Expressions of digital citizen identity on Facebook and Twitter. The case of the Saltillo, Coahuila's municipal government

Expresiones de identidad ciudadana digital en Facebook y Twitter. El caso del gobierno municipal de Saltillo, Coahuila

Gabriel Pérez Salazar*
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0083-4083
Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila, Mexico

Sergio Antonio Corona Reyes**
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0094-5752
Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila, Mexico

ABSTRACT

Based on the observation of the comments made to the official and personal accounts on Facebook and Twitter of the mayor of Saltillo, Coahuila, Mexico; an identification is made of the way in which the expression of the digital citizen identity takes place from four variables: support, opposition, demands and proposals. The most outstanding results obtained from a quantitative-descriptive perspective suggest that this identity manifests itself mainly from expressions of demand towards the solution of issues related to the services provided by the city council (security, public lighting, etc.), as a sign of citizen identity. In contrast, proposal-related entries are much less frequent. It is concluded that the participation manifested in the observed platforms reflects a relevant collective sense of identity that its more evident in terms of the immediate spatial contexts (such as the neighborhood or the neighborhood), than in relation to broader areas (such as the region), depending on the platforms observed.

RESUMEN

Con base en la observación de los comentarios hechos a las cuentas oficiales y personales en Facebook y Twitter del alcalde de Saltillo, en Coahuila, México, se hace una identificación de la manera en que tiene lugar la expresión de la identidad ciudadana digital desde cuatro variables: el apoyo, la oposición, las demandas y las propuestas. Los resultados más destacados, obtenidos desde una perspectiva cuantitativa-descriptiva, sugieren que esta cualidad se manifiesta principalmente a partir de expresiones de demanda hacia la solución de asuntos relacionados con los servicios que brinda el ayuntamiento (seguridad, alumbrado público, etcétera), como señal de la identidad ciudadana. En contraste, las participaciones relacionadas con propuestas son menos frecuentes. Se concluye que la participación manifestada en las plataformas observadas refleja un sentido identitario colectivo relevante, y es más evidente en términos de los contextos espaciales inmediatos (como el barrio o la colonia), que en relación con ámbitos más amplios (como la región o la entidad federativa), según las plataformas observadas.

* Full-time research professor at the Faculty of Communication Sciences of the Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila, Mexico. PhD in Political and Social Sciences from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. E-mail: gabriel.perez.salazar@uadec.edu.mx ResearcherID: AAD-4797-2021.

** Full-time research professor at the Faculty of Communication Sciences of the Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila, Mexico. PhD in Humanistic Studies from the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey. E-mail: antoniocorona@uadec.edu.mx

Paakat, Revista de Tecnología y Sociedad, Year 11, no. 21 (2021) ● September 2021-February 2022
eISSN 2007-3607 ● Universidad de Guadalajara

1

Introduction

Socio-Digital platforms (SDP) such as Facebook and Twitter, despite the persistence of the digital divide in Mexico,[1] have an increasing presence in the Mexican population, and their uses frequently transcend entertainment and socialization. Through them, communicative relationships occur between citizens and rulers, which have public affairs as their central subject. This is the object of study of this paper.

Digital citizen identity is related to participation in matters of common interest, through various SDP, based on the significance that the subject has for the close environment and its belonging to various collectives. From a look made from the academic field of communication, the objective of this work is to identify the way in which this category is expressed from the comments that users of these sociodigital media address to the mayor[2] of the municipality of Saltillo, capital of the state of Coahuila, Mexico.

The approach is based on three concepts: citizenship, participation and identity. Their synthesis allows us to propose the notion of digital citizen identity. This is a term that, as far as it was possible to find in the background, and although it had already been used by authors such as Hamutoğlu and Ünal (2015) and Hassan, Maon, Kassim, Yunus and Jailani (2019), it had not been formally defined and neither had it been applied to the observation of its manifestations in DSPs. Thus, the main contribution of this research is related both to a conceptual proposal in this sense, and to the study of the way in which citizen identity expression is manifested in a specific urban environment, in its virtual dimension.[3] In addition, it is an approach that, unlike what is more frequently found in previous studies, instead of focusing on the authorities and their use of technology, focuses on the citizens and their expressions.

Conceptual framework and background

Citizenship and space

Citizenship is a category that has been studied repeatedly in the social sciences since the late nineteenth century (Marshall, 1950). In general terms, it refers to a form of membership in a political and legal entity,[4] from which a set of rights and obligations are derived (Bellamy and Kennedy-Macfoy, 2014).

Its study has given rise to two general lines: the liberal and the republican (Leydet 2017). The former emphasizes aspects of a structural-normative nature, among which the conditions through which citizenship is acquired and exercised stand out. From the republican perspective, emphasis is placed on the consideration of this condition as an act that implies involvement and participation in matters of public interest. This paper is located around this second meaning, which states that the focus of this study are the actions that, in

Paakat, Revista de Tecnología y Sociedad, Year 11, no. 21 (2021) ● September 2021-February 2022
eISSN 2007-3607 ● Universidad de Guadalajara

2

the communicative sphere, citizens carry out on public affairs, and which belong to what Dominelli and Moosa-Mitha (2014) identify as *citizen practices*.

Some citizen practices have been increasingly mediated by information and communication technologies (ICT). In this sense, Neuman, Bimber and Hindman (2011) recognize a set of actions that are performed in virtual environments, which are related to the exercise of citizen rights and obligations and are derived from the possibilities of interaction that arise with public officials.

Another aspect of the state of the question is determined by the notion of digital citizenship, which corresponds to the set of practices that seek to expand democracy through the use of ICTs (Jenkins, 2011). Some of the conclusions point out that, although these possibilities of participation exist, they occur around a series of limitations derived from the digital divide (Kenner & Lange, 2019; Oyedemi, 2020).

