

---

Special issue

Political communication

---

**Carlos Muñoz**

carlos.munizm@uanl.mx  
Full professor. Political  
Communication Laboratory  
(LACOP). Universidad  
Autónoma de Nuevo León,  
Mexico.

---

**Nilsa Marlen Téllez**

nilsa\_marlen@hotmail.com  
PhD researcher. Political  
Communication Laboratory  
(LACOP). Universidad  
Autónoma de Nuevo León,  
Mexico.

---

**Alma Rosa Saldierna**

alma.saldiernas@uanl.mx  
Full professor. Political  
Communication Laboratory  
(LACOP). Universidad  
Autónoma de Nuevo León,  
Mexico.

---

**Submitted**

November 21, 2016

**Approved**

March 13, 2017

---

© 2017

**Communication & Society**

ISSN 0214-0039

E ISSN 2386-7876

doi: 10.15581/003.30.3.255-274

www.communication-society.com

---

2017 – Vol. 30(3)

pp. 255-274

---

**How to cite this article:**

Muñoz, C.; Téllez, N. M. & Saldierna, A. R. (2017). Political sophistication as a mediator in the relation between media consumption and citizen participation. Evidence from the O-S-R-O-R model. *Communication & Society* 30(3), 255-274.

This research was financed by a project of the Secretaría de Educación Pública (PRODEP) and the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León (PAICYT).

## Political sophistication as a mediator in the relation between media consumption and citizen participation. Evidence from the O-S-R-O-R model

**Abstract**

Active and effective citizen political participation is one of the main manifestations of the existence of a healthy and well consolidated democracy. It has been found that media consumption is a significant predictor for the development of this civic participation. The Communication Mediation Model (O-S-R-O-R) set out an indirect effect that exposure to media messages have on citizen participation, by means of the development of orientations subsequent to consumption and reasoning of the message. Political sophistication is among these orientations promoted by the media, understood as the general level of knowledge on the political system (factual) or the (electoral) campaign acquired by the citizens under media exposure. With the objective of determining its mediating effect on the increase of citizen participation, an analytical survey was conducted in the state of Nuevo León, Mexico, right after the 2015 gubernatorial elections. Findings reflect a mediating role played by factual political sophistication in explaining offline political and civic participation. However, electoral political sophistication worked better to achieve an indirect effect on online political participation.

**Keywords**

Political participation, civic participation, political sophistication, political attention, social media

### 1. Introduction

In scientific literature, it is common for authors to point out that citizen participation in public life and affairs is a key indicator to know the countries' democratic quality and health (Delli Carpini, 2004; Putnam, 2000). In fact, having a society that is made up of participative individuals is necessary to achieve a truly democratic development thereof. However, this participation manifests in many varied forms (Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009). The fact is that, along the traditional manifestations of offline participation in the political and civic field, the

Internet has opened up an option for new types of expression of online citizen involvement with the system (Kim, Russo, & Amnå, 2017). Online political participation has expanded with the arrival of new electoral campaigns 2.0, but also thanks to the new modalities for political management on the part of officials and for control on the part of the media and public opinion.

From the perspective of studies on political communication, it has been possible to confirm the relation between media consumption, in its different manifestations and contents, in the development of said citizen participation (Bakker & de Vreese, 2011; Díaz & Muñiz, 2017; Huerta & García, 2008; Scherman, Arriagada, & Valenzuela, 2012; Shah et al., 2007). However, this communicative effect is not direct, but rather it requires the presence of intermediate factors that mediate in the generation of citizen participation. This is the hypothesis put forth from the perspective of the *Communication Mediation Model*, proposed in the area of political communication by McLeod, Scheufele and Moy (1999), on the basis of the framework worked in psychology by Markus and Zajonc (1985, cited in Cho et al., 2009). The authors consider a multivariate model where communicative variables (such as attention or exposure) and other variables of politological nature (such as political sophistication) are involved, resulting in the generation of citizen behavior.

This proposal, put to the test in several studies, has resulted into the current *Campaign Communication Mediation Model* (O-S-R-O-R), put forth by Shah et al. (2007) to explain the effects of political communication in citizen behavior, both in its civic and its political dimensions. From this model, it is assumed that citizens show certain previous orientations ( $O_1$ ), such as political interest, which guide exposure to communicative stimuli (S), such as news, electoral debates or the use of social networks, just to cite a few examples. The information received generates reasoning ( $R_1$ ) at the interpersonal or intrapersonal levels, which result in subsequent orientations ( $O_2$ ), such as the level of political knowledge or political sophistication. This set of variables has an impact, by means of an indirect effect, on the development of a behavior ( $R_2$ ), manifested in more or less political and/or civic participation by the citizens.

Several studies have confirmed this relation at the international level (e.g. Gil de Zúñiga, Bachmann, Hsu, & Brundidge, 2013; Jung, Kim, & Gil de Zúñiga, 2011; Lee, Shah, & McLeod, 2013; Reichert & Print, 2017) as well as in the Latin-American context (e.g. Muñiz & Corduneanu, 2014; Valenzuela, 2013). Although the model has been put to the test in the Mexican context, it has only been possible to prove the mediating effect of interpersonal and interactive political conversation on the development of citizen participation. Therefore, it is only fitting to wonder whether political knowledge—or political sophistication, just as the construct is approached in the present article – equally plays this mediating role.

For this purpose, the present article works with data from a post-electoral analytical survey conducted in the Mexican state of Nuevo León in 2015 after the gubernatorial campaign. In particular, the study aims to determine whether the attention paid to political contents on traditional media, as well as the follow-up of the campaign through web pages and social networks, influenced the levels of citizen participation. With the objective of proving this relation, mediating models were used that allowed analyzing the role played by the mediating variables, in this case political sophistication, to enable the indirect effect of media consumption in its above-mentioned different manifestations on citizen participation, both in terms of offline and online political participation, and offline civic participation.

## **2. Literature**

### **2.1. Media and citizen participation**

It is common for authors to claim that a more solid and healthier democracy can only be attained on the basis of the necessary support of an active and participative citizenship (e.g. Bakker & de Vreese, 2011; Putnam, 2000; Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak, 2005). In fact, it has been pointed out that citizen participation, manifested in a political or civic form, is an inherent element of the citizens' democratic engagement (Delli Carpini, 2004). To the extent that the citizen considers an issue to be relevant or perceives it as affecting their personal development, this involvement in the political system, and their subsequent participation, will tend to increase. This is something that is also expected to happen with respect to citizen civic participation, in the sense they consider that the issues they get involved with are intrinsically important or have significant consequences in their own lives (Hollander, 2007). Though it is true that this involvement can occur at any moment, there is no doubt that citizen involvement tends to increase during electoral processes, when both political and media activity increases and therefore, informative offer about political issues becomes more ever-present.

Thus, it has been possible to observe how during elections there is a tendency for citizen participation to increase; moreover, there is greater contact between citizens and candidates, either in a direct or indirect manner through the media coverage. In fact, there is evidence that the activation of the political communication process to announce campaign activities redounds to the increase of participation (Shah et al., 2007). On occasion, this participation has been linked in the literature more with the expressions of citizen's behavior developed within the electoral process, mainly the vote. However, it should be remembered that outside these periods it is also possible to manifest citizen's political participation and, in addition, not only can the most conventional activities give shape to this citizen's behavior. On the contrary, it is necessary to consider the entire wide range of activities with which citizens can become involved within the political and social system (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995).

