

Open Government Analysis: A Study in Brazil and Mexico

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine open government in Mexico and Brazil. The Open Government Partnership was started by both Latin American nations. This study makes use of content analysis methods, bibliometric analysis methods, and qualitative approaches. The Google Scholar database and the open government policy papers of both nations provided the data for this study. According to the study's results, open government is unpopular in Brazil and Mexico, which makes it inconsistent with the Open Government Partnership's primary goal of promoting open government. E-government, public policy, health, accountability, transparency, access, and participation are the main concerns in both nations. However, climate change is the present problem. These issues highlight the importance of open government in both nations as well as its promise for the future. Brazil has made 130 promises in its fight for open government, whereas Mexico has concentrated on 87. Mexico does not have a promise that is a significant component of the Open Government Partnership after 2022, but Brazil has consistently updated its obligations. All of the pledges made by both nations, meanwhile, might lead to a more open government. Stakeholders in both nations, including those in Latin America and other Open Government Partnership members, can benefit from the study's conclusions.

Keywords: Brazil, Mexico, Open Government, Open Government Partnership

INTRODUCTION

Since the 2000s, numerous nations have advocated for open government as part of their public agenda. Open government is regarded as critical, comparable to New Public Management (NPM) in the 1980s (Gil-Garcia, Gasco-Hernandez, & Pardo, 2020; Ingrams, 2020). The public sees open government as a valuable tool for administrative change and government transformation (Ingrams, Piotrowski, & Berliner, 2020). Currently, open government projects are actively promoted both in Western and developing nations (Lnenicka & Saxena, 2021). Open government is a trend in public management reform that aims to create a transparent and collaborative government system. Advances in information and communication technology have had a profound influence on the notion of open government (Afandi, 2024; Tai, 2021).

The Obama Administration is credited with establishing open government by emphasizing the extensive use of information and communications technology to promote participation, transparency, and collaboration (Ruijter, D tienne, Baker, Groff, & Meijer, 2020). Open government has emerged as a key administrative reform tactic that has inspired other nations to create and carry out programs pertaining to participation, transparency, information access, and collaboration (Ruijter & Meijer, 2020).

Open government has been extended by many governments. For instance, the United States announced the Open Government Directive in 2009 and then spearheaded the creation of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), a global agenda to promote open government, alongside Brazil, Mexico, Norway, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Indonesia, and the Philippines (Bonina & Eaton, 2020; Schmidhuber & Hilgers, 2021).

The Open Government Partnership is predicated on the notion that open government enhances the public-government relationship and has long-term, exponential advantages for all parties involved. It is also more responsive, accessible, and accountable to the public (Wirtz, Weyerer, & Rösch, 2019). OGP is a large cooperation with thousands of civil society groups as well as members at the local and national levels. These forces collaborate to establish an open government through the partnership (Afandi, Afandi, & Erdayani, 2024).

Civic space, anti-corruption and integrity, digital governance, inclusiveness, fiscal openness, natural resources, justice, right to information, public service delivery, and open parliament are among the 10 policy themes that are the emphasis of the Open Government Partnership (Afandi, Erdayani, & Afandi, 2024). Since its founding in 2011, the Open Government Partnership has expanded quickly, today including 162 local governments and 75 member nations. The Open Government Declaration, which all OGP members have signed, mandates that they collaborate to develop changes as part of an action plan that may really benefit the public.

This study aims to analyze open government in Brazil and Mexico. Brazil and Mexico are Latin American countries that play an important role in the formation of the Open Government Partnership. Brazil has set one hundred and thirty open government commitments, while Mexico has set eighty-seven open government commitments. This makes Brazil and Mexico play a major role in campaigning for open government in Latin America.

Method

This study use bibliometric and content analysis methods in a qualitative manner. A technique for examining scientific literature in a certain field of study or issue is called bibliometric analysis (Donthu, Kumar, Mukherjee, Pandey, & Lim, 2021; Moral-Muñoz, Herrera-Viedma, Santisteban-Espejo, & Cobo, 2020). Critical discoveries derived from scientific literature are identified and highlighted using this strategy (Gaviria-Marin, Merigó, & Baier-Fuentes, 2019; Kulsum et al., 2022).