The study of citizenship in SDP has been the subject of considerable academic attention. Around Twitter, the works of authors such as Grant, Moon and Busby (2010), and Bonsón, Perea and Bednárová (2019) stand out, who point out that this platform is often used by public officials to obtain citizen participation, in the form of support and suggestions. Although the first studies highlight that some strategies oriented to this platform were often executed from centralized logics (Graham, Broersma, Hazelhoff & Van'T Haar, 2013), others recognize the manifestation of more participatory communicative models among its users (Bekafigo & McBride, 2013).

In relation to Facebook, its study on citizenship has led to analyses that initially used to focus on younger user groups (Theocharis & Lowe, 2016), as well as on how their identities were expressed through their discursive participation around political issues (Marichal, 2013). Due to recent demographic changes on this platform, current work often focuses on phenomena such as *echo chambers or informational bubbles* (Cargnino & Neubaum, 2020), as well as the effect of algorithmic structures on public affairs discussion (Ohme, 2021).

Citizen participation

Another background to the approach is the notion of citizen participation, which is closely related to the concept of citizenship. As Cornwall (2002) suggests, its traditional definition used to be limited to the involvement of citizens through relatively sporadic mechanisms with low levels of collaboration, such as voting and political parties; however, nowadays this participation is conceived based on the establishment of actions that facilitate and promote more open forms of rapprochement between the different levels of government and the citizenry.

Paakat, Revista de Tecnología y Sociedad, Year 11, no. 21 (2021) ● September 2021-February 2022
eISSN 2007-3607 ● Universidad de Guadalajara

3

Based on Nabatchi and Leighninger (2015), citizen participation can be understood as a process in which the interests, needs and values of citizens are incorporated into governmental decision-making, through the establishment of organized and intentional interactions, based on reciprocal communication. As Vromen (2017) suggests, participation is sometimes seen as not necessarily involving long-term ideological commitments, but may also include more pragmatic actions, related to everyday life issues.

As Nabatchi and Leighninger (2015) posit, there are two types of citizen participation: thick, in which, based on deliberation, large numbers of organized people make decisions and act accordingly, and light, in which involvement occurs on an individual basis from a sense of belonging with a larger cause. In the latter, to the extent that a sufficient number of people manage to give visibility to their proposals, these can have a greater impact, as occurs in the demands that go viral on the Internet. One of the main differences between these two forms of participation lies in the fact that the first scenario usually involves a greater investment of time, effort and resources (both intellectual and emotional) than the second (Nabatchi & Leighninger, 2015).

In relation to citizen participation and the Internet, it is possible to find various reflections on the possibilities for establishing citizen involvement through the mediation of ICTs. While for Nabatchi and Leighninger (2015) these are feasible scenarios from which they suggest concrete strategies, Fuchs (2006), located in a more critical line, questions whether it is possible to reach representative agreements, based on the fragmentation and anonymity that take place in virtuality. For this author, these are forms of collaboration in which it is difficult to generate a collective will.

Other approaches suggest the beginning of hybrid forms of involvement with correspondences between the physical and the virtual (Treré, 2020), while for Theocharis and Van Deth (2018), in the digital it is possible to observe an expansion in the repertoires of action, where there is not necessarily an extension of previously available modes. As it is possible to observe, this is an issue around which an intense debate continues about its limitations and possibilities.

In any case, it is an object that has been extensively worked on from an empirical perspective. Due to the large number of references available, the search for background information was limited to the last five years, and only to citizen participation through SDP in Ibero-America. Based on Cornwall (2002), it can be said that most of the work carried out in this region agrees with the traditional notion of participation, that is, that which is associated with electoral processes.

In these works, the use of this type of platforms for the establishment of interactions between parties and candidates with voters stands out, with relatively low levels of participation (Gamir, 2016), especially when they are used as means of dissemination rather than as authentic channels of participation (Muñiz, Dader, Téllez &

Paakat, Revista de Tecnología y Sociedad, Year 11, no. 21 (2021) ● September 2021-February 2022
eISSN 2007-3607 ● Universidad de Guadalajara

4

Salazar, 2016; Moreno, 2017). In other studies, Facebook and Twitter are recognized as virtual spaces of interaction with important levels of involvement (López, Hernández, Santillán & Ortiz, 2018).

Regarding current studies of citizen participation in SDP, it is possible to identify works that analyze processes of deliberation and interaction with various government entities, such as parliaments and ministries of state. In this group, the effort for the use of these technologies in the involvement of citizens in government transparency stands out, although with relatively limited results (Rodríguez-Andrés, 2017), particularly in contexts in which government structures traditionally applied to citizens tend to be transferred to cyberspace (Téllez & Ramírez, 2021) and their use is more informative than deliberative (Giraldo-Luque & Villegas-Simón, 2017).

Therefore, it is suggested that much work is still needed in the region to achieve truly effective virtual collaboration schemes (Callejo-Gallego & Agudo-Arroyo, 2019). In any case, some of these trends coincide with what has been reported on citizenship in virtual spaces at the international level.

In this search, it was considered appropriate to highlight in greater detail those works focused on the study of citizen participation through the use of SDP at the municipal level. Based on a study in the municipalities of Spain and Brazil, Schimidt (2016) reports that the use of SDP allows users an effective approach to the authorities on everyday problems, such as roads and public spaces. These results contrast with what was found by Astudillo (2016), in relation to the Municipality of Quito, Ecuador. According to this author, until the time of the study, local authorities only used traditional strategies with low levels of interaction in these media.

Based on a study of city councilors in Bucaramanga, Colombia (Bohórquez-Pereira, Flórez-Quintero & Alguero-Montaño, 2021), it is suggested that, despite a notable increase in the use of SDP, in most of the cases observed, modes of communication prevail that are more in line with a logic of dissemination than of interaction and involvement with users, as had been observed in the work of Téllez and Ramírez (2021). As it is possible to suggest from these works, in some regions of Ibero-America a disparate use of SDPs tends to prevail in terms of citizen participation, due to the prevalence of unidirectional forms in the relationship between the authorities and the governed.