In this sense, previous studies have marked a clear difference between the political participation and the civic participation that citizens can get involved with (Bakker & de Vreese, 2011; Shah et al., 2007). However, both concepts are slippery, due to the fact that, although there is a clear difference between them both, it is true that they can manifest in the same people with different degrees of intensity (Valenzuela et al., 2009). Despite this relation, both forms of participation represent actions of clearly different natures within the system. In this sense, political participation entails a behavior whose objective is to influence the government's or the legislators' actions (Gil de Zúñiga, Jung, & Valenzuela, 2012; Verba et al., 1995), as well as the politicians' election and the implementation of public policies (Delli Carpini, 2004). On the other hand, civic participation involves actions or behaviors that seek to solve the community's problems (Zhang, Johnson, Seltzer, & Bichard, 2010), by means of non-electoral and non-governmental actions, such as volunteering or participation in neighbors' movements and associations, just to cite a couple of examples.

The influence exerted by the Internet, as well as the different social media and platforms that make it up, has resulted in new forms of participation, both in the social and the political fields (Jung et al., 2011; Woolley, Limperos, & Oliver, 2010; Zhang et al., 2010). As Bakker and de Vreese (2011) point out, the concept of participation cannot be understood as an expression that remains static, but rather as one that shows different dimensions that tend to change over time. And, no doubt, the onset of the Internet has entailed a change in this manifestation of participation. Specifically, it has opened the door to what is called online participation, as opposed to the traditional one that takes place in the offline field (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2017). A good example of the possibilities that the new

media have for citizen participation and engagement is social networks, whose use in politics and during electoral campaigns is increasing steadily, providing the ideal space for candidates and citizens to mutually interact and get involved (Woolley et al., 2010).

And the fact is that along with the ease that the Internet provides to search for information, which also reflects a certain degree of participation to some extent, social media also provide an opportunity to exchange points of view, helping to disseminate the opinions and creations that the citizens contribute (Cáceres, Brändle, & Ruiz, 2015; Hargittai & Walejko, 2008). That is something that can help the development of a political activism. No wonder authors such as Casero-Ripollés (2017) point out that the creation of contents through web 2.0 is a central and defining element of a new form of political activism, since this platform is used by different segments of the citizenry to transmit their proposals and get involved with the system. This participation is characterized, in addition, by being less expensive than the traditional offline manifestations of political participation (Cáceres et al., 2015). A simple click or a movement of the mouse can result in an expression of low-risk activism or participation, which is beginning to be known as slacktivism or clicktivism (Casero-Ripollés, 2017).

The relation between media consumption and the other communication manifestations, such as conversation, and the development of this citizen participation has been widely reviewed from the perspective of studies on political communication (Bakker & de Vreese, 2011; Cáceres et al., 2015; Casero-Ripollés, 2017; Huerta & García, 2008; Kim, Hsu, & Gil de Zúñiga, 2013; Kim et al., 2017; Muñiz & Corduneanu, 2014; Scherman et al., 2012; Shah et al., 2007). This is due to the fact that the media do not only provide the citizens with information on the community's affairs, but they also tell them how to participate in them (McLeod et al., 1999; Rojas, 2006). The media may even provide, as it happens on the social media, ways to exercise this participation by performing online participation activities. In this sense, authors such as Hargittai and Walejko (2008) highlight how greater access and frequency on the new media usually results in greater citizen commitment in activities on the online field. Therefore, it is possible to observe a close relationship between traditional or new media consumption and citizen's political and/or civic participation (Bakker & de Vreese, 2011; Kim et al., 2017).

However, there still persists some controversy about the effects that this relation may entail for citizens. With respect to the effects on media consumption behavior, Putnam (1995) points out that the media, especially television, exert a noxious effect on the citizens since it subtracts them from greater engagement in political or civic activities. The author adds that this could result in the increase of distrust and the weakening of their political and civic activities. Against this pessimistic stance, one that is to a certain extent in common with the postulates presented from the theories of media malaise, other researchers point out instead that the studies confirm a positive relation between content consumption and participation (McLeod et al., 1999). It may even be assumed, as Bakker and de Vreese (2011) argue, that most of the effects generated by media consumption on citizen participation are positive by nature, and they contribute to improving citizen engagement.

In fact, the relation between media consumption, from a broad perspective, and the development of citizen participation, both at the political and the civic levels, has been widely studied and confirmed in the last few years (Bakker & de Vreese, 2011; Cáceres et al., 2015; Hargittai & Walejko, 2008; Kim et al., 2017; Shah et al., 2005, 2007). For example, in their work, Bachmann and Gil de Zúñiga (2013) detected how consumption, both of news contents and of Internet news platforms, contributed to increase the levels of online and offline civic participation and political participation among the participants in the study. Kim et al., (2013), revealed similar results in this case confirming the positive incidence of media consumption on the development of civic participation. These significant relations have also been detected in the Mexican context, and the studies conducted have arrived at

the conclusion that participation increased among those who consumed the most political contents from the media thus developing a regular habit of political conversation (Díaz & Muñiz, 2017; Huerta & García, 2008; Muñiz & Maldonado, 2011).

## 2.2. The Communication Mediation Model(O-S-R-O-R)

Scholars have tried to explain the explicative relation of the communication variables in the development of citizen participation from the perspective of different theoretical models. Among the models proposed, the one made by McLeod et al. (1999) stands out; in their pioneering work, these authors outline a model to explain communicative mediation in the increase of citizen participation. In their study, the authors refer that the influence of communicative variables in participation is strong, but this influence occurs through an indirect effect that requires the mediation of other variables subsequent to the exposure to media contents. Though this model arouses in the field of political communication, their sources are to be sought in social psychology, from the O-S-O-R framework proposed by Markus and Zajonc (1985, cited in Cho et al., 2009) to explain the process of the influence of the acquisition of information on the cognitive responses generated by individuals.

This proposal was followed by McLeod et al. (1999), and later retaken by Sotirovic and McLeod (2004), who set out the so-called *Communication Mediation Model* or O-S-O-R Model, which hypothesizes that the impact of the communicative variables, both the mass and the interpersonal ones, on citizen participation occurs thanks to the mediation of subsequent orientations –in this case the discussion, political knowledge and/or political efficacy – that develop after the exposure to or consumption of communicative stimuli. Later studies that have used the said model have modified the original statement to turn the political dialog, in its different variants, into a new mediating bridge between media consumption and political behavior (Cho et al., 2009; Jung et al., 2011; Shah et al., 2005, 2007; Rojas, 2006).

Among these later works is the one of Shah et al. (2005), which incorporates issue reflection as an element that is subsequent not simultaneous to media content consumption. They called the new model as *Citizen Communication Mediation Model*, assuming that the expressions of conversation, both the interpersonal and the interactive or online interaction through the exchange of civic messages on the Internet, are the true bridge that explains the impact of media message consumption on citizen participation, in its different expressions. In this sense, the model considers conversation as a subsequent orientation, but one that has a different nature from that of the rest of the orientations, represented by political knowledge and political efficacy.

However, the most current model results from the reinterpretation made by Shah et al. (2007), broadening the *Campaign Communication Mediation Model* by incorporating *Reasoning* as an independent variable between media consumption and subsequent orientations. This way, the model is constituted as an O-S-R-O-R process, which involves taking four steps for the impact on behavior to occur. From this model, it is assumed that the individual's initial orientations (O<sub>i</sub>) channel communicative consumption, determining what and when it is consumed. Structural, cultural, cognitive, and motivational characteristics of audience, as for instance the political interest, will guide the way in which individuals obtain information on politics (McLeod et al., 1999; Shah et al., 2007). Media messages consumed by the subjects are the stimulus (S) thanks to which information is obtained within the political process, such as political attention, exposure to commercials or the use of social networks.

On the other hand, consumption of these stimuli has the capacity to make an impact on the generation of subsequent orientations (O<sub>s</sub>), but that is something that will be achieved thanks to a *Reasoning* process (R<sub>i</sub>), which may involve both an intrapersonal or intimate

reflection process, and a interpersonal political discussion, both in online and/or offline fields (Bakker & de Vreese, 2011; Jung et al., 2011). To Shah et al. (2007), the heart of the communicative mediation process is at this point, since it is here that the message is understood and the basis that will produce the subsequent effect are developed. But, not only reasoning has the capacity to mediate between media consumption (S) and citizen participation (R<sub>2</sub>). But also secondary orientations (O<sub>2</sub>) generated by this exposure to information and reasoning resulting from its consumption may become bridges to explain citizen engagement.