Textual, visual, or auditory data can be analyzed and interpreted using the methodical research technique known as content analysis. Finding hidden patterns, themes, or correlations in the data is the aim of this approach. Numerous disciplines, including political science, communication, and social research, can benefit from the application of content analysis (Subedi, Nyamasvisva, & Pokharel, 2022; Wang & Shepherd, 2020). Through an in-depth review of the document's contents, this research uses content analysis to delve into and understand a particular problem or subject.

The open government policy documents from Mexico and Brazil that are accessible on their respective websites provided the data for this study. With the keywords "Brazil collaboration," "Brazil public participation," "Brazil accountability," "Brazil transparency," "Brazil accessibility," "Brazil e-government," "Mexico collaboration," "Mexico public participation," "Mexico accountability," "Mexico transparency," "Mexico accessibility," and "Mexico e-government," data were also obtained from the Google Scholar database using the Publish or Perish (PoP) application. The core tenets of open government form the basis of these terms.

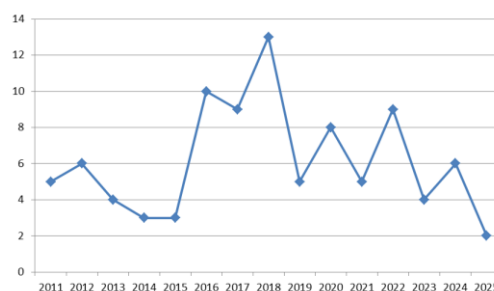
In keeping with the two nations' participation in the OGP, the data utilized spans the years 2011–2025. The information was saved in RIS format, Mendeley was used to pick it (including filling in the specifics of the keywords), and VOSviewer was used to analyze it (analysis type: co-occurrence; analysis unit: keywords; calculation method: full calculation). The outcomes of a content analysis of accessible government policy papers in Brazil and Mexico were then added to the bibliometric map that emerged from this procedure.

Results And Discussion

As the initiator country of OGP from Latin America, including its long involvement since 2011, there are 92 publications of open government articles in Brazil and 97 publications of open government articles in Mexico (see Graph 1 and Graph 2). In Brazil, 5 articles were published in 2011, 6 articles in 2012, 4 articles in 2013, 3 articles each in 2014 and 2015, 10 articles in 2016, 9 articles in 2017, 13 articles in 2018, 5 articles in 2019, 8 articles in 2020, 5 articles in 2021, 9 articles in 2022, 4 articles in 2023, 6 articles in 2024, and 2 articles during January – April 2025.

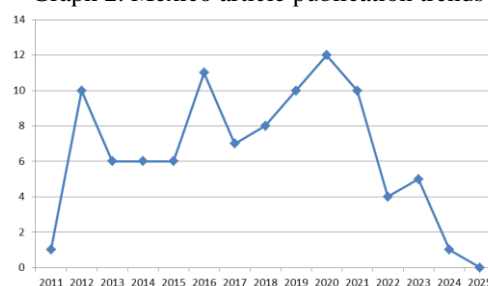
In Mexico, 1 article was published in 2011, 10 articles in 2012, 6 articles each in 2013, 2014, and 2015, 11 articles in 2016, 7 articles in 2017, 8 articles in 2018, 10 articles in 2019, 12 articles in 2020, 10 articles in 2021, 4 articles in 2022, 5 articles in 2023, 1 article in 2024, and no publications in the period January-April 2025. The fluctuating publications indicate that open government studies in Brazil and Mexico are not popular. At its peak, the Brazilian open government study reached 13 publications in 2018, while the Mexican open government study reached 12 publications in 2020. This is clearly not in line with the objectives of the organization they initiated, where OGP is an effort to campaign for open government as a strategy for broad public administration reform.

