

PROMOTING OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP: INSIGHTS FROM ARGENTINA'S BUENOS AIRES

MEMPROMOSIKAN KEMITRAAN PEMERINTAH TERBUKA: WAWASAN DARI BUENOS AIRES ARGENTINA

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Abstract (In English). This study aims to analyze the open government of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Buenos Aires plays a leading role as the only pilot local government program of the Open Government Partnership in the country. Qualitative approaches and bibliometric analysis methods are used in this study. The research data were obtained from the official website of the Buenos Aires government and sourced from the Google Scholar database. The findings of this study indicate that the open government of Buenos Aires is not popular. The dominant issues include transparency, accountability, public trust, COVID-19, participation, collaboration, e-government, governance, smart cities, and disputes. Current issues include healthcare centers, information, data, the environment, digital platforms, and civil technology. Buenos Aires is currently focusing on three of its open government commitments, including the participation of children and adolescents as subjects of rights in the design of public policies; urban woodland management in the City of Buenos Aires through the open government perspective; plain language: a tool to guarantee simple, fast and effective communication between the state and citizens. These commitments have the potential to create a more open government in Buenos Aires. The findings of this study serve as recommendations for decision-makers in Buenos Aires, as well as for all local governments in Argentina and all members of the Open Government Partnership in implementing open government.

Keywords: Buenos Aires, Open Government, Open Government Partnership

Abstract (In Bahasa). Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis open government Buenos Aires, Argentina. Buenos Aires memiliki peran utama karena satu-satunya program percontohan pemerintah lokal Open Government Partnership di negara tersebut. Pendekatan kualitatif dan metode analisis bibliometrik digunakan pada penelitian ini. Data penelitian diperoleh dari website resmi Pemerintah Buenos Aires dan bersumber dari database Google Scholar. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa open government Buenos Aires tidak populer. Isu-isu yang mendominasi meliputi transparansi, akuntabilitas, kepercayaan publik, COVID-19,



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partisipasi, kolaborasi, e-government, tata kelola, kota pintar, dan perselisihan. Isu-isu yang terkini meliputi pusat kesehatan, informasi, data, lingkungan, platform digital, dan teknologi sipil. Buenos Aires saat ini fokus pada tiga komitmen open government mereka, meliputi: partisipasi anak-anak dan remaja sebagai subjek hak dalam perancangan kebijakan publik; pengelolaan hutan kota di Kota Buenos Aires melalui perspektif pemerintahan terbuka; bahasa sederhana: alat untuk menjamin komunikasi yang sederhana, cepat dan efektif antara negara dan warga negara. Komitmen-komitmen tersebut berpotensi untuk menciptakan pemerintahan Buenos Aires lebih terbuka. Temuan penelitian ini menjadi rekomendasi bagi para pengambil keputusan di Buenos Aires, termasuk juga bagi seluruh pemerintah local di Argentina dan seluruh anggota Open Government Partnership dalam menerapkan open government

Keywords: Buenos Aires; Open Government; Open Government Partnership

1. INTRODUCTIONS

The term open government is not new, but various social contexts and advances in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the government sector have contributed to how open government is conceptualized (Shao & Saxena, 2019; Wirtz, Weyerer, & Rösch, 2019). The origins of open government can be traced back to the Greek Athenian codification of law. Still, the Visigothic Code of the Kingdom of Sweden is considered the beginning of modern open government initiatives (Moon, 2020; Wang & Shepherd, 2020). Traditional open government refers to the freedom of information available to citizens so that they can make government authorities transparent and accountable even though their contributions are often constrained by the political environment. This traditional approach was reconsidered and reshaped when web technologies offered new channels through which more information could be provided simultaneously to many unknown people beyond the constraints of space and time (Gascó-Hernández, 2014; Khurshid et al., 2022).

Open government is an intriguing agenda promoted by many governments since the 2000s. Open government is seen as very important, similar to New Public Management (NPM) in the 1980s (Safarov, 2019; Zhao, Liang, Yao, & Han, 2022). Currently, there has been a global tendency to create a sustainable open government through the use of artificial intelligence. Open government initiatives have been widely introduced not only in Western democracies but also in Asian and African countries (Afandi, Erdayani, & Afandi, 2024; Gil-Garcia, Gasco-Hernandez, & Pardo, 2020; Prastya, Misran, & Nurmandi, 2021).