### 2.3. Political sophistication as subsequent orientation

Since the *Communication Mediation Model* was put forth, several studies have confirmed the different relations between the variables assumed within the process. In some cases, these works have focused on the indirect effect caused by reasoning in its different manifestations (Cho et al., 1999; Muñiz & Corduneanu, 2014; Shah et al., 2007). Other studies have evaluated the mediating effect caused by the feeling of political efficacy, inasmuch as it is a subsequent orientation resulting from consumption and reasoning of the information obtained. That is Chan's (2016) case study, which has detected a mediating effect of political efficacy between consumption of Facebook and political participation. On the other hand, other authors have also worked with a model that includes political knowledge as a subsequent orientation. For example, McLeod's et al. (1999) study and more recently Jung's et al. (2011) or Reichert's and Print's (2017) can be reviewed. All of them prove the mediating effect caused by political knowledge, along with political efficacy in their models, on citizen participation.

Many of the studies performed from the O-S-R-O-R model have focused on the impact of attention or consumption of news content or other traditional political contents, such as electoral spots. However, the model opens to any other type of message that can stimulate the acquisition of information. In correspondence with the new reality in the election campaigns and political life, digital media have brought about a wide range of new forms of information transmission (Towner, 2012, Groshek & Al-Rawi, 2013; Woolley et al., 2010). The platforms and media that have developed from the Internet provide different ways for citizens to get involved with politics (Fernandes, Giurcanu, Bowers, & Neely, 2010), creating opportunities for the citizens' civic and political engagement to increase (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012; Hargittai & Walejko, 2008). That happens thanks to the fact that these media provide their users with information that allows them to engage in debates where points of view are exchanged. A fact that can result in that the users have better information about the affairs so that they can undertake a more profound understanding thereof, and improve their political knowledge as well (Blom, Carpenter, Bowe, & Lange, 2014).

Therefore, it is easy to observe how political knowledge is a key variable for obtaining involved and engaged publics. Several studies have revealed how participation tends to increase the greater the knowledge on the political system (Buendía & Somuano, 2003; Huerta & García, 2008; Norris, 2000). That is, greater knowledge leads to greater civic engagement, which, along with an increase in public trust in political affairs, produces a virtuous circle that improves the way democracy works (Avery, 2009). This relationship, which has been usually studied in the offline field, is also observed in the digital field. Thus, it has been revealed that the higher the educational level of these citizens, the greater the creation of political contents on the Internet on the part of the citizens, which is an indicator of activism by these users (Casero-Ripollés, 2017).

The concept of political knowledge is closely linked with that of political sophistication, so much so that it is even common for it to be presented as interchangeable in the scientific literature (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Rhee & Cappella, 1997). In this sense, it has been indicated that a sophisticated citizen is the one that is engaged intellectually, cognitively and

emotionally with public affairs (de Vreese, Boomgaarden, & Semetko, 2011; Muñiz, 2012). That is, this is a citizen with greater political awareness, which results in greater interest in getting information about the events that happen in the public sphere, as well as in their capacity to maintain and express well-formed objective ideas about what is happening in that system (Schuck, Boomgaarden, & de Vreese, 2013). This wide variety of attitudes and behaviors that the sophisticated citizen develops has caused many authors to consider political sophistication as a multidimensional construct, one that includes both political knowledge and political interest (de Vreese et al., 2011; Muñiz, 2012; Schuck et al., 2013).

Sophisticated citizens, therefore, have more complex, profound and organized cognitive structures or political schemes (Dassonneville, 2012; Miller, 2011), which are used to process the information they receive about specific affairs, assess political actors and identify and articulate their interests to commit and participate in politics in a more profitable manner (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Muñiz, 2012). Factual political sophistication, therefore, is a representation of political knowledge that the citizen holds and that is represented in the notions or factual ideas they have and can express about the political system, about how it is structured, about how it works or about what the rules of the game on which the system is based are, as well as about who the main leading actors are within it and what they do and propose (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996).

However, political knowledge is not confined to this factual field has been mentioned, but rather political knowledge can also be that which is acquired during electoral processes. Campaigns are, no doubt, one of the main scenarios where politicians and citizens interact about the main political issues (Stevens, 2005), which cause them to be spaces that contribute to the activation of sympathizers and voters, as well as to the education and change of the citizens' ideas (Claassen, 2011). The reception the citizen makes of the information concerning election campaigns can result in learning the proposals offered and the stance held by the candidates and/or parties about them. Greater knowledge of these aspects determines the voter's electoral political sophistication, which shapes the level of campaign awareness the citizen will have in relation with what is going on during the election process (Claassen, 2011; Schuck et al., 2013).

It is not difficult to assume that political sophistication, both the factual and the electoral ones, will have an impact on the citizens' decisions and behaviors (Dassonneville, 2012). And the fact is that it is expected that the more sophisticated people there are, the more trained citizens the system will have. But, also more educated voters that will can make rational decisions after considering reflexively the different proposals offered by the candidacies. Thus, it has been possible to detect that those with greater electoral political knowledge engage better socially and use the information they have been provided with during election campaigns (Singh & Roy, 2014), there has been a tendency to a positive correlation with conventional political participation entailed in the act of voting (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996). But, in addition to this effect in rational decision-making, it has been detected that political sophistication can also moderate the impact that the emotions aroused during the campaign have on vote behavior and on the citizens' political attitudes (Miller, 2011).

From the evidence contributed by the empirical antecedents reviewed, different hypotheses were put forth about the indirect effect of attention to political contents, as well as the follow-up of web pages and social networks on politics, on citizen participation. In this case, both offline and online political participation, and civic participation were considered as dependent variables, while factual and electoral political sophistication were used as mediating variables. The relations among all of them determined the formulation of the following hypotheses:

- H1:Factual political sophistication mediates between attention to political contents on traditional media and offline political participation.
- H2:Electoral political sophistication mediates between attention to political contents on traditional media and offline political participation.
- H3:Factual political sophistication mediates between follow-up of web pages on politics and social networks and offline political participation.
- H4:Electoral political sophistication mediates between follow-up of web pages on politics and social networks and offline political participation.
- H5:Factual political sophistication mediates between attention to political contents on traditional media and online political participation.
- H6:Electoral political sophistication mediates between attention to political contents on traditional media and online political participation.
- H7:Factual political sophistication mediates between follow-up of web pages on politics and social networks and online political participation.
- H8:Electoral political sophistication mediates between follow-up of web pages on politics and social networks and online political participation.
- H9:Factual political sophistication mediates between attention to political contents on traditional media and civic participation.
- H10:Electoral political sophistication mediates between attention to political contents on traditional media and civic participation.
- H11:Factual political sophistication mediates between follow-up of web pages on politics and social networks and civic participation.
- H12:Electoral political sophistication mediates between follow-up of web pages on politics and social networks and civic participation.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Participants

In order to carry out this study, an analytical survey was conducted with a convenience sample of social network users in the state of Nuevo León, Mexico. In that sense, these users were invited to participate in an online survey promoted through the Facebook social network. The survey application was carried out in the months of June and July, 2015, immediately after the end of the Nuevo León gubernatorial elections, which were held on June 7<sup>th</sup> 2015. In this study, only participants over 18 years of age were used, people who had been registered in the electoral roll in the state of Nuevo León. The final sample consisted of 294 participants. 51.7% of participants were women ( $n = 152$ ), with an age range from 18 to 67 years ( $M = 34.06$ ,  $SD = 12.57$ ). The participants indicated their income ranged from 6,000 to 30,000 pesos a month (52.7% as a whole) and most of them had undertaken professional studies or had a bachelor's degree (50.7%) or a postgraduate degree (38.8%), which indicates a high educational level among the social network users surveyed. Finally, the responders were asked to self-position ideologically as being on the left (0) or the right (10). As an average, the sample was positioned slightly towards the center-right ( $M = 5.32$ ,  $SD = 2.28$ ) of the ideological spectrum.

