DIGITAL MANDATE: AN EXPERIENCE WITH THE USE OF APPLICATION

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Abstract: It is a research in the domain of Digital Democracy, with an emphasis on the analysis of the transformative modes of information and communication technologies on democracy and the democratic system. The main objective is to identify how the use of an application works to monitor and manage a parliamentary mandate. There is a qualitative and exploratory research, with a case study development. Results indicate that the use of the application can generate significant levels of engagement, even larger when there are sensitive topics on discussion. It is concluded that the use of the application to interact with citizens adds another level to the existing information and communication technologies, with the potential to generate more engagement, due to their own characteristics.

Keywords: Digital Democracy; Representation; Responsiveness; Digital Mandate; Application.

Introduction

This article is part of the field of Digital Democracy studies, which deals, in a comprehensive way, with the ways in which new information and communication technologies (NICTs) affect and transform democracy and the democratic system. Particularly, the research turns to the analysis of an experience of using an application (app), installed on smartphones, for monitoring and participating in the mandate of federal representative, in the 56th Legislature.

The use is focused both on the part of the representative and on the part of the users, considering the quantitative data generated by the use of the application itself and qualitative elements, derived from the experience of the user, the representative and his/her team. Due to its recent nature (as far as is known, at the federal level, it is the first Legislature in which there is a record of effective use of an application for this purpose, even so by a very small percentage of representatives – around 1%), the research is exploratory. It has a more qualitative than quantitative profile, although the presentation and analysis of the generated quantitative data is part of it.

The general objective of the research is to identify how the application is used, both by the representative and his/her team and by the users. From the data and reports of the

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experience, it is expected to glimpse potentialities, constrictions, opportunities and threats, to build a scientific framework for the analysis of this type of experience, as well as to record factual elements that may provide future comparative analyses.

Digital democracy has become a present and urgent theme, given its possibilities as a minimizing element of the crisis or a deficit of representation spread throughout the world, through the valorization of popular participation in decisions. According to Amartya Sen, Nobel Prize in Economics, one of the little-explored attributes of democracy is its ability to "enrich the reasoned debate through improvements in information availability and the feasibility of interactive discussions" (SEN, 2011, p. 15). The instruments of digital democracy precisely increase information availability exponentially – in spite of all the asymmetry of supply and the quality of information – and have become technically feasible – which does not mean that they always happen – interactive discussions covering large geographically dispersed masses. Therefore, according to the theoretical framework emphasized by Sem (2011), the digital element adds capabilities to democracy, enriching it and making its experience, on the part of citizens, broader.

The concern underlying this article is the perception of the need to adapt the institutions of representative democracy to a changing reality based on the accelerated technical progress and the erosion of the patterns of political relations that have hitherto prevailed. It is not yet possible to be clear as to what the point of arrival of technological transformations, institutional innovations and, therefore, the conditions of sociability and social cohesion that will come, which contributes to the feeling of anguish.

The present study is also justified by the exponential growth in the use of NICTs. In June 2018, only the App Store surpassed 170 billion downloads[1]. In 2010, the word app became so popular that it was named "word of the year" by the American Dialect Society.

From this perspective, this article dialogues with the works of Simon *et al*. (2017), Guimarães, Faria and Sathler (2016), Faria (2012), Sampaio (2010), Noveck (2009), Coleman and Blumer (2009), Marques (2008), Gomes and Maia (2008), Leston-Bandeira (2007), by emphasizing the broader possibilities for shaping the participatory process, provided by the NTIC. This certainly does not mean underestimating the problems already mentioned in this so-called Digital Democracy or in the use of the internet for political training and information. Problems such as poorly qualified political information, unequal access, political culture, predominance of performance by the mass media as authorities in the virtual environment, over-control and cyber-threats, in addition to a reduction of politics to the aesthetics of the viewer.

