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AI IN ELECTIONS

IN EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA:

Opportunities, Challenges, and Ways Forward for Democrats and Liberals

AI in Elections in East and Southeast Asia:
Opportunities, challenges, and ways forward for democrats and liberals

Guide to content

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AI in Elections in East and Southeast Asia:
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1. Introduction

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into electoral and political processes in East and Southeast Asia represents one of the most transformative shifts in contemporary politics. As AI technologies evolve, they are poised to reshape how elections are conducted, presenting both significant opportunities and challenges. This policy paper examines the emerging applications, implications, and policy options related to AI in elections, with a particular focus on the role that democratic and liberal political actors across the region can play.

AI's potential to revolutionize politics is matched only by the speed at which it is advancing. Since the introduction of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, which achieved unprecedented growth surpassing that of TikTok, Spotify, and YouTube combined, political organizations have been compelled to adapt swiftly (Cerullo 2023). While headlines often focus on the misuse of AI—highlighting deep fakes and disinformation as prime concerns—there is also immense potential for AI to enhance election administration, voter engagement, and campaign efficiency. Ignoring these developments risks leaving political actors, particularly democratic and liberal parties, at a disadvantage as opposing political forces and other industries embrace AI.

Figure A. Top Ten Countries by Percentage of Active ChatGPT Users

Rank	Country	Percentage of surveyed individuals using ChatGPT
1	India	45%
2	Morocco	38%
3	UAE	34%
4	Argentina	32%
5	Brazil	32%
6	Indonesia	32%
7	South Africa	31%
8	Philippines	28%
9	Sweden	27%
10	South Korea	26%

Source: CCI Global Consumer Sentiment Survey 2023 by Boston Consulting Group

This is a critical juncture for political stakeholders in East and Southeast Asia to evaluate AI's potential, not only as a tool of influence but as an instrument that can be leveraged for ethical and effective political engagement. The initial wave of AI adoption in politics has shown that while risks are evident, such as the potential for biased messaging and data misuse, the opportunities are just as significant. For instance, campaigns have been able to increase content production, tailor communications to specific voter demographics, and extract actionable insights from extensive public data in ways previously unattainable. This technology can be empowering for many democratic and liberal organizations across the region.

The policy landscape, however, is still in an early stage of development. As seen in current research, most jurisdictions and organizations including political actors are presently experimenting with AI to judge its efficacy and identify best practices. This experimentation phase is crucial for understanding how AI can be effectively integrated into electoral and political processes while ensuring that safeguards are in place to mitigate associated risks. Generative AI for instance, while nascent, already supports political parties in many areas of campaign including brainstorming strategies, drafting initial content for mass outreach, and engaging voters through automated chatbots.

Yet, as political actors explore AI's potential, concerns about responsible use and ethical implications grow. Human oversight must be maintained as a fundamental component of AI processes, ensuring that its internal and external uses remain transparent, accountable, and aligned with liberal and democratic values. Leaders within political organizations must take a proactive stance, setting clear guidelines and expectations on how and when AI should be used to maintain trust and prevent misuse.

Figure B. Definition of Terms

Artificial Intelligence	The simulation of human intelligence by computers, enabling them to perform tasks like learning, reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making.
Machine Learning (ML)	A branch of AI where computers learn from data and improve their performance over time without being explicitly programmed for specific tasks.
Natural Language Processing (NPL)	A field of AI that enables computers to understand, interpret, and respond to human language in a natural way.
Generative AI	A type of AI that creates new content, such as text, images, or music, based on patterns learned from existing data.
Misinformation	False or misleading information shared without intent to deceive.

Disinformation	False information deliberately created and spread to mislead or manipulate people.
Malinformation	True information shared with harmful intent, often out of context or with malicious goals.
Algorithm	A set of rules or instructions that a computer follows to solve problems or perform tasks. Algorithms are the building blocks of AI systems.
Data Privacy	The protection of personal information collected, stored, or processed by AI systems, ensuring compliance with privacy laws and ethical standards.
AI Explainability	The ability of an AI system to provide understandable explanations for its outputs or decisions, critical for trust and accountability.
Human-in-the-Loop (HITL)	AI systems that require human oversight or intervention in decision-making processes to ensure accountability and reduce risks.
AI Sovereignty	The principle that nations should control their own digital infrastructure, data, and AI systems, often influencing regulatory approaches.
Ethical AI / Responsible AI	The practice of designing, developing, and deploying AI systems that respect human rights, fairness, and social values.

In East and Southeast Asia, the landscape of AI in politics is shaped by the diversity of political systems and levels of technological readiness. Democracies such as South Korea and Taiwan are using AI to increase voter participation and transparency, while more authoritarian regimes like China and Vietnam deploy AI to monitor public sentiment and control information flow. This paper aims to unpack these varied applications, explore the opportunities AI presents for democratic practices, and highlight the critical risks that need to be managed.

The challenges of taming a fast evolving technology like AI may appear to be overwhelming. But the stakes are high, and there is no better time to address these challenges than now. By experimenting responsibly and implementing AI in thoughtful ways, political stakeholders can harness its benefits to improve electoral integrity and voter engagement. This policy paper aims to contribute to public conversations by presenting a comprehensive analysis of AI's use in electoral processes, offering evidence-based insights, and recommending strategies for responsible and innovative AI integration. Through careful stewardship, political actors can navigate the evolving AI landscape, ensuring that it enhances, rather than undermines, the democratic and liberal foundations of free elections in East and Southeast Asia.

This paper begins with an introduction that contextualizes the significance of AI in the contemporary political landscape, particularly in East and Southeast Asia. The second section,

Defining AI, breaks down key AI applications relevant to political processes and dispels common misconceptions to set a clear foundation for understanding subsequent discussions. The third section, Emerging uses of AI in elections and politics: Opportunities and risks, explores how AI is transforming various aspects of political work including message development and distribution, data analytics and research, organizational management and mobilization, and election administration, each providing an analysis of the advantages and potential pitfalls for democratic and liberal actors. The fourth section, Learning from East and Southeast Asian cases, delves into real-world applications and lessons from countries such as South Korea, Indonesia, and Taiwan, highlighting both successes and challenges. The final section, Policy options for Asian liberals and democrats, outlines guiding principles for the ethical and effective use of AI in elections and politics and presents actionable policy recommendations to help political organizations navigate this complex landscape responsibly and proactively.

2. Defining AI

AI has become a cornerstone of technological innovation, significantly influencing various sectors, including politics and governance. In the context of this policy paper on the role of AI in political processes in East and Southeast Asia, it is essential to define AI, explore its different applications, and clarify common misconceptions to lay the groundwork for an informed discussion on its opportunities and risks.

At its core, AI refers to a collection of technologies designed to simulate human intelligence. These systems can process large volumes of data, learn from patterns within that data, and make decisions with varying degrees of autonomy. AI encompasses a range of subfields, including machine learning, natural language processing, and more specialized applications like generative AI, which can create content ranging from written text to deep fake videos.

In the context of electoral and political processes, AI's transformative potential is significant. AI technologies empower political organizations to conduct enhanced analyses of voter data, identifying patterns and trends that might not be immediately apparent through conventional methods. This enables campaigns to design targeted messaging and outreach strategies that align closely with the concerns and interests of different voter demographics. For example, machine learning algorithms can sift through vast amounts of social media activity, public records, and polling data to predict voter behavior and tailor campaign efforts accordingly. Natural language processing-powered chatbots can be deployed to engage voters directly, answering questions and providing real-time updates about campaign positions or voting procedures, thus enhancing voter interaction and accessibility. Meanwhile, the use of generative AI presents both opportunities and challenges. While it can be leveraged to produce persuasive campaign content efficiently, it also raises concerns over the creation and dissemination of deepfake videos or misleading media, which can disrupt public trust and erode the integrity of electoral discourse.

Overall, AI's integration into political processes redefines the interaction between political parties and the electorate by introducing advanced data processing, strategic automation, and enhanced communication tools. This blend of technological capability not only optimizes campaign management but also poses critical considerations for transparency, ethics, and public trust in the democratic process.

2.1 Differentiating key AI applications

2.1.1 Machine Learning (ML): This subset of AI focuses on developing algorithms that can learn from data and improve their performance over time without needing explicit programming for every specific task. ML algorithms are trained on large datasets to identify patterns and make informed predictions or decisions. For example, ML can be used to analyze voter sentiment by examining social media interactions and public discourse. This capability allows political campaigns to adapt their messaging in real time, ensuring more relevant and effective outreach.

2.1.2 Natural Language Processing (NLP): NLP is an AI application that enables machines to comprehend, interpret, and generate human language in a way that is meaningful and contextually appropriate. This technology forms the basis for chatbots, virtual assistants, and automated content creation tools used in many different industries. NLP systems can engage directly with voters, answering questions, providing information about policy positions, or guiding users through voter registration steps. For instance, during recent elections in Singapore and the Philippines, AI-powered tools supported candidates by generating tailored messages that resonated with specific voter demographics.

