

AI in the context of political communication: Opportunities and challenges


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Abstract---In the contemporary political environment, strategic political communication has become a decisive factor in shaping public perception, influencing voter behavior, and determining the success of political campaigns. The rapid advancement of digital technologies and the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) have fundamentally transformed the logic, structure, and mechanisms of political communication. What was once a process centered on persuasive messaging and traditional media channels has now evolved into a data-driven, algorithmically managed, and highly personalized communication system. Artificial intelligence allows political actors to analyze massive datasets, identify behavioral patterns, and predict audience responses with unprecedented accuracy. Tools such as sentiment analysis, machine learning algorithms, and microtargeting techniques enable political organizations to tailor their messages to specific demographic or psychographic groups, maximizing the persuasive impact of their campaigns. Through automated content generation, chatbots, and social media algorithms, AI also facilitates continuous interaction with the electorate, reshaping the relationship between citizens and political institutions. However, the integration of AI into political communication also introduces significant challenges. Concerns over privacy violations, data manipulation, disinformation, and algorithmic bias threaten democratic transparency and trust in political institutions. The line between strategic persuasion and manipulation becomes increasingly blurred, raising important ethical and regulatory questions about the responsible use of AI in the political domain. Therefore, AI-driven strategic political communication represents both an opportunity and a risk: it enhances the effectiveness and precision of political messaging while simultaneously demanding new frameworks for accountability, media ethics, and information security. Understanding this duality is essential for evaluating the role of technology in shaping the future of democratic governance.

Keywords---artificial intelligence; strategic political communication; data analysis; microtargeting; information security.

Introduction

The modern political environment is becoming increasingly complex, as a result of which strategic political communication plays an important role in both domestic and global processes. The rapid development of digital technologies and artificial intelligence has radically changed the forms and strategies of communication, especially when it comes to planning and distributing targeted political messages. In the past, strategic political communication was based mainly on effective audience interaction and the creation of relevant messages to achieve specific goals, while today it has new, more multidimensional functions, which include data-driven solutions, audience behavior analysis, microtargeting and automated communication systems.

Strategic Political Communication is a deliberate, deliberate and systematic process through which political actors: parties, leaders and public institutions, use various

communication mechanisms to shape public opinion, determine the policy of the day and attract support for specific political goals. British researcher Vian Bakir notes that this communication is often deliberately manipulative, using social-psychological techniques and heuristic mechanisms to better understand the motivations, behavior and media environment of the audience, which allows political actors to determine the content and strategic direction of messages.

The integration of artificial intelligence into political communication further increases the effectiveness of the process. AI technologies allow for better understanding of the needs of the audience through data analysis and modeling, assessing the effectiveness of communication and generating personalized messages. This, in turn, increases the targeting of political campaigns, improves the ability to manage public opinion, and creates new challenges in terms of ethics, information accuracy, and content management.

Strategic political communication today includes a wide range of tools and methods: public opinion research, data analysis, development of media strategies, use of press releases and message boxes, mobilization of social media, microtargeting, and automated communication. In this process, the development of professionalism, the growth of the role of the media, and the integration of market mechanisms are important, because modern political communication is no longer limited to the provision of information, but also includes the formation of public opinion and the management of political behavior (Hilaris Publisher, n.d.).

Main part

In contemporary strategic communication, artificial intelligence (AI) technologies play an increasingly decisive role. Political communication has migrated into the digital sphere, where success depends on effective information processing, audience insight, and the creation of adaptive messages. AI has become a key instrument in simplifying and optimizing these processes (Tumasjan et al., 2021).

1. Data Analysis and Sentiment Assessment.

AI-driven data analytics allow political actors to gather and process massive amounts of information from digital platforms—ranging from traditional media outlets to social networks and voter feedback. Through sentiment analysis, politicians can evaluate emotional and rational attitudes in real time, enabling more responsive and evidence-based communication strategies (Van Aelst et al., 2022).

2. Personalization and Targeted Messaging.

Machine learning algorithms make it possible to analyze voter behavior, interests, and demographic attributes, allowing political parties to craft highly tailored messages for different audience segments. This

personalization enhances engagement, reinforces identification, and ultimately strengthens political mobilization (Stier et al., 2023).

3. **Chatbots and Virtual Assistants.**
AI-powered chatbots have become integral tools for political campaigns and public institutions, ensuring constant and timely interaction with citizens. These tools provide answers to frequently asked questions and disseminate essential information—particularly during elections or crises (OECD, 2022).
4. **Automated Content Generation.** -
AI's ability to autonomously generate textual and visual content is transforming political communication. It supports political actors in maintaining a continuous information flow through social media posts and news briefs. However, this also raises ethical concerns about authenticity, misinformation, and algorithmic manipulation (Floridi & Cows, 2021). Predictive analytics further enable political organizations to detect early signs of communication crises and develop proactive responses.