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[1] Data extracted from AppAnnie. Website: https://www.appannie.com/en/insights/market-data/data-behind-10-years-ios-app-store/#download

1. Technology, mandate and responsiveness

Contemporaneity is marked by the clash of two political macrostructures and the solution requires novelty in terms of institutions. Political macrostructures are conducive to dealing with a kind of problem and given a particular social configuration. Absolutist monarchies (a type of political macrostructure) failed with the advent of modernity and were replaced. Modern institutions, whose foundations date back 300 years ago, were primitive and underdeveloped to account for the changes and the acceleration in the pace of those that came with the Industrial Revolution. They run the risk of failing, at present, due to their basic insufficiencies, in a phenomenon that has been generally understood as a crisis of representative democracy.

In postmodernity, there is talk of vertigo and anxiety, reflecting the fact that the political macrostructures of modernity are staggering, shaken by the Information Revolution. Discussions about digital democracy need to consider this expanded dimension, which transcends the instrumental use of NICTs for new political practices. It is necessary to understand the transformations in humans and their political expressions caused by the appropriation of new technical realities, in addition to the mere association of the use of the network with some instruments of participatory democracy.

People contribute by being part and not to be part, developing a sense of purpose, through the feeling of collectivity and social relations that are densified around common endeavors. The true potential of the NICTs is that they force a confrontation with deeper questions: which democracy? And democracy for whom? In fact, the same questions that underlie the crisis of representative democracy.

In the digital democracy, the availability of freely treatable information and data (open data) is the raw material for the development of processes for understanding state action at a higher level. Applications created in a broad participatory and collaborative way, with the participation of representatives, Legislative officials, political scientists, hackers and citizens in general, make better use of the potential of using legislative data, providing new user-friendly views that facilitate the understanding of the political process. Other applications, with the use of robots that run on top of open data, enable the performance of permanent audits, making the accountability process dynamic and interactive. This trend should increase, as public agencies in various parts of the world have made civic initiatives feasible to foster collaborative development with a view to generating more efficiency in the result of transparency applications (EYLER-WERVE; CARLSON, 2012; SILVA; BRAGATTO; SAMPAIO, 2016). Such initiatives are carried out in different formats, such as hacker marathons, hackathons, ideas and applications contest and similar ones.

A key premise in the field of digital democracy studies is that the NICTs favor the exercise of dialogic, continuous representation, surpassing the concept of liberal democracy of

an accountability that can only be performed when mandates are renewed. We are dealing here with what Urbinati (2005) called 'negotiated representation', based on the constant judgment made by the citizens of each decision made by the representative. This constant connection between represented and representatives enhances the capacity for transformation, in addition to generating greater engagement in participation. In line with this perspective, we work with the concept of digital democracy postulated by Gomes (2011):

> It is in this context that we can situate the so-called digital democracy. Umbrella concept, digital democracy is broad enough to accommodate 'any' form of use of devices (computers, cell phones, smartphones, palmtops, iPads), applications (programs) and tools (forums, websites, social networks, medias, social media...) of digital communication technologies (GOMES, 2011).

What is understood as digital democracy, therefore, is that this is a contemporary form of participatory democracy, leveraged by the ascendancy of the NICTs. The digital media arrived with the intention of allowing the citizen to have more access to information about the State's activities, that is, greater information availability (transparency); but also to allow a denser interaction between representatives and represented, collimating in a greater effectiveness in participation.

In the specific case, the use of an application to monitor the mandate, the perspective is to expand the dimension of responsiveness, that is, to use a technology with the specific objective of overcoming difficulties identified as symptoms of the crisis of representative democracy. In particular, it is intended to expand communication between the representative and the electorate (representative and represented) with the use of this specific tool. There are several studies that deal with the use of tools such as social networks (Facebook, Twitter), but there are still no studies dedicated specifically to the use of the application.

Panhoca and Bonini (2014, p. 208) study the term responsiveness and came to the conclusion that:

> The term responsiveness has been used frequently in the evaluation of public policies, and can be understood – according to Popescu (2011) – both as an appropriate response from governments to citizens' demands, and as a convergence of actions: from the State that responds to citizens they demand (PANHOCA and BONINI, 2014, p. 208).