Identity and citizenship

In general, identity has been described as what one is, what makes a person distinguishable. According to Mead (2009), this makes it possible to understand the way in which interactions take place at the social level, through a set of structures based on the experience with others, and which mediate in every relationship that is established. One is, according to

Paakat, Revista de Tecnología y Sociedad, Year 11, no. 21 (2021) ● September 2021-February 2022
eISSN 2007-3607 ● Universidad de Guadalajara

5

this author, from such interactions, in which communication processes contribute to establish a distinction between oneself and others.

The idea of this structure is taken up again from a socio-cognitive dimension by authors such as Castells (1999) and Giménez (2000). For them, identity stands as a category that refers not only to the distinction with others, but also as an interpretative matrix through which the subject locates himself in relation to his social reality.

For Giménez (2000), inclusion in collectives is an identity constituent in which the family is located as a point of genesis, and which is expanded according to its incorporation in various spheres of the social environment, among which the immediate space is included. For this author, this belonging is defined as the insertion of an individual personality in a collective towards which a significant relationship is experienced, and which contributes in a relevant way to the internalization of a symbolic complex that operates as an emblem of this group.

In this sense, there are works in which it is suggested that participation depends on the relations of belonging that exist over the environments of interaction, which can range from the neighborhood, to broader contexts, such as the city and the country (Tiramonti, Cullen and Fanfani, 2003), where issues of common interest are shared (Hafer and Ran, 2016). Space, as a referent, contributes to the distinction of what one is, both individually and collectively (Lefebvre, 1991). When a space delimited and organized through different social arrangements is assigned a specific meaning, it is possible to speak of a place (Aarseth, 2001).

For the purposes of this study, three specific variables of place will be used: the neighborhood, the city and the state. The specific definition of each in the minds of its inhabitants is a social construction and varies according to communities and individuals, which is closely related to participation and citizen identity (Haeberle, 1987).

Based on the above, collective identity by space will be understood as the relations of meaning that affect both the self-perception and the social projection of the self, which are elaborated and expressed in terms of different physical dimensions that, due to their scope, may be determined by the neighborhood, which is the closest experiential unit of collective meaning in public space; the city, which is composed of different neighborhoods; and the state, which depends on the geopolitical grouping of different localities and which, by going beyond everyday experience, leads to the development of more abstract identitary senses than the first two (Jones, Jones & Woods, 2004).

In addition to the spatial, belonging to other collective identities by group can be determined by place of work (Angouri & Marra, 2012), partisan affiliations (Green, Palmquist & Schickler, 2002), sports sympathies (Jackson, 2005) and regional identity (Barberich, Campbell and Hudson, 2012); among other possibilities.

Paakat, Revista de Tecnología y Sociedad, Year 11, no. 21 (2021) ● September 2021-February 2022
eISSN 2007-3607 ● Universidad de Guadalajara

6

Identity is a concept of utmost importance related to citizenship since, according to Harju (2007) and Hafer and Ran (2016), it builds a relationship between people's daily lives and their public activity. The conceptual basis that these authors propose corresponds to the way in which citizens define themselves as part of a civic identity in a given environment and the actions they take accordingly (Lowndes, Pratchett & Stoker, 2006). For Harju (2007) identity can be seen as a resource for civic action and an important constituent for agency, and integrates a whole system of references and representations derived from belonging to a community of interest (Mayo, 2000).

Although the motivations for public participation go beyond the scope of this research, it can be said that, based on Gustafson and Hertting (2017), these are very complex incentives, including self-interest, whether individual or collective to which one belongs (family, group, etc.), as well as the improvement of conditions in one's immediate environment.

Digital citizen identity

For Hafer and Ran (2016), citizen identity is associated with participation in public affairs, as a process of social exchange in which citizens define themselves based on the subjective conceptualization of their actions, as part of a collective. These practices are processes in which identity is constantly constructed and sometimes lead to self-categorizations that vary from broad participation groups to collectives involved in much more specific issues (such as citizens who report paving failures to the corresponding authority). According to Huddy (2001), the actions of the subjects have a close relationship with the significant group to which they have some sense of belonging, which leads to the internalization of a dynamic social identity that depends on the context in which it is located.

Based on the notions of Giménez (2000), Mead (2009), Lowndes, Pratchett and Stoker (2006) and Hafer and Ran (2016) that have been reviewed, citizen identity can be defined as the process of significant internalization of elements of a shared context, which gives meaning to the self in relation to a collective based on the polis and which, from the republican conception of citizenship, leads to the performance of actions that have to do with matters of common interest, through which the self is continuously redefined.

When these actions take place in virtual communicative acts, it is possible to speak of the expression of digital citizen identity, which will be understood as a process of signification and definition of the self, both publicly and within each subject, which can originate diverse social practices in the spaces of online interaction related to matters of public interest, derived from the conditions of the physical space in all its dimensions (neighborhood, city, region or country).

Paakat, Revista de Tecnología y Sociedad, Year 11, no. 21 (2021) ● September 2021-February 2022
eISSN 2007-3607 ● Universidad de Guadalajara

7

Regarding the observation of this category from the republican model, we found proposals developed from extremely close concepts, such as active citizenship (de Weerd, Gemmeke, Rigter & van Rij, 2005; Abs & Veldhuis, 2006), and social citizenship (Quiroga, 2005). These authors have proposed a set of indicators from which four variables are identified for recording digital citizenship practices: support (expressions of approval or sympathy with a positive sense), opposition (enunciations of disapproval or antipathy, with a mostly negative sense), demand (requests or petitions in response to perceived needs) and proposals (suggestions or proposals with a propositional sense).

It is proposed that the discursive-identity positioning of citizens can be categorized from this matrix and, by virtue of what has been discussed about citizen identity, it can operate as an approximation to this category, so it will be the basis for the analysis of the corpus of this research. In this sense, it is important to note that no other previous work has been found that makes a specific study of the way in which digital citizen identity is expressed, so this is an exploratory approach that should be contrasted in future research.

Method

Based on the activity recorded in a preliminary observation, the decision was made to conduct the fieldwork from the observation of the official accounts of the city council of Saltillo, Coahuila, on Facebook and Twitter, as well as the mayor's personal accounts on these platforms.[5] The observation period was from January 1 to 31, 2020, where the expressive-identity acts made by those who interacted with these accounts were recorded.

