

Communication strategies in social networks from the practice of open government

Estrategias de comunicación en redes sociodigitales desde la práctica del gobierno abierto

Estratégias de comunicação em redes sociodigitais a partir da perspectiva de um governo aberto

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to describe how the management strategies of Twitter and Facebook of the governments of Querétaro and Hidalgo are associated with open government, understood as the one that promotes transparency, accountability and citizen participation in a digital interaction scheme. The study concludes that communication strategies are not related to this concept and are not coherent with the planning established in the regulations; moreover, it shows a limited interaction between government and citizens, far from what its expected from an open government.

Keywords: open government; strategic communication; public communication; social networks.

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este artículo es describir cómo se vinculan las estrategias para la gestión de Twitter y Facebook de los gobiernos estatales de Hidalgo y Querétaro con el gobierno abierto, entendido como aquel que promueve la transparencia, la rendición de cuentas y la participación ciudadana en un esquema de interacción digital. Se concluye que las estrategias de comunicación analizadas no se vinculan con esta noción y no son coherentes con la planificación establecida en la normatividad; asimismo, evidencia una limitada interacción entre gobierno y ciudadano, alejada de lo que se espera de un gobierno abierto.

Palabras clave: gobierno abierto; comunicación estratégica; comunicación pública; redes sociodigitales.

RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é descrever a forma como se vinculam as estratégias de gestão do Twitter e Facebook nos governos de Hidalgo e Querétaro em relação a um governo aberto, entendido aqui como aquele que promove transparência, prestação de contas e participação cidadã numa lógica de interação digital. O estudo conclui que as estratégias de comunicação analisadas não se vinculam com a noção de governo aberto, pela incoerência das propostas apresentadas; que evidenciam uma interação limitada entre governo e cidadão, distante de uma formulação de governo aberto.

Palavras-chave: governo aberto; comunicação estratégica; comunicação pública; redes sociais.

How to cite:

Negrete-Huelga, K. & Rivera-Magos, S. (2018). Estrategias de comunicación en redes sociodigitales desde la práctica del gobierno abierto. *Cuadernos.info*, (42), 183-196. <https://doi.org/10.7764/cdi.42.1242>

INTRODUCTION

The processes of transparency transform the patrimonialist vision of the State, which had been solely in charge of protecting information, towards new methods of governance that “guarantee the democratization and development of new forms of government and dialogical systems of interaction and construction of the common” (Sierra, 2013, p. 23). It is in this context that open government emerges as a measure for the opening of information using information and communication technologies. This initiative seeks, through transparency and accountability, to achieve the collaboration of society in public affairs, using digital platforms as mediating elements of the discourse between the government and citizens. Thus, spaces such as Twitter and Facebook consolidate as “‘detonating’ instruments” for democratic protest and transformation” (Natal, Benítez, & Ortiz, 2014, p. 193).

Both Ibero-American and American authors agree on the need to analyze the incidence and effectiveness of the strategies for the use of social digital networks in public administrations (Criado & Rojas-Martín, 2015; Ferré Pavia, 2014; Gómez-Issasi, 2013; Mickoleit, 2014; Sandoval-Almazán & Gil-García, 2012; Velasco, 2013). Some even propose models that analyze the platforms of digital governments to measure their development (Gil-García, 2012). Despite academic recognition of the potential of these tools, studies show that uses are far from their proper exploitation, which results in a lack of communication strategies. Villoria and Ramírez-Alujas (2013) affirm that the use of ICTs is not transforming the way in which governments interact. In the same vein, Mickoleit (2014) points out that several governments of the world continue to use them to retransmit press releases, without taking advantage of their capacities for openness, inclusion and participation. In Mexican context, Gómez-Issasi (2013) reveals that social digital networks do not always entail citizen participation, because digital communication strategies are not based on interactivity. Moreover, Sandoval-Almazán and Gil-García (2012) claim that there is a lack of strategies for the creation of content and attraction, and have shown that, in some states, instead of increasing their impact, they lose users.

