

Uses and Risks of Artificial Intelligence in electoral campaigns 2023: Delphi survey of strategic experts in Colombia

Usos y Riesgos de la Inteligencia Artificial en las campañas electorales 2023: Encuesta Delphi a expertos estratégicos de Colombia

Usos e riscos da Inteligência Artificial nas campanhas eleitorais de 2023: inquérito Delphi a especialistas em estratégia na Colômbia

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Abstract

Computational propaganda and bots have become tools within social networks for shaping opinions. However, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) has added complexity to this landscape, allowing for natural language processing and the creation of automated strategies for political communication. While AI offers potential benefits, it also raises ethical concerns and the risk of spreading misinformation. Consequently, countries like Colombia are exploring the application of AI in political campaigns while simultaneously working on regulating its use within their democratic framework. In view of the 2023 upcoming elections, the debate surrounding the ethics and impact of AI in political communication gains significant relevance. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the potential applications of artificial intelligence (AI) in Colombian political communication, its influence on polarization, and its role in disseminating disinformation. By employing the Delphi method with a panel of electoral strategy experts, the findings revealed a consensus among experts regarding AI's utility in creating content for social networks and segmenting political messages. However, there was disagreement regarding its suitability for generating government plans and its influence on the perception of the candidates' image. Additionally, experts concurred that algorithmic communication exacerbates polarization on social networks but held differing opinions on whether it enhances or diminishes electoral participation.

Keywords:

Artificial intelligence; political communication; ChatGPT; electoral processes; polarization; disinformation

Resumen

La propaganda computacional y los *bots* han surgido como herramientas en redes sociales para moldear opiniones. Sin embargo, la inteligencia artificial (IA) llega como actor para permitir el procesamiento del lenguaje natural y el desarrollo de estrategias de comunicación política automatizadas. Aunque promete beneficios, también plantea desafíos éticos y riesgos de desinformación. Países como Colombia exploran el uso de IA en campañas políticas, al tiempo que buscan regular su aplicación en su contexto democrático. Con la llegada de las elecciones 2023, el debate sobre la ética y el impacto de la IA en la comunicación política adquiere relevancia. Por ello, el objetivo de este estudio fue identificar los posibles usos de la IA en la comunicación política colombiana, su influencia en la polarización y su impacto en la desinformación. Se utilizó el método Delphi en un grupo de expertos en estrategia electoral. Los resultados arrojaron que concuerdan en que la IA es útil para crear contenido en redes sociales y segmentar mensajes políticos. No obstante, discrepan en considerar su uso para planes de gobierno y de su influencia en la percepción de la imagen de los candidatos. Además, coinciden en que la comunicación algorítmica aumenta la polarización en redes sociales, sin embargo, difieren en si fomenta o reduce la participación electoral.

Palabras clave:

Inteligencia artificial; comunicación política; ChatGPT; procesos electorales; polarización; desinformación

Resumo

A propaganda computacional e os bots surgiram como ferramentas nas redes sociais para moldar opiniões. No entanto, a chegada da inteligência artificial (IA)

complexificou ainda mais o cenário, permitindo o processamento de linguagem natural e o desenvolvimento de estratégias de comunicação política automatizadas. Embora prometa benefícios, também coloca desafios éticos e riscos de desinformação. Assim, países como a Colômbia exploram o uso da IA em campanhas políticas, ao mesmo tempo em que buscam regulamentar sua aplicação em seu contexto democrático. Com as eleições de 2023 no horizonte, o debate sobre a ética e o impacto da IA na comunicação política ganha relevância. Portanto, o objetivo deste estudo foi explorar os possíveis usos da inteligência artificial (IA) na comunicação política colombiana, sua influência na polarização e seu impacto na desinformação. Assim, utilizando o método Delphi em um grupo de especialistas em estratégia eleitoral, os resultados mostraram que os especialistas concordam que a IA é útil para criar conteúdo em redes sociais e segmentar mensagens políticas. No entanto, discordam quanto ao seu uso para criar discursos ou planos de governo. Além disso, concordam que a comunicação algorítmica aumenta a polarização nas redes sociais, mas diferem quanto a se ela fomenta ou reduz a participação eleitoral.

