

# What confers legitimacy to public policies? Comparing the print-online media logic of the legitimacy judgment

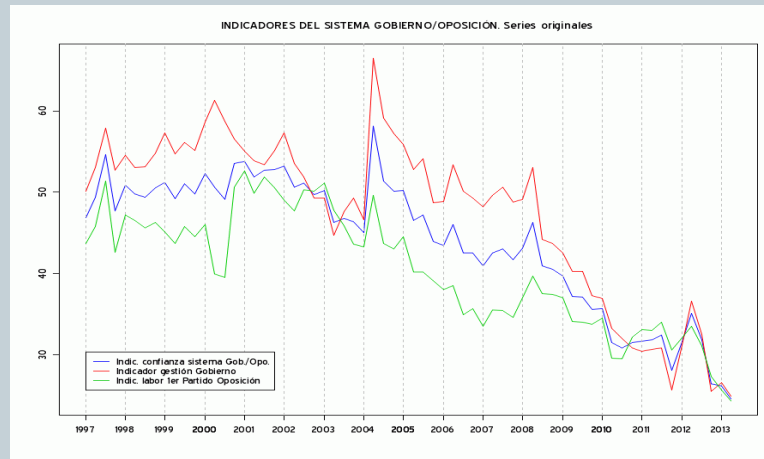


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# Starting point



**GAP**



Can communication help closing this gap?

# Theory framework



INTANGIBLE ASSETS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

# Building intangible assets in the public sector, an emerging research area

(Garnett, 1992; Grunig, 1997; Garnett et al., 2008; Glenney, 2008; Luoma-aho, 2008; Geldes & Ihlen, 2010; Stromback and Kioussis, 2011; Canel & Sanders, 2012; Waeraas & Byrkjeflot, 2012; Valentini, 2013; Sanders & Canel, 2013; Luoma-aho and Makikangas, 2013).