Open government has become an important strategy for administrative reform that has prompted many countries around the world to design and implement initiatives related to e-government, access to information, transparency, public participation, and collaboration (De Blasio & Selva, 2019; Piotrowski, Berliner, & Ingrams, 2022; Schnell, 2020; Zafarullah & Siddiquee, 2023). Many governments have expanded the concept of open government; for example, the Obama administration announced the Open Government Directive in 2009 and, together with South Africa, Brazil, the Philippines, Indonesia, the United Kingdom, Mexico, and Norway, took a leading role in establishing the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in 2011. The OGP is a multinational effort to promote open government worldwide (Raca, Velinov, & Kon-Popovska, 2022;

Schmidthuber & Hilgers, 2021).

The Open Government Partnership is comprised of countries, local governments, and civil society organizations that support each other in designing and implementing projects that promote transparency in governance, public engagement, and accountability (Lnenicka & Saxena, 2021; Noushin, Farajollah, Mahdi, & Mahmoud, 2020). Transparency describes the public's ability to not only see but also understand how their government works. Public engagement refers to the public's ability to influence government by engaging in government processes and programs. Accountability reflects the public's ability to hold government to account for its policies and performance (Aboalmaali, Daneshfard, & Pourezzat, 2020; Bonina & Eaton, 2020).

The Open Government Partnership is based on the idea that open government is more accessible, more responsive, and more accountable to citizens, and that improving the relationship between citizens and government has long-term and exponential benefits for all (Heywood, 2014; Lathrop & Ruma, 2010; Ruijter & Meijer, 2020). The Partnership focuses on several policy areas, including anti-corruption and integrity, beneficial ownership, open contracting, civic space, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom of expression, digital governance, environment and climate, extractive industries, fiscal openness, inclusion, people with disabilities, youth, justice, land and spatial planning, open parliaments, public service delivery, education, health, water and sanitation, and the right to information (Gao, Janssen, & Zhang, 2021; Ingrams, 2020; Ruijter, Détienne, Baker, Groff, & Meijer, 2020).

Seventy-five countries and one hundred and sixty-three local governments are currently part of the Open Government Partnership. Being a local OGP member provides benefits to drive open reforms that have become part of the vision and mission of each local government to achieve levels of accountability, responsiveness, inclusiveness, and transparency (Ingrams, Piotrowski, & Berliner, 2020). Through membership in this global community, each local government can gain new information on the implementation of open government and can share views, experiences, and resources to achieve the principles of open government (Li, Yang, & Lu, 2024).

The Open Government Partnership has launched a local government pilot program because it recognizes that much open government innovation and reform is happening at the local level. Local governments can engage directly with citizens and deliver many important public services (Matheus & Janssen, 2020; Tai, 2021). Local governments involved in the program include Buenos Aires (Argentina), Madrid (Spain), Basque Country (Spain), La Libertad (Peru), Sekondi-Takoradi (Ghana), South Cotabato (Philippines), Seoul (South Korea), Paris (France), Tbilisi (Georgia), Austin (United States), Scotland (United Kingdom), Kaduna State (Nigeria), Sao Paulo (Brazil), Elgeyo Marakwet (Kenya), and Jalisco (Mexico) (Afandi, Afandi, & Erdayani, 2024).

Buenos Aires is the capital of Argentina and the only local government in Argentina designated as a local government model by the Open Government Partnership. In the country, there are seven local governments that have joined the OGP, namely: Buenos Aires, the City of Córdoba, the Province of Córdoba, Corrientes, Mar del Plata, Mendoza, and Rosario. This makes Buenos Aires play an important role in the open government campaign in Argentina, even in Latin

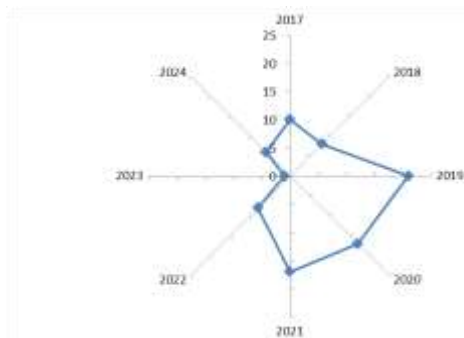
America. Since joining the OGP, Buenos Aires has made twenty-five open government commitments. Their first commitment was implemented in 2017, and they are currently focusing on three main commitments. This study aims to analyze the open government of Buenos Aires.