Palavras-chave

Inteligência artificial; comunicação política; ChatGPT; processos eleitorais; polarização; desinformação

1. Introduction

Social and political polarization has become a tool for electoral strategists and a phenomenon of interest for researchers (Mora Ledesma, 2011). However, there are conflicting opinions about the effect of polarization on political participation. On one hand, some authors argue that it generates apathy and withdrawal (Fiorina & Abrams, 2008), while others assert that it stimulates the electorate and, by making positions explicit, inclines them toward participation (Lupu, 2015).

This is consistent with the observation that in recent decades, winning candidates and American voters have been moving in opposite directions, creating an interesting paradox of polarization (Galston, 2023). However, with the trend toward sensationalism, exacerbation, and dramatization, political polarization has led to the development of extreme political attitudes and positions (Lobo, 2017), as well

as the creation of perverse incentives among power groups to favor conflict over cooperation with their opponents (Iyengar & Westwood, 2015). Nonetheless, some authors point out that research is still insufficient and limited regarding the relationship between polarization and democratic processes (Marino & Iannelli, 2023).

Consequently, with new possibilities, interest groups from various political currents have been inclined to develop different types of strategies on social networks, gaining relative influence in elections (Magnani, 2017). For example, during the 2016 United States presidential election, exposure to X reduced the percentage of Republican votes, with limited effects on participation and votes for the House of Representatives and the Senate (Fujiwara et al., 2020). On the other hand, in Taiwan, social networks had a positive impact on voter participation and attitude (Lee, 2020).

Additionally, computational propaganda emerges as another actor using automated algorithms to disseminate information shaped to serve interests or political agendas (Howard et al., 2023). Therefore, this research aims to identify the uses that political strategists make of these tools and their influence on polarization in Colombia.

1.1. Polarization and political communication

Social networks promote connectivity within groups; however, they also generate tendencies to ignore or attack information that contradicts partisan or ideological identity (Interian et al., 2023), consolidating identities and limiting boundaries between political groups (Iyengar & Westwood, 2015), sometimes even more accentuated than in the real world (Barredo-Ibáñez et al., 2021). This phenomenon, known as polarization, not only affects the dissemination and reach of political messages but is also driven by the ability of certain polarizing topics to influence opinions and connections in public discussions more than less divisive ones (Schuliaquer & Vommaro, 2020). This effect is intensified by messages that evoke feelings of anger and disgust, contributing to greater success in persuasion (Brady et al., 2019).

Exposure to partisan media increases ideological and emotional polarization through strategies like misinformation and hate speech (Vasist et al., 2023). Although partisan media is especially polarizing, the effect of exposure to non-partisan media is still unknown (Kubin & von Sikorski, 2021). In this sense, social networks promote hyper-emotionality in politics, hindering the creation of

consensus between divergent parties (García, 2019). For example, Facebook and X function as virtual echo chambers, where individuals with similar opinions reinforce shared narratives that restrict political debate (Boxell et al., 2017; Cinelli et al., 2021). It has been suggested that multifactorial analysis models could be useful for recommending news and thus reducing polarization within these echo chambers (Treuillier et al., 2023).

1.2. Computational propaganda and political communication

The information age and cyberspace have created a new medium of communication that escaped media and government control (Castells, 2012; Roetzel, 2019). In this context, computational propaganda emerged as a strategic tool to create artificial currents of opinion (Bradshaw & Howard, 2017), later defined in academia as algorithmic communication (Campos-Domínguez & García-Orosa, 2018) and technopolitics (López-López & Oñate, 2019). The impacts associated with digital media strategies can vary depending on the political system. In emerging democracies, political participation and information consumption can be beneficial, while in established democracies, the decrease in political trust, increase in populism, and polarization can be detrimental (Lorenz-Spreen et al., 2023).

Computational propaganda is primarily conducted in electoral processes due to its high costs (Barredo-Ibáñez et al., 2021). Thanks to technological advances such as machine learning and sentiment analysis (Persily & Tucker, 2020), it has allowed for the creation of personalized content (Campos-Domínguez & García-Orosa, 2018). This has led to the automated generation of information by parties and candidates (Gutiérrez-Rubí, 2018), benefiting state propagandists and authoritarian tendencies (Trauthig et al., 2023).

