7-1-2018

Digital Cabinet: An Analysis Through the Lens of Theory of Communicative Action

Jorge Lheureux de Freitas
Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUC-RS), jorge.freitas@acad.pucrs.br

Marie Anne Macadar
COPPEAD / Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), marie.macadar@coppead.ufrj.br

Rafael Fabiano Ravazolo
Tribunal Regional Eleitoral-RS (TRE-RS), ravazolo@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://aisel.aisnet.org/relcasi

---

Digital Cabinet: electronic participation, transparency, and accountability through a critical perspective

Oficina Digital: participación electrónica, transparencia y rendición de cuentas a través de una perspectiva crítica

Gabinete Digital: participação eletrônica, transparência e prestação de contas por meio de uma perspectiva crítica

Jorge Lheureux de Freitas
Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUC-RS)
Porto Alegre, Brasil
jorge.freitas@acad.pucrs.br

Marie Anne Macadar
Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ)
Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
marie.macadar@coppead.ufrj.br

Rafael Fabiano Ravazolo
Tribunal Regional Eleitoral-RS (TRE-RS)
Porto Alegre, Brasil
ravazolo@gmail.com

Abstract

This work entered the universe of e-Participation, Transparency and Accountability in order to analyze the citizen's influence in generating results in state actions and policies. For this purpose, the Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil) Digital Cabinet case was studied, an initiative supported by Information and Communications Technology, between 2011-2014. This program had encompassed a record number of participants comparing to similar initiatives in Latin America and all over the world and it deserves a highlight in terms of e-participation, as well as its relation with transparency and accountability in the continent. For the exploratory analysis of the phenomenon, the Theory of Communicative Action (TCA) served as the study's interpretative lens, by means of testimonies from members of the political class, major media, alternative media and members of the Digital Cabinet team, i.e., persons with some kind of interest in the initiative. This combination determined the purpose of this work: "Analyzing the perception of people regarding the results of e-Participation, Transparency and Accountability in the Digital Cabinet based on the TCA fundamentals." The analysis of the interviews showed that, according to the respondents' perception, the program manifests itself both as a communicative action and as a form of strategic action, which are pillars of the presented theory. From these inputs, evidence appeared which allowed for a more in-depth analysis, including suggestions for future programs of this kind.

Keywords: e-Participation, Transparency, Accountability, Digital Cabinet, Theory of Communicative Action

Resumen

Este trabajo ingresó al universo de la e-Participación, la Transparencia y la rendición de cuentas con el fin de analizar la influencia de la ciudadanía en la generación de resultados en las acciones y políticas estatales. Para ello, se estudió el caso del Gabinete Digital de Rio Grande do Sul (Brasil), iniciativa apoyada por Tecnologías de la Información y las Comunicaciones, entre 2011-2014. Este programa ha contado con un número récord de participantes en comparación con iniciativas similares en América Latina y en todo el mundo y merece un destaque en términos de participación electrónica, así como en materia de transparencia y rendición de cuentas en el continente. Para el análisis exploratorio del fenómeno, la Teoría de la Acción Comunicativa (TCA) sirvió como lente interpretativa del estudio, a través de testimonios de miembros de la clase política, grandes medios de comunicación, medios alternativos y miembros del equipo del Gabinete Digital, es decir, personas con algún tipo de interés en la iniciativa. Esta combinación determinó el propósito de este trabajo: "Analizar la percepción de las personas sobre los resultados de e-Participación, Transparencia y rendición de cuentas en el Gabinete Digital con base en los fundamentos de la TCA". El análisis de las entrevistas mostró que, según la percepción de los entrevistados, el programa se manifiesta tanto como una acción comunicativa como una forma de acción estratégica, que son pilares de la teoría presentada. A partir de estos aportes surgieron evidencias que permitieron un análisis más profundo, incluyendo sugerencias para futuros programas de este tipo.

Palabras clave: e-Participación, Transparencia, Rendición de cuentas, Gabinete digital, Teoría de la Acción comunicativa

Resumo

Este trabalho inseriu-se no universo da e-Participação, Transparência e Prestação de Contas com o objetivo de analisar a influência do cidadão na geração de resultados nas ações e políticas do Estado. Para tanto, foi estudado o caso do Gabinete Digital do Rio Grande do Sul (Brasil), iniciativa apoiada pela Tecnologia da Informação e Comunicação, entre 2011-2014. Este programa teve um número recorde de participantes em comparação com iniciativas semelhantes na América Latina e em todo o mundo e merece destaque em termos de e-participação, bem como em relação à transparência e prestação de contas no continente. Para a análise exploratória do fenômeno, a Teoria da Ação Comunicativa (TCA) serviu de lente interpretativa do estudo, por meio de depoimentos de integrantes da classe política, grandes veículos, meios alternativos e integrantes da equipe do Gabinete Digital, ou seja, pessoas com algum tipo de interesse na iniciativa. Esta combinação determinou o propósito deste trabalho: "Analisar a percepção das pessoas em relação aos resultados da e-Participação, Transparência e responsabilização no Gabinete Digital com base nos fundamentos do TCA". A análise das entrevistas mostrou que, na percepção dos entrevistados, o programa se manifesta tanto como uma ação comunicativa quanto como uma forma de ação estratégica, pilares da teoria apresentada. A partir dessas entradas, surgiram evidências que permitiram uma análise mais aprofundada, incluindo sugestões para futuros programas desse tipo

Palavras-chave: e-Participação, Transparência, Responsabilidade, Gabinete Digital, Teoria da Ação Comunicativa

1   Introduction

Ever since ancient Greece, through landmark events such as the British Magna Carta, the French Revolution and the Independence of the United States, until the threshold of the last Century, classic democracy has been consolidating itself as a form of relationship of the citizens with the State. This form of Government has been going through changes, at times incrementally, at times arising from ruptures seeking to provide the citizens with more mechanisms to influence the course of public affairs. However, on practical terms, the ratio of forces remains basically the same, as citizenship continues to exercise its prerogatives through the traditional indirect democracy channels, i.e., by choosing its representatives. This restricts the actual exercise of power to the time of voting, an episodic contact every two years which restricts the relationship to an electoral connection (Gomes, 2005).

In this context, for the purpose of reducing this representation gap and contributing to the supplementation of the democratic state's institutional legitimacy, some initiatives have emerged focused on citizen participation. One example is Porto Alegre's Participatory Budget, a program in which citizens provide direct opinion about budget utilization in their area. The Participatory Budget is renowned and discussed both in domestic and international forums.