2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a bibliometric analysis method. Bibliometric analysis is a method for analyzing scientific literature in a particular field of knowledge or topic (Donthu, Kumar, Mukherjee, Pandey, & Lim, 2021; Moral-Muñoz, Herrera-Viedma, Santisteban-Espejo, & Cobo, 2020). This method is used to identify and highlight critical insights generated from scientific literature (Gaviria-Marin, Merigó, & Baier-Fuentes, 2019; Kulsum et al., 2022). The research data were obtained from Buenos Aires government policy documents and sourced from the Google Scholar database taken using the Publish or Perish (PoP) application with the keywords Buenos Aires e-government, Buenos Aires information access, Buenos Aires transparency, Buenos Aires participation, and Buenos Aires collaboration, which are based on the main principles of open government. The data used is within the time limit of 2017 to 2024 by Buenos Aires involvement in the Open Government Partnership. Data were stored in RIS format, selected using Mendeley (including completing details author keywords), and analyzed using VOSviewer (type of analysis: co-occurrence; unit analysis: keywords; counting method: full counting). The bibliometric map is then juxtaposed with Buenos Aires' open government policies.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

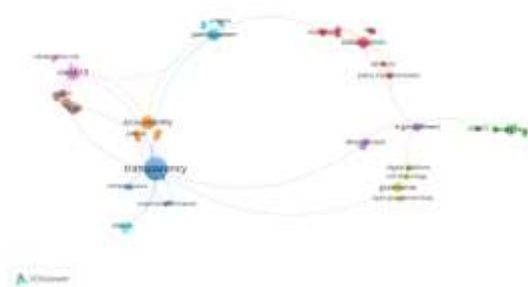
In the period 2017-2024, there were 88 articles on Buenos Aires open government published in scientific journals (see Graph 1). The most articles were published in 2019 (21 articles), while the least were in 2023 (1 article). Ten articles were published in 2017, eight articles were published in 2018 and 2022, seventeen articles were published in 2020 and 2021, and six articles were published in 2024. This shows that Buenos Aires open government is unpopular, which contradicts its status as a local government pilot program by the Open Government Partnership. This partnership aims to campaign for open government as an effective public administration reform strategy widely.



Source: Processed by the Author, 2025

Graph 1. Publication trends

There are fifty-one main issues of Buenos Aires open government. These issues are integrated and divided into several main focuses (see Figure 1). First, focus on advocacy, challenges, collaboration, data, environment, policy implementation, strategy, and sustainability. Second, focus on citizens, commitment, ICT industry, information and communication technology, smart city, and technological link. Third, focus on climate finance, cooperative workplaces, public policy, social services, transparency, and watercooler democracy. Fourth, focus on civil technology, digital platforms, governance, open government data, and the platform ecosystem. Fifth, focus on development, digital governance, digital transformation, e-government, and efficiency. Sixth, focus on activism, civil society, environmental rights, human rights, and participation. Seventh, focus on accountability, authority, judicial, legislative, and public power. Eighth, focus on access, healthcare centers, information, and public trust. Ninth, focus on the collaborative role, COVID-19, database, and pandemic. Tenth, focus on the dispute, future inflation, and inflation targeting. The dominant issues include transparency, accountability, public trust, COVID-19, participation, collaboration, e-government, governance, smart cities, and disputes. Meanwhile, the current issues include healthcare centers, information, data, the environment, digital platforms, and civil technology. These issues show the urgency and potential future contribution to the open government of Buenos Aires.



