

Communication in Parliaments: Information, Openness and Public Engagement in Brazil

*Comunicación Parlamentaria: Información, Transparencia
y Participación Ciudadana en Brasil*



Cristiane Brum Bernardes
CEFOR/Brazilian Chamber of Deputies.
cris.brum@gmail.com
@CrisBBernardes
ORCID: 0000-0001-5367-3047



Isabele Batista Mitozo
Federal University of Minas Gerais.
ibmitozo@ufmg.br
ORCID: 0000-0002-7627-306X

Abstract

The article reviews studies produced in Brazil on legislative media and the digital communicative processes of parliaments to advance the analysis of the communicative configuration of the country's legislative houses. It reflects on both analog media and the digitalization process of Brazilian legislative institutions since the late 20th century, as well as the effect of this phenomenon on the communicative processes carried out by these institutions and the reinforcement of democratic values through these tools. The concepts of openness, transparency, and permeability to societal influence on legislative actions are important for the specialized discussion, considering the prominence of the Brazilian case in this field for over two decades.

Keywords

Public Communication; Public Engagement; Legislatures; eParliaments; Brazil.

Resumen

El artículo revisa los estudios producidos en Brasil sobre los medios legislativos y los procesos comunicativos digitales de los parlamentos para avanzar en el análisis de la configuración comunicativa de las cámaras legislativas del país. Se reflexiona tanto sobre los medios analógicos como sobre el proceso de digitalización de las instituciones legislativas brasileñas desde finales del siglo XX y el efecto de este fenómeno en los procesos comunicativos llevados a cabo por estas instituciones, así como en el fortalecimiento de los valores democráticos a través de estas herramientas. Los conceptos de apertura, transparencia y permeabilidad a la influencia de la sociedad sobre las acciones legislativas son importantes para la discusión especializada, teniendo en cuenta el destacado papel del caso brasileño en este ámbito durante más de dos décadas.

Palabras clave

Comunicación pública; comunicación legislativa; participación ciudadana; poder legislativo; parlamento digital; Brasil.

1. Introduction

Over the past three decades, communication carried out by parliamentary institutions has undergone various changes and adaptations in response to the global landscape of technological convergence. Unsurprisingly, the phenomenon of legislative communication has attracted growing analytical interest as scholars seek to understand whether such initiatives represent a new stage of political communication in Brazil. Considering the constitutional framework that identifies three types of communication and broadcasting in the country –public, state-owned, and private– the debate revolves around how the strategies adopted by legislative bodies are classified within these three categories. While some authors draw on definitions of institutional communication and public communication (Bernardes, 2010; Queiroz, 2007) to explain the functioning of the communication practices adopted by legislatures, many identify legislative media and other parliamentary strategies as forms of political communication (Bernardes, 2010; Braga, Mitozo & Tadra, 2016; Mitozo, 2018). This article, therefore, proposes a brief review of studies produced in Brazil on legislative media and the digitalization of parliaments, in order to further the analysis of the contemporary communicative configuration of Brazilian legislative houses.

Given the undeniable and accelerated process of digitalization experienced by Brazilian parliaments since the late twentieth century, it is no longer possible to discuss the communication landscape without mentioning tools such as social media platforms or mobile applications (Bernardes, 2020a; 2020b, 2021; Braga, Mitozo & Tadra, 2016; Mitozo, 2023). In this context, and reflecting the global communication scenario, we have moved from a reality centred on broadcasting in the early 2000s to the current trend of audience segmentation as the dominant mode of global digital communication. Barros *et al.* (2021: 8-9) define contemporary digital practices among parliamentarians using the concept of *egocasting*, that is, «the production, selection and reproduction of content in a personalised manner, attuned to one's own personal taste and ideological preferences». In other words, the digital presence of political actors goes beyond segmentation by establishing specific niches for the production and real-time dissemination of political content.

The aim of this article is, therefore, to reflect on the practices and effects that both analogue media and the digitalization of information and communication processes by parliaments have had on their openness, transparency, and permeability to societal influence over their actions –an important point in the specialist debate, given Brazil's prominent role in this area for more than two decades. Beyond the fragmentation of the communicative environment across different platforms and applications, it is also relevant to observe how authors position digital communication initiatives and strategies by parliaments in relation to public engagement with institutional activities (Bernardes; Leston-Bandeira, 2016; Leston-Bandeira, 2014; 2016; 2019).

Following a theoretical review of communication systems within legislative bodies in the next section, we proceed to a discussion of media convergence and the digitalization of legislative work. If transparency of parliamentary activities and political visibility are the concepts shaping the structure

of these systems, we analyse how public engagement is the core concept underpinning the digital initiatives developed by parliaments –and adopted by parliamentarians– over the past three decades in Brazil.

2. Legislative Media and transparency

Created in the 1990s, electronic legislative media transformed the landscape of newsworthiness concerning parliaments in Brazil by broadcasting legislative proceedings live –activities that had previously reached the public only through the mediation of commercial media (Barros, Bernardes & Lemos, 2008). Legislative television channels were formally established following the Cable Law (Law 8,977/95), which regulated pay-TV services in the country and allowed for the creation of channels run by the Legislative Branch, as well as university and community broadcasters. The Legislative Assembly of Minas Gerais was the first Brazilian parliament to have its own television station, launched in 1995, followed by the Senate in 1996 and the Chamber of Deputies in 1998.

Although the systematic and official dissemination of parliamentary work began in the National Congress with the transfer of the capital to Brasília –in the case of the Chamber of Deputies, the Broadcasting Service was created in 1961 and its first product was a 20-minute news bulletin for the official programme *A Voz do Brasil* (The voice of Brazil) in 1963– the process of transparency was significantly strengthened by the creation of legislative broadcasters. In addition to television, both houses also launched radio stations, printed newspapers, and news agencies in the late 1990s.