In alignment with these attempts to get society and the State closer together, the quick evolution of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has allowed for the transformation of the deliberation and decision-making processes, getting the Government and the governed closer together, allowing the citizens to play a more active role in the directions of the State (Saebo, Rose, & Molka-Danielsen, 2010). In this context, the technological resources targeted at the empowerment of citizenship only become meaningful as they produce results for the society.

The Theory of Communicative Action (TCA), a theoretical construction of the German philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas, with its depth, fundamentals and characteristics, proved to be the optimum instrument to understand this perception of results by the social tissue. In order to provide the necessary data for the study, the Digital Cabinet – a program focused on e-Participation, Transparency and Accountability that was in place between 2011 and 2014 in the State of Rio Grande do Sul – was the chosen case for the research work. By combining the aforementioned elements, the purpose of this work, in short, consists of "Analyzing the perception of regarding the results of e-Participation, Transparency and Accountability in the Digital Cabinet based on the TCA fundamentals."

Thus, as the program is "a dialogue channel between the Government and society" and is characterized by participation and transparency, it is assumed to establish an actual communication with the social body by means of questions and answers, demands and response to demands, establishing a dialogue between the parties which ultimately happens between the community and the managing group controlling the state initiatives. This way, the analysis by means of TCA fundamentals focuses exactly on the perception of people about the results of this "speech".

Digital Cabinet was one of the most important programs in Latin American context as well as all over the world. From 2011 to 2014, consultations and discussions about traffic, health, regulations, cultural issues, political reform, etc. were made available by Digital Cabinet. These different forms of e-participation had reached an expressive number of participants, a range between 60,000 and 250,000. This massive and unprecedented participation in global terms demonstrated the significance of the program in the context of important e-participation initiatives.

Rio Grande do Sul was the state where the program was designed and applied. Besides reproducing the Brazilian scenario, it resembles the Uruguayan, Argentinian and even Chilean realities, allowing its proposal to be easily applied to these countries and to other South America and Latin America nations. In short, Digital Cabinet had dealt with the ordinary issues and problems of the Latin American countries and its model, standards and practices can be useful throughout the continent.

This article is structured as follows: after the introduction, the study's theoretical reference is presented, then the studied case (the Digital Cabinet). The methodological procedures are described in the fourth section followed by field research and data analysis in the sixth chapter. At the end, some final points are considered about the results obtained by this study.

2 Literature review

In order to better understand the presented proposition, it is important to address the essential related elements – e-Participation, Transparency, Accountability and Theory of Communicative Action – to better describe the studied environment, its constituent elements, internal relationships and the basic theory that works as a lens through which the phenomena are analyzed.

3 E-Participation

At the public level, participation is the instrument by which citizenship may influence the state in the conduct of public affairs, by means of its pressure power. It refers to "the quantity, quality and diversity of stakeholders' input" (Welch, 2012, p.93) and involves the idea of connection and distribution among stakeholders and the state entity, so the stakeholders may perceive their role in discussions concerning governmental decision-making (Saebo, Rose & Flak, 2008). By means of communication, participation allows the citizens to influence the "decision-making process and achieve responsible and reasonable

solutions for the stakeholders" (Susha & Grönhuld, 2012, p. 374), and IT works as a channel enabling to expand the scope of the decision-making process (Chun & Cho, 2012). Sæbø, Rose e Flak (2008) argue that the planning or development of public reforms and virtual services represents the critical moments in which e-Participation should be present.

At the international level, the document "E-Government Survey 2014", produced every two years by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, stresses the importance of commitment to participation in public governance and establishes a three-level e-Participation model that moves from the smallest to the greatest engagement level with the population in order to guide its development in countries belonging to the UN.

Level	Description
1	E-information – participation takes place by providing citizens with public information and access to information upon demand.
2	E-consultation – engagement of people in deeper contributions to and deliberation on public policies and services.
3	E-decision-making - empowering people through co-design of policy options and co-production of services components and delivery modalities.

Table 1. e-Participation Maturity Model. Source: UN, E-Government Survey (2014)

In spite of the importance it has been given by scholars and international bodies, participation – especially e-Participation – has been the subject of criticism over time, such as from Cleaver (1999), Eriksen (2001), Astöm *et al.* (2012). Cleaver (1999) states that there is no clear evidence of its effectiveness, since it is just accepted, without any kind of questioning; that the technological approach is not suitable to address issues of power, control and information"; and that the influence of people in the process is restricted to the modeling of projects that structured the consultation.

 The possibility of coopting the public opinion was also mentioned as a weakness, as it can distort the concept of participation to the extent that organized groups may corrupt this process by holding the collective interest hostage to the purposes of segments (Eriksen, 2001, as cited in Radermacher, 2002). For clarification purposes, it is suitable to mention what happened in one of the Digital Cabinet tools, the Governor Answers, during the first edition in 2011. The winning proposition resulted from votes of the Firefighters Association members, who were called by its president for this purpose, so the proposition from this group was prioritized to the detriment of the others (Bittencourt & Gautier, 2013).

Another issue that deserves attention is the use of e-Participation as a means to legitimize non-democratic Governments, which make use of the media provided by information and communications technology (Astöm *et al.*, 2012). Based on the 2010 United Nations e-Government survey, the author notes that Bahrein is above France in the e-Participation rank, Kazakhstan is above Sweden and Malaysia is on a higher level than Germany.

This discussion does not reject the recognition of e-Participation by scholars and international bodies. At the Brazilian level, Cunha, Coelho and Pozzebon (2014) stress the increasing interest in e-Participation by academic researchers and even Governments. Likewise, when Maia and Marques (2010) mention the example of Belo Horizonte's e-participatory budget, in which "on-line participation was greater than off-line" (p. 469), they note the importance of investigations in the e-Participation field. Another facet of its relevance is its role of fomenting Transparency. A study by Welch (2012) indicates that participation is linked to an increase in transparency, even though the reverse is not true. On the other hand, he warns that public pressure arising from the information provided by transparency may put pressure on the public management to expand participation.

3.1   Transparency

It could be said that Transparency is the instrument which, by means of the Internet and other Information and Communication Technology mechanisms, provides and boosts the dissemination of Government contents to the population, making it easier for the Government and society to fight corruption, improve enforcement and allowing public agents to be held responsible for their acts (Meijer, 2009; Bertot, Jaeger & Grimes, 2010). In this regard, it establishes a connection to Accountability, as the Government representatives may exercise their decision-making powers in the most open and apparent manner possible (Nolan, 1995 as cited in Curtin & Meijer, 2006).

Regarding Transparency, it is important to mention the side effect of breaking the information-dissemination monopoly of large providers, as the provision of Government data serves to moderate the influence of these groups. This is because it provides people with elements that may or may not have been disclosed or may have been disclosed only on a partial basis (Scholl & Luna-Reyes, 2011; Harrison *et al.*, 2012).

