Research Article

SOCIAL NETWORKS: TOOL OF THE NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

*Mauricio Moncada and Dr. Carlos Gomez

Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León (UANL), Nuevo León, México

Abstract

This paper addresses with an exploratory look two transformational processes that have significantly affected modern societies and that are closely linked. On the one hand, the transformation of public administration to the new public management as a product of the crisis caused by the bureaucratic model of the Welfare State and, on the other hand, the transformation of social communication processes as a result of technological revolutions and the emergence of social networks in the field of social communication. The central hypothesis is that this transformational situation in both sectors offers an opportunity to turn towards new forms of management that are more efficient, effective, agile, and transparent, thereby giving greater legitimacy to current governments. However, some risks and success factors are also pointed out that allow us to trace a route for future research.

Keywords: Public administration, New public management, Communication media, Social networks, Citizen participation.

INTRODUCTION

Modern public administration, despite the fact that its fundamental pillar is based on the traditional concept of administration from a functional perspective, in this turbulent and complex post-covid context, it is aimed at being a new public management; characterized by efforts to achieve greater efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy in the provision of goods and services offered to society. The arrival of social networks, after a period dominated by the traditional, vertical, and elitist media, has completely revolutionized communication and information in society at a global level. Indeed, the emergence of social networks has been expanding the spaces for dialogue and express, transversal, horizontal and continuous communication where the same individuals in society can be part of the information and also influence it; thereby achieving that these spaces have a level of legitimacy higher than traditional media. Taking into consideration that the new public management has as its objective the efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy of government action and social networks are the communicative interface between society and government, there is a synergy between both factors that contribute to the public administration being able to achieve its goals easier. Social networks as a tool of the new public management, contribute to their goals and objectives if they are used and exploited correctly based on the needs of the entity that makes use of them and of society itself. In this paper, this relationship is briefly analyzed in order to outline a roadmap that will positively empower the use of social networks as an instrument for improving public management. For this purpose, in the first place, based on the documental analysis of scholars in both subjects, that is, public management and social networks, a brief description of the theoretical framework of the transition from the traditional public administration to the new public management is made, as well as the exposition of the transition from the traditional means of communication represented by the media to the

*Corresponding Author: *Mauricio Moncada*
Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León (UANL), Nuevo León, México

enhanced social networks by the development of communication and information technologies. Subsequently, the process of incorporating social networks in the Mexican public administration is described and finally a brief exposition of an empirical case is made at the local government level with the government of the State of Nuevo Leon in Mexico and the perspectives of the use of social networks in the context of democratic governance and open government are presented.

From the traditional public administration to the new public management

Historically, public administration has been understood simply as the activity of the State. This general definition has been relatively agreed upon over time. (Guerrero, 2019) "In Germany, Karl Marx referred to the organizing activity of the State and Lorenz von Stein to the activity of the State; while in the USA, Woodrow Wilson discerned about government in action, Luther Gulick about the work of government, and Marshall Dimock the State as a builder" (Guerrero, 2019). Despite the difference between the definition of public administration as an institution in the evolution of contextualized administrative thought in different countries, "we can affirm that practically all definitions of public administration are generally understood from three different aspects." (Gómez, 2016) These aspects are taking into consideration the following dimensions: as a structure that manages resources, as a function of the State and as a scientific discipline. (Gomez, 2016). In this framework, Gómez (2016) warns that public administration as a structure that manages resources is based on Legal Science and is based on statically describing the administrative apparatus of government. On the other hand, the consideration as a function of the State considers public administration as a continuous action of the state apparatus that satisfies the needs and demands of society. Finally, "the consideration of Public Administration as a discipline is part of the claim of its consolidation as an autonomous scientific discipline" (Gómez, 2016). Based on these premises, it can be affirmed that "it is common to find notions of public administration influenced by Law, Political

Science or Administration, which try to define it according to the sphere of influence of each discipline" (Villarreal, 2016). Due to its multidisciplinary nature, public administration continues today, to seek a definition in order to fully develop as an autonomous and specific discipline (Pardo, 2016).

