



Received: 2017-02-28  
Reviewed: 2017-04-09  
Accepted: 2017-05-09



RECYT Code: 55710  
Preprint: 2017-07-15  
Published: 2017-10-01

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3916/C53-2017-03>

## Social Empowerment in Mexican Violent Contexts through Media Competence

### Empoderamiento social en contextos violentos mexicanos mediante la competencia mediática

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#### Abstract

The acquisition of digital skills, media diet management, and general knowledge of ICT, is essential for the development and empowerment of audiences in the current media ecology, particularly considering the political and social challenges of the Latin American environment. In that sense, the study of media competence is urgent for sizing up the needs and characteristics of these communities. This work analyses the axiological and ideological dimension of media competence during an electoral process in northwestern Mexico, a region that is generally subject to violence related to organized crime. Twenty-three items pertaining to this dimension were selected from an instrument designed to evaluate media competence, which were applied to a probability sample of 385 subjects divided by digital natives, digital migrants, and digital illiterates. After an exploratory factor analysis, seven factors were identified. The intra and inter-group scores were explored, lower scores were found in components that allude citizens' participation and social action; likewise, three of seven factors showed statistically significant differences, being digital natives who reported a lower score. Therefore, the need to search for new strategies for citizens to acquire media competence is evident, in order for pro-summing to become a social empowerment tool.

#### Resumen

En las actuales ecologías mediáticas la adquisición de saberes digitales, manejo de dieta de medios y dominios generales de las TIC son fundamentales para el desarrollo y el empoderamiento de las audiencias, en particular, al considerar los desafíos políticos y sociales de entornos como el latinoamericano. Así, el estudio de la competencia mediática es urgente para dimensionar las necesidades y características de estas comunidades. La presente investigación analiza la dimensión axiológica e ideológica de la competencia mediática durante un proceso electoral en el noroeste de México, región que se ha caracterizado por la violencia relacionada con el crimen organizado. A partir de un instrumento diseñado para evaluar dicha competencia, se seleccionaron 23 ítems que remiten a la dimensión señalada, este se aplicó por medio de un muestreo probabilístico a 385 sujetos divididos en nativos, inmigrantes y analfabetos digitales. Tras un análisis factorial exploratorio se identificaron siete factores que conforman la dimensión axiológica e ideológica. Se exploraron las puntuaciones intra e intergrupos y se encontraron puntuaciones bajas en componentes que aluden a la participación ciudadana y a la movilización social; asimismo, tres de los siete factores presentaron



diferencias estadísticamente significativas, siendo los nativos digitales quienes reportaron valores más bajos. Así, se pone en evidencia la necesidad de buscar nuevas estrategias para que los ciudadanos adquieran la competencia mediática y que así el prosumo se vuelva una herramienta de empoderamiento social.

## Keywords / Palabras clave

Media competence, social empowerment, digital natives, violence, media, communication and development, social participation, citizens.

Competencia mediática, empoderamiento social, nativos digitales, violencia, medios de comunicación, comunicación y desarrollo, participación social, ciudadanía.

## 1. Introduction

In 2012, the then presidential candidate, Enrique Peña Nieto, would be the catalyst for one of the student and social movements with the greatest media presence in recent years, “YoSoy132” (“IAm132”). The phenomenon appeared in the international spotlight because it highlighted the close relationship between the biggest broadcasting company in the country, Televisa, and the current president of Mexico (2012-18). In fact, the whole affair went from being a media process to a counter-media one, which is to say, young audiences demanded greater media plurality and not just unilateral coverage, in the rancid style of Televisa, of the person considered the main character in the presidential soap opera.

For Candón (2013), the movement portrayed a generational conflict between those who have grown up with the use of ICT and those who have considered TV as their main source for information (IAB México, 2016). The crisis went beyond ideological differences as it represented a genuine demonstration of technology’s role in the cultural understanding of such concepts as politics, economy, education, trust in institutions, media included. Campos-Freire (2008) calls this process a cascade of questions about the role and the path that traditional media must follow in social mediation for democracy.