As a historical landmark, representatives for 40 countries gathered in Atlanta in 2008 for the purpose of establishing an international regulation on the topic. This meeting prepared the Atlanta Declaration, which elevated transparency to the capacity of a public policy. In this meeting, three essential principles were established: (1) access to information is a fundamental right; (2) the Governments should enact legislation to give effect to this right; and (3) the right to information applies to all intergovernmental organizations such as the UN, OAS, etc.

Like e-Participation, Transparency has also been the subject of criticism. It is sometimes viewed as a potential threat to privacy, because of the fragile frontier between individual and public right; as a means for the media to overload and distort the provided information, thus undermining the institutional legitimacy (Oliver, 2004 as cited in Meijer, 2009); and as a risk of biased information (Grimmelikhuijsen, 2011).

As for information overload, Heead (2012, p. 42) states that "Governments explore the fact that information-processing capacity out of the state cannot handle the flow of information on a relevant time scale and ensure effective transparency". The author notes that there may be attempts to obstruct transparency when reporting may be damaging to the agents. Simultaneously, this failure to comply with the principle of information disclosure may encourage other sectors – resistant to disclosing their data – to do the same.

If, on the one hand, the arguments presented indicate that Transparency has fragilities, on the other hand, one cannot ignore its outstanding strong points, as acknowledged by international instruments such as the 2014 UN E-Government Survey and prior editions.

3.2   Accountability

This is public management's central core, as it relates directly to the performance expected from the public agent (Meijer, 2003). Accountability is connected to the concept of holding public agents responsible, involving information about the decision-making processes, the participants, their respective conducts and the results arising from actions, including sanctions in the event of omissions or irregularities (Heeks, 1998). Teixeira (1997, p. 2020) argues that Accountability is an integral part of the concept of social control and defines it as "politic agents' obligation to account for their acts". Meijer (2003), in turn, assumes that Accountability encompasses three steps, being a process that begins with (1) the information phase when the available data and elements are collected in order to determine what happened; (2) next comes the analysis of conformity between what happened and the regulation; and finally, if applicable, (3) comes the phase for imposition of sanctions.

In terms of ICT, it can be said that its support to Accountability takes place in three ways: in monitoring (1), by providing citizens with the required information to analyze the progress; in comparison (2), by providing data that can be verified and checked against those from other institutions, thus allowing for the determination of relative performance; and control (3), allowing for the use of methods to audit processes and systems (Heeks, 1998).

3.3   Theory of communicative action

In the second half of the previous Century, Jürgen Habermas, a scholar from the second generation of thinkers of the Frankfurt School, created the Theory of Communicative Action (TCA). It establishes that communication is the *center* of social action (Pinto, 1995). In this regard, "Habermas understands social action as an interaction process genealogically built by interpretation and linguistic understanding" (Vizeu, 2005, p.23). In the author's theoretical construction, common agreement (understanding) is the requirement for communicative action, which refers to "the interaction of at least two subjects capable of speaking and acting who establish an interpersonal relationship" (Habermas, 2012, p. 166).

The constituent elements of TCA are listed in the next subsection, namely: speech and communication; understanding; communicative action, strategic action and validity claims; and life-world.

3.3.1 Speech and communication

Speech represents a fundamental input for a liberating (communicative) rationality, which materializes in a dialogue between the parties and which must be established on bases of symmetry and reciprocation, with no imposition or manipulation (Habermas, 2012).

3.3.2 Understanding

It is the negotiating process between the dialoguing parties that seek to reach an agreement in an intersubjective manner, without any form of coercion, on a symmetric basis and in a cooperative fashion (Habermas, 2012).

3.3.3 Communicative action, strategic action and validity claims

Communicative action is characterized by an intersubjective relationship in which the subjects seek to achieve their purposes by means of legitimate arguments, negotiation and mutual understanding (Pinto, 1995). According to the author's theoretical construction, communicative action only exists if, apart from understanding, validity claims are also present in the communication, according to the Table 2.

Speech Act		
World	Validity claim	Question
Objective	Truth	Are the contents of speech true?
Normative	Rightness	Are the contents of the speech consistent with the moral, ethical and social values of this historical moment? So is it legitimate?
Subjective	Sincerity	Are the agent's intentions consistent with the contents of the agent's speech? Is it sincere?
Comprehensibility		Are the contents of the speech understandable?

Table 2. Speech Act Validity Claims. Source: Adapted from Vizeu (2011).

Thus, communicative action is focused on understanding and assumes that the validity claims are present, i.e., speech must be understandable, be consistent with reality (be true), comply with the moral, social and ethical values (legitimate) and be sincere.

At least one of these validity claims is not present in the strategic action, which is characterized by being eminently teleological (finalistic) and focused on success. In this form of social action, one of the parties views the other as an object or adversary (Cecez-Kecmanovic & Janson, 1999) and may achieve its purposes by means of influence (Mingers, 2001) and manipulative forms of communication (Jacobson & Storey, 2004).

3.3.4 Life-world

Life-world is the environment, the "backdrop of a previous cultural consensus" (PINTO, 1995, p.81) where the communicative action is processed. It represents the repository of the environment's social, cultural and historical experience where the communicative action takes place, exerting influence by means of rules and social institutions, which in turn contribute to the personal development of the speech agents (Jacobson & Storey, 2004). Lubenow (2012) states that "life-world involves communicative processes of cultural transmission, social integration and socialization, the reproduction of which requires institutions capable of renewing and preserving traditions" (p. 108).

3.3.5 State-society dialogue

In order to enable an analysis through the TCA lens, this research assumes that the relationship between the State and society is based on a dialogue in which one party asks (participation) and the other answers (society), the reply to which would be the results, followed by reactions and so on. Likewise, in the case of

transparency, the parties maintain a dialogue in the request for and provision of information, in the response of society according to the contents of the provided data and the resulting reaction from the state.

If the dialogue takes place on symmetric terms – i.e., without the State making use of its capacity as an empire but remaining on the same level as the interlocutor, based on understanding and comprehensibility without disregarding legitimacy, truth and with no hidden agenda – this is a relationship with communicative action characteristics.

4   Digital Cabinet

The Government of the State of Rio Grande do Sul established the Digital Cabinet program in 2011, the definition of which, according to an institutional statement posted on its own website, was to be "a channel for participation and dialogue between the Government and society" for "the purpose of incorporating new participation tools, providing citizens with new opportunities to influence public management and exercise greater social control over the State". According to Macadar, Daniel and Pereira (2013), the program was a mechanism that allowed citizens to contribute in the preparation of the Government's political guidelines. Rodegheri and Oliveira (2014) stress another facet of the program, which is to facilitate "access to public information and consequently an almost direct contact with the state governor" (p.734, 2014).