In the theoretical framework of traditional public administration and considering the various objects of study of this, there are certain concepts that are related to its theoretical evolution. Said traditional objects are: (Villarreal, 2016)

- State as an integrating element of social forces.
- Government and its functional and operational structure.
- Power as an instrumental form.
- Executive power based on the exercise of public resources and attention to social demands.
- Existing institutional relationship between public authorities.
- Bureaucracy and its staff.
- Organization theory (Uvalle, 2005)

From a more utilitarian perspective, the listed objects of traditional public administration provided a theoretical and methodological basis for North American administrative thought in the 20th century. "From the North American progressive vision, the evolution of public administration began in this context, whose dominant paradigm was efficiency and the rational instrumental model in the decision process" (Villarreal, 2016).

The historical moments, based on differentiated institutional needs, shifted the study focus of the administrative phenomenon until reaching the current paradigms focused on a managerialist method. According to this perspective, the Western public administration has gone through the following stages: (Arrellano, 2004)

- *Orthodoxy*. Characterized by a scientific administration with a vertical and centralized hierarchical structure. The human component was not considered in the orthodox model.
- *Heterodoxy*. Human factor becomes important when establishing human relations within the organization. The individual is considered strategic and with an impact on organizational goals.
- *Neoclassicism*. Emphasis is given to the decision process based on the limitations of the human factor. Process known as bounded rationality (Simon, 1947).
- *Public policy*. "The set of activities of government institutions, acting directly or through agents, and that are aimed at having a certain influence on the lives of citizens." (Alcántara, 2004, p.106).
- *New public administration*. Structural redesign based on decentralization strategies and delegation of functions, incorporating innovative methods based on pre-established objects and goals.
- *Public Management*. It appears as a proposal to rethink administrative discipline as a response to the administrative crisis and lack of legitimacy. (Cabrero, 1997) It is based on effectiveness and economic efficiency.
- *New public management*. Integrated after the managerial reform of the eighties, characterized by the application of seven doctrines: (Hood, 1991).

- ✓ Participation of professionals in the administration.
- ✓ Specification of standards and evaluation of agency performance.
- ✓ Emphasis on the control of results.
- ✓ Disaggregation of units in the public sector.
- ✓ Change in competition between government agencies.
- ✓ Emphasis on the use of private sector management techniques.
- ✓ Austerity in the use of government resources.

On the other hand, more recently a problem has begun raise that is more focused on the political element of the administration. The contemporary State posed by Wolfe (1980) is characterized by a crisis of legitimacy. Said crisis is explained as a consequence of the "exhaustion of an administrative structure that grew in the face of the explosive complexity of the social, economic and political systems" (Cabrero, 1997). Said crisis is a phenomenon derived from a universal problem; "more as a result of the social, economic and technological evolution of the contemporary world, than as a result of specifically ineffective governments or particularly inoperative regimes" (Cabrero, 1997). It is presented as a response to citizen demands, seeking a state apparatus that serves society and not vice versa. In this order of ideas, Laufer (1982) suggests a new system of legitimacy; given no longer by the ends sought but by the methods of the exercise of power. It is a crisis of the State-society relationship, and "it is precisely the public administration apparatus that is the responsible bridge in said relationship." (Cabrero, 1997, p.17) It is at this juncture in which the influence of social networks is noticed as a connecting instrument of this government-society relationship.

The response to the crisis of legitimacy raised is the modernization of public administration. In other words, move towards the new public management. Said modernization must carry with it three fundamental factors: (Cabrero, 1997)

- Efficiency. This aspect of modernization appears as a transformative process of an inefficient public administration, which wastes resources and organizational energy. Therefore, the need to recompose input-output relationships is established. "At constant input obtain increases in output or, at constant output, minimize input." (Cabrero, 1997)

  - ✓ *Solutions*: reduction of the bureaucratic apparatus, rationalization of human, material, technical and financial resources.

- Effectiveness. It is based on the need for modernization due to the crisis in the realization of state goals. The traditional public administration is considered an ineffective apparatus, incapable of achieving objectives.

  - ✓ *Solutions*: modernization process that induces changes in the regulatory structure.