These authors, therefore, emphasize the dialogic characteristic of responsiveness, involving a set of social questions (demands of those represented) and governmental responses (actions of representatives). This perspective contributes so that responsiveness is also understood in terms of Bakhtin's thought, who assumed the concept of 'responsible response', comprising the dialogue between the self and the other, in the space configured in and by the citizen-governing dyad (BAKHTIN, 2010). Bakhtin's perception is considered as inaugural, in

the field of communication, of the notion of legitimacy via informed consent, built through responsible dialogue.

It offers perhaps one of the broadest conceptualizations on the subject, relating it to the theme of the quality of democracy, so that it is understood as of procedure, content and result, which unfold in eight dimensions. This perspective implies taking the rule of law, accountability (electoral and interinstitutional), competition and participation as criteria for analysis. Quality in terms of content implies considering the dimensions of freedom and equality. Finally, the focus on results determines the octave of the dimensions, which is the responsiveness.

Pogrebinschi and Ventura (2017, p. 267) state that:

> Participatory and deliberative mechanisms certainly constitute one of those means (so that citizens can formulate their preferences), and their potential to increase the responsiveness of governments and parliaments is one of the main reasons why, contrary to what some (still) think, expanding participation strengthens representation without establishing any kind of antagonism (POGREBINSCHI and VENTURA, 2017, p. 267).

Here the authors point to an important issue in the field of digital democracy. In addition to a utopian (and illusory) substitution of representative democracy for direct democracy, through the use of NICT, it is, in fact, about seeking to 'democratize representative democracy', with the feasibility of more effective participation, with the opening of the decision-making structure itself, putting an end to the idea of an independent mandate. It is also a movement to demonopolize representatives and their specialization and informalization of the jurisdiction.

It is also reflected in the proposal to overcome the dimension of the mere (private) relationship, present in many of the so-called participatory instruments, and to establish participation in its genuinely public character. Starting from improvements in informational availability and assuming the feasibility of interactive discussions, we move towards strengthening three key points of democracy: political participation, dialogue and public interaction (SEN, 2011).

Some proposals that naively associate the possibilities opened by new technologies to the possibilities of exercising direct democracy, however, do not contribute to the debate. Representative democracy, to remember the words of Winston Churchill, is still the least worst of political regimes. The complexification of the world and the vast diversity of agendas to be faced by political bodies reaffirms the need for professional politicians, dedicated full time to the study and deliberation of matters. Parliaments, in this sense, are like specialist systems imagined by Giddens (2012), an institution with unique competences and capacities, with specific objectives, without which modern societies are unable to develop properly.

It is not, therefore, about challenging representative democracy. Rather, it seeks to improve it, with the creation of other instruments of direct democracy, or, in other words,

adding democracy to representative democracy, as a way of mitigating the crisis of representative democracy and the feeling of orphanhood in society. What exists is the expectation that the NICTs will be able to contribute effectively to overcome some technical difficulties, previously considered insurmountable, in addition to enabling the expansion of the deliberation space beyond the internal scope of parliamentary houses.

The perspective of the present research, therefore, is to assume that the use of NICTs, particularly that of a smartphone application, favors responsiveness by enabling the expansion of the representative's ability to transform the demands of those represented into a political attitude.

Studies of websites specializing in digital media and social networks, such as mLabs, for example, indicate that on social networks there is a level of engagement for each user action. On Facebook, for example, there is a gradation between viewing, liking, interacting with distinction of an emotion, commenting and sharing. The last two actions (comment sharing) presuppose greater user engagement. On Twitter, the likes of retweeting also differ, which implies greater engagement.

