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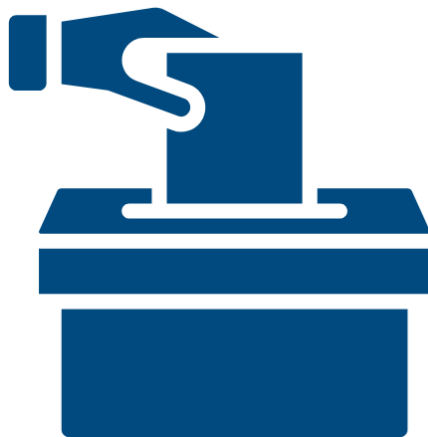
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GENERATIVE AI



AND ITS INFLUENCE ON MEXICO'S 2024 ELECTIONS

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ANALYSIS

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Table of contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Introduction | 4 |
| 2. Mexico's 2024 electoral process | 5 |
| 2.1. Mexican political context: how did we get here? | 5 |
| 2.2. Results of the 2024 elections | 5 |
| 2.3. What else? Other elements to consider for the 2024 election | 6 |
| 3. The influence of generative AI in Mexico's 2024 elections | 9 |
| 3.1. Generative AI use cases | 9 |
| 3.2. Key insights into AI in the 2024 Mexican elections | 14 |
| 4. Potential future challenges | 15 |
| 5. Public policy recommendations | 16 |
| 6. Conclusion | 18 |
| 7. Annexes | 19 |
| 7.1. Annex 1- Overview of Mexico's political structure | 19 |
| 8. References | 20 |

1. Introduction

The accelerated expansion and accessibility of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) present both opportunities and significant concerns to democracy, particularly during elections. The question “Can AI undermine democracy?” has never been more pressing than in 2024, a pivotal year where nearly half of the world’s population—3.7 billion people—cast votes in elections across 70 countries (Ewe, 2023).

At the start of the year, the World Economic Forum released its "[Global Risks Report 2024](#)", which highlighted AI-generated disinformation as one of the top five risks over the next two years. The report, based on an in-depth global ranking exercise, emphasized the potential of generative AI to fundamentally reshape the way electoral campaigns are conducted and citizens’ engagement with political information. For instance, in 2023, Slovakia experienced the disruptive effects of AI first-hand, when AI-fuelled disinformation distorted public perception during the elections. This exemplifies the dual nature of generative AI: while it can enhance efficiency by improving voter outreach and streamlining administrative tasks, it also poses a direct threat to democratic institutions.

As AI permeates every facet of our society, safeguarding the democratic future we aspire to requires robust AI governance, including the implementation of measures to protect electoral integrity.

In response to this borderless challenge, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation launched a global research initiative to explore the impact of generative AI on electoral

campaigns and democracy, selecting global majority countries¹ to delve into, namely Mexico, South Africa, and India, working with local partners. In Mexico, they partnered with [Eon Institute](#), a local think-tank, to identify emerging AI electoral trends and risks in order to inform the development of strategies designed to strengthen democracy and promote informed public discourse.

This policy paper presents the Mexican experience, informed by a roundtable discussion and interviews with a diverse group of 13 experts in electoral issues, political communication, AI and democracy, journalism, fact-checking, and digital citizenship. This group of experts consists of specialists from technology companies, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, and civil society (their names can be found in the acknowledgments section above). Eon Institute’s findings in Mexico present a different story to the global narrative, stemming from the country’s unique political and social context.

As AI’s influence on elections is only beginning to unfold, we stand at a critical juncture. The decisions we make today about how to govern and manage these technologies will determine whether they strengthen or weaken our democracies. Now is the time to monitor how AI is being incorporated in Mexico’s election processes to identify emerging trends and vulnerabilities that could have a significant impact in the future. From there, can be develop effective safeguards to mitigate risks associated with these advancements.

¹ Global majority refers to people who are "black, Asian, brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the global south, and or have been racialised as 'ethnic minorities'" and "represent approximately 80% of the world's

population", according to educator and activist Rosemary Campbell-Stephens, who coined the termv. (Bryan, 2024).

2. Mexico's 2024 electoral process

To fully grasp the impact of AI on Mexico's 2024 electoral process, it is essential to first understand the country's unique political structure and broader political context. An overview of the country's political structure can be found in Annex 1.

2.1. Mexican political context: how did we get here?

From 1929 to 2000, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) party, founded in 1929 under the name Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PNR), maintained hegemonic control over Mexican politics. Only in the late 20th Century did Mexico begin transitioning to political plurality thanks to electoral reforms² and public demands for greater transparency. The year 2000 marked a turning point with the presidential victory of Vicente Fox Quesada of the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) party and Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) of the Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD) winning the Mexico City Government elections.

In the 2006 and 2012 elections, AMLO was the PRD's candidate for presidency but lost, respectively, to Felipe Calderón Hinojosa (PAN) and Enrique Peña Nieto (PRI), alleging electoral fraud in both cases (Olivares y Urrutia, 2022). In response, López Obrador led a peaceful resistance movement that laid the groundwork for "lopezobradorismo", a political and social movement centred on his persona and the fight against corruption, and as an alternative to the traditional political system (Jiménez, 2017). After leaving the PRD party, López Obrador transformed the movement into a full-fledged political force, founding the Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional (Morena) party in 2014, and his broader political vision, known as "La Cuarta Transformación" (The Fourth Transformation).

In 2018, López Obrador won the presidency with Morena, earning 54% of the votes³—a record at the time. This victory marked a turning point in Mexico's political landscape, as Morena rapidly expanded its influence, securing governorships and the majority in both houses of Congress. Throughout his six-year tenure, AMLO's administration was characterized by strong political leadership, a prominent communicative presence, and strong popular support (Córdova, 2024).

2.2. Results of the 2024 elections

Mexico's 2023-2024 electoral process marked a historic milestone as the largest election in the country's history. Nearly 98 million people were registered in the electoral roll and around 15 million young people were eligible to vote for the first time.

On June 2, 2024, 20,708 positions were contested nationwide (629 at the federal level and 20,079 at the local level). The positions up for election included the Presidency, 128 seats in the Senate, 500 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, 8 governorships, the Head of the Government of Mexico City, and 31 local congresses.

Three participants took part in the presidential election race:



Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo,⁴ candidate for the political coalition "Sigamos Haciendo Historia" (Morena, PT, and PVEM⁵).