- Legitimacy. Modernization based on the necessary process to re-establish the dialogue between State and society. "Diverse and non-traditional mechanisms that allow the fluidity of dialogue, communication, agreement and above all the participation and will of the citizenry. A participation not only at the demand level but also in the management and monitoring of the policies and projects that are executed." (Cabrero, 1997)

Regarding the present investigation, taking into consideration the necessary modernization raised by Cabrero (1997), which in summary refers to the introduction of the new public management taking efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy as a fundamental axis, special attention will be paid to emphasis on the axis of legitimacy, which establishes the need for fluid communication mechanisms and continuous participation of society in the processes and decisions of public administration. Like the public administration, the media underwent a transformation from the "traditional" to the modern; having an evolutionary correlation that ends in a synergistic dependence between both.

From traditional media to social networks

Historically, countries with democratic systems, whose base is political liberalism, have as their fundamental axis the division of powers: executive, legislative and judicial. "The division of powers and guarantees of the governed are the two basic legal assumptions on which the modern constitutional structure of the Western State is based." (Villanueva, 2014). Said division implies depositing the public power of the State in different and interdependent bodies to carry out the actions and proper functioning of the governing entity. Together with the three aforementioned powers, and starting at the end of the 18th century, at the time of the French revolution, the term of a fourth power began to be coined, "to speak of the incipient media" (González, 2020). This term is attributed to the English politician Edmund Burke when he used this expression in the English parliament, referring to the power that the press already had to promote political attitudes and criteria in society. (Esquivel, 2013). From the time in question according to Castro (2006), the press was already a powerful instrument of subversion of order, morality, religion, and human society itself. "The press acted as a counterpower to the established powers, a function that was later recognized by society" (Galán-Gamero, 2014). Ideologically, the media "are the cornerstone in democratic societies, since they act as interlocutors between the State and civil society" (Blesa, 2006, p. 92) by generating a space where issues of relevance to the community.

In a more recent theoretical context, this characteristic of the media in a democratic society coincides with the philosophy of Jürgen Habermas (1991), which specifies that the media perform its function as a "gatekeeper" in open and free societies. In the same way, they guide the audience towards the most important issues, thus generating an agenda and expanding the public space. (McCombs and Shaw, 2001) Such public space is the core of a democratic society. (Blessa, 2006) More recently, in the same order of ideas, Robert Dahl (1992) affirms that in any democratic system there are two basic institutions: plurality of information and freedom of expression; both being possible due to the very existence of the media. Based on the above, in the ideological sphere, there is a correlation and interdependence between the media and democratic life due to its influence on civil society. Unfortunately, the traditional media (TV, radio, written press...) has moved away from the ideological correlation with democratic life and "seem to have conveniently filled this void by standing as the privileged interlocutors between the world of business and society - on the one hand-and business and politics-on the other." (Blesa, 2006, p. 93) Based on this, there are two clear dimensions within the field of communication media: commercial and political-ideological, which prevail

predominantly in journalistic activities (Cebrián, 2004). Motivated by economic and commercial purposes, the media "are hardly conceived in the traditional scheme of public space but, are defined as private spaces capable of influencing politics, state management and the private life of individuals" (Luna Pla, 2003). The social and economic force concentrated in the media is undeniable. Unfortunately, this new motivation, far from the original purpose of the media previously exposed, has a predominant characteristic: "the concentration of the media in fewer and fewer hands, which always belong to the economic and financial elites" (González, 2020). Because the traditional media have changed their purpose of dialogue between the State and society for that of seeking economic profitability, "they are suffering a crisis of credibility." (Calvo, Martínez and Juanatey, 2014, p. 23) The audience's perception of the credibility of the media has been declining since the 1970s. (Pew Research Center, 2007).

In Mexico, the mass media have distinguished themselves by the total dominance of two television stations (Huerta and Gómez, 2013) that "between both headlines have reached a total of 96% of the country's screen share." (De la Garza and Barredo, 2017) These television stations practically had a monopoly on the symbolic management of public opinion. Despite the fact thatMexicans obtain their information on politics from various sources (family, work, educational centers), the media came to strongly influence the subject of politics. (Garcia and Wong, 2008). The loss of credibility of the mass media, which indirectly caused political disaffection due to the same lack of confidence in the information that the traditional media transmit, is a reality that has been changing due to the emergence and growth of social networks. (De la Garza and Barredo, 2017). Although the emergence of social networks in the 21st century has been associated with extraordinary technological advances in communication, the concept is more remote and has its origin in sociological studies. In this sense, the concept of social network refers simply and plainly to social structures made up of individuals who are united by some type of relationship. Indeed, it is even associated with another concept that is closely related to social networks and that is social capital. This last term refers to the relationships established by social groups with common goals, and which are based on solidarity, loyalty, reciprocity, and other factors that go beyond the mere exchange of information. Let's look at some definitions of social capital (Portelaand Gómez, 2022):