In the case of an application, by this logic, a greater engagement is engendered, because the user has to actively search for the application in the online store, download it, install it and then effectively use it. For this reason, even in the case of remote participation, participation via application is considered to be denser than participation via other social networks or other traditional instruments of contact. Channels such as the 0800 telephone number of the House of Representatives or the institutional e-mail of each representative (widely disseminated) generate a significant movement of demands (social questions), but a very low response rate (representatives' actions), also as informed by the representative's office used in this research.

With the adoption of the NICTs, like applications, it is expected that the figure of the digital mandate will emerge – a truly connected mandate, which will provide those represented with a much-improved experience in terms of monitoring the representative's performance. The application allows for personalized digital interactions between the representative and those represented, as well as allowing the representative to understand the needs of their representatives the moment they arise – and sometimes even preemptively. The continuous representation envisioned by Urbinati (2005) takes shape in real time.

With the application, the representative is continuously interacting with those represented, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is a differentiated model in relation to that of liberal democracy, in which representatives concentrate their communication efforts with the public during the electoral period, managing, *a posteriori*, their mandates based on the assumption that involvement with voters is limited and brief. In this model of representation in liberal democracy, representatives work with the proposal "get what we have", that is, their initiatives to promote public policies or legislative deliberations follow their own training,

almost regardless of what their electorate thinks[2].

The use of the application does not presuppose the materialization of a different type of linked mandate, however, it allows the representative to exercise a kind of curatorship of the represented – identifying and anticipating his/her needs and already signaling what will be done or will try to be done to meet the needs. Note that the practice of curatorship does not imply a tutelary, or paternalistic, view of the mandate, on the part of the representative. Even more considering that the application establishes a cost-effective, dynamic and reliable two-way communication between the representative and the represented, producing positive feedback effects – the better the representative understands his/her represented, the more he can adapt his/her performance to satisfy needs. This perspective of representation is close to the dynamics of responsiveness and representative and represented interaction envisioned by Miller and Stokes (1963).

2. Methodology

Methods called qualitative or unstructured were used, as they are better adapted to the proposed problem. According to Godoy (1995, p. 74), when what is desired is an understanding of the phenomenon, in its complexity, in a broad way, qualitative analysis is the most suitable. Then, exploratory research, as defined by Gil (1987), was carried out as the most appropriate research modality to provide a general and approximate view of the study question.

The technique used was a case study of an experience, addressing the mandate of a specific representative, who since the beginning of his performance, has chosen to use the application as a tool for monitoring and managing his mandate. As a data collection technique, the representative and the person of his team most directly responsible for the operational issues of the application were interviewed (elite interviewing). Quantitative data produced by using the application to date have also been collected. Users were not interviewed or heard directly by any other means.

The chosen representative is Federal Representative Felipe Rigoni, from the state of Espírito Santo, 27 years old, elected for the first time to the 56th Legislature, with 84,405 votes. Young and enthusiastic about the application of new technologies to the public service, the representative has his political origin in social movements and has no family connection with other politicians. Affiliated with the Brazilian Socialist Party (Portuguese acronym: PSB), he set up his office with 15 servers, eight in Brasília (DF) and seven in the city of Vitória (ES).

The application in question is called "*Nosso Mandato* (Our Mandate)" and was created by the programming company "*Transformando Tecnologia LTDA*", in April 2018, at the

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[2] It is not the scope of this article to discuss linked mandate and independent mandate, however the assumptions usually attributed to both cases are assumed to be true.

suggestion of a city councilor in the city of Belo Horizonte, who used it in his own mandate. It is currently available in Android and IOS versions and can be downloaded and used free of charge. According to the administrators of the application, the main objective of this application is "to bring closer and to improve the relations between holders of legislative mandates and their voters", or, more specifically, "so that representatives from all over the country can establish a direct channel with their voters"[3]. According to the creators (the councilor who participated in its creation is part of the company's Board), suggestions from politicians were followed, to configure the application to follow any type of parliamentary mandate. The application is made available to the public, by means of a monthly fee paid by the registered representative, according to their position (Councilor, State Representative, District Representative, Federal Representative and Senator).