According to Leticia Renault, one of the first researchers to study the operation of television stations maintained by legislatures in Brazil, such vehicles are «auxiliary instruments» in the process of constructing effective popular participation in politics (Renault, 2004: 136). Jardim (2006), in turn, argues that legislative television channels are potentially important tools for expanding democratic practices, being essential bodies within contemporary legislative production.

More than a decade after the first studies, Barreto (2018) analysed the live broadcasts of legislative television and concluded that debates in the Plenary help parliamentarians engage in discursive representation, reaching voters in various ways. According to her, if opening the legislature to cameras and microphones «is a way to enhance transparency and accountability-responding to societal demands», the process also «offers opportunities for politicians to strategically manage their personal, party-political, and institutional images, ensuring greater control over their public exposure» (Barreto, 2018: 8). In line with Bernardes' (2010) argument, the author acknowledges that these outlets perform a public communication function, even though they also serve political communication purposes by providing greater visibility to political activity.

Following the evolution of these practices, numerous authors have analysed the operation of legislative media over the more than 30 years since the country's re-democratisation and agree that such media have altered not only the public's perception of legislative houses but also the internal organisation and the legislative process itself (Barreto, 2018; Bernardes, 2010; Carvalho, 2020; Freitas, 2004; Renault, 2004; Santos, 2008). These changes may be visible to the public –such as increased presence of parliamentarians in the Plenary and committee meetings, longer and more frequent speeches, or growing concern among legislators with their appearance and oratory skills due to the real-time broadcast of legislative proceedings– or less transparent, such as the hiring of more communication professionals by institutions and the structuring of parliamentary offices for such purposes (Carlomagno, Braga & Wisse, 2019).

Naturally, most of these studies take into account contemporary demands for greater visibility of political processes and actors, as well as increased transparency in state activities and administration as a whole (Carvalho, 2020; Jardim, 2006). In this regard, legislative media form part of a broader process of opening up parliamentary institutions that began in the last century, driven by considerations related to the efficiency and effectiveness of state bodies and the public's right to information on political decisions (Faria, 2012; Opening Parliament, 2012).

As a specific type of «source media», in the terminology proposed by Sant'Anna (2008), studies indicate a growing demand by the representatives themselves for visibility of their day-to-day work (Bernardes, 2010; Carvalho, 2020; Freitas, 2004), as well as an attempt to avoid journalistic mediation in the dissemination of information about parliamentary work in the public sphere (Barros, Bernardes & Rodrigues, 2014; Carvalho, 2020; Rocha, 2009) –a trend that emerged towards the end of the first decade of the 2000s.

In their study of the founding discourse behind the legislative media of the Brazilian Federal Chamber of Deputies, Barros, Bernardes and Rodrigues (2014) highlight that the official justification for the creation of these institutional media outlets is based on three main points: 1) the constitutional principle of publicity; 2) opposition to the negative agenda promoted by private media regarding the Legislative Branch; and 3) institutional defence of legislative media, especially concerning editorial policy and dissemination strategies (2014: 13). Complementarily, in his study of the Senate, Freitas (2004) emphasises that citizens' lack of information regarding the functions and operations of legislative houses may even lead them to question the legitimacy of the expenditure involved in maintaining them –an argument that is also mobilised by professionals within the legislative houses to justify spending on communication initiatives.

Well before discussions around the opening up of parliaments –in the transition from the 20th to the 21st century– the debates and proceedings taking place within legislative houses had already attracted the attention of journalists. Arnold (2004) points out that the media have long been a crucial source of information on the actions, opinions, and evaluations of elected parliamentarians. According to the author, media coverage of the legislature fulfils two roles: it allows citizens to assess the performance of elected

officials and enables parliamentarians to scrutinise government actions, as part of the constitutional duty of legislative oversight of the Executive Branch (Arnold, 2004: 1). In this sense, citizens' access to information on parliamentary activity is essential to the democratic regime, as it also contributes to a better understanding of the functions performed by parliaments. It is unsurprising, therefore, that live broadcasts of parliamentary work are a reality in almost all American legislatures (Carvalho, 2020). In Brazil, in addition to access to the legislative process in committees and plenary sessions, many legislative houses also offer a variety of digital information dissemination initiatives, which will be addressed in the following section.

In his analysis of media coverage of the U.S. Congress, Cook (2005) argues that the practices for disseminating governmental information –including that relating to the legislature– were shaped through negotiation between political actors and the media, rather than being guided by a normative reflection on the type of information a democracy requires (Cook, 2005: 40). According to the author, parliamentarians seek to construct a shared agenda (2005: 119), using the media to communicate with their peers, especially within other branches of government (Cook, 2005: 122). He further notes that this is essential for the legislature, since the law-making process involves other actors beyond the parliamentarians themselves, such as the President and the Judiciary. The Brazilian case reveals interesting parallels with the U.S. context, not only due to the robust bureaucratic organisation that supports the communication activities of the National Congress –as noted by several Brazilian authors– but also due to the use of legislative media by political actors as a tool for inter-institutional communication (Bernardes, 2010; Carlomagno, Braga & Wisse, 2019; Carvalho, 2020; Gonçalves, 2010).