The integration of the analysis corpus in Facebook was done manually, and all the responses to the publications made in both accounts were collected, in a period that went from the date of publication to five days later. In Twitter, a *Python* module was programmed which, through the Application Programming Interface (API) of this platform, recorded all the publications in which the two accounts were mentioned.

Subsequently, this corpus was processed through a content analysis based on Krippendorff's model (1990). The unit of observation was determined by the complete context of each of the posts recorded. In the case of Facebook, this included the original post to which users were commenting, and on Twitter, the thread of the conversation to which it corresponded, in the case of a reply or retweet.

The unit of registration was defined as the main meaning of the publication in question, based on its eventual multimodality (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001) and context, based on the four categories defined in the theoretical section: support, opposition, demand and proposal. This multimodality contemplated written text (composed of phrases, hashtags and hyperlinks, especially under the modality of tags to other users), images (static and animated GIFs) and videos.

Paakat, Revista de Tecnología y Sociedad, Year 11, no. 21 (2021) ● September 2021-February 2022
eISSN 2007-3607 ● Universidad de Guadalajara

8

In the case of Facebook, the analysis was made on the total of 764 records made (273 for the account *saltillogob* and 491 for Manolo.Jimenez.Salinas). On Twitter, at the end of the automated collection we had a total of 12,081 publications for the account *manolojim* (MJ), from which the publications made by twenty accounts related to the Saltillo city hall were removed, resulting in a NMJ = 10,977 (90.9% of the original) and a sample size nMJ = 373, with a probabilistic selection.

In the saltillogob (SG) account, of the 6,038 publications registered by the Python module, after performing the same filtering process, the analysis universe had a size of NSG = 3,352 (55.5% of the original), leading to a probabilistically selected sample of nSG = 325.[6] Since the objective was to identify the way in which the citizen digital identity is manifested, this filtering[7] was intended to reduce the biases derived from the publications made by accounts managed by city hall personnel who had tagged the mayor or the official account of this governmental entity.

Results

After following the procedure described in the previous section, table 1 shows the frequencies corresponding to the four variables indicated in the theoretical framework.

Table 1. Variables of digital citizen identity

Observed accounts		OP*	Support		Opposition		Demand		Proposal	
Facebook			*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
	Saltillogob	273	22	8.1	76	27.8	**154**	56.4	10	3.7
	Manolo.Jimenez. Salinas	491	44	9.0	27	5.5	**380**	77.4	40	8.1
	Total Facebook	**764**	**66**	**8.6**	**103**	**13.5**	**534**	**69.9**	**50**	**6.5**
Twitter										
	SaltilloGob	325	147	45.2	19	5.8	**122**	37.5	7	2.2
	Manolojim	373	243	65.1	20	5.4	**33**	8.8	2	0.5
	Total Twitter	**698**	**390**	55.9	**39**	5.6	**155**	22.2	**9**	1.3
Total		**1 462**	**456**	**31.2**	**142**	**9.7**	**689**	**47.1**	**59**	**4.0**

* OP = Observed publications.

The analysis carried out made it possible to identify the specific issues around which citizen expressions occurred, in each of these variables: support (table 2), opposition (table 3), demand (table 4) and proposal (table 5).

Paakat, Revista de Tecnología y Sociedad, Year 11, no. 21 (2021) ● September 2021-February 2022
eISSN 2007-3607 ● Universidad de Guadalajara

9

Table 2. Support

Support	Facebook				Twitter			
	saltillogob		Manolo.Jimenez. Salinas		SaltilloGob		manolojim	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Efficient management	**8**	**36.4**	**18**	**40.9**	15	10.2	61	25.1
Street lighting	5	22.7	3	6.8	2	1.4	10	4.1
Good management of public resources	4	18.2	0	0.0	1	0.7	2	0.8
Congratulations to the staff	3	13.6	2	4.5	3	2.0	2	0.8
Attention to citizens	1	4.5	6	13.6	0	0.0	12	4.9
Support for the colonies	1	4.5	7	15.9	0	0.0	2	0.8
Support for the mayor as a candidate for governor	0	0.0	8	18.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
Partisan support	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	36	14.8
Public security	0	0.0	0	0.0	**34**	**23.1**	21	8.6
Roads	0	0.0	0	0.0	**34**	**23.1**	2	0.8
Civil protection	0	0.0	0	0.0	17	11.6	1	0.4
Public assistance	0	0.0	0	0.0	10	6.8	0	0.0
Culture	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	4.8	14	5.8
Public areas	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	3.4	**65**	**26.7**
Public health	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	3.4	15	6.2
Garbage collection	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	2.7	21	8.6
Environmental care	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	16	6.6
International relations	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	2.5
Other issues	0	0.0	0	0.0	10	6.8	15	6.2
Total	**22**	100.0	**44**	100.0	**147**	100.0	**243**	100.0

Table 3. Opposition

Opposition	Facebook				Twitter			
	saltillogob		Manolo.Jimenez. Salinas		SaltilloGob		manolojim	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Partisan accusations (against the PRI)	**19**	**25.0**	1	3.7	0	0.0	1	5.0
Sarcasm for appreciation	11	14.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Public security	11	14.5	2	7.4	1	5.3	2	10.0
Street lighting	6	7.9	2	7.4	0	0.0	0	0.0

Paakat, Revista de Tecnología y Sociedad, Year 11, no. 21 (2021) ● September 2021-February 2022
eISSN 2007-3607 ● Universidad de Guadalajara