With the 2014 elections and the induction of a new governor in 2015, the Digital Cabinet was not updated during the first half of 2015. However, at the beginning of the second half the website was overhauled, which apparently changed the previous proposition in a substantial manner. It should be noted that this study concerns the program in the past, as it worked on data collected until December 2014.

The program essentially worked as a virtual tool by means of a website containing several tools for e-Participation, Transparency and Accountability, apart from a section for the publication of news and events. Simultaneously, the program had pages of its own in the social networks Facebook and Twitter, held in-person events and sponsored or attended congresses, clinics and similar events, usually concerning current topics.

In order to better understand the purpose and contents of the Digital Cabinet during the period under analysis, its configuration between 2011 and 2014 is described in the Table 3. It should be noted that some tools were incorporated during the period under analysis, i.e., not all were present for the entire period.

Configuration of the Rio Grande do Sul Digital Cabinet - 2011 - 2014	
Tool	Specification
The Governor Answers	People submitted questions to the Governor according to previously established topics. Questions with the most votes were answered by the Governor on video. The issue was then included in the Government's agenda, as in the aforementioned case of the firefighters.
The Governor Asks	The Governor submitted major questions for the people to answer, allowing for the submission of suggestions. In a consultation about public health (2011), 60,000 people participated. On traffic safety, the number rose to 100,000 answers. In the participatory budget, which featured a different format from the Governor Asks but also included consultation, participation by virtual voting exceeded 250,000 citizens.
Government Hears	Virtual web-based public hearings with the participation of experts on the topic and the general public, with the possibility of submitting questions on-line.
An eye on the Works	Focused on Transparency and Accountability, the tool listed a set of works whose number was progressively increasing, in order to monitor its performance. Citizens could post messages and pictures related to whether information was correct or not. Those who registered for certain works received e-mail at each change of performance status.
Network Dialogues	These were public discussions on major current topics (Internet Civil Framework, Copyright, Feminism and Internet), with the audience in attendance and broadcast on the Internet. The participants were usually appointed by collective groups via Facebook.

Configuration of the Rio Grande do Sul Digital Cabinet - 2011 - 2014	
Facebook and Twitter	With a language targeted at a young audience, events and topics related to the program and technology were discussed.
News	During three years, the portal posted more than 850 news items and it was verified that the most discussed topics were participation, interiorization, the Digital Cabinet itself, technology and the governor's image.
Events	The face-to-face events included clinics and congresses focused on topics such as democracy, culture, World Cup, technology, free software, hackers' meetings, etc.

Table 3. Digital Cabinet Configuration. Source: Adapted from the Digital Cabinet website.

Thus, Figure 3 presents an overview of the program's various expressions, whose alleged purpose was to promote in-person participation by means of events and meetings. It also intended to promote virtual participation by means of its tools or social media, transparency, notably with the "An Eye on the Works" tool, and the resulting social control enabled by the provided information.

5   Research method

This study, characterized by investigation, interpretation of collected evidence and search for new explanations for the analyzed phenomenon, adopts a qualitative-inductive approach. Bryman (1984, p. 77) states that "the qualitative methodology is distinguished in several ways. The *sine qua non* is a commitment to view the world from the actor's standpoint". The utilization of TCA, a critical theory, with current topics involving the social tissue, along with the very inaccuracy of the program's social impact, points to the exploratory nature of the research. The method used was case study, which, according to Yin (2010), seeks to investigate a current event in an in-depth manner, based on the environment where it is located, especially when its area of influence and repercussion is not clearly defined.

In terms of scope, the study sought to obtain a critical understanding of the results of e-Participation, Transparency and Accountability based on a case study, differentiating between the predominantly strategic and communicative rationality expressions. The analysis unit consists of the study of the three phenomena referred as expressions of the Digital Cabinet based on testimonies of respondents about the results achieved by the program.

The data collection instrument sought alignment with the purpose of the research and followed semi-structured interviews, thus ensuring freedom of action without deviating from the work's core. This gave the interviewees more freedom to state their opinions and allowed them to highlight the fields about which they were most knowledgeable (Horton, Macve & Struyven, 2004).

The interviews were conducted from May 30th through September 10th 2014, when 16 persons were heard, grouped in four different segments: three representatives from mainstream media (MM) and two from the alternative media (AM); five members of the political sector (PO) of various political colors; four respondents categorized as stakeholders (SH), who follow the program on social media, attend in-person events or research about the topic; and two members of the Digital Cabinet (DC) staff.

The choice of respondents from different categories with different views and interests had the purpose of identifying contributions as diverse as possible, allowing for a varied and rich analysis based on the Theory of Communicative Action, apart from reinforcing the study's validity through the triangulation of different sources. The political class was chosen as it is the representative for society on an institutional level, and there was also the concern of interviewing representatives with different positions regarding the program. As for the media, its capacity as an information channel and dissemination of major facts was the basis for its inclusion. The stakeholders, for their familiarity with the program or studies conducted, and the staff members, for their inside view of the program, were considered segments with potential for important and special contribution to the research.

The invitations to take part in the interviews were sent from Facebook and Twitter, the authors' personal network and those of third parties, referral by respondents, from politicians' offices and contacts with

scholars on the topic. In short, these are the respondents' details and the political stances they assumed at the time of the interviews:

- Politicians: PO1, PO2 and PO4 assumed an independent position regarding the Government; PO4 was an opposer; and PO5 was a supporter.
- Media: MM1, a former anchor of a top-ranked radio show, aligned with the Government; MM2, working in newspaper media, television, radio and Internet; MM3, content provider for one of the Internet's largest ISP's; AM1 and AM2 are or were working for the alternative media.
- Stakeholders: SH1 took parte in a Digital Cabinet in-person event; SH2 wrote his specialization paper on the Rio Grande do Sul participatory system; SH3 wrote his graduation term paper on the Digital Cabinet; SH4 was a Digital Cabinet follower on Facebook.
- Program staff members: DC1 and DC2 – any description of their profiles would result in their identification, so it is omitted.

The interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed in their entirety. For the codification work, software program MAXQDA Version 11 was used. For the purpose of understanding the subliminal meaning of the respondents' "speeches" (contents) (BARDIN, 2011), content analysis was chosen for the study. Based on the studied case and on the Theory of Communicative Action, nine main codes were initially created ("Digital Cabinet", "accountability and social control", "participation", "transparency", "comprehensibility", "intentionality", "rightness" and "truth", "results"). Once the examination of the collected data was started, the need was felt to expand the original list and "accessibility", "dissemination" and "relevance" were added, totaling 12 main codes and nine subcodes. At the end of the analysis of several testimonies, 249 excerpts were taken. In the political and media groups, 64 passages were coded for each; in the Digital Cabinet stakeholders' segment, the amount resulted in 68 quotations; and 58 excerpts were highlighted in the program staff group. The categorization of excerpts by code can be verified on Table 4.