Thus, beyond their public or institutional functions related to transparency in parliamentary activities, the media –and legislative media outlets in particular– serve very specific purposes for political actors. According to Cook, parliamentarians tend to publicly emphasise issues that fragment opposition to their arguments and strengthen their own group or coalition. They also use the media to circumvent the influence of party leaders and bring their personal agenda to the forefront of public debate (Cook, 1989: 1049-1050). The author warns that while the use of the media may aim to foster collective action and build a common agenda, it can also contribute to internal power fragmentation within legislative houses (Cook, 1989: 1050). Interestingly, this observation predates the rise of social media and its appropriation by political actors. To some extent, the trend towards fragmentation and polyphony in parliamentary discourse was already being encouraged by legislative media even before the digitalization process began.

Recently, some studies have focused on analysing the transformations that legislative communication systems have undergone over the past decades (Barros, Bernardes & Rodrigues, 2016; Nunez, 2020), and the increasing digitalization of information processes about parliaments (Braga, 2008; Carvalho, 2020) –a topic that cannot be ignored when addressing contemporary communication. Nunez (2020), for instance, examines the consequences of the convergence process of the Senate's legislative media, following the transformation of the *Agência Senado's* website into a multimedia news portal. According to the author, the predominance of a journalistic communica-

tion model in public institutions poses limitations for fostering meaningful relationships between the legislature and citizens. In other words, public engagement is not always considered a relevant strategy by content producers working within political institutions.

An important point in the debate on the digital transformation of parliamentary communication systems over the past decade is the fact that most digital content and initiatives continue to be merely informative in nature, without moving towards broader forms of citizen engagement (Barros, Bernardes & Dias, 2009; Barros, Bernardes & Rodrigues, 2016; Bernardes & Leston-Bandeira, 2016; Bernardes & Queiroz, 2023; Leston-Bandeira, 2016, 2019; Leston-Bandeira & Siefken, 2023). In this regard, despite the technological potential for greater permeability of parliaments to public opinion, there does not appear to be systematic and effective use of such contributions in most legislative houses. One noteworthy case in which there is some sophistication in citizen engagement with parliament is the *E-Cidadania Portal* of the Federal Senate (Bernardes & Queiroz, 2023), which provides for the inclusion of proposals with a high level of public support on the official agenda. However, even this initiative does not reach the full potential envisaged by the concept formulated by Leston-Bandeira (2016, 2019).

In this sense, institutions appear to have invested in a perspective of public journalism as an information disseminator, without fully recognising that the digital environment offers alternative forms of public interaction that go beyond the mere provision of useful information about parliaments. Barros, Bernardes and Dias (2009), writing before the concept of engagement was developed by Leston-Bandeira, had already warned that interactivity is an essential feature of truly public communication and, as such, should have been a standard feature of legislative communication practices long before the digitalization of those practices. The relationship between transparency, visibility and public engagement began to be explored more deeply in studies carried out from the second decade of this century, accompanying the empirical development of digital initiatives by parliaments.

3. Digitalization and public engagement

From the second decade of the 2000s onwards, studies began to consider digital tools as conducive spaces for opening up institutions, particularly due to the new forms of communication with constituents that such initiatives enable. The introduction of digital technologies in legislative communication processes –whether through the technological convergence of legislative media or through the engagement of political actors with social media– led researchers to focus on the very process of parliaments entering the so-called digital age. It is in this context that the concept of the *e-Parliament* or *Digital Parliament* emerges, defined as institutions «that make use of digital information and communication technologies to improve legislative processes at all levels, from the provision of information to the promotion of public engagement» (Bernardes & Mitozo, 2023: 20).

At present, various lines of inquiry can be identified within this emerging field of research into Digital Democracy (Gomes, 2018; Bernardes, Mitozo, Braga & Silva, 2023). Studies on Digital Parliament bring together investigations that examine, among other aspects, the development of mechanisms aimed at promoting transparency and public engagement –enabling the collaborative construction of policy proposals (Barros, Bernardes & Silva, 2023; Noveck, 2023)– as well as the expression of both traditional and new institutional functions by legislatures (Braga, Mitozo & Tadra, 2016; Leston-Bandeira, 2009).

This process of digitalization has, as highlighted in the literature, reversed previously established communication dynamics, while also facing the challenge of managing the lack of control over information circulating about institutions, given the entry of new content producers into the political information sphere. Initially, the development of parliamentary websites sought to harness the potential of new media in this shifting communication landscape (Bernardes & Leston-Bandeira, 2016; Braga, 2007, 2008; Carvalho, 2020), prompting changes in content production and access to public information –developments that attracted scholarly interest, particularly due to the innovative nature of the Brazilian case. Considering that for over two decades the internet has been the primary means by which citizens seek information about legislatures (Hansard Society, 2001), researchers began to analyse how digital platforms have been appropriated by these institutions.

Beginning with the focus on website development, the Brazilian case garnered particular attention due to the longevity of the Chamber of Deputies' Portal, launched in 1996. In a comparative analysis between this website and that of the British House of Commons, Bernardes and Leston-Bandeira (2016) found that the range of information available on the Brazilian portal was more comprehensive in terms of legislative activity than its UK counterpart. The Brazilian legislature's main advantage, however, lay in the provision of tools for public engagement with institutional activities. Marques (2011) had already identified that the Chamber's Portal was a pioneer in Latin America regarding the creation of interactive channels, having launched, in the early 2000s, a live chat platform enabling citizens to communicate directly with their representatives' offices.