10

Opposition	Facebook				Twitter			
	saltillogob		Manolo.Jimenez. Salinas		SaltilloGob		manolojim	
Obligation of public officials	5	6.6	1	3.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Public finances	4	5.3	3	11.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
Corruption	4	5.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Roads	4	5.3	2	7.4	1	5.3	0	0.0
Public areas	2	2.6	1	3.7	0	0.0	2	10.0
Personal attack on the mayor	2	2.6	1	3.7	3	15.8	4	20.0
Personal attacks on other officials	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	10.5	0	0.0
About deleting comments	2	2.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Lack of attention to citizens	0	0.0	**8**	**29.6**	0	0.0	0	0.0
Garbage collection	0	0.0	4	14.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
Conflict of Aguas de Saltillo with the Casa del Migrante	0	0.0	0	0.0	**4**	**21.1**	**6**	**30.0**
Public transport	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	10.0
Other remarks	6	7.9	2	7.4	8	42.1	3	15.0
Total	**76**	**100.0**	**27**	**100.0**	**19**	**100.0**	**20**	100.0

Table 4. Demand

Demands	Facebook				Twitter			
	saltillogob		Manolo.Jimenez .Salinas		SaltilloGob		manolojim	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Street lighting	**76**	**49.4**	**106**	**27.9**	12	9.8	5	15.2
Public areas	24	15.6	96	25.3	3	2.5	2	6.1
Request for information on municipal procedures	24	15.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Roads	18	11.7	58	15.3	29	23.8	5	15.2
Public transport	4	2.6	18	4.7	12	9.8	5	15.2
Sewer system	3	1.9	7	1.8	4	3.3	2	6.1
Request for support staff	0	0.0	24	6.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Public security	0	0.0	18	4.7	**35**	**28.7**	**7**	**21.2**
Garbage collection	0	0.0	18	4.7	0	0.0	2	6.1
Attention to colonies	0	0.0	9	2.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
Pedestrian bridges	0	0.0	7	1.8	0	0.0	0	0.0

Paakat, Revista de Tecnología y Sociedad, Year 11, no. 21 (2021) ● September 2021-February 2022
eISSN 2007-3607 ● Universidad de Guadalajara

11

Demands	Facebook				Twitter			
	saltillogob		Manolo.Jimenez .Salinas		SaltilloGob		manolojim	
Environmental pollution	0	0.0	6	1.6	4	3.3	0	0.0
Drinking water	0	0.0	4	1.1	5	4.1	3	9.1
Public health	0	0.0	3	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
Public education	0	0.0	3	0.8	1	0.8	0	0.0
Civil protection	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	6.6	1	3.0
Animal protection	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	2.5	0	0.0
Other demands or requests	5	3.2	3	0.8	6	4.9	1	3.0
Total	**154**	**100.0**	**380**	**100.0**	**122**	**100.0**	**33**	**100.0**

Table 5. Proposal

Proposals	Facebook				Twitter			
	saltillogob		Manolo.Jimenez .Salinas		SaltilloGob		manolojim	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Roads	4	40.0	1	2.5	5	71.4	0	0.0
Public areas	2	20.0	7	17.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Greater citizen participation	2	20.0	9	22.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Simplification in procedures	1	10.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Public security	1	10.0	10	25.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Labor issues (municipal workers)	0	0.0	3	7.5	1	14.3	0	0.0
Environmental care	0	0.0	6	15.0	1	14.3	2	100.0
Culture	0	0.0	1	2.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Promotion of social programs	0	0.0	1	2.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Public health	0	0.0	2	5.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	10	100.0	40	100.0	7	100.0	2	100.0

Based on the importance of context in the immediate theoretical framework, in addition to these four variables, the implicit or explicit space was identified in the publications included in the sample (table 6), based on a recoding determined by the meaning of the publications recorded, in three spatial dimensions: the neighborhood, the city (urban environment of the metropolitan area of Saltillo) and the federal entity (in this case,

Paakat, Revista de Tecnología y Sociedad, Year 11, no. 21 (2021) ● September 2021-February 2022
eISSN 2007-3607 ● Universidad de Guadalajara

12

corresponding to Coahuila de Zaragoza). When reference was made to a place, but it was not identifiable either in the enunciation or in its context, it was labeled as another space.

Table 6. Space

Collective identity by space	Facebook				Twitter			
	saltillogob		Manolo.Jimenez.Salinas		SaltilloGob		manolojim	
	ƒ	%	ƒ	%	ƒ	%	ƒ	%
Neighborhood	**134**	**95.7**	**339**	**84.8**	80	25.2	87	23.3
Saltillo	6	4.3	55	13.8	**233**	**73.3**	**265**	**71.0**
Coahuila	0	0.0	4	1.0	5	1.6	20	5.4
Other space	0	0.0	2	0.5	0	0.0	1	0.3
Total	**140**	**100.0**	**400**	**100.0**	**318**	**100.0**	**373**	**100.0**

Likewise, as part of the collective identities implicit in the citizen identity, the groups in the observed publications were recorded (table 7). These were identified from a re-coding of the data, where collectives that could provide identity meanings that were explicitly mentioned in the publications made by the users were marked. Thus, five possibilities were found: party (expressions of loyalty or adhesion to the local ruling party, PRI), family (manifestation of belonging based on kinship relationships), work (belonging to collectives by place of work), sports team (manifestations of sympathy or support for a local sports team, in this case, Los Saraperos of the Mexican Baseball League) and rivalry with the Laguna region (expressions referring to unequal conditions or treatment between the inhabitants of Saltillo and Torreón).[8]

Table 7. Groups

Collective identity by group	Facebook				Twitter			
	saltillogob		Manolo.Jimenez.Salinas		SaltilloGob		manolojim	
	ƒ	%	ƒ	%	ƒ	%	ƒ	%
Political party (PRI)	**21**	**91.3**	6	15.0	0	0.0	**54**	**87.1**
Family	1	4.3	**28**	**70.0**	**1**	**100.0**	0	0.0
Work	1	4.3	6	15.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Sports team	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	9.7
Rivalry with Laguna region	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	3.2
Total	**23**	**100.0**	**40**	**100.0**	**1**	**100.0**	**62**	**100.0**

Paakat, Revista de Tecnología y Sociedad, Year 11, no. 21 (2021) ● September 2021-February 2022
eISSN 2007-3607 ● Universidad de Guadalajara

13

Discussion and conclusions

As raised in the conceptual section, digital citizen identity can be understood as the process of signification and definition of the self, which gives rise to various social practices in online interaction spaces related to matters of public interest. The results shown in the previous section allow us to highlight some elements linked to this category in the SDPs observed, based on expressions of support, opposition, demand and proposals that, from Nabatchi and Leighninger (2015), correspond to light participations; that is, generated individually and with a relatively low investment of resources.

