

The state of strategic communication in Latin America, 2026

A Matrix of Authority, Political Economy and Algorithms (MAPEA) for reading institutional authority, political economy and algorithmic mediation

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Abstract—In 2026 Latin America is undergoing a profound transformation in the field of strategic communication. The region combines a structural crisis of institutional trust, political-economy conditions marked by high levels of inequality and labor informality, and an algorithmic dimension that is redefining the rules of visibility, reputation and legitimacy. This article proposes the MAPEA matrix (Matrix of Authority, Political Economy and Algorithms) as an analytical tool to understand these dynamics in an interrelated way, through three dimensions —authority, political economy and the algorithmic— whose intersections shape the central tensions of the moment. Drawing on the analysis of high-authority primary sources (2025-2026), three strategic implications are derived: building authority through coherence and transparency, embedding contextual sensitivity into strategy design, and developing responsible governance of the algorithmic dimension.

Keywords— *strategic communication; Latin America; institutional trust; political economy; artificial intelligence; algorithmic mediation; synthetic reputation.*

Resumen—América Latina atraviesa en 2026 un momento de transformación profunda en la comunicación estratégica, combinando una crisis estructural de confianza institucional, condiciones de economía política marcadas por alta desigualdad e informalidad, y una dimensión algorítmica que redefine las reglas de visibilidad, reputación y legitimidad. Este artículo propone la matriz MAPEA (Autoridad, Política Económica y Algoritmos) como herramienta analítica para leer estas dinámicas a través de tres dimensiones interrelacionadas, derivando tres implicaciones estratégicas: construir autoridad desde la coherencia y la transparencia, integrar sensibilidad contextual y desarrollar una gobernanza responsable de la dimensión algorítmica.

Palabras clave— *comunicación estratégica; América Latina; confianza institucional; economía política; inteligencia artificial; mediación algorítmica; reputación sintética.*

1. Introduction & methodology

«The great enemy of communication, we find, is the illusion of it».

— W. H. Whyte, *Is Anybody Listening?* (Fortune, 1950, p. 174).

Latin America is experiencing a moment of complexity for strategic communication in 2026. The region combines a persistent crisis of institutional trust, high levels of inequality and labor precarity, and an accelerated technological transformation that is profoundly reshaping how messages are produced, distributed, and consumed. In this scenario, traditional communication strategies reveal growing limitations, while organizations —both public and private— face the need to adapt to a more fragmented, algorithmic, and demanding environment in terms of legitimacy.

Available data confirms this tension. Distrust toward governments remains structurally high, patterns of news consumption have shifted toward digital platforms with opaque recommendation logics, and the adoption of artificial intelligence is reconfiguring both professional practices and audience expectations. Against this backdrop, it has become

necessary to develop analytical frameworks capable of understanding, in an integrated manner, the institutional, economic, and technological dimensions that condition strategic communication in the region.

This article emerges precisely from that need. Its purpose is to offer a rigorous and updated diagnosis of the state of strategic communication in Latin America in 2026, with particular attention to the interactions between institutional authority, structures of political economy, and the algorithmic dynamics that now mediate the relationship between organizations and their publics.

1.1. Objectives

The present document has the following main objectives: to characterize the current context of strategic communication in Latin America, identifying the principal tensions and opportunities facing organizations; to propose and apply an original analytical framework —the MAPEA matrix— capable of integrating institutional, economic, and technological dimensions in a coherent manner; to offer

strategic recommendations grounded in the analysis of primary sources; and to contribute to the generation of applicable knowledge for communication professionals as well as for institutional and corporate decision-makers in the region.

1.2. Scope and approach

The study focuses on Latin America and the Caribbean, with particular attention to the countries with the greatest demographic and economic weight in the region. The period of analysis covers primarily the years 2025 and 2026, although references to previous years are included when they help illuminate current trends. The approach adopted is analytical and integrative: it does not limit itself to describing isolated phenomena but seeks to understand how the different dimensions of the communication ecosystem —institutional authority, economic and political conditions, and algorithmic mediation— influence one another and shape the conditions of possibility for strategic communication.