#### 3.2. Measures

*Attention to contents on politics on the traditional media.* The degree of attention to the different programs of the traditional media was evaluated, with a five-point Likert scale, ranging between nothing (1) and much (5). Thus, the responders were asked how much information about the Nuevo León gubernatorial electoral campaign they had obtained, for example, from news in the newspapers, on the radio or on TV programs about politics. The reliability analysis conducted with the seven items used revealed an acceptable internal



consistence ( $\alpha = .76$ ), which allowed to determine that there was unidimensionality among the different activities indicated.

*Follow-up of web pages and social networks.* With the intention of knowing the level of consumption of the social media during the election campaign, the responders were asked how much they had followed the Internet pages or social networks on politics to obtain information about the Nuevo León gubernatorial elections. The scale constructed was made up of the addition of 6 items, related with the consumption of Internet pages and the follow-up of the different social networks, for example, Facebook, Twitter or YouTube. In all of the cases its consumption was measured using the five-point Likert scale ranging from nothing (1) and much (5), and it revealed an acceptable internal consistence of the scale constructed ( $\alpha = .62$ ).

*Factual political sophistication.* To generate the index of factual political sophistication, the reference taken was the proposal by other authors who recommend adding the responders' level of political interest and knowledge in this construct (e. g. de Vreese et al., 2011; Muñiz, 2012; Schuck et al., 2013). In this sense, the index created granted double the weight to knowledge as opposed to interest. Regarding political interest, the level of interest shown by the responders in local or municipal, state, national or federal and international politics was measured using the five-point Likert scale ranging from nothing (1) and much (5) ( $\alpha = .74$ ). As to factual political knowledge, six questions were asked about current Mexican and state political reality, determining whether the responders knew the answers (1) or not (0) to questions such as, for example, How long is the gubernatorial term in Nuevo León? ( $\alpha = .46$ ).

*Electoral political sophistication.* Regarding the level of political sophistication shown by the responders in the electoral field, the same proposal used for the previous index was followed, but in this case approaching interest in the electoral campaign and knowledge about electoral issues. Thus, the interest showed by responders in the Nuevo León gubernatorial elections was measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from not interested (1) to very interested (5). In addition, the level of electoral political knowledge showed by the participants was measured, using a set of five questions by which the responders were asked to indicate which candidate to the governor's office had set a certain electoral proposal. The answers were coded as correct (1) or incorrect (0), with the same criteria followed for factual political knowledge ( $\alpha = .31$ ).

*Offline conventional political participation.* To generate the index concerning the political participation undertaken by the responders in the offline field, a scale was constructed from the addition of four items that measured actions that usually reflect conventional or traditional political activities. In this sense, the question was to what extent they had worked or collaborated with the electoral political campaign, working for a candidate or political party in the election campaign, attending political party meetings or whether they had made requests or paid visits to politicians, governors or public officials. The internal consistency of the scale was evaluated ( $\alpha = .75$ ), obtaining a good reliability for the indicator constructed.

*Online conventional political participation.* Along with the traditional expression of political participation developed in the offline field, the purpose was equally to try to measure the level in which the participants had gotten involved with politics in the online field, more specifically through the election candidates' social networks. To this end, a scale made up of nine items was used to measure the level in which the participants had engaged in activities, for example, such as lending their support and encouragement to the candidate, asking the candidate direct questions or clicking on like or favorite on any message by the candidate on their social networks. The reliability analysis made using the

**Political sophistication as a mediator in the relation between media consumption and citizen participation.  
Evidence from the O-S-R-O-R model**

scale constructed revealed a high level of internal consistency ( $\alpha = .91$ ), and an acceptable reliability was obtained for the scale constructed, which reflects its unidimensionality.

*Civic participation.* Finally, the participants were asked to what extent they had undertaken any of the following activities in the civic field: working in some community project, working in the support of some cause or social group, performing some sort of voluntary work, trying to solve the neighborhood, community or city problems, attending neighbors meetings and/or meetings of some social club or group. They were all measured using Likert scales ranging from nothing (1) to much (5), and a good internal consistency of the scale constructed was detected ( $\alpha = .78$ ).

**4. Results**

As a step prior to conducting the measurement analyses considered in the study, the existence of relations between the different variables considered in the study was reviewed (see Table 1). The analysis allowed determining the existence of statistically significant correlations among all the variables. In addition, no case presented a problem of collinearity, since no correlations greater than  $r = .90$  were found. In this sense, the strongest association detected was the one between the two measurements of political sophistication,  $r(291) = .54, p < .001$ , which indicates that participants with greater factual political sophistication also showed greater electoral political sophistication, a result within the expected logic. As to the descriptive values, it is possible to observe that in general terms, the participants showed greater levels of civic participation than political participation, both online and offline. Moreover, the level of consumption of political web pages and social networks and attention to political contents on traditional media to follow the election campaign were, in general terms, moderate, and no differences were detected between both behaviors,  $t(287) = 1.796, p = .074, d = 0.11$ . Finally, the levels of both types of political sophistication were high, since they were both positioned above the theoretical mean, however, factual political sophistication was higher than the electoral one,  $t(292) = 7.108, p < .001, d = 0.40$ .

**Table 1.** Descriptive and bivariate correlations of the variables used

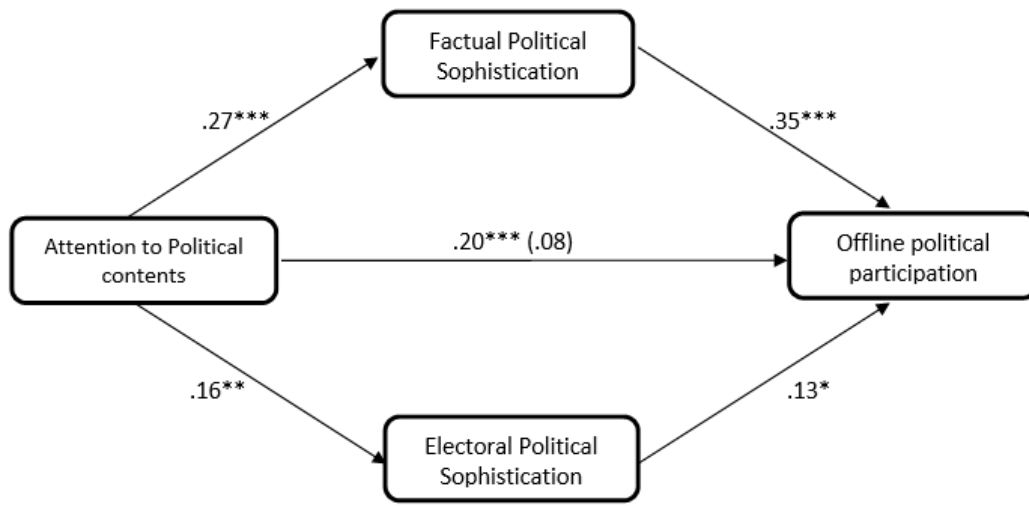
	<i>M (SD)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Offline political participation	2.02 (1.08)	-	.48***	.46***	.45***	.33***	.20***	.37***
Online political participation	2.08 (0.98)		-	.34***	.32***	.36***	.16**	.47***
Civic participation	3.37 (1.35)			-	.43***	.26***	.21***	.36***
Factual political sophistication	1.38 (0.22)				-	.54***	.27***	.39***
Electoral political sophistication	1.29 (0.23)					-	.16**	.35***
Attention to political contents	2.83 (0.79)						-	.33***
Follow-up of web pages and social networks	2.75 (0.63)							-