As had been found in the studies by Schimidt (2016) and Vromen (2017), these were approaches to everyday issues in which, on both platforms, the highest frequency corresponded to requests and petitions (69.9% on Facebook and 47.1% on Twitter) while the lowest frequency was given by proposals (6.5% on Facebook and 4% on Twitter). According to Bonsón, Perea and Bednárová (2019), these platforms are used to establish interactions between authorities and citizens on matters of public interest.

Despite their wide variety, in general, the expressions revolved around demands about services provided by the municipal authority, such as public safety, lighting, roads, maintenance of public spaces, drinking water, drainage and garbage collection. There was an important difference between both platforms observed: while on Facebook expressions tended to be more frequent in relation to the neighborhood (90.2% on average), on Twitter it was in terms of the city (72.2% on average).

Based on the relationship between citizen identity and the significant collectives expressed, despite having been presented in a relatively small proportion (8.2% of the total on Facebook and 9.0% of the Twitter sample), the importance of the political party to which the mayor[9] belongs stands out in the identity expressions observed, both from his personal account and from the official account of the Saltillo city council.

It is important to reiterate that the objective of this work has given rise to a study focused on citizens and not on public administration, (an approach that is not the most frequent, according to the background reviewed). Whether this participation is the result of citizen identity (Tiramonti, Cullen & Fanfani, 2003), or whether this identity is constructed from participation (Hafer & Ran, 2016), it is suggested that the expressions made in the SDPs observed can be understood as expressive actions that allow an approach to the manifestation of civic and community senses that are gestated in the various dimensions of citizen identity.

As has been discussed, the most frequent sense in the observed sample is related to the expression of requests addressed to the municipal authority. This may have a direct relationship with the rights assumed by citizens; that is, it is reasonable to infer an internalization of this condition in those who made their demands through the observed

Paakat, Revista de Tecnología y Sociedad, Year 11, no. 21 (2021) ● September 2021-February 2022
eISSN 2007-3607 ● Universidad de Guadalajara

14

platforms, in terms of Harju (2007) and Mayo (2000); however, it is a hypothesis that would have to be verified in future approaches.

In this sense, the records allow us to assume an awareness of being subject to a series of rights as taxpayers, derived from the relationship with a legally established entity. Although expressions of support were less frequent (8.6% on Facebook and 31.2% on Twitter), they sometimes started from thanks to the authority for the solution to problems very similar to those found in the requests.

In relation to other variables that were recorded (space and groups), it was identified that these are practices that are frequently associated with the proximate environments suggested in the antecedents: the neighborhood and the city (Tiramonti, Cullen & Fanfani, 2003) which, as Cooper, Bryer and Meek (2006) had suggested, are built from a communicative relationship between authorities and citizens, in which the improvement of living conditions is sought (Gustafson & Hertting, 2017).

Since the manifestation of proposals occurred marginally, in contrast to what was reported by Grant, Moon and Busby (2010), it is proposed that the expression of citizenship present in the sample still has ample possibilities of evolving to more proactive forms of participation, to the extent that political structures build more open mechanisms of reciprocal communication, clear and inclusive (as had been suggested by Nabatchi & Leighninger, 2015), and that, in addition, this consultation is reflected in the definition of public policies, beyond the merely discursive or the solution of immediate and highly delimited problems, such as repairing a street light or cleaning a square. This would allow us to move towards clearer and more effective governance practices than what is currently possible to observe at all levels of government in Mexico.

REFERENCES

Aarseth, E. (2001). Allegories of Space: The Question of Spatiality. In M. Eskelinen & R. Koskimaa (eds.), *Cybertext Yearbook 2000*. Jyväskylä, Finlandia: University of Jyväskylä.

Angouri, J. & Marra, M. (2012). *Constructing Identities at Work*. Londres: Palgrave Macmillan.

Asociación de Internet. (2019). 15 estudios sobre los hábitos de los usuarios de internet en México 2019. https://www.asociaciondeinternet.mx/estudios/habitos-de-internet

Paakat, Revista de Tecnología y Sociedad, Year 11, no. 21 (2021) ● September 2021-February 2022
eISSN 2007-3607 ● Universidad de Guadalajara

15

Astudillo, D. Y. (2016). *Las TIC como herramientas de comunicación organizacional para potenciar la participación ciudadana de los jóvenes del DMQ* (tesis de maestría). Quito: Universidad Central del Ecuador.

Barberich, C.; Campbell, N. & Hudson, R. (2012). *Land & Identity. Theory, Memory and Practice*. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi.

Bekafigo, M. A. & McBride, A. (2013). Who tweets about politics? Political participation of Twitter users during the 2011 gubernatorial elections. *Social Science Computer Review*, *31*(5), 625-643.

Bellamy, R. & Kennedy-Macfoy, M. (2014). *Citizenship. Critical Concepts in Political Science*. Nueva York: Routledge.

Bohórquez-Pereira, G.; Flórez-Quintero, J. D. & Alguero-Montaño, M. O. (2021). Comunicación digital entre ediles y usuarios en Twitter. *Ánfora*, *28*(50), 183-214.

Bonsón, E.; Perea, D. & Bednárová, M. (2019). Twitter as a tool for citizen engagement: An empirical study of the Andalusian municipalities. *Government Information Quarterly*, *36*(3), 480-489.

Callejo-Gallego, J. & Agudo-Arroyo, Y. (2019). Análisis cuantitativo y cualitativo de la audiencia de las cuentas del Estado español en Facebook y Twitter. *El Profesional de la Información*, *28*(5), 430-437.

Cargnino, M. & Neubaum, G. (2020). Are we deliberately captivated in homogeneous Cocoons? An Investigation on Political Tie Building on Facebook. *Mass Communication and Society*, 1-23.