Main code	Subcode	Number of excerpts	Total highlight in the Code
Results	-	20	20
Accountability/social control	-	10	10
Accessibility	-	15	22
	Friendly	7	
Comprehensibility	-	17	17
Dissemination	-	17	17
Digital Cabinet	-	20	46
	Media	6	
	Governance and institution	5	
	An Eye on the Works	9	
	State Program	6	
Intentionality	-	21	28
	Choice of works	6	
	State-Governor Confusion	1	
Participation	-	17	22
	Direct Access	5	
Relevance	-	12	12
Rightness	-	13	13

Main code	Subcode	Number of excerpts	Total highlight in the Code
Transparency	-	21	28
	Consultation results	7	
Truth	-	14	14
Total codes	249	249	

Table 4. Subject categorization by code

6 Data Analysis and Discussion of Results

The value that can be added to any form of program, especially to public initiatives, resides in the value delivered to society. However, the actual gain (added value) exists to the extent that the social tissue perceives and acknowledges the usefulness of the initiative or program. Based on this assumption, before discussing the perception of the results (i.e., their value) by the people, it is important to analyze it against the results shown by the program over its nearly four years. The Digital Cabinet team, at the end of 2014, showed the main results achieved by the program during the 2011-2014 period (see Table 5).

Results presented by the Digital Cabinet
1. Creation of free fare for students.
2. New horizons for discussion – discussion with the people responsible for the demonstrations in mid-2013; discussion on representation crisis, on new forms of democracy, etc.
3. Separation of the Fire Department from the Military Police.
4. Raising awareness against bullying – creation of the Community Committee for School Violence Prevention.
5. Veto to the Law of Foreign Words, which prohibited the use of words from other languages in official Rio Grande do Sul advertisements and documents.
6. Open formats (ODF) – approval of State Law 14,009/12, determining the adoption of open format systems.
7. Healthcare priorities – contribution of the consultations to make Rio Grande do Sul the state with the highest number of hospital beds per capita and investment of 12% of the net revenue in healthcare.
8. Traffic Safety – car tax reduction for drivers with no tickets and greater discount to those registered in the Rio Grande do Sul invoicing system.
9. Toll Model – as a result of consultation via The Government Hears, the Rio Grande do Sul Road Company and community plazas were created.
10. Expropriation of the Saraí Occupation – as a result of the National Fight for Housing Movement mobilization via the Digital Cabinet networks, the Government ordered the expropriation of the Saraí building, located in downtown Porto Alegre, which had been occupied by families connected to the movement.

Table 5. Digital Cabinet 2011-2014 – Results. Source: Adapted from the Program website.

Based on these results presented by the Digital Cabinet, the interviews were analyzed according to the previously established segments and categorized under the methodological procedures. It is important to note that the constituent elements of TCA – an objective world (truth), a normative world (legitimacy), a subjective world (sincerity) and comprehensibility – have guided this analysis, so they supported the achievement of the purpose proposed by this article.

The evidence that emerged from the combination of results shown by the Digital Cabinet, by the respondents' perception and by the interpretation of the TCA fundamentals are presented in the subsections below.

6.1 Political segments

The analysis begins by the group of politicians, the segment that is supposed to be more attentive to the results of the Government initiatives and repercussions thereof. In this regard, PO1 noted that the participation "has this importance to transform. People feel a bit like actors of the transformation process", but ends with some skepticism by saying that "the Digital Cabinet and the politicians themselves absorb it (participation), but don't always execute it".

On a more critical note, PO3, an opposer to the Government, questioned the intentionality (sincerity) of the Program – **Habermas' subjective world** – and the actual results, inferring that the Governor would be using the Digital Cabinet for electoral purposes. Here is his statement: "I saw no objective change for the better in this Government, but I saw a change in the Governor's attitude, for marketing purposes, […] he's taking advantage of it based on a consultation for an early start of his electoral campaign".

On the other hand, PO5, who is aligned with the state Government, stated that "people do not seek to participate, so to speak, on an abstract level" and added that "people also seek this instrument (participation) because they know that it will bring them some concrete benefit, some concrete result". The respondent mentioned that the popular consultations have guided the Government's actions, as in the case of the separation of the Fire Department from the Military Police and expropriation of the Saraí building.

Questioned about the results, PO1 noted that, in terms of perception, the problem begins with the allocation of the citizens' contributions, as there is no information on the website about their utilization. PO1: "You don't see, or at least I haven't seen, a distribution of demands to the sectors, to the related Secretariats".

Discussing results, PO4 argued that programs focused on popular participation and direct relationship between governor and the governed must be the guideline of future Public Managements, stating that, within the **meaning of communicative action**, "from now on, whoever it is, regardless of who wins the election, this tool (participation), which is a contemporary tool, will only develop and evolve".

The use of a semi-structured approach in the conduct of interviews allowed for the appearance of surprising contributions. In this regard, questioned about transparency results, PO2 mentioned the topic's relationship with large media organizations, addressing the matter under a different angle:

Historically, our Governments would spend millions with expensive, paid media […]. We cannot be this foolish. They spend the entire time bad-mouthing the Government until the Government gives them funds. When the Government begins to fund their programs, they begin to say good things about it. [...]. So the traditional information media, which is extraordinarily distorted, made analysis difficult for the citizens. Today, as we have both paid media and Internet media, Internet media can provide you with State and Government aspects simultaneously.

Based on the contents of the respondent's statement, it would be possible to infer that such "distorted information" points to violations of the validity claims of truth (objective world) and sincerity (subjective world). Consequently, a **strategic action** is characterized.

6.2 Media segment

As the previous statement concerned media, it is opportune to develop the next analysis from this segment. For this purpose, the statement by AM1 is presented, stressing the results obtained by the Program. According to AM1, by publishing certain topics and "as a result of long and patient work by the Digital Cabinet staff", the Program ultimately influenced major information providers to report news that would normally be ignored. As for participation, he is skeptical about its results, as he says the topic stays away from the large mass of population.

Generally, the segment's perception on results proved controversial. Respondent AM2 says that alternative media's relationship with the Digital Cabinet is an open dialogue. He states: "This way we can have access to the Government, we can engage in a dialogue with it". Thus, he is stating that the public entity seeks an understanding of an approximation to the other party, which apparently would be considered an expression of **communicative action.** This perception is not confirmed by the final observation – "the remainder of the modification that should happen ultimately does not happen" – If there is a dialogue but no results, what is

the intention of this communication? The final "speech", on the other hand, is reminiscent of the **strategic action** idea.