1.3. Use of bots in political communication

Algorithmic communication, as a resource for electoral marketing strategies, can present significant risks to today's democratic society (López-López et al., 2023). First, algorithms can generate slander, leaving the media and citizens defenseless

(Lewis et al., 2019), and second, their use has led to racist deviations through the dissemination of hate speech (Turner Lee, 2018).

At this point, the fabrication of consensus arises through the automated dissemination of propaganda via social bots (Persily & Tucker, 2020). These bots generate uncertainty and distortions by inflating reach metrics, promoting dominant narratives that foster negative emotions and challenges in network governance (Barredo-Ibáñez et al., 2021; Cai et al., 2022).

Cyber troops associated with government entities, political parties, or subcontracted services seek to influence public opinion in their favor (Bradshaw & Howard, 2017). For example, Politibot in Spain stands out for its informative quality (Sánchez & Sánchez, 2017; Sánchez & Sánchez, 2020), while in the United States, the influence of bots on users' political opinions has been observed (Bail et al., 2018).

In Ecuador, evidence of automated and human manipulation strategies on X was found during the 2017 presidential elections (Puyosa, 2017). During the 2020 presidential campaign, an increase in the conversion of commercial bots to electoral bots was observed, suggesting a greater use of this technology in political campaigns (Ackerman et al., 2020). In Mexico, "cyborgs" have been detected, which are bots capable of simulating human behavior (Clark et al., 2016).

During political events such as elections, the use of computational propaganda increases (Bradshaw et al., 2020). In Colombia, during the 2014 presidential elections, approximately 22% of users were bots (Cerón-Guzmán and León-Guzmán, 2015). In the 2018 presidential elections, cyber troops employing computational propaganda techniques were detected to influence public debate in favor of and against candidates (Bradshaw et al., 2021), although direct responsibility could not be attributed.

In Colombia, computational propaganda was detected in WhatsApp groups affiliated with Iván Duque, where distorted content was shared to improve his image and discredit other candidates (Chenou et al., 2020; Serrano, 2018; Worley, 2018).

1.4. Artificial intelligence, political communication, and misinformation

AI enables software to perform advanced tasks such as reasoning, learning, creating, and planning, comparable to humans (Google, n.d.; European Parliament,

2020). In politics, it is used in virtual assistants for speeches and campaigns (Dader & Campos Domínguez, 2017), allowing the automatic creation and dissemination of personalized messages by combining big data and advanced software (Kreiss & Jasinski, 2016).

AI is used to influence political and social opinion (Campos-Domínguez & García-Orosa, 2018; Mattelart & Vitalis, 2015). In Latin America, AI was used in electoral campaigns, such as in Quito, Ecuador, in 2019, where it helped Jaime Yunda win (Calderón, 2019). In fact, its role is evolving in governmental spheres: in Denmark, as the leader of a political party with Leader Lars (Jaimovich, 2023); and in Romania, as a social policy advisor to the government with Ion (Sánchez, 2023). Additionally, it is increasingly used to manipulate and generate political audiovisual content, such as the dissemination of a fake image of Donald Trump being arrested (Devlin & Cheetham, 2023) and a video from the Republican Party describing what the country would be like if Joe Biden were reelected as President of the United States (Seisedos, 2023).

Moreover, AI has facilitated the creation of hyper-realistic audiovisual representations, known as deepfakes, which simulate the appearance and speech of real people (García-Ull, 2021). The first attempt to create a deepfake resulted from an application developed in 2017 by a Reddit user self-named "Deepfakes" (Cole, 2017) who used an autoencoder technique (Deshmukh & Wankhade, 2021). These techniques, combining deep learning and falsification, raise serious privacy concerns as they increase the risk of identity theft. Their use to manipulate faces poses a threat to politics (Pérez Dasilva et al., 2021), especially following the emergence of deepfakes of prominent figures like Barack Obama or Donald Trump (Devlin & Cheetham, 2023).