Cases such as “YoSoy132”, the Arab Spring, 15M or Movimiento de los Indignados (Anti-Austerity Movement), Ferguson, Ayotzinapa, among many others, have a common denominator, the Internet as a platform for producing, replicating, and spreading messages of social outrage. The role of media, especially social media in contemporary society, as Caldero and Aguaded suggest (2015), is very dynamic. Although hyper-communicated audiences build new imaginaries of culture and media participation, they still face obstacles that must be overcome in order to reach critical literacy in times when social empowerment, through media, is more than urgent.

Even though the arrival of the Internet has contributed to the democratization and transparency of government and communicative practices, encouraging even the knowledge society (Drucker, 1994), the hypermodern era (Lipovetsky & Serroy, 2009) or the information society (Bell, García & Gallego, 1976), as it has been called through different theoretical approaches, it is important to continue researching the relationship between media narratives, reception, and above all, their uses for social empowerment.

The empowerment of citizens through strategies of pedagogy, discourse, technology, and production of tools that encourage freedom of speech, are media competence matters. From decades ago to the present days, international organisms such as UNESCO, The European Union, CIESPAL, ALAIC, ININCO (Communication Research Institute), INTERCOM (Brazilian Society of Communication Interdisciplinary Studies), ILET (Latin American Institute of Transnational Studies), CEREN (Study Center of National Reality), ALFAMED, civil partnerships, several NGOs, and groups interested in educommunication globally, have highlighted the importance of the management of media diet in daily life.

In 1964, Wilbur Schramm published a study about communication and development in countries of the third sector, where he attributed operative possibilities to accomplish institutional, and economic



and social development goals to media. “Development communication is the creation, thanks to the influence of mass media, of a public atmosphere which encourages change, considered essential to achieve the modernization of traditional societies through technology” (Beltrán, 2006: 59).

Years later, UNESCO urged the stakeholders to prioritize the adequate use of media to guarantee freedom of speech, in hopes of getting better living conditions for the world population, as stated in the Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racism, apartheid and incitement to war. Document that recognizes media as part of the culture process in young people’s education for a spirit of peace, justice, liberty, mutual respect, and comprehension of human rights (UNESCO, 1979).

It is in this educative framework where the works of Mario Kaplún and Juan Díaz Bordenare are located. They led edu-communicative proposals to approach their region’s injustice related to government, dependency of economic powers, poverty, and lack of opportunities for minorities; concerns that were also captured by several scholars in initiatives such as Cocoyoc’s Declaration in Mexico of 1974, or meetings sponsored by UNESCO in Bogota and Costa Rica in 1974 and 76 respectively (Beltrán, 2006). In that decade, the configuration of a professional and strategic Communication Studies about the development of Latin America starts, which, although shares a common background with communication studies of the 1950s, acquires new meanings between Latin American cultural paradigm and what Marques-de-Melo (1987) identifies as moment of the critical current.

In that sense, Aguaded and Caldeiro (2013) argue that, despite the new media not being conceived for educational purposes, the use of those new screens entails modifications in different levels of the social framework, as they express values and imply pedagogical functions in educational processes and contribute to the socialization of current media ecologies. In such scenario, there is an urgency among critical citizens of the communicative phenomenon for, “a deeper and more extensive knowledge of media would serve as incentive for participation, active citizens, development of competence and lifelong learning” (Carlsson, 2001:106).

This research situates itself in relation to these active citizens under the premise that media contribute to empowering audiences, and therefore, developing different aspects of the subjects’ individual and collective life. “The imaginary of communication for development is related to social work of movements vindication based on the search for life conditions improvement, starting from local strategies that get linked in national and international networks” (Chaparro, 2009:146). It cannot be otherwise anymore a phenomena of intolerance, racism, discrimination; and oppression must be approached from a communication for equity and transparency, where their social function adjusts to this century’s requirements.