Despite the results, the open government initiative is active on the Mexican presidential agenda and is part of collaborative projects with civil organizations and experts, such as the Alliance for Open Government, which seeks to “promote citizen participation, increase transparency, fight corruption, and use technology as an enabler of this openness” (Alianza para el Gobierno Abierto, 2015, n/p.). Given the dichotomy between the official discourse and the results of research, there is a need to evaluate the communication strategies in social digital networks from a vision that ranges from the review of the official strategy to the management processes and the results of digital contents. As it is a recent object of study, it requires “more research to recommend policies or ideas that improve interaction with citizens, as well as using them to encourage cooperation and collaboration with the government which allows generating value in society” (Sandoval-Almazán & Gil-García, 2012, p. 298).

In this paper, we present a study that analyzes open government from strategic communication, a theoretical approach necessary to understand its functioning and face the difficulties exposed by researchers about the use of social digital networks by the government. Using a comparative methodological construction of two case studies, we analyzed the governments of the states of Hidalgo and Querétaro from a model that exploits documentary, empirical and digital data to assess their communication strategies in social digital networks, considering the elements that constitute the open government. Therefore, we start with the question: How are the management strategies of Twitter and Facebook linked to the open government policy in the state governments of Hidalgo and Querétaro?

Firstly, we discuss the definition of open government and its differentiation with *e-government*, to then focus on the theoretical perspective of strategic communication in governments and its links with the public and the governmental. Next, we present the methodological model, which includes a study divided into three stages, with different variables and data collection tools. Subsequently, we present the analysis and discussion of the results of the study, to end with the conclusions.

OPEN GOVERNMENT AND E-GOVERNMENT, DIFFERENCES AND RELATIONS

Technological changes affect the development of a modern liberal State legitimized by the will of citizens. From the emergence of the printing press to the cinema, radio and television, the use of technology in the political sphere has been an imperative for the activities of ideological dissemination and electoral propaganda. Thus, the nature of the government's activities made it the only privileged one for the collection, registration, storage and processing of large amounts of information (Ruelas & Pérez, 2006; Sandoval-Almazán, 2013). In the search for the legitimization of power, governments resort to transparency and the opening of information under new logics of government that seek to build a participatory democracy. Open government is born from the debates on access and freedom of information, data protection and the improvement of democracy; it is a measure that generates a constant conversation with citizens to hear what they say and request, and that makes decisions based on their preferences and needs (Goberna América Latina, 2013). This is what is referred to as the active insertion of individuals in public life. An open government seeks to achieve citizen participation through the conversion of government data into open data, "to allow its use, protection and collaboration by citizens in the processes of public decision-making, accountability and improvement of public services" (Sandoval-Almazán, 2013, p. 13). According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the benefits entailed are the assurance of fair access to the formulation of public policies and the reestablishment of trust in government (Goberna América Latina, 2013). Therefore, the four pillars that support it are transparency, accountability, collaboration and citizen participation, in a model of digital interaction in which the civil servant loses the monopoly of knowledge and rethinks his relationship with the citizen. Its operation requires a complex vision, with a change of perspective regarding traditional communication models, both by public servants and by citizen-users. It also requires the restructuring of internal organizations and procedures, prior to its enforcement. Sandoval-Almazán (2013) mentions two characteristics necessary for its functioning: the first

is the reorganization of data to open its consultation to the citizens in government repositories; the second, the establishment of its measurement derived from the different levels of maturity and implementation perceived in each country. In this context, the social digital networks construct new spaces of direct interaction between both actors of the State, eliminating the physical obstacles of distance and time.

It is therefore evident that open government cannot happen without technology. Thus, an *e-government* implies a technological implementation in the internal structures and in the existing administrative procedures. To do so, it is necessary to consider two mechanistic and instrumental elements: the development of an infrastructure that allows connectivity, and the digitization and use of ICTs in internal processes, so that they are agile and efficient. *E-government* maintains a relationship with the citizen based on the improvement of the procedures and services to which he can access, and is configured as the first step on the road to the development of open government policies through the use of technology.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION IN THE STUDY OF OPEN GOVERNMENT