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive aspects

According to data from the company that owns the application, there are currently just over 15 thousand registered users, of which 5,036 are specifically directed to the monitoring of Representative Felipe Rigoni. The application allows the user to follow the mandates of a councilor, a state or district representative, a federal representative and three senators – when downloading the application, the user already indicates the representative(s) he/she intends to follow. As of June 6, 2019, there were four federal the representatives registered, two senators, five state the representatives and ten city councilors.

Federal Representative Felipe Rigoni reported that he had contact with the application through the *RenovaBR* movement, which is defined as "an initiative for the formation of leaders and civic engagement"[4]. Still according to him, the *RenovaBR* movement encouraged the political leaders of its staff to use the application. Table 1 indicates the number of users who have appointed Representative Felipe Rigoni to be monitored over the first six months of his mandate.

Table 1 - New users of the 'Our Mandate' app that follow the Representative Felipe Rigoni

	February	March	April	May	June
Users	459	181	3.627	597	192

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on data provided by the advisor of the Representative Filipe Rigoni.

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[3] Statements about the application, website: https://www.nossomandato.com.br.
[4] Website: https://renovabr.org/quemsomos.

When registering in the application, the user informs his/her personal data, which Member of Parliament would like to monitor and whether or not he/she is a voter of that member. This information does not serve as a criterion for the acceptance or not of the user, but it does allow the representative to differentiate the preferences of his/her electoral base and that of the others represented. The request for personal information seeks to give a very personal character and avoid the participation of robots, as is common in other social networks. Figure 1 shows the application's home screen and voting screen.

Figure 1 - Illustrative image of the home screen and the voting screen of the 'Our Mandate' application

Source: Generated by the authors themselves, using the application 'Our Mandate'.

The application offers nine features to users. The first of these, "Voting", is the monitoring of the bills being voted on and the possibility for the user to 'vote' on the bills, expressing how they would like the representative to vote on that particular matter. As previously discussed, the representative takes these results as an additional reference to guide his/her decisions, not necessarily automatically assuming the position adopted by most users (the mandate remains an independent mandate).

For this functionality to operate properly, the staff of the representative's staff registers the matters to be resolved on the day, in the Plenary or in committees, and then makes a summary of the bills available to users. There are the "yes", "no" and "abstention" voting options, which mimic the representative's own options. The representative has the possibility to

see the total or discriminated results between users who declared themselves as voters and users who did not.

The second feature is "Problem Notification". It allows the user to share with the representative problems that he/she identifies in his/her city, allowing the representative to act on the matter, requesting measures from the responsible bodies, for example. The third functionality "Schedule Meeting" aims to facilitate the personal contact of users with the representative, facilitating the scheduling of face-to-face meetings with the representative or with any member of his/her team.

There is a feature designed to allow users to follow the processing of bills submitted by the representative himself/herself ("My bills"). Another feature allows the user to send suggestions for bills, to be taken over or not by the representative. Another feature is "Transparency", which allows the user to track the expenses of the representative's office. It is also possible for users to present their opinions on the public budget ("Budget").

From the point of view of the representative's personal knowledge, there are the "Profile" features, gathering biographical information from the representative; and "Proposals", which provides the campaign proposals of the representative as a candidate, so that the user can assess the performance of the representative in relation to what he/she assumed as a commitment in the electoral period. Figure 2 shows the application's functionalities screen.

Figure 2 - Application's functionalities screen

Source: Generated by the authors themselves, using the application 'Our Mandate'.

Table 2 shows the application usage data:

Table 2 - Use of the 'Our Mandate' application, by users who follow the Federal Representative Felipe Rigoni, by functionality.

	February	March	April	May	June
Votes on bills	906	641	7560	306	330
Problem notification	22	6	12	10	2
Schedule meeting	15	20	7	21	0
Bills suggestions	38	41	33	45	17
Budget suggestions	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on data provided by the advisor of the Representative Filipe Rigoni.