It is not an easy task. One of the problems learned in recent experiences, as demonstrated by the communicative phenomena quoted, is that media by itself cannot guarantee the right to communication. Other factors are also needed for that: Rule of Law, journalistic security, citizen security, trustworthy institutions, respect for individual guarantees, among other conditions related to democracies. Contemporary media ecology is complex, it raises survival challenges to what Chaparro (2009) calls the third sector. In other words, citizens of the first sector or dominant axis are created from cultural imaginaries self-appointed by interlocutors with power and different contexts than those of the developing countries, for example Latin America. Consequently, when referring to communication, media literacy, and communicative empowerment for development, it is necessary to adjust the focus to the region.

In that sense, the way to face the concept of media literacy is from an open articulation to the theoretical revision of global approaches; stressing the position of Iberoamerica, especially in the proposal of Ferrés, Aguaded and García-Matilla (2012) and the one of Alfamed<sup>1</sup> research group, which gathers works of more than 50 researchers from 13 countries, but adapts it to the reality of Sinaloa.



## 2. Local media competence

According to Ferrés and Piscitelli (2012), media competence includes technological and critical knowledge about media use, and it demands the need to maximize the participative dimension of communicative processes, not just participation associated with mere expression, but linked to truly approaches of dialog, selection, critical interpretation, and dissemination of communicative productions, as the prosumers do nowadays. Authors propose six dimensions: 1) languages, 2) technology, 3) interaction processes, 4) production and dissemination processes, 5) ideology and values, and 6) aesthetics. Media competence dimensions and indicators, although connected transversally, present communicative phenomena which make them ideal for their promotion and/or study. Thus, when approaching social movements and citizen participation, the nations' socio-political spheres must be considered, for example, the elections.

Farré (2016) states that the construction of political-media reality flourishes in conditions of reflection of personal, institutional, and social life. So, a political process is the adequate scenario to inquire the phenomenon of citizen participation from media competence. There the citizens face not only the decision to choose their representatives, but also media stimuli that get them in touch with their needs, stressing the audience's ideology and values in the axiological level of collective and individual actions. Therefore, the axiological and ideological dimensions, or Ideology and values, as Ferrés and Piscitelli (2012) call them, lead to the subject's interpretation, production, and critic in different types of narratives, as in the election campaigns, especially because of the citizen responsibility of taking action and sympathizing in society, which is urgent in the region studied.

Even though concepts of political communication, communication for development, educommunication, media literacy, and media competence are different, they share common objectives: to transcend the communicative phenomenon of audiences' individual and collective spaces to improve aspects from their lives. Thus, educating media citizens with critical thinking leads to the promotion of a thought that is aware of and demands to their government. There lies the importance of studying media competence in light of an elections process; from the perception of subjects about their trust in institutions, media, political parties, and actions taken to express disagreement with the elaboration of communicative products for social call-up, when needed.

It was decided that the most accurate way to inquire the phenomenon of media competence in Sinaloa was to classify its citizens according to the proposal of Prensky (2001), in regards to their use of ICT. That is to say, by examining the differences between those who have grown with the use of ICT (digital natives), those who have migrated to them (digital migrants) and those who have low or null knowledge of them (digital illiterates) (Guzmán-Acuña, 2008). According to the way existent literature locates individuals in regards to their technology skills and capabilities, including citizen participation in social and political matters (Rowlands & al., 2008).

For Romero-Rodríguez and Mancinas-Chávez (2016), current communicative processes go beyond the use of new platforms or technology structures. The "mediamorphosis" has emerged. This is a phase of inter-subject relationships where audiences get informed, share their realities, and create content as prosumers; now the media subject becomes decoder, recorder, and also sender of realities through multiple platforms and narratives.

Despite the apparent invasion of technology and audiovisual narratives in all spheres of the audiences' lives, there are still gaps that must be filled. Grijalva-Verdugo and Moreno-Candil (2016) warn, in a previous study about levels of media competence in university students of Sinaloa, about the lack of knowledge in several dimensions, although one could think that, as digital natives they would possess high levels of competence. Consequently, they propose that it is not limited only to educational places, but to processes of human cognition and mediation, such as schools and work spaces. Hence, they must be measured in those contexts, locating the knowledge transfer levels, knowledge mobilization, and the citizens' actions in relation to their every-day-life problems.