1.3. The matrix as an analytical tool

To address the complexity of the object of study, this article employs the MAPEA matrix as its central analytical framework, structured around three interrelated dimensions: the *Dimension of Authority*, which examines the capacity of actors to generate and sustain legitimacy and trust; the *Dimension of Political Economy*, which analyzes the structures of inequality, informality, and power that condition communication; and the *Algorithmic Dimension*, which studies the impact of platforms, algorithms, and artificial intelligence on visibility and the meaning of messages. The matrix is presented in greater detail in Section 2.

1.4. Research methodology

The preparation of this document has been based on the analysis of primary sources of high authority, primarily reports and studies published between 2025 and 2026 by international organizations, academic institutions, and specialized research centers. The main sources include reports from CEPAL, the *Edelman Trust Barometer Latin America 2026*, the *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026*, studies by the Inter-American Development Bank on artificial intelligence and digital transformation, as well as specialized research on corporate communication trends in the region.

The qualitative treatment of the sources was carried out through a deductive-inductive thematic coding process. A predefined coding scheme based on the three dimensions of the matrix was used as a starting point and subsequently enriched inductively with emerging categories during the reading of the sources. Cross-referencing of information was performed through analytical matrices that made it possible to identify convergences, contradictions, and information gaps across the different sources. Particular attention was paid to maintaining a clear separation between quantitative data of institutional origin and conceptual contributions of an interpretive nature, while ensuring the traceability of each statement to its original source. In addition, the recent work of Mario Riorda has been incorporated as a conceptual reference framework, particularly regarding the management of institutional crises and the transformations of political communication in the digital age; these contributions have been used as an analytical lens rather than as primary sources of quantitative data.

Figure 1. Three baseline indicators for strategic communication in Latin America, 2025-2026.

53 % Distrust toward governments in the region. Edelman Trust Barometer LATAM 2026	46.6 % Labor informality rate. CEPAL 2025	53.8 % Organizations already investing in AI and automation. AND 2026
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Table 1. Key indicators for strategic communication in Latin America, 2025–2026.

Indicator	Source	Latest value	2025–2026 trend
Monetary poverty	CEPAL (2025)	25.5 %	Stable / slight improvement
Extreme poverty	CEPAL (2025)	9.8 %	Persistent
Labor informality rate	CEPAL (2025)	46.6 %	Remains high
Female labor force participation	CEPAL (2025)	51.8 %	Significant gender gap
Distrust in government	Edelman (2026)	53 %	Structural
Trust in news	Reuters Institute (2026)	25–31 %	Low
AI adoption in communication	AND (2026)	53.8 %	Growing
Difficulty measuring ROI of AI & data	AND (2026)	69.2 %	Major challenge

Note. Data correspond to the latest available year (primarily 2024–2025), with trends projected toward 2026. Sources: CEPAL; Edelman Trust Barometer LATAM 2026; Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026; AND, Corporate Communication Trends in Latin America 2026.

2. The MAPEA matrix: a lens for the algorithmic age

Analyzing strategic communication in Latin America in 2026 requires analytical tools capable of simultaneously addressing institutional tensions, economic and political conditions, and the technological transformations that now mediate the relationship between organizations and their audiences. To this end, the MAPEA matrix has been developed as a conceptual framework.

The model begins from a straightforward observation: communication strategies can no longer be explained solely through the relationship between sender and receiver, nor through the management of channels alone. The combination of weakened institutional authority, deep structural inequalities, and an ecosystem increasingly mediated by algorithms and artificial intelligence demands a model that integrates these three dimensions in an interrelated manner. The matrix is organized around three analytical axes — authority, political economy, and the algorithmic dimension— whose intersections generate specific tensions that define the real terrain on which communication strategies move in the region. The value of the model lies precisely in making these interrelations visible.

