

## A REVIEW ON OPEN GOVERNMENT AND DEMOCRACY

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### ABSTRACT

*The idea of open government, which has been extensively pushed in recent years, promises a wider vision than e-government, with the goal of radically transforming governments to become more transparent, participatory, and collaborative. Unfortunately, this hasn't made a substantial difference in a number of basic e-government issues. One issue is that the underlying democratic philosophy is seldom articulated properly. As a result, in this article, we've created a framework for analyzing open government from a democratic standpoint, as well as a look at the research basis for open government and the kinds of research that are currently lacking. From 2009 to 2013, we looked at the concept of democracy in peer-reviewed publications on open government, concentrating on discussions of certain basic problems and the types of remedies proposed. We discovered that, despite seeming noble intentions and considerable rhetoric, there seems to be a dearth of appropriate instruments for public debate and representation in any meaningful way. The following are two key points to consider: I the rhetoric in the dominant discourse supports the Obama administration's concept of open government, which is defined as transparency, participation, and collaboration; however, in practice, the focus is primarily on transparency and information exchange, ignoring fundamental democratic issues such as participation and collaboration; and (ii) the rhetoric in the dominant discourse supports the Obama administration's concept of open government, which is defined as transparency, participation, and collaboration.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Democracy, Fundamental, Government, Philosophy, Participation.*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

ICTs have altered the preconditions for information sharing and provided technological opportunities for a more collaborative information creation and sharing culture. As information and communication technology (ICT) has grown increasingly common and integrated into our daily lives, the emphasis has moved from the technology itself to how we utilize it. The idea of open government places information and communication technology (ICT) at the center of a larger effort to convert governments into more creative and collaborative organizations. It can be seen as a progression of the e-government field, which has been chastised for focusing solely on improving government services and neglecting to consider the transformation of government as a whole toward a more participatory democracy. There are several technologies that promote a

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more collaborative, participatory, and transparent government, and it seems that these, when combined with appropriate data support, have the potential to be more widely used for informed debate and democratic decision-making. The idea of open government has grown in importance as a means of achieving these goals while fostering a more creative and collaborative public sector and, as a result, promoting more deliberative and participatory democratic institutions. Several problems, however, are linked to this, necessitating a more fundamental shift in governance and the creation of an innovative deliberative democracy based on a pluralistic public sphere.

Collaborative information sharing and deliberative debates are becoming more common on public platforms such as microblogs, online social networks, picture and video sharing sites, wikis, and other technologies that allow for a bottom-up approach to information creation and sharing. The private sector has created some of the most well-known technologies, such as picture and video sharing platforms (such as Flickr and YouTube), social networking sites (such as Facebook or LinkedIn), and microblogs (such as Twitter). There are also systems aimed at increasing transparency in the public sector, an online encyclopedia about American politics and elections; OpenCongress and more innovative projects. The US State Department wiki for Foreign Affairs information; and Intellipedia, a joint information source for US Intelligence Agencies and Departments (Baltimore). Various wikis and community portals for jointly sharing information on local areas such as cities are also popular categories. Following these trends for making information of various types public, many governments and authorities have begun to provide access to public data, allowing people to search, download, reuse, and share data from agencies, localities, and the federal government for the United States: one example is the state of New York's site [data.ny.gov](http://data.ny.gov).

This is a major step forward in many ways, but there are still many issues to address. Discrimination based on gender, age, and race is just as prevalent in the virtual world as it is in the real one. The overview of gender-building studies on the internet demonstrates how gender matters even in anonymous text-based chat and discussion forums. Racial identity is essential for involvement in interactive online setting. Despite the fact that online forums may have a variety of deliberative features, research on them is limited[1–3].

Political debates in Canada and Poland have shown that they are often neither productive nor substantive. Furthermore, many technologies include peer communication and debates as a method of achieving agreement, but these conversations are seldom coupled with any sophisticated means to allow a deliberative democratic process that takes into account important information from different points of view.

Yet, there exist tools like Your Priorities VoteIt, and Simply Voting as well as decision support systems like Palisade and Rationale that concentrate on various methods to vote and organize arguments around issues. However, they are seldom used in more open-ended discussion forums. There are also platforms that aim to capture more systematic and deliberative decision making but they are often only used for very specific purposes, and even though such structured tools have proven to produce higher quality results, their use tends to result in even more reduction in productivity. For example, compare an unstructured conversation with one that is assisted by structuring tools, and they find that the organized discussion improves quality but excludes individuals who do not understand the tools or this kind of reasoning.