In that sense, media knowledge is not an exhausted topic. It should be clarified that media competence is an ability acquired differently by audiences in relation to their context, education, age, among other sociocultural factors. For Grijalva-Verdugo (2016) educating in media, implies an



attitude change for technology incorporation, instructional strategies upgrade, digital knowledge evaluation, and above all, not to assume arbitrarily that recent generations possess high media competence per se.

The visible urgencies of production and consumption in Mexico's media ecology, especially in Sinaloa, as Grijalva-Verdugo and Izaguirre-Fierro (2014) notice, are marked by the complex appropriation of forms of media competence in citizens. Sinaloa leads lists of "Most violent places" (El Debate, 2016) and "Most insecure places" (Angel, 2016) of the world. For Moreno-Candil, Burgos-Dávila, and Valdez-Batiz (2016), drug trafficking has contributed to the configuration of an ordinary landscape that has permeated the citizens' lives in such a way that, even people who are not involved in the phenomenon have psychosocial proximities to it (Moreno-Candil & Flores-Palacios, 2015). Therefore, providing social empowerment to citizens that have been hurt by drug cartels' physical and symbolic violence is truly difficult, as a cornerstone of media competence is the freedom of speech, which is utopian in scenarios plagued by impunity, corruption, violence, and other inhibitors. For that reason, evaluation indicators cannot be the same as those applied to other spaces such as the European, since its levels of social development are different. There is an urgency of research from within, in order to create theoretic-methodological references to evaluate media competence in violent contexts and also contribute to similar spaces in other latitudes.

### 3. Method

In order to properly examine the axiological and ideological dimension in violent contexts, such as Sinaloa, a questionnaire was developed to capture not only media competence, but also be sensitive to the observed reality. Though research regarding media competence, particularly in the Spanish case, suggest various strategies for the recollection of empirical testimonies such as field observation, expert interviews, open and closed questionnaires, focus groups, amongst others, the present study reports results from the application of a Likert scale from July to November of 2016 in Sinaloa; a province located in northwestern Mexico. The findings suggest new field approaches to be made in future research endeavors.

Participants were asked to express their attitudes regarding the media in Mexico and Sinaloa, the credibility of political parties and their participation in social movements. In this sense, the decision for the axiological and ideological approach followed that, in the period prior to data collection, Sinaloa had just undergone an electoral process for governor, local congress and municipal mayors, held on June 5, 2016 (Instituto Electoral del Estado de Sinaloa, 2016).

The ideological aspects were latent in the fieldwork through the relationship to political parties, the influence of the media on citizen's choices and the overall trust of the audiences in politics as a whole. The theoretical categories evaluated aspects related to citizen analysis of candidate proposals, social participation in political events convened by political parties or electoral bodies, critical observation of campaigns, interpretation of messages, dissemination of narratives, socialization of politics, management of the information produced during the political process and willingness to participate in demonstrations and other social movements.

The scale consisted of 23 items in a 5-point Likert format, participants were asked to express the frequency in which they partook in actions related to different aspects of the axiological and ideological dimension. The direction of the scale was set so that a higher score in each item would mean a higher capacity to evaluate sources, prioritize content, analyze virtual identities, as well as a critical examination of the effect of the messages from the media. As a result of this, and due to the phrasing of some of the items, their scores had to be inverted prior to the data analysis. The overall internal consistency of the scale was acceptable ( $\alpha=0.838$ ); however, a closer examination of the items showed that one of them had a negative item-scale correlation value which affected the reliability of the instrument, thus it was eliminated from the analysis. The final 22-item version of the scale had a higher internal consistency value ( $\alpha=0.866$ ).