Expanding this body of research based on Leston-Bandeira's (2009) framework, Braga, Mitozo, and Tadra (2016) examined how legislative functions are expressed through the online channels made available on the websites of the National Congress and Brazil's state legislative assemblies. These researchers demonstrated that, despite being structured for public interaction, the primary emphasis lay on elements related to *Legitimation* and *Representation* –in other words, content aimed at reinforcing the image of the legislature and its representatives, respectively. These findings align with two key characteristics of the Brazilian context: the low level of trust in legislative institutions¹ and the personalised nature of politics, which is more centred on individual political actors than on institutions (Cervi, 2022). This situation was already a harbinger of how digital networks would begin

1. Available at [CNN Brasil](#).

to place individual representatives and representative institutions at opposite poles in relation to their communication strategies –a topic that will be addressed in the following section.

Still in the context of how legislative houses express their actions through their official websites, a survey of the Brazilian National Congress' portals revealed that 8 out of 12 identified Digital Democracy initiatives referred to Access to Information and Transparency/Open Data (Silva, 2023), while four tools (three from the Chamber and one from the Senate) were classified under public participation/engagement, albeit lacking any deliberative content (INCT-DD, 2018). In this context, it is important to recall the significance of the enactment of Brazil's Access to Information Law in 2011, a development that followed the country's involvement in the Open Government Partnership (OGP), of which it was one of the founding signatories. Brazil's adherence to the OGP shed light on the need for greater openness within representative democratic institutions –beyond the scope of transparency and access to information *per se*– framing these values as gateways for fostering public engagement in decision-making (Opening Parliament, 2012; ParlAméricas, 2016), a recurrent topic in research during that decade.

Among public engagement initiatives, special attention is warranted for the two online political participation platforms developed by Brazil's national houses: the *e-Democracia* Portal², launched in 2008 by the Chamber of Deputies, and the *e-Cidadania* Portal³, established in 2013 by the Federal Senate. The launch of these mechanisms introduced a new model of communication that leveraged interactivity to draw public attention to institutional discussions, using a variety of tools such as forums, surveys, and interactive project editing. These channels were built on the principle of crowdsourcing and have been the focus of several academic studies (Mitozo, 2013, 2018; Faria, 2012; Rossini & Oliveira, 2016; Brandão, 2015; Bernardes & Queiroz, 2023).

In his study of the development and use of the first portal, Mitozo (2018) identifies four key factors as crucial to the success of such initiatives: 1) the institutionalisation of the initiatives; 2) the involvement of the Speaker and his/her board (Mesa-Diretora); 3) cross-sectoral integration within the institution; and 4) the type of communicative relationship maintained between representatives and the represented. The influence of these factors has been observable over the years, particularly in the changes made to both portals. The *e-Cidadania* Portal gained notable visibility after the 2018 elections, when presidential campaign networks mobilised voters to participate in surveys hosted on the Senate's website (Chagas, Mitozo, Barros, Santos & Azevedo, 2022), illustrating the impact of the fourth factor identified by Mitozo (2018).

This influence brings us to another significant point in the process of digitalization and public engagement with legislative institutions: the emergence of social media platforms in the mid-2000s, which marked a turning point in state communication. Although legislatures were initially slow to adapt –an

2. The Portal is undergoing restructuring and was therefore located on the Chamber's website at the time of writing. Available at: [Câmara dos Deputados](#)

3. Available at: [Senado Federal, e-Cidadania Portal](#)

expected lag in institutions characterised by collective decision-making—social media quickly gained prominence as a communication tool for public institutions. These platforms offered legislatures the opportunity not only to showcase their work but also to reinforce the collective nature of representation (Bernardes, 2020a; 2020b; Leston-Bandeira & Siefken, 2023), in contrast to the personalism inherent in Brazil's political system. Studies such as Braga and Wisse (2021) and Massuchin and Oliveira (2023) demonstrate that having a presence on digital platforms can bring legislatures closer to the public, since digital sociability today revolves around these channels, which now receive more traffic than official websites, especially in a country like Brazil, where the adult population spends four hours per day on average on these platforms (CGI.BR, 2023).

Naturally, this adoption has been more efficiently executed by individual representatives. Social media platforms are designed for interpersonal interaction, and individual MPs have greater flexibility in hiring specialised staff to manage their online presence than institutional bodies do (Bernardes, 2021; Barros, Bernardes, Faria & Busanello, 2021). As a result, political representatives have managed to sustain a form of permanent campaigning by investing in the promotion of their achievements and curating favourable narratives (Cervi, 2022) through a logic of *egocasting*, the act of broadcasting highly personalised content, tailored to one's own agenda (Barros *et al.*, 2021). Within this context, teams often employ strategies such as what Cesarino (2020) refers to as «narrative hedging» –selecting fragments of reality to construct a favourable narrative for the agent or a damaging one for their opponents— an area that is still lacking in in-depth research in the Brazilian context. The efficiency of such communication –capable of broadly reaching voters– has become a point of concern in the literature. Institutions struggle to compete with individual representatives for public attention (Bernardes, 2021; Barros *et al.*, 2021), and there is no longer any institutional filter on what these actors can publish online. Previously, MPs relied on the official media set provided by the legislature (which included a website, email address, and telephone number) and had to vie for visibility on the institution's news portal. Furthermore, in today's information crisis, where misinformation and manipulated content dominate online flows (Bennett & Livingston, 2018), this communicative independence enjoyed by representatives may further undermine public trust in institutions (Massuchin *et al.*, 2021).

All of this digital infrastructure laid the foundation for the Brazilian legislature's relatively effective response to the pandemic through the implementation of remote online work (Mitozo, 2023). A number of studies have focused on the use of social media and websites as tools for transparency and public engagement (Braga & Wisse, 2021; Aneas *et al.*, 2021), as well as the development of remote deliberation systems (Mitozo, 2023; Batista & Santos, 2021; Santos & Gherson, 2021; Mitozo & Quintão, 2024). In practice, the Brazilian National Congress emerged as a pioneer in the use of online tools not only for internal work conducted by parliamentary advisers, but also unprecedentedly for the legislative deliberation process itself. The Remote Deliberation System (RDS), as outlined in a Senate manual published in three languages (Brazil, 2020), operated differently in each house: while the Senate outsourced the service, the Chamber of Deputies leveraged its greater digital

capacity and administrative infrastructure to adapt an existing tool for roll-call registration and voting (Peixoto, 2013, 2020)⁴.