*Note:*  $N = 294$ . All the variables were measured with scales from nothing (1) to much (5), except for the ones concerning political sophistication that were measured using scales from 0.50 (minimal) to 1.75 (maximal). \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; \*\* $p < .01$

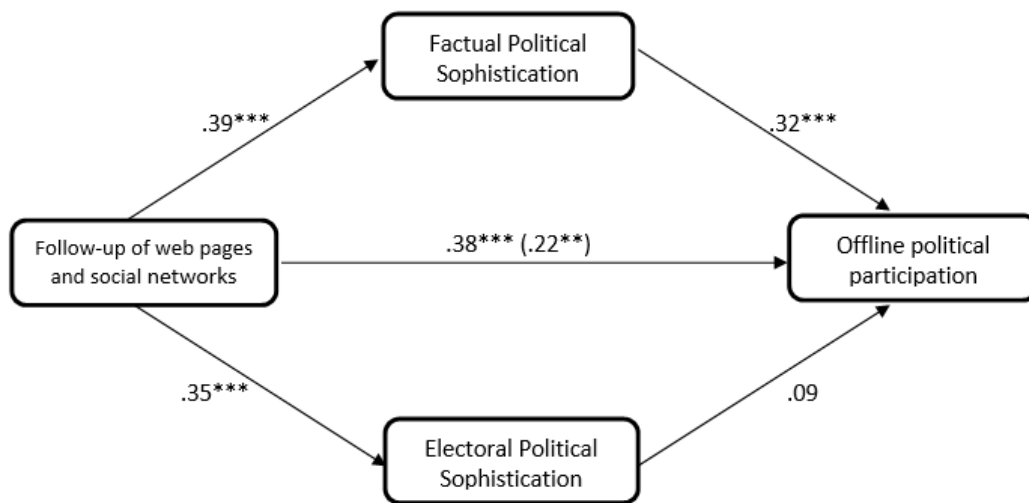
**Political sophistication as a mediator in the relation between media consumption and citizen participation.  
Evidence from the O-S-R-O-R model**

In correspondence with the hypotheses of the study, the different mediation analyses to confirm them were carry out, using political attention and the follow-up of web pages on politics on the Internet and the social networks as independent variables, and the measures of online and offline political participation and civic participation as dependent variables and, finally, the indices of factual and electoral political sophistication as mediating variables. This type of analysis allows determining how much and how a predicting variable impacts the criterion variable, as well as whether the mediating variables set out work in the attainment of this effect (Igartua & Rodríguez de Dios, 2016). To carry out this analysis, the macro PROCESS for SPSS created by Hayes (2013) was used. This method allows calculating the direct effects (of the predicting variables on the criterion variable, controlling the mediating one), indirect effects (of the predicting variables on the criterion variable, by means of the mediating one) and total effects (the sum total of all the other effects) in the model proposed. Specifically, model 4 was used with a *bootstrapping* of 10.000 samples to determine the indirect effects of the variables described above.

**Figure 1.** Impact of media consumption on offline political participation



Note: N = 292, \*\*\*p < .001; \*\* p < .01; \* p < .05

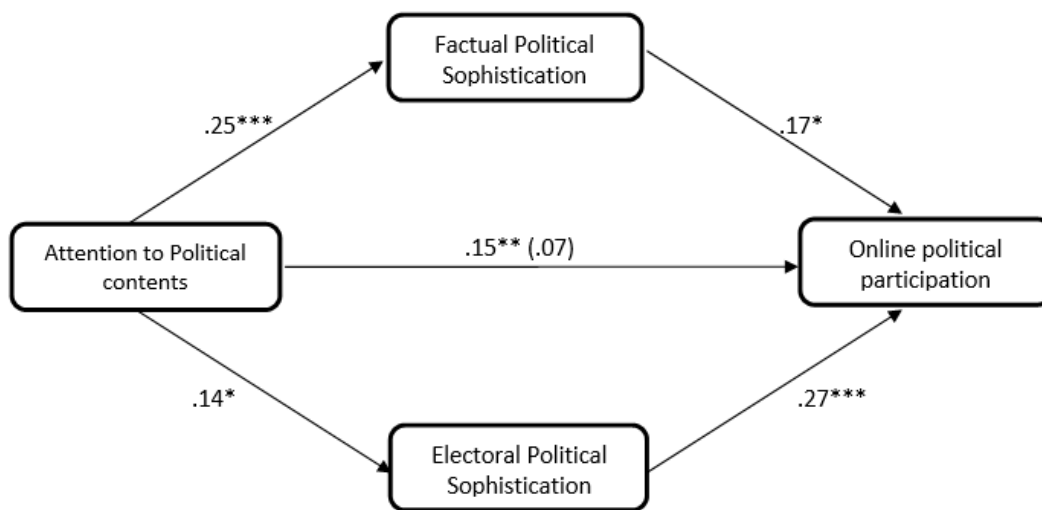


Note: N = 287, \*\*\*p < .001; \*\* p < .01

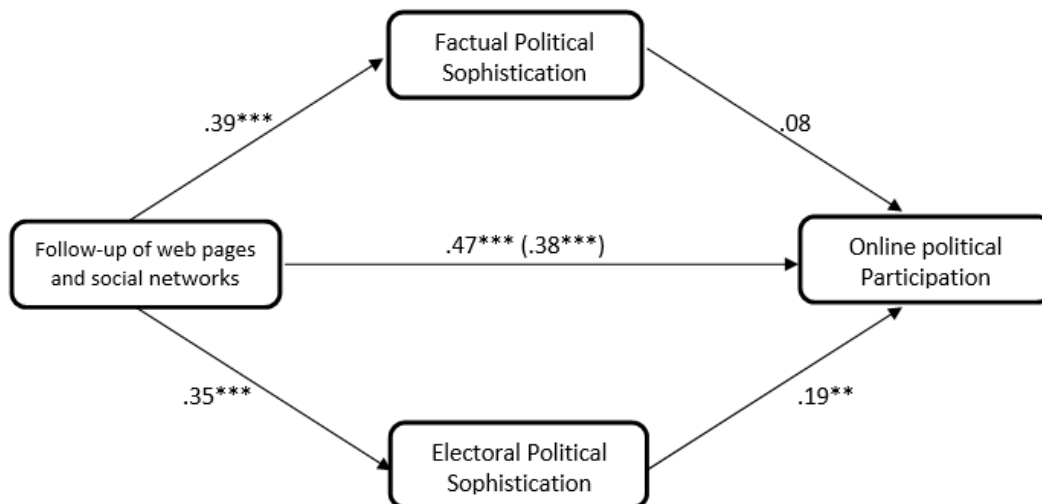
**Political sophistication as a mediator in the relation between media consumption and citizen participation.  
Evidence from the O-S-R-O-R model**

First of all, the effect of attention to political contents on traditional media during the election campaign was calculated regarding offline political participation (see Figure 1). The results showed that there was a statistically significant indirect effect, through both factual political sophistication,  $B = .10$ ,  $SE = .03$ , 95%  $CI [.05, .15]$ , and electoral political sophistication,  $B = .02$ ,  $SE = .01$ , 95%  $CI [.003, .053]$ <sup>1</sup>, therefore confirming hypotheses 1 and 2 that was put forth. However, the contrast of both effect allowed determining that the one produced by the factual one was greater. Therefore, it may be concluded that the effect of attention to contents can be explained mainly by the development of factual political sophistication ( $\beta = .27$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which in turn causes offline political participation to increase ( $\beta = .35$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**Figure 2.** Impact of media consumption on online political participation