2.1. The three dimensions of the model

2.1.1. *Dimension of Authority: governance, legitimacy, and institutional trust.*

The dimension of authority refers to the capacity of institutional, corporate, and emerging actors to generate, sustain, and mobilize legitimacy and trust in the public sphere. It is not limited to the perceived credibility of governments or companies; it also includes the ability to define which issues enter the public agenda and which voices are considered legitimate to speak about them.

In Latin America, this dimension is undergoing a moment of structural fragility. The *Edelman Trust Barometer Latin America 2026* places distrust toward governments in the region at 53 %. This figure does not reflect only an image problem, but a deeper erosion of institutional authority. At the same time, the *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026* shows that trust in news has declined notably in several countries: 25 % in Colombia, 26 % in Argentina, and 31 % in Mexico. This dual crisis —institutional and media— has created a vacuum that new actors and dynamics, many of them algorithmic, are attempting to fill.

In this context, the work of Mario Riorda proves especially useful. Riorda (March 23, 2026) describes what he calls “crises of deviant conduct” as a type of institutional crisis characterized by rapid escalation, driven by public indignation in the face of behaviors perceived as fraudulent or morally unacceptable. According to the author, effective management of this type of crisis requires following five stages: the immediate removal of those involved (as a symbolic firewall), repair of the damage, full disclosure of information, ethical reinforcement of the structure, and the establishment of public oversight mechanisms. Riorda also

warns against the risk of neglecting institutional forms under the assumption that there is prior consensus on the substance of discussions.

The most direct consequence for strategic communication is that when institutional authority is weakened, narratives lose their capacity to be accepted as legitimate. In a fragmented ecosystem with high levels of news avoidance, organizations need to find new ways to build credibility: greater transparency, coherence between discourse and action, or the capacity to manage crises of legitimacy with speed and responsibility. It is pertinent to enrich this lens with other contributions: authors such as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe have analyzed how populist discourses construct political identities through the articulation of unsatisfied demands —a process related to what Riorda terms “popularizing discourse”—, while the work of Pierre Rosanvallon on counter-democracy and of Nadia Urbinati on populism as a distorted form of representation provide complementary frameworks. From this perspective, the vacuum of institutional trust also opens space for new actors —grassroots territorial movements, horizontal networks, and experiences of community economy— that build legitimacy through proximity, reciprocity, and the concrete resolution of everyday problems.

2.1.2. *Dimension of Political Economy: inequality, informality, and power.*

The dimension of political economy addresses the material, regulatory, and power-related conditions that frame strategic communication. In Latin America, these conditions continue to be marked by high levels of inequality and informality. According to CEPAL (2025), in 2024, 25.5 % of the population was living in monetary poverty and 9.8 % in extreme poverty; the labor informality rate reached 46.6 %, with even higher figures in rural areas. This reality generates a profound segmentation of audiences. Gender gaps further aggravate the situation: female labor force participation stood at 51.8 %, compared to 74.9 % for men, while unpaid care work represents between 19 % and 27 % of regional GDP.

2.1.3. *Algorithmic Dimension: platforms, AI, and visibility.*

The algorithmic dimension encompasses the technical infrastructures, recommendation systems, and artificial intelligence tools that currently mediate visibility and message consumption. The AND study (2026) indicates that 53.8 % of organizations already invest in automation and artificial intelligence, while 65.4 % use data for strategic decision-making; however, 69.2 % acknowledge difficulties in measuring return on investment.

2.2. Intersections and dynamics between dimensions

The three dimensions maintain relations of mutual influence. One of the most relevant intersections occurs between authority and political economy: low institutional trust cannot be explained solely as a problem of perception, but is anchored in material conditions of inequality and informality that weaken the credibility of official and corporate narratives.

