

# Mexican Political Campaigns

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Capability Demonstration: Mexico State's June 4<sup>th</sup> Election



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*“Mexico’s rapidly evolving social & political landscapes require innovative ways to understand and influence campaign outcomes.”*

## Project Overview:

ENODO Global conducted a Mexican political campaigns analysis to demonstrate the effectiveness of its population-centric methodology and data analysis platform. ENODO analysts used the Mexico State June 4, 2017 gubernatorial election as a case study to analyze social and other online media prior to, during, and post-election. The case study identified, measured, and tracked changes in public perception and sentiment concerning key topics of interest. It also analyzed the influence of individual candidates, their messages, and their political parties on public perception. ENODO’s analysis of Mexico State’s election illustrates the effectiveness of our population-centric approach and the technical platform’s application and performance, which combined produced key findings and recommendations to inform future Mexican political campaigns.

## Key Findings:

- Candidates from the different political parties did not optimize Mexican social media to bolster positive narratives about their own policies or attack those of their opponents.
- No individual candidate or political party was able to significantly connect on an individual / personal level with the voter base on substantive policy or social issues.
- Online discussions focused primarily on the election itself and transparency in election results rather than topics discussed within the election.
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis of online narratives revealed a lack of public interest regarding topics that candidates or parties were discussing.
- Procedural concerns dominated social media discussions and ‘crowded out’ discussions that were more focused on specific policy concerns or even broader social risk factors.
- Topics concerning widespread election fraud and corruption were present prior to, during, and post-election and were not limited to one party or candidate.
- Mexican political candidates who develop communications strategies that connect with constituents on key issues will be well positioned to win future political campaigns.

## Technology Platform:

ENODO created a technology platform tailored for Mexico’s unique linguistic, cultural, and information environments. The platform was designed to collect online information in real-time, identify key topics of interest within Mexican society, and measure voter sentiment concerning important topics in the Mexico State gubernatorial election. ENODO’s analysts applied the latest technologies to optimize the platform’s performance and inform the discovery of key findings and recommendations.



## *“Social media enables candidates to disseminate targeted narratives and optimize their campaign strategies.”*

ENODO applied a Topic Model that used customized Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques optimized for the social and linguistics environments of Mexican Twitter use. Topic modeling is a computational tool that identifies the main themes (‘topics’) within a set of data. After testing multiple topic modeling techniques, ENODO determined that Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) produced the strongest results for this study. LDA was applied and standard NLP protocols were observed to process and ‘clean’ tweets for subsequent analysis. For example, common words, known as ‘stop words’ that contain little to no substantive information (e.g., ‘el’, ‘la’, ‘lo’, ‘los’ and ‘las’) were removed. Additionally, Tweets that contained less than 60 characters in length were also removed to reduce noise within the data.

Real-time data collection was linked to Twitter’s Streaming Application Programming Interface (API). Approximately 20 phrases, hashtags, and individuals were identified as the most relevant to the Mexico State election. Nearly 330,000 tweets were collected; roughly 179,000 were collected in the days leading up to, and the day of the election. The additional 151,000 tweets were collected randomly over the two weeks following the election to provide insight into the short-term aftermath of, and narratives surrounding, the election.

In addition to ENODO’s real-time automated collection and analysis capability, a manual post-election analysis was also conducted. Manual analysis examined narratives and sentiment that remained after initial election results had been concluded (i.e. measuring sentiment after election emotions subsided) between June 19 and 28, 2017. The analysis focused on hashtag correlation and a review of other online discussions regarding candidates, parties, and post-election narratives.

### Case Study Analysis:

ENODO utilized the combination of automated and manual processes to perform quantitative and qualitative analysis respectively. Automated processes were used to collect, synthesize, and analyze large volumes of information, across broad topics and general themes. This technique is very effective for national level campaigns. Manual analysis was used to drill down and analyze specific individuals and topics, which is very effective for local and state campaigns. By combining these approaches, analysts were able to develop unique insights into topics and themes and produce findings and recommendations that were validated from multiple sources and by different analytical techniques. In the sections below, findings from each analytical approach are introduced and discussed. The findings uncover opportunities to refine existing analysis, conduct future analysis, and to obtain greater insights to apply recommendations for future political campaigns.