This scenario presents challenges in detecting fake news, as the growing sophistication of deepfakes makes it difficult to distinguish between real and fictitious content (Chawla, 2019).

1.5. Natural language model in political communication: ChatGPT

In this context, companies like Microsoft, Google, Meta, and OpenAI are competing to develop user-friendly platforms for natural language processing (Medina, 2023). Among them, ChatGPT from OpenAI has become popular, with over half of

Americans having heard of it and 14% having used it (Vogels, 2023). ChatGPT is a model that generates coherent responses thanks to its ability to process large amounts of data (OpenAI, 2023).

Guadián (2023) suggests that the ChatGPT model has applications in areas such as marketing and politics, like drafting electoral speeches and government proposals. In India, its use is being explored in the legal sector through an AI committee in the Supreme Court (Gandhi & Talwar, 2023). On the other hand, lawmakers in Costa Rica used it to draft an AI regulation law (Sequeira, 2023). The debate about its regulation is gaining momentum in the United States and Europe (Bohórquez, 2023; Gonzalo, 2023).

1.6. Ethical challenges regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence

These advancements raise ethical debates and concerns about their potential manipulation (Laux, 2021). Although powerful, AI can also be more harmful than previous technologies in spreading fake news, as Corrales (2023) warns. There is concern about the impact of a deepfake's influence on a community and the public image of a leader.

In light of the new AI tools released to the general public, there have been calls to attention to the risks that widespread use may pose for electoral processes and how protection strategies need to be developed (Panditharatne & Giansiracusa, 2023). The ethical implications raise various concerns, ranging from privacy preservation, fairness, the need for accountability, to transparency in algorithmic discrimination processes (Big Data Marketer, 2023).

As philosopher John K. Roth warns, mere ethical discussion is not enough; we must act considering the context of an imperfect and unequal world (Hagerty & Rubinov, 2019). Therefore, according to the authors, AI systems will generate diverse and potentially global social impacts, with more marked consequences for vulnerable groups, necessitating the development of AI ethics that recognize these risks across different cultures.

In Colombia, although social networks do not seem to influence voting (Barredo Ibáñez et al., 2015), the regional elections of October 2023 could be the first instance of the massive use of these tools (Hoyos, 2023), affecting candidates' perception and generating credibility in fake news.

Given the above, this study aims to understand how experts perceive the challenges and resources related to the increasing use of computational propaganda, algorithmic communication, and artificial intelligence in electoral campaign strategies. The goal is to answer the following questions:

RG1: What are the possible uses of AI in political communication in Colombia?

RG2: To what extent does algorithmic communication influence the observed political polarization in Colombia?

2. Methodology

2.1. Research design

The study adopts a non-experimental cross-sectional approach with a descriptive scope, without exploratory objectives. It was conducted using the Delphi method, a technique used to establish guidelines and predict trends (López-Gómez, 2018). This method is characterized by its controlled feedback and statistical group consensus (Dalkey, 1972), allowing for the collection of group opinions on a topic through sequential questionnaires directed at experts (Simancas-González, 2016).

2.2. Sample description

The sampling profile was non-probabilistic by judgment (Galloway, 2005), which involved selecting sample members based on the knowledge and judgment of the researchers after consulting the database of the local mayor's office communication office. The selection of experts does not follow a common standard in terms of specific elements and the number of participants (López-Gómez, 2018; Steurer, 2011), as the number can vary depending on the research problem and available resources.

Four objective criteria were established to select digital political strategists in Colombia:

1. Degree in Social Communication or related fields.
2. At least 5 years of experience in managing social networks.

3. Experience in communication teams in electoral campaigns and/or during government tenure.
4. Being professionally active in political advisory roles.

Fifteen experts were identified (Table 1), of which 10 agreed to participate in the study, meeting the requirements described by López-Gómez (2018).

Given the specific characteristics of the Colombian context, it was deemed pertinent to include only professionals from this country. The group of experts maintains heterogeneity: men (N = 4) and women (N = 6), who have worked on political campaigns at the local level, in the Caribbean region (N = 5) and the Andean region (N = 5), as well as in national campaigns (N = 5). They have an average age of 34 years and 7 years of professional experience.