According to Mitozo (2023), this institutional readiness was, to some extent, transferred to the state legislative assemblies, which adopted exclusively online remote working systems. These ranged from simpler setups (such as the use of Zoom and voice or gestural voting) to more sophisticated mechanisms (such as mobile voting applications, as used by the Chamber of Deputies). The literature also examined how these new procedures were legally incorporated into institutional frameworks. Santos and Gershon (2021) observed that these changes occurred through acts and requests, outside the scope of formal bylaws, but they led to a substantive change in the timeline of legislative processing and voting procedures, especially as committee work remained inactive and was not adapted to the RDS. Mitozo and Quintão (2024), in a study of state legislatures, found that only 14 assemblies incorporated these changes into their internal regulations, suggesting a lack of long-term reflection on the procedures, potentially compromising their stability. One example is the Chamber of Deputies, which, despite returning to in-person sessions in October 2021, passed board acts in November of that year allowing MPs attending COP26 in Scotland to vote remotely during a key deliberation on a constitutional amendment defining the terms of social assistance amid the ongoing pandemic and economic crisis (Mitozo & Quintão, 2024).

When it comes to the regulation of digital procedures, in the current context of technological development, one cannot overlook the potential appropriation of artificial intelligence by legislative institutions and particularly by individual legislators (Faria, 2023). According to Mendonça, Almeida, and Filgueiras (2023), public institutions must seek to understand these technologies and incorporate them responsibly into their procedures. Similarly, the development of such technologies should take institutional theory into account to promote reflection and improve practice. In a scenario dominated by misinformation and powerful technology platforms, the integration of AI into public data management must be approached with caution and grounded in clear regulations. This is essential to prevent backsliding on the digital gains made in public governance, particularly those related to information security, a progress partly guaranteed by Brazil's Access to Information Law (LAI) and the General Data Protection Law (LGPD).

4. Conclusion

Based on the Brazilian case, this article has presented a brief review of studies produced over the last 30 years that have focused on legislative media and the communicative processes of parliaments, analysing how these processes have led to greater openness to citizen engagement with such institutions.

4. Infoleg, a tool developed by the Chamber of Deputies and adapted for remote voting, is an information access and transparency application that has been operational since 2013, but a new feature was added to its platform during the legislature's period of social distancing between 2020 and 2021.

Whereas analogue legislative media advanced the transparency of legislative work –particularly from the 1990s onwards– and brought parliament closer to citizens through real-time audiovisual broadcasting of its daily activities (Carvalho, 2020), the digitalization of parliamentary institutions in the 21st century has created new opportunities for public engagement. Although many legislative houses have yet to fully explore the interactive potential of digital environments, it is undeniable that Digital Democracy is a growing concept, increasingly invoked through various legislative initiatives.

The Brazilian case is a clear example of progress in this field, particularly within the two houses of the National Congress. According to many of the analyses cited in this article, the channels and tools developed over the past two decades by the Chamber of Deputies and the Federal Senate have effectively enhanced the transparency of legislative work and parliamentary activity. Legislative television and radio broadcasters, for example, have become consolidated as credible and balanced sources of information on the legislative process –no small feat in a context of increasing ideological polarisation and widespread fake news and disinformation. In this sense, they have become tools used by citizens, activists, politicians, and journalists alike to support more consistent political engagement.

Among the pioneering parliamentary digitalization initiatives are the *e-Democracia* and *e-Cidadania* Portals. However, many critics have argued that the public engagement potential of these tools remains underdeveloped, leading to missed opportunities for citizens to meaningfully influence the legislative process. This is largely due to the lack of institutional feedback mechanisms that could give continuity and weight to citizens' contributions (Bernardes & Queiróz, 2023; Leston-Bandeira & Siefken, 2023). Although further investment in interactive and human resources is still needed to manage these tools in line with the norms of digital sociability, the digital channels opened by Brazilian legislatures are advancing in their goal of creating more opportunities for communication between institutions, representatives, and the represented. They also contribute to the broader academic literature reflecting on innovations that can strengthen democracies.

This development faces a crucial challenge: the mismatch between the pace at which institutional proposals are approved and the speed at which digital tools evolve, a concern highlighted in various analyses (Braga, 2008; Faria, 2012; Mitozo, 2023; Nunez, 2020). Nevertheless, the explicit objective has been to involve citizens more actively in public decision-making. This is reflected in the effort to replicate the interactive nature of private digital media, through a process referred to as institutional openness, characterised by access to information, transparency, accountability, and public engagement. The dynamics of openness are largely facilitated by digital tools, which not only enable more communication and informational exchange, but also allow data to be made available in machine-readable formats –open data (Silva, 2023)– thus reinforcing the four aforementioned practices.

Within this context, a topic gaining increasing attention in recent studies is the use of artificial intelligence (AI), which presents new challenges for public institutions –especially parliaments, as they will also be responsible for defining the rules, boundaries, and consequences of its use. Some stu-

dies have already warned that parliamentary institutions and actors must urgently and deeply understand both the potentials and the risks that AI poses to democratic regimes, and that it must be aligned with the necessary institutional procedures for its implementation within legislative houses (Mendonça, Almeida & Filgueiras, 2023). Without such analytical capacity on the part of parliaments and parliamentarians concerning the new digital landscape shaped by AI-mediated communication, both institutions and political actors risk becoming ineffective or even obsolete in their legislative functions.