In the political changes that result from the insertion of ICTs, communication processes are transformed, giving greater relevance to the role of citizens, who openly manifest their demands and needs. Thanks to the new channels of digital communication for government interaction, there is a point of convergence between the governmental and the public. The first term refers to a communicative perspective that perceives the Internet as a space for promoting government actions that seek understanding, adherence and support from citizens to the rulers from the dissemination of information. Under this interpretation, government communication has the task of establishing sensors to detect certain needs and maintaining its audience as its main focus (Tironi & Cavallo, 2008), in order to give a sense of stability and generate convincing, coherent and understandable messages (Gasió & Amadeo, 2001). The second perceives communication from a different process, in which the object focuses on the interaction of State

actors (society-companies-government), in a scheme of circulation of information and opinions with the same opportunity to issue messages. In this scheme, public communication leads to sustain flexible and open regimes, where the role of government is only that of “one more actor, and often one against whom the actors associate” (Demers & Lavigne, 2007, p. 77).

In the landscape of initiatives that seek government openness, the common points between communication, technology and government lead to consider public communication as the appropriate perspective for the analysis of the technological mediations proposed by open government.

From this perspective, the interaction generated in digital public spaces is considered in a context of advanced democratic openness; in this context, citizens are considered as active figure in the social debate, so his approach of what is public for the analysis of communication in social digital networks – from the perspective of open government– is pertinent, since it is associated “with a discursive network where other concepts such as democracy, political participation, citizen rights or accountability meet” (De León, 2009, p. 17).

It is evident that governments need to set communication strategies from the public perspective; however, the functionality of the initiative will be reflected not only in the approach perspective, but also in the communication strategies linked to the implementation and management of the networks. In this regard, communication goes from being the articulation of a participatory process to the axis of action traced by the lines of purpose. In strategic communication, there is an analysis of the organizational essence linked to goals derived from certain interests, which requires maintaining coherent discourses and actions. In a context framed in the lack of credibility and the need for legitimation of the State, the elaboration of governance policies under strategic thinking will help to reduce the distance between what the executive powers say to maintain their identity and what citizens perceive (Canel & Zamora, 2004). Thus, its role will be inherent in the achievement of the implementation of the objectives in an integral planning process (design, execution and analysis of lines of action), which allows the interaction channels to be effectively used to provide feedback on the institutional actions that other actors propose, without neglecting the principles, values and

objectives that govern the institution. The perception from the perspective of open government entails the possibility of empowering messages that reflect the values of society through the “proactive and constant exchange of messages with selected audiences and through various media and channels” (Sánchez Benítez, 2011, p. 7).

The role of strategic communication seeks to strengthen the credibility of the government through the openness and flexibility of the organization, as well as the congruence between its plans and its actions. Hence, the strategy in social digital networks cannot be conducted in isolation and disconnected from open government, but requires that a global social media strategy surrounds it as a part of the communication plans (Gómez-Roa, 2013). In this regard, the most advanced degree of use of the social-digital networks will be achieved with the introduction of clear guidelines and the publication of the official strategy of the organization (Mergel & Bretschneider, 2013).

In summary, the points of encounter between interaction, technology and government, in this context, lead to consider strategic communication as a transversal element for the functioning of initiatives such as open government, which converge in the public and governmental communication logics. Thus, public communication is conceived as the most appropriate way to analyze technological mediations, where the public actors involved (society, companies and governments) establish interactions in a balanced manner.

METHODOLOGY

Faced with the need to create a model for the analysis of open government capable of investigating the strategies for implementation and appropriation of this practice, we decided to pick up some of the indicators and categories exposed in the methodological models of Rojas-Martín (2013) for the measurement of social digital networks in *e-government*, of De León & Medina (2013) for the study of digital public spaces, and of Muñoz, Dader, Marlen and Salazar (2016) for the study of commitment 2.0 on Facebook by candidates from different states of Mexico. Likewise, we created other indicators to allow these models to be adapted to the analysis of open government, ICTs and communication strategies.