2.1.3 Generative AI: A relatively newer application of AI, generative models such as GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) have gained significant attention. These models can create content autonomously, from campaign materials to strategic memos. While generative AI can support political actors by streamlining content creation and personalizing communications, it also raises ethical concerns. Recent reports highlight how the rapid adoption of tools like ChatGPT has transformed content production in the context of election campaigns, but documentations also warn of risks associated with unverified, AI-generated content and its potential to produce misinformation if not carefully managed.

2.2 Common misconceptions about AI

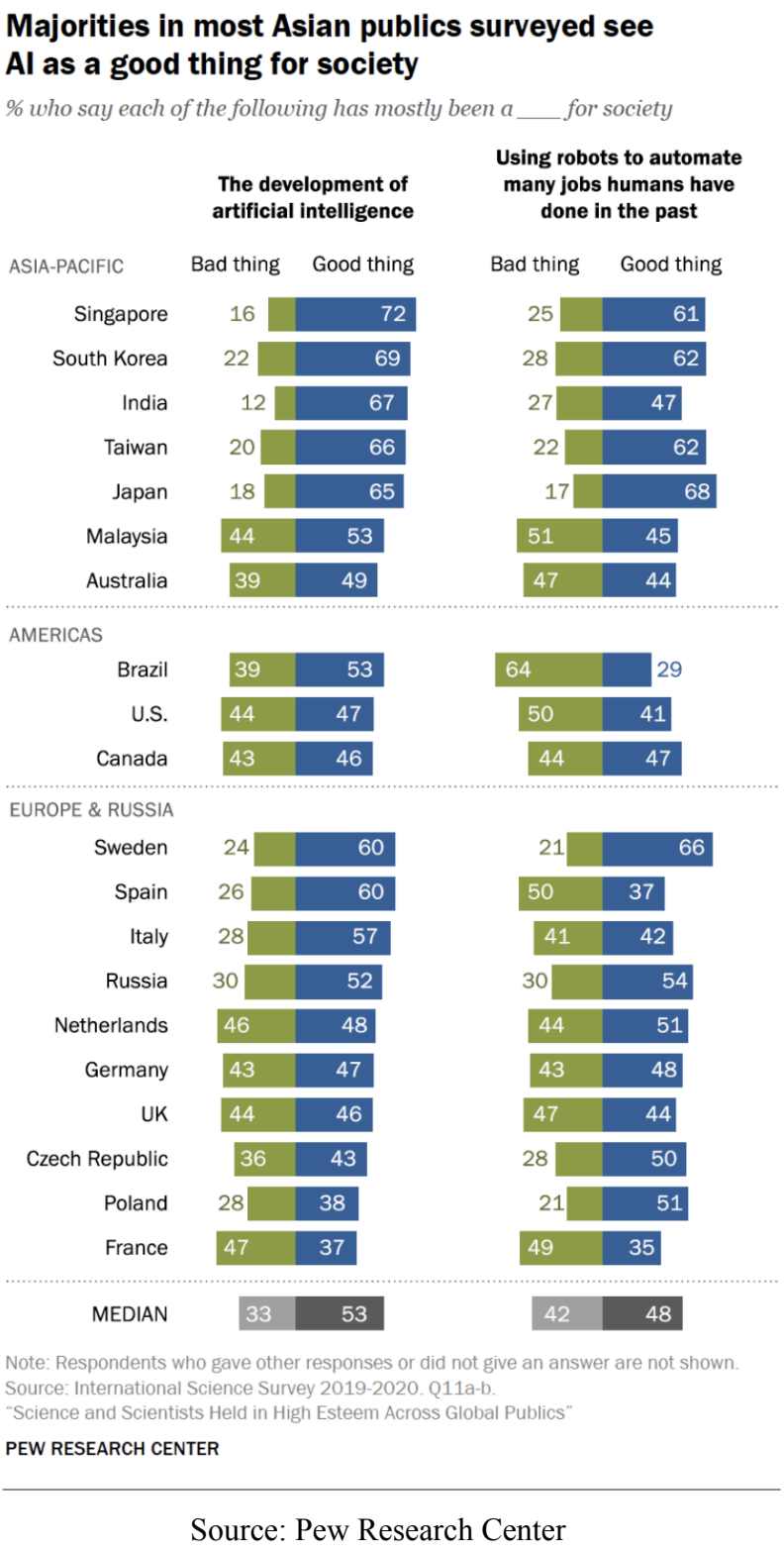
2.2.1 AI as autonomous decision makers: A prevalent misconception is that AI systems operate independently, making decisions without human oversight. While advanced AI systems can process and analyze data autonomously, human intervention remains a critical component of responsible AI use, especially in electoral processes. The integration of AI in political use requires human oversight to ensure ethical standards, accuracy, and alignment with democratic values.

2.2.2 AI as infallible: Another common myth is that AI provides flawless solutions. While AI can analyze data at an unprecedented scale and speed, it is only as good as the data it is trained on. Biases inherent in data can lead to skewed outcomes. Biased data can exacerbate misinformation or produce discriminatory targeting practices. Political campaigns must remain vigilant, verifying AI-generated insights and addressing potential biases to maintain fairness and transparency.

2.2.3 AI as an exclusive tool for large organizations: Many believe that only large, well-funded organizations can benefit from AI. While advanced enterprise solutions may be costly, there is a growing range of affordable, open-source AI tools that smaller parties and independent organizations can leverage. These tools allow for data analysis, targeted messaging, and voter engagement at a fraction of traditional costs, democratizing access to technological innovation in electoral contexts.

2.2.4 AI is equivalent to misinformation: Although much of the public discourse around AI emphasizes its potential to spread misinformation, this narrative overlooks AI's role as a tool that can be wielded either ethically or unethically. While generative AI can indeed be used to create misleading content, it also offers mechanisms for fact-checking and detecting false information. Responsible use of AI, guided by ethical policies and human oversight, can help mitigate risks and harness AI's potential for promoting transparent and accurate electoral practices.

Figure C. Public Perceptions of Development of AI



Source: Pew Research Center

AI in electoral processes encompasses a spectrum of technologies that each bring unique benefits and challenges. Machine learning and NLP enhance data analysis and voter engagement, while generative AI transforms content creation and strategic communication. However, common misconceptions about AI's autonomy, infallibility, and exclusivity need to be clarified to foster informed discussions about its role in politics. Political stakeholders must understand that while AI holds significant promise, its responsible application is crucial for maintaining democratic integrity, transparency, and public trust.

Understanding the nature of AI in politics requires acknowledging its dual potential. On one hand, AI provides unprecedented opportunities for political actors to optimize their strategies, engage with voters more effectively, and enhance operational efficiency. On the other hand, it poses risks that must be managed proactively. These risks include data privacy concerns, the spread of disinformation, and the potential for AI-driven content to exacerbate political polarization. In this report, we discuss how AI-powered tools can be used responsibly, emphasizing that training on the proper utilization of AI and the integration of human review are essential to ensure ethical practices.

3. Emerging uses of AI in elections and politics: Opportunities and risks

The use of AI is reshaping political campaigns, voter engagement, and election management, presenting both opportunities and challenges. The analysis identifies the key emerging applications of AI in the region and explores their implications for liberal and democratic parties by examining opportunities and associated risks.

Figure D. Emerging Uses of AI in Elections and Politics

Message development and distribution	AI in message development and distribution enhances political campaigns by using machine learning to create targeted messages and personalize outreach to specific voter segments. This technology allows campaigns to automate content creation, increasing efficiency and outreach. However, risks include reinforcing biases and spreading misinformation, requiring careful oversight to ensure ethical use and maintain public trust.
Data analytics and research	AI in data analytics and research allows political campaigns to gain deeper insights into voter sentiment and behavior, enabling more effective targeting and segmenting of voters. By analyzing large datasets, AI helps predict voter behavior, segment audiences, and track emerging trends. However, risks include data privacy concerns, potential bias in AI models, and misuse of personal data.
Organizational management and mobilization	AI has become a transformative tool for political organizations, enhancing internal operations, volunteer mobilization, and resource management. By using machine learning and predictive analytics, AI optimizes communication, training, and coordination, improving campaign efficiency. It can personalize volunteer engagement, streamline onboarding, and track morale. However, challenges include

	the digital divide, over-reliance on automation, and privacy risks.
Election administration	AI is revolutionizing election management by improving efficiency, transparency, and accuracy. It helps with resource allocation by predicting voter turnout, enhances voter registration accuracy by identifying discrepancies, and allows real-time monitoring of election day events for quick decision-making. However, risks such as technical failures, cybersecurity threats, disinformation through deep fakes, and over-reliance on automation without human oversight must be carefully managed to protect the integrity of elections.

3.1 AI in message development and distribution

The advent of AI has revolutionized message development and distribution in political campaigns, transforming how parties craft, refine, and disseminate their communications. By employing machine learning algorithms and data-driven tools, campaigns can analyze vast datasets—including social media interactions, demographic trends, and voter behavior—to produce and distribute highly targeted, impactful messages. This strategic use of AI enables campaigns to personalize outreach, ensuring that communications resonate with diverse voter segments and adapt to changing sentiments.