Table 1. *Panel of Experts Who Participated in the Survey*

No.	Participant	Occupation	Type of campaign	Years of experience
1	Viany Pérez	Media Editor	Regional	26
2	Eliana Álvarez	Digital Project Director	Regional	7
3	Onix Correa	Audiovisual Team Coordinator	National	8
4	Katyna Pugliese	Political Communication Advisor	Regional	7
5	Cristina Amortegui	Head of Communications	National	5
6	María Claudia Camargo	Operational Director of Digital Agency	Regional	8
7	Menfy Méndez	Political Communication Advisor	Regional	7
8	Sebastián Rodríguez	Political Communication Advisor	National	5
9	Jairo Soto	Political Communication Advisor	National	5
10	Anthony Rada	Political Communication Advisor	Regional	6

2.3. Data Collection Protocol

A questionnaire containing both closed and open-ended questions was administered. In the first round of the Delphi panel, 36 questions with a five-option scale were used, along with 6 open-ended questions to obtain more precise results (Table 2). The questionnaire was validated with the collaboration of two experts with PhDs in

Table 2. *Questionnaire Administered to the Panel of Experts in the First Round*

BLOCK I: Implementation of Artificial Intelligence in Colombian Presidential Electoral Processes	
1	Open-ended Question: Broadly speaking, how do you think AI is used in Colombian presidential campaigns?
2	Likert Scale: Do you consider that natural language models, such as ChatGPT (for example), can be useful tools for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing political communication strategies. - Creating campaign speeches. - Drafting government plans. - Producing audiovisual products. - Creating content for a candidate's social media. Options: Strongly agree – Agree - Not sure - Disagree - Strongly disagree.
3	Likert Scale: Do you think AI-generated content has the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change the image of a candidate: - Increase the candidate's favorable image. - Discredit the opposing candidate. - Spread hate speech. - Influence voting decisions. Options: Strongly agree - Agree - Not sure - Disagree - Strongly disagree.
4	Likert Scale: Do you think AI can be used during electoral campaigns to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Detect and combat misinformation. - Segment specific political messages. - Automate analysis and decision-making tasks. - Evaluate the impact of strategies and speeches in real-time. - Manipulate public opinion against a candidate. - Spread fake news. - Manipulate trends on X. Options: Strongly agree - Agree - Not sure - Disagree - Strongly disagree.
5	Open-ended Question: If you were the digital leader of a candidate, how would you use AI in your 2023 electoral strategy?
BLOCK II: Possible Effects of AI Use in Political Communication in Colombia	
6	Open-ended Question: What do you consider are the main benefits of using AI in political communication in the Colombian context?
7	Open-ended Question: What concerns or risks do you identify regarding the use of AI in political communication in Colombia?
8	Open-ended Question: In your opinion, what ethical limits should be established regarding the use of AI in electoral campaigns?

(continued)

Table 2. *Questionnaire Administered to the Panel of Experts in the First Round (continued)*

BLOCK III: Influence of Algorithmic Political Communication on Political Polarization in Colombia	
9	<p>Likert Scale: Do you consider that algorithmic political communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contributes to offline political polarization in the country. - Increases polarization on social networks. - Amplifies political divisions. - Encourages voter participation. - Generates voter disinterest. - Drives conflict between political opponents. - Promotes the broader dissemination of positive messages. <p>Options: Strongly agree - Agree - Not sure - Disagree - Strongly disagree.</p>
10	<p>Open-ended Question: In your opinion, to what extent does algorithmic political communication influence the political polarization observed in Colombia?</p>

Communication and experience in political communication: Jennie Peña from the Universidad del Norte and Tania Cobos from the Universidad Tecnológica de Bolívar. Subsequently, a questionnaire was designed in Google Forms and distributed via email in July 2023.

In the second stage, a personalized questionnaire was designed for each expert, eliminating questions without 50% consensus in the first round and resending only those where responses differed from the majority. The results of the first questionnaire were provided to allow them to reconsider their responses, and an open-ended question was included at the end for any additional comments on their change or maintenance of decision.

