these results were published in newspapers across the country, that of the 2008 edition was published in an unusual way. Indeed, the first results were delivered electronically less than three weeks after the end of the tests (organized from July 7 to 10), thus setting the speed record for thirty years. The computerization of the correction as well as the publication of the results electronically were the appropriate response to speed up the publication process and avoid the long waiting periods experienced in previous years.

This electronic transmission of mail provides a definite advantage to candidates who live far from major urban centres. Thanks to text messages, they can find out their results at the same time as those who live in the capital (instantaneous circulation of information). Before 2008, due to long waiting periods, some university establishments admitted candidates waiting for their results. The latter could thus follow the courses, but their registration only became definitive if their results were positive. Candidates who failed, for their part, were obliged to stop their courses in order to re-register in a secondary school to retake the exams, unless they took the exams as a self-taught student³. But it was not always easy for these repeating candidates to find a school that would accept them with a delay of three months or more. Most often, school principals were reluctant to enroll these candidates who had failed; some even took back only their own repeating students. For others, however, it was an opportunity to blackmail these students, whose only crime was not having passed the state exams, by demanding exorbitant sums of money from them as registration or re-registration fees, as the case may be. As a result, some repeaters had no choice but to wait until the following year to re-register properly at the beginning of the year, thereby losing a school year. The accelerated publication of results by social networks has solved this problem, because since 2008, recipients have had their results in just two or three weeks after the exams, which gives them plenty of time to find either a university (if they pass) or a school where they can register to re-sit the state examinations (if they fail). This confirms Sauret's comments that social networks act on the time factor by making the administration's capacities coincide with the expectations of citizens.⁹

There are also public services that currently use phonies; these services transmit documents such as orders, updated lists of personnel, transmission of service reports, etc. through social networks (e-mails, WhatsApps).

⁸ Consciousness. , *Degree of appropriation of NTIC in the DRC*, www.laconscience.com/Degree-of-appropriation-of-NTIC-in-the-DRC, 2011.html (page consulted on March 6, 2024).

⁹ Sauret, J., *Efficiency of administration and service to the citizen: the challenges of electronic administration*, *French Journal of Public Administration*, No. 110, 2004, p. 279-295.

b. *Minimizing the risk of fraud and cheating*

"With the new system, the risk of fraud is minimized. University officials [...] now have the ease of knowing all the registered students"¹⁰.

This statement by an EPSP inspector attests that the risk of fraud was, alongside the late publication of results, another major scourge before the delivery of results electronically.

In the old system, many things happened between the copy correction center and the printing center, which are not housed in the same building, including the fraudulent printing of the rankings, which offered the possibility of inserting other names. Mafia networks had thus been formed around this very lucrative activity, involving both underpaid EPSP inspectors eager for dishonest gain, crooked intermediaries and unscrupulous school principals. Cases of corruption, cheating or tampering with the rankings were thus denounced for almost every edition. Furthermore, as we have previously reported, the simple fact that a student's name appeared on a ranking was sufficient proof for him to be enrolled in a university establishment. It is also with the same record that he could claim his state diploma at the EPSP or the certificate of achievement in lieu of the diploma (in the case of new graduates). ICT, by eliminating easily manipulated record lists, has significantly reduced the risk of fraud and cheating. The certificate of achievement in lieu of the diploma has become the only official document with which a candidate can be admitted to university.

c. *Saving money*

According to the EPSP authorities, publishing results electronically saves money every year. But to our knowledge, there is no study to date that can assess the real financial impact of this public policy on the EPSP budget. On this subject, Kalonji wonders¹¹: "By need of evolution or by concern to save money formerly intended for printing? Nobody knows except that the initiative [...] has reassured on the dynamism of the EPSP authorities to follow the train of evolution already underway, failing to catch up with it.

d. *Preservation of archives*

A final, and not least, advantage of the electronic publication of results is the preservation of archives. In fact, it was common, in the old system, to make several requests to the General Inspectorate of the EPSP without getting your hands on a single copy of the rankings for a particular option. However, while waiting for the delivery of the State diplomas, this ranking served as the diploma. Ironically, even the EPSP General Inspectorate required certain students who applied for a certificate of achievement in lieu of a diploma to provide the Inspectorate with a copy of the list of honors for their option, even though it was the Inspectorate that printed the lists of honors and was supposed to archive them.