"Aggregate of the current or potential resources that are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual recognition;" (Bourdie, 1985)

"Aspects of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (Putnam. 1993)

"Networks along with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation within and between groups". (OECD, 2001)

"Set of social relationships characterized by attitudes of trust and behaviors of cooperation and reciprocity". (Atria, 2003)

"... the ability of actors to secure benefits through belonging to networks and other social structures." (Portes, 1998)

Clearly, in the context of the knowledge society, the sense that social networks have is fundamentally focused on the use of technological platforms and the exchange of information, data, and messages between individuals, while in social capital they have a more cooperative sense towards objectives. Common. (Gomez, 2014) This was expressed in the last century by Hudson Hanifan (1920) "...the serious social, economic and political problems of the communities can only be solved by strengthening the networks of trust between the associates". As noted in the study by Gómez, the meaning of relationships is to solve common problems through collaboration, while social networks are more focused on the exchange of information, although they intend to transcend this function. With the ICT revolution, on the other hand, the concept acquires a broader connotation in the 21st century with the impulse that these social relations receive due to the use and dissemination of the Internet. (Pereyra, 2012) In this context, the social network acquires a more dynamic nature as a product of the society of knowledge, by facilitating interactions through various platforms (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Tiktok, among others), with messages, content, and videos, thus multiplying the possibilities of exchange between individuals and social groups. This phenomenon is precisely what gives rise to this new meaning given to social networks. With the advent of (technological) social networks, "the ways and frequency in which human beings communicate have changed, which has also given rise to a different form of citizen participation." (Ayala, 2014) The new forms of interaction and participation that social networks bring with them have originated a new way of communicative organization in which individuals have access to direct and permanent information, "but also the right to be participants of public discourse, which was only restricted to a power elite," (Ayala, 2014) a circumstance very different from that observed in the days prior to social networks where traditional media predominated. This is precisely what opens an extraordinary opportunity for the use of social networks in public administration. Social networks must be understood not only as simple technological tools for the exchange of messages, but as authentic means of communication, interaction, and global participation. (García, Del Hoyo, and Fernández, 2014).

Social networks in the new public management

Social networks are considered as a fast and heterogeneous evolutionary phenomenon. In 2019, 45% of the world population used social networks, with Facebook being the most used social network with more than 2,270 million active users. (Hootsuite, 2019) These networks have had a strong impact not only in society, but also in the public sector, due to the transparency, participation, and collaboration that networks bring with them. (Criado, Sandoval, and Gil, 2013). Social networks can be defined as "a type of digital technology capable of enabling bidirectional interactions between actors, so that they actively participate in the creation, edition and sharing of content, being the generation of communities the common object." (Villorde, 2020). In relation to the field of new public management, social networks present opportunities to contribute to the objectives of this, considering the aspects of transparency, legitimacy, and participation. Social networks allow easy and direct communication and interaction of the public administration with other actors. (Bonson, Royo, and Ratkai, 2015) This is because the digital platforms in question favor a rapprochement with the citizen due to the open spaces it creates. Another opportunity that social networks bring with them is disintermediation. "These technologies cause the generation of greater horizontal ties between providers and recipients of public services" (Villorde, 2020), thus benefiting the public administration with the citizen's collective intelligence. Social networks as a data source is another opportunity to use them as a tool for new public management. Administrations can extract knowledge and information from the activities and relationships generated by citizens on the various digital platforms of social networks. (Mejier and Potjer, 2018) Putting these data to good use improves the organizational efficiency, quality, trust, and legitimacy of public administration. The adoption of the use of social networks in public administration processes is known as the institutionalization of social networks (Villorde, 2020). "It implies the convergence and establishment of a set of routines and procedures, the alignment of innovative practices as part of the mission and vision of the organization, as well as the integration of these digital platforms in the technological paradigm and the organization's public communication standards" (Villorde, 2020).