# Building intangible assets to close gaps

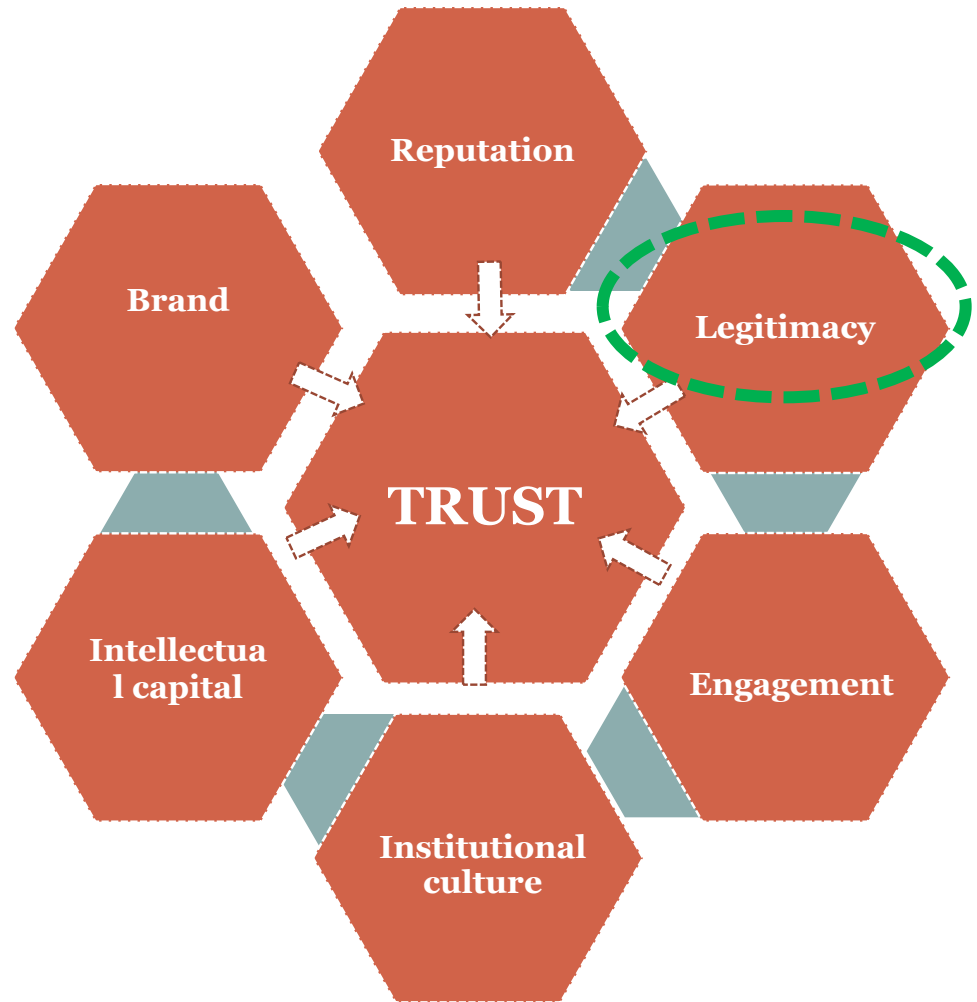


- **Non-monetary asset**
- that enables and **gives access to tangible capital**
- it gives rise to a **resource**
- from which a future **benefit/value**

(Egginton, 1990; Hall, 1992; Lev & Daum, 2004; Canel & Luoma-aho, 2015; Canel & Luoma-aho, in press)

# Building intangible assets in the public sector, an emerging research area

(Garnett, 1992; Grunig, 1997; Garnett et al., 2008; Glenny, 2008; Luoma-aho, 2008; Geldes & Ihlen, 2010; Stromback and Kioussis, 2011; Canel & Sanders, 2012; Waeraas & Byrkjeflot, 2012; Valentini, 2013; Sanders & Canel, 2013; Luoma-aho and Makikangas, 2013).



**Can intangible Legitimacy increase trust?**

# Legitimacy



- Legitimacy is the **judgment** that strategic audiences make about an **organization's actions, according to cultural norms and standards**
- *Is the government behaving as it should?*

(DiMaggio y Powell, 1991; Suchman, 1995; Deephouse, 1996; Tyler, 2006; Johnson, Dowd & Ridgeway, 2006; Bitektine, 2011)

# Congruence between



**Social values  
implied by  
organizational  
activities....**

**GAP**

**AND**



**the norms of  
acceptable  
behavior in  
society.**

**CONGRUENCE**

(DiMaggio y Powell, 1991; Suchman, 1995; Deephouse, 1999; Johnson, Dowd & Ridgeway, 2006; Bitektine, 2011).



# Legitimacy an intangible asset?

## RESOURCE

- “provides a **‘reservoir of support’** (Tyler, 2006, 381)
- organizations get perceived as more **worthy, meaningful, predictable, and credible** (Hamilton, 2006; Tyler, 2006).

## (Economic) benefits flow

- **promotes rule-following** (Hurd, 1999)
- **saves systems of deterrence strategies** and incentives

# Exploring the legitimacy judgment



**WHAT IS THE ANGLE PEOPLE STRESS WHEN  
JUDGING PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS?**

# Four types of legitimacy



Type	What it is	Applied to the public sector
Procedural legitimacy	The process	“consulting all required bodies to pass a law”
Consequential legitimacy	Outcomes, results, achievements	“mortality rates at hospitals”;
Structural legitimacy	Buildings, working policies, budgets, resources, etc	“A hospital follows safety laws”
Personal legitimacy	Leadership	The Minister of Health pays his/her taxes

(Suchman, 1995; Deephouse & Carter, 2005; Bitektine, 2011)

# Implications of these typologies?



- may help identifying which is **the angle the judge emphasizes** when assessing an organization
- allow elaborating **better measurements** of the value which is provided to stakeholders in public management
- will give clues about what **strategies help bridging gaps with citizens**

# Online Legitimacy. Towards the “networked legitimacy” in Twitter



CASTELLO ET AL. 2016

Does Online Communication  
modify the legitimacy  
judgment?