Generative AI has taken these capabilities to a new level by significantly enhancing the speed and scalability of content creation. Tools like those developed by Tech for Campaigns serve as powerful AI-driven platforms that assist in drafting campaign materials, such as fundraising emails, advocacy letters, and strategic memos (Curi 2024). These tools generate content that is approximately 70% complete, allowing campaign staff to focus on reviewing, refining, and personalizing the output to maintain high-quality standards (Higher Ground Labs 2024). This AI-human collaboration optimizes workflow, allowing campaigns to respond more dynamically to evolving political landscapes.

Figure E. Tech for Campaigns

Developed in 2017 by a team of political strategists and technology experts, Tech for Campaigns empowers progressive campaigns in the United States with cutting-edge technology and tools to enhance electoral strategies, improve voter outreach, and boost campaign efficiency, ultimately fostering greater equity in electoral competition and strengthening the democratic process.

Key features of Tech for Campaigns

Message Development	Uses machine learning algorithms to create targeted messages derived from data analysis.
Personalized Outreach	Customizes messages to engage effectively with a wide range of voter segments.

3.1.1 Opportunities

The use of AI in message development and distribution offers numerous advantages, particularly for smaller or resource-constrained political parties. AI tools can democratize access to high-quality communication strategies by providing automated content drafting, allowing parties to compete with more extensive, better-funded organizations.

Organizations such as the US-based Rural Ground Game have also leveraged generative AI to refine their messaging for specific voter demographics, using feedback loops to avoid generic or stereotypical language and ensure cultural relevance (Higher Ground Labs 2024). Similarly, research by Tech for Campaigns highlighted that the use of AI-assisted drafting tools for fundraising communications improved efficiency, with campaigns reporting a 350-440% increase in dollars raised per work hour (Franco & Radford 2024). These metrics underscore AI's ability to optimize resource allocation and boost the effectiveness of outreach efforts.

AI tools can produce persuasive, high-performing content comparable to that created by humans although there are still consistency challenges (Bae 2024). By automating initial drafts and allowing human teams to review and refine them, campaigns can quickly adapt messaging strategies and respond to real-time events, staying ahead in a fast-paced political environment.

3.1.2 Risks

Despite its benefits, the use of AI in message development and distribution comes with notable challenges that must be addressed. A significant concern is the potential for reinforcing existing biases. AI models trained on incomplete or skewed datasets may replicate these biases, resulting in content that disproportionately favors certain voter segments or perspectives (Cowgill et. al. 2020). This can alienate specific demographics or amplify divisive themes, contributing to "filter bubbles" that limit voters' exposure to varied viewpoints (Samuels 2012).

Another substantial risk is the spread of misinformation. Without comprehensive oversight, AI-generated content could inadvertently include inaccuracies or misleading information (Angwin et. al. 2024).. Studies have shown that while AI-generated messages can be as persuasive as human-crafted ones, they require meticulous human review to ensure truthfulness and prevent the propagation of false narratives (Bontridder and Poullet 2021). Recent studies point out that the subtlety of AI-generated content makes it difficult for the public to discern its origin, heightening the need for transparency and ethical practices (Zhou et. al. 2023).

AI's role in message development and distribution offers transformative potential for political campaigns, enabling more tailored, efficient, and responsive communications. However, this power must be wielded responsibly. By implementing strong oversight measures, maintaining transparency, and adhering to ethical data practices, campaigns can leverage AI to enhance voter outreach while safeguarding democratic values and public trust.

3.2 AI in data analytics and research

AI-driven data analytics offer significant opportunities for political campaigns to understand and engage with voters more effectively. By analyzing large datasets that include social media interactions, survey responses, and demographic profiles, AI tools empower campaigns to gain deeper insights into voter sentiment and behavior. These tools allow political organizations to tailor their messaging, adjust their strategies in real-time, and strengthen voter outreach.

Figure F. Listening Post

Developed by a team of AI and media monitoring experts, Listening Post is an advanced platform designed to help users efficiently track and analyze the growing world of online audio and video content. Its purpose is to provide timely insights, helping businesses, political analysts, and content creators stay informed and ahead of emerging trends in a rapidly changing media landscape.

Key Features of Listening Post

Comprehensive AI-Powered Monitoring and Discovery	Monitors political feeds, podcasts, video channels, and online ads, using AI to deliver timely alerts and uncover shifting political landscapes, giving users a strategic edge in tracking political conversations.
Audio/Video Transcription and Actionable Analysis	Automatically converts audio and video content into text for easier analysis, while structuring chaotic data into actionable insights, including sentiment analysis.

3.2.1 Opportunities

The application of AI in data analytics can help campaigns establish stronger and more meaningful connections with voters. This capability to adapt swiftly to real-time data ensures that campaigns remain relevant and increase voter engagement.

AI-driven predictive modeling also provides opportunities to build custom audiences and enhance voter segmentation. Platforms such as Change Research's Magnify AI highlight how AI can identify supporter bases that might not be detected through conventional methods (Change Research 2024). By going beyond traditional partisanship metrics, campaigns can engage in more issue-oriented and targeted outreach, making their resource allocation more strategic. This is particularly beneficial for democratic and

liberal parties, which often prioritize connecting with diverse voter bases on key policy issues.

AI's capability to analyze complex datasets allows campaigns to create microtargeted strategies that resonate with specific voter segments (Higher Ground Labs 2024). By studying voter behavior and psychographics, campaigns can deliver personalized messages that address distinct concerns, resulting in a more robust connection with various demographic groups. This precision ensures that outreach efforts yield higher voter engagement and conversion rates.

AI's ability to track trends and forecast voter behavior equips campaign teams too with actionable insights. This proactive strategy formation helps political actors identify emerging issues, adapt messaging in response, and maintain a competitive edge in the electoral landscape.

3.2.2 Risks

While the advantages of AI in data analytics are considerable, significant risks accompany its use. Chief among these are data privacy and security concerns. AI tools often process personal data obtained from public platforms without explicit consent, raising the potential for misuse of data handling (Andreotta et. al. 2021). In regions such as Southeast Asia, where data protection regulations may be insufficient, these risks are heightened. Campaigns using AI must navigate the ethical implications of collecting and processing voter information, as failure to do so can erode trust and damage public perception.

The reliance on AI-generated insights also introduces the risk of biased outcomes. AI models trained on unbalanced or unrepresentative data can lead to skewed analyses that influence campaign strategies in unintended ways (Cowgill et. al. 2020). This can result in discriminatory targeting practices or misinformation being propagated if not carefully managed.

The potential of AI in data analytics and voter behavior research is transformative, allowing campaigns to forge deeper connections, align strategies with public sentiment, and optimize resource allocation. However, these benefits must be balanced with a strong commitment to ethical standards, robust privacy protections, and rigorous oversight to ensure that AI enhances, rather than compromises, the integrity of the electoral process.

3.3 AI in organizational management and mobilization

AI has become a transformative tool for political organizations, not only in external voter engagement but also in enhancing internal party operations and volunteer mobilization. By using machine learning algorithms and predictive analytics, parties can better manage their internal processes, energize their base, and optimize the strategic deployment of resources. This approach helps political organizations strengthen internal cohesion, improve volunteer training and onboarding, and create a more dynamic and efficient campaign structure.

Figure G. Fair Count

Founded in 2019 by Stacey Abrams, Fair Count empowers underrepresented communities in Georgia, boosts voter participation, and ensures fair representation. Using AI tools like Generative AI Analysis and County-Level Insights, it refines voter engagement strategies and optimizes resource allocation, enhancing mobilization efforts and campaign efficiency.

Key Features of Fair Count

Generative AI Analysis	Uses AI to analyze voter sentiment and provide insights from transcripts, helping campaigns refine their strategies and understand their base more effectively, thus optimizing resource allocation and engagement efforts.
Country-level Insights	By generating insights specific to counties, this feature enables targeted campaign strategies, ensuring that resources are deployed where they are needed most, thus enhancing internal coordination and improving campaign efficiency.

3.3.1 Opportunities

AI can be used to enhance the internal mobilization of party members by improving communication, tracking engagement, and streamlining coordination efforts. AI-driven tools can analyze member activity, suggest optimal communication channels, and provide personalized updates that keep members informed and engaged. For example, machine learning algorithms can assess which types of content resonate most with party members and tailor communications to maximize involvement and participation (Blanchard et. al. 2024).

AI has also proven to be invaluable in training and onboarding new volunteers at scale, equipping them to run campaigns more effectively (Higher Ground Labs 2024). AI-powered learning platforms can provide personalized training modules that adapt to the volunteer's learning pace and skill level. By using interactive AI-driven simulations, volunteers can practice scenarios they may encounter during canvassing or phone banking, enhancing their readiness and confidence (Tong and Coster 2023). Additionally, chatbots and AI-based digital assistants can guide new recruits through the onboarding

process, answer questions in real-time, and ensure they have the resources needed to become productive team members quickly (Reuters 2024).