Bertha Xóchitl Gálvez Ruiz, candidate for the political coalition "Fuerza y Corazón por México" (PAN, PRI, and PRD).



Jorge Álvarez Maynez, candidate for the Movimiento Ciudadano party.

² These reforms included the introduction of proportional representation and tighter regulations on campaign finance, as well as the establishment of the autonomous Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) to oversee elections (now INE) (Córdova, 2024).

³ Results shared by INE in 2018. More information: <https://centralectoral.ine.mx/2018/07/06/da-conocer-ine-resultados->

[del-computo-de-la-eleccion-presidencial-2018/](#)

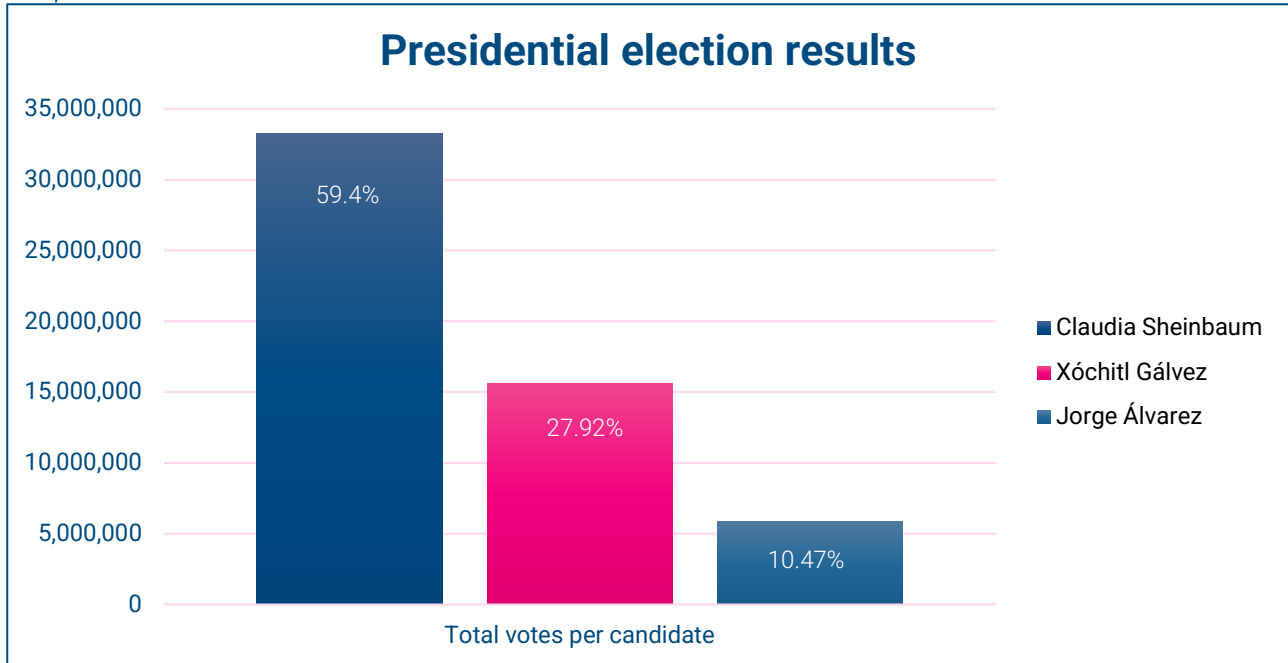
⁴ It is important to note she is a close and trusted person of the former President López Obrador and one of the founders of Morena.

⁵ Partido del Trabajo (PT) and Partido Verde Ecologista de México (PVEM).

With a citizen participation rate of 60.04% according to the results presented by the National Electoral Institute (INE), Claudia Sheinbaum won with 59.4% of the votes, surpassing the results obtained by AMLO in 2018 by 5

million votes. She was followed by Xóchitl Gálvez with 27.92% of the votes, while Jorge Álvarez Máynez obtained 10.47%.

Graph 1. Presidential election results. INE. 2024.



The results of this election solidified Morena's status as the dominant political force in Mexico. Not only did the party secure the presidency, but also extended the control over governorships, with 23 out of 31, including Mexico City. This sweeping victory also translated into the

Legislative Branch, as Morena and its allied parties (PT and PVEM) gained a qualified majority in the Chamber of Deputies and came close to achieving the same in the Senate. This shift marks a return to an absolute majority, a political landscape not seen since 1985.

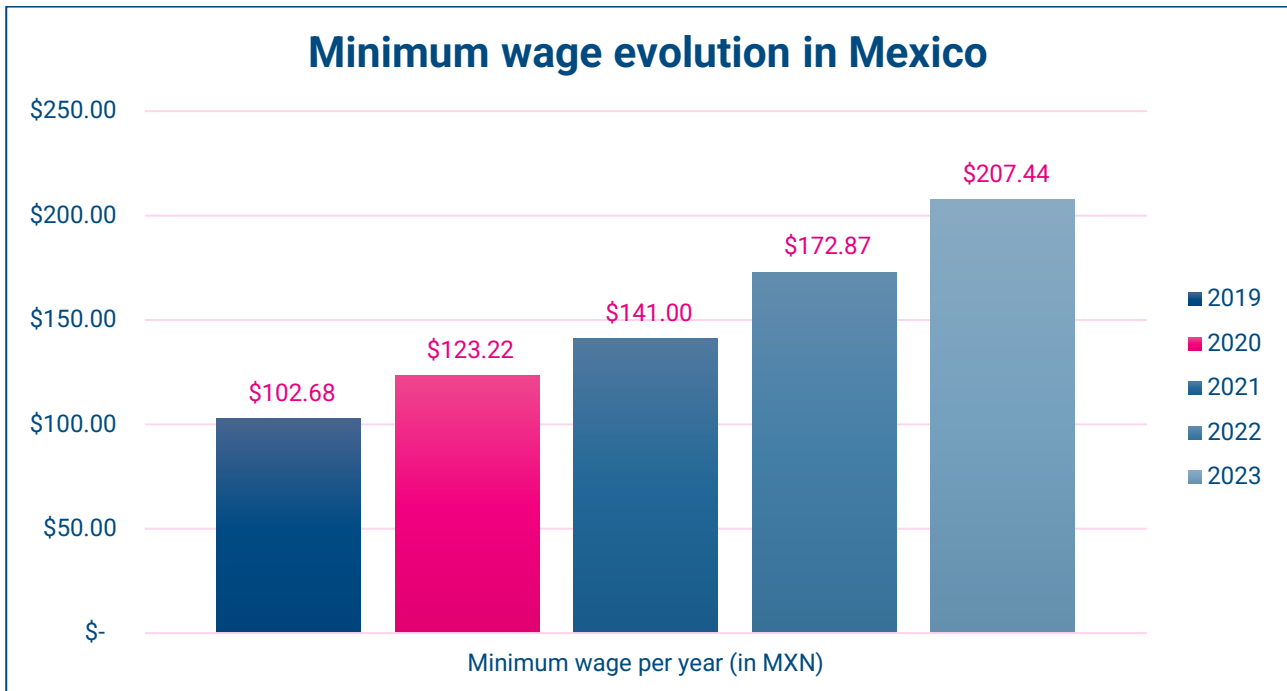
2.3. What else? Other elements to consider for the 2024 election