In this sense, there are many layers to be observed regarding how legislative houses communicate and provide tools that reinforce democratic values, both online and offline. In this regard, the Brazilian case stands out for its digital and administrative capacity to manage these processes –a longterm preparedness (Peixoto, 2013, 2020)– which became evident during the public health crisis, when it was necessary to appropriate available tools for legislative work at all levels. This highlights the urgency of deepening reflections on the subject, seeking interdisciplinary approaches to the theoretical and methodological discussion of such cases.

References

- Aneas, T.; Barros, S. & Marinho, J. (2021): «O Legislativo e as oportunidades de participação online sobre a pandemia do coronavírus: o abismo entre as iniciativas dos parlamentos em nível federal e estadual». *E-Legis – Revista Eletrônica Do Programa De Pós-Graduação Da Câmara Dos Deputados*, 14 (Esp.).
- Arnold, R. D. (2004): *Congress, the Press, and Political Accountability*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation; Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Barreto, R. C. (2018): *Tribuna ao vivo [manuscrito]: discussão, representação e os avessos suscitados pela midiatização do parlamento*. Tese (doutorado), Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Faculdade de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas.
- Barros, A. T.; Bernardes, C.B. & Dias, M. C. (2009): «Perspectiva sociopolítica da interatividade nas mídias legislativas: o caso da Câmara dos Deputados». *Cadernos da Escola do Legislativo*, 11: 59–83.
- Barros, A. T.; Bernardes, C. B. & Lemos, C.R.F. (2008): «As mídias legislativas e a redefinição da noticiabilidade política no Brasil». *Em Questão* (UFRGS Impresso), 14: 11-23.
- Barros, A. T., Bernardes, C. B. & Rodrigues, M. R. (2014): «O discurso fundador das mídias legislativas da Câmara dos Deputados». *E-Legis – Revista Eletrônica Do Programa De Pós-Graduação Da Câmara Dos Deputados*, 14(14): 7-25. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51206/e-legis.v14i14.184>
- Barros, A. T. de; Bernardes, C. B. & Rodrigues, M. R. (2016): «Brazilian Parliament and digital engagement». *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, Kingston upon Hull/UK, 22: 540-558.
- Barros, A. T.; Bernardes, C. B.; Faria, C. F. S. & Busanello, E. (2021): «Do egocasting aos gabinetes digitais: o uso de lives, stories e podcasts pelos deputados federais brasileiros». *Contextualizaciones Latinoamericanas*, 2(25): 7-23. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32870/cl.v2i25.7863>.

- Barros, A. T.; Bernardes, C. B. e Silva, M. C. (2023): «A experiência de crowdlaw no Brasil: elaboração colaborativa online de leis na Câmara dos Deputados». In: Cristiane B. Bernardes; Isabele B. Mitozo; Sérgio S. Braga e Sivaldo P. Silva (orgs.): *Parlamento Digital: conceitos e práticas*. 1ed. Brasília: Editora Universidade de Brasília.
- Barros, A. e Mitozo, I. (2018): «Democracia digital e transparência legislativa nos parlamentos nacionais do Mercosul». 1º Congresso do INCT.DD, Salvador.
- Batista C. e Santos, F. (2021): «Origens e implicações do funcionamento congressual em tempos de pandemia: notas sobre o sistema de deliberação remota (SDR) e o papel das novas tecnologias». *E-Legis - Revista Eletrônica Do Programa De Pós-Graduação Da Câmara Dos Deputados*, 14(Esp.): 57-69. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51206/e-legis.v14iEsp.654>
- Bennett, W. L. & Livingston, S. (2018): «The disinformation order: Disruptive communication and the decline of democratic institutions». *European Journal of Communication*, 33(2): 122-139.
- Bernardes, C. B. (2010): *Política, institucional ou pública? Uma reflexão sobre a mídia legislativa da Câmara dos Deputados*. Tese (Doutorado), Instituto de Estudos Sociais e Políticos (IESP) da Universidade Estadual do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), Curso de Doutorado em Ciência Política, Centro de Formação, Treinamento e Aperfeiçoamento (Cefor), Câmara dos Deputados.
- Bernardes, C. B. (2020a): «Engajamento público e o uso institucional do Facebook nas assembleias legislativas da Região Sudeste». *Revista de Sociologia e Política*, 28(76): e003-26. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/1678-987320287603>
- Bernardes, C. B. (2020b): «Uso do Twitter para engajamento político: análise dos perfis das assembleias legislativas da Região Sudeste». *Revista Compólitica*, 10: 5-48.
- Bernardes, C. B. (2021): «Possibilidades e Obstáculos na Gestão de Perfis em Redes Sociais pelas Assembleias Legislativas da Região Sudeste do Brasil». *Revista Eletrônica do Programa de Pós-Graduação da Câmara dos Deputados*, 14: 12-38.
- Bernardes, C. B. & Leston-Bandeira, C. (2016). «Information vs Engagement in parliamentary websites – a case study of Brazil and the UK». *Revista de Sociologia e Política*, 24(59): 91-107.
- Bernardes, C. B. & Mitozo, I. B. (2023): «Inovações digitais para os Parlamentos: Pesquisa e Prática». In: Cristiane B. Bernardes; Isabele B. Mitozo; Sérgio S. Braga & Sivaldo P. Silva (orgs.): *Parlamento Digital: conceitos e práticas*. 1ed. Brasília: Editora Universidade de Brasília, pp. 17-48.
- Bernardes, C. B. & Queiroz, A. B. D. (2023): «Engajamento Público nos Eventos Interativos do Portal E-Cidadania do Senado Federal». *Revista Parlamento & Sociedade*, 11: 41-60.
- Bernardes, C. B.; Mitozo, I. B.; Braga, S. S. & Silva, S. P. Silva (orgs.) (2023): *Parlamento Digital: conceitos e práticas*. 1ed. Brasília: Editora Universidade de Brasília.
- Braga, S. (2008): *Podem as TICs auxiliar na institucionalização das Democracias? Um estudo sobre a informatização dos órgãos legislativos na América do Sul e no Brasil*. Brasília: Plenarium.
- Braga, S.; Mitozo, I. B. & Tadra, J. (2016): «As funções educativas dos e-parlamentos: Uma análise longitudinal do caso brasileiro». *Cadernos de pesquisa*, 46(162): 1192-1215.
- Braga, S. S. & Wisse, F. (2021): «Repertórios de ação dos parlamentos digitais durante o enfrentamento da pandemia». *E-Legis – Revista Eletrônica Do Programa De Pós-Graduação Da Câmara Dos Deputados*, 14(Esp.).
- Brandão, W. (2015): *Fóruns do portal e-Democracia: uma análise da discussão de argumentos online*. Dissertação de Mestrado (Mestrado em Poder Legislativo), Cefor – Câmara dos Deputados, Brasília. 107f.