The exploratory work used the comparative strategy of differentiated cases, aiming to apply it to two cases

Contrast Factors	Hidalgo	Querétaro
Human development Index	Medium	Very high
Internet user population	1,424,985 users	1,041,074 users
Internet users of social digital networks	66.7%	68.9%
Internet users who interact with the government	17.6%	20.3%
Temporary stage	2010-2016 (Outgoing administration)	2015-2021 (Incoming administration)
Dependency	Governor's Board of Advisors	Social Communication Coordination
Staff number	One person	Five people

Table 1. Contrast factors in selected cases

Source: Own elaboration.

of differentiated variables. For this, we used as criteria the browsing habits of citizens (INEGI, 2014a, 2014b), the Human Development Index (PNUD, 2015), and the temporary stage in which the administration was (incoming, outgoing). In addition, other contrast factors were the characteristics of each organization, considering the branch to which they depend and the number of staff (table 1), which became visible during the data collection. For the selection of cases, we requested authorization to conduct the study in seven states of the Republic, obtaining a favorable response in Hidalgo and Querétaro. The refusal of the remaining states is paradoxical, since it contradicts the spirit of openness and transparency of open government.

Considering the transversality of strategic communication in the management processes of the social digital networks, the methodology identifies three moments that shape its implementation and management. First, there is the normative stage, composed of institutional arrangements (laws, regulations and government systems) that seeks to “understand how the design, implementation and use of information technologies in public organizations are selected” (Gil-García, 2012, p. 60). The second is the qualitative stage, where management processes, permeated by organizational structures and procedures and environmental conditions, are identified. The first refers to the “organizational features and management strategies that have a direct influence as success factors on the adopted technologies” (Luna-Reyes &

Gil-García in Rojas Martín, 2013, p. 38), while the environmental conditions are defined as how the environment that can affect public organizations in the form of threats or opportunities (Rojas Martín, 2013). Finally, there is the digital stage, in which the results of the strategies are reflected through the contents published in the institutional accounts of Twitter and Facebook.

For the normative stage (see table 2), we conducted a documentary review based on elements of strategic communication (establishment of objectives, evaluation, professional training, organization, strategic planning), digitization and ICTs (digital communication, digitization, importance of ICTs, innovation, social digital networks), open government (open data, interaction with the citizen, citizen participation, accountability, decision-making with citizens) and *e-government* (internal organization and infrastructure).

The units of analysis were: (1) the National Digital Strategy (EDN), the strategic document to implement the federal Mexico Digital project for the development of the country through technology and innovation, which includes open government actions; (2) the Handbook for the formulation of the State and Municipal Digital Strategy, contemplated in the EDN for the integration of the three levels of government, to give coherence between the actions of the federal, state and municipal governments; (3) at the state level, the Digital Agenda of the State of Hidalgo, since it

Main Concept	Category	Indicator
Institutional arrangements (Rojas Martín, 2013)	Strategic communication	Setting objectives
		Evaluation
		Professional training
		Organization
		Strategic planning
	Digitization and ICTs	Digital communication
		Digitization
		Importance of ICTs
		Innovation
		Social digital networks
	Open government	Open data
		Citizen interaction
		Citizen participation
		Accountability
		Decision-making with citizens
	e-Government	Transparency
Offline communication		
Infrastructure		
Offline citizen participation		
		Offline transparency

Table 2. Categories and indicators of the normative stage

Source: Own elaboration.

Level	Analysis units
Federal level	National Digital Strategy (EDN) Handbook for the formulation of the State and Municipal Digital Strategy
State level - Hidalgo	State Development Plan 2011-2016 (PED) Digital Agenda of the State of Hidalgo (ADEH)
State level - Querétaro	State Development Plan 2016-2021 (PED)

Table 3. Analysis units of the normative stage

Source: Own elaboration.

Main Concepts	Category	Subcategory
Strategic communication	Organizational process (Rojas Martín, 2013)	Management model (Gil-García, 2012)
		Characteristics of the institutional organization
		Specific training (Gil García, 2012)
		Experience in the use of social digital networks (Rojas- Martín, 2015)
	Environmental conditions (Rojas Martín, 2013)	Procedure for managing social digital networks
		Technical equipment (De León, 2015; Rojas Martín, 2013)
		Public servant perception
Open government	Open government	Response to citizens Citizen participation

Table 4. Categories and indicators of the qualitative stage

Source: Own elaboration.

was directly linked to the previous two (Querétaro does not have a normative document on the matter), and (4) the State Development Plans of both states, the main axes of government work, which contain the strategies to be met by administrations (table 3).