Castells, M. (1999). *La sociedad red. El poder de la identidad*. México: Siglo XXI.

Cooper, T. L.; Bryer, T. A. & Meek, J. W. (2006). Citizen-centered collaborative public management. *Public Administration Review*, *66*, 76-88. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2006.00668.x

Cornwall, A. (2002). Locating Citizen Participation. *IDS Bulletin*, *33*(2). https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2002.tb00016.x

Corona-Páez, S. A. (2013). Saltillo y Torreón: viejas rivalidades. *El Siglo de Torreón*. https://www.elsiglodetorreon.com.mx/noticia/925164.saltillo-y-torreon-viejas-rivalidades.html

De Weerd, M.; Gemmeke, M.; Rigter, J. & van Rij, C. (2005). *Indicators for monitoring active citizenship and citizenship education*. Amsterdam: Regioplan.

Paakat, Revista de Tecnología y Sociedad, Year 11, no. 21 (2021) ● September 2021-February 2022
eISSN 2007-3607 ● Universidad de Guadalajara

16

Dominelli, L. & Moosa-Mitha, M. (2014). *Reconfiguring citizenship*. Surrey, Reino Unido: Ashgate.

Fuchs, D. (2006). Participatory, liberal and electronic democracy. In T. Zittel & D. Fuchs (eds.), *Participatory democracy and political participation: can participatory engineering bring citizens back in?* (pp. 29-54). Londres: Routledge.

Giménez, G. (2000). Materiales para una teoría de las identidades sociales. In J. M. Valenzuela Arce (coord.), *Decadencia y auge de las identidades* (pp. 45-78). México: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte / Plaza y Valdés.

Gamir, J. (2016). Blogs, Facebook y Twitter en las elecciones generales de 2011. Estudio cuantitativo del uso de la web 2.0 por parte de los cabezas de lista del PP y del PSOE. *Dígitos*, *2*, 101-120. https://roderic.uv.es/bitstream/handle/10550/53623/111615.pdf

Giraldo-Luque, S. & Villegas-Simón, I. (2017). Uso de redes sociales por los parlamentos como medio de participación política. Estudio de caso latinoamericano y europeo. *Profesional de la Información*, *26*(3), 430-437.

Gustafson, P. & Hertting, N. (2017). Understanding participatory governance: An analysis of participants' motives for participation. *The American Review of Public Administration*, *47*(5), 538-549.

Graham, T.; Broersma, M.; Hazelhoff, K. & Van'T Haar, G. (2013). Between broadcasting political messages and interacting with voters: The use of Twitter during the 2010 UK general election campaign. *Information, Communication & Society*, *16*(5), 692-716.

Grant, W. J.; Moon, B. & Busby, J. (2010). Digital dialogue? Australian politicians' use of the social network tool Twitter. *Australian Journal of Political Science*, *45*(4), 579-604.

Green, D.; Palmquist, B. & Schickler, E. (2002). *Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identity of Voters*. Londres: Yale University Press.

Haeberle, S. H. (1988). People or place: Variations in community leaders' subjective definitions of neighborhood. *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, *23*(4), 616-634.

Hafer, J. A. & Ran, B. (2016). Developing a citizen perspective of public participation: identity construction as citizen motivation to participate. *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, *38*(3), 206-222.

Paakat, Revista de Tecnología y Sociedad, Year 11, no. 21 (2021) ● September 2021-February 2022
eISSN 2007-3607 ● Universidad de Guadalajara

17

Hamutoğlu, N. B. & Ünal, Y. (2015). Digital citizenship in Turkey and in the world: Educational applications and technology. *The Online Journal of Quality in Higher Education*, *2*(3), 39.

Harju, A. (2007). Citizen participation and local public spheres: an agency and identity focussed approach to the Tampere postal services conflict. In B. Cammaerts, & N. Carpentier (eds.), *Reclaiming the Media: Communication Rights and Expanding Democratic Media Roles* (pp. 92-106). Bristol: Intellect Books.

Hassan, N. M.; Maon, S. N.; Kassim, E. S.; Yunus, N. A. M. & Jailani, S. F. A. K. (2019). Digital Competencies among Adolescence. *The Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Business and Management*, 714-717.

Huddy, L. (2001). From social to political identity: A critical examination of social identity theory. *Political Psychology*, *22*(1), 127-156.

Jackson, S. (2005). *Sports, Culture and Advertising: Identities, Commodities and the Politics of Representation*. Londres: Routledge.

Jenkins, H. (2011). *La cultura de la convergencia de los medios de comunicación*. España: Paidós Comunicación.

Jones, M.; Jones, R. & Woods, M. (2014). *An introduction to political geography: space, place and politics*. Londres: Routledge.

Kenner, S. & Lange, D. (2019). Digital Citizenship Education. Challenge and Opportunity. *Scuola democratica*, *10*(4), 47-55.

Krippendorff, K. (1990). *Metodología de análisis de contenido. Teoría y práctica*. Barcelona: Paidós.

Kress, G. & Van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal discourse. The modes and media of contemporary communication*. Londres: Arnold / Oxford University Press.

Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The Production of Space*. Hoboken: Blackwell.

Lévy, P. (1999). *Qué es lo virtual*. Barcelona: Paidós.

Leydet, D. (2017). Citizenship. In E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/citizenship/

López, J. L.; Hernández, C. C.; Santillán, B. E. & Ortiz, A. M. (2018). Emociones e interacción ciudadana: análisis de la comunicación emocional de los presidenciables en Twitter y Facebook. In B. N. Gómez & J. L. López (coords.),

Paakat, Revista de Tecnología y Sociedad, Year 11, no. 21 (2021) ● September 2021-February 2022
eISSN 2007-3607 ● Universidad de Guadalajara

18

Agenda sociodigital de la campaña presidencial de 2018 (pp. 108-130). Torreón, Coahuila: CONEICC; UAdeC.