Note:  $N = 288$ ,  $***p < .001$ ;  $**p < .01$ ;  $*p < .05$



Note:  $N = 287$ ,  $***p < .001$ ;  $**p < .01$ ;  $*p < .05$

<sup>1</sup> SE = standar Error, CI= Confidence Interval

On the other hand, it is also possible to observe a statistically significant effect of consumption of web pages and social networks on politics during the election campaign on offline political participation (see Figure 1). However, in this case only an indirect effect was detected through factual political sophistication,  $B = .12$ ,  $SE = .03$ , 95%  $CI$  [.08, .17], but not through electoral political sophistication. So, only hypothesis 3 is confirmed, but not hypothesis 4 as put forth. That is why it may be concluded that consumption of political contents on webs and social networks caused electoral political sophistication to increase ( $\beta = .39$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which in turn resulted in an increase of offline political participation ( $\beta = .32$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

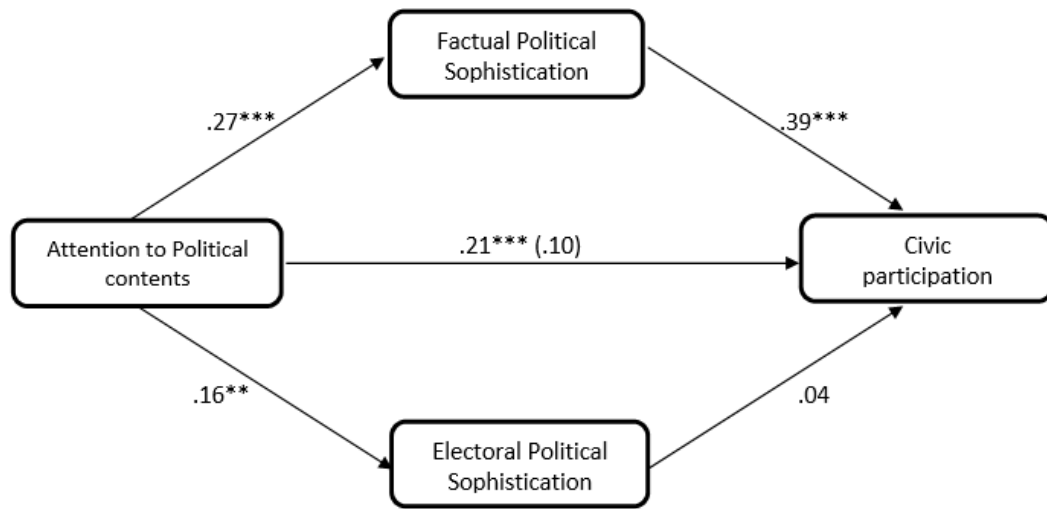
As to the effect of political attention on online political participation (see Figure 2), the results show that there occurred a statistically significant indirect effect through political sophistication, both in the factual,  $B = .04$ ,  $SE = .02$ , 95%  $CI$  [.01, .09], and the electoral ones,  $B = .04$ ,  $SE = .02$ , 95%  $CI$  [.009, .08], thus confirming hypotheses 5 and 6 as they were formulated. The contrast of both effects calculated allowed determining that the mediating role of factual political sophistication was greater, so it may be concluded that attention to political contents on traditional media caused factual political sophistication to increase to a larger extent ( $\beta = .25$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which in turn generated an increase in the respondents' online political participation ( $\beta = .17$ ,  $p = .010$ ).

With respect to the effect of digital consumption of politics during the electoral campaign, it was also possible to detect a statistically significant indirect effect on online political participation. In this sense, the data reflect that electoral political sophistication worked as a mediating variable,  $B = .07$ ,  $SE = .02$ , 95%  $CI$  [.03, .12], between consumption of webs and social networks on politics ( $\beta = .35$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and the increase of online political participation ( $\beta = .19$ ,  $p = .002$ ), thus confirming hypothesis 8. However, no mediating effect was detected in factual political sophistication, which is contrary to hypothesis 7 as put forth (see Figure 2).

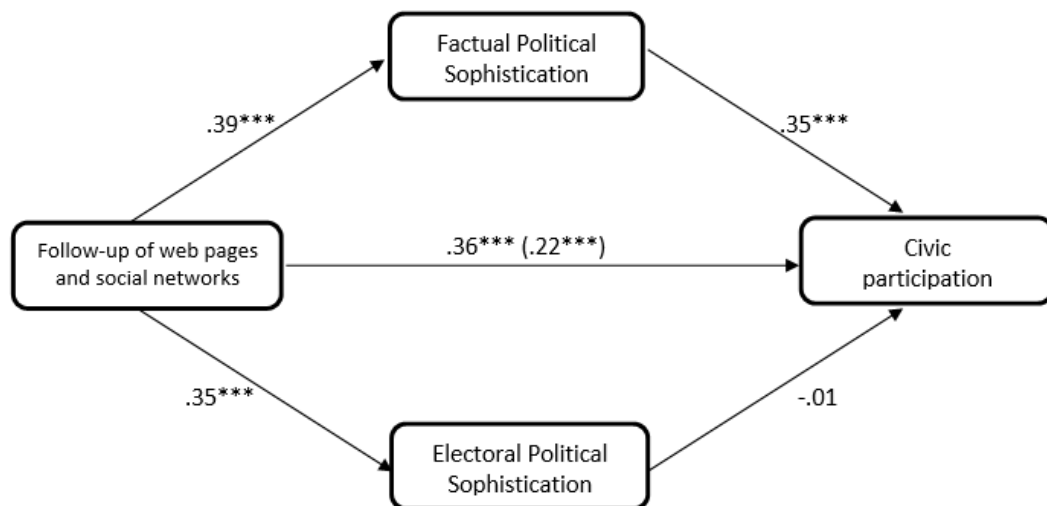
Lastly, the effects on the development of civic participation of consumption in both types of media were analyzed (see Figure 3). As to the impact of attention to politics on traditional media on civic participation, it was possible to confirm a statistically significant indirect effect caused through factual political sophistication,  $B = .11$ ,  $SE = .03$ , 95%  $CI$  [.06, .17], but not through the electoral one. Therefore, it was only possible to confirm hypothesis 9, but not hypothesis 10. This way, it should be pointed out that the effect of political attention in the increase of the responders' civic involvement was explained through the development of factual political sophistication ( $\beta = .27$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which in turn causes civic participation to increase ( $\beta = .39$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

As to the impact on citizen involvement caused by follow-up of web pages and social networks on politics to obtain information about the election campaign, it was also possible to detect a statistically significant mediating effect on civic participation (see Figure 3). In this case, the results allowed determining that factual political sophistication was the variable that worked as mediator,  $B = .14$ ,  $SE = .03$ , 95%  $CI$  [.09, .20], just as it was put forth in hypothesis 11, but it was not like that with the electoral one which was expected regarding hypothesis 12. It may be concluded, therefore, that follow-up of the campaign through digital media caused factual political sophistication to increase ( $\beta = .39$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which in turn generated an increase in the respondents' level of civic participation ( $\beta = .35$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**Figure 3.** Impact of media consumption on civic participation



Note:  $N = 292$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \* $p < .05$



Note:  $N = 287$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \* $p < .05$

## 5. Discussion and conclusions

The main aim of this study was to determine to what extent it is possible to test whether attention paid to political contents on traditional media and the follow-up of web pages and social networks during an election campaign, in this case one concerning the Mexican state of Nuevo León gubernatorial elections in 2015, have an impact on the levels of citizen participation. Following the general view set out by Bakker and de Vreese (2011), and considering the results obtained in the study, it may be concluded that media consumption in its different manifestations has positive effects on citizen involvement, both at the political and the civic levels. In this sense, the study did not reveal any negative effects of the different expressions of media consumption, an idea that is closer to the proposals made from approaches such as political mobilization than from theories of media malaise. The

**Political sophistication as a mediator in the relation between media consumption and citizen participation.  
Evidence from the O-S-R-O-R model**

findings made by previous studies can be confirmed, for instance the one by Bachmann and Gil de Zúñiga (2013), in the sense that both news contents on traditional media and on Internet platforms contribute to citizen commitment.