Graph 1. Brazil article publication trends



Source: author's processing

Graph 2. Mexico article publication trends

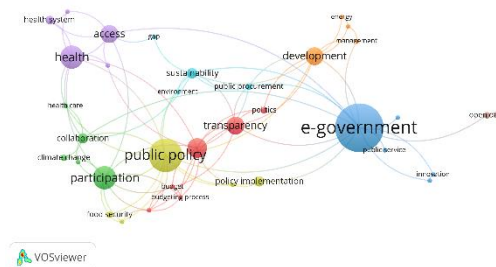


Source: author's processing

The study identified thirty-two main issues of open government in Brazil. These issues are integrated and divided into several main focuses (see Figure 1). The first issue focuses on accountability, the budgeting process, democracy, politics, and transparency. The second issue focuses on climate change, collaboration, government projects, and participation. The third issue focuses on e-government, innovation, interoperability, public management, and public service. The fourth issue focuses on corruption, food security, governance, policy implementation, and public policy. The fifth issue focuses on access, health, health services, health systems, and medicine. The sixth issue focuses on the environment, public procurement, and sustainability. The seventh issue focuses on development, energy, and management. The eighth issue focuses on data and open data.

The dominant issues of Brazil's open government include e-government, public policy, health, accountability, development, participation, access, transparency, sustainability, public procurement, and the budgeting process. Meanwhile, the current issues of Brazil's open government include climate change, food security, sustainability, public procurement, data, innovation, and public management. These issues show the urgency and potential of Brazil's open government in the future.

Figure 1. Brazil network visualization



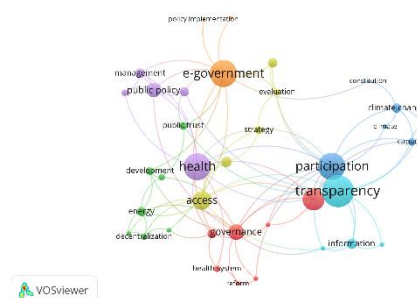
Source: author's processing

In the open government of Mexico, this study found thirty-six main issues. All of these issues are also integrated and divided into several main focuses (see Figure 2). The first issue focuses on accountability, governance, collaboration, health system, government projects, reform, and water governance. The second issue focuses on energy, development, public trust, decentralization, democracy, sustainability, and systems. The third issue focuses on participation, climate change, capacity, local government, and the constitution. The fourth issue focuses on access, health services, public value, strategy, and evaluation. The fifth issue focuses on health, public policy, management, technology, and health policy. The sixth issue focuses on transparency, information, data, and planning. The seventh issue focuses on e-government and policy implementation.

The dominant issues of Mexico's open government include transparency, participation, health, e-government, accountability, access, governance, public policy, health services, information, collaboration, energy, and climate change. Meanwhile, the current issues of Mexico's open government include climate change, local government, capacity, water governance, government projects, democracy, development, and systems. These issues also show the urgency and potential of Mexico's open government in the future.

Based on Figures 1 and 2, it appears that both countries have the same dominant open government issues, including e-government, public policy, health, accountability, transparency, access, and participation. In addition, it also appears that both countries have the same current open government issues, namely climate change.

Figure 2. Mexico network visualization



Source: author's processing

Brazil and Mexico have set 130 and 87 open government commitments, respectively (see Table 1). These commitments began in 2011 and are updated periodically as a form of concrete support for OGP. These commitments are aligned with the ten OGP policy areas.

Table 1. Open government commitments in Brazil and Mexico

Country	Year	Commitment	Total
Brazil	2011-2012	32	130
	2013-2015	51	
	2016-2017	16	
	2018-2020	11	
	2021-2022	12	
	2023-2027	8	
Mexico	2011-2012	37	87
	2013-2015	26	
	2016-2018	11	
	2019-2022	13	

Brazil has consistently set its open government commitment since 2011 as a form of support and campaign for open government, while Mexico last had an open government commitment in 2022, so that currently Mexico does not have any concrete steps related to open government in the country.

Brazil is currently focusing on eight commitments, including: first, transparency and participation in infrastructure investments. In order to distribute tools that facilitate openness across the stages of the public infrastructure policy cycle, this commitment encourages transparency through comparative studies and surveys. Greater social control is made possible by the presence of sufficient transparency tools, particularly for those groups who are directly impacted by major building projects. This enables them to keep an eye on the project's socio-environmental effects and take part in the decision-making process. The accountability of those who create and carry out public policies in the infrastructure sector will rise in tandem with the promotion of action transparency. This commitment also includes a number of initiatives to improve community engagement, involvement, and control across the public infrastructure policy cycle. In particular, by requiring societal involvement in the various stages of infrastructure policy.