In the quantitative analysis, considering definitive responses from the first and second rounds, those with 70% intragroup consensus or higher were selected, as this percentage is considered high according to the study by Romero-Collado (2021). The data were processed with SPSS, and variables were described using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage for greater precision (Steurer, 2011). Subsequently, for further analysis, Likert scale responses were grouped into three categories: "strongly agree" and "agree," "not sure," and "disagree" and "strongly disagree." Qualitative responses to open-ended questions were used to support quantitatively identified patterns.

3. Results

3.1. Uses of AI in Political Communication in Colombia

AI is used in political communication; however, the experts only reached a consensus on two items in this section. The respondents agree that natural language models are useful for creating content on candidates' social media and segmenting political messages (Table 3).

The experts indicated that AI helps to segment demographic data and characterize citizens, facilitating the generation of political speeches tailored to national interests. Additionally, they mentioned its use in Colombia since at least 2022 to create creative content on social media and develop effective personalized messages. They also agreed on its use in creating bots to spread negative messages, aligning with Lewis et al. (2019).

Table 3. *Consensus on the Uses of Artificial Intelligence in Political Communication in Colombia*

No.	Consensus	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
1	Natural language models can be useful tools for creating content for a candidate's social media.	8	80%	Strongly agree
2	AI can be used during electoral campaigns to segment specific political messages.	7	70%	Agree

3.2. Influence of Algorithmic Political Communication on Political Polarization in Colombia

The obtained consensus highlights the influence of algorithmic political communication on polarization in Colombia. The experts agreed that the use of algorithmically generated strategies reinforces negative aspects such as the increase of polarization on social networks, the amplification of political divisions, the contribution to offline political polarization, and the promotion of conflict between opponents.

From a positive perspective, the respondents agreed that these strategies can also promote the wider dissemination of positive messages (Table 4).

Table 4. *Consensus on the Influence of Algorithmic Political Communication on Political Polarization*

No.	Consensus	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
1	Increases polarization on social networks.	8	80%	Strongly agree
2	Amplifies political divisions.	8	80%	Strongly agree
3	Promotes the wider dissemination of positive messages.	8	80%	Strongly agree
4	Contributes to offline political polarization in the country.	7	70%	Agree
5	Drives conflict between political opponents.	7	70%	Agree

Four out of five scenarios of AI influence have negative connotations. Additionally, they assert that algorithmic political communication contributes to misinformation and the spread of fake news, polarizing citizens and favoring candidates or political parties instead of promoting democratic participation. It is also mentioned that AI could be used to detect and counteract the negative actions of opposing candidates.

3.3. Application of AI in Electoral Processes: Misinformation

Although the use of algorithmic political communication in electoral processes is associated with negative influence scenarios (Bender, 2022; Gagrčin et al., 2023), we found a total consensus of 100% among experts who believe it fosters voter participation. However, in contrast, 70% state that AI-generated content causes voter disinterest (see Table 5).

The experts pointed out that tools like chatbots and personalized messages can influence citizens when they go to vote. However, the rise of fake news by these same bots can generate disinterest, increase divisions among citizens, and promote hate speech that fuels the country's tensions.

Additionally, the experts see AI as useful in electoral processes: it detects misinformation, generates audiovisual content, and automates analysis. It also manipulates

Table 5. *Consensus on the Influence of Algorithmic Political Communication on Voter Participation*

No.	Consensus	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
1	Fosters voter participation.	10	100%	Strongly agree
2	Causes voter disinterest.	7	70%	Agree

trends on X and opinions toward candidates (Table 6), as indicated by Lorenz-Spreen et al. (2023), with variable impacts depending on the political current.

Table 6. *Consensus on the Application of AI in Electoral Processes and Misinformation*

No.	Consensus	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
1	Detect and combat misinformation.	9	90%	Strongly agree
2	Spread fake news.	9	90%	Strongly agree
3	Manipulate trends on X.	9	90%	Strongly agree
4	Generate audiovisual content.	8	80%	Agree
5	Automate analysis and decision-making tasks.	7	70%	Agree
6	Manipulate public opinion against a candidate.	7	70%	Agree

The experts express concern about the potential of AI to spread misinformation and hate rather than strengthen democracy in Colombia. Although its utility in creating dynamic messages is recognized, the lack of ethical and legal regulation, including the use of software like ChatGPT, raises concerns.