- AMLO's unprecedented level of popular support:** One of the most striking aspects of AMLO's term was his strong popular support. Despite unfulfilled key campaign promises –such as improving healthcare system, reducing military presence in the streets, and curbing violence (including organized crime and femicides)– he maintained approval rates of nearly 60% until the end of his term, according to El Financiero (2024). This achievement is no doubt the result of different elements: his political capital –built over four decades– which stems from his political career, his extensive travels across the country, his popular appeal, and his consolidation as the main opponent of PAN and PRI, the two parties that shaped Mexican politics in the early

2000s.

Secondly, his broad popular support can be partly attributed to economic improvements and the implementation of new social programs (Barria, 2024). Specifically, between 2018 and 2022, according to the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL, 2023), the country saw 5 million people lifted out of poverty, the greatest achievement in the fight against poverty in more than two decades (see graph below). Experts attribute 70% of this reduction to income improvements, with an overall increase in minimum wage by 18.2% (Suarez, 2014).

Graph 2. Minimum wage evolution in Mexico. Mexexecution. 2023.



- **Weakness of opposition parties:** In addition to the former president's popularity, the weakness and internal division of the opposition has also been notable. The leadership of PAN, PRI, PRD, and MC has failed to consolidate a compelling alternative political project.
- **High levels of electoral violence:** Another key element to consider in this electoral process was violence. The 2023-2024 election period was of the most violent in Mexico's history according to data from Laboratorio Electoral (2024) with over 30 candidates murdered during the campaign and more than 200 non-fatal violent incidents reported.⁶ Much of the violence was tied to organized crime in regions where cartel's influence pressured candidates and, in some cases, shaped political outcomes (Misra, 2014).

Additionally, there was a significant rise in gender-based political violence.⁷ According to INE data, 205 complaints related to this type of

violence were filed during the electoral period. Of these, 42% involved social media attacks. As election day approached, the violence augmented not only in frequency but also in severity, shifting from digital forms to physical threats, assaults, and even murders (Orozco, 2024).

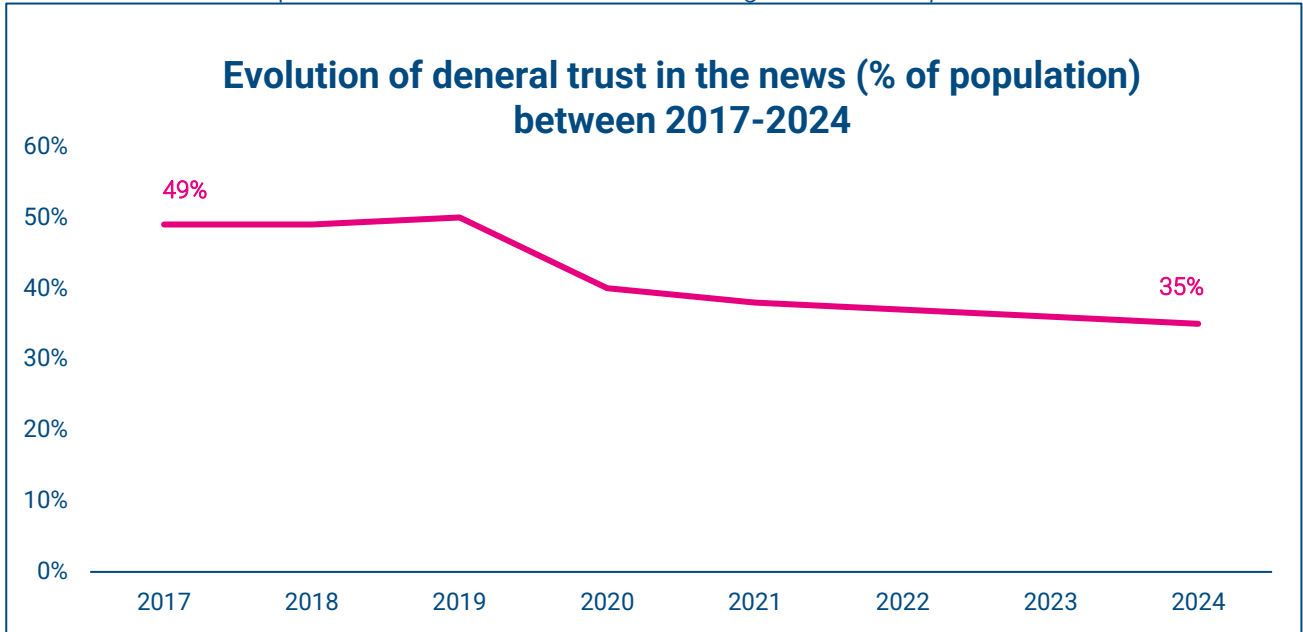
- **General lack of trust in media:** Trust in the media in Mexico has sharply declined in recent years, driven largely by former President AMLO's morning press conferences known as "mañaneras". In these sessions that served not only to inform but to set the national agenda, the public debate, and directly address criticism from the media and opposition (Barría, 2024), he repeatedly verbally attacked journalists and the press, damaging media credibility. Since he took office in 2018, distrust in news has dropped by 15 percentage points, with only 35% of Mexicans trusting the news in 2024, according to the Digital News Report 2024 by Reuters Institute.

⁶ These events do not only record those related to candidates, but also those related to people within the electoral process, mainly party officials, campaign collaborators, electoral officials, among others.

⁷ INE (s.f.) defines this concept as "all actions or omissions by individuals or public officials directed at women based on gender, that have a differentiated

impact on them or disproportionately affect them, with the intent or result of undermining or nullifying their political-electoral rights [...] Political violence against women may include, among others, physical, psychological, symbolic, sexual, patrimonial, economic, or femicidal violence."

