

Intensive use of tools and resources for political professionalization in presidential campaigns: the case of Colombia 2018

Uso intensivo de herramientas y recursos de profesionalización política en campañas presidenciales: el caso de Colombia 2018

Uso intensivo de ferramentas e recursos para a profissionalização política em campanhas presidenciais: o caso da Colômbia 2018

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ABSTRACT | The presidential campaigns in Colombia are increasingly sophisticated and professionalized. Candidates and parties hire experts, make intensive use of new technologies and the media, personalize the campaign, and conduct opinion polls or surveys regarding citizens' perception. Considering the professionalization advances, the objectives of this work are, first, to measure the level of the campaign's professionalization of the three main presidential candidates of Colombia in 2018 (Iván Duque, Gustavo Petro, and Sergio Fajardo), and, second, to identify the areas of greater development of techniques and innovation made by the different groups of these campaigns. To measure the level of professionalization, we built an index that allows comparisons inside and outside the campaigns. The cases analyzed show that the advantage in electoral preferences is not enough to obtain victory, but rather that campaigns with a certain level of professionalization are required. Likewise, we can see that in the 2018 Colombian presidential campaign the level of professionalization is explained by the communicative dimension, depending on the media structures, the image projection and the emotionality of the staging of the communicative tool.

KEYWORDS: presidential campaigns; professionalization of campaigns; professionalization index; Colombia.

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RESUMEN | *Las campañas presidenciales en Colombia son cada vez más sofisticadas y profesionalizadas. Candidatos y partidos contratan expertos en distintas áreas, hacen un uso intensivo de las nuevas tecnologías y de los medios de comunicación, personalizan la campaña en el candidato y realizan sondeos de opinión o encuestas de percepción ciudadana. Considerando los avances en la profesionalización, los objetivos de este trabajo son, en primer lugar, medir el nivel de profesionalización de las campañas de los tres principales candidatos presidenciales de Colombia en 2018 (Iván Duque, Gustavo Petro y Sergio Fajardo), y, posteriormente, identificar las áreas de mayor desarrollo de técnicas e innovación que presentaron los diferentes grupos de dichas campañas. El nivel de profesionalización se midió a través de un índice construido en trabajos anteriores que permite hacer comparaciones internas y externas en las campañas. Los casos analizados ponen de manifiesto que la ventaja en las preferencias electorales no es suficiente para obtener el triunfo, sino que se requieren campañas con cierto nivel de profesionalización. Asimismo, se puede identificar en la campaña presidencial de 2018 que el nivel de profesionalización se encuentra explicado por la dimensión comunicativa, dependiendo de las estructuras mediáticas, la proyección de la imagen y la emotividad de la puesta en escena de la herramienta comunicativa.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *campañas presidenciales; profesionalización de las campañas; índice de profesionalización; Colombia.*

RESUMO | *As campanhas presidenciais na Colômbia estão se tornando mais sofisticadas e profissionalizadas. Os candidatos e partidos contratam especialistas em diversas áreas, fazem uso intensivo das novas tecnologias e dos meios de comunicação, personalizam a campanha sobre o candidato e realizam sondagens de opinião ou de percepção cidadã. Considerando os avanços na profissionalização, os objetivos deste trabalho são, em primeiro lugar, medir o nível de profissionalização das campanhas dos três principais candidatos presidenciais da Colômbia em 2018 (Ivan Duque, Gustavo Petro e Sergio Fajardo), e, em segundo lugar, identificar as áreas de maior desenvolvimento de técnicas e inovação apresentadas pelos diferentes grupos destas campanhas. Para medir o nível de profissionalização, construímos um índice que permite fazer comparações tanto dentro quanto fora das campanhas. Os casos analisados mostram que a vantagem nas preferências eleitorais não é suficiente para obter a vitória, senão que são necessárias campanhas com certo grau de profissionalização. Da mesma forma, pode-se identificar que na campanha presidencial de 2018 o nível de profissionalização se explica pela dimensão comunicativa, dependendo das estruturas midiáticas, da projeção da imagem e da emotividade da encenação da ferramenta comunicativa.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *campanhas presidenciais; profissionalização das campanhas; índice de profissionalização; Colômbia.*

INTRODUCTION

As stated by Cárdenas Ruiz, “the 2018 presidential elections in Colombia took place in the midst of a process of political transition in the post-conflict framework where the continuity of the Peace Agreement and the tension over new thematic agendas were at stake” (2020, p. 47). In this scenario of uncertainty, the political communication strategies got more professionalized through the use of new information technologies, the personalization of the campaign in the candidate’s figure and not in the political party, the hiring of external consultants who are experts in political marketing, image, social networks, and audiovisual production, and in conducting surveys, focus groups or polls. In this context it is worth asking about the level of professionalization deployed by the different campaigns, as well as how to determine the level to use it for comparative analyses. This paper aims to answer these questions and to measure the level of professionalization of the presidential campaigns of the three most voted candidates in Colombia: Iván Duque, from the *Partido Centro Democrático* (39.14% vote), Gustavo Petro, from the *Colombia Humana* coalition (25.08%), and Sergio Fajardo, from the *Compromiso Ciudadano* movement (23.7%). This is based on the Professionalization Index (INPRO), which considers the internal structure of the campaign and the communication resources of parties and candidates and allows comparisons to be made inside and outside the campaigns.