Another significant intersection takes place between authority and the algorithmic dimension: the fragmentation of the information ecosystem and the declining weight of traditional channels have made algorithms play a central role in determining which voices achieve visibility, a mediation that can either reinforce or erode the authority of senders. Finally, the intersection between political economy and the algorithmic dimension proves especially delicate: the accelerated adoption of AI can generate efficiency gains, but also risks of exclusion when not managed according to equity criteria.

2.3. Value of the matrix for strategic communication

The principal contribution of the matrix lies in its capacity to offer an integrated reading of an environment that is usually approached in a fragmented manner. By crossing the dimensions of authority, political economy, and algorithms, the model makes it possible to identify tensions and opportunities that remain hidden when variables are analyzed separately, and it helps formulate more precise questions: What kind of authority can be built in this specific context? What material constraints limit the reach of certain narratives? What algorithmic dynamics are shaping visibility, and how can they be managed responsibly?

3. Political economy in Latin America, 2026

Strategic communication does not operate in a vacuum. Its possibilities and limits are deeply conditioned by the economic, social, and political structures in which it is embedded. In Latin America, these structures present persistent characteristics that decisively shape the context in which organizations attempt to construct messages, generate trust, and mobilize support.

3.1. Structural inequality and poverty

Latin America remains one of the most unequal regions in the world. According to the *Panorama Social de América Latina y el Caribe 2025* by CEPAL, in 2024, 25.5 % of the population was living in monetary poverty, while 9.8 % lived in extreme poverty. Although these percentages represent an improvement compared to the worst moments of the pandemic, they remain structurally high. Inequality is not expressed solely in terms of income: it also manifests in unequal access to basic services, differences in educational quality, and digital divides. This reality generates highly differentiated publics, with varying capacities to access, process, and respond to information. Communication strategies that fail to account for this heterogeneity tend to address, implicitly, the sectors with greater access and cultural capital.

3.2. Labor informality and precarity

One of the most characteristic features of the Latin American economy is the high rate of labor informality. In 2024, 46.6 % of the workforce was in informal employment, with figures exceeding 60 % in several countries. This condition implies not only economic instability but also reduced access to social

protection and a weaker relationship with formal institutions. Informality has direct consequences for strategic communication: messages that presuppose labor stability, access to corporate benefits, or a regular relationship with the financial system prove of little relevance to a very significant portion of the population.

3.3. Gender gaps and unpaid care work

Gender inequalities remain a relevant structural factor. Female labor force participation stood at 51.8 % in 2024, compared to 74.9 % for men. This gap is compounded by a greater presence of women in informal employment and by a highly unequal distribution of unpaid care work, whose economic value is estimated at between 19 % and 27 % of regional GDP. From the perspective of strategic communication, a significant part of female audiences faces time, access, and resource constraints that must be considered when designing messages and selecting channels.

3.4. Implications for strategic communication

The panorama described above requires recognizing that there is no homogeneous public. Differences in material conditions generate fragmented audiences that respond differently to the same messages; strategies that assume an idealized receiver—with economic stability and regular digital access—tend to lose effectiveness or generate rejection among sectors that do not recognize themselves in that profile. Moreover, the persistence of inequality poses an ethical and strategic challenge: organizations that aspire to build lasting relationships of trust need to demonstrate coherence between their discourse and the real conditions in which a significant part of the population lives.

4. Institutional authority & trust

The capacity to generate and sustain authority constitutes one of the fundamental conditions for the effective exercise of strategic communication. Without a minimum of legitimacy and trust on the part of audiences, narratives lose their ability to circulate, be believed, and mobilize support.

4.1. The state of institutional trust

Available data reveal a situation of structural distrust. According to the *Edelman Trust Barometer Latin America 2026*, 53 % of the population expresses distrust toward governments, a figure that reflects the consolidation of a long-term trend aggravated by economic crises, corruption scandals, and a widespread perception of institutional ineffectiveness. Distrust is not limited to the governmental sphere: the Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026 documents a sustained decline in trust in news—25 % in Colombia, 26 % in Argentina, and 31 % in Mexico—, reflecting not only a crisis of media credibility but also a growing fragmentation of the information ecosystem.