Keeping volunteers motivated over the course of a long campaign is another challenge that AI can help address. AI-driven sentiment analysis can monitor volunteer morale through internal surveys, feedback channels, and social media interactions. This allows campaign managers to identify when engagement levels are dropping and respond proactively by implementing strategies that rekindle enthusiasm, such as personalized motivational messages, rewards for milestones achieved, or targeted engagement campaigns (Khan et. al. 2023). AI can also help segment volunteers into groups based on their strengths and interests, aligning them with tasks that match their skill sets and boosting overall productivity and satisfaction (Huang & Sun 2020).

AI can also optimize how campaigns allocate volunteer resources by predicting peak engagement periods and strategically scheduling volunteer shifts based on data-driven insights (Khan et. al. 2023). This ensures that resources are available when most needed, improving campaign efficiency. Additionally, AI tools can automate the coordination of volunteer activities, such as sending reminders, scheduling training sessions, and assigning tasks, which helps keep operations seamless and reduces the administrative burden on campaign staff.

3.3.2 Risks

One of the most significant challenges in utilizing AI for internal mobilization is the digital divide and technological disparities. Not all members or volunteers possess equal access to advanced digital tools or the technical skills required to effectively use AI-driven platforms (Tipnis et. al. 2024). This gap can create disparities in participation, where those with higher digital literacy or better access to technology become more actively involved, while others may be marginalized or unable to contribute meaningfully (Tipnis et. al. 2024). The result is an uneven integration of members into campaign activities, which can undermine collective efforts and stifle the diverse input essential for robust campaign strategies.

Another concern is the potential for over-reliance on automation. While AI has the capacity to streamline numerous processes, including communication, scheduling, and data analysis, relying too heavily on automation can result in missed opportunities for personal connection and meaningful engagement (Higher Ground Labs 2024). Volunteers and party members value the human touch in their interactions, which helps foster a sense of community and shared purpose. If campaigns depend solely on AI-generated messages or automated responses, the personalized, relational aspect of volunteer coordination may

be lost. This lack of personal interaction can lead to decreased motivation and engagement over time, diminishing the efficacy of the campaign's efforts.

Privacy and data security present further challenges in the use of AI for managing internal operations and monitoring volunteer activity. AI systems used for tracking engagement or automating outreach require the collection and processing of significant amounts of data (Andreotta et. al. 2021). This raises critical concerns about the security and ethical use of such data. Mishandling or compromising sensitive information—such as volunteer contact details, participation records, or personal preferences—can erode trust within the organization. The potential for data breaches or unethical data practices could discourage volunteers from participating and severely impact the campaign's reputation. Ensuring data security and maintaining transparency about data usage are imperative to build and sustain trust among party members and volunteers.

AI's role in organizational management and mobilization extends beyond external voter engagement; it can transform internal party operations and volunteer management by streamlining processes, enhancing training, and improving resource allocation. However, political organizations must balance the technological benefits with ethical considerations, human oversight, and robust data security practices. By doing so, they can leverage AI to energize their base, equip volunteers effectively, and run campaigns that are not only efficient but also inclusive and secure.

3.4 AI in election administration

AI is increasingly being integrated into election administration to enhance the operational capabilities of electoral management bodies (EMBs). These technologies support a range of functions, including voter registration management, resource allocation, and streamlining election day operations (Juneja 2024). By automating routine tasks and leveraging real-time data analysis, AI helps EMBs manage complex electoral processes more efficiently and transparently, which is essential for maintaining public trust in democratic systems.

Figure H. Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC)

The Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) is a nonprofit organization founded in 2012 to enhance the accuracy of voter registration rolls across the United States. Through collaboration with state election officials, ERIC works to improve electoral integrity and expand access to voter registration for eligible citizens.

Key Features of ERIC

Data Matching and Fraud Detection	Utilizes cross-state data comparison and Social Security death records to identify duplicate registrations, deceased voters, and individuals who

	have moved, while also monitoring voter registrations across state lines to detect potential voter fraud, ensuring the integrity of the voter registration process.
Statistical Reporting	Generates transparent reports on deceased voters, movers, and duplicate registrations, offering valuable insights to maintain accountability and support effective election administration.

3.4.1 Opportunities

One of the most notable opportunities AI presents is in the optimization of resource allocation. EMBs often face challenges related to the equitable distribution of resources, such as voting machines, ballots, and staff, to meet the varying demands of polling stations (Padmanabhan et. al. 2023). AI can analyze historical data and real-time information to predict voter turnout patterns and help officials allocate resources accordingly (Markay 2022). This proactive approach ensures that high-traffic polling stations receive adequate support, minimizing waiting times and preventing potential disruptions. For example, similar applications of AI-driven resource management in various industries have demonstrated improvements in resource and workforce allocation (Al Haidary et. al. 2021; Talarico & Duque 2015).

Another significant advantage is the use of AI in maintaining accurate and current voter registration systems (Akbar, et. al. 2021). The complexity of managing voter rolls can lead to errors that may result in voter disenfranchisement or inflated registration lists. AI tools can cross-reference multiple data sources to identify discrepancies, such as duplicate registrations or outdated information, and prompt further investigation by election officials (Electronic Registration Information Center 2024). This automated oversight helps uphold the integrity of the voter list, contributing to fairer elections where each eligible vote is counted and the potential for fraud is minimized.

AI's potential for real-time data analysis is also transformative for EMBs. Election day operations involve constant monitoring and quick decision-making to address unexpected developments, such as surges in voter turnout or technical malfunctions at polling stations. AI tools equipped with predictive analytics can provide a comprehensive overview of these operations, enabling EMBs to make data-driven decisions swiftly (Juneja and Floridi 2023). The ability to respond to challenges as they arise ensures smoother operations and reinforces public confidence in the electoral system.

Moreover, the streamlining of routine processes through automation allows EMBs to allocate their human resources more strategically (Juneja 2024). Tasks that are typically labor-intensive, such as communication with polling station coordinators and the updating of voter lists, can be automated to reduce administrative burdens. This frees up staff to focus on critical decision-making and oversight, enhancing the overall efficacy of the electoral process.

For liberal and democratic parties, the benefits of AI integration in election management go beyond operational efficiency. Transparent and well-organized elections build trust in the democratic process and promote higher voter engagement. When voters see that elections are run smoothly and without incident, they are more likely to participate and view the process as legitimate (Bowler et. al. 2015). This trust is foundational for maintaining an engaged and active electorate that supports democratic principles.

3.4.2 Risks

Despite these benefits, AI in election management carries risks that must be acknowledged and mitigated to protect the integrity of the electoral process. One major risk is the reliability and resilience of AI systems. These technologies, while powerful, are not immune to technical issues. Software errors, network disruptions, or power outages on election day could lead to significant disruptions, delaying voting and eroding public trust in the electoral process (Juneja 2024). To safeguard against these vulnerabilities, EMBs should develop robust contingency plans that include manual fallback procedures and adequate human oversight to step in if automated systems fail.

Cybersecurity is another pressing concern (Van der Staak and Wolf 2019). AI systems used by EMBs often handle sensitive voter data and critical election infrastructure, making them attractive targets for cyberattacks. Such incidents could compromise voter data, disrupt the flow of election day operations, or even tamper with results, posing serious threats to the integrity of elections. To mitigate these risks, it is crucial that EMBs adopt advanced cybersecurity measures, such as encryption protocols, regular system audits, and partnerships with cybersecurity experts, to secure their AI tools and data against potential breaches.

The potential for AI-fueled disinformation, particularly through deepfake technology, presents an additional layer of risk (Labuz and Nehring 2024). Deepfakes—manipulated videos or audio recordings that convincingly mimic real individuals—can be used to spread false information or create confusion among voters. This technology has already been leveraged in various global contexts to misrepresent political figures and events,