To achieve this goal, the text is divided into three parts: the first conceptually defines the campaigns professionalization and contextualizes the development of said professionalization. The second takes the concept to the operational plane, from where the analytical tool that will serve to study the campaigns is derived: the index based on the observation of the political parties organizational and communicative factors. In a third section, we measure the level of professionalization of the campaigns of Iván Duque, Gustavo Petro and Sergio Fajardo, to then conclude with the main reflections.

THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF CAMPAIGNS

Professionalization refers to the process of evolution of electoral campaigns. This process appears as a consequence, among other reasons, of changes in the media, as well as social changes and in the electoral and party systems (Holtz-Bacha, 2002). In this regard, a professional campaign is

one that uses tactics and strategies that favor the intensive use of mass media, as well as the most recent technological innovations to reach voters (media-intensive), which are guided by sophisticated methods of market research and public opinion (surveys, discussion groups, databases, opposition research, etc.) (poll-driven), and planned by professional consultants, experts in political marketing and media management (consultant-driven) (Díaz 2015 pp. 125- 126, based on Farrell, 1996 and Smith 2004, 2009).

With this perspective, three different stages can be identified in the evolution of political communication, especially in electoral campaigns: pre-modern, modern, and post-modern campaigns. These stages show how the organization of the campaign, the media and the electorate are simultaneously transformed, and how the electoral process is informed (Norris, 2002; Plasser & Plasser, 2002; Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999).

The first stage in the evolution of the campaigns began in the 19th century and lasted until 1950. In it, political communication was organized from the political parties at the local level and, since there was a strong partisan link, in direct contact with the electorate. Within the media and broadcast channels stand out the use of partisan press, the publication of pamphlets and posters pasting, the holding of local rallies and, well into the 20th century, the broadcast of spots through the radio (Gibson & Römmele, 2001; LeDuc, Niemi, & Norris, 2002).

A second stage, from 1960 to 1990, corresponds to modern campaigns. Unlike the previous one, the organization of the campaign is conducted from the central level and the political parties begin to be advised by external consultants, in charge of designing part of the strategy. Television, which during this period becomes the main channel for promoting parties and candidates, is added to the traditional media. The direct consequence of this new way of receiving information was the decline of face-to-face politics, as well as the gradual loss of partisan ties (Gibson & Römmele, 2001; LeDuc et al., 2002). During this stage, feedback instruments, such as surveys and focus groups, begin to be used to get to know the population.

The current stage corresponds to that of postmodern campaigns. This began in the 1990s and one of its main characteristics is the presence of external consultants —experts in media, audiovisual production, political marketing, and political communication—, who have a much more influential role in designing the strategy and in its execution. The messages and announcements become more complex, and the segmentation of the electorate based on the knowledge of their preferences thanks to measurement instruments and the use of new technologies —text messages, emails, and social networks— stands out. Due to the loss of party identification and the candidate-elector distance of the previous stage, in postmodern campaigns, parties assign greater importance to local organizations to celebrate their proselytizing activities (Gibson & Römmele, 2001; LeDuc et al., 2002).

That said, Holtz-Bacha (2007) conceives professionalization “as a process of adaptation and, as such, a necessary consequence of changes in the political system, on the one hand, and in the media system, on the other, as well as in the relationship between both systems” (p. 63). Thus, professionalization not only implies a shift away from traditional forms of electoral campaigning towards more modern forms and media, but also changes within the political system (Negrine, Mancini, Holtz-Bacha, & Papathanassopoulos, 2007).

BACKGROUND

Despite having had an armed conflict, Colombia is one of the countries in the region where there has been greater institutional stability, based on the continuity of its electoral processes. In this context, political campaigns in the country have been recognized for developing within a bipartisan ideological space, in which the Liberal and Conservative parties faced each other on the political arena to achieve public power, and in which political propaganda, massive speeches, the radio and the press became the most important communicative elements to persuade the voter.

The low institutionalism of the Colombian State, the lack of credibility and ideological conviction towards political parties, globalization, and the new mechanisms of citizen participation, along with the new media tools, have changed the methods used to develop electoral campaigns (Restrepo-Echavarría, 2015). According to Restrepo-Echavarría, “presidential campaigns in Colombia have gradually migrated from the streets and public squares to television debates, and from political rallies to virtual forums on social networks, in which public agenda issues are deliberated, such as the peace process and drug trafficking, surpassing others such as unemployment, corruption, and the economy” (2015, p. 88).