- Brasil (2020): *Orientações para implantação e operação do sistema de deliberação remota*. Brasília: Senado Federal.
- Carlomagno, M.; Braga, S. & Wisse, F. (2019): «Gabinetes digitais: o papel da comunicação online na rotina parlamentar». *E-Legis*, 12(29): 104-132.
- Cervi, E. U. (2022): «Quando o discurso social de direita encontra políticos demagogos e instituições democráticas enfraquecidas: o caso do extremismo brasileiro». *Revista Más Poder Local*, 50: 108-123. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56151/maspoderlocal.111>
- Cesarino, L. (2020): «Como vencer uma eleição sem sair de casa: a ascensão do populismo digital no Brasil». *Internet & Sociedade*, 1(1): 91-120.
- CGI.BR (2023): «Pesquisa sobre o uso de tecnologias de informação e comunicação nos domicílios brasileiros: TIC domicílios 2022». CETIC.br. Disponível em: <https://www.cetic.br/pt/arqui-vos/domicilios/2022/domicilios/#tabelas>
- Chagas, V.; Mitozo, I.; Barros, S.; Santos, J. G. & Azevedo, D. (2022): «The ‘new age’ of political participation? WhatsApp and call to action on the Brazilian Senate’s consultations on the e-Cidadania Portal». *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 19(3): 253–268.
- Cook, T. (1989): *Making laws and making news. Media strategies in the U.S. House of Representatives*. Washington: The Brookings Institution.
- Cook, T. (2005): *Governing with the news. The news media as a political institution*. (2ª ed.) Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Faria, C. F. S. (2012): *O parlamento aberto na era da internet*. Brasília: Edições Câmara.
- Faria, C. F. S. (2023): «Robôs políticos: como a inteligência artificial pode facilitar a interação entre cidadãos e parlamentares». In: Cristiane B. Bernardes; Isabele B. Mitozo; Sérgio S. Braga & Sivaldo P. Silva (orgs.): *Parlamento Digital: conceitos e práticas*. 1ed. Brasília: Editora Universidade de Brasília, pp. 267-287.
- Faria, C. & Rehbein, M. (2016): «Open Parliament Policy Applied to the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies». *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 22(4): 559–78.
- Freitas, L. C. S. (2004): *A midiatisação do Parlamento: a TV Senado e as transformações na atividade político-parlamentar no Senado brasileiro*. Dissertação. (Mestrado em Comunicação Social). Programa de Pós-Graduação da Faculdade de Comunicação Social, Universidade de Brasília (UnB), Brasília.
- Gomes, W. (2018): *A democracia no mundo digital: história, problemas e temas*. São Paulo: Edições Sesc.
- Gonçalves, R. M. Dy Lá F. (2010): *O superhomem pendura o paletó na repartição: a gênese do jornalista legislativo*. Dissertação. (Mestrado em Comunicação Social).
- Hansard Society (2001): «The challenge for Parliament: Making Government accountable». The Report of the Hansard Society Commission on Parliamentary Scrutiny.
- INCT-DD (2019): *Democracia Digital no Brasil: Prospecção sobre o Poder Legislativo e o Poder Executivo Federal 2018*. Salvador: Instituto Nacional de Ciência e Tecnologia em Democracia Digital (INCT-DD).
- Jardim, M. A. (2008): *Antenas do Legislativo. Uma análise dos canais de televisão do Poder Legislativo no Brasil*. Tese de Doutorado. (Doutorado em Ciências Sociais). Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciências Sociais, da Faculdade de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas da Universidade de Campinas (Unicamp), Campinas.