There are three main approaches to the adoption process of social networks in the public sector: (Villorde, 2020)

- Focus on diffusion of innovation. Rogers (2003) explains that there are four conditions for a technological innovation to facilitate its adoption:

  - ✓ *The simplicity of innovation*. It is considered easy to use and maintain.
  - ✓ *Testing capacity*. Allow prior testing before formally adopting the innovation.
  - ✓ *Observance capacity*. That the results of the innovation can be easily evaluated.
  - ✓ *Comparative advantage*. That it provides a greater advantage based on costs and opportunities compared to other technological innovations.

- Focus on the representation of the technology. It is assumed that the technology (social network) would be marked by specific adaptations and molding of the organization and its respective users. (Fountain, 2001) It has indicators that would affect the process of successful adoption of social networks: (Criado, Rojas, and Gil, 2017)

  - ✓ *Organizational factors*. Organizational structures and management strategies.
  - ✓ *Institutional factors*. Regulations and procedures that could affect the adoption process.
  - ✓ *Environmental factors*. Technological, social, political, and economic context that surrounds public organizations.

- Focus on the milestones and phases of the process. Mergel and Bretschneider (2013) propose an institutionalization model adapted to social networks based on three areas:

  - ✓ *Entrepreneurship and experimentation*. It implies the existence of a series of public entrepreneurs who are already personally familiar with social networks and are incorporating them experimentally in the organizational environment where they are involved.
  - ✓ *Order out of chaos*. This area refers to the fact that individuals generate different visions of the same digital

platform within the organization, requiring management intervention to maintain order and avoid conflicts.

✓ *Institutionalization.* This area is based on the need to join efforts to coordinate and standardize the practices of social networks in public administration.

The adoption of social networks in the field of new public management in any public organization whose focus is to serve the public is a complex process that must be carried out with caution to get the most out of the tool in question. (Villorde, 2020). Said complexity is based on fulfilling the ethical and regulatory responsibilities of social networks and at the same time adopting formal procedures for use based on good practices. (Sánchez, 2007). Based on the complexity of implementation and its due importance, there are certain strategies for the use of social networks in public administration that must be considered for their implementation in the field. Each administration uses social networks in the way that best serves its objectives and within its possibilities based on its circumstances. (Villorde, 2020) Some administrations are based more on exploiting the information dissemination potential of the networks, but others take advantage of the platforms for more participatory and collaborative uses. (Meijer and Thaens, 2013) Whatever the case, "social networks are presented as an invaluable helpful tool" (Villorde, 2020, p.383).

On the other hand, Mergel (2013) classifies the uses of social networks in public administration into three categories:

- *Push.* The use of social networks as a channel for the dissemination of information for citizens. The administration is represented on social networks with the main purpose of positioning messages, avoiding direct interaction with citizens.
- *Pull.* It seeks information from the same public, which is why it encourages user participation in its networks. Seeks interaction even though it is limited.
- *Networking.* It pursues the generation of horizontal and continuous communication, based on open exchanges with users.

In addition to the categorization of Mergel, Criado and Villorde (2020), and based on the aforementioned categorization, they have enriched it by focusing the emphasis on the uses of social networks to complement the provision of certain public services and establishing social transactions. Thus, the authors (Criado and Villorde, 2020) classify the use of social networks in public administration into the following three categories:

- *Provision of information.* Intended for the dissemination of basic information on the administration (activities, events, press releases, etc.).
- *Citizen interaction.* The administrations seek interaction with the citizen by establishing a two-way communication on the platforms.
- *Provision of public service.* Linked to the dissemination of information on public services granted by the administration (health recommendations, weather alerts, recommendations for caring for water, calls to action, etc.).

The use of social networks as a tool for the new public management of current public organizations "is having notable impacts on many services and on different public policies."

(Villorde, 2020). The communicative and participatory potential of social networks in the public administration can be seen mainly in emergency management and in attacking the misinformation that exists in the same networks. Said diffusion potential is used by the administrations in their favor and thus more easily achieve the objectives and goals of the same public administration towards society. However, the use of social networks in the new public management entails ethical and regulatory responsibilities to ensure its proper implementation and safeguard citizen rights (Sánchez, 2007). Therefore, the use of digital social networks must include compliance with "rules and policies of use of the digital social network itself, such as privacy policies, advertising regulations, conditions of use, etc" (Salvador, Valencia, and Cruz, 2020).