However, despite the fact that both types of media show positive effects, attention to political contents on the media is observed as the predicting variable that generates the most indirect effects on all the types of participation, both the political and the civic ones, just as it can be observed in the summary table (see Table 2). Although the effect of following web pages and social networks on politics on the Internet during the election campaign was also positive, it was possible to observe greater weakness as to its influence on certain levels of participation. Though it is true that, following authors such as Dassonneville (2012) or Hargittai & Walejko (2008), frequent access to this kind of media contents may result in greater citizen engagement in online activities, it seems that the influence of content consumption on traditional media continues to be stronger in the development of a deeper citizen participation, above all in the offline field.

**Table 2.** Summary of the confirmation of the hypotheses

	It is conformed	It is not confirmed
H1: APC → FPS → OFPP	X	
H2: APC → EPS → OFPP	X	
H3: PWRS → FPS → OFPP	X	
H4: PWRS → EPS → OFPP		X
H5: APC → FPS → ONPP	X	
H6: APC → EPS → ONPP	X	
H7: PWRS → FPS → ONPP		X
H8: PWRS → EPS → ONPP	X	
H9: APC → FPS → CP	X	
H10: APC → EPS → CP		X
H11: PWRS → FPS → CP	X	
H12: WPSN → EPS → CP		X

*Note:* APC = Attention to political contents in traditional media, WPSN = Follow-up of web pages on politics and social networks on politics, FPS = Factual political sophistication, EPS = Electoral political sophistication, OFPP = Offline political participation, ONPP = Online political participation, CP = Civic participation

In addition to studying this relation, the work also considered the particular objective of analyzing the role played by the different mediating variables thereof, in particular factual and electoral political sophistication, within the process of impact that media consumption has on citizen engagement in its different manifestations, in the case of this article, offline and online political participation, and offline civic participation. Taking this objective as reference, the following is a detailed revision of each of the hypotheses set out

in the paper to determine whether they are confirmed or not, and discuss their implications.

As to the hypotheses relating offline political participation (1 to 4), all of them are confirmed except for the fourth. In this sense, factual political sophistication is observed as a good tool to mediate between traditional and new media consumption and the increase of more traditional or conventional political participation. In turn, electoral political sophistication only manages to generate an indirect effect between the consumption of political contents on traditional media and this offline participation. However, this knowledge about the affairs and issues approached in the campaign generated through the new or digital media does not manifest as a good mediator to cause the citizens' offline political participation to increase. This type of learning, therefore, does not seem to generate political activism in the traditional field, but perhaps it can develop it in the digital field where the new online electoral campaigns are carried out, along the lines set out by authors such as Singh and Roy (2014) or Casero-Ripollés (2017).

And that is precisely what can be observed when analyzing the impact of media consumption on the development of online political participation, specifically through the social networks. The results of the study allow confirming the majority of the hypotheses put forth (5 to 8), except for the one that assumes that factual political sophistication generates an indirect effect between the follow-up of contents on digital media and online political participation. Therefore, the development of electoral political knowledge, regardless of the medium used to obtain this information, is presented as the best generator of an indirect effect on that participation on the social networks (H6 and H8). That is, political activism within the social networks seems to be reinforced in those individuals who have greater knowledge about the candidates' campaign proposals, irrespective of whether they obtained this information on traditional media or the Internet. A result that is similar to that found by other authors, such as Blom et al. (2014) or Singh and Roy, 2014, who claim that those citizens with greater electoral political knowledge, engage better and use electoral information in their decision-making.

Finally, and regarding the hypotheses put forth about the development of civic participation, the analyses show ambivalent results. Thus, electoral political sophistication does not seem to generate any mediating process between media consumption and civic or social participation. The results of the study allow concluding that publics with greater factual political sophistication, that is, with a higher level of political interest as well as with higher levels of general or factual political knowledge, tend to develop this type of social activities to a greater extent. So, it is concluded that media consumption, regardless of the format used, promotes social activism, thanks to the formation of greater knowledge about the inner workings of the system and the rules that govern it. In general terms, it may be concluded that factual political sophistication offers better results within the explicative model of citizen participation than electoral political sophistication.

The results obtained highlight how sophisticated publics in the field of factual political affairs have greater political awareness, which will increase their probability of developing activities in the traditional political and civic fields. A conclusion that other authors have also arrived at (Jung et al., 2011; McLeod et al., 1999; Reichert & Print, 2017), about the mediating effect produced by political knowledge on citizen participation. In turn, political sophistication in the electoral field seems to encourage the citizens to develop greater participation in the spaces generated by the Internet in the new election campaigns. That leads to consider future research about whether this greater online political activism, which results from the campaign awareness held by the citizens has the capacity to permeate the real field or not. That is, whether these publics that are more participative in the digital field transfer their activism into the real field also, in keeping with the *gateway hypothesis* put



forth by authors such as Kim et al. (2017), or whether they are rather two differentiated manifestations of political activism.

## References

- Avery, J. (2009). Videomalaise or virtuous circle? The influence of the news media on political trust. *International Journal of Press/Politics*, 14(4), 410–433. doi: 10.1177/1940161209336224
- Bachmann, I., & Gil de Zúñiga, H. (2013). News platform preference as a predictor of political and civic participation. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 19(4), 496–512. doi: 10.1177/1354856513493699
- Bakker, T. P., & de Vreese, C. (2011). Good news for the future? Young people, Internet use, and political participation. *Communication Research*, 38(4), 451–470. doi: 10.1177/0093650210381738
- Blom, R., Carpenter, S., Bowe, B. J., & Lange, R. (2014). Frequent contributors within U.S. newspaper comment forums: An examination of their civility and information value. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 58, 1314–1328. doi: 10.1177/0002764214527094
- Buendía, J., & Somuano, F. (2003). Participación electoral en nuevas democracias: la elección presidencial de 2000 en México. *Política y Gobierno*, 10(2), 289–323.
- Cáceres Zapatero, M. D., Brändle, G., & Ruiz San-Román, J. A. (2015). Hacia la construcción de una ciudadanía digital. Nuevos modelos de participación y empoderamiento a través de Internet. *Prisma Social*, (15), 643–684.
- Casero-Ripollés, A. (2017). Producing political content for web 2.0: Empowering citizens and vulnerable populations. *El Profesional de la Información*, 26(1), 13–19. doi: 10.3145/epi.2017.ene.02
- Chan, M. (2016). Social network sites and political engagement: Exploring the impact of Facebook connections and uses on political protest and participation. *Mass Communication and Society*, 19(4), 430–451. doi: 10.1080/15205436.2016.1161803
- Cho, J., Shah, D. V., McLeod, J. M., McLeod, D. M., Scholl, R. M., & Gotlieb, M. R. (2009). Campaigns, reflection, and deliberation: Advancing an O-S-R-O-R model of communication effects. *Communication Theory*, 19, 66–88. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2885.2008.01333.x
- Claassen, R. L. (2011). Political awareness and electoral campaigns: Maximum effects for minimum citizens? *Political Behavior*, 33, 203–223. doi:10.1007/s11109-010-9129-6
- Dassonneville, R. (2012). Electoral volatility, political sophistication, trust and efficacy: A study on changes in voter preferences during the Belgian regional elections of 2009. *Acta Politica*, 47, 18–41. doi:10.1057/ap.2011.19
- de Vreese, C. H., Boomgaarden, H. G., & Semetko, H. A. (2011). (In)direct framing effects: The effects of news media framing on public support for Turkish membership in the European Union. *Communication Research*, 38(2), 179–205. doi: 10.1177/0093650210384934
- Delli Carpini, M. X. (2004). Mediating democratic engagement: The impact of communications on citizens' involvement in political and civic life. In L. L. Kaid (Ed.), *Handbook of political communication* (pp. 395–434). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