Source: Processed by the Author, 2025

Figure 1. Network visualization

Buenos Aires is currently focusing on its three open government commitments: *First*, the participation of children and adolescents as subjects of rights in the design of public policies. Although the government of the City of Buenos Aires has participatory instances for children and adolescents, there are difficulties in incorporating their perspective into public policies. The convening tools are not used enough because there is a legal impediment to addressing this population group directly, even though there is great potential for their participation.

Currently, the government of the City of Buenos Aires works specifically with children and adolescents through the implementation of the Friendly City Program. This means the recognition of this segment of the population as subjects with full rights and places the State as guarantor of their active participation in society. The program is managed by an intergovernmental commission made up of the Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents,

the Ministry of Education, the Secretariat of Urban Development, the General Direction of Decentralization and Citizen Participation, the Ministry of Human Development and Habitat, and the Ministry of Culture. Likewise, the General Directorate of Citizen Participation and Closeness works transversally with the government, promoting participatory instances like “BA Costa”, a project for children carried out with the General Directorate of Urban Anthropology.

The objective of the commitment is to strengthen the available information and incorporate the children’s perspective. To this end, a Childhood Index will be published as a tool for designing public policies across the government and for those interested in studying it. In turn, participatory instances will be implemented with children and adolescents to collect opinions, topics of interest, and their perspectives on government decisions. Finally, these initiatives will be disseminated to make visible and raise awareness about the relevance of participation in this segment.

Through the publication of the Childhood Index, the commitment will generate a useful tool for the planning of public policies and for the study of the population group. Likewise, by carrying out participatory instances, it will be possible to place children and adolescents as a group capable of expressing their demands without intermediaries. In this way, the commitment contributes to building a protagonist participation of children and adolescents and active citizenship. The expected impact of this commitment is to generate greater visibility of the issue and broaden perspectives on the inclusion of children and adolescents. In this sense, the commitment also seeks to strengthen collective intelligence by listening to the ideas of this segment still dispersed in the community.

Second, urban woodland management in the City of Buenos Aires through the open government perspective. The government of the City of Buenos Aires has different areas working on urban woodland policies. That’s why there are some challenges in systematizing the available information. This generates distances between the citizens and the government: neighbors don’t have a clear and direct communication channel to express their demands on the subject and to better understand the urban woodland policies. For example, the state of the trees on their sidewalks and information such as species suitable for sidewalks, species suitable for green spaces, and pruning season, among others, is unknown.

In 2009, Law 3263 was enacted, which aims to protect and increase trees in urban areas, complying with technical and administrative requirements. This regulation made it possible to lay the foundations so that in 2013 the Ministry of Environment and Public Space of the Government of the City of Buenos Aires presented the Master Plan for Trees with the aim of improving planning and transforming public trees into a true state policy. In turn, through the law, the Register of Historical and Notable Trees of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires was created, and the government was able to have a policy of dissemination, awareness, and promotion of environmental education.

Within the framework of the Master Plan for Trees of the City of Buenos Aires, the commitment will seek to incorporate the perspective of open government for the opening of information and participation of actors in the

subject. To this end, it proposes: a) holding regular meetings with government areas responsible for trees to coordinate courses of action; b) disseminating and displaying the Woodland Master Plan in stages; c) having a record of existing trees in the city; d) coordinating actions with specialists in the subject; e) incorporating the participation of neighbors.

The commitment consolidates a state policy and provides a framework for its coordination. At the same time, it will improve citizen participation through more information. On the other hand, it resolves the need to have a registry of existing trees unified by the government and provides a tool available to neighbors, which will allow them to have more and better information.

The commitment pursues the objective of continuing to deepen the vision of open government across government. At the same time, it has a long-term vision of transparent, participatory, and fair environmental management. In this sense, it is not just generating open data. The commitment is about thinking and planning the tree policy, promoting collaboration and interaction between actors from different sectors of the government. Also, this commitment is related to the project “BA Cambio Climático”, a platform that contains the actions carried out by the government in climate matters. Through this project, the government promotes the open government perspective in climate action.