# *“Designing effective campaign strategies requires in-depth understanding of public sentiment and perceptions.”*

## *Quantitative Analysis*

Quantitative analysis relied on LDA Topic Modeling, which revealed that social media discussions were primarily focused on the coverage of the election process and results, rather than substantive policy issues or specific topics that candidates discussed. The vast majority of online discussion, pertaining to the election process and results, were negative in sentiment. Moreover, topics regarding fraud and corruption connected to the election dominated online discussion and were also negatively perceived.

Three of the ten topics identified by the model (5 pre-election and 5 post-election) focused on these concerns. Pre-election topics included narratives that centered on the mechanics of voting and included discussions of possible fraud in the voting process. This suggested a correlation between discussions of election results and finance (terms including ‘dinero’ and ‘efectivo’). Another key post-election topic identified narratives that focused explicitly on corruption in voter registration.

## *Qualitative Analysis*

Qualitative analysis relied on a manual post-election strategy through hashtag correlation, review of online discussions, and narrative analysis. Each technique confirmed the results of ENODO’s quantitative analysis that topics continued to focus on reporting of election results, fraud, and corruption, while other topics were not discussed in great detail.

ENODO analysts used hashtag correlation to measure sentiment for specific candidates as well as topics. For example, hashtags related to Alfredo del Mazo Maza (primarily associated with the hashtag #DelMazo) were most revealing. Approximately 59.3% of tweets featuring the hashtag #delmazo expressed negative sentiments (with the remaining 40.7% primarily neutral). By comparison, posts that featured the hashtag #PRI were 91.7% neutral.

Sentiments expressed in tweets featuring #morena were primarily neutral, compared to those featuring #delmazo. Recent topics relating to the Morena party included #moreloselecciones2018 (Morelos Election 2018), #laesperanzasedefiende (the hope is over), and to a lesser extent #notengasmiedode (do not be afraid of), #enlaceestatal (state link), and #evacadena (referring to Eva Cadena, a congresswoman who accused Morena of irregular practices).

Analyzing post-election narratives on 28 June, the hashtag that has increased in trending most over the past month was #FraudeElectoral (+32.9% trend). This was also reflected in national and international online media, particularly accusing the PRI party of “vote-buying, telephone threats to discourage voting, and even bloody pigs’ heads placed outside opposition party offices.” ([Atlantic, 2017](#); also reported in [La Jordana, 2017](#) & [Guardian, 2017](#)) Yet the Morena party was also criticized for corruption, particularly in relation to accusations from Eva Cadena and Delfina’s



## *“Candidates who develop communications strategies that connect with constituents on key issues will win future campaigns.”*

connections with Higinio Martínez ([carlosloret.com](http://carlosloret.com), 2017). Overall narratives and themes by the end of June included a continued focus on corruption and fraud, which was often linked with discussions of dignity (featuring #EndomexDigno) and democracy. A narrative that emerged immediately post-election from Morena supporters who questioned the election results, featured the concepts of a ‘fight for justice’ and calling for ‘respect [of] people’s choice’.

### Conclusion:

In today’s digital world, reliance on traditional campaign techniques to design effective campaign strategies is insufficient. ENODO’s customized population-centric methodology and analytical platforms make sense of online data and identify topics that matter most in peoples’ daily lives. The rigor behind our data collection and analysis illustrates the cumulative power behind the insights candidates can develop from our capability in order to shape voter perceptions and behavior. It also highlights the need to proactively engage with key influencers, various demographic groups, and different networks via social media to manage online discussions and influence public opinion on the key topics that win elections.

The case study of the Mexico State gubernatorial election (1) highlights the value of ENODO’s population-centric approach, (2) demonstrates ENODO’s technical platform’s functionality and capability through a real-world campaign, (3) identifies the various nuances of social media analysis, and (4) introduces how ENODO’s capability provides candidates a competitive advantage. Application of the full spectrum of ENODO’s capability improves the success rate of political campaigns by:

- Creating the online foundations that embolden supporters to directly promote a candidate’s policies and denigrate opponents
- Identifying, understanding, and measuring key topics being discussed by individuals, candidates, political parties during each specific campaign
- Tracking public perception and sentiment changes of key topics in real-time as campaigns and narratives evolve
- Developing targeted narratives and customized communication plans to address key topics and mitigate negative sentiment
- Developing a knowledge-base of voter sentiment for deeper insights into different demographic groups’ perceptions and sentiment
- Designing effective campaign strategies that create enduring relationships with key demographic groups and strengthen party loyalty





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