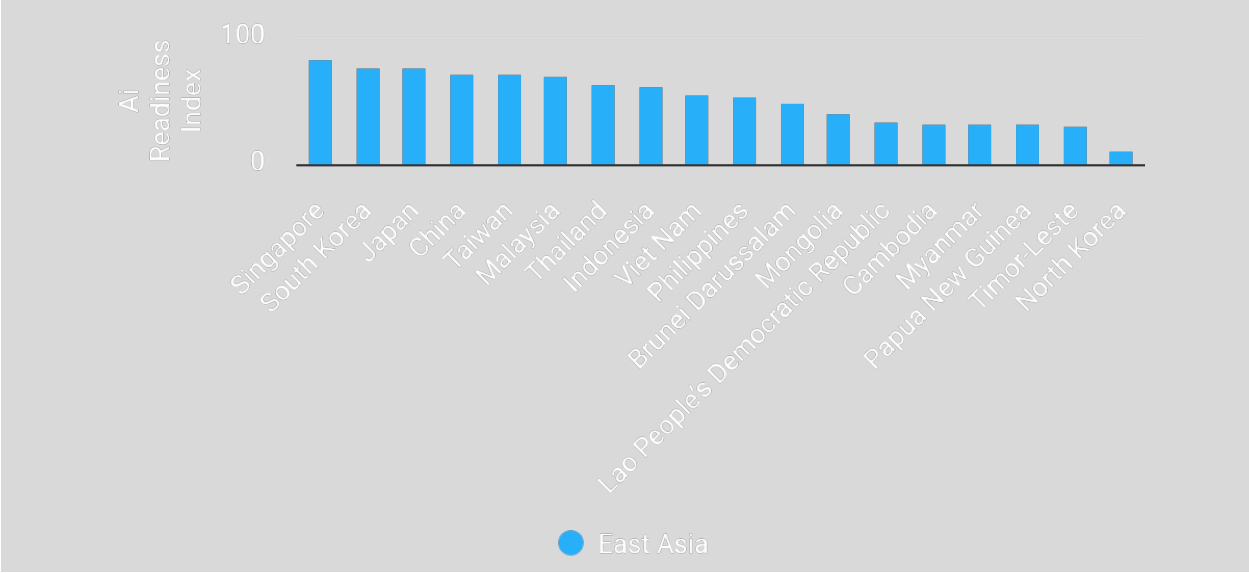
sowing distrust and undermining democratic institutions. Moreover, there is the issue of over-reliance on AI systems without sufficient human oversight (Juneja 2024). While automation can streamline many election processes, the lack of human review may result in oversight errors that could affect the fairness and transparency of elections. For example, discrepancies in data flagged by AI must be verified by election officials to avoid false positives that might unjustly affect voter registration lists or resource allocation.

AI holds the potential to significantly enhance the efficiency and transparency of election management and administration. However, these advantages come with risks that must be proactively managed to protect electoral integrity. By implementing cybersecurity measures, maintaining human oversight, enforcing regulations, and fostering public awareness, EMBs can harness AI's power responsibly and strengthen democratic processes.

4. Lessons from Indonesia, South Korea, and Taiwan

This section examines the experiences of selected East and Southeast Asian countries—Indonesia, South Korea, and Taiwan—in integrating AI into their electoral processes. These country studies aim to highlight how AI has been employed in elections, the responses to challenges encountered, and the lessons that other countries can draw from these experiences. The analysis reveals that while AI presents opportunities for innovation in election management and campaigning, it also introduces significant risks, particularly related to disinformation and misuse. By understanding these cases, political actors across the region can better navigate the complexities of AI in democratic contexts.

Figure I. AI Government Readiness Scores for Select Asian Countries



Source: AI Government Readiness Index 2023 by Oxford Insights

4.1. Indonesia

Indonesia's 2024 general elections highlighted the transformative potential of AI in elections, as well as the risks it poses to election integrity. While AI facilitated innovations, it also enabled a surge in disinformation, requiring targeted responses to safeguard the electoral process.

The General Elections Commission of Indonesia (KPU) has spearheaded efforts to integrate AI technologies across various aspects of election administration. One of the notable implementations is the Voter List Information System (Sidalih), an AI-powered tool aimed at creating credible voter lists. Launched in 2014, Sidalih has been instrumental in centralizing voter data and detecting duplicate entries, ensuring greater accuracy in voter registration (Akbar, et. al. 2021). Additionally, AI systems have been employed for other election stages, such as the Nomination Information System (Silon), used for managing candidate nominations, and the Counting Information System (Situng), which facilitates vote tabulation and public transparency. These tools have helped enhance operational efficiency, reduce human error, and streamline the management of complex electoral processes (Akbar, et. al. 2021).

However, Indonesia's experience with AI integration into its electoral management has encountered significant hurdles. Problems such as outdated voter lists and inaccurate population records created a situation where eligible voters were often disenfranchised, while individuals not entitled to vote appeared on the rolls (Akbar, et. al. 2021). These issues highlighted the need for more accurate, up-to-date records and effective AI tools to clean and verify voter data.

There were notable uses of AI too to innovate election campaigning. The Prabowo-Gibran presidential campaign epitomized AI's potential for creative voter engagement. Leveraging generative AI, the campaign developed "gemoy" avatars—cartoon-like representations of the candidates—tailored to appeal to younger voters (Tan & Husada 2024). These avatars were featured in posters and viral dance videos that resonated with Indonesia's digitally active youth population. Anies Baswedan's team launched Haveaniesday.com, while Ganjar Pranowo's campaign introduced Team.Ganjar.ai, leveraging digital tools to engage with voters and amplify their reach through visual image manipulation (Shidiq, et. al. 2024). Additionally, an AI-powered mobile application allowed users to take selfies with the candidates, personalizing voter engagement (Lamb, et. al. 2024). Other candidates used AI-powered chatbots to interact with voters, providing instant responses to policy-related inquiries and bolstering accessibility (Chen 2024). These tools enabled candidates to extend their reach and maintain a consistent presence across Indonesia's vast archipelago.

However, the role of AI in amplifying disinformation has been particularly pronounced too in Indonesia. AI-enabled tools have been weaponized to create fake news, deepfake videos, and misinformation campaigns that undermine trust in democratic institutions. Deepfake videos became a prominent tool for disseminating false narratives. Notable examples included fabricated videos of presidential candidate Anies Baswedan speaking Arabic at public events and late president Suharto urging voters to support Golkar Party candidates (AFP Indonesia 2023, Asian Network for Free Elections 2024). These videos garnered millions of views, demonstrating the viral potential of AI-generated disinformation. The Indonesian Anti-Defamation Society (MAFINDO) intensified fact-checking efforts, documenting a significant rise in political and election-related hoaxes. Their findings revealed that AI-generated disinformation had doubled compared to previous election cycles, complicating efforts to ensure information integrity (Belinda, et. al. 2024).

Indonesia's experience underscores the importance of comprehensive regulatory frameworks to govern AI use in elections. The absence of robust enforcement mechanisms allowed AI-powered disinformation campaigns to proliferate, highlighting the need for stricter compliance measures. Indonesia's Ministry of Communication and Information (Kominfo) issued Circular No. 9 of 2023, outlining ethical guidelines for AI use (Prasetyo 2024). These guidelines emphasized transparency, accountability, and the ethical deployment of AI in both public and private sectors. Kominfo also encouraged electoral stakeholders to declare and label AI-generated political content, although compliance was inconsistent because it's only voluntary (Asian Network for Free Elections 2024).

The recent elections also revealed the challenges in leading multi-stakeholder approaches in promoting ethical AI use. Ahead of the 2024 Indonesian elections, a civil society organization-led initiative sought to establish a "Joint Commitment on the Code of Ethics for Election Campaigning on Social Media" ((Koalisi Damai 2024)). The initiative aimed to bring together electoral stakeholders—including political parties, candidates, and regulators—to adopt ethical practices in the digital realm, particularly in response to the growing use of AI and other technological tools in campaigns. Despite its ambitious scope and potential to promote accountability and transparency, the initiative failed to garner widespread support.

The proposed code of ethics included several key commitments designed to mitigate the risks associated with AI and technology in election campaigns. Notably, it called for stakeholders to avoid the use of technological tools and AI to create fake accounts, deploy bots, or engage in microtargeting for trolling and cyberbullying. Additionally, the code emphasized the importance of transparency in the use of AI in election campaigns. Specific measures included requiring signatories to label AI-generated political content shared by registered election participants and their campaign teams on social media and ensuring public awareness of such content. Another provision urged signatories to declare their use of AI transparently and align their campaign practices with ethical standards.

Despite the relevance of these provisions in addressing emerging challenges, the initiative struggled to gain traction among stakeholders (Asian Network for Free Elections 2024). The lack of consensus highlights the challenges of regulating AI use in elections, particularly in environments where enforcement mechanisms are weak. This missed opportunity underscores the need for broader collaboration and stronger incentives to establish ethical frameworks that can adapt to the evolving role of AI in electoral processes.

4.2 South Korea

South Korea has emerged as a key player in the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into electoral processes, leveraging the technology to improve efficiency while contending with its inherent challenges. The country's use of AI in elections has highlighted both the potential for innovation and the risks associated with disinformation and misuse. By examining South Korea's experience, we can gain valuable insights into the opportunities AI presents, the obstacles it introduces, and the measures needed to ensure its ethical application in democratic contexts.

A central challenge in South Korea's electoral landscape has been the proliferation of AI-enabled disinformation, particularly through the use of deepfake technologies. The 2024 National Assembly elections saw a surge in election-related deepfakes, with the National Election Commission (NEC) identifying 129 such instances (The Chosun Daily

2024). These included fabricated videos of President Yoon Suk-yeol falsely admitting to corruption and criticizing political rivals (Lee 2024). The videos gained traction on social media platforms like TikTok, amplifying their reach and influence. These incidents demonstrated the capacity of AI to blur the lines between reality and fabrication, undermining public trust in political institutions.