- Inter-Parliamentary Union; United Nations Development Programme (2022): *Global Parliamentary Report 2022: Public engagement in the work of Parliament*.
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (2022): *World e-Parliament Report 2022*. Disponível em: <https://ipu.org> (Acesso em 15 julho 2022).
- Leston-Bandeira, C. (2019): «Parliamentary petitions and public engagement: an empirical analysis of the role of e-petitions». *Policy & Politics*, 47(3): 1-22. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1332/030557319X15579230420117>
- Leston-Bandeira, C. (2016): «Why Symbolic Representation Frames Parliamentary Public Engagement». *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 18(2): 498-516. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148115615029>
- Leston-Bandeira, C. (2014): «The pursuit of legitimacy as a key driver for public engagement: The Case of European Parliament». *Parliamentary Affairs*, 67(2): 437-457. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gss050>
- Leston-Bandeira, C. (2009): «Parliamentary functions portrayed on European parliaments' websites». Dossier «Internet and Politics», *Revista de Sociologia e Política*, 17(34). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-44782009000300003>
- Leston-Bandeira, C. & Siefken, S. T. (2023): «The development of public engagement as a core institutional role for parliaments». *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 29(3): 361-379, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13572334.2023.2214390>
- Marques, F. P. J. A. (2011): «Participação, instituições políticas e internet: um exame dos canais participativos presentes nos portais da Câmara e da Presidência da República». In: R. Maia; W. Gomes e F. P. J. A. Marques: *Internet e participação política no Brasil*. Porto Alegre: Sulina, pp. 95–121.
- Massuchin, M. G. & Oliveira, P. A. de (2023): «Comunicação pública nos legislativos: accountability, transparência e proximidade com os cidadãos nas redes sociais». *Animus – Revista Interamericana de Comunicação Midiática*, 22(48): 330-352. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5902/2175497763997>
- Massuchin, M.; Tavares, C.; Mitozo, I. & Chagas, V. (2021): «A estrutura argumentativa do descrédito na ciência: uma análise de mensagens de grupos bolsonaristas de Whatsapp na pandemia da COVID-19». *Revista Fronteiras – estudos midiáticos*, 23(2):160-174. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4013/fem.2021.232.11>
- Mendonça, R.; Almeida, V. & Filgueiras, F. (2023): *Algorithmic Institutionalism: The changing rules of social + political life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mitozo, I. B. (2013): *Participação e Deliberação em ambiente online: um estudo do Portal e-Democracia*. Dissertação de Mestrado (Mestrado em Comunicação) – Universidade Federal do Ceará, Fortaleza, 165p.
- Mitozo, I. B. (2018): *E-participação nos parlamentos: Desenvolvimento e uso de iniciativas pela Câmara dos Deputados brasileira e pela House of Commons britânica*. Tese (Doutorado em Ciência Política) – Universidade Federal do Paraná, Curitiba. 267p.
- Mitozo, I. B. (2023): *Legislativos online na pandemia: práticas e lições de tempos de emergência*. São Luís: EDUFMA.
- Mitozo, I. B. & Quintão, T. (2024): «As mudanças trazidas pelo trabalho remoto emergencial ao regimento interno das assembleias legislativas brasileiras». *Anais do 14º Encontro da ABCP*, Salvador.

- Noveck, B. (2023): «CrowdLaw». In: Cristiane B. Bernardes; Isabele B. Mitozo; Sérgio S. Braga & Sivaldo P. Silva (orgs.): *Parlamento Digital: conceitos e práticas*. 1ed. Brasília: Editora Universidade de Brasília.
- Nunez, S. A. C. (2020): *Doze anos de multimídia: convergência e engajamento público no Portal Senado Notícias*. 131 f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Poder Legislativo) – Centro de Formação da Câmara dos Deputados, Brasília.
- Opening Parliament (2012): *Declaration of Parliamentary Openness*. Disponível em: <https://www.openingparliament.org/declaration> (Acesso em: 15 novembro 2018).
- Parlaméricas (2016): *Roteiro para a abertura legislativa*. Ottawa, Canadá.
- Peixoto, T. (2020): «Virtual parliaments in Times of Coronavirus: Flattening the Authoritarian Curve?». Disponível em: <https://democracyspot.net/2020/04/21/virtual-parliaments-in-times-of-coronavirus-flattening-the-authoritarian-curve/>.
- Peixoto, T. (2013): *Open parliaments: technological enactment in state legislatures*. Tese (Doutorado em Ciência Política), European University Institute.
- Rossini, P. & Oliveira, V. V. de (2016): «E-democracia e legislação colaborativa: a discussão da reforma política no Brasil». In: *Encontro Anual da Compós, Goiânia. Anais eletrônicos [...]. Associação Nacional dos Programas de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação*, p. 1-25.
- Queiroz, D. (2007): *Jornalismo institucional nas TVs legislativas. Os casos do Brasil e do México*. Dissertação. (Mestrado em Comunicação Social). Programa de Pós-Graduação da Faculdade de Comunicação Social, Universidade de Brasília (UnB), Brasília.
- Renault, L. (2004): *Comunicação e política nos canais de televisão do Poder Legislativo no Brasil*. Belo Horizonte: Assembleia Legislativa do Estado de Minas Gerais.
- Rocha, C. (2009): «A cobertura jornalística na Câmara dos Deputados». *E-legis. Brasília*, 3: 108-116.
- Sant'Anna, F. (2008): *Mídia das fontes. O difusor do jornalismo corporativo*. Brasília: Casa das Musas.
- Santos, F. e Gershon, D. (2021): «Os regimentos remotos». In: F. Santos (org.): *Congresso Remoto: A experiência legislativa brasileira em tempos de pandemia*. Rio de Janeiro, Sociedade e política collection, pp. 39-52.
- Santos, M. L. (2008): *TV Legislativa: TV Câmara de Ribeirão Preto e accountability*. Tese (Doutorado em Sociologia) - Faculdade de Ciências e Letras, Universidade Estadual Paulista, Araraquara.



©Derechos del autor o autores. Creative Commons License. Este artículo está bajo una licencia internacional Creative Commons Atribución-NoComercial-SinDerivadas 4.0.
©Copyright of the author or authors. Creative Commons License. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.