To carry out good practices in the use of social networks in public administration, basic principles are required: (Salvador, Valencia and Cruz, 2020)

- Train and educate public administration employees on the laws and regulations to follow, as well as the importance of using social networks for their functions; this so that they are aware of their limitations and consequences in their actions.
- Publish a unified content preparation policy on social networks and have control over it.
- Highlight the importance of not associating personal data with organizational data on social networks.
- Create a strategy for the supervision and verification of compliance and updating of administrative processes carried out in digital media.

Social networks in public administration in Mexico

Although the extensive use of social networks in public administration must be located in the 21st century (when Facebook emerged in 2004, YouTube in 2005 and Twitter in 2006), the background can be seen from a decade earlier with the incorporation of various information technologies in government administrative processes such as *Compranet* and the creation of the first websites specifically for the Presidency of the Republic in 1995 (Salvador, Valencia and Cruz, 2020). From a more formal perspective, we can situate the incorporation of communication technologies to the Mexican government with the public administration of President Vicente Fox, who established electronic government as one of his axes of Good Government. This meant a leap in the innovative process of the government and therefore of public management. To this we must add the enactment of the law on access to public information in 2003, which made it possible to make significant progress in communication processes both inside and outside the public administration. Although electronic government constitutes an important advance regarding the modernization of the Mexican public administration, we cannot affirm that this is the determining factor in the development of social networks. The extraordinary technological advance in the 2.0 network has allowed us to strengthen the spaces for communication between public management and citizens, strengthening relations, communication, and informative interactions. CLAD (2007) defines e-government as the use of ICT in public administration bodies to improve information and services offered to citizens, promote the effectiveness and efficiency of public management, and substantially increase transparency in the public sector and citizen participation. This last aspect is

the one that has the greatest impact on democratic governance. To the extent that social networks are empowered through electronic platforms, social capital is enriched, discussion, informed debate and deliberation in public management are favored. At the same time, the legitimacy of government action is strengthened. The creation of the digital platforms of Facebook in 2004, You Tube in 2005 and Twitter in 2006 came to revolutionize the use of social networks and impact the digital processes in the Mexican government. From President Felipe Calderón to the current president Andres M. López Obrador, they have made use of social networks to communicate with citizens. On the other hand, President Enrique Peña Nieto promotes a national digital strategy that seeks to modernize the government and channel the open government model signed by various countries in 2011. Despite initial ambitious wishes, progress has not met the demands of a highly polarized society resentful of corruption and the lack of transparency and accountability. There have been significant advances in the digitization of public records, creation of databases, digital services, government procedures, but the agenda still has many windows of opportunity. In this regard, it is worth noting some critical success factors for the use of ICTs in public management that the Ibero-American Charter of Electronic Government points out to us. We highlight three threats. In the first place, it must be ensured that the dissemination of online services can guarantee the non-exclusion of citizen groups, for which reason it must be complemented with policies to promote access to the network for broad social sectors. Secondly, for any new product or service that public administrations intend to offer, communication strategies must be established that clearly express the value offered to the citizen. For this, it is important to identify and offer an offer of incentives to achieve a first critical core of users of the new services. Finally, the success of the networks will depend primarily on the effort made to share information, agree on projects, encourage the participation and involvement of staff within the organization itself, since these processes are key elements for the relevant use of platforms as interfaces between society and government. To illustrate a specific case of the involvement of social networks in local public management, we will briefly analyze the case of the Secretary of Citizen Participation of Nuevo León.

Public administration of Nuevo Leon case: secretariat of citizen participation

Within the framework of a renewal project of the government of Nuevo León (LOAPENL, 2021), as a result of an election that was strongly supported on social networks and on a very important basis of citizen participation, (De la Garza, 2021) we can explore the model of the recently created Secretariat for Citizen Participation whose one of the fundamental purposes is precisely to promote the use of social networks to improve public management.

Said Secretariat, since its creation in 2021, has framed within the Organic Law of Public Administration for the State of Nuevo León (2021) the actions and responsibilities related to the links between society and government through the relevant tools and mechanisms for this purpose. Article 23 of the Law in question states that:

"The Secretariat for Citizen Participation is the agency in charge of establishing and implementing direct participation

mechanisms that promote transparency, collaboration in a governance model, and accountability for the solution of public problems; and consequently, it is responsible for the office of the following matters:

... XIV. Promote good governance mechanisms, through government innovation, transparency, and accountability.