Today, thanks to the contribution of social networks, those who wish can at any time consult the archives of the last three editions of the results of the state examinations on the EPSP website.

III.3 Challenges and constraints of electronic mail transmission

While the EPSP authorities have succeeded in their gamble of publishing the results less than three weeks after the end of the tests, thus reducing waiting times and the risk of cheating, it must also be acknowledged that this initiative has faced major challenges.

a. *Mastering technology*

Analyzing the first editions of publication of results electronically, Kankole (2009) reports that they experienced many failures and errors which provoked indignation and frustration among candidates and their relatives as well as among school officials.¹² On the EPSP website, some candidates found their name on the list of a school other than their own and sometimes even the name of a school was in another center, in another province or even on no list at all. These errors left Internet users perplexed and sometimes sowed doubts about the objectivity of the results, and by extension about the effectiveness of the system itself. Furthermore, the situation was not easy for candidates who chose the mobile phone channel to find out about their results. Some students had received text messages from the operator Vodacom, a partner of EPSP, confirming their success with the mark obtained (expressed as a percentage), but they later realized that their name did not appear on any list on the EPSP website. Hence Kalonji's conclusion: "Acquiring technology is one thing, knowing how to manage it well and tame it is another."

The disparity, even contradiction, between the results published on the EPSP website and those of Vodacom has discredited Vodacom's results and given rise to much criticism of this partnership. In context, this question seems very relevant to us: "Are SMS a safe way to deliver results, knowing that in some provinces, there is no access point to the social network [Internet] and that candidates will have to make do with it?" In the opinion of many observers, it was not the tool that was at fault, but rather the people who were supposed to use it. In this regard, Kankole notes: "[...] a good work tool allows a person to save time, quantity and quality. But, the worker must still be able to handle the tool at his disposal. [...] The people assigned to this task are not up to the task. "It is to overcome these criticisms and improve the offering of their service that EPSP and Vodacom have placed great emphasis on technological training for both the inspectors responsible for correction and the staff responsible for recording the results on the website.

Hacking in the Congolese public administration is observed through social networks: There are people who monitor the communication of political and administrative authorities when these authorities communicate. On this occasion, these hacking groups release these communications from the authorities on social networks; this is why some authorities prefer a direct interview to avoid their communication being hacked.

There is also indiscretion: When the document is sent on WhatsApp, other people read it, and yet it is a mail that should not be flooded in social networks; sometimes even another person (wife, children, ...) can use the phone of a third person.

¹⁰ Massikini, A. (2008). *Exetat: innovations in proofreading and publication of results*, www.jdconline.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1403&Itemid=26 (page consulted on February 28, 2024).

¹¹ Kalonji, T. (2008). *State Exam 2008-2009: Vodacom publishes erroneous results*, www.societecivile.cd/node/3876 (page consulted on March 5, 2024).

¹² Kankole, L., *Computerized correction of state exams: Minister MakerMwangu won in political marketing by losing credit*, www.digitalcongo.net/article/60553 (page consulted on March 1, 2024).

b. Internet accessibility

In a country where social networks are still struggling to take hold, it is not always easy to access the Internet, particularly in rural areas. But even in large cities, not everyone has the privilege of accessing the Internet. In 2009, one year after the launch of electronic publishing, the Internet teledensity was 0.37 users per 100 inhabitants, the proportion of households with a computer was 0.3% and that of households with access to the Internet was 0.2%.¹³ In such an environment, cybercafes have established themselves as new channels for publishing results. Even though the EPSP website is known to all students and their relatives, when the minister announces the start of the results publication period, cybercafe managers prohibit any customer from consulting this site. They have a monopoly on it and communicate the results only to the recipients who are obliged to pay up to the equivalent of US\$0.50 each. The publication period therefore becomes an opportune time for these cybercafe managers, like newspaper vendors in the old system, to do good business on the backs of students who are only asking to know their results. However, Internet accessibility is not only a question of a consultation point, but also and above all of electricity supply. While rural areas are virtually devoid of them, urban areas experience power cuts and other untimely outages, which does not make consultation in the few existing cybercafes easier. During the publication period, it is not uncommon to encounter crowds running in all directions in search of neighborhoods where there is electricity or a cybercafe powered by a generator. This attraction further raises the stakes for cybercafe owners.