In the second stage, we conducted observations within the management areas of social digital networks, as well as interviews with public servants involved in their management to know the characteristics of each organization and their management logics. The study subjects were:

- **In Hidalgo:** the deputy director of the analysis and discourse area of the Board of Advisors of the Governor, the only one in charge of the management and operation of the social digital networks, without any connection with the area of social communication.
- **In Querétaro:** in the operational role, three people from a service provider agency; in the management, the sub-coordinator of digital communication and the deputy director of the social communication coordination, belonging to the Governor’s Secretariat.

In the qualitative data collection, we analyzed the logics behind content production, decision-making

and design of strategies, as well as the objectives perceived by public servants regarding management processes. Regarding environmental conditions, we analyzed the technical equipment, the use of software, the communication channels and general characteristics of the environment, as well as the perception of the public servants about the importance and objectives of the use of social digital networks (table 4).

Finally, for the digital stage, we conducted a content analysis of the institutional accounts of Facebook and Twitter of each of the governments. Although in both management offices they also managed the accounts of the governor, we limited the study to the analysis of the accounts *Gobierno de Hidalgo* and *Gobierno del Estado de Querétaro* of each platform, since the study focused on the institutional character of the government; likewise, we did not study the accounts of the government dependencies since they were managed independently of the areas subject to this study. From the selected profiles, we reviewed the publications of the governments (internal publications) and those of the civil profiles within the institutional accounts (external publications), discarding those publications from other public servants and from commercial pages. In the first, we evaluated the publication strategies (themes, formats and multimedia resources), citizen interactions (topics

Type Of Publication	Main Concepts	Category	Subcategory
Internal publications	Strategic communication	Publishing strategies	Theme
			Format
	Open government	Citizen participation	Reactions and shared content (Muñiz, Dader, Téllez, & Salazar, 2016)
External publications	Open government	Type of participation	Complain Commentary Report Suggestion Question

Table 5. Categories and indicators of the digital stage

Source: Own elaboration.

	Hidalgo	Querétaro
Facebook	29 internal publications 4 external publications	84 internal publications 41 external publications
Twitter	826 internal publications 72 external publications	359 internal publications 871 external publications

Table 6. Content collection sample June-August 2016

Source: Own elaboration.

and type of publication: direct, response or shared content), and the government’s response to these interactions. As shown in table 5, we also analyzed the type of citizen participation (complaint, comment, report, suggestion or question).

The collection was made between June and August 2016, with a random selection of one week per month, obtaining the sample shown in table 6.

The composition of the whole model seeks to analyze the coherence between the different moments in which strategic communication is involved. In addition, it establishes its link with the theoretical concepts that guide this research through the indicators described for the fulfillment of the objective of the study. On the other hand, the totality of the model visualized each stage in a relational way, seeking a deep understanding of the phenomenon of study thanks to analyzable elements of the different stages.

RESULTS

NORMATIVE STAGE

In the institutional arrangements, open government permeates the processes of government management and regulations are perceived as strategic guidelines to establish the government’s work. The federal documentation poses digital communication as a basic element for the approach to citizenship, in which the social digital networks are channels for open and transparent interaction. In the same way, the Digital Agenda of the State of Hidalgo shows a link around communication and the perception of the use of social platforms in terms of interaction and participation. On the other hand, Querétaro does not establish guidelines that show the link between technology and communication, so that citizen interaction and participation are mentioned but not related to the use of ICTs.

All the documents aim at the development of *e-government* along with the openness measures, thus considered a complementary process for digitization. In both cases, the improvement of infrastructure and connectivity is considered as part of the government action lines, which does not contradict the logic of government management. Regarding strategic communication, there are different elements in each state. In Hidalgo, planning and management are implemented through the institutionalization and systematization of the processes, as happened with the creation of the State Prospective Planning System that seeks, among other things, the updating of internal organization handbooks and the search for continuous improvement through evaluation, which means that the institution is flexible towards rethinking its strategies. On the contrary, in Querétaro, the State Development Plan is considered as a planning document, without deepening into its role in the activities of government management. The findings allow us to consider that the state of Hidalgo has action lines with greater links with open government and federal guidelines, with an emphasis on innovation as a constant factor for government management; on the other hand, the norms of Querétaro show its transformation towards the involvement of the citizen in governmental activities, however, there is no use of technology to develop it.