Graph 3. General trust in the news. *Digital News Report 2024.*



While outlets like CNN, El Universal, and Imagen Noticias are considered the most trusted, the overall hostile environment toward journalism has fuelled a negative perception of information.

Moreover, news consumption has shifted significantly, with social media being the only source to see an increase, reaching 64% of news consumption from 2023 to 2024.

Notably, 18% of Mexicans—primarily younger audiences—now rely on social media and content platforms for information.

Table 1 below shows the percentage of population that uses these sources for news consumption.

Table 1. Most used social media and content platforms for news. *Digital News Report 2024.*

| Position | Platform | Percent of the population that uses that platform for news | Percent of the population that uses that platform in general |
|----------|------------------------|--|--|
| 1 | Facebook | 50% | 70% |
| 2 | YouTube | 34% | 64% |
| 3 | WhatsApp | 28% | 66% |
| 4 | TikTok | 18% | 40% |
| 5 | X (previously Twitter) | 14% | 23% |
| 6 | Instagram | 13% | 37% |

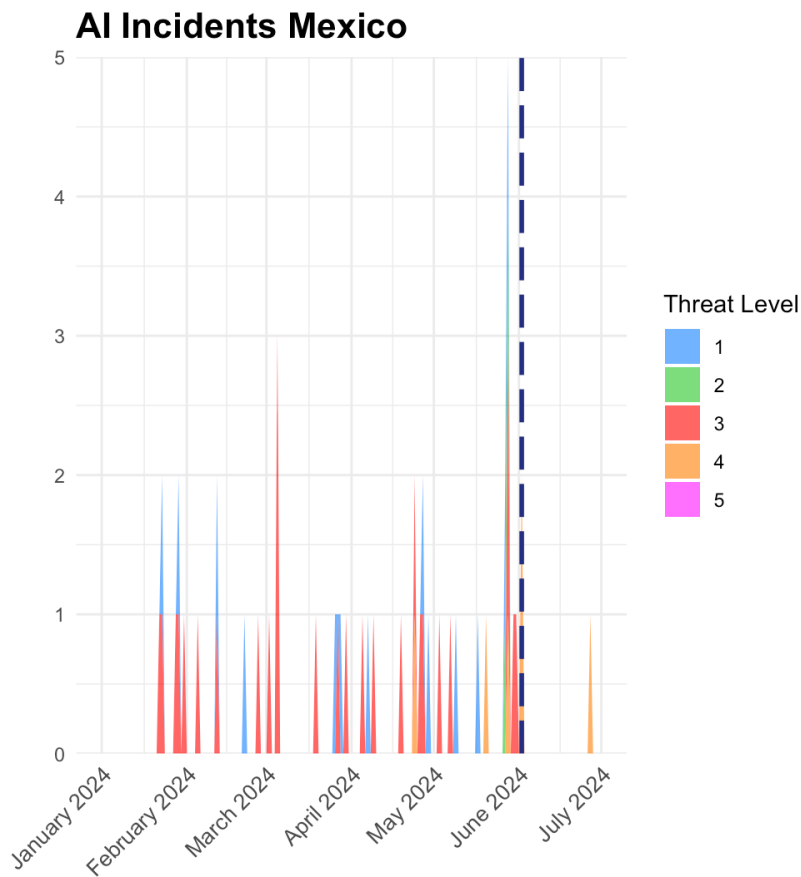
3. The influence of generative AI on Mexico's 2024 elections

3.1. Generative AI use cases

The German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) conducted a review on events related to the use of generative AI in the Mexican electoral period from January to July 2024.⁸ This review involved the use of a media monitoring tool to filter online articles and news pieces from different sources to identify relevant AI-related

electoral cases. Out of the pool of 5,934 resources, only 44 were not repeated and focused on elections (for instance, some stories had nothing to do with the Mexican Election). Graph 4 illustrates the number of cases of AI and elections over a 6-month period.

Graph 4. Number of cases on AI elections in Mexico (January- July 2024).



The following table shows the 44 identified cases, categorized by threat and strategy directly associated with generative AI in electoral context. Please note each case can cover more than one strategy and/or threat.

⁸ The campaign process was divided in: pre-campaign from November 20th 2023 to January 18th 2024, inter campaign from January 19th to February

29th 2024; and campaign from March 1st to May 29th 2024.

Table 2. Cases categorized by threat and strategy⁹

| Strategy/ Threat | Threat 1: Targeting Information Consumption | Threat 2: Targeting Citizens' Ability to Vote | Threat 3: Targeting Candidates and Political Parties | Threat 4: Targeting Trust in Democracy | Threat 5: Targeting Election-Related Infrastructure |
|--|---|---|--|--|---|
| Dismiss. To push back against criticism, deny allegations and denigrate the source | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Distort To change the framing and twist and change the narrative | 7 | 0 | 16 | 4 | 0 |
| Distract To turn attention to a different actor or narrative or to shift the blame | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Dismay To threaten and scare off opponents | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Divide To create conflict and widen divisions within or between communities and groups | 6 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 0 |

Based on the analysis of these use cases, along with insights from experts during the roundtable and interviews, the following trends in the use of generative AI in Mexico's 2023-2024 electoral cycle have been identified.

- **Minimal malicious electoral use**

Despite widespread concerns about generative AI's potential influence on electoral processes worldwide, its role in Mexico's 2023-2024 election cycle was surprisingly minimal.

Many reported generative AI deepfakes were, in fact, shallowfakes or cheapfakes, which involve simple, accessible editing tools to manipulate images, videos, or

audio, as opposed to the more complex techniques of generative AI. Of the 44 identified cases, the group of experts highlighted 5 for their significant media coverage and social media engagement, with no clear evidence or correlation, however, to indicate a meaningful impact on election outcomes.

Five Most Covered Gen AI Uses Cases for Malicious Electoral Use

Of all use cases, the group of experts highlighted five in particular due to the significant media attention and user engagement they garnered:

[Martí Batres denies the authenticity of an audio claiming the use of generative AI \(November 2023\)](#)

Ahead of the pre-campaign period and the official candidacy announcements for Mexico City's Head of Government, an alleged audio recording surfaced, purportedly featuring Martí Batres, Mexico City's Head of Government at the time, expressing intentions to remove another candidate from the race. Batres denied the recording's authenticity, claiming it

⁷ Source: Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, based on DISARM Framework used by the European Union and NATO to categorize objectives for disinformation and influence opportunities. Some of the cases apply to different threats or strategies.

was generated using AI. However, experts have raised doubts about his statement pointing to a “liar’s dividend”.¹⁰

[Xóchitl Gálvez presents “IXóchitl”, an AI-powered spokesperson \(December 2023\)](#)

During the pre-campaign, Xóchitl Gálvez introduced “IXóchitl”, an AI-driven digital representation of herself designed to enhance and streamline her video political communication. The messages given were approved and supervised by Gálvez.