The sample was stratified by locality; participants were selected from the main cities of Sinaloa (Culiacan, Mazatlan, Los Mochis, Guasave, Guamuchil and Navolato) and their rural areas, in



accordance to criteria from the Instituto Nacional Electoral (INE). Households and blocks (urban and rural) were randomly selected considering gender, age and schooling quotas. The sample consisted of 385 subjects extracted from voter registry of 2, 064, 508 (Instituto Electoral del Estado de Sinaloa, 2016) with a 95% confidence interval. The Mexican age of legal voting age (18) was taken as the inclusion criteria for the sample, which was later classified as digital native, immigrant or illiterate (Guzman-Acuña, 2008; Prensky, 2001).

## 4. Results

An exploratory factor analysis was performed on the gathered data (KMO=0.770; Bartlett's sphericity test  $p < 0.01$ ). A 7-factor solution explained 67.99% of the scale's total variance (Table 1).

**Table 1. Factor solution (Varimax)**

Factor/Item	Factors						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>1. Civic reflection</b>							
I talk about my political or electoral preferences with my colleagues at work.	.845						
I talk about my political or electoral preferences with my family.	.795						
I talk about my political or electoral preferences with my friends.	.782						
I analyzed the candidates' proposals on the basis of the campaign not my family's voting tradition.	.642					.403	
I trust the electoral organisms.	.612						
<b>2. Social function of the media</b>							
I believe the national media contributes to the country's democracy.		.855					
I believe the local media contributes to the democracy of Sinaloa.		.831					
The media in Mexico is sufficient to keep me properly informed.		.742					
The media in Sinaloa is sufficient to keep me properly informed.		.603					.406
<b>3. Civic action</b>							
I've supported a march or social movement by distributing information, summoning people or collaborating on its organization.			.790				
I've participated in any kind of civic forum to improve my city or neighborhood, such as neighborhood meetings or citizen consultations.			.737				
I complain with my friends or acquaintances when the media disperses false or wrong information regarding the country			.408	.405			
<b>4. Social action of the media</b>							
I consider that the media should criticize political parties and candidates to public office.				.859			
It is important for the media to speak good or bad of the candidates, that way, I can get an idea of the way they really are.				.828			
<b>5. Social conscience</b>							
I believe that an individual's freedom of expression should be defended regardless of the medium: social media, television or public spaces.					.812		
Social media contributes to transparency.					.598		
I believe that by participating in politics the country's quality of life has a greater possibility of improvement.					.590		
<b>6. Critical analysis of political campaigns</b>							
Political or electoral campaigns are important for learning about the candidates' ideologies.						.802	
I will give my vote to the candidate with the best proposal, regardless of their political party.						.771	
<b>7. Production of participation tools</b>							
I'd be willing to participate in a march (protest).							.771
I share, produce and comment memes because they allow me to generate political conscience.							.509
I comment on the information publish in social media channels by informative media (Noroeste, El Universal, amongst others).			.462				.495
Eigenvalue	6.93	2.44	2.11	1.54	1.27	1.15	1.01
% of explained variance	26.6	10.6	9.2	6.7	5.5	5.0	4.4
Cronbach's alpha	0.84	0.82	0.67	0.76	0.63	0.69	0.61



In order to obtain independent factors, data was rotated using Varimax rotation, meaning that only items with a factor load of 0.40 or higher were included in the analysis (Table 1). The following factors were obtained:

- Civic reflection, which includes five items (eigenvalue of 6.93) and explains 26.6% of the total variance of the scale. The items in this factor pertain to the action of socializing information and opinions with members of the participants' immediate social groups (i.e. family and coworkers). Overall, the factor alludes to the individual's reflexivity, his or her ability to express evaluations regarding electoral organisms and campaign proposals, aspects that are urgent in order to achieve a more critical standing in the local political context.
- Social function of the media (eigenvalue=2.44, explained variance=10.5%), which includes four items. Here, participants were asked to express their beliefs regarding the efficiency of local and national media to promote democracy and civic values.
- Civic action (eigenvalue=2.11, explained variance=9.2%), which groups three items related to specific actions taken by individuals to promote acts of social protest. Overall, this factor assesses the degree of active involvement and participation in political protest.
- Social action of the media (eigenvalue=1.54, explained variance=6.7%) consists of two items that focus on the critical role played by the media in the construction of the audiences' opinions regarding political candidates.
- Social conscience (eigenvalue=1.27, explained variance=5.5%), alludes to the recognition that social change requires the participation of individuals and the media, as well as the defense of freedom of expression as a guarantee to manage and promote such change through diverse mediums.
- Critical analysis of political campaigns (eigenvalue=1.15, explained variance=5.0%) comprises two items which recognize the importance of an adequate analysis of political campaigns though the proposals of the candidates, or by being a reflexive voter.
- Production of participation tools (eigenvalue=1.01, explained variance=4.4%), the three items that compose this factor refer to aspects that characterize a politically active society that has a proper use and domain of ICT to promote social organization and political participation.

Once these factors were identified, the values for each one were compared amongst the groups contemplated in the study. Given that each factor was comprised of a different amount of items, their values were standardized to facilitate the comparison. Thus, the value for each factor oscillates from 0.2 to 1, where 1 represents the highest possible value. After this, the distribution of values of each factor within each group was analyzed. It was found that the data did not comply to a normal distribution, therefore non-parametric tests were used to compare the groups in this study.

Factors	Average rank		
	Digital Native	Digital Immigrant	Digital Illiterate
1. Civic reflection	3.49	3.97	2.84
2. Social function of the media	4.64	4.27	4.84
3. Civic action	2.31	2.49	2.50
4. Social action of the media	4.46	4.63	5.16
5. Social conscience	5.11	4.85	4.59
6. Critical analysis of political campaigns	5.37	5.40	4.63
7. Production of participation tools	2.82	2.40	3.44
$\chi^2$	428.51	160.90	23.89
Kendall's W	0.288	0.305	0.249
p<	0.001	0.001	0.01

Friedman's test considers the overall values obtained by each factor within the group and ranks them from lowest to highest; the lowest score is given the value of 1, while the factor with the highest



score is given the value of 7 (there are seven factors). Table 2 shows the average rank of each one of the factors that make up the axiological and ideological dimension for each group considered in the study (digital natives, immigrants and illiterates). Though each factor had a different average rank value, if the extremes of these orderings are observed, there are some consistencies amongst the groups. For example, the factors that systematically received lower scores, and can thus be considered the least characteristic aspect of the dimension in the sample are: “civic action” and “production of participation tools”. The later presents a disparaging scene for Sinaloan society, it seems as if it is unwilling to be politically active; this unwillingness encompasses traditional means of social organization and participation, such as marches and forums, as well as more recent methods of participation closely related to the production and divulgence of digital content. On the other hand, “critical analysis of political campaigns” is the highest ranked factor for both digital natives and digital immigrants, whereas for the digital illiterates the highest ranked factor was “social action of the media”. This presents an interesting contrast amongst the groups, especially when the electoral behavior is considered; for the younger participants of the study, the main influence on their vote comes from political campaigns and the reflection on the proposal made by the candidates, for the older participants (digital illiterates), it is the media who is in charge of promoting and informing about the candidates and their proposals.

**Table 3. Kruskal-Wallis test**

Factor	Average range			H	GL	p
	Digital Native	Digital Immigrant	Digital Illiterate			
1. Civic reflection**	180.76	221.67	189.53	9.40	2	0.008
2. Social function of the media	187.82	197.36	232.38	3.29	2	0.193
3. Civic action*	183.43	216.51	193.75	6.26	2	0.044
4. Social action of the media**	180.74	215.16	241.35	11.12	2	0.004
5. Social conscience	179.58	196.91	182.95	1.81	2	0.405
6. Critical analysis of political campaigns	187.65	203.56	195.84	1.53	2	0.466
7. Production of participation tools	191.03	188.11	174.00	0.43	2	0.805