Overall, AI represents both a transformative opportunity and a governance challenge for modern democracies, redefining how political narratives are created, disseminated, and received (Harvard Kennedy School, 2023).

In the **Chatham House** report, it is noted that "*the very idea of a non-human variable (AI) has the potential to transform our perspectives and perceptions of politics in its broadest sense*" (Chatham House, 2018).

Case 1: In April 2025, Italian opposition parties filed a complaint with the national communications regulatory authority against the right-wing party *Lega*. The complaint concerned AI-generated images containing racist and Islamophobic content, which the party used to portray migrants as criminals and to incite fear and hatred toward them within society (The Guardian, 2025).

Analysis:

This case clearly illustrates how AI technologies can be used for political propaganda and public opinion manipulation. The criminalization of migrants may aim to exploit societal attitudes for political gain, undermining the very foundations of pluralistic democracy. It is particularly noteworthy that domestic political actors are employing AI tools that may originate from foreign technological sources. This raises serious concerns regarding information security and technological sovereignty. Moreover, the widespread dissemination of such materials on social media platforms creates fertile ground for foreign interference and influence operations.

Case 2: On April 4, 2023, when the 45th President of the United States, Donald Trump, faced a court hearing, related visual content circulated widely on social media. A Facebook user named Gabi Kamaev published a photo depicting Trump taking a step

accompanied by supporters- as indicated in the post description, he is heading toward the courthouse (Myth Detector. 2023)..

Analysis:

Although this case does not involve explicitly discriminatory content, it demonstrates how AI-generated images can shape public perception of a political figure. The incident highlights the potential for psychological operations in the information space. Even if such operations are individual and not coordinated at the state level, they set a precedent that threatens the authenticity of public information. In such cases, intelligence systems should act as guarantors of information security, promptly identifying deepfakes and raising public awareness.

Case 3: In this case, during an election campaign in Georgia, the political party *Girchi* used AI-generated advertising videos. The videos featured people of various ages, genders, and political views expressing support for the party, although these individuals were not real. It was possible that part of the population could not distinguish these AI-generated videos from genuine footage (Girchi,2025).

Analysis:

This case illustrates the potential of AI to create highly realistic political content that can influence public perception without using actual supporters. By generating synthetic audiences, political actors can artificially amplify perceived popularity and create social proof, which may affect voters' decisions. Such practices raise important ethical questions regarding transparency, voter manipulation, and the integrity of electoral processes. The case also highlights the need for regulatory frameworks and public awareness initiatives to mitigate risks associated with synthetic media in political communication. Although *Girchi* did not win the elections, this case remains significant in the field of political communication because it demonstrates the potential of AI to create highly realistic and persuasive content. It highlights how synthetic media can shape public perception, generate social proof, and influence voter behavior, even without actual electoral success. The case sets a precedent for the ethical, strategic, and regulatory challenges that arise when artificial intelligence is integrated into political campaigns.

The integration of artificial intelligence into political communication elevates modern intelligence activities to a new level. Standard strategic practices in intelligence analysis- collecting information relevant to the state, conducting analytical processing, and making operational decisions based on primary operational data and information channels linked to both domestic and foreign actors—are significantly transformed by AI tools. Modern surveillance states increasingly acquire and validate operational information through political communication manipulation, algorithmically managed platforms, personalized messaging, and deepfake technologies.

Consequently, states that can identify and influence informational agents within the political systems of other countries (e.g., supporter groups within political parties, influential media channels, etc.) using AI possess a level of influence previously attainable only through classical intelligence instruments. From this perspective, AI in the field of political communication can serve as a tool for both informational dominance and influence operations. This development impacts not only international security but also state sovereignty.

Conclusion

The integration of artificial intelligence technologies into modern political communication represents both progress and a significant strategic challenge in terms of national security. Big data-based analytics, audience behavior prediction, personalized messaging, and automated communication indicate the potential of AI to create a new level of effective communication in political processes.

The analysis of the presented cases demonstrates that the use of AI technologies in political discourse can become not only a tool for informational advantage, but also a source of political manipulation and aggravation of cybersecurity risks. Political perceptions can be shaped not only by blatant disinformation, but also by visual narratives that are focused on emotional reactions. The transformation of AI into a weapon, especially during electoral processes, creates geopolitical vulnerabilities and increases the risks of violating information sovereignty.

Accordingly, it is necessary for state intelligence agencies to strengthen tools for detecting deepfake technologies and promote public education in media literacy.

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