[Claudia Sheinbaum is victim of deepfakes in a malicious video \(January 2024\)](#)

Shortly after the campaign officially began, a deepfake video featuring Claudia Sheinbaum circulated inviting people to invest in a fake financial platform. Sheinbaum condemned the video in an Instagram live, warning the public about the scam and vowing to pursue legal action if necessary. The case did not develop further because no official complaint was filed.

[Use of generative AI to create Claudia Sheinbaum poster after presidential debate \(April 2024\)](#)

Following the second presidential debate, Claudia Sheinbaum’s official accounts managers shared a poster claiming her victory. However, users quickly identified that the image had been generated using AI. The image was later removed from the official accounts.

[Electoral Tribunal fines PAN for using AI to alter an image of a child \(May 2024\)](#)

The Specialized Chamber of the Electoral Tribunal fined PAN for using AI to create an image of a child for a political ad. While the party argued that the image did not represent a real child, the Tribunal ruled that, since it couldn’t technically verify the authenticity of the image, child protection had to take precedence. The use of AI-generated child images was deemed to exceed the acceptable limits for electoral campaigns. This, however, has not led to broader conversations on the use of deepfakes in elections.

- **Limited use of deepfakes**

Most AI use cases during Mexico’s 2023-2024 electoral process involved digital reproductions of candidates’ voice or images (22 in total). These included scenarios where a candidate appeared speaking about an opposing candidate, party, or against its own party, to spread disinformation and misinformation.

While AI was mainly used to generate deepfakes, specifically shallowfakes, its deployment was limited compared to other countries. Experts pointed out that the use of generative AI in Mexico’s electoral process largely followed traditional approaches, serving to reinforce established tactics like discrediting opponents, rather than introducing the innovations seen in some other countries.

Instances of deepfakes in Mexico’s 2023-2024 electoral process (by date)

- [Clara Brugada denounces audio made with AI where she supports her opponent Santiago Taboada for the Head of Government of Mexico City.](#)
- [Claudia Sheinbaum rejects a video created with AI of her and AMLO dancing.](#)
- [The Mayor of Zinacantepec, State of Mexico, Manuel Vilchís Viveros, condemned the use of AI to generate images falsely depicting him as being upset with the governor.](#)
- [The Mayor of Álvaro Obregón in Mexico City, Lía Limón, has addressed a false AI-generated audio clip in which she is allegedly calling for a boycott of an event organized by candidate Clara Brugada.](#)
- [A video of the candidate, Alma Alcaraz Hernández in Guanajuato, was edited with AI to create a false speech.](#)
- [Wrestling match between Xóchitl Galvez and Claudia Sheinbaum created via AI.](#)
- [Deputy Marcela González Castillo denounces an AI audio of her to manipulate information and fake news.](#)
- [Candidate Lili Campos denounces AI use to spread false information about her alleged opposition to social programs.](#)

¹⁰ This concept refers to the strategic use of false claims that misinformation or deepfakes are fabricated, allowing politicians to deflect scandals and maintain public support. Here for more information: <https://gvu.gatech.edu/research/projects/liars-dividend-impact-deepfakes-and-fake-news-politician-support-and-trust-media>

- [Candidate Enrique Galindo denounces an AI video that alters his image to falsely depict his stance on the water issue.](#)
- [AI was used to fabricate an alleged conversation in which candidates for the Acapulco municipality purportedly discuss allying with organized crime.](#)
- [Fake audio of Margarita González saying that if people did not vote for her she would remove social programs.](#)
- [Morena spokesperson Edurne Ochoa said that the audio released attributed to Eukid Castañón was made with AI.](#)
- [PT candidate in Tuxtepec accused of altering Sheinbaum's image to create a video in favor of the party.](#)
- [An AI-generated audio surfaced, allegedly exposing the Mayor of Tijuana and the PAN candidate discussing plans to undermine Morena's candidacy.](#)
- [AI used to put the Morena candidate in Los Cabos behind bars.](#)
- [Audio of AI where the PAN-PRI-PRD candidate talks to the governor of Guanajuato about the alleged vote buying.](#)
- [Video of former president Peña Nieto wearing a vest from the Morena party.](#)
- [The president of the Morena State Committee in Veracruz denied the veracity of the audio in which he anticipates the victory of his opponents.](#)
- [AI-generated audios of a Morena candidate in Hidalgo allegedly feature her expressing opposition to her own party.](#)
- [An AI-driven campaign targeting the PAN-PRI-PRD candidate in Puebla has been denounced.](#)
- [Azucena Marín Correa, head of the State Comptroller's Office, blamed AI for an audio where she supposedly coerces the vote in favor of Morena.](#)

• **Liar's dividend**

At least two cases were identified where false claims were made about AI manipulating content, despite expert verification confirming the authenticity of the material.

Most of these had to do with a candidate trying to get out of having said something that was poorly received or could negatively affect their reputation and standing.

Instances of candidates blaming mistakes on AI (by date)

- [An audio circulating on social media allegedly features Mayor Paola Angón](#) discussing a sum of money in exchange for being considered for reelection in her municipality. She has denied the claim, stating it is a deepfake, but deepfake detection tools suggest 95% of authenticity.
- [Former President Vicente Fox](#) blames AI for spelling and writing errors in his tweets.

• **Boosting fraud and cybercrime**

A significant trend in the 2023-2024 electoral cycle was the misuse of generative AI for cybercrimes. One of the most prominent and widely reported AI-cases involved a deepfake showing Claudia Sheinbaum inviting citizens to invest in a fake financial platform. Furthermore, at least

three additional cases were reported where the images of politicians were exploited to perpetrate different cybercrimes, including phishing scams and identity theft. This trend reflects the rise in cybercrimes in Mexico,¹¹ where criminals exploited the electoral context to maximize the impact of their illicit activities.