The promulgation of the Political Constitution of 1991 modified the electoral system, with effects on the partisan system: the rules that would allow a ballotage for the presidential election were established, seeking to provide greater legitimacy to the winning candidate; changes were introduced in the campaign financing scheme, implementing a mixed financing system, and subnational campaigns for the election of mayors and governors were strengthened (Restrepo-Echavarría, 2017).

In the party system, there was a shift from a two-party system to a multi-party system, expanding political participation to different social groups (indigenous, Raizal, Christian, Protestant). This contributed to the fact that political parties went from having an internal structure based on ideological and institutionalized factions to being based on political personalities.

Indeed, Pizarro (2008) shows that the Colombian party system began to show deinstitutionalization symptoms, specifically in two dimensions: the legitimacy of political organizations and the organizational solidity of internal structures. As a result, independent candidacies arise, as well as campaigns conceived and funded by the candidate, without the tutelage of the political party, whose function will be limited to lending its name and offering an endorsement to make the candidacies official (Pizarro, 2008).

In the presidential 2018 elections, there is an amplification of the personalization phenomenon. These elections consolidated the strengthening of personal political

brands and the collapse of traditional party formations. In this regard, the figures of Gustavo Petro and Sergio Fajardo were strengthened as referents of the center-left after gathering historic support at the polls which, despite not giving them the presidency, places the left as a real and viable alternative to power after decades of ostracism. While in the campaign of Iván Duque, ultimately the winner, the personalization fell on the image of the former president and founder of the *Partido Centro Democrático*, Álvaro Uribe.

METHODOLOGY

The analytical tool to measure the level of professionalization of Colombian campaigns adopts criteria proposed by Gibson and Römmele (2001, 2009) and Strömbäck (2009). For the construction of their index, Gibson and Römmele (2001, 2009) suggest observing ten variables to capture the basic elements of a campaign, considering the tools and strategies used, the way they are used, and the nature of the relationships of power within the campaign. In a first study (Gibson & Römmele, 2001) the index adopts dichotomous criteria —presence or absence of the phenomenon—, while later the variables to be observed are classified as subjective and objective, and they measure not the presence or absence but the intensity in which the phenomenon is presented on a scale from 0 to 3.

A review of this proposal is made by Strömbäck (2009), who considers that Gibson and Römmele built a model centered on the party (party-centered theory) and paid little attention to other elements of the professionalization of campaigns. Strömbäck suggests considering, in addition to the use of new technologies and the presence of experts in campaign management, the use of sophisticated techniques, among which the organization of focus groups stands out. Like Gibson and Römmele (2009), when they reformulate their index, Strömbäck (2009) creates variables with three categories. For him, his index better captures professionalization in multiparty systems, unlike Gibson and Römmele's index, which would be more suited to two-party systems.

Given that campaign techniques and instruments will continue to evolve over time and according to the context (Strömbäck, 2009), the criteria for measuring professionalization must also be modified. Different authors have adapted the above indexes to measure the professionalization of some campaigns in Latin America. Rocha (2007) analyzes the presidential campaigns in Brazil from 1989 to 2006. The Colombian case on the 2010 and 2014 presidential campaigns is addressed by Restrepo-Echavarría (2015) and Restrepo-Echavarría, Rodríguez, and Castromil (2018), respectively. On the other hand, González and Restrepo-Echavarría (2020) measure the level of professionalization of the 2018 Mexican presidential campaign.

Following all these authors, the professionalization index proposed here (INPRO) is made up of two dimensions: the *organizational* identifies the campaign's internal structure, the people who participate in it, and the way in which they are organized. This is divided into three categories: strategic, tactical, and technical (Restrepo-Echavarría et al., 2018; González & Restrepo Echavarría, 2020). The indicators and values of the organizational dimension are detailed below.

1. Campaigns staff. The argument put forward in the literature is that the greater the centralization of the campaign's decision-making staff, the greater the professionalization. When the campaign's decision-making staff is decentralized, the candidate, party or coalition acquires a value of 0; when it is semi-centralized, it acquires 1, and when it is centralized, 2.
2. External consultants. The presence of external consultants to the party is one of the main features of professionalization (Holtz-Bacha, 2002). The value 0 is assigned when the campaign did not have an external professional consultant in any area; 1, when the external professional consultant participates occasionally during the campaign and oversees certain functions, and 2 when the external professional consultant participates throughout the campaign.
3. Professional campaign management. The greater the experience and specialization in the coordination of the campaign, the greater the professionalism. A value of 0 is assigned when the campaign is coordinated by party personnel without previous experience in electoral campaigns; 1, when the campaign is coordinated by party personnel with experience in electoral campaigns, and 2, when the campaign is coordinated by professional manager(s) from alien to the political party or the candidate.
4. Permanent campaign. Following Gibson and Römmele (2001, 2009), one of professionalization characteristics is that the campaigns are permanent. According to this, if in the campaign the candidate limits his/her communication strategy to the times established by the electoral system, the value is 0; if the candidate tries to generate communication strategies, both in the moments in which he/she is competing for the nomination and outside of these, but the electoral system limits the campaign cycles, the value is 1, and if the candidate tries to generate communication strategies, both in the moments in which he/she competes for the nomination and outside of these, and there are no effective limits established by the electoral system, the value is 2.