... XVI. Build a means of interaction between citizens and authorities by implementing the use of technology as a means of handling complaints, requests, or proposals.

... XXIII. Develop a digital citizen culture through the implementation of an electronic government that promotes close and constant communication as a digital inclusion strategy.

The cited article, together with the corresponding sections, clearly expresses the function that the Secretariat must fulfill when promoting innovation, transparency, and accountability (traits of the new public management), using technologies and digital media (including social networks) to this, and always linking with the citizenry. A public policy of the Secretariat that reflects the institutional mission of the agency is the Improvement Boards Program, in which the Secretariat contributes to the creation of "a neighborhood organization that represents its community on issues of public interest." (Secretaria de Participación Ciudadana, 2022). Said program facilitates the neighborhood community to expose their needs, to propose solutions to neighborhood problems, to present projects, and at all times, to act as a link between the community and the local and/or state government. (Secretaria de Participación Ciudadana, 2022).

To achieve the objectives and follow up on said program, the Secretariat for Citizen Participation uses the following digital tools: (Secretaría de Participación Ciudadana, 2022)

- Email and WhatsApp for questions, requests for information and monitoring of program participants.
- Digital surveys as a tool to gather information about the program, the participants, and the interested parties.
- Google maps to geolocate existing Improvement Boards.
- Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to publicize the program, attract more interested parties and have an open channel of interaction with citizens interested in said programs.

Utilizing the previously mentioned categorization of Mergel (2013), said program is successful considering that it amalgamates the 3 categories in question. In one hand, *Push*, since Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are used to disseminate specific messages and position them on the citizen agenda; *Pull* since they use digital surveys to gather information from society, and *Networking* since through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp they open a continuous and efficient two-way communication.On the other hand, the use of social networks has had an impact on the transformations indicated by the same authors, since they have been used to provide preventive information on health or meteorological risks, such as citizen interaction with the development of forums and consultations for the design of policies and government programs, and for the provision of public services through improvement boards and institutional web pages. To this date, the main result of the implementation of this program, using social networks as a tool, is the establishment of 244

improvement boards in 1 year in the metropolitan area of Nuevo León. Likewise, the communication and work link between the community and the government continues to be strengthened, carrying out various work groups and consultations for continuous improvement (convened and carried out using social networks and digital tools). This program is an example of how digital tools, used responsibly and consciously, can potentiate public policies and have an effective and efficient impact on the well-being of citizens.

Final reflections

The evolution of the media with the appearance of the internet, information, and communication technologies (ICTs) and later social networks have transformed the communication dynamics worldwide; In this, the impact on public administration is not minor since it is included in said transformation in the field of public management. Many government actors and public administrations use social networks to share and report their activities. Likewise, there are administrations that use these networks to open organic and horizontal communication spaces and mainly direct interaction with the members of the community. Even though the implementation of social networks in administrative dynamics is relatively recent and there is a margin of error in the establishment of processes to improve their use, without doubt social networks are increasingly present in different areas of the public life. The correct use of social networks as a tool of the administration to contribute to the efficiency, effectiveness and mainly the legitimacy of the new public management gives rise to the existence of a synergy that has as its objective the purpose of any administration: the well-being of the society.

The streak offered by social networks at a time when government legitimacy has been negatively eroding is undoubtedly an opportunity to recover the esteem that dignifies government action at a time when the results of systemic public policies leave much to be desired. want in our country. Poverty, inequality, insecurity, education are policies that require participation, collaboration and co-creation as processes inherent to government management. The expansion of public spaces implies much more than managing men, resources, and technologies, since with the transformations described in this work, strategies and public policy networks are incorporated that reflect the dynamics of an intense, creative and demanding civil society (Uvalle, 2007). The times demand the democratization of power and under this premise, society and public administration are factors of connection, deliberation, and collaboration to jointly address and solve public problems. Whether in a governance or open government model, it is clear that the factors that affect good governance are participation, collaboration, and the use of technologies to improve public management supported by a framework of law, transparency, and accountability. That is the way.

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