Instances of fraud and cybercrime (by date)

- [Claudia Sheinbaum is the victim of deepfakes in a malicious video.](#)
- [AMLO warns about scam using his image to invest in PEMEX.](#)
- [Alert of the use of AI for fraud in the sale of land in Quintana Roo using AMLO's image.](#)
- [AI-powered videos of politicians inviting you to invest.](#)
- [Interior Secretary Luisa María Alcalde denied inviting people to participate in a government-backed investment program on Telegram.](#)

¹¹ According to El Economista (2024), a research done by the cybersecurity firm Norton found that in 2023, 17% of Mexicans were victims of

cybercrime.

- **Contributing to gender-based political violence**

Gender-based political violence has notably increased with the rise in the number of female candidates and the advance towards political parity. Social media and content platforms, through the activities of bots and trolls, have become the primary channels for disseminating violent and derogatory content aimed at belittling and discrediting female candidates.

During the 2023-2024 electoral cycle in Mexico, generative AI was identified in at least two cases where it was used to create and distribute non-consensual intimate content of female candidates. This practice reflects a broader troubling trend. According to 2023 State of Deepfakes report approximately 98% of deepfake cases depict non-consensual pornography, over 99% of which depict women.

Even though the elections have ended, these challenges continue. Recently, Senator Andrea Chávez exposed the distribution of an AI-manipulated image falsely showing her face on another person's semi-nude body,¹² further highlighting the continuous misuse of AI for gender-based political violence.

It is worth mentioning that Mexico has a series of legislative reforms designed to combat this kind of violence: the Ley Olimpia, explained further below. The generation of AI-manipulated images falls under the protections and penalties established by these reforms but the law has yet to be applied at the date of this paper.

Ley Olimpia: the fight against digital violence

The "Ley Olimpia" or Olimpia Law in English is a series of legislative reforms designed to combat digital violence, particularly crimes that violate individuals' sexual privacy through online platforms, often referred to as cyber-violence. It contemplates penalties of three to six years in prison for those who carry out these actions and fines ranging from 500 to 1,000 UMAs,¹³ equivalent to about \$2,790 - 5,590 USD at the time of this brief's redaction.

The reforms emerged from the efforts of Olimpia Coral Melo who, alongside feminist collectives and activists, campaigned to reform the Penal Code in the state of Puebla, criminalizing the distribution of unauthorized sexual content as a violation of privacy. This initiative has since been replicated, with the 31 states having approved regulations on this matter (United Nations, 2023).

Another noteworthy use of generative AI involved "beautifying" the images of female candidates in an attempt to make them more likable. Although this is not

direct violence, it intersects with gender-based political violence by reinforcing hegemonic beauty standards that often become focal points for criticism and attacks.

Instances of AI gender-based political violence (by date)

- [Movimiento Ciudadano candidate for mayor of Monterrey, Mariana Rodriguez, denounces an inmate AI-generated photo.](#)
- [Mayor of Tijuana described video made with AI as "misogynistic".](#)
- [PT female candidate in Tamaulipas is victim of AI-generated intimate photos.](#)

- **Incipient adoption among Electoral Tribunals**

The adoption of AI in Mexico's Electoral Tribunals at a state level remains in its early stages, but it holds significant potential for improving judicial efficiency and transparency. Currently, the use of AI in these institutions

is limited to exploratory projects for enhancing operational efficiency and decision-making processes. While some tribunals have begun incorporating these tools, full-scale AI integration is still in development.

¹² More information about the case here: <https://www.infobae.com/mexico/2024/10/09/senadora-andrea-chavez-denuncia-en-redes-a-monero-por-senalamientos-misoginos-piden-aplicar->

[ley-olimpia-en-su-contra/](#)

¹³ Economic reference measure in Mexican pesos used to determine the amount of the payment of obligations.

AI use cases in the electoral institutes (alphabetically)¹⁴

The Electoral Tribunal of Coahuila.

The Electoral Tribunal of Coahuila has been using AI tools since 2021 to conduct probabilistic analyses assisting jurisdictional staff in selecting the most effective conflict resolution options.

The Electoral Tribunal of Querétaro.

The Electoral Tribunal is implementing a pilot test using AI to enhance the recognition of data in ballot paper accounts.

The Electoral Tribunal of Nuevo León.

An advanced AI-powered precedent search system was designed for the legal operators of Nuevo León's Electoral Tribunal. This system enhances efficiency by enabling users to quickly identify the most common grounds for legal challenges and access relevant templates for their legal documentation.

3.2. Key insights into AI in the 2024 Mexican elections

With AI use exploding in elections across the world, one might wonder why Mexico was not privy to this trend. Together with the experts that took part in this exercise, three key reasons were identified. They are shared below:

- Limited competition:** Polls and early predictions consistently indicated a decisive victory for the ruling party, reducing the incentive for both the governing coalition and the opposition to rely on aggressive AI-driven strategies. The election dynamics were heavily influenced by factors beyond technology, including Morena's strong popular support under AMLO's administration, the ruling party's expansion of social programs to address economic poverty, the opposition's internal divisions and general weaknesses, and a widespread lack of trust in traditional media. These elements together shaped an electoral landscape where the outcome was set, regardless of potential AI strategies.
- Lack of internet access:** While the 2021 electoral campaigns rapidly adapted to digital platforms to reach voters due to the restrictions posed by the pandemic, the 2023-2024 cycle saw a significant return to traditional campaign methods. This shift back to traditional methods can be attributed to various digital divides—such as disparities in internet access, gender biases in digital engagement, and intersectional barriers—that limited the effectiveness of purely digital campaign strategies.
- Insufficient AI knowledge and skills:** Campaign teams and the public in general faced significant limitations in financial resources and technical expertise to develop and use generative AI tools, making it difficult to effectively adopt and deploy them during the elections.

¹⁴ Information provided by Ordellin Font, Jorge Luis and Rentería, Cesar part of their project "Algorítmicos Públicos en México, Centro de Investigación y Docencias Económicas" (in development), 2024. All the cases are presented here: <https://algoritmoscide.org/>

4. Potential future challenges

While generative AI did not play a major role in influencing the outcomes of the 2024 elections in Mexico, it is crucial to proactively consider the potential future challenges that may arise. In addition to the trends identified in the past electoral cycle, below are some other challenges to consider for the future.