# Social media: Networked Legitimacy (Castello et al. 2016)



- Social media are suitable platforms for **organizations-public dialogue** (Angeles & Capriotti, 2009; Etter, 2014; Fieseler & Fleck, 2013; Lee et al., 2013)
- **enhance legitimacy**: improve transparency (Bertot, Jaeger & Grimes, 2010; Mossberger, Wu and Crawford, 2013; Kim, Park and Rho, 2015; Oliviera & Welch 2013)
- social media help **organizations** become **more relational** (Bitektine & Haack, 2015).
- **social media use is associated with high consequential and procedural legitimacy** (Suchman, 1995; Tyler, 1997; Scharpf, 1999; Grimmeliikhuijsen & Meijer, 2014).

# Methodology and research questions





# Methodological design

The Spanish Minister  
for Education 2011-  
2015

**Minister and Ministry**

- Official website
- Twitter accounts

**Triangulation**

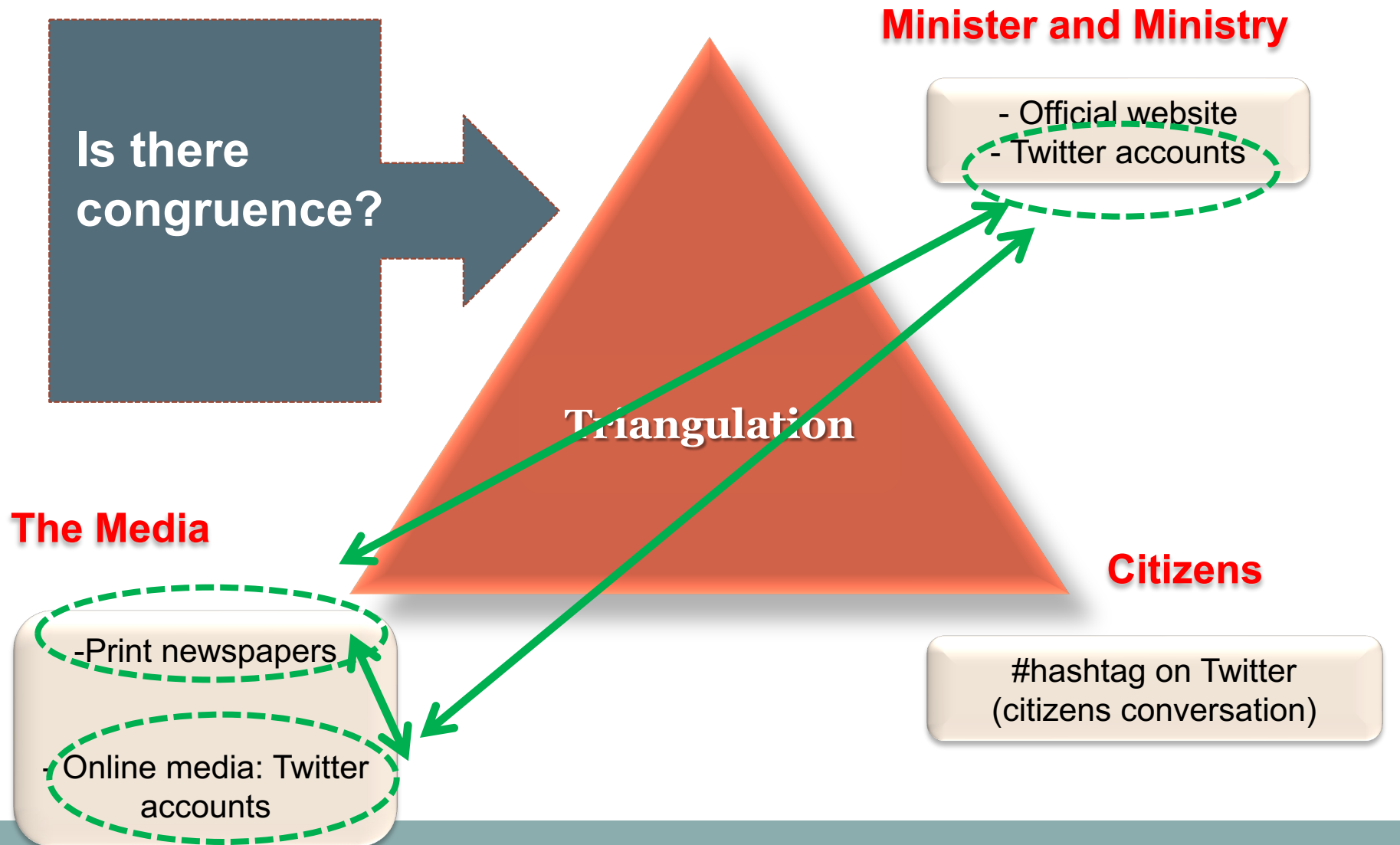
**The Media**

- Print newspapers
- Online media: Twitter  
accounts

**Citizens**

#hashtag on Twitter  
(citizens conversation)

# Methodological design



# Research questions



- Do all four types of legitimacy apply?
- Is there a predominant type?
- Are there differences between print and online media?
- Which media represent closer the Minister's Twitter account?
- What are the implications for legitimacy strategies of public sector organizations?

# Findings



# Types of legitimacy in the media: Do 4 apply?

	Print media	Online media
Procedural	50%	79,8%
Consequential	35,3%	9,7%
Structural <b>X</b>	0,4%	-
Personal	12,2%	10,5%

- ✓ **Structural does not apply to either**
- ✓ **Personal very little**
- ✓ **Same predominance: procedural**

# Comparing printed with online media

	Print media	Online media
Procedural	50%	79,8%
Consequential	35,3%	9,7%
Structural <b>X</b>	0,4%	-
Personal	12,2%	10,5%

## ✓ Different distribution:

- ✓ Online media are much more focused on the process than print media