Second, data for the fight against corruption. Since it promotes improved data availability, utilization, and quality regarding the prevention, detection, and elimination of corruption, this commitment is closely tied to the transparency principle. Accountability-wise, this commitment makes it easier to identify unlawful activity, and the responsiveness principle will make it easier to follow up with and monitor interested parties insofar as improved data availability, standardization, prioritization, and use will lead to more responsive government actions and strategies. The process of developing, putting into practice, and overseeing solutions can involve a more educated and evidence-based populace. Furthermore, residents are more likely to trust and participate in government-proposed participatory procedures when they have access to data. More participation in the pursuit of creative solutions is also made possible by the improved quality of data and information. The commitment would also entail public involvement in setting priorities for issues deemed crucial to combating corruption.

Third, collaborative practices for science and technology. Transparency is necessary for this promise to apply to practically all frameworks. In order to enable scientists to both prepare, translate, and adapt their research products for interested non-specialists to learn from and, on the one hand, open up the research process by making it more transparent to their peers, the frameworks involved must set guidelines for digital technologies and curation methodologies. Public entities have a large portion of the duty for Open Science and are also in possession of pertinent data on ongoing and finished activities. Therefore, it is necessary to design strategies and advancements that enable the realignment of current monitoring systems in order to consolidate and analyze data and make it available through interfaces that are clear and accessible to the many interested societal segments. This dedication supports the reproducibility of science and open innovation, fosters citizen science, and offers fresh avenues for communication and interaction with a collaborative culture.

Fourth, the culture of access to information. Through communication and cooperation between the community and public authorities at all levels, this commitment fosters openness by boosting adherence to the nation's Law on Access to Information (LAI). Civil society organizations that take part in the activities conducted within the Network's purview will represent the people. Additionally, they will play a crucial role in its construction through entity participation, mobilization, and distribution.

Fifth, ethnic-racial affirmative action data. This commitment promotes the presence of technical teams that are educated in the correct processing and active transparency of data and information, as well as the training of civil servants on the significance of gathering suitable skin color or race data in their operational routines. Public bodies can publish ethnic-racial affirmative action data in a timely and standardized manner by establishing an institutional culture of data collection and use to inform decisions on affirmative action policies and by promoting practices that are continuously updated and improved in line with the need to produce, process, and make available ethnic-racial affirmative action data. By encouraging the involvement of federal, state, and local managers, organized social movements, and private organizations in the creation of affirmative action policies, the collaborative and unified production, processing, and availability of high-quality, standardized ethnic-racial affirmative action data strengthens social control and participatory management.

Sixth, digital and media education for elderly people. It is possible that the proposed commitment to "define, in a cross-sectoral and participatory way, a curriculum framework for digital and media education for older people, which guarantees their central role, whose implementation can be monitored and evaluated" will boost this population segment's social engagement. Encouraging or enhancing media education and digital literacy would help older adults use digital information and communication technology more securely and critically. Since these examples are primarily communicated, expressed, and executed virtually, gaining these skills would also enable this social group to engage more actively in the various facets of community life (information, consultation, access to rights, and involvement).

Seventh, Better Services for Family Farming. By combining services, sharing data, information, and goods produced via active transparency, and enhancing communication of the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Family Farming's (MDA) Service Charter, this commitment promotes transparency. In addition to actions to qualify the accreditation network and those in charge of directing and serving the target community of family farming, this commitment promotes accountability through the use of surveys and evaluations among service users and the restoration of the relationship between the federal government and organized civil society in the implementation of the follow-up to the recommendations that are the subject of the evaluation.

Participation and social control will be promoted by mapping and identifying the primary issues that users encounter, which will motivate efforts to enhance and improve MDA services. Additionally, information sharing with MDA service users will also promote social control.

Eighth, social participation and popular education in the territories. An integrated database on the groups and entities that support public policies and rights by region is created after the mapping outlined in this commitment is completed, making it easier to articulate this type of action. The community's usage of the database can facilitate successful integration between government programs and civil society, provided that the General Personal Data Protection Law's safeguards are guaranteed. Through the commitment, residents may learn more about social participation's processes and examples, as well as who advocates for them and how to access them. This dedication increases involvement in these systems and bodies, increasing their representativeness.