4.2. Crisis of legitimacy and popularizing discourses

The erosion of institutional authority also has a discursive and performative dimension. Mario Riorda (June 14, 2026) has pointed to the growing presence of what he calls “popularizing discourse”, a rhetorical strategy that pushes political representation toward performative formats and tends to strain the limits of what is considered legitimate democratic practice. Riorda also warns against neglecting institutional forms under the assumption that there is prior consensus on the substance of discussions: when institutions relax or abandon formal standards of communication and behavior, they generate a perception of arbitrariness that further erodes their legitimacy. The notion of “crises of deviant conduct” (Riorda, March 23, 2026) proves useful for understanding how certain crises of legitimacy are activated and escalate, characterized by rapid combustion driven by citizen indignation; the way institutions respond—particularly if they opt for opacity or the closed defense of those involved—can determine whether the crisis is contained or significantly amplified.

It is pertinent to situate these categories in dialogue with other relevant contributions in the field. The work of Nadia Urbinati on populism as a distorted form of representation, or the analyses of Pierre Rosanvallon on counter-democracy and new forms of institutional distrust, allow Riorda’s theses to be read within a broader framework; likewise, the studies of Ernesto Laclau on the discursive construction of political identities offer tools for understanding how “popularizing discourses” articulate unsatisfied demands. From this perspective, the weakening of institutional authority also opens the possibility for new actors—territorial movements, community care networks, horizontally articulated leaderships, or experiences of solidarity economy—to construct alternative forms of legitimacy through proximity, reciprocity, and the effective resolution of everyday problems.

4.3. Media and informational fragmentation

The crisis of authority is reinforced by the profound changes in the media ecosystem. The declining weight of traditional media and the rise of digital platforms have fragmented the public sphere and weakened the mechanisms through which institutions used to build legitimacy. The *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026* shows that a significant proportion of the population actively avoids consuming news; this avoidance responds not only to fatigue but also to a perception of irrelevance or bias in traditional media.

4.4. Implications for strategic communication

The situation obliges organizations to assume that authority is not automatically granted by occupying an institutional position: it must be built and renewed continuously. It also requires special attention to coherence between discourse and action, since in contexts of low trust, discrepancies tend to be detected quickly and generate significant reputational costs.

Informational fragmentation, in turn, requires rethinking channels and formats: strategies that depend exclusively on traditional media have an increasingly limited reach.

5. The algorithmic dimension: platforms, AI & visibility

Strategic communication in Latin America increasingly operates within an ecosystem mediated by algorithms. Decisions about which messages are shown, to whom, and in what context are strongly conditioned by automated systems of recommendation, content moderation, and content generation.

5.1. The transformation of the visibility ecosystem

Over the past decade, digital platforms have progressively displaced traditional media as the main spaces for the circulation of information. This shift has not been merely quantitative: it has modified the rules of visibility. It is no longer enough to produce relevant content; it is also necessary to understand and adapt to the algorithmic logics that determine which contents are amplified. In 2026, this dynamic has intensified with the mass incorporation of generative artificial intelligence into search engines and virtual assistants: language models synthesize information about organizations without these having direct control over the outcome, generating a “synthetic reputation” that can significantly influence public perception.

5.2. Adoption of artificial intelligence in communication

The use of artificial intelligence tools by communication departments has grown significantly. According to the *Corporate Communication Trends in Latin America 2026* study, 53.8 % of organizations already invest in automation and artificial intelligence and 65.4 % of communication departments claim to use data for strategic decision-making. However, this adoption presents important limitations: 69.2 % of communication leaders identify difficulty in measuring return on investment as one of their main challenges. The speed of adoption also generates risks: reports from the Inter-American Development Bank (2026) warn that an excessively rapid technological transition can generate permanent social costs, including the definitive expulsion of workers from the formal labor market.