On the other hand, there was no consensus on whether AI-generated content can structure a government plan or influence voters' perceptions of a candidate's image or the spread of hate speech (Table 7). These premises can be complemented with studies related to the influence and perception of candidates.

Table 7. *Points Without Consensus*

No.	Consensus	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
1	Natural language models, like ChatGPT, can be useful tools for drafting government plans.	4	40%	Disagree
2	AI-generated content has the ability to change the image of a candidate.	4	40%	Disagree

(continued)

Table 7. *Points Without Consensus (continued)*

No.	Consensus	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
3	AI-generated content has the ability to increase the candidate's favorable image.	4	40%	Disagree
4	AI-generated content has the ability to discredit the opposing candidate.	5	50%	Not sure
5	AI-generated content has the ability to spread hate speech.	5	50%	Not sure
6	AI-generated content has the ability to influence voting decisions.	5	50%	Not sure
7	AI can be used during electoral campaigns to evaluate the impact of strategies and speeches in real-time.	5	50%	Not sure

4. Discussions and Conclusions

The results reveal differing opinions on the role of AI in Colombian political communication. While its potential to enhance citizen participation is highlighted, concerns are also raised about its ability to restrict participation through the spread of hate speech or misinformation. There are worries that algorithmic strategies might increase polarization and conflict among opponents.

Contrary to Guadián's (2023) assertions, there was no consensus among the experts regarding whether natural language models like ChatGPT could be useful tools for creating campaign speeches and drafting government plans. Nevertheless, this phenomenon is already occurring in the country's political practice. These tools are improving their usage and results daily. For example, ChatGPT, through the use of prompts to obtain information, can be trained as a political consultant and perfect documents required for electoral campaign strategies.

Regarding the impact on democratic processes in Colombia, opinions diverge. While some studies suggest that polarization can reduce electoral participation (Fiorina & Abrams, 2008), others argue that it can promote it. However, Marino & Iannelli (2023) point out the uncertainty about the overall effects of polarization influenced by AI tools.

Given the above, it is relevant to consider the assertion that the use of AI tools in elections in Colombia may increase the spread of fake news, the manipulation of public opinion trends, and the discrediting of opposing candidates. This could encourage political groups to favor conflict over cooperation to achieve greater electoral influence, although the magnitude of its impact remains uncertain.

This information confirms that AI is a reality that directly influences the formation of opinions and citizens' decisions, as well as the quality of debate and democratic health. It is essential to consider how different political, cultural, and regulatory contexts affect the implementation and impacts of AI and to address the political consequences, especially misinformation and polarization. Additionally, the credibility that the use of AI can generate not only for a candidate but also for the political strategist, in terms of whether it is used as a complement to their work or performs the majority of their work for them, must be taken into account.

Finally, it is suggested to establish ethical boundaries and protective measures when using these tools in electoral campaigns in Colombia.

This study examines the impact of AI on politics and elections in Colombia, highlighting advantages and ethical concerns such as polarization and misinformation. It recommends investigating the relationship between AI and voting decisions, conducting quantitative studies on its influence on political polarization, and helping to establish ethical regulations for future elections. Additionally, comparing Colombia's situation with other countries regarding the use of AI in political communication and exploring how different contexts affect its implementation and effects would be useful.

The study has limitations in its sample and focus on expert opinions. Quantitative studies with representative samples of the population are recommended for more conclusive results. Future research could conduct controlled experiments and surveys during elections to inform ethical regulations in the use of AI.

Author's Contribution

Marcela López Ponce: Investigation, formal analysis, methodology, data curation, validation, Writing-original draft. **Daniel Barredo Ibáñez:** Conceptualization,

supervision, methodology and software, writing - review and editing. **Hada Sánchez Gonzáles:** Conceptualization, supervision, writing - review and editing. All authors have read and agree to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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