The most striking statement from the respondents came from MM1, the only one in the group who is affiliated to a political party of the allied base. This respondent criticized the consultation about political reform, arguing that this matter is in the jurisdiction of the Federal Government, not the State Government. Entering the realm of Habermas' **subjective world** (sincerity), the respondent explicitly questioned the intentionality of conducting consultation that could not bring any effective results.

Discussing the Program's practical results, MM3 mentioned the expropriation of the Saraí, listed by the Digital Cabinet itself in its legacy report. Another result mentioned was the negotiation with street vendors during the World Cup, who were excluded from the surroundings of Beira-Rio stadium, which hosted the games in the State, by order of FIFA, so they were moved to the Goal Way, a route established for soccer fans to walk to the stadium on match days. From MM3's statement, it is possible to deduce that it is a solution arising from the sincere will of the parties to enter into a legitimate agreement which truly meets the participants' need, thus configuring a **communicative action**.

As for participation, AM1 mentioned that this was one of the topics in which results fall short of expectations. In his opinion, the deterioration of politics and subsequent separation between government and society affected the initiative, which is restricted to a group of participants, without the engagement of a more significant portion of the population.

6.3 Stakeholders' segment

SH1, who has attended the Program's in-person event and training in the ICT field, analyzed the results under a different angle. His arguments express the view of the audience that uses the tool, of persons connected to the Internet and familiarized with the technology, who ultimately used the tool in this niche, with specific inquiries, discussions and, finally, results. The respondent's position enables an analysis under two TCA expressions: (1) **Comprehensibility** – Did the average citizen understand the contents oriented to the audience attending these events? –; (2) **Legitimacy** (normative world) – Were the social, ethical and moral values permeating these discussions consistent with those adopted by the general society?

In the **truth** validity claim, SH1 questions how it would be possible to affirm that the consultations would not be consistent with the actual results, as the consultations were not available in open data format, so they would be impossible to audit? Minimizing the critical aspect, the respondent stated the importance of consultation concerning traffic and the An Eye on the Works tool as a social control instrument.

SH4, in turn, questioned the results of the budget consultation, whose purpose was to allow for a minimum participation on public funds, implying that the Rio Grande do Sul financial crisis precluded any kind of discussion on allotment of funds that could really make a difference.

Questioned about funds, SH3 stated: "I, in particular, cannot see anything effective happening in the Digital Cabinet". Furthermore, he stated that he does not agree – which would be a violation of the **truth** claim – with the Program's statement that free fare was an item that arose from this public initiative. On the other hand, he noted that transparency contributed to a better perception of the citizens' demands by the Government.

SH2 noted that the tool features no links to inform to which Secretariat or Body the demand was forwarded, in such a manner as to allow an evaluation of the Digital Cabinet's effectiveness, which he identified as a major obstacle in the perception of results.

6.4 Digital Cabinet staff segment

The purpose of interviewing people who took part in the Digital Cabinet team was to understand the initiative based on an inside view of the results achieved and underlying difficulties.

In terms of ascertainment and monitoring of the results, DC2 points to relationship problems in obtaining information from Government Secretariats and Bodies. Confirming the aforementioned statement, DC1 noted that the Program's pace was much faster than the official bureaucracy, which hampered the monitoring thereof.

As for practical results, DC2 mentioned the occupation of the Saraí building, also stated by DC1, the demilitarization of the Fire Department, previously linked to the Military Police, as a result of the Governor Answers tool. It is interesting to note the respondent's statement that, because of the tool's appropriation by

public corporations, it was discontinued. The firefighters' mobilization to gather more votes and lead their suggestion to win, to the detriment of others of wider scope, is a practical example of such appropriation.

Finally, DC2's statement should be noted about the effects on Car Tax resulting from the consultation about traffic safety and investment in public health resulting from consultation on the topic.

Leaving the segment focus and moving to a broader scope, Table 6 shows the various perceptions of the respondents, categorizing them according to their contents and expressions of communicative or strategic actions.

Social action perceptions	
Communicative	Strategic
PO1 – "People feel a bit like actors of the transformation process."	PO3 – "[…] he's taking advantage of it based on a consultation for an early start of his electoral campaign".
PO5 "[…] here in Rio Grande do Sul, we work with the concept that this is a democracy instrument in the public management."	PO2 "[…] the traditional information media, which is extraordinarily distorted, made analysis difficult for the citizens."
PO1 – "I think the Digital Cabinet has the purpose of fomenting discussion in society, articulation, rather than a solution."	MM1, about the political reform consultation: "What is the purpose of it? Is it to actually contribute to the process or give a political answer in the tense moment the country was going through? [...] Unfortunately, in this specific case, it seems to me that it is much more the second answer than the first."
MM2 – "it is as if there is a canvas around public management […], remove the canvas and expose everything that is not owned by the government, […] it is the full exercise of transparency".	MM1 – "Are you for or against political reform? […] why will I get into this, what is the result it will get? What I see in this case is much more the mobilization of government supporters than of society as a whole."
AM2 – "We, as alternative media, end up interacting a lot with the cabinet, either in events or in several cooperative coverage items that they promote and the like."	MM2, on participation: "It ultimately becomes more or less a…, I'm going to use a kind of malicious term, but it looks like a brotherhood. These are the same people moving in there."
AM2 – "I believe it is effective (in terms of social control). It is a well done project and a purpose properly achieved."	SH3 – "I cannot see to which extent the civil society is effectively able to influence the policies that are being developed through the Digital Cabinet."
SH1 – About an Eye on the Works: "I think it's cool. I think its fantastic because you can look for a work that is taking place right next to your house and you see that it is 95% completed when it actually isn't. So you can go there, take a picture and voice your complaints, you know. So you have a more active participation."	SH4, asked about the Program's effect in the state management: "How does it affect the state management? I don't know. The budget portion that is allotted to participation is so insignificant that I don't know whether it even amounts to one per cent of the state budget that is being voted. In this aspect, I think the answer is no."
SH4, talking about awareness as a result – "today you hear a lot of people saying that the good times were during the dictatorship years, for instance. This is something that they mention a lot, this thing about democracy, democracy, democracy."	SH2 – "I notice that, in terms of communication language, the Digital Cabinet gets isolated."
DC2 "I think the OcupaSaraí movement is also a bit of it, as it lead us to stop and think about it and brought this understanding, and it wasn't just from us to them. OcupaSaraí […] was also the first major instigation that we received."	SH3 – "they said the free fare was a demand that arose from the Digital Cabinet, but this is a demand that has existed for a long time in the civil society and has not come from the Digital Cabinet, in my opinion."