5.3. Changes in news consumption patterns

The shift in news consumption toward short-form video platforms has substantially modified the conditions of visibility. The *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026* shows that platforms such as TikTok have become relevant channels for accessing news in several countries in the region: in Peru, 45 % of the population already uses this platform to stay informed. This change reduces the effectiveness of strategies based exclusively on traditional media or long-form content, and forces organizations to adapt their messages to more fragmented consumption logics.

5.4. Synthetic reputation and governance challenges

One of the most relevant phenomena of recent years is the emergence of “synthetic reputation”: the image that artificial intelligence systems generate about an organization based on dispersed information found on the internet. This reputation does not depend exclusively on communication assets controlled by the organization itself, but is constructed from mentions in media, user opinions, and other third-party content. This situation requires the development of algorithmic governance capabilities: understanding which sources are influencing the “synthetic reputation”, identifying possible biases or inaccuracies, and designing strategies to generate consistent signals of authority that automated systems can recognize.

5.5. Implications for strategic communication

The algorithmic dimension requires rethinking traditional models of measurement and attribution, as vanity metrics are increasingly insufficient; the fragmentation of consumption requires diversifying channels and formats; and the governance of “synthetic reputation” is becoming an area of growing strategic importance. Finally, the use of artificial intelligence in communication processes requires clear criteria of responsibility and transparency, whose absence can generate significant reputational risks in a context of low institutional trust. Organizations that manage to integrate these transformations in a strategic and responsible manner will have greater possibilities of building authority in an environment increasingly mediated by automated systems.

6. Critical intersections between the three dimensions

The three dimensions of the matrix —authority, political economy, and the algorithmic— do not operate in isolation. Their relations of mutual influence configure the real terrain on which strategic communication develops, and understanding them is essential to avoid partial diagnoses.

6.1. Authority and political economy

Low institutional trust in the region cannot be explained solely as a problem of perception or deficient communication: it is deeply anchored in material conditions of inequality, informality, and precarity. When broad sectors of the population experience labor instability, low income, and limited access to social protection, institutional and corporate narratives face greater difficulties in being perceived as legitimate. Distrust is not merely a credibility deficit; it is also a rational response to institutions that, in many cases, fail to resolve —or even aggravate— citizens’ living conditions. Strategies that seek to strengthen institutional authority without considering the constraints imposed by political economy tend to prove ineffective or even counterproductive.

6.2. Authority and the algorithmic dimension

The erosion of traditional mechanisms of legitimation has made algorithms play an increasingly central role in determining which voices and contents achieve public

visibility. In this new environment, the construction of authority no longer depends solely on institutional coherence or relationships with traditional media, but also on the capacity to generate signals of credibility that automated systems can recognize and amplify. “Synthetic reputation” has become a relevant factor that institutions and companies do not fully control, posing a double challenge: developing technical and strategic competencies to operate in algorithmic environments without abandoning the principles of transparency and coherence that sustain authority in the long term.

6.3. Political economy and the algorithmic dimension

The accelerated adoption of artificial intelligence can generate efficiency gains, but it also carries risks of social exclusion when not managed according to equity criteria. In a region with high levels of labor informality and multidimensional poverty, an excessively rapid technological transition can amplify pre-existing inequalities. This intersection obliges organizations to consider not only the technical efficiency of their algorithmic tools, but also their social impact.

6.4. Synthesis: tensions and opportunities for 2026–2027

The intersections between the three dimensions reveal a scenario characterized by structural tensions, but also by opportunities for those who manage to read the context in an integrated manner. Organizations that develop a simultaneous reading of authority, political economy, and algorithms will be able to identify more precise levers for intervention and more robust strategies.

7. Strategic implications for communication

The analysis shows that strategic communication in Latin America in 2026 faces an environment marked by the superposition of three major tensions: the erosion of institutional authority, the structural constraints of political economy, and increasing algorithmic mediation. These tensions reinforce one another and configure a complex field of action, but also one full of opportunities.