- Delli Carpini, M. X., & Keeter, S. (1996). *What Americans know about politics and why it matters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Díaz, O., & Muñiz, C. (2017). Los efectos de la comunicación política en el compromiso político de los jóvenes en la elección presidencial mexicana de 2012. *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales*, 62(229), 181–222.
- Fernandes, J., Giurcanu, M., Bowers, K. W., & Neely, J. C. (2010). The writing on the wall: A content analysis of college students' Facebook groups for the 2008 presidential election. *Mass Communication and Society*, 13, 653–675. doi: 10.1080/15205436.2010.516865
- Gil de Zúñiga, H., Bachmann, I., Hsu, S., & Brundidge, J. (2013). Expressive versus consumptive blog use: implications for interpersonal discussion and political participation. *International Journal of Communication*, 7, 1538–1559.
- Gil de Zúñiga, H., Jung, N., & Valenzuela, S. (2012). Social media use for news and individuals' social capital, civic engagement and political participation. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 17, 319–336. doi: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2012.01574.X
- Groshek, J., & Al-Rawi, A. (2013). Public sentiment and critical framing in social media content during the 2012 U.S. Presidential campaign. *Social Science Computer Review*, 31(5), 563–576. doi: 10.1177/0894439313490401
- Hargittai, E., & Walejko, G. (2008). The participation divide: Content creation and sharing in the digital age. *Information, Communication and Society*, 11(2), 239–256. doi: 10.1080/13691180801946150
- Hayes, A. F. (2013). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis*. New York, NY: Guilford.
- Hollander, B. A. (2007). Media use and political involvement. In R. W. Preiss, B. M. Gayle, N. Burrell, M. Allen, & J. Bryant (Eds.), *Mass media effects research: Advances through meta-analysis* (pp. 377–390). New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Huerta, J. E., & García, E. (2008). La formación de los ciudadanos: el papel de la televisión y la comunicación humana en la socialización política. *Comunicación y Sociedad*, (10), 163–189.
- Igartua, J. J., & Rodríguez de Dios, I. (2016). Correlatos motivacionales del uso y la satisfacción con Facebook en jóvenes españoles. *Cuadernos.Info*, (38), 107–119. doi: 10.7764/cdi.38.848
- Jung, N., Kim, Y., & Gil de Zúñiga, H. (2011). The mediating role of knowledge and efficacy in the effects of communication on political participation. *Mass Communication and Society*, 14(4), 407–430. doi:10.1080/15205436.2010.496135
- Kim, Y., Hsu, S., & Gil de Zúñiga, H. (2013) Influence of social media use on discussion network heterogeneity and civic engagement: The moderating role of personality traits. *Journal of Communication*, 63, 498–516. doi: 10.1111/jcom.12034
- Kim, Y., Russo, S., & Amnå, E. (2017). The longitudinal relation between online and offline political participation among youth at two different developmental stages. *New Media and Society* 19(6), 899–917, doi: 10.1177/1461444815624181
- Lee, N.-J., Shah, D. V., & McLeod, J. M. (2013). Processes of political socialization: A communication mediation approach to youth civic engagement. *Communication Research*, 40(5), 669– 697. doi: 10.1177/0093650212436712

- Miller, P. R. (2011). The emotional citizen: Emotion as a function of political sophistication. *Political Psychology*, 32, 575–600. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9221.2011.00824.x
- McLeod, J. M., Scheufele, D. A., & Moy, P. (1999). Community, communication, and participation: The role of mass media and interpersonal discussion in local political participation. *Political Communication*, 16, 315–336. doi:10.1080/105846099198659
- Muñiz, C. (2012). Creando ciudadanos comprometidos. Aportación de los hábitos comunicativos al desarrollo de la sofisticación política entre los jóvenes. *Revista Mexicana de Opinión Pública*, (12), 55–74.
- Muñiz, C., & Corduneanu, I. (2014). El papel mediador de la conversación política en la generación de participación política: evidencias desde una perspectiva generacional comparativa. In G. Meixueiro & A. Moreno (Coords.), *El comportamiento electoral mexicano en las elecciones de 2012* (pp. 201–228). Ciudad de México: CESOP.
- Muñiz, C., & Maldonado, L. (2011). Entre la movilización y el malestar mediático. Impacto de las prácticas comunicativas en las actitudes políticas de los jóvenes. *Perspectivas de la Comunicación*, 4(2), 32–54.
- Norris, P. (2000). *A virtuous circle: Political communication in post-industrial democracies*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Putnam, R. D. (1995). Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy*, 6(1), 65–78. doi: 10.1353/jod.1995.0002
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Reichert, F., & Print, M. (2017). Mediated and moderated effects of political communication on civic participation. *Information, Communication and Society*, 20, 1162–1184. doi: 10.1080/1369118X.2016.1218524
- Rhee, J. W., & Cappella, J. N. (1997). The role of political sophistication in learning from news. Measuring schema development. *Communication Research*, 24, 197–233. doi: 10.1177/009365097024003001
- Rojas, H. (2006). Comunicación, participación y democracia. *Universitas Humanística*, 62, 109–142.
- Scherman, A., Arriagada A., & Valenzuela, S. (2015). Student and environmental protests in Chile: The role of social media. *Politics*, 35(2), 151–171. doi: 10.1111/1467-9256.12072
- Schuck, A. R. T., Boomgaarden, H. G., & de Vreese, C. H. (2013). Cynics all around? The impact of election news on political cynicism in comparative perspective. *Journal of Communication*, 63(2), 287–311. doi: 10.1111/jcom.12023
- Shah, D. V., Cho, J., Eveland, W. P., & Kwak, N. (2005). Information and expression in a digital age. Modeling internet effects on civic participation. *Communication Research*, 32, 531–565. doi:10.1177/0093650205279209
- Shah, D. V., Cho, J., Nah, S., Gotlieb, M. R., Hwang, H., Lee, N-J. & McLeod, D. (2007). Campaign ads, online messaging, and participation: Extending the communication mediation model. *Journal of Communication*, 57, 676–703. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2007.00363.x
- Singh, S. P., & Roy, J. (2014). Political knowledge, the decision calculus, and proximity voting. *Electoral Studies*, 34, 89–99. doi:10.1016/j.electstud.2013.11.007

- Sotirovic, M., & McLeod, J. M. (2004). Knowledge as understanding: The information processing approach to political learning. In L. L. Kaid (Ed.), *Handbook of Political Communication Research* (pp. 357–394). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Stevens, D. (2005). Separate and unequal effects: Information, political sophistication and negative advertising in American elections. *Political Research Quarterly*, 58, 413–425. doi:10.1177/106591290505800304
- Towner, T. (2012). Campaigns and elections in a web 2.0 world: Uses, effects, and implications for democracy. *Public Administration and Information Technology*, 1, 185–199. doi: 10.1007/978-1-4614-1448-3\_12
- Valenzuela, S. (2013). Unpacking the use of social media for protest behavior: The roles of information, opinion expression and activism. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 57(7), 920–942. doi: 10.1177/0002764213479375
- Valenzuela, S., Park, N., & Kee, K.F. (2009). Is there social capital in a social network site? Facebook use and college students' life satisfaction, trust and participation. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 14(4), 875–901. doi: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2009.01474.x
- Verba, S., Schlozman, K., & Brady, H. (1995). *Voice and equality: Civic volunteerism in American politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Woolley, J. K., Limperos, A. M., & Oliver, M. B. (2010). The 2008 presidential election, 2.0: A content analysis of user-generated political Facebook groups. *Mass Communication and Society*, 13, 631–652. doi:10.1080/15205436.2010.516864
- Zhang, W., Johnson, T. J., Seltzer, T., & Bichard, S. L. (2010). The revolution will be networked. The influence of social networking sites on political attitudes and behavior. *Social Science Computer Review*, 28(1), 75–92. doi: 10.1177/0894439309335162