South Korea's approach to addressing the challenges posed by AI in elections has been proactive and multifaceted. At the core of its response is the revision of the *Public Official Election Act* in 2023, which introduced strict measures to combat the use of AI for electoral manipulation (Eom 2024). The law explicitly banned the creation and dissemination of election-related deepfakes, with penalties including up to seven years in prison or fines of up to $37,500. This legislative action underscored the government's commitment to protecting electoral integrity while allowing for the constructive use of AI, such as generating campaign slogans or speeches.

In addition to legal reforms, South Korea has relied heavily on collaboration between public institutions and private sector actors. Major technology companies like Naver and Kakao have implemented measures to monitor and flag disinformation on their platforms. Kakao's "Karlo AI Profile" introduced watermarks on AI-generated content to help users discern between real and synthetic media (Lee 2024). Similarly, Deepbrain AI (2024) partnered with the National Police Agency to develop detection tools for tracking and responding to deepfake-related election crimes. These partnerships have strengthened South Korea's capacity to address the technological challenges posed by AI-driven disinformation.

South Korea's experience provides several critical lessons for other nations grappling with the integration of AI in elections. The first and most important takeaway is the necessity of a robust legal framework. The revision of the *Public Official Election Act* demonstrates how clear and enforceable laws can deter the misuse of AI while allowing for its constructive applications. Countries seeking to regulate AI in elections should adopt similarly specific and targeted legislation, balancing innovation with accountability.

Another significant lesson is the value of public-private collaboration. The role of South Korea's technology companies in detecting and mitigating disinformation highlights the importance of involving multiple stakeholders in safeguarding electoral integrity. Governments should seek partnerships with tech developers, academia, and civil society organizations to leverage collective expertise and resources in addressing AI-related challenges.

Finally, South Korea's experience underscores the need for transparency and accountability in AI use. Measures such as watermarking AI-generated content and holding regular consultations with experts can help ensure that AI is used responsibly. These efforts not only protect the integrity of elections but also build trust in democratic institutions.

4.3 Taiwan

Taiwan's experience with AI in elections offers a sobering account of how emerging technologies can be weaponized to undermine democratic integrity. In the country's most recent presidential elections in 2024, AI-driven disinformation campaigns reached unprecedented levels of sophistication and impact, exposing the vulnerabilities of electoral systems to malicious actors. Taiwan emerged as a benchmark for AI-enabled election manipulation.

One of the most significant challenges was the proliferation of AI-generated deepfakes, which blurred the lines between fact and fiction. These hyper-realistic fabrications included doctored videos and manipulated audio clips designed to falsely attribute statements or actions to political candidates. For instance, deepfake content circulated during the campaign portrayed certain candidates making inflammatory remarks they had never actually said (Hung, et. al. 2024). This deliberate misinformation eroded public trust, not only in the targeted individuals but also in the broader electoral process itself. In addition to generating audio and video content, AI is increasingly used to create avatars for fake accounts. These AI-produced avatars exhibit distinctive traits as well as background that appear intentionally blurred to obscure their origins. Taiwan AI Labs estimates that more than 730,000 troll accounts have been engaged in manipulation activities in the 2024 elections (Infodemic 2024).

Moreover, AI's ability to generate and disseminate disinformation at an unprecedented scale and volume outpaced traditional countermeasures. Taiwan saw a deluge of false narratives flood social media platforms, targeting specific voter demographics with tailored messages designed to exploit fears and biases. At least 270,000 news articles are believed to be part of disinformation campaigns (Taiwan AI Labs 2024). The speed at which AI systems could produce and distribute this content overwhelmed fact-checking organizations, creating a disinformation environment where lies could spread faster than truths could be verified.

Taiwan's experience offers critical lessons for other nations grappling with the governance of AI in elections. First, clear legal frameworks are indispensable for addressing the misuse of AI, particularly concerning disinformation. Taiwan's laws targeting deepfake creators provide a model for crafting deterrent policies that protect electoral integrity. The Legislative Yuan acted decisively by amending the Presidential

and Vice Presidential Election and Recall Act and the Civil Servants Election and Recall Act in 2023 (Hung, et. al. 2024). These legal revisions imposed stringent penalties, including prison sentences of up to seven years, for individuals who create or disseminate deepfake content intended to manipulate electoral outcomes.

Second, collaborative efforts between governments, civil society organizations, and independent fact-checking entities can amplify the effectiveness of counter-disinformation measures. The Taiwan FactCheck Center, established with government and private sector support, plays a crucial role in combating disinformation by verifying content and debunking false claims. During election cycles, the Center actively monitored online platforms for AI-generated fake news and released timely fact-checking reports to counteract misinformation (Chou 2023).

And third, Another significant way Taiwan is addressing AI-enabled disinformation is through private enterprises developing AI-driven solutions to counteract it. Taiwan AI Labs (2024), a privately funded and pioneering open AI research institute in Asia, has taken a proactive role in combating disinformation. Founded in 2017, Taiwan AI Labs specializes in trustworthy and responsible AI technologies, leveraging the country's expertise in semiconductors, healthcare data, and advanced human-machine interfaces. While its origins lie in healthcare innovation, the institute has expanded its scope to address information manipulation, particularly in the context of elections and public discourse.

A notable initiative by Taiwan AI Labs is the 'Infodemic' platform (2024), designed to provide real-time and comprehensive data analysis for understanding and countering coordinated disinformation campaigns. The platform uses large language models to monitor and analyze information manipulation across major social platforms, including Facebook, YouTube, Twitter (X), and TikTok. By identifying patterns in troll group activity and the narratives they propagate, the platform helps stakeholders recognize emerging threats and their potential impacts on public perception.

In preparation for elections, Taiwan AI Labs intensifies its efforts approximately two months before voting begins (Infodemic 2024). The organization conducts weekly closed-door meetings with domestic and international experts to share insights into disinformation trends and coordinated online behavior. This collaborative approach aims to bolster media literacy and foster resilience against manipulation by equipping non-technical partners with actionable intelligence.

Taiwan's case underscores that while AI offers transformative potential in electoral processes, its adoption must be accompanied by robust governance measures. Countries can draw inspiration from Taiwan's comprehensive strategy, which balances innovation

with safeguards to ensure that AI strengthens, rather than undermines, democratic practices.

The experiences of South Korea, Indonesia, and Taiwan reveal the transformative potential of AI in elections, as well as the risks it introduces. These case studies offer several key lessons for other nations. First, clear and enforceable laws are essential for regulating AI use in elections. Both South Korea and Taiwan's amendments to their respective election laws demonstrate the importance of addressing specific challenges like deepfake disinformation.

Second, partnerships between governments, technology companies, and civil society organizations are critical for leveraging collective expertise and resources. The role of private sector actors, particularly those also in the business of developing AI solutions, illustrates the value of multi-stakeholder approaches to combating AI-enabled disinformation. Meanwhile, Indonesia's challenges in rallying collective responses must also inform efforts to pursue similar initiatives.

And lastly, political actors must prioritize transparency in the use of AI in elections. Measures such as watermarking AI-generated content help ensure informed engagement among citizens and maintain trust in the political processes. By examining these country cases, other nations can better understand how to harness the potential of AI in elections while safeguarding democratic principles. The lessons learned from these countries underscore the importance of proactive and collaborative efforts to navigate the evolving landscape of AI in politics.

5. Policy options for democratic and liberal parties in Asia

This section introduces a comprehensive framework of guiding principles and actionable policy recommendations to equip democratic and liberal parties with strategies for the ethical integration of AI in elections and politics. By emphasizing both the transformative opportunities and the potential risks of AI, these principles aim to ensure that its use aligns with electoral integrity, enhances voter trust, and promotes democratic and liberal approaches to building national digital ecosystems. The principles draw on existing frameworks such as the EU guidelines on trustworthy AI, the ASEAN Guide on AI Governance and Ethics, and case studies from Asia, offering a synthesis tailored to the unique challenges of the region.

5.1 Guiding Principles for Ethical and Effective AI Use in Elections and Politics

The effective use of AI in political contexts requires adherence to foundational principles that prioritize ethics, transparency, and sovereignty.

Figure J. Guiding Principles for Ethical and Effective AI Use in Elections and Politics

Principle 1: Transparency, Accountability, and Explainability

Principle 2: Fairness and Non-Discrimination
Principle 3: Human Oversight and Control
Principle 4: Data Privacy, Security, and AI Sovereignty
Principle 5: Productive Experimentation with Risk Minimization

5.1.1 Principle 1: Transparency, Accountability, and Explainability

Transparency is critical to building public trust in AI use in elections and politics. Political entities must clearly communicate when and how AI technologies are employed, whether in voter outreach, campaign management, or election administration. For example, the use of AI-powered chatbots to provide voters with information on different aspects of the electoral and political processes is quickly becoming mainstream. The use of these AI chatbots should always be accompanied by clear disclosures to ensure trust and clarity among users and the broader public.