1 More political misinformation and disinformation in and outside of election periods:

Global trends, such as the use of AI-generated deepfakes in other elections, illustrate a growing reliance on generative AI to create sophisticated and credible misinformation. This poses a significant threat to public trust in democratic institutions and undermines confidence in reliable sources of information. For instance, in [2023 Slovakia's elections](#), an AI-manipulated audio surfaced during the media silence before the election, falsely portraying a candidate discussing vote-buying. The election was tightly contested, and the targeted candidate ultimately lost.

While the use of generative AI during election periods presents notable risks, its application outside of these times can also significantly influence electoral outcomes, especially in exploiting the fears of specific vulnerable communities. Although this trend has not yet gained substantial traction globally, it has the potential to do so. AI-driven misinformation can subtly shape public perception and political narratives long before voters head to the polls, highlighting the need for vigilance and proactive measures against misuse.

2 Hyper-personalization of political communication:

AI tools can analyze user behaviors on different platforms and their information consumption patterns to create hyper-personalized content that effectively manipulates large segments of the population, shaping their political opinions and electoral decisions. While social media and content platforms come up as obvious echo chamber spaces, so may large-language models (LLM) and LLM-based assistants, a reality that is only beginning to be understood. Moreover, as candidates explore the use of digital replicas of themselves, these systems may adjust the information shared with users (on purpose or not), manipulating them into voting for them, especially when it comes to pivotal voting groups.

3 Challenges in verifying fake content:

While detecting the authenticity of visual content is still possible, to a certain extent, for the human eye, this will

become more challenging as AI improves. Distinguishing between fake audio and text poses even greater challenges, as their veracity is harder to discern and they tend to be perceived as more authentic by the public.

4 Content generation outpaces real-time verification:

This challenge is already being faced by fact-checkers, as the speed of the generation and distribution of misinformation and disinformation far exceeds the verification capabilities of fact-checkers. Current automated verification tools lack the necessary sophistication to reliably identify all forms of forgery, particularly in nuanced audio and text materials.

5 Cybersecurity concerns:

Malicious actors could leverage AI to automate attacks, manipulate voter databases, and generate convincing phishing schemes and deepfakes, complicating citizens' ability to discern legitimate information from fraud and scams. The threat of large-scale cyberattacks on electoral infrastructure underscores the urgent need for electoral institutions to adopt robust cybersecurity standards and infrastructure to effectively counter these risks.

6 Increase in gender-based political violence:

Intimate deepfakes and other forms of online violence represent a growing threat to the security, dignity, and potentially the success and wellbeing of women in the political sphere. As generative AI tools become more accessible, the potential for creating and disseminating harmful content increases, complicating efforts to combat misogyny and harassment. This phenomenon not only impacts individual women but also perpetuates a culture of violence that discourages female participation in politics, weakening democracy by dissuading women from actively engaging, thus leading to a lack of representation for 50% of the electorate.

5. Public policy recommendations

As the impact of generative AI on electoral processes continues to unfold, it is crucial to develop proactive responses that address the associated risks while harnessing the technology's potential for democratic engagement.

Based on the conversations with experts and desk research, the authors of this report make a series of recommendations to mitigate the threats posed by AI-generated materials and ensure that the democratic process remains resilient in the face of evolving technological challenges.

1 Mandate tagging of AI-Generated content in electoral campaigns

- The Mexican government, in collaboration with technology companies and regulatory bodies should collaborate with tech companies (social media platforms, AI developers) to establish clear guidelines for identifying and tagging AI-generated electoral content.
- Platforms should be required to embed visible labels and watermarks directly on all political content identified as being created or manipulated by AI. These labels should be easily recognizable by users to ensure transparency.

2 Require transparency reports from content and social media platforms

- To ensure accountability and security in the use of AI during electoral processes, the Mexican Government should require content and social media platform companies to publish transparency reports detailing their use of AI in election-related contexts.
- The reports could detail the deployment of AI algorithms, including any content moderation or political advertisement tools; the tools used to detect and address disinformation, deepfakes, and electoral manipulation; and information regarding the ranking, recommendation, or suppression of electoral content, among others.
- Encourage regular third-party audits by independent organizations to assess the effectiveness of these measures and ensure that social and content platforms comply with leading transparency standards.

3 Leverage AI to combat gender-based political violence in electoral processes

- Collaborate with electoral bodies, political parties, and law enforcement agencies to explore the development of responsible and ethical AI systems that analyze historical data on political violence to predict areas and groups at high risk for gender-based political violence during electoral campaigns.
- Deploy AI-driven systems to monitor content and social media platforms, political forums, and other digital spaces for real-time detection of gendered violence, hate speech, and harassment targeting political actors. For this, platforms and tech companies could develop flagging mechanisms that alert moderators or law enforcement when gender-based political violence is detected.
- Develop AI systems that could offer actionable insights in combating gender-based political violence for the electoral authorities.

4 Strengthen Mexico's electoral authorities capabilities regarding the impact of AI on democracy

- Mexico should prioritize strengthening its electoral authorities and updating their capabilities related to new technologies, including AI and its potential impact on society.
- Carry out red teaming workshops with election polling officials and law enforcement to simulate worst case scenarios involving IA threats in electoral processes and create different actionable contingency plans accordingly.
- Develop AI-driven transparency tools to enhance the oversight of campaign financing, electoral advertising, and political communication. These tools can help detect disinformation, track digital spending, and ensure compliance with electoral regulations, fostering greater accountability and trust in the electoral process.
- Explore the creation of a trusted flagger system in Mexico, modeled after the European Union's Digital Services Act (DSA), where fact-checkers, trade unions, and networks of digital rights organizations (selected by INE) work independently from online platforms to identify and report illegal content during elections, ensuring diligence, accuracy, and objectivity in content moderation.

5

Strengthen regulatory electoral frameworks to address the specific challenges of generative AI in elections

- Create dialogues between INE, tech companies, media, civil society, academia, and international organizations to generate the insights to reform exiting electoral laws to address AI-generated content for elections.
- The updated regulatory framework must include clear and enforceable sanctions for individuals, political parties, or entities that use generative AI to manipulate electoral outcomes.
- Expand INE's capacities to monitor, track, and sanction the improper use of AI technologies during elections.

6

Promote multi-stakeholder collaboration to mitigate potential electoral risks

- The Mexican government should establish an independent, cross-sector task force to address the potential risks AI poses to electoral integrity. This task force would operate on a continuous basis and include representatives from key sectors—government, electoral authorities, technology companies, civil society, academia, and international organizations.
- The task force would continuously monitor AI-driven electoral threats, set up early warning systems to detect these threats in real-time and coordinate countermeasures. It would also focus on developing tools to help prevent and mitigate AI risks in elections. For example, comprehensive strategies to identify and counter misinformation and disinformation.
- The task force would facilitate regular knowledge exchanges and collaboration between sectors, ensuring that governments, media, tech companies, academia, and civil society are aligned on best practices.