In the period 2019-2022, Mexico focused on thirteen commitments, including: first, disclosure of beneficial owners. This commitment promotes transparency, accountability, citizen participation, and innovation that offers new forms of interaction between the state and citizens. Promoting public policy actions on beneficial ownership will strengthen the international coalition that seeks to reduce corruption and increase trust between governments, society, and business. This commitment seeks, through close cooperation between governments and civil society, the publication of essential information to identify violations of the law and demand appropriate intervention from the authorities to prevent and punish them.

Second, transparency in the flow of arms and arms control. This commitment encourages access to information and citizen participation, especially since this is a policy area that has been largely closed to the public. The information disclosed on the flow and control of arms to, within, and from Mexico is very little and opaque. In fact, to obtain any information on the matter, it is necessary to submit a request for information to the Ministry of National Defense. Since 2018, information on the flow and control of arms has been classified as secret, which complicates the process of accessing information by requiring the requester to submit an appeal for review.

Third, subnational open government strategy. This commitment provides public institutions, bodies guaranteeing access to public information, and civil society organizations with the knowledge that will enable them to implement more effective open government actions and advance towards the consolidation of open countries through a proven citizen participation framework by establishing permanent spaces for dialogue that contribute to accountability, transparency, innovation, and citizen empowerment. This commitment disseminates and promotes open government practices in states and municipalities, and seeks to include more civil society actors operating at the subnational level in national open government exercises.

Fourth, transparency of forestry, water, and fishing management. This commitment encourages transparency through the publication of timely, complete, and easily accessible information on natural resource management on the official websites of government institutions or agencies, encourages citizen participation through the formation of citizen monitoring groups, and encourages accountability through informed participation so that citizens can demand more effective actions, programs, and policies from government institutions. This commitment contributes to the design, implementation, and evaluation of public policies on the issue.

Fifth, transparency for monitoring of trusts. The results of this commitment directly include transparency and accountability as part of the citizen monitoring and oversight strategy. Furthermore, the process of developing and fulfilling the commitment is carried out with the participation of civil society organizations that have expertise in this field. This commitment is a

response to the need to better understand the origin and use of public resources and to actively participate in their supervision and examination.

Sixth, strengthen public care services. This commitment basically encourages citizen participation. The close relationship that has been established between the government and civil society continues to advance towards the main goal of creating a National Care System. Collaboration is strengthened in this commitment through the creation and implementation of clearer mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the progress of the commitment. This commitment encourages innovation by promoting public policy actions in the field of care, it contributes to strengthening the rule of law, accountability of public institutions, and the implementation of fundamental freedoms and rights of citizens.

Seventh, democratic controls on interventions of private communications. The interception of private communications, access to stored data, and illegal and disproportionate geolocation by states are not only practices that violate human rights but also actions that directly contradict the principles of open government. Illegal digital espionage against members of civil society and journalists directly violates the space for free and open civic participation. This commitment promotes access to information and citizen participation by working together to make government decision-making processes transparent in fundamental areas, both for national security and for the protection of civic space. In addition, this commitment strengthens regulations related to access to information from the perspective of citizens.

Eighth, it is an open platform for public security information. This commitment allows for innovative obligations of institutions that have been normatively established, with a platform that allows for the identification of intersections between obligations that were not previously articulated. This commitment encourages access to information and citizen participation by seeking to ensure that data that allows for the measurement of crime in Mexico is accessible to the public, civil society organizations, and victim groups that seek to influence decision-making on the issue. This commitment also opens up opportunities for citizen participation in defining the methodology for creating the registry and the platform.

Ninth, transparency to promote labor inclusion. This commitment promotes transparency through the presentation of a platform on labor rights, recurring discriminatory practices in the workplace, policies that seek to address these practices, evaluation and study of these policies, and best practices for involving workers in operations. This commitment formalizes collaboration between public institutions, academics, and civil society organizations responsible for fulfilling the commitment. It requires employers to be accountable and aware of their obligations, which in turn impacts the implementation of rights. This commitment seeks to establish a monitoring system for recommendations issued by the multi-stakeholder group, as well as a reporting mechanism for malpractice, whose concerns will be reported periodically.