7.1. Cross-cutting implications

The first major implication is the need to abandon fragmented approaches: strategies that address institutional trust without considering the material conditions of audiences, or that invest in algorithmic tools without evaluating their impact on the perception of legitimacy, tend to generate partial or counterproductive results. A second implication is the urgency of developing capabilities for integrated contextual reading. Finally, the current context demands greater coherence between discourse and action, since in an environment of low trust and high fragmentation, discrepancies tend to be detected quickly and erode credibility in an accelerated manner.

7.2. Recommendations to strengthen authority

In the realm of institutional authority, organizations must prioritize coherence and transparency as pillars of their communication. This implies avoiding the use of “popularizing discourse” as a short-term strategy, managing crises of legitimacy with speed and openness, and protecting institutional forms. They must also develop capabilities to build authority in algorithmic environments, actively monitoring their “synthetic reputation” and generating consistent signals of credibility.

7.3. Recommendations from political economy

From the political economy dimension, recommendations point toward greater contextual sensitivity in the design of communication strategies: recognizing the heterogeneity of audiences, adjusting channels and formats to the real

conditions of access and consumption, and avoiding narratives that may be perceived as exclusionary for those facing conditions of informality or precarity.

7.4. Recommendations in the algorithmic realm

In the algorithmic dimension, recommendations focus on responsible governance and strategic adaptation to new visibility environments: developing capabilities to measure results beyond platform metrics, investing in the governance of “synthetic reputation”, adopting clear criteria of transparency in the use of algorithms, and diversifying channels and formats.

7.5. Synthesis and strategic priorities

The strategic implications can be summarized in three major axes: build authority through coherence and transparency; integrate contextual sensitivity at all stages of communication planning; and govern the algorithmic dimension responsibly.

Table 2. Strategic implications by MAPEA dimension.

Dimension	Main challenge	Key strategic implication	Priority recommendation
Authority	Low institutional trust and “popularizing discourses”	Narratives lose legitimacy without coherence between discourse and action	Strengthen transparency and responsible crisis management
Political Economy	High informality and inequality	A large share of the audience operates outside formal consumption and communication circuits	Design messages and channels with contextual sensitivity
Algorithmic Dimension	Accelerated AI adoption without clear measurement of results	Risk of “synthetic reputation” and loss of control over visibility	Develop algorithmic governance and impact measurement

Note. This table summarizes the main strategic implications derived from the analysis of the three dimensions of the matrix.

8. Conclusions

Latin America faces in 2026 a context of strategic communication that has been profoundly transformed. The combination of structurally weakened institutional authority, political economy conditions marked by inequality and informality, and an algorithmic dimension that redefines the rules of visibility and legitimacy configures an environment of high complexity.

This article has sought to provide analytical clarity through the matrix, which proposes an integrated reading of three dimensions that are usually addressed separately. The main findings can be synthesized into three major observations. *First*, the erosion of institutional authority is not an isolated problem of perception: it is deeply intertwined with material conditions of inequality, informality, and precarity. *Second*, the algorithmic dimension has ceased to be a secondary technical factor to become a central element that redefines the rules of visibility and legitimacy. *Third*, the intersections between the three dimensions constitute the terrain on which the greatest tensions and opportunities are played out.

Looking ahead to the coming years, organizations that aspire to develop strategic communication with real impact will need to advance simultaneously on three fronts: building authority through coherence and transparency, integrating contextual sensitivity in the face of the material conditions of

their audiences, and governing the algorithmic dimension responsibly. In a Latin American context marked by structural distrust, persistent inequality, and accelerated technological transformation, this capacity for integrated reading represents a significant strategic advantage for those seeking to develop communication with legitimacy and sustainable impact.

Declarations

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Disclaimer. This document is based on publicly available sources and on an analytical interpretation of them. Data correspond to the latest available figures at the time of writing (primarily 2024–2025), with trends projected toward 2025–2026. The matrix constitutes an original analytical model. The interpretations and recommendations reflect the author’s analysis and do not necessarily represent the official position of the organizations cited.