It's also worth noting that 87 percent of Wikipedia contributors are men, with the average age being about 18 years old. Half of the authors are under the age of 23, and just 14.7 percent are parents. Furthermore, fewer than 10% of the total number of writers are responsible for more than 90% of the postings in the ten biggest.

To conclude, when it comes to deliberative processes and tools for analyzing the representativeness of the players engaged, the democratic element of existing systems for information exchange and cooperation has not progressed. As a result, it's critical to examine how these problems have been handled in the growing number of papers on open government, which this study does via a content analysis of peer-reviewed journals that have published on the subject in the last five years. The next part defines the present idea of open government, and the third section places it within a larger theoretical framework in order to evaluate it from a democratic standpoint. The technique utilized in the fourth part is described, and the findings of our content analysis are presented in the fifth section. Finally, we analyze our results in light of our theoretical framework and propose a study agenda for the field's future research.

## *2. The Concept of Open Government:*

Open government can be seen as a new paradigm within different research areas such as e-government (making government more efficient, transparent, interactive, and service-oriented through the use of ICT), e-participation (top-down and bottom-up practices of citizen participation), and open data in the field of computer science (availability, access, reuse, and redistribution of data to enable interoperability and innovation). The open government idea includes participatory elements of government such as crowd sourcing as a way to make the government better informed but also more effective by delegating certain data creation and administration to a variety of public and private sector plan. Collaboration is concerned with deliberative elements of social media in which knowledge is produced in a citizen-to-government conversation; nevertheless, contact with the public is not simply viewed as a means to crowd source information. Transparency and information sharing at all levels of government, between government and the public, and in the public sphere means that information is not only accessible by default to promote understanding and accountability, but also interoperable and open for reuse by different government agencies and the private sector to promote innovation[4–7].

The Obama administration has embraced and pushed the idea of open government in a big way (Open Government Progress Report to the American People, 2009). The open government VPN is primarily supported by the United States government and organizations headquartered in the United States, according to an article mapping online "virtual policy networks" (VPNs). The European Commission (European Commission, 2013) as well as the governments of Canada and Australia (2014) support the idea (2010). The idea of transparent government has long been advocated in China, particularly as a means of holding local governments responsible on environmental concerns. The Open Government Partnership (2014), a global platform supported by private investors and partner governments, currently has 63 member states from all over the globe that have committed to establishing and implementing common open government principles.

The open government idea emphasizes interoperability, transparency, and participatory aspects that technology may improve, as well as a fundamental shift in how governments function.

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According to official documents promoting open government from the United States (Open Government Progress Report to the American People, 2009), Canada (Government of Canada, 2014), and the European Commission (European Commission, 2013), the concept is broadly used in various contexts, but the focus differs. In the United States, for example, commercial players and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) currently control a significant portion of the public sector, which explains why interoperability and accountability, common standards, and open data policies are so important. In Europe, where many governments have historically had more control over their public sector, the emphasis is on decentralization and opening up to private sector players and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Transparency and comprehension are emphasized throughout the papers, and public involvement is regarded as a critical tool for collecting data. Furthermore, the Obama administration has emphasized the importance of public collaboration, which includes not only providing data to the government but also developing information collaboratively in a democratic process that includes multiple perspectives (Open Government Progress Report to the American People). Singapore's "Government with you" approach aims to collaborate with the public in the creation of information and services. The primary emphasis of the Australian declaration is debate and "greater involvement in Australia's democracy".

As a result, the meaning of open government changes from a means to improve government efficiency and innovation to a way to improve democracy. In order to examine how the idea connects to democracy, we shall provide a framework for democracy in the next section. The overview of e-democracy discourses, reviews of the field of e-government, all point to a lack of nuanced discussion of the underlying concepts of democracy, and to the fact that technology development is usually based on an unarticulated liberal conception of democracy. In this liberal rhetoric, democracy is a market-like tool in which people vote for the political parties of their choice depending on how well they meet citizens' wants and interests. Individual liberty and openness are necessary conditions for making informed decisions in this case. The open government discourse advocates a more participatory government, more in accordance with deliberative democracy proponents. The fundamental notion is to return to a traditional democratic concept in which a wide public deliberative discussion is required to achieve a common understanding of the issues at hand and the choices made. The distance between people and their representatives will generate alienation in society and transform democracy into a marketplace for political ideas devoured by a passive audience if individuals are not active and involved. The deliberative democracy model has also been challenged, mostly because of the concept of a neutral public space free of agonistic interests, where all facts are given and everyone may reach an agreement. The uneven involvement in the public sphere, as well as the hegemonic discourse that determines what is possible to say in this domain and what is deemed political, is highlighted. As a consequence, consensus is impossible to achieve; rather, it is a "temporary outcome of a provisional hegemony" and there is a danger that confidence in this concept would weaken democratic institutions. Mouffe also criticizes the fundamental goal of deliberative democracy, which is to establish a neutral space free of self-interest and emotion, where "objective" reasoning and agreement may be achieved[8–10].