Third, plain language: a tool to guarantee simple, fast, and effective communication between the state and citizens. Most of the state's work is carried out through the drafting of different texts (regulatory and administrative), in addition to information and content published on government web pages. This wording is characterized by containing complex grammatical structures, with long sentences and technical language that hinders communication between the State and the recipients of public policies. This way of communicating public affairs affects the right to understand and access public information. For this reason, it is important to achieve clarity in communication to increase trust, inclusion, and democratic legitimacy, and also guarantee the right of access to information in a simple, inclusive, and accessible manner. In turn, it is necessary to strengthen citizen participation and accessibility to procedures, rights, and regulations for neighbors.

Plain language has acquired an important place on the public agenda. In 2020, Law 6367 was enacted, which establishes the obligation to write in plain language all documents issued by organizations that belong to the public sector of the City of Buenos Aires. The Legal and Technical Secretariat (SECLYT) of the Executive Power and the Legislature worked on the drafting of Plain Language Manuals and Guides so that all the technical areas of the government have tools to apply this writing style. To promote the use of plain language, SECLYT designed a curriculum and provided training to government officials and agents through the Higher Career Institute. Likewise, the Articulation and Coordination Table on Access to Public Information and Transparency of the Three Branches of the State translated the Access to Public Information Law into plain language. However, it's difficult to implement plain language throughout public administration as a cross-cutting tool to change the way to communicate public affairs. Therefore, it's important to know the perspective of the organizations to improve the projects.

The commitment aims to strengthen the plain language policy in the City

of Buenos Aires. For this, it will seek to a) generate participatory instances with civil society and listen to the demands of citizens; b) train different areas of government on the subject and include it in their agendas; c) disseminate the issue to the public; d) have online access to procedures, regulations or documents in plain language; e) carry out self-assessments in government areas to have proposals for improvement.

Through the consolidation of spaces for exchange with civil society, the commitment proposes identifying regulations and the most consulted documents and procedures that generate difficulty for citizens to write them in plain language. In turn, an interdisciplinary group will be sought to work on the subject, and the work carried out will be disseminated through the launch of the Plain Language section on the government and Legislature web pages. Finally, training will be carried out internally, which will strengthen capacities. Plain language is the foundation for a more inclusive open government. It is part of a global agenda of transparency, accountability, and access to public information as ways to guarantee citizens' access to public information, the exercise of their rights, and the fulfillment of their obligations.

4. CONCLUSION

Buenos Aires' open government is not popular despite being a pilot program of the local government Open Government Partnership. Transparency, accountability, public trust, COVID-19, participation, collaboration, e-government, governance, smart cities, and disputes are the dominant issues. Current issues include healthcare centers, information, data, the environment, digital platforms, and civil technology. These issues show the urgency and potential future contributions of Buenos Aires' open government.

Currently, Buenos Aires is focused on its three commitments. First, the participation of children and adolescents as subjects of rights in the design of public policies. This commitment creates greater visibility and broadens perspectives on including children and young people. It has the potential to strengthen collective intelligence by listening to ideas from this segment that are still scattered in society. Second, urban woodland management in Buenos Aires through the open government perspective. This commitment deepens the vision of open government across government. At the same time, it has a long-term vision of transparent, participatory, and equitable environmental management. In this case, it is not just about producing open data. This commitment is about tree policy thinking and planning, promoting collaboration and interaction between actors from different government sectors. Third, plain language: a tool to guarantee simple, fast, and effective communication between the state and citizens. This commitment identifies the most frequently consulted regulations, documents, and procedures that cause difficulties for citizens to write them in easy-to-understand language. A potential interdisciplinary group will work on the subject, and the results of the work carried out will be disseminated through the launch of the Easy Language section on the government and legislative web pages. These commitments have the potential to create a more open government in Buenos Aires.

The findings of this study serve as recommendations for researchers to

use as a basis for the study of Buenos Aires' open government. This will provide a real contribution to the Buenos Aires government in achieving its open government commitment. The implementation of open government by Buenos Aires contributes to all local governments in Argentina, including hundreds of local governments that are members of the Open Government Partnership. The practice of Buenos Aires' open government is very relevant and should be implemented by local governments that have characteristics that are not much different from their own.

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