5. Personalization of the campaign in the candidate. The literature coincides in pointing out that the more personalized the campaign is for the candidate, the greater the professionalization. Value 0 is assigned when the party and party leaders are the focus of the campaign; 1, when the campaign combines the promotion of the candidate with that of the party, and 2, when the focus of the campaign is centered on the candidate.
6. Professionalization of the campaign group. Since Bill Clinton's campaign, the creation of specialized campaign groups in different areas has become popular (Strömbäck, 2009). 0 is assigned when the candidate and his/her collaborators conduct all the work in the campaign; 1, when some areas of the campaign are managed by experts on the subject and the rest of the staff are collaborators, and 2, when the group is made up of work areas and in each one there are professional staffs of experts.
7. Paid affiliation of the campaign. Payment for services is associated with the specialization of the work performed. It acquires a value of 0 when all collaborators in the campaign are volunteers; 1, when there is a mix of volunteers and paid staff in the campaign, and 2, when all campaign staff are paid for their work.
8. Funding. This indicator considers the mechanisms and ways to obtain funding for the campaign, considering that private financing is allowed in Colombia. It is scored with 0 if the campaign does not have an area dedicated to the raise and allocation of financial resources (without Political Action Committees, PAC), but the fundraising was done by the campaign manager or the candidate; 1, if the campaign had a manager and a party group dedicated to obtaining resources, and 2 if the campaign had a committee of specialists from outside the party dedicated to obtaining and allocating financial resources (with PAC).
9. Election monitoring. The use of monitoring tools is essential in a campaign to know and segment the electorate and adapt the strategy (Strömbäck, 2009). Value 0 is assigned when the campaign does not use surveys, polls, or focus groups; 1, when the campaign interprets public polls and sporadically hires opinion poll experts, and 2 when it uses polls, surveys, or focus groups and has expert staff in the analysis of these monitoring instruments.

The second dimension, called *communicative*, captures the parties' and candidates' communication strategies and resources. This is also subdivided into three categories: discursive, communication processes, and technical media (Restrepo-Echavarría et al., 2018; González & Restrepo-Echavarría, 2020). The indicators and values of the communicative dimension are detailed below.

1. Personalized messages. When it is evident that the messages focus on the party and not on the candidate, the value is 0; when the messages intersperse the candidate with the party, 1 is assigned, and 2 when they are characterized by having a high focus on the candidate above the party's message and ideology.
2. Use of symbolic references. If the content is direct and the interest is only in informing, the value is 0; if the message combines informational and symbolic content, 1 is assigned, and if the message has a high symbolic content, 2.
3. Message segmentation. When in the campaign there are only standard messages inviting people to vote for the candidate, the value is 0; when the campaign divides the audiences, but communicates the same messages, 1 is assigned, and 2 when there is a high level of message fragmentation, both by audiences and different types of messages depending on the target.
4. Emotional use of electoral messages. When the contents of the messages are direct and standard, 0 is assigned; the value is 1 when the content of some messages generates emotion, and 2 when the messages have a high emotional level.
5. Image construction. 0 is assigned when the candidate's physical and discursive image is not preponderant due to the lack of accompaniment; 1, when the party's strategists are responsible for building a physical and discursive image of the candidate, and 2, when the candidate has a group of professionals in charge of building his/her public image and political discourse.
6. Storytelling. Through language and rhetoric, candidates build a personal narrative to mobilize the electorate. The narrative strategy is usually autobiographical or familiar (Liebhart & Bernhart, 2017). If the candidate does not develop a discursive strategy that builds stories, 0 is assigned; 1, when the candidate constructs stories but without preparation and with a high level of improvisation, and if the candidate constructs a narrative to mobilize the electorate, 2 (Restrepo-Echavarría et al., 2018).
7. Participation in debates and forums. This is related to professionalization since it requires specialized advisory work to prepare the candidate's image, his/her camera attitude, his/her speech, etc. When the candidate does not participate in debates or forums such as television programs (of a different nature, including comedy) or on virtual platforms (debating with youtubers, for example), 0 is assigned; 1, when participation in discussions or forums is sporadic, and when participating in all forums and discussions, 2 is assigned.

8. Written material for external use in electoral campaigns. If the use of written advertising is non-existent in the campaign, or it is incipient with some flyer material, it acquires the value 0; when the campaign uses all kinds of written material, but without access to billboards due to their high cost, 1, and 2 when there is a massive use of billboards, external advertising, and mobile billboards, press material and flyers accompanied by a signage strategy.
9. Use of new resources: WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, SMS. 0 is assigned when the campaign does not use this type of resources; 1 when frequent use of said resources is made, and 2 when they are used throughout the entire campaign.