7

Foster public awareness of AI-generated electoral content

- The Ministry of Public Education (SEP), in collaboration with INE's Dirección Ejecutiva de Capacitación Electoral y Educación Cívica (DECEYEC), and civil society, should strengthen and implement more campaigns, programs, strategies, and accessible tools to improve the level of digital literacy tailored to electoral contexts. These programs could include online

courses, workshops, and public awareness campaigns that teach individuals how to critically evaluate the authenticity of information, recognize AI-generated content, and understand the mechanics of disinformation.

- National and local media outlets, in partnership with electoral authorities, should launch public awareness campaigns, such as social media campaigns and government spots, aimed at informing citizens about AI's impact on elections and the risks of disinformation.
- Specialized training programs could be developed for vulnerable groups such as first-time voters, elderly citizens, and minority groups, who may be more susceptible to disinformation.

8

Enhance the role of digital citizenship in democracy

- The sense of citizenship and digital agency should be central to these campaigns. Citizens need to be empowered as active participants in safeguarding democracy, not just passive consumers of information. The courses on civics should integrate media and digital citizenship into the national education curriculum as well as creating campaigns that reach marginalized communities.
- Develop workshops on civic engagement between government, INE, and civil society focused on the evolving role of citizens in the digital age, encouraging voters to see themselves as gatekeepers who can help prevent the spread of disinformation.

9

Foster research and International Cooperation on AI in electoral contexts

- Create knowledge-exchange and conversation spaces to learn about and share successful strategies and lessons-learned in mitigating AI-related risks during elections at an international level.
- From the insights that come out of these conversations, collaborate on developing international norms and standards for the ethical use of AI in elections, ensuring transparency, accountability, and fairness.
- Promote funding opportunities for collaborative research projects addressing specific AI-related challenges in electoral processes.

6. Conclusion

The 2024 electoral process in Mexico provided not only a valuable opportunity to evaluate the initial impact of generative AI on electoral integrity but also to compare it with international experiences. Although AI-generated content had a limited influence in Mexico's past electoral cycle due to the minimal competition faced by the Morena party, a clear favorite, this doesn't mean Mexico's elections will always be as "safe" from the harsher and more negative impacts of AI on democracy. In fact, global trends highlight the need for proactive strategies to address future electoral challenges.

Mexico's 2024 elections also underscored that electoral behavior is shaped by a complex interplay of elements such as culture and social, economic, and political dynamics. In this context, campaigns and mass persuasion—whether through traditional or AI-driven tools—played a more limited role than commonly assumed. This past election was defined not by the integration of AI in electoral campaigning, but rather by the unique Mexican political context, characterized by the dominant influence of one party and the weakness of the opposition.

While it might be tempting to attribute electoral challenges to technology alone, a belief that is starting to emerge worldwide, we must avoid the trap of blaming AI or letting AI-related challenges blur the deeper structural issues facing democracy. AI could serve as a convenient scapegoat, deflecting attention from more critical issues like institutional corruption, polarization, and the weakening of democratic checks and balances.

Nevertheless, some of the concerns surrounding AI and democracy, especially in the context of elections, are justified. Safeguarding future elections will require preventative measures, including clear guidelines on AI use in political campaigns, transparency mandates and accountability mechanisms, multi-stakeholder collaborations, and public awareness campaigns aimed at mitigating potential risks.

Looking ahead, Mexico's priority must be to address the risk to democracy posed by AI while tackling deeper-rooted issues. Mexico must act now to ensure that, instead of undermining democracy, AI becomes a tool for its reinforcement and protection, enhancing transparency, accountability, and public trust in the electoral process, on which a fairer future depends.

7. Annexes

7.1. Annex 1- Overview of Mexico's political structure

Mexico is a Federal Republic comprising 31 autonomous states and a Federal District (Mexico City). Its political and government structure are based on the 1917 Constitution, which establishes the division of powers into three main branches, replicated at both federal and local levels:

- **The Executive Branch.** The President is the central figure of the Executive Branch, elected by direct vote for a six-year term with no possibility of re-election. State governors and mayors are also elected directly for six-year terms.
- **The Legislative Branch.** The Legislative Branch is bicameral, composed of the Congress, which includes:
 - **The Chamber of Deputies.** This chamber has 500 seats; 300 deputies are elected by direct vote for a three-year term, while the remaining 200 seats are distributed proportionally among the political parties.
 - **The Senate.** This chamber has 128 seats; 96 senators are elected by direct vote for six-year terms, while the remaining 32 seats are distributed proportionally among the political parties.

Local congresses are unicameral as they are composed of only the Chamber of Deputies.

- **The Judicial Branch.** The Judicial Branch is headed by the Supreme Court of Justice and comprises a system of federal and local courts. Prior to September 2024, the magistrates for the Supreme Court were elected by the President and approved by the Senate. The local magistrates and judges were appointed and assigned by the Federal Judiciary Council, which oversees the administration and governance of the Judicial Branch. As of September 2024, all these roles are submitted to public vote¹⁵.

Mexico's current electoral structure.

There are currently seven political parties registered in the National Electoral Institute (Instituto Nacional Electoral, INE) listed in alphabetical order: Movimiento Ciudadano

(MC), Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional (Morena), Partido Acción Nacional (PAN), Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD), Partido del Trabajo (PT), Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), and Partido Verde Ecologista de México (PVEM).

The most recent electoral reform, enacted in 2014, consolidated changes gradually introduced in previous reforms, all aimed at establishing autonomous and impartial electoral authorities and institutions to promote fairer political competition. As a result, the National Electoral Institute (Instituto Nacional Electoral, INE) was established that same year as the foremost authority in organizing both federal and local elections and as the main arbiter.

¹⁵ At the time of this document, the Judicial Reform promoted by former President Andrés Manuel López Obrador was approved. One of the main changes introduced is the election of the Judicial Branch positions by popular vote. For more details, please visit:

<https://www.sitios.scjn.gob.mx/cec/sites/default/files/banner/2024-07/Analysis%20of%20the%20Judicial%20Reform-ENGLISH%20VERSION%5B50%5D%5B71%5D.pdf>

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