- ✓ Print media are more focused on achievements than online media
- ✓ In online media the process becomes the crucial angle for legitimacy

# Types of legitimacy: comparing the media with the Minister's account

	Print media	Online media	Minister's profile in Twitter
Procedural	50%	79,8%	76,5%
Consequential	35,3%	9,7%	14,7%
Structural	0,4% <b>X</b>	- <b>X</b>	- <b>X</b>
Personal	12,2%	10,5%	8,8%

- ✓ Structural does not apply
- ✓ Same predominance: procedural
- ✓ Personal seems to be equally important

# Types of legitimacy: comparing the media with the Minister's account

	<b>Traditional media</b>	<b>Online media</b>	<b>Minister's profile in Twitter</b>
Procedural	50%	79,8%	76,5%
Consequential	35,3%	↓ 9,7%	↓ 14,7%
Structural	0,4%	-	-
Personal	12,2%	10,5%	8,8%

✓ Twitter seems to increase the focus on processes

✓ Even for the Minister the process gets much more important than the person

✓ Achievements go down in Twitter



# Tone of judgment

Print Media			
	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Procedural	14,4	50,4	35,2
Consequential	16,3	57,1	26,5
Personal	18,5	36,3	45,1
Structural	-	100	-

Online Media			
	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Procedural	7,2	40,2	52,6
Consequential	8,3	25	66,7
Personal	-	-	-
Structural	-	-	-

✓ Print media is more negative than online media

✓ Print media is more polarized

✓ Twitter increases neutrality for both processes and achievements

# Tone of judgment: the Minister's profile

Print Media			
	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Procedural	14,4	50,4	35,2
Consequential	16,3	57,1	26,5
Personal	18,5	36,3	45,1
Structural	-	100	-

Online Media			
	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Procedural	7,2	40,2	52,6
Consequential	8,3	25	66,7
Personal	-	-	-
Structural	-	-	-

The Minister's profile in Twitter			
	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Procedural	25	-	75
Consequential	55	-	45
Personal	33,3	-	66,7
Structural	-	-	-