Lowndes, V.; Pratchett, L. y Stoker, G. (2006). Diagnosing and remedying the failings of official participation schemes: The CLEAR framework. *Social Policy and Society*, *5*(2), 281.

Marichal, J. (2013). Political Facebook groups: Micro-activism and the digital front stage. *First Monday*, *18*(12), https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/download/4653/3800

Marshall, T. H. (1950). *Citizenship and Social Class*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mayo, M. (2000). *Cultures, communities, identities. Cultural strategies for participation and empowerment*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Mead, G. H. (2009). *Mind, self, and society: From the standpoint of a social behaviorist*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Moreno, D. X. (2017). *Análisis de las campañas políticas a través de las redes sociales: Facebook y Twitter de Lenin Moreno, Guillermo Lasso y Cynthia Viteri, candidatos a la presidencia de la República del Ecuador en los comicios del 19 febrero de 2017* (tesis de maestría). Universidad de Sevilla.

Muñiz, C.; Dader, J. L.; Téllez, N. M. & Salazar, A. (2016). ¿Están los políticos políticamente comprometidos?: Análisis del compromiso político 2.0 desarrollado por los candidatos a través de Facebook. *Cuadernos.info*, (39), 135-150. http://dx.doi.org/10.7764/cdi.39.970

Nabatchi, T. & Leighninger, M. (2015). *Public participation for 21st century democracy*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.

Neuman, W. R.; Bimber, B. & Hindman, M. (2011). The Internet and four dimensions of citizenship. n R. Y. Shapiro & L. R. Jacobs (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of American Public Opinion and the Media* (pp. 22-42). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ohme, J. (2021). Algorithmic social media use and its relationship to attitude reinforcement and issue-specific political participation. The case of the 2015 European immigration movements. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, *18*(1), 36-54.

Oyedemi, T. D. (2020). The Theory of Digital Citizenship. In J. Servaes (ed.), *Handbook of Communication for Development and Social Change* (237-255). Singapore: Springer.

Paakat, Revista de Tecnología y Sociedad, Year 11, no. 21 (2021) ● September 2021-February 2022
eISSN 2007-3607 ● Universidad de Guadalajara

19

Quiroga, A. M. (2005). Indicadores sociales para la ciudadanía. *Palobra*, *6*(6), 54-70. https://doi.org/10.32997/2346-2884-vol.6-num.6-2005

Rodríguez-Andrés, R. (2017). ¿En camino hacia el gobierno 2.0?: análisis del uso de redes sociales por los ministerios españoles para fomentar la transparencia y la participación ciudadana. *Estudios Sobre el Mensaje Periodístico*, *23*(2), 937-954.

Schimidt, K. (2016). *Participación ciudadana en redes sociales: ¿cómo es la interacción con ayuntamientos de España y Brasil en Facebook y Twitter?* (tesis de maestría). Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

Téllez, M. F. & Ramírez, S. (2021). Prácticas de comunicación en el ecosistema digital. Análisis de seis gobernaciones colombianas sobre sus procesos de comunicación pública para promover la participación ciudadana. *Investigación & Desarrollo*, *29*(1), 41-68.

Theocharis, Y. & Lowe, W. (2016). Does Facebook increase political participation? Evidence from a field experiment. *Information, Communication & Society*, *19*(10), 1465-1486.

Theocharis, Y. & Van Deth, J. W. (2018). The continuous expansion of citizen participation: a new taxonomy. *European Political Science Review*, *10*(1), 139-163.

Tiramonti, G.; Cullen, C. & Fanfani, E. T. (2003). Educación, exclusión social e identidad ciudadana. *Diálogos Pedagógicos*, *1*(1), 50-55.

Treré, E. (2020). *Activismo mediático híbrido*. Bonn: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

Velázquez, C. (2018). Carta abierta a AMLO. *La Razón*. https://www.razon.com.mx/el-cultural/carta-abierta-a-amlo/

Vromen, A. (2017). *Digital Citizenship and Political Engagement*. Londres: Palgrave Macmillan.

Paakat, Revista de Tecnología y Sociedad, Year 11, no. 21 (2021) ● September 2021-February 2022
eISSN 2007-3607 ● Universidad de Guadalajara

20

[1] According to the Internet Association (2019), Mexico has an Internet penetration rate of 71% in people over six years old, that is, nearly three out of every ten Mexicans lack this service.

[2] Position held by Manolo Jiménez Salinas in the term from 2019 to 2021 (following his re-election in 2018).

[3] The notion of virtual interactions is based on the approaches of Lévy (1999), who defines this condition on the basis of a problematic state in which there are various dimensions that are actualized according to the participants in the processes of symbolic exchange in cyberspace. Some of these dimensions are determined by time and space, which correspond to subjective coordinates, as well as to tensions that occur between the public and the private, the collective and the individual, and so on.

[4] In the Mexican regulatory framework, this can occur at three levels: country (federal), state (or federative entity) and municipal (city council).

[5] The accounts of the city council were: https://www.facebook.com/saltillogob and https://twitter.com/SaltilloGob For the mayor's case, they were: https://www.facebook.com/Manolo.Jimenez.Salinas and https://twitter.com/manolojim

[6] In the calculation of both Twitter samples, a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5% were considered. The calculation was made through the online service http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html

[7] The filtered data will be called valid in the final sections.

[8] Dr. Sergio Antonio Corona Páez, who was director of the Center for Historical Research at the Universidad Iberoamericana Torreón, refers in a journalistic document to the existence of a mutual feeling of historical rivalry between the inhabitants of Saltillo and Torreón, derived from the perception of unequal treatment in taxation and economic promotion, at least since the late nineteenth century (Corona-Páez, 2013). Another editorial reference to this rivalry can be found in Velázquez (2018).

[9] The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI, by its acronym in Spanish) governed Mexico from its founding in 1930 until 2000. In Coahuila it has been the only party that has governed the entity from 1930 until the time this article was written.

Paakat, Revista de Tecnología y Sociedad, Year 11, no. 21 (2021) ● September 2021-February 2022
eISSN 2007-3607 ● Universidad de Guadalajara

21