The professionalization index (INPRO) is obtained by averaging the result of the two dimensions of analysis. In each dimension, the values of its indicators are added and then divided by the total number of indicators. The formula to calculate the INPRO is shown below:

Professionalization index (INPRO)

$$\text{Organizational dimension: } INPRO_o = \frac{\sum \text{Indicators' intensity Organizational dimension}}{10}$$

$$\text{Communicative dimension: } INPRO_c = \frac{\sum \text{Indicators' intensity Communicative dimension}}{9}$$

$$\text{Professionalization index: } INPRO = \frac{INPRO_o + INPRO_c}{2}$$

Source: Own elaboration based on Restrepo-Echavarría et al., 2019.

With the INPRO value, it will be possible to know the professionalization level of each campaign, as shown in table 1.

The information sources come from the monitoring of the media during and after the campaigns, from the analysis of advertising spots on television and radio, from the official pages of the candidates and parties, as well as from interviews with collaborators and political consultants of the three election campaigns. Interviews were conducted between the months of April and May 2019 with the regional coordinators of the presidential campaign of Iván Duque, Mario Hernández, and Juan Fernando Jaramillo; the advisor to Gustavo Petro's campaign, the Argentinian Ángel Beccassino, and the consultants Miguel Jaramillo Lujan, director of MPG, and Nury Astrid Gómez Serna, director of the *Máximo Impacto* consulting company, regarding Sergio Fajardo's campaign.

Professionalization index (INPRO)	Professionalization level	Professionalization %
$0 \leq \text{INPRO} < 0.5$	Low	$0\% \leq \text{INPRO} < 25\%$
$0.5 \leq \text{INPRO} < 1$	Medium	$25\% \leq \text{INPRO} < 50\%$
$1 \leq \text{INPRO} < 1.5$	Medium-high	$50\% \leq \text{INPRO} < 75\%$
$1.5 \leq \text{INPRO} \leq 2$	High	$75\% \leq \text{INPRO} \leq 100\%$

Table 1. Electoral campaigns professionalization level

Source: Own elaboration based on Rocha (2007).

RESULTS

Organizational dimension

Starting with the Campaign staff indicator, the main characteristic of Colombian presidential campaigns is that they were decentralized or semi-centralized (table 2). Duque's campaign had a partial command centralization with a management staff and a central campaign group directed from Bogota. It was possible to identify a decentralized campaign where each group, by region and by municipality, generated the strategy both for advertising and the candidate's messages and events. In fact, one of the campaign's problems was the groups' funding, which did not receive money from the central group to elaborate the campaign strategy.

Petro's campaign had a partially centralized command, made up mostly of support committees and regional supporters' groups, mostly young people and students, who fulfilled the function of carrying out the campaign in the interior of the country. These were accompanied by the central group of the campaign, which handled the candidate's agenda on his tour of different regions. Fajardo's campaign had a decentralized staff, leaving the national political marketing strategy to a few members of the campaign who have belonged to his home group *Compromiso Ciudadano*.

As for the presence of external consultants within the campaigns, Duque's campaign did not have an external advisor; only in the second round did he have sporadic help from publicist Carlos Alberto Cortés, manager at *Do Consulting*, who oversaw the discursive strategy of the campaign. It could be said that the strategic part of the campaign was directed by its campaign manager Luis Guillermo Echeverri, son of Fabio Echeverri, a member of Álvaro Uribe Vélez's electoral campaigns. Petro had the support of the Argentinian external adviser Ángel Beccassino, in charge of advertising and, in general, of advising on the campaign's mobilization. Similarly, in the second round he was fundamental in the construction of the message of hope

and the frontal attack on the fear generated by the *Centro Democrático* candidate. Fajardo's campaign did not have an external adviser, only the support of people who are highly experienced in electoral matters who have been in his previous campaigns, both for mayor of Medellín and for governor of Antioquia.

Concerning the professional management indicator, it should be noted that Duque's campaign had a group of collaborators close to the Álvaro Uribe government, personal friends of the candidate. This group was led by Luis Guillermo Echeverri. Gloria Ramírez and Juan Pablo Bieri, journalists with extensive experience in media at the national level, were at the forefront of the communication strategy. The strategy in the field was carried out by its head of debate, Alicia Arango, with a long tradition in the party and a loyal person to Álvaro Uribe during his presidency. Another member of the campaign very close to the candidate was María Paula Correa, his personal assistant, who worked during the two terms of Álvaro Uribe's presidency.

Petro's campaign had a medium management, since most of them were people who have always been with the candidate since he was Bogotá mayor, such as Holman Morris, head of debate, María Maldonado, head of campaign programming, Jorge Rojas, internal campaign strategist, Augusto Rodríguez, manager, and finally, volunteers throughout the country. A medium level of professionalization is also seen in Fajardo's campaign, since both his manager and his most important campaign group acquired experience in the different positions they held in the department of Antioquia.