Conclusion

All in all, although the various applications of e-government are only one instrument in the search for solutions to the real problem of state reform and strengthening the efficiency and capacities of the administration, they can prove to be a powerful tool in the service of scalable, effective, transparent and participatory governance. In this sense, the Congolese authorities should seriously consider social networks as a lever for the modernization of Congolese public administration and one of the means of getting the country out of the chronic and pathological territorial under-administration that has characterized it for several years.

Based on the observations made above, we can say that social networks have generated obvious gains in the delivery and/or transmission of administrative mail, including accelerated publication (time saving), minimization of fraud and cheating, and the preservation of archives. Despite the problems (hacking, indiscretion) they generate and the challenges they face, this practice should be encouraged. However, it is not yet part of a national and global dynamic tending to provide the country with an electronic government. As MOVA states:

"There is a lack of [...] synergy and a national integration of these somewhat exotic isolates"¹⁴. The few actions undertaken by public organizations remain disparate and not integrated to this day. The telecommunications infrastructure, which is not very developed, is also not likely to contribute to the emergence of a true electronic government. In short, as the case of the publication of state

examination results electronically illustrates, social networks play an important role in improving the provision of public services in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in terms of accessibility, speed and efficiency. Although they are not in themselves a panacea for the ills that plague the Congolese public administration, used wisely, social networks can constitute one of the solutions to the territorial under-administration that the country is experiencing, making the Congolese public administration capable of offering a quality service and promoting transparency within state services.

Bibliography

1. Adam, L. (2007). Feasibility study for an open Internet backbone in the Democratic Republic of Congo. *Alternatives*, June .
2. Charles DEBBASCH & Frédéric COLIN, Public Administration, Economica, Paris, 2005.
3. Henry Mova Sakanyi, The DR Congo in the digital revolution: current issues, challenges for tomorrow, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2010.
4. Jethro Kombo Yetilo, (2010) *Congolese public administration grapples with ICT innovations, challenges and perspectives. The case of the publication of state examination results*, Pyramids, No. 19.
5. Kalonji, T. (2008). State Examination 2008-2009: Vodacom publishes erroneous results, www.societecivile.cd/node/3876 (page consulted on March 5, 2024).
6. Kankole, L., Computerized correction of state exams: Minister Maker Mwangi won in political marketing by losing credit, www.digitalcongo.net/article/60553 (page consulted on March 1, 2024).
7. Consciousness. Degree of appropriation of NTIC in the DRC, www.laconscience.com/Degree-of-appropriation-of-NTIC-in-the-DRC, 2011.html (page consulted on March 6, 2024).
8. Massikini, A. (2008). Exetat: innovations in the correction of tests and the publication of results, www.jdconline.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1403&Itemid=26 (page consulted on February 28, 2024).
9. UNDP, Support for public administration reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo, www.cd.undp.org/projet.aspx?titre=Appui%20%C3%A0%20l'administration%20publique&projetid=31, 2007 (page consulted on March 1, 2024).
10. Sauret, J., Efficiency of administration and service to the citizen: the challenges of electronic administration", *Revue française d'administration publique*, n° 110, 2004.
11. *Long-term strategy for African governance and public administration programme*. September 2008
12. Tshibambe, L. (2007). Efficient management of public affairs: an electronic government envisaged in Congo-Kinshasa, www.balancingact-africa.com/node/16937 (page consulted on February 20, 2024). International Telecommunication Union (2009). World Telecommunications/ICT indicators Database, www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/statistics/ (page consulted on March 06, 2024).

¹³Jethro Kombo Yetilo, *Congolese public administration grapples with ICT: innovations, challenges and perspectives. The case of the publication of state examination results*, Pyramids, No. 19, 2010, p. 15.

¹⁴Henry Mova Sakanyi, *The DR Congo in the digital revolution: current issues, the challenges for tomorrow*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2010