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Appendix A. Detailed methodology

This document was prepared by combining quantitative analysis of secondary indicators with a qualitative interpretive approach. The main sources correspond to reports published between 2025 and 2026 by internationally recognized organizations. The qualitative treatment was carried out through a deductive-inductive thematic coding process: a predefined coding scheme based on the three dimensions of the matrix was used as a starting point and subsequently enriched inductively with emerging categories during the reading of the sources. Cross-referencing of information was performed through analytical matrices that made it possible to identify convergences, contradictions, and information gaps across the different sources. Particular attention was paid to maintaining a clear separation between quantitative data of institutional origin and conceptual contributions of an interpretive nature, while ensuring the traceability of each statement to its original source. In addition, the recent work of

Mario Riorda was incorporated as a conceptual reference framework, used as an analytical lens rather than as a primary source of quantitative data.

Appendix B. Glossary of key concepts

Authority. The capacity of institutional, corporate, or emerging actors to generate, sustain, and mobilize legitimacy and trust in the public sphere.

Crises of deviant conduct (Riorda). A type of institutional crisis driven by public indignation in the face of behaviors perceived as fraudulent, corrupt, or morally unacceptable, characterized by rapid escalation.

Popularizing discourse (Riorda). A rhetorical strategy that pushes political representation toward performative formats, turning democratic practice into performances whose institutional legitimacy is questionable.

Algorithmic Dimension. The set of technical infrastructures, recommendation algorithms, and artificial intelligence systems that mediate the visibility, distribution, and perception of messages.

Political Economy. The material, regulatory, and power structures (inequality, informality, gender gaps) that condition the possibilities of strategic communication.

MAPEA Matrix (Martín). Matrix of Authority, Political Economy and Algorithms. A multidimensional analytical tool developed by Luis Martín.

Prevalence of forms (Riorda). A principle that warns against neglecting formal standards of communication under the assumption that prior consensus exists on the substance.

Digital point of no return (Riorda). The historical moment (around 2018) when the convergence of social media, mass data use, and automation irreversibly reconfigured political and social activation.

Synthetic reputation (Martín). The image or perception that artificial intelligence systems generate about an organization based on dispersed information on the internet, beyond the organization's direct control.

Algorithmic adoption velocity (κ). A metric describing the pace at which organizations restructure their operations around artificial intelligence.

Appendix C. Operationalization of the matrix: indicators and metrics

The practical usefulness of the matrix depends on its translation into observable and measurable indicators. Table 3 presents an operationalization system that enables organizations to move from the conceptual framework to day-to-day management.

Table 3. Indicator system for operationalizing the matrix.

Dimension	Key indicator	Metric type	Example of operationalization	Frequency	Source / method
Authority	Narrative-institutional coherence	Qual. + Quant.	% of audited messages coherent with the organization's real actions	Quarterly	Narrative audit + action review
Authority	Management of legitimacy crises	Qualitative	% of crises managed following Riorda's 5 stages	Per crisis	Internal crisis-management protocol
Political Economy	Contextual sensitivity	Qualitative	% of campaigns with a prior diagnosis of the audience's material conditions	Per campaign	Strategic briefing checklist
Political Economy	Adaptation to informality	Quantitative	% of messages with channels and formats adapted to audiences in informality	Biannual	Channel and format mix analysis
Algorithmic Dimension	Governance of synthetic reputation	Quant. + Qual.	Frequency of monitoring mentions in LLMs + % of corrections implemented	Monthly	Monitoring tools + protocol
Algorithmic Dimension	Real impact measurement	Quantitative	% of campaigns with an attribution model beyond platform metrics	Quarterly	Results-measurement dashboard

Note. This indicator system enables organizations to translate the conceptual framework of the matrix into concrete management and evaluation tools. Its application should be adapted to the size, sector, and analytical capacity of each organization.