As for the time during which they campaigned, it is worth noting that the, Iván Duque, from *Centro Democrático*, did not run a permanent campaign because, unlike many candidates who have had a long political career, he had no partisan experience or tradition. For political analyst Gilberto Tobón Sanín, "Duque was a fabrication by the party leader Álvaro Uribe Vélez who, along with the committee of the *Centro Democrático* party chose him as a presidential candidate over other experienced candidates" (No cogió la noche... Cosmovisión, 2018, 1:41).

Petro and Fajardo, on the other hand, campaigned permanently, from their positions as governors in the mayoralties of Bogotá and Medellín, respectively, the Senate of the Republic —for Petro— and the governorship of the department of Antioquia —for Fajardo—, where despite of the legislative limitations that prohibit participation in politics (Procuraduría General de la Nación, 2017) both built their image and government slogans. In Petro's case, it was *Bogotá Humana*, which in the national campaign would be called *Colombia Humana*; Fajardo used *Antioquia, the most educated*, which would give the whole platform to his presidential campaign as professor for the presidency of Colombia. Similarly, both built their discourse in favor of change and against the traditional political class and corruption.

Category	Indicator	Duque	Petro	Fajardo
Strategic	Campaigns staff: centralized vs. decentralized.	1	1	0
	Presence of external consultants in different areas.	0	2	0
	Professional campaign management.	2	1	1
	Permanent campaign.	0	2	2
	Personalization of the campaign in the candidate, moving away from the party's ideological programs and orientations.	1	2	2
Tactical	Professionalization of the campaign group, a multi and interdisciplinary working group.	2	1	1
	Paid campaign affiliation.	1	1	1
	Funding.	0	1	0
Technical	Electoral monitoring: use of polls, surveys, and focus groups.	1	1	1
	Media training and team training.	2	2	2
INPRO		1.0	1.4	1.0

Table 2. Organizational dimensión

Source: Own elaboration.

Regarding the personalization of the campaigns, the case of Duque could be classified as moderately personalized, since, although it was an attempt to build the image of a candidate who was unknown to most of the public opinion, he was the one who had the support of the leader of the party, Álvaro Uribe. Similarly, this campaign had substantial support by members of the *Centro Democrático* in generating messages and attacks on other candidates and voters. Petro and Fajardo's campaigns were highly personalized campaigns; because they did not had support from the traditional parties, they sought to position their leadership above the partisan groups.

As for the professionalization of the campaign group through a multi and interdisciplinary work group, Duque's campaign shows the highest level of professionalization (*¿A quiénes escuchan...?, 2018*). This candidate had the collaboration of personnel from different areas and allied collaborators who had had extensive experience in Álvaro Uribe's government. Said group was structured in three multidisciplinary teams, coordinated by his campaign manager Luis Echeverri. The first, his close circle, made up of politicians from *Centro Democrático*, businessmen, and expert personnel in political communication issues. The second, a group of communicators and journalists who followed the candidate and collected the statements, images, and videos of his tours. Finally, a team made up of about 15 millennials, in charge of the content for Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp (Gómez, 2018).

Petro's campaign had a medium level of professionalization because, although it was an experienced group, most of them are not people with high background and promotion in their professions. His campaign manager was Augusto Rodríguez, a friend of the candidate who led a group of collaborators who were accompanying Petro from his government in the Bogota mayor's office. Similarly, he was supported by the social bases and pressure groups of the Colombian left, such as the FECODE union (Colombian teachers' union) and structures of the *Unión Patriótica* party and part of the *Polo Democrático* and MOIR. Finally, Fajardo's campaign had the support of experts in business matters, especially the most important business group in the country: the Antioquia business group. His direct collaborators were those who have always accompanied him in his *Compromiso Ciudadano* political project, part of his work group from the Medellin mayor's office and the Antioquia government, plus a large base of unpaid collaborators.

As for the paid affiliation to the campaign, within Duque's campaign there are very few people, in specific positions, who had a salary. The campaign was mostly made up of groups of collaborators, many of whom belonged to other groups, especially staff of the congressmen of the Republic, collaborators of *Uribismo* in the regions and municipalities. It should be considered that, both in the Petro and in the Fajardo campaigns, many of these groups in their territories funded the advertising and the different supplies that the campaigns required. Others were *ad honorem* groups of supporters.

In the field of funding parties, candidates, and electoral campaigns, it was found that the electoral campaigns did not have strategic areas dedicated to raising funds and allocating financial resources. In fact, what is observed is the direct support of the economic elites. For example, Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo, the richest man in Colombia, financed more than 50% of Duque's campaign, while the group of businessmen from Antioquia partially financed Fajardo's campaign. Finally, it is important to highlight that in this area the Petro campaign had an average level of professionalization, since it raised funds from its donations' portal on its website, where, according to information from several newspapers, the collection of money, especially from academics and university students, occurred (Segrera, nd).