Accountability complements transparency by holding parties responsible for the outcomes of AI applications. Mechanisms such as regular audits and ethical oversight boards ensure that AI tools are used responsibly. Explainability, as emphasized in the ASEAN Guide on AI Governance and Ethics (2024), is essential in this context. Explainability refers to the ability of AI systems to provide interpretable and clear insights into their operations and decisions. For instance, an AI tool used for voter segmentation must explain how it categorizes voters and the data it uses to do so, allowing for informed oversight and public understanding.

5.1.2 Principle 2: Fairness and Non-Discrimination

AI systems in electoral contexts must promote inclusivity and fairness, ensuring that their use does not marginalize or discriminate against specific groups. This principle is particularly relevant in diverse electorates, where biased datasets could lead to unequal representation or exclusion. Indonesia's challenges with AI-driven voter registration tools, which inadvertently disenfranchised marginalized communities, underscore the importance of fairness. The ASEAN Guide on AI Governance and Ethics (2024) advocates for data practices that are inclusive and representative of diverse populations to mitigate such risks.

5.1.3 Principle 3: Human Oversight and Control

A core principle across AI ethics literature is the need for human oversight and control over automated systems. This principle safeguards against the risks of unchecked AI decision-making, which can undermine democratic processes. AI should serve as an aid to human judgment, not a replacement. Human oversight ensures that critical decisions made with the support of AI are reviewed and aligned with ethical standards and the

party's values. The role of human review becomes especially important in content generation and voter analysis, where an automated output could have unintended consequences. Taiwan's proactive measures to detect and counteract deepfake disinformation during its 2024 elections illustrate the importance of human intervention in maintaining electoral integrity (Chou 2023). Human oversight ensures that automated outputs align with ethical standards and democratic values, serving as a critical check against potential misuse. Drawing from industry best practices and recommendations by ethical AI organizations, human oversight must be integrated at every stage of AI implementation to maintain the integrity of electoral activities.

5.1.4 Principle 4: Data Privacy, Security, and AI Sovereignty

Protecting voter data is paramount in AI applications. Political organizations must adhere to stringent data protection regulations, such as the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (2016), and prioritize security measures to prevent breaches. Political entities often handle sensitive voter data, which, if mishandled, could lead to breaches of trust or legal repercussions. This guiding principle calls for strict adherence to data protection laws and ethical standards that prioritize the security of voter information.

Additionally, AI sovereignty—ensuring that AI systems are developed and managed within a framework that respects national democratic institutions—is essential. People in the region must not be excluded from decisions that affect development of AI tools and policies. Taiwan's development of domestic AI solutions like the "Infodemic" platform demonstrates how AI sovereignty can bolster resilience against external disinformation campaigns and maintain control over critical digital infrastructure (Infodemic 2024).

5.1.5 Principle 5: Productive Experimentation with Risk Minimization

AI is a rapidly evolving technology, and political organizations must engage in continuous learning and adaptation to leverage its full potential. This guiding principle stresses the importance of controlled experimentation—testing new AI tools and methodologies in a way that prioritizes learning and innovation while minimizing risks. Political parties should conduct pilot projects or phased rollouts to evaluate AI's performance, addressing any challenges before fully integrating these tools into broader strategies. This principle aligns with industry insights that emphasize the need for iterative learning and adaptive management in deploying advanced technologies. Experimentation should be accompanied by risk assessment practices that identify potential harms and outline strategies for mitigation.

5.2 Policy Recommendations for Ethical and Effective AI Use in Elections and Politics

This section builds upon the guiding principles of transparency, fairness, accountability, and sovereignty to offer actionable policy recommendations. These are grounded in the experiences of countries such as Indonesia, South Korea, and Taiwan, as well as regional frameworks like the ASEAN Guide on AI Governance and Ethics. The focus is on enabling democratic and liberal parties to harness AI's potential responsibly while safeguarding democratic integrity.

Figure K. Policy Recommendations for Ethical and Effective AI Use in Elections and Politics

1. Develop comprehensive legal and policy frameworks
2. Adopt internal organizational policies and guidelines
3. Collaborate with tech developers and independent auditors
4. Emphasize AI Explainability and Sovereignty

5.2.1 Develop comprehensive legal and policy frameworks

Comprehensive legal and policy frameworks are foundational to ensuring the ethical integration of AI in electoral processes. These frameworks must establish clear regulations governing the permissible uses of AI in campaigns and elections while emphasizing transparency, accountability, and data security. Legal structures should also address emerging challenges such as AI-enabled disinformation and deepfake technologies.

In Southeast Asia, the ASEAN Guide on AI Governance and Ethics (2024) provides valuable principles that member states can adapt for electoral contexts. The guide highlights the importance of human-centric AI, transparency, and collaborative governance. Indonesia's experience demonstrates the necessity of such frameworks. Although the Ministry of Communication and Information issued ethical guidelines for AI use in elections, these lacked enforceability, leading to inconsistent compliance and proliferation of disinformation during the 2024 elections (Prasetyo 2024; Asian Network for Free Elections 2024). Strengthening these frameworks with legally binding provisions, as seen in South Korea's Public Official Election Act, could ensure compliance and protect electoral integrity (Eom 2024).

South Korea offers a compelling example of robust legal responses to AI-related challenges. Its 2023 amendment to the Public Official Election Act explicitly bans election-related deepfakes, with severe penalties for violators (Eom 2024). This legislation not only potentially deters the misuse of AI but also allows for constructive

applications, such as generating campaign materials. Taiwan's Legislative Yuan similarly criminalized the creation and dissemination of deepfakes intended to manipulate electoral outcomes, demonstrating the value of targeted legal interventions (Hung, et. al. 2024).

To ensure broad compliance, these frameworks should include mandates for independent audits of AI systems used in campaigns. Drawing from the ASEAN guide's emphasis on transparency and accountability, electoral management bodies could establish third-party oversight mechanisms to evaluate AI applications for bias, fairness, and compliance with ethical standards.

5.2.2 Adopt internal organizational policies and guidelines

While external regulations create the macro-level framework for ethical AI use, political parties must develop internal policies to align AI applications with their values and operational integrity. These policies should address transparency, human oversight, data ethics, and the mitigation of risks associated with AI deployment.

Political parties can look to Taiwan's use of collaborative mechanisms to bolster internal accountability. The Taiwan FactCheck Center, supported by both government and private sector actors, exemplifies how independent monitoring can complement internal efforts (Chou 2023). Parties should consider establishing AI ethics committees responsible for auditing AI-driven strategies, reviewing data-handling practices, and ensuring inclusivity in campaign outreach.

South Korea's partnership with tech companies like Naver and Kakao offers another model. These firms implemented measures such as watermarking AI-generated content and detecting election-related deepfakes (Lee 2024). Parties can incorporate similar practices, mandating clear labeling of AI-generated materials to maintain voter trust.

Indonesia's civil society initiative to create a Joint Commitment on the Code of Ethics for Election Campaigning on Social Media provides a relevant, albeit underutilized, example of how ethical AI use can be institutionalized (Koalisi Damai 2024). Although the initiative lacked widespread support, its provisions—such as labeling AI-generated content and declaring AI use—serve as a blueprint for internal party policies. Political organizations should adopt such measures to preemptively address ethical concerns and enhance transparency.

5.2.3 Collaborate with tech developers and independent auditors

Collaborative partnerships between political organizations, tech developers, and independent auditors are critical for ensuring AI applications align with democratic values. These partnerships can facilitate the development of AI tools tailored to ethical guidelines and the unique needs of electoral processes.

The ASEAN Guide on AI Governance and Ethics (2024) underscores the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration, a principle that Taiwan exemplifies through its partnerships with Taiwan AI Labs. The Lab's "Infodemic" platform, which monitors and counters disinformation, demonstrates how private enterprises can contribute to safeguarding elections (Taiwan AI Labs 2024). Similarly, South Korea's collaboration with Deepbrain AI to detect deepfake-related crimes highlights the potential of private-public partnerships to enhance electoral integrity (Deepbrain AI 2024).

Indonesia's experience underscores the necessity of independent audits. Despite the introduction of ethical guidelines by Kominfo, the lack of enforcement mechanisms limited their effectiveness (Asian Network for Free Elections 2024). Political parties should advocate for mandatory audits of AI tools, ensuring these systems are free from biases and align with ethical standards.

5.2.4 Emphasize AI Explainability and Sovereignty

AI explainability is critical to maintaining trust and accountability in its deployment. Political parties must prioritize tools and practices that ensure voters understand how AI technologies influence campaign strategies and messaging. This aligns with the ASEAN Guide's principle of fostering public trust through transparency.

Taiwan's proactive sharing of insights on disinformation trends through weekly expert consultations showcases the value of demystifying AI applications (Chou 2023). Political parties should adopt similar measures, incorporating explainability into both internal policies and public-facing communications.

AI sovereignty—the ability of nations and organizations to govern their AI systems independently—also emerges as a critical consideration. Taiwan's use of domestically developed AI tools like the "Infodemic" platform underscores the importance of local expertise in addressing context-specific challenges (Infodemic 2024). Democratic and liberal parties should advocate for the development of locally relevant AI technologies, ensuring that these systems align with national values and priorities while mitigating risks associated with foreign influence.