From the conception of the office and its structure, the representative sought to contemplate the issue of interaction with the application. There is a server dedicated exclusively to the operational issues of the application, however, all servers in the office are responsible for jointly receiving and seeking to meet the demands that arise through the application. To this end, the representative sought to adapt all the internal practices of the cabinet, work logistics and daily routines make his/her digital mandate model work well. The chief of the office in the state, for example, is preparing to schedule the meetings requested by users. The server responsible for the legislative production area studies the suggestions for bills, contributing with the representative to filter those who are unable to be made viable[5] or those suggestions that do not adhere to the profile of the representative mandate, and, among those that pass through this sieve, adapt to the legislative format necessary for the bill protocol. The legislative process advisor, when receiving the week's agenda, creates accessible, short and objective texts, to explain the bills and make them available for voting by users, being also responsible for monitoring the result of the votes and updating the representative about them.

3.2. Qualitative aspects

The representative highlighted that the application can be seen as a way to structure popular participation, simplifying the possibility of effective participation in the mandate for the average citizen. For him, the positive aspects are not restricted to the fact that the citizen feels himself/herself participating, but also to the fact that the application, by allowing a structured dialogue, contributes to generate a 'collective intelligence', which can be used by the representative to strengthen the mandate.

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[5] For example, a bill proposal to implement the death penalty is ruled out because it is not viable (unconstitutional) and because it does not adhere to the profile of the representative's mandate.

In the view of Federal Representative Felipe Rigoni, this collective intelligence is a gain that transcends the electoral aspect. Still according to the representative, there are many matters of interest, but about which they have no further knowledge. With the participation of users, in the application, important suggestions and comments arise, which contribute to their own perception and understanding of the subject. Still on the influence of using the application in the mandate, the representative noted that it imposes discipline on the office and, consequently, on the mandate, making it more active and rigorous with internal processes and external practices. The need to explain the bills in advance, signaling a tendency to vote, leads to a self-commitment of greater dedication to the analysis of each bill.

With regard to his connection with the inputs coming from the application, the representative expresses his clarity that the nature of his mandate is independent, that is, he does not feel obliged to follow the results obtained through the application (vote according to the majority of voters, for example). However, from the perspective of collective intelligence, he considers participations via application to be important and, from them, he often has different insights on the various subjects under comment. According to the representative relationship advisor, who specifically takes care of the application, despite the low number of users, engagement is growing. For her, there is work to be done in terms of teaching popular participation: "Unfortunately, popular participation is something we need to teach. The population is not used to following closely, giving opinions, charging. It is an ant's work to change that".

The advisor's analysis corresponds to a representative's view regarding the educational role of the application. When disclosing his agenda, as a member of the House of Representatives, he also disseminates the national political agenda, on a friendly and intelligible platform, allowing even those with little formal knowledge to be able to understand and follow. For the representative, this is an important dimension, given the deficit in political education in Brazil. According to him, every good politician should also be a good teacher[6].

With regard to the elections, the representative assessed that the application precedes the voter's response, serving as a 'daily ruler' to assess his own work. It also creates, on the part of those represented, a desire for participation, because when users have the experience of having their vote answered, either by an individual vote justification or by proposing some legislative suggestion, they feel fulfilled, realizing that their participation can have objective results.

Finally, for the representative, the application is a technology to enable authentic and real-time responsiveness. With it, the representative seeks a deep understanding of the conditions, situations and needs of those represented, striving to see the world through their

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[6] In his interview, the representative attributed this phrase to former British Prime Minister David Cameron.

eyes and to capture the essence of their experiences.

4. Discussion

The number of users who follow the mandate of the Representative Felipe Rigoni (5,036) should be seen in perspective. In view of the total number of users who downloaded the application, 1/3 are users of the representative, which, in itself, contributes to legitimize their choice for the case study. However, given the number of voters of the representative himself and, even more, the total number of voters in his state, the number and users is still very small. However, one can imagine that this number will grow as the application is used and produces results.