Social action perceptions	
Communicative	Strategic
DC1 – "In the case of traffic, the suggestions were included in the State Traffic Plan, which determines the guidelines until 2020."	SH4, on the participatory budget results: "I say that the budget percentage, compared to the whole, the participation is minimum, the relevance is minimum."
DC1 – "When things do not have an impact for society, we just abandon them with no embarrassment, as in the case of the Collaborative Agenda, which was one of the first tools that we launched."	DC2 – "I saw how difficult it was for the Cabinet to engage in a dialogue with other secretariats. We were always trying to get things done at a certain speed, but facing difficulty in obtaining a more immediate response."

Table 6. Social action perceptions

This mosaic of perceptions was not intended to depict an average of positions, as this would not be possible. The selection criteria for the statement essentially followed the intention of providing the widest possible range of views about the program. Finally, it should be noted that the categorization of actions – either communicative or strategic – was consistent with the authors' interpretation about the viewpoints expressed by the respondents.

7   Conclusion

As previously mentioned, the result is the most important factor and the very reason for the existence of any public program, as public affairs exist to serve the citizens. Commenting on participation results, Arstein stated in 1969 that "participation without redistribution of powers is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless. It allows decision makers to allege that all sides have been considered but only a few of them to benefit from it" (p. 216).

On a preliminary basis, a comment should be made about the results shown by the Program and the respondents' perception. Five out of the ten results listed in the Digital Cabinet website were not mentioned by the respondents – new horizons for discussions, bullying, law of foreign words, open formats and toll mode. Three out of five mentioned were referred by Digital Cabinet staff members and by the politician in alignment with the government and only two – the Saraí and free fare for students – were recalled by the others, which points to strong indication of problems in the conveyance of this information to society.

As for the TCA-based analysis, this study has found that people perceived the Digital Cabinet results as communicative actions, consistently with all the validity claims – truth, rightness, sincerity and understanding – and as strategic actions when some of these requirements were not present.

Based on the evidence that both social actions are perceived in the analyzed phenomenon, one could question the purpose of such study. In fact, the gain resides exactly in the diagnosis performed based on TCA, as the actions characterized as communicative should be maintained and, if possible, improved upon. On the other hand, those considered as strategic actions compose the universe that is potentially susceptible to elimination, replacement or correction.

By way of example, the perception that the participation in the Digital Cabinet was restricted to small groups whose values, in theory, could not represent what society deems suitable within its "life-world" pointed to possible distortion: the initiative, along its existence, lacked a well-defined focus, at times trying to encompass large portions of the population, at times getting away from its institutional purposes by focusing on extremely specific audiences. This dichotomy created the idea that there were two different programs, which should not happen in initiatives of this kind.

Based on the detected evidence, it is possible to list suggestions to improve future initiatives intending to follow the same purposes, such as: the consultation topic must be within the jurisdiction of the government unit where the program belongs, otherwise credibility may be lost; the promotion must clearly disclose the practical results so they may be perceived by society; just as monitoring mechanisms were created for the works, the forwarding of demands should also be possible to monitor; seek greater integration between the program targeted at citizens and other government bodies; establish policies and guidelines for the

achievement of the initiative's mission, maintaining the focus; create specific programs for alternative audiences; and search for the insertion and integration of the initiative within the state machine.

In terms of limitations for this study, the first one concerns the timing of the interviews, as they were conducted too close to the electoral season, which precluded access to the candidates and limited the testimonies to politicians who were not running. This same reason also limited the contact with certain journalists. Another limitation refers to focus on results, staying away from other Program expressions such as technological bias, study of the Facebook page and analysis of the Twitter contents. Finally, the research was restricted to Digital Cabinet only, even though there are other related programs both in Brazil and in the rest of the world.

As a suggestion for future programs, an in-depth investigation should be conducted on this low participation and consequent segregation of audiences using the Program; an analysis of the other supplemental dimensions of Digital Cabinet such as Facebook and Twitter contents; and a comparative study with other programs in and out of Brazil.

Searches conducted on Scholar Google using the arguments "communicative action theory" and "e-Participation" or "electronic participation" for electronic participation and "communicative action theory" and "open Government" or "opengov" for open government found six studies on e-Participation with TCA, four of them related to open government. Using the same search arguments on Proquest, Scopus and Web of Science, the number of records found was smaller or zero. Although in terms of transparency there is a greater number of approaches, this study stands out as a theoretical contribution by covering relationships – theory with e-Participation and open government – rarely explored by scholars. It is also important to note that not one of them uses the approach adopted by this study, which is based on "speech" between government and society and the perception of society segments about this dialogue, introducing a new method of analysis based on TCA fundamentals. Furthermore, the diagnosis of potential weak points and the submitted suggestions, which could even be included in a model to be built in a future work, represents another special contribution.

Finally, the importance of a program like Digital Cabinet should be mentioned, as it is an innovative initiative making use of technology to offer distinguished services targeted at citizens, having become a benchmark for future efforts focused on this field.

8   Acknowledgments

9   References

Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of planners*, *35*(4), 216-224.

Åström, J., Karlsson, M., Linde, J., & Pirannejad, A. (2012). Understanding the rise of eParticipation in non-democracies: Domestic and international factors. *Government Information Quarterly*, *29*(2), 142-150.

Bardin, L. (2011). *Análise de conteúdo*. São Paulo: Edition 70, 279 p.

Bertot, J. C., Jaeger, P. T., & Grimes, J. M. (2010). Using ICTs to create a culture of transparency: E-Government and social media as openness and anti-corruption tools for societies. *Government Information Quarterly*, *27*(3), 264-271.

Bittencourt, S. e Gautier, T. (2013). Comunicação Pública e Internet: Limites e Amplitudes do Ambiente Digital (pp. 83 a 110). In: Cocco, Giuseppe (Org.) *Gabinete digital: análise de uma experiência*. Porto Alegre: Companhia Rio-grandense de Imprensa, CORAG.

Bryman, A. (1984). The debate about quantitative and qualitative research: a question of method or epistemology? *British Journal of Sociology*, 75-92.

Cecez-Kecmanovic, D., & Janson, M. (1999, December). Communicative action theory: An approach to understanding the application of information systems. In *the Proceedings of the 10 th Australasian Conference on Information Systems ACIS '99* (pp. 183-195).

Center, C. (2008). Atlanta Declaration and Plan of Action for the Advancement of the Right of Access to Information. In *International Conference on the Right to Public Information*. Available at: <http://www.cartercenter.org/documents/Atlanta%20Declaration%20and%20Plan%20of%20Action.pdf. Accessed on April 6th, 2014.