The integration of AI into elections and politics presents both unprecedented opportunities and significant challenges. By adopting comprehensive legal frameworks, internal policies, and collaborative oversight mechanisms, political parties can harness AI's potential while safeguarding democratic values. The experiences of Indonesia, South Korea, and Taiwan demonstrate the importance of context-specific strategies, from countering disinformation to fostering digital literacy. Guided by ethical principles and informed by regional frameworks like the ASEAN Guide on AI Governance and Ethics, democratic and liberal parties can lead the way in shaping AI's role in elections to enhance transparency, fairness, and voter trust.

6. Ways forward for CALD

To champion ethical and effective AI use in elections and politics, the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD) must play a proactive role in advocating for and shaping the integration of AI technologies. Drawing from regional experiences and frameworks such as the ASEAN Guide on AI Governance and Ethics, CALD can take specific steps to support its member parties and foster a democratic and inclusive digital ecosystem. This section outlines key actions that CALD should prioritize to ensure that AI enhances, rather than undermines, democratic values.

6.1 Advocate for comprehensive regional legal and policy framework

CALD should lead efforts to establish robust, region-wide legal frameworks governing AI use in elections and politics. The ASEAN Guide on AI Governance and Ethics provides a foundational starting point, emphasizing transparency, fairness, and human-centric AI principles. However, compared to the European Union's AI Act, the ASEAN Guide has notable limitations. It serves more as a set of non-binding principles than a regulatory framework, lacking enforceable provisions and detailed mechanisms for compliance and accountability. While the EU AI Act categorizes AI systems by risk levels and mandates stringent regulatory measures for high-risk applications, including electoral processes, the ASEAN Guide leaves significant discretion to member states, resulting in inconsistent implementation across the region.

CALD must advocate for a more cohesive and enforceable regional framework inspired by the EU's approach but tailored to the unique political, social, and technological contexts of Southeast Asia. This framework should address specific challenges such as AI-enabled disinformation, voter manipulation, and data misuse while safeguarding democratic values. Drawing on South Korea's legislative success with the 2023 amendment to the Public Official Election Act, CALD can propose legally binding provisions to regulate AI-generated content, including deepfakes, and establish penalties for violations.

Additionally, CALD should emphasize the need for third-party audits and compliance mechanisms, as recommended in the ASEAN Guide. These measures would strengthen accountability and ensure that AI systems used in electoral processes meet ethical and technical standards. By advocating for enforceable laws that balance innovation with democratic integrity, CALD can help its member parties and governments create a trusted and resilient electoral environment.

6.2 Assist member parties in developing national legal and policy frameworks

CALD must work closely with its member parties to support the development of robust national legal frameworks that govern the ethical use of AI in elections and politics. While regional guidelines are essential for consistency and shared principles, the unique sociopolitical contexts of each nation require tailored national laws that address specific challenges.

Drawing lessons from South Korea's Public Official Election Act and Indonesia's ethical guidelines on AI use, CALD can provide its member parties with technical expertise, capacity-building programs, and model legislation that ensures compliance with international standards while respecting local nuances.For example, CALD could create a legislative toolkit for its member parties, outlining key components of effective AI laws, such as transparency in AI deployment, mandatory labeling of AI-generated content, and stringent penalties for AI misuse, including the creation of disinformation or deepfake videos. The ASEAN Guide on AI Governance and Ethics can serve as a foundational framework, but CALD must emphasize the need for enforceable national laws, as the ASEAN Guide's non-binding nature limits its practical application.

Moreover, CALD can offer training workshops and fellowships for lawmakers, political leaders, and technical advisors in member countries, equipping them with the knowledge to draft and advocate for AI legislation that upholds democratic values. By actively collaborating with member parties, CALD ensures that AI governance at the national level aligns with regional objectives and builds a unified front against the misuse of technology in elections and politics.

6.3 Lead the establishment of a multi-stakeholder council on AI ethics and governance in Asia

To effectively address the challenges and opportunities presented by AI in elections and politics, CALD must establish a Multi-Stakeholder Council on AI Ethics and Governance. This council would act as a hub for collaboration among public institutions, private technology companies, academic researchers, political leaders, and civil society

organizations. By fostering public-private partnerships, the council can leverage diverse expertise to ensure the ethical and effective use of AI in democratic processes.

The council would create robust ethical guidelines and technical standards tailored to the unique challenges of Asian democracies. These guidelines would integrate principles from frameworks such as the ASEAN Guide on AI Governance and Ethics while addressing the specific needs of electoral processes, such as transparency in voter engagement and safeguards against disinformation. Through public-private partnerships, the council can also fund and support research projects that explore AI's impact on electoral integrity, political processes, and societal trust. Long-term research initiatives could address systemic issues like algorithmic bias, while shorter projects might focus on immediate concerns such as the proliferation of deepfakes during election cycles. The council could also encourage private sector innovation by funding tech developers to create solutions that align with ethical principles.

Furthermore, the council can develop a pipeline of experts equipped to navigate the ethical complexities of AI by offering fellowships and training programs. These programs could target emerging leaders from political organizations, technology firms, and academia, fostering interdisciplinary approaches to AI governance. The council could also collaborate with private companies to sponsor fellowships focused on practical applications of AI in elections, such as the development of explainable AI tools for voter segmentation.

The council can also facilitate partnerships between technology developers and electoral stakeholders to co-create AI solutions. For instance, the partnership between Taiwan AI Labs and public institutions to combat disinformation provides a blueprint for such collaborations. Similarly, South Korea's engagement with tech giants like Kakao and Naver demonstrates the potential of private sector involvement in implementing watermarking systems and monitoring platforms. These partnerships ensure that technological solutions align with ethical standards and democratic values.

Finally, the council will act as a bridge between technical experts and the general public, promoting transparency and trust in AI applications. The council would synthesize research findings, collaborative outputs, and case study insights into actionable recommendations for governments and political organizations. These models could include templates for legal frameworks, best practices for technology deployment, and strategies to mitigate AI misuse.

6.4 Support internal capacity building for member parties

To ensure the ethical and effective use of AI in elections and politics, CALD must prioritize strengthening the internal capacities of its member parties. Building robust internal mechanisms will empower these parties to adopt AI tools responsibly, integrate ethical practices, and stay competitive in an increasingly technology-driven political landscape. This capacity-building effort should include training programs, the development of internal policies, and fostering a culture of proactive experimentation with AI technologies.

AI's integration into political campaigns requires an informed and skilled workforce capable of navigating its complexities. CALD can support member parties by organizing workshops, seminars, and training programs tailored to the unique needs of political organizations. These programs should cover the technical, ethical, and strategic dimensions of AI use, enabling party leaders, campaign managers, and data analysts to make informed decisions.

For example, workshops can focus on the ethical implications of AI in voter engagement, providing insights into the risks of microtargeting and data misuse. Training sessions on generative AI tools, such as those used to create campaign content, can help parties understand how to leverage these technologies while maintaining transparency and fairness. Moreover, hands-on sessions on tools like AI-driven voter segmentation systems or chatbots can equip parties to deploy these technologies effectively and ethically.

Internal policies and ethical guidelines are essential for ensuring that AI use aligns with a party's values and the broader democratic principles it upholds. CALD can also assist member parties in drafting comprehensive frameworks that address critical aspects such as transparency, accountability, data ethics, and the mitigation of algorithmic bias.

Drawing inspiration from initiatives like Taiwan's collaboration with the Taiwan FactCheck Center, member parties can create internal mechanisms to monitor AI use and ensure compliance with ethical standards. Ethics committees within parties can serve as oversight bodies, regularly auditing AI-driven strategies and assessing their impact on inclusivity and fairness. These committees can also guide proactive experimentation, balancing innovation with safeguards to minimize risks.

Furthermore, proactive experimentation is crucial for staying ahead in a rapidly evolving technological landscape. CALD can encourage member parties to pilot AI tools and methodologies, providing a controlled environment to evaluate their benefits and challenges. Experimentation allows parties to identify best practices, address potential pitfalls, and build confidence in AI's applications.

For instance, parties can test AI tools for voter outreach in smaller-scale campaigns before deploying them nationally. Prototypes of AI chatbots can be piloted to assess their effectiveness and gather feedback from users. Experimenting with AI-generated content, as seen in Indonesia's campaigns with "gemoy" avatars and personalized digital tools, can provide insights into how to tailor messages for different demographics while ensuring ethical boundaries are respected.

Finally, CALD can also create platforms for peer learning, where member parties share experiences, challenges, and successes in using AI. By fostering collaboration across the region, parties can learn from each other's innovative approaches and collectively address common obstacles. These peer-to-peer exchanges can extend to collaborative experimentation projects. For example, two or more member parties could jointly pilot a regional initiative, such as a shared AI tool for cross-border disinformation monitoring. Such collaborative efforts can amplify the impact of individual parties' learnings and create regionally adapted solutions.

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