QUALITATIVE STAGE

We sought to make observations of the management processes within the offices of each government; nevertheless, in Hidalgo there was no designated physical space and the activities were conducted in different parts of the capital, which reveals the incidence of ICTs in the elimination of the spatial limits of labor. For Querétaro, the observations could be made in two different offices: the Digital Communication Under-Coordination and the service provider agency. Both governments allowed us to observe their work routines during two days of the month of July 2016², in which we also conducted interviews with public servants.

The results showed no linkage between the objectives set by each administration with the communication elements identified in the normative documents. Likewise, we detected the existence of two management models with several differences, linked to the characteristics of the organization. First, each

area is positioned at different points in the chain of command, which influences the management logic related to decision-making, planning, evaluation of results and content production. In Hidalgo, the public servant behind the management of the social digital networks depended on the Board of Advisors of the Governor, so the authorization to publish contents came directly from the governor; in this way, the manager searched, by monitoring the networks, for the topics to be proposed for publication, through short-term planning. On the other hand, in Querétaro the communication strategies needed to be authorized by the superior managers, so there was a med-term planning; given that they have the professional services of an external agency –a team of a political expert, two communicologists and a designer–, the agency proposed the contents to the head of the area of digital communication, who approved the messages in accordance with the previously agreed strategies. Thus, we can observe that the more subordinate the area is, the more planning there is, due to the time required for the authorization of the strategies. This implies that the planning in the state of Querétaro is more systematic and that the control mechanisms applied to the subordinate area derive in the elaboration of reports of activities. In Hidalgo, as there is neither a subordination to a chain of command nor more staff to perform other tasks, the activities of the person in charge are focused on covering events and generating publication proposals, so there is no control or evaluation mechanisms of the strategies. The dynamics of strategic communication are related to the characteristics of the organization itself: a greater hierarchization of the area entails a lower evaluation of results, which is also related to the number of personnel on which the supervision of communication strategies depends. In this sense, it is observed that the more people are above the chain of command, the more mechanisms of evaluation and control are exercised.

On the other hand, the results indicate that the professional training of the managers implies a position taken from an ideological reference in the management processes, as proposed by De León and Medina (2013). In Hidalgo, the contents are managed by a journalist and are similar to that of traditional media. In Querétaro, the sub-coordinator, who has a specialty in marketing, bases his publication strategies on the results of the reports on the opinion of citizens.

In addition, the subordinate staff performs operational tasks based on their design, communication and public administration skills; thus, the production of the messages reflects different professional profiles. Another finding was the influence of environmental conditions on the production of content. Although in the Hidalgo case the lack of an office was not a factor that impeded the management work, the technical equipment affected the complexity of the message's production: the responsible managed the platforms from a mobile phone, so the image and video formats that accompanied the publications were simpler than those of his counterpart, who had a human and technical team to achieve a more elaborate production. Consequently, we can see that physical spaces disappear from management dynamics, which is characteristic of the adoption of digital culture. Likewise, connectivity becomes an indispensable element in daily activities, both for the instantaneous production of messages and for establishing internal communication channels.

The results of the qualitative stage also showed that the policies on digital public communication embodied in normative documents do not relate with the daily work of public servants in charge of the management of social digital networks. Although in Hidalgo the guidelines emphasized the use of ICTs as communication channels with the citizen, in the interviews we observed that the objective is the positioning of the governor, so Facebook and Twitter are used as traditional media, based on unidirectionality. Similarly, in Querétaro, the official plan showed no relationship between ICTs and the government's communication processes; nevertheless, the communication area uses these technologies for the systematization of the processes and show some digital interaction with the citizen, reflected in the objective set forth by the public servants, which is to inform, motivate and educate.