Chun, S. A., & Cho, J. S. (2012). EParticipation and transparent policy decision making. *Information Polity*, *17*(2), 129-145.

Cleaver, F. (1999). Paradoxes of participation: questioning participatory approaches to development. *Journal of International Development*, *11*(4), 597-612.

Cunha, M. A. V. C., Coelho, T. R., & Pozzebon, M. (2014). Internet e participação: o caso do orçamento participativo digital de Belo Horizonte. *RAE-Revista de Administração de Empresas*, *54*(3), 296-308.

Curtin, D., & Meijer, A. J. (2006). Does transparency strengthen legitimacy? *Information polity*, *11*(2), 109-122.

Gabinete Digital. Retrieved on May 2nd 2015 de http://gabinetedigital.rs.gov.br/sobre/.

Gomes, W. (2005). A democracia digital e o problema da participação civil na decisão política. *Fronteiras-estudos midiáticos*, *7*(3), 214-222.

Grimmelikhuijsen, S. (2011). Being transparent or spinning the message? An experiment into the effects of varying message content on trust in Government. *Information Polity*, *16*(1), 35-50.

Habermas, J. (2012). Teoria do agir comunicativo I: Racionalidade da ação e racionalização social. WMF Martins Fontes.

Harrison, T. M. Guerrero, S., Burke, G. B., Cook, M., Cresswell, A., Helbig, N., Hrdinova, J., Pardo, T. (2012). Open Government and e-Government: Democratic challenges from a public value perspective. *Information Polity*, *17(*2), 83-97.

Heald, D. (2012). Why is transparency about public expenditure so elusive? *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, *78(*1), 30-49.

Heeks, R. (1998). Information systems for public sector management. *Government Data: Understanding the Barriers to Citizen Access and Use*.

Horton, J., Macve, R., & Struyven, G. (2004). Qualitative research: experiences in using semi-structured interviews. *The real life guide to accounting research*, 339-357.

Jacobson, T. L., & Storey, J. D. (2004). Development communication and participation: Applying Habermas to a case study of population programs in Nepal. *Communication theory*, *14*(2), 99-121.

Macadar, M.A., Daniel, V. M. e Pereira, G. V. (2013). Estudo preliminar do Gabinete Digital do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul (Brasil): a influência dos fatores institucionais. In *the Proceedings of the International Conference of Information Resources Management CONFIRM- 20*13. Natal, Brasil

Meijer, A. J. (2003). Transparent Government: Parliamentary and legal accountability in an information age. *Information Polity*, *8*(1), 67-78.

Meijer, A. (2009). Understanding modern transparency. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, *75*(2), 255-269.

Mingers, J. (2001). Combining IS research methods: towards a pluralist methodology. *Information systems research*, *12*(3), 240-259.

Open Government Declaration. *Open Government Partnership*. Retrieved on April 30th, 2015 de http://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/open-Government-declaration.

Pinto, J. M. D. R. (1995). A teoria da ação comunicativa de Jürgen Habermas: conceitos básicos e possibilidades de aplicação à administração escolar. *Paidéia (Ribeirão Preto)*, (8-9), 77-96.

Radermacher, L. (2002). The European Commission's White Paper on European Governance: The Uneasy Relationship Between Public Participation and Democracy. *German Law Journal*, *3*(1), 3.

Rodegueri, L. B. & Oliveira , R.S. (2014). A experiência do Gabinete Digital do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul e a construção da cibercidadania no Brasil. *Pensar, Fortaleza*, *19(*3), p. 721-749.

Sæbø, Ø., Rose, J., & Flak, L. S. (2008). The shape of eParticipation: Characterizing an emerging research area. *Government Information Quarterly*, *25*(3), 400-428.

Sæbø, Ø., Rose, J., & Molka-Danielsen, J. (2010). eParticipation: Designing and managing political discussion forums. *Social Science Computer Review*,*28*(4), 403-426.

Scholl, H. J. (Ed.). (2010). E-Government: Information, technology, and transformation. ME Sharpe.

Scholl, H. J., & Luna-Reyes, L. F. (2011, January). Uncovering dynamics of open Government, transparency, participation, and collaboration. In *System Sciences (HICSS), 2011 44th Hawaii International Conference on* (pp. 1-11). IEEE.

Susha, I., & Grönlund, Å. (2012). eParticipation research: Systematizing the field. *Government Information Quarterly*, *29*(3), 373-382.

Teixeira, E. (1997). As dimensões da participação cidadã. *Caderno CRH*,*10*(26).

UN, E-Government Survey (2014). E-Government for the Future We Want**.** Department Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, New York.

UN, E-Government Survey (2012). E-Government for the people. Department Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, New York.

Vizeu, F. (2005). Ação comunicativa e estudos organizacionais. *RAE-Revista de Administração de Empresas*, *45*(4), 10-21.

Vizeu, F. (2011). Uma aproximação entre liderança transformacional e teoria da ação comunicativa. *Revista de Administração Mackenzie***,** *12(*1), 53-81.

Welch, E. W. (2012). The relationship between transparent and participative Government: A study of local Governments in the United States. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, *78*(1), 93-115.

Yin, R. K. (2015). Estudo de Caso: Planejamento e Métodos. Bookman.

Jorge Lheureux de Freitas is PhD and Master in Strategy, focused on Management of Information Systems in e-government and open government at Business Scholl at Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUC-RS), Porto Alegre, Brazil. He was visiting scholar at the Ragnar Nurkse Department of Innovation and Governance, School of Business and Governance, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia (from August to November 2017) and at the Center for Technology in Government, CTG, University at Albany, USA, (January and February 2013). He is graduated from the Business Scholl (1983) and School of Law (1981) at PUC-RS.

Marie Anne Macadar is currently an associate professor of Management Information System at COPPEAD/UFRJ and a visiting scholar at FGV/EAESP (Brazil). She also was a visiting scholar at the Center for Technology in Government (CTG) at the State University of New York, USA, in 2012. She holds her PhD from University of São Paulo, Brazil, and was a visiting student at the University of Cambridge, UK (2003-2004). In 1998 she has received her Master and in 1994 her Bachelor, both in Administration at Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil.

Rafael Fabiano Ravazolo received his Master in Business and Administration from the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (2016). He has a specialization in Public Management (2012), and a degree in Administration (2009), both from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. He works professionally as a professor of postgraduate and preparatory courses, emphasizing the subjects of General and Public Administration. He has been a civil servant by the Regional Electoral Court of Rio Grande do Sul since 2005, working in People Management and Strategic Management.