

THE MEXICAN PARADOX: AN “OPEN GOVERNMENT” THAT CENSORS

Regina Cantu

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Youtube videos of [absolutelly politically incorrect youngsters](#) giving out their opinion on country's affairs, [president's memes](#), play on loop the [“Gabriel Ernesto I'm your mother” scenes once starred by our first lady in turn](#), or making [websites meant to measure the presidential incompetence](#). May be banal, even out of order activities, but overall they are manifestation of one of our main rights as Mexicans: our right to express ourselves freely.

“Your liberty ends there where other's liberty begins” this is very true. Yet the president, his cabinet and local governing figures must not only bare the critiques thrown their way, but must of all tend to them. The issue is that these critiques seem to literally be endangered to extinction. Some days ago thousands of people mobilized themselves both through their [physical](#) and [virtual](#) networks to avoid the destruction of this practice.

I will noy go through the explanation as to why the articles that constitute our Brand new Telecommunications Law are finely designed to shred into pieces our freedom of expression, isolate and even monitor not only active citizens, but also the informed ones, the educated ones and even those who wish to pose a critique to all of the above. [Here](#), [Here](#) and especially [Here](#) are well made explanations of these facts, the facts about a law that not only means to regulate internet, but every media.

What I'm most interested in is adding another face to this debate:

From January 29th until April 8th of this year in the following website [datos.gob.mx](#) the “National policy of Open Data” was available to any citizen who was able to access the files in order for them to give an opinion or suggest a change. The result, 174 individuals posted a comment regarding all the chapters of said policy: Introduction, Objectives, Open Data, Institutional Architecture, Privacy and Publication, and usage promotion.

This policy and the participation process above described are the rudder of Mexico's participation as co-president of the Open Government Partnership, and constitute also a section of the National Digital Strategy. What is what? In order to figure this out, logic dictates that the links provided at [datos.org.mx](#) would help understand the institutional and political structure of it all and specially what the Open Government

Partnership and Mexico's National Digital Strategy are. Yet, sadly, or else gladly since it is an excellent example to my case, in order to access the site where Mexico's participation on the Open Government Partnership is explained (aga.org.mx) authentication is required: access to it is denied. But do not fret, the presidential site offers a [shallow explanation](#) in order to feed our curiosity, or else fulfil our demands with the minimal expression of information possible, however you might see it. Of course there is always the [international site](#), in a different language and with way more information.

Some of the available information in said site: the [national action guides for local governments](#) which establish the construction of an action plan meant to focalize every effort to incorporate civil society, academia and various government levels towards the open government goals. These goals aim to achieve that every citizen in the country will be able to access all of the data produced by governments, so that social innovation is promoted. Hence understanding that Open Government goes beyond transparency of government operations, well into guaranteeing that information is not out there but yet that it is out there and USABLE, hence promoting a dialog between citizens and decision makers.

So, having clarified Mexico's role and goal through the Open Government Partnership, another question remains, what is Mexico's National Digital Strategy? To explain this a [thorough youtube video](#) is available, which explains clearly how this strategy's aim is to make of a country a Smart country "iMexico" if you will. And even though there is no hint as to how this may be achieved, it is clear that the: accessibility, diversity and transparency of information available through the Telecommunications and Information technologies will be guaranteed.

Which will clearly happen through the government's parameters, much like what happens with the national information on the Open Government Partnership locked behind a password, but "opened" to the public through a couple of paragraphs in the official site. Well-designed youtube videos, data bases, graphics, interactive interfaces and any other digital device that our thoughtful government sees fit, will provide a unique reading to the government's, and hence the country's reality; I hope to be mistaken and that the reason as to why they will not deliver raw data is just to prevent us from being overwhelmed or confused by the information.

A hard thing to believe, especially since the legal instrument that has brewed the now famous [#EPNvsInternet](#) [#ContraelSilencioMx](#) [#LeyTelecom](#) among others is a highly censoring and restrictive Federal Law: The Federal Telecommunications Law, an

instrument from which local laws, agreements, policies and regulations will be created. And all these instruments will provide the basis upon which policies such as Mexico's National Digital Strategy will receive Budget, the final and most defining element of a policy, what actually makes it a reality and not just rhetoric.

Take part of the "Open Data Policy" is now a lost opportunity, yet the observation and [pressure on the Federal Telecommunications Law](#) so it is not approved in its present form must not cease. Because, no matter how many international accords are signed by our country, our freedom to share, know and distribute our opinion regarding the government's performance will be lost; alongside with our intimacy, and the safety and trust to organize ourselves and demonstrate our opinion publicly; even the possibility to choose the media providers and services we want to have access to will be lost. We must understand that while our government promises an Open iFuture for our country we may be on brink of losing the capability of knowing, interpreting, building, communicating and having a dialog around our country's reality, hence the possibility of deciding the future that we want.