✓ Minister's non negativity is more followed by online media than by print media

✓ Online media follows minister's neutrality more than print media

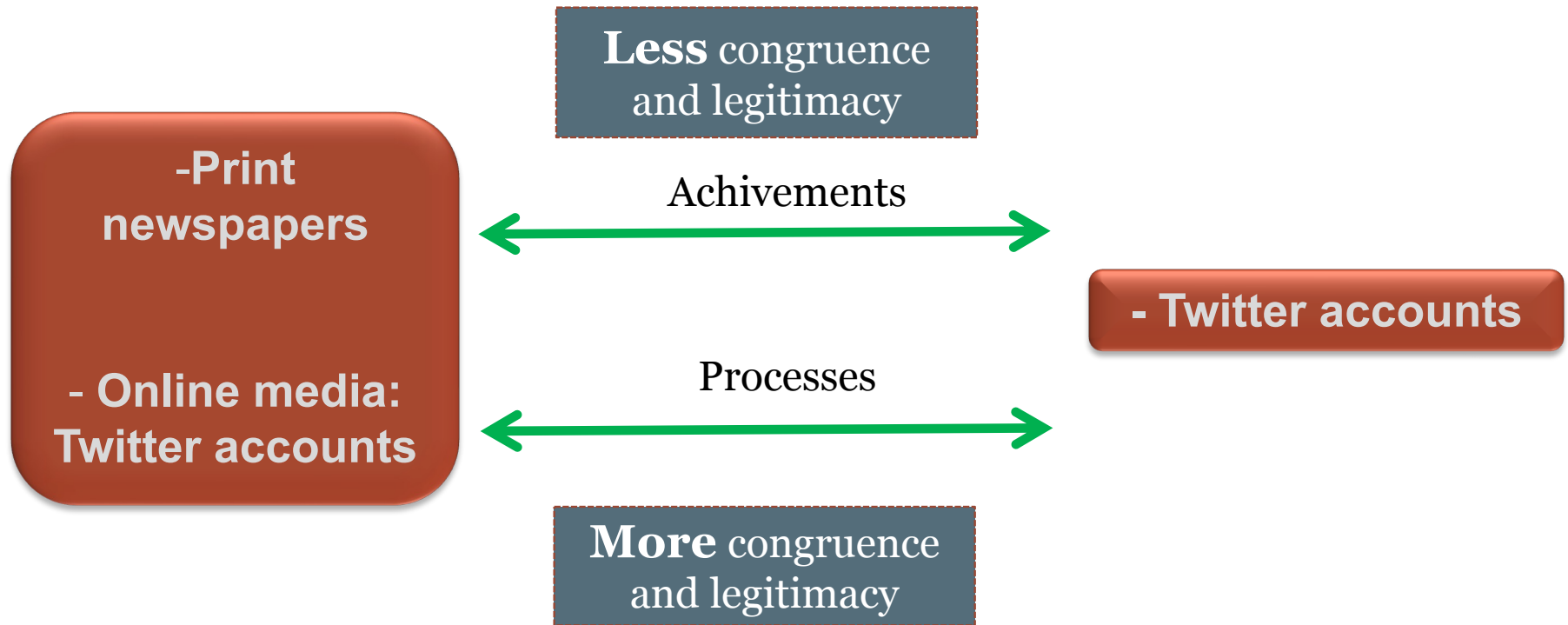
# Conclusions/Final comments



# Conclusions

## The Media

## Minister and Ministry



# Conclusions



- There is a difference in the legitimacy judgment focus:
  - Print media are interested in achievements as well as in processes
  - Online media are majorly interested in processes, much less in results
- There is a difference in the amount of legitimacy:
  - The ministry/minister have higher legitimacy (procedural and consequential) in online media than in print media;
- Online media are more congruent with the Minister than print media

# Implications for legitimacy strategies



- Public organizations should be aware of:
- A) the increasing relevance of processes: relations! dialogue! communication!



develop strategies that combine processes with outcomes

- B) the gap that there is between print and online media



address from their Twitter accounts the higher polarization of print media

# Further research

## The Media

-Print newspapers

- Online media:  
Twitter accounts

## Minister and Ministry

- Twitter accounts

Less congruence and  
legitimacy



More congruence and  
legitimacy



Who are citizens  
congruent with?



## Citizens ?

#hashtag on Twitter  
(citizens conversation)