Regarding the bills submitted, this is an expressive number – 129 suggestions. According to the representative, three were proposed by himself, three were referred to a councilor and two to state representatives, given their nature in terms of legislative competence. Eleven were considered unfeasible, due to technical and parliamentary issues; others were referred to the Legislative Consultancy for further studies.

The expressiveness of this result (presentation of bills) is highlighted due to the constitutional complexity so that a proposal for a popular initiative is presented before the House of Representatives. According to paragraph 2 ° of Art. 62 of the Federal Constitution, a bill of popular initiative needs to be subscribed by at least one percent of the national electorate, distributed by at least five states, with not less than three tenths percent of the voters of each one of them (BRASIL, [2016]). The possibility for electors to present a bill, using the application, therefore becomes much easier.

Equally expressive is the result of the meeting scheduling functionality. Forty-two meetings have already been requested, sixteen of which have already been held and the others await availability on the representative's agenda. In view of the geographical characteristics of Brazil and the location of Brasilia, scheduling a meeting with a representative can be a very difficult task for a citizen, without resorting to a feature of this nature.

The problem notification functionality featured forty-six notifications. In this specific case, it is necessary to reflect on the role of the representative, because his/her role is not to be a mediator or superintendent of his/her electorate. However, there are times when the representative's performance in this dimension may represent legitimate public policy initiatives. In any case, the availability of technology expands the possibilities of communication to those represented, who, otherwise, should have some direct channel of contact with the representative to present their complaints.

The votes on bills functionality is the one that registered the greatest participation in the scope of the application. In the case of Bill 1,292 of 1995, for example, 106 people expressed their opinion by voting on the bill. Considering that people had to do the entire application

adhesion process (search, installation, registration, use), as well as the fact that they were willing to register their vote, this shows a great commitment, a symptom of qualified participation. Which, certainly, generates in the elector a genuine satisfaction in perceiving his/her voice being effectively considered, even though the representative does not vote in accordance with the result presented by the application. It is noticed that the application reinforces the dialogical link between the representative and those represented, preserving the non-linked character of the mandate.

In the case of the transparency functionality, there is redundancy with other types of systems, such as open data provided by the House of Representatives. However, in the application environment, the information is more accessible to the user and ends up composing, also, an additional element in this dialogical relationship between the representative and those represented. Likewise, we can consider the area of proposals as a simplification, for being direct and clear, of the instruments of vertical accountability in relation to the representative.

It is very interesting to record the peak of users and interactions with the application, verified in April 2019 – 3,627 new registered users (see Table 1) and 7,560 votes (see Table 2). Studies on representation show that the electoral connection, or, in other words, the interest of those represented by the performance of representatives, is significantly increased when sensitive topics are under discussion (EULAU; KARPS, 1977; EULAU *et al*., 1959). This was the case in April 2019, when the Social Security Reform proposal was in deliberation. Salisbury (1984, p. 65) states that "interest is active, preference is passive", highlighting how interests involve the perception of anticipated effects of politics – governmental action or inaction, including all its symbolic forms, as well as allocations more tangible.

Final considerations

Innovations in the areas of technology and social media have had a significant and global impact on democracy in recent years. NICTs amplified the voices of citizens and facilitated the accountability processes of the authorities. However, despite the almost daily appearance of various platforms, applications and tools created to carry out the political process or adapted to it, their use by political actors is still below social demands.

The use of applications to monitor representatives' mandates in this context is even more recent and innovative. The data collected by this article are still very preliminary and can generate an exploratory perspective on the subject, according to the methodological proposal adopted. It can be seen, right now, that the application actually generates a more active engagement than other social networks, qualifying citizen participation and opening up possibilities for effective and concrete results for those represented.

The constraints of this article (case study of an isolated experience, recent phenomenon) open up possibilities for future studies, such as comparative studies, nationally and

internationally, to verify the progress of the use of this specific type of NICT in the monitoring of the representative mandate. It is also imagined the construction of operational variables that allow more clarity on these new practices.

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