\*p<0.05; \*\*p< 0.01

Once the distribution of the factors within each group was explored, a Kruskal-Wallis test was used to compare the differences amongst the groups. The Kruskal-Wallis test compares the average range of a variable across more than two groups. The results are showed in Table 3. Although there are differences in every factor across the groups, only three of them are statistically significant: “civic reflection”, “civic action” and “social action of the media”. In order to properly identify the root of these differences, Mann-Whitney U tests were performed. It was found that, in all cases, the significance lies when the digital natives’ scores are compared to the other two groups, that is, digital natives manifest these factors significantly different from digital immigrants and digital illiterates. How are these manifestations different? Considering the age gap between the groups, one could expect that the most significant difference would be found when comparing digital natives against digital illiterates; however, this only happened when comparing the “social action of the media” (U=1811; p<0.05). In this case, the digital illiterates were who attributed greater importance to the role the media plays in promoting political ideologies. With this, a greater emphasis was given to the importance of having a critical positioning towards politicians amongst different media platforms. In other words, it was the older participants in the study, who more frequently considered that the media should constantly criticize and denounce politicians, rather than keeping a blander o neutral position. The same difference was observed when comparing digital natives versus digital immigrants (U=10589; p<0.01), again the difference favored the older participants (digital immigrants). A possible explanation for these discrepancies could be the ambiguity of the items that comprise this factor regarding the concept of “the media”. In recent times, especially amongst younger people, the term social media has become more salient, distinguishing from the concept of media that tends to encompass traditional media outlets such as televised news and newspapers.





Regarding the “civic reflection” factor, the statistical differences were significant when comparing the results of digital natives and digital immigrants ( $U=10038$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), again, the older participants were the ones who reported a more frequent dialogue and reflection regarding political themes with their social circles (i.e. family, friends, coworkers). From this result, it makes sense that when it comes to “social action” ( $U=10380$ ;  $P<0.05$ ) the difference also favors the digital immigrants. If this group reports a more frequent dialogue and reflection on politics when compared to the younger participants, it is consistent that the digital immigrants would also be more prone to partaking in direct political and social actions such as protests against the political class.

## 5. Discussion and conclusions

It was found that the axiological and ideological dimension of media competence is constituted by seven components which are closely related to each other: civic reflection, social function of media, civic action, social action of the media, social conscience, critical reception of political campaigns, and production of participation tools. There is a rejection of participation; however, digital migrants and illiterates are the ones that appear less reluctant to get involved in social movements. Despite the assumption that digital natives, being more familiar with ICT, would have higher levels of media competence, it was not the case for this study, as the adult audiences were the ones that showed more openness to participate in social movements.

Unlike in other scenarios, digital natives tend to not get involved in criticizing and questioning politics, even when considering the violence that characterizes the state. Ironically, Sinaloa appeared on the international press for leading a movement integrated by a large group of citizens, mostly young people (digital natives), that asked for the release of cartel boss “El Chapo Guzmán” (Zamarrón, 2014). In fact, in social media #IloveChapo was used to promote the march and demanded the release of whom they called “the Hero of Sinaloa” (Agence France Presse, 2014). This movement was not necessarily framed in the classical theories of social movements (Della-Porta & Diani, 2015), as the protest was not in regards to the rights of vulnerable groups. A new social claimant emerges, whom does not see in “El Chapo” a delinquent, but a benefactor of the masses forgotten by the State. Such events highlight the existence of certain kinds of media competence and social empowerment, however, not in the promise of the emancipatory, liberating, and critical tradition of educommunication. So, it is not that the citizens lack media competence, but rather that, when called for participation, weariness and distrust of political institutions appear. Thus, the urgency of social empowerment framed in knowledge bonding that contributes to concrete actions in the struggle for democratic and less violent spaces; otherwise, to keep the promise of media use to obtain ethical knowledge with social vision, will be increasingly further in contexts as complex as the region studied.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Alfamed, Euro-American Inter-University Research Network on Media Literacy for Citizenship, endorsed by AUIP (Iberoamerican University Association of Graduate Studies).

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