Instead, she believes that democracy is about accepting a diversity of beliefs and identities, and that clashing interests should be turned into competing interests rather than believing that there is a one-size-fits-all answer. With this in mind, we turn to liberal democratic theory to identify

some key ideas. This theory is helpful as a starting point because it views democracy as an iterative and scalable process in a setting that includes people who are impacted by its choices. Dahl's democratic model may therefore be applied to members of a small group, state citizens, and members of a volunteer organization. Democracy, according to Dahl, is a continuous reflecting process that involves not just collective decision-making but also determining who is a representative "citizen" in those decision-making processes.

Grasp is at the heart of this process, with the goal that everyone participating has a clear understanding of the issues and possibilities, as well as the freedom to voice that understanding. Following that, fundamental democratic rights to participate in the deliberative process of establishing the agenda, having debates, and voting are granted. Finally, equitable representation is critical at all levels, from agenda formulation through debate and voting. We may assess the degree of democracy in a scenario by examining these three factors. We'll now look at how open government ideas connect to these three elements of the democratic process: comprehension, debate, and representation.

## 2. DISCUSSION

The open government concept proposed in the research papers is a powerful meme because it alludes to change, transformation, and even a revolution in the way government operates. It's also difficult to argue against this belief system's promises of responsibility, innovation, and a sharing culture, all of which will be fulfilled provided we all conform to the same norms. Despite the apparent democratic problems with ICT, such as growing inequalities and access to the tools to participate in society being more complex than ever, much research has focused on the less problematic aspects of open government, neglecting the challenges of digital difference. From a radical democratic perspective, both participation, in which people provide government with information, and collaboration, in which knowledge is created through debate, may be challenged. In this perspective, the "public" is made up of many people who are different from one another. Because of conflicting interests within and between parties, it is difficult to achieve consensus in a deliberative process in such a scenario. ICT has worsened the gap between diverse groups' ability to participate in terms of needed literacy and social capital, according to research on digital differentiation. It matters who is arguing and making decisions. Feminist academics emphasize the importance of "placed knowledge", which implies that knowledge is always positioned in a person's previous understanding of the material. People not only have varied and sometimes competing interests, but they also produce and interpret information differently, which is why the outcome of information gathering is also affected by who is in the "crowd." As a consequence, there is a need for more discussion and action research in this area in order to discover methods to foster a more deliberate democratic process.

Furthermore, gaining access to various stakeholders particularly in more marginalized groups is a significant challenge, and in order to mitigate the severity of such situations, it is critical to recognize antagonistic interests as well as understand which opinions are visible in the debate and which are not. With the possible exception of tools that meet the need to identify participants, existing support tools appear to lack this ambition when it comes to ways for more representative participation in collaborative governments. In an online community, your online performance determines your identity. Identity is not an issue for simple and clearly defined task-oriented activities like data transcription, but as tasks become more complex, legally



recognized identity becomes increasingly important. As a consequence, more rigorous research in this area is needed. It's also essential to speak about why issues like representation and digital diversity aren't addressed at all in these areas of research. Similarly, it is important to look into the facts and reasons why political science professors have not addressed open government in their own discipline/publications.

### 3. CONCLUSION

To conclusion, the prevailing discourse supports the idea of open government as defined by the Obama administration: openness, engagement, and cooperation. But in reality, it ignores the more problematic concepts of deliberation and representation, and primarily relies on understanding via information interchange. Only one article offers a technique to promote deliberation with no proposed solution to the problem of representation. Finally, most often, the public is portrayed as one homogeneous population. This study of the open government paradigm shows that the concept of open government has become more politicized, concentrating on innovation and efficiency rather than discussion and democracy in political discourse. Transparency and open data are instruments for not only accountability but also control. As a consequence, a more critical discussion about who owns data, how it is produced, and by whom is needed.

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