DIGITAL STAGE

The indicators of open government are difficult to perceive from the management processes. In Hidalgo, there were no activities related to interaction with citizens, while the Querétaro team, in addition to proposing content, focuses its activities on the response to citizens. That is why the analysis of

digital content made it possible to examine more accurately the openness elements. However, Twitter and Facebook publications corroborated that both the messages from the states and citizen interactions do not contain elements of open government. On the other hand, publication strategies are coherent with the objectives perceived by public servants. In Hidalgo, the strategies for positioning the governor seek to generate publications that promote government actions, emphasizing the image and the name of the governor. In Querétaro there was a greater variety of topics: given that they have the objective of informing, motivating and educating, the publications do not correspond entirely to governmental actions, but rather combine information on sports, culture and general information about the state or reforms being implemented.

Regarding citizen participation, we found that, although the samples included the same collection period for both governments, there were significant differences in the number of publications. Thus, citizens of Hidalgo accounted for approximately one-tenth of those of Querétaro: on Twitter, they were 72 as opposed to 871, while on Facebook they were 4 as opposed to 41. Of these, in Hidalgo, there were no responses in Facebook, while in Twitter, there was only an answer for 8% of the publications. In Querétaro, there was a 67% for Facebook and a 6% for Twitter. This shows that strategies in social networks in Hidalgo are far behind, even from *e-government*, since digital content is managed contrary to the principles of interaction of digital platforms. On the other hand, in Querétaro we perceive a greater importance of the figure of the citizen, since there is a production of varied contents centered on the interest of the people, which are partially accompanied by governmental propaganda. Likewise, when analyzing the reasons for participation, it was found that most of the publications of citizens focuses on resolving problems. Only on Twitter could we identify publications with citizen suggestions (8% of the total of Hidalgo and 4% in Querétaro), which imply collaborative work between both State actors and, therefore, are contents in the spirit of open government. This corroborates that the participation in social digital networks is not directed towards a collaborative work, but rather it seeks the resolution of needs and the remote access

to procedures and services, configuring its use under the logic of *e-government*.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings allow us to conclude that the communication strategies of the Hidalgo and Querétaro governments for the management of Facebook and Twitter are not linked to open government. In Hidalgo, these platforms are conceived as traditional means of communication, while in Querétaro the activities reflect their use as an interaction tool linked to procedures and services. Although the federal guidelines as well as those of Hidalgo emphasize open government as a current agenda item, it is not within the daily dynamics of the states, so official documents are disaggregated elements of the management of social digital networks. Although the documents are not a unit that reflects the real values of the action, their revision is not ruled out because they are the official bases of the government's actions. Thus, it is demonstrated that the communication strategies are not coherent with the planning established in the norms, but rather obey to the perceptions of each area about the objectives of using social digital networks.

The results regarding citizen participation in social networks allow us to determine that the development of open government is not only established through government actions: since citizens are also an actor of the State, the quality of their participation will somehow determine its progress. Although the government is responsible for promoting citizen participation, citizens' perception of the social digital

networks is focused on seeking to resolve immediate needs thanks to the government, without involving the latter in the resolution. Consequently, the dynamics of government interaction depend on the demands of the citizen, but only when they are heard, as in the case of Querétaro. In this regard, the strategies of Hidalgo did not show mechanisms for evaluating the contents, so a question arises about the lack of citizen participation and its possible link with the absence of a response from the government. Therefore, in the task of government openness, collaboration is required so that the citizen becomes involved and the government allows their participation.

Finally, the general results of the study demonstrate the relevance of the analysis of strategic communication for the operation of government management initiatives. Reviewing them from a methodology that analyzes their incidence in a transversal way (normative, qualitative and digital) allows to deepen into the strategic management and to establish explanations through the relationship and complementarity of data. The on-the-field investigation of the management work was fundamental to understand both the role of the perceptions of public servants about social digital networks as the dynamics of their management. This work is a first step that opens the possibility of future research lines that analyze more deeply the role of citizen participation and the quality of government responses to these interactions. Thus, understanding the phenomenon as a whole could provide proposals for the adequate development of open government initiatives.

NOTES

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