Finally, to conclude this dimension, regarding the use of polls, surveys, focus groups to monitor perceptions, and design of the communication strategy, a high level of professionalization was evidenced in the campaigns of Duque, Petro and Fajardo. This presidential campaign was based more on the construction of emotional scenarios than on the process of building campaign proposals; in fact, there are more political communication strategies and political marketing techniques, taking advantage of the electoral polarization left by the Plebiscite for Peace on October 2, 2017.

Communicative dimension

In the three campaigns it can be seen how the communicative dimension is the most relevant based on the use of different communication techniques and processes. The characteristic is the construction of the personalized message of the candidates, in their speeches in the first person, close to the citizens, distancing themselves from the political party. Similarly, the presidential campaigns had a high use of symbolic referents to stimulate the vote. In this campaign, indignation, disagreement, and fear of the peace process, the ideological polarization left by the armed conflict, the Venezuelan crisis, and the political confrontation between former president Álvaro Uribe and outgoing president Juan Manuel Santos, were common.

Duque was the candidate who segmented his messages the most to try to reach different audiences. In his intention to attract a younger electorate, in some advertisements he appeared as a happy and party man, while, before other sectors, such as adults and the more conservative population, he presented himself as a statesman, educated man with character (Comitia Consulting, 2018). Petro, unlike Duque, did not use that type of segmentation. Most of his advertising was designed to captivate the young public and social groups and collectives dissatisfied with the country's political and economic situation proposing a change (En Movimiento. Información y prensa, 2018). Similarly, Fajardo moderately segmented his messages, building the ideal of the honest and sincere teacher, seeking to build bridges between all the power actors¹ (Sergio Fajardo, 2018).

Regarding the emotional use of electoral messages, the campaigns had a high content; the political division due to the Plebiscite of October 2, 2017, on the Havana peace agreements had left a high polarization and an atmosphere of conflict and divergent views. All three campaigns built emotional messages: fear, anger, and hope. An example was Duque's campaign, where his vice-presidential formula Marta Lucía Ramírez took a photo, visiting a supermarket in Venezuela with empty shelves, as a sign of the future of Colombia in the event of a possible Petro victory. Petro's campaign used a more direct and specific message, with economic and political issues of political activation; the main purpose was to show the shortcomings of the Colombian State and remind public opinion of the acts of corruption of previous governments. Fajardo pretended to be the neutral candidate, the conciliator, seeking to distance himself from the traditional political class, structuring a message of education and reconciliation.

1. *The professor president* is his slogan, which defines him as a centrist progressive, leaving aside the political polarization that at that time marked the advertising of the presidential campaign.

Category	Indicator	Duque Petro		Fajardo
Discursive	Personalized messages.	2	2	2
	Use of symbolic referents.	2	1	1
	Message segmentation.	2	1	1
	Emotional use of messages.	2	2	2
	Construction of image and positioning of the candidate.	2	2	2
	Storytelling.	2	1	2
Communication processes	Participation in televised debates and social forums.	1	2	2
Technical means	Written material for external use in electoral campaigns.	2	2	2
	Use of new resources: WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, SMS.	2	2	2
INPRO		1.88	1.66	1.77

Table 3. The communicative dimension

Source: Own elaboration.

In the communication processes category, the intention to build and position the candidates’ image is evident. Duque, a little-known candidate, without political experience and partisan tradition, loaded his political communication strategy with symbols and signs. He showed himself as a mature and determined candidate in his intention to reach a more adult and conservative electorate, but also jovial and cheerful, playing soccer or musical instruments, to reach a younger electorate; the campaign built an image of a statesman, a scholar, and the most suitable to follow the ideas of Álvaro Uribe Vélez (Iván Duque presidente, 2018).

Petro, on the other hand, position himself through a placating discourse, to change the perception of the armed left, whose image in Colombia has been discredited for decades, at while undertaking a critical speech against the establishment. His positioning strategy was through a more moderate social democratic discourse, highlighting his previous experience as a ruler and positioning issues such as corruption and support for the countryside and agriculture (Julián Duque García, 2018).

Similarly, the storytelling technique in the Duque and Fajardo campaigns is remarkable, both in the image construction and in the search for recognition among all the country’s citizens. Likewise, in the construction of the political

message, allusion was made to nationalist principles, appealing to the origin and tradition of their paisa ancestry —in the case of Fajardo—, the construction of imaginaries of honorability and rectitude, the idea of being fair, kind, and simple. In Petro's campaign there was no clarity about the preparation of his story since this candidate had to overcome and defend himself from the Colombians idea about the discredit of Colombian guerrillas and leftist politicians due to the history of the armed conflict.

Another fundamental item of the communicative dimension in the presidential campaigns was the wide participation in the televised debates. In this campaign, different debate formats were used depending on the media group at the national and regional level (*Grupo RCN, Grupo Caracol TV*), and regional channels such as *Tele Antioquía, Tele Pacífico, Tele Caribe*, which carried out the debate. In Colombia, the televised debates are free, their number is not regulated by the National Electoral Council (CNE, by its Spanish acronym), and the candidate can determine whether to attend or decline the invitation.