Tenth, access to sexual and reproductive health services for youth. This commitment promotes access to information, citizen participation, and accountability. On the one hand, it seeks to ensure the availability and dissemination of comprehensive and accessible information to the diverse population of children and youth in the country about the goods and services that the government is required to provide under the current regulatory framework. On the other hand, it seeks to ensure the participation of organized civil society and the general public (especially target populations) to help ensure full compliance with the regulations and identify areas of opportunity in the process of providing goods and services. It proposes the establishment of a citizen feedback mechanism that can serve as a space for authorities to respond to citizen contributions or complaints regarding sexual and reproductive health services, as well as those related to sexual violence.

Eleventh, transparent education data. This commitment promotes access to information and citizen participation. It seeks to provide citizens with the opportunity to access information available in the Education Information and Management System (SIGED), which until now has been limited. It proposes the development, in a participatory manner, of criteria for permanent accessibility to information, as well as contributing to decision-making through citizen feedback—at the federal level—and direct support in the provision of services at the local level. However, the commitment does not consider mechanisms that require the relevant authorities to respond to or incorporate citizen input into decision-making. Therefore, there is no basis for concluding that access to information and citizen participation will lead to greater accountability.

Twelfth, citizen participation in sustainable rural development. This commitment promotes citizen participation. It refers to efforts to better involve vulnerable groups in participation mechanisms at the federal level so that they can contribute to the formulation of plans, strategies, and policies that impact their livelihoods in rural areas. Spaces for collaboration between governments, organizations, and productive sectors of civil society are strengthened, allowing them to discuss and reach agreement on decisions that impact the agriculture, fisheries, and aquaculture sectors in rural areas. Greater transparency in government activities is promoted by creating spaces for the public to learn about plans and policies and contribute to their design, monitoring, and evaluation, thus encouraging more transparent decision-making. Mechanisms will be created to monitor the functioning of councils in rural areas. Information technology is used to establish mechanisms to monitor progress and fulfillment of commitments, as well as the functioning of participation mechanisms.

Thirteenth, citizen oversight of social program spending. This commitment promotes access to information and citizen participation. Making the path of money transparent in a public spending sector characterized by opacity and unreliable data. The door is open to civil society organizations with a long history of independent analysis in social policy. While this commitment increases accountability by strengthening reporting mechanisms, it does not propose the implementation of mechanisms that require governments to respond appropriately and promptly to these complaints.

CONCLUSION

Brazil and Mexico are the initiators of OGP from Latin America, but open government is less popular in both countries, which is not in line with the main goal of OGP to campaign for open government. Dominant issues in Brazil include e-government, public policy, health, accountability, development, participation, access, and transparency. Meanwhile, dominant issues in Mexico include transparency, participation, health, e-government, accountability, access, governance, and public policy.

In an effort to campaign for open government, Brazil has set 130 commitments, while Mexico focuses on 87 commitments. Brazil has continuously updated its commitments, while Mexico, after 2022, does not have a commitment that is a major part of the OGP. Brazil in 2023-2027 set eight commitments, including transparency and participation in infrastructure investments; data for the fight against corruption; collaborative practices for science and technology; a culture of access to information; ethnic-racial affirmative action data; digital and media education for elderly people; better services for family farming; and social participation and popular education in the territories.

Mexico in 2019-2022 set thirteen commitments, including disclosure of beneficial owners; transparency in the flow of arms and arms control; subnational open government strategy; transparency of forestry, water, and fishing management; transparency for monitoring of trusts; strengthening public care services; democratic controls on interventions of private

communications; open platform for public security information; transparency to promote labor inclusion; access to sexual and reproductive health services for youth; transparent education data; citizen participation in sustainable rural development; and citizen oversight of social program spending. All of these commitments from both countries have the potential to create a more open government.

The findings of this study serve as recommendations for stakeholders in Brazil and Mexico, including Latin American countries and hundreds of countries that are currently members of OGP. Brazil's and Mexico's open government practices are very relevant to be implemented by countries with similar characteristics.

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