This freedom in the number of debates meant that more than 30 meetings were held in the campaign, including televised debates, in universities, with unions, institutions and groups, and even YouTubers (*Debates presidenciales, ¿es momento de regularlos?*, 2018). The only candidate who refused to respond to the call of youtubers was Iván Duque, who also refused to attend debates in the second round. In fact, there was an evident better preparation of Petro and Fajardo when facing the camera, in the training of oral and corporal expression to answer the questions, and in the preparation on different topics of the country's agenda, especially in the regional debates where the candidates had to know the territory's specific problems.

Lastly, the campaigns made extensive use of written material and of all the technical means and new communication and convergence technologies. According to the study *ICTs Use and Appropriation in Colombia*, 59% of Colombians access social networks at least 10 times a day and 70.1% of Colombians are on Facebook (Arias, 2017). This was evidenced in the campaigns of Duque, Petro and Fajardo, where the use of social networks, especially Twitter and Facebook, generated large transmedia communication processes, with proposals for interactive videos, forums, and photographs, managed by groups of networks experts, influencers, creation of trends, management of the agenda and permanent interaction with voters. Likewise, the use of interactive mobile techniques was observed from the SMS to the use of WhatsApp and telemarketing, where the media agenda was imposed, and electoral pedagogy was made. The use of a new tool such as drones to take pictures in the public square, expanding and closing shots to show the magnitude of the event was also seen in the presidential campaigns.

Candidate	Total professionalization index (INPRO)	Level of professionalization
Duque	1.44	Medium-high**
Petro	1.68	High*
Fajardo	1.38	Medium-high**

*High level = $1 \leq \text{INPRO} < 1,5$

**Medium-high level = $1,5 \leq \text{INPRO} \leq 2$

Table 4. 2018 Colombian presidential campaigns professionalization level

Source: Own elaboration.

Finally, it should be considered that the groups of experts in the management of the technical tools were accompanied by the different leaders of their parties, opinion leaders, and influential characters in social networks and WhatsApp networks, thus fueling the political communication strategy of the different campaigns.

CONCLUSION

This work aimed to measure the professionalization level of the campaigns of the three main candidates in the 2018 presidential election in Colombia. In the first place, it should be noted that two campaigns showed medium-high levels of total professionalization and one, that of Petro, showed a high level. Thus, the accumulated experience of the electoral campaigns of Duque, Petro and Fajardo shows that the advantage in electoral preferences is not enough to obtain victory, but that campaigns with a certain level of professionalization are required.

Likewise, it is evident that in the presidential campaign the level of professionalization is explained by the communicative dimension, an aspect that, in each of the analyzed campaigns, provided the greatest development and coverage level. It can be concluded, therefore, that the presidential campaigns in Colombia continue to depend on the media structures, the image projection, and the emotionality of the staging of the communication tool. On the contrary, the organizational dimension shows that the campaign in Colombia is informal in many respects. Previous studies of professionalization in Colombia show similar results (Restrepo-Echavarría, 2015, 2017; Restrepo-Echavarría and Gómez, 2019). I.e., in contrast to the organizational dimension, the communicational part was the one that provided the greatest professional development in each of the electoral contests, both in the winners and in the losers. Similarly, it was noted that the organizational dimension, which had lower development rates than the

communicative one, was governed by low party dispositions in the country's electoral context; their organizational structures adapt more easily to new strategic challenges, but they were campaigns that had no order or ideological cohesion. The study shows the dependence of the organizational structure of the campaign on the candidate's communication strategy and his administrative capacity, as was the case of the Petro and Fajardo campaigns, whose organizational potential depended on personalization and not of a partisan group.

Second, in the electoral processes in Colombia, the adaptation of the country's strategic foundations to international dynamics is evident. Phenomena such as the personalization of the campaign in the candidate, the implementation of new discourses, the use of mass media and new information technologies as the main source of dissemination of proposals, and the structuring of strategies around emotional messages were key elements when designing the three presidential campaigns since they contributed more effectively when it came to having citizen support in a polarized environment with low partisan institutionalization.

A third reflection is the greater professionalization of Gustavo Petro's campaign (INPRO: 1.68), a leftist candidate who achieved a historic vote. This level reveals a substantial change in how left parties and candidates in Colombia have evolved in the way of conducting electoral campaigns, since the insertion of political communication techniques were not considered within these groups, which preferred the traditional use of affiliation, the public square, and the mass discourse. And now, candidates like Petro find new ways to captivate and attract voters in new information technologies, spots, narratives, and external advisers. The professional development in the campaign of a left-wing candidate probably influenced "the enthusiasm generated by [the] agenda" of Petro (Gamboa, 2019, p. 190), which was consolidated in electoral support.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the contribution of this work in analytical-methodological and empirical terms. In this regard, thanks to the index, empirical information was obtained to know the level of professionalization of Colombian campaigns in their last electoral process, and it contributed to the generation of new knowledge for the study of electoral campaigns in Colombia.

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