

Deep Fakes and Digital Ethics: Navigating the Ethical Dilemma in Portraying Political Characters through Deep Fakes and their Impact on Political Communication in Digital Media

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ABSTRACT: The study aims to investigate the ethical and communication issues of deep-fake videos involving Imran Khan, Shahbaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on TikTok. Using qualitative techniques, forty deepfake videos were produced and evaluated to sort their main themes and review public interest. By using Postmodern Media Theory and Media Ethics Theory, the research investigates how deepfakes can change the reality of politics and raise issues with consent, truthfulness, and identity. Some main categories appeared in my analysis: satire and parody, fake political messages, altered election campaign strategies, encouraging leaders, and propaganda that spread negativity. Most of the time, fake statements focused on Khan, Sharif, and Maryam Nawaz, and they were usually hit with satire and stereotypes based on their gender. Bilawal Bhutto's views were better-balanced than those of the previous leader. People who saw the fake videos laughed, got confused, and didn't trust them, showing that deepfakes can have a bad effect on society and democracy. It points out that TikTok's personalized algorithm helps spread possibly untrue or misleading material. To protect democracies from problems caused by deep-fakes in politics, it urges people to be digitally literate, update regulations, make tech platforms more responsible, and prioritize ethical AI standards.

KEYWORDS: TikTok, Political Communication, Deep Fake, Artificial Intelligence

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Introduction

Today, with the latest technology and digital media, AI is important for two aspects of communication. People strongly question the field because it can now produce deepfakes that sound and look almost identical to real people. Because of deepfakes, anyone can easily share fake photos and videos, making it hard to distinguish between truth and falsehood, thus raising serious ethical, public, and social problems. Deepfakes mostly impact politics because they can be used to affect public opinion, disturb voting, and reduce people's faith in democratic institutions. This research focuses on the ethical issues and methods people use to communicate about deepfake technology, using the example of pictures influenced by TikTok of Pakistani political leaders. TikTok users in Pakistan are estimated to be around 64 million.

Local and national political situations are guided by family politicians and people with a firm dedication to their political parties. The portrayal of leaders by the media often changes people's perceptions of a leader's credibility, honesty, and charm. Now, deepfakes play a unique role in political talks. Many reporters and media commentators have studied Shahbaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and Imran Khan, while the public frequently disagrees over their opinions. Dishonest falsehoods and funny videos are both possible because deepfakes have become a part of the media. Since deepfake videos are being shared so widely on TikTok and other such sites, questions about ethics and how we communicate about politics are more relevant than ever.

Deepfake is a so-called generative adversarial network (GAN) in machine learning that has become a cause of concern, especially when used in politics. Whereas on the one hand, GANs are making life easier by generating life-like images and audio to present to different industries, deepfakes have been applied to spread fake news, tamper with visual images, and manufacture quotes, not always distinguishable as fictionalised ones. Deepfake ethics distort our identity and freedom concepts, particularly in countries such as Pakistan, where there is a lack of proper laws against cybercrimes, and victims of manipulation have no other sources of justice.

This paper is an investigation of the sharing and reception of deepfake videos of Pakistani politicians on the TikTok platform used by teenagers. The algorithm of TikTok increases deepfakes, and they are likely to circulate compared to real content. The study employs qualitative content analysis to classify the accounts on videos of Shahbaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and Imran Khan. Such videos appeared on TikTok, and user interactions were examined to learn how they swayed the general trust and political messages.

The paper discusses the ethical implications of AI-created content, its consequences to democracy, especially the perception of people about news and voting. Scholars such as Luciano Floridi suggest that online platforms have transferred power and accountability in information to those receiving it, and to make matters worse, it is becoming more difficult to distinguish between what is the truth and manipulation. The paper ends by outlining recommendations for stronger legislation to deal with the risks of AI in politics and improved content moderation by platforms such as TikTok. This study underlines the scope of the digital disinformation issue and the necessity of openness in technological and political circles and helps guard the credibility of media by studying deepfakes in the context of Pakistani politics.

Literature Review

Deepfake videos can also be used quite widely to deliver divisive messages, or taking advantage of ethnic or political tensions is another important issue (Akram et al., 2023; Battista, 2024). In recent years, researchers, policymakers, and those working in technology have grown interested in so-called deepfakes. The ability to create deepfakes is a combination of the latest methodologies, artificial technologies, and is the best illustration of the exponentially increasing development of artificial technologies' smartness and programmable DRM tampering (Farouk, 2024; Raza et al., 2025). It is alarming how deep fakes were made possible by the growth of deep learning and generative adversarial networks (GANs). Thanks to these algorithms, it's becoming more challenging to recognize which content is real and which is fake. As deep-fake technology spreads, media integrity, politics, and ethics online now face new issues. Stories in literature often

focus on how it is possible to find and resolve deep-fake technology. VR (Virtual Reality) journalism and AI-created content change the media environment and bring new opportunities as well as challenging issues (Bora, 2020; Kashif et al., 2025). Many Researchers have published important findings about deepfakes by discussing how they are produced and how they are discovered. As generative models can advance faster than the technology used to recognize deep-fakes, worried experts are concerned about using technology to slow them down.

Some research examines the effects of deepfakes on both people's minds and their politics. Chesney and Citron explain that deepfakes push against the trust in facts that are fundamental to democracy, preventing people from uniting on what exists. The false concept of lying journalists and journalists creating or sharing bogus tales adds more challenges to the media world. They point out that the rise of deepfakes is adding to a general decline in confidence in institutions, especially when politicians take advantage of ambiguity to cause doubt among the public.

In the realm of political communication, scholars have examined the implications of deepfakes in shaping electoral outcomes and manipulating voter behavior. Scholars discuss how synthetic media can be strategically deployed to fabricate endorsements, smear opponents, or create false narratives that sway undecided voters. The effect is compounded by the virality of social media platforms, where content is often shared without verification. TikTok has emerged as a critical arena for political communication, given its user-generated, algorithm-driven format and high engagement among younger audiences. Platform accountability can be done through content moderation and review processes. It is necessary to optimize social media policies by ensuring companies pay attention to the content and develop AI-based moderation tools that will identify and brand misleading information (Li, 2025).

The ethical dimensions of deepfakes have also been a focal point in academic discourse. Many scholars have proposed a framework for digital ethics that emphasizes the moral responsibility of developers, platforms, and users in navigating AI technologies. They argue that transparency, accountability, and informed consent are foundational principles in addressing the ethical dilemmas posed by synthetic media. They add that the erosion of visual and auditory authenticity poses a risk to societal norms around truth-telling and representation.

TikTok has become one of the most popular social media applications that passed the one billion monthly active users threshold in 2021 and became the global top-grossing app in 2022. TikTok has about 80 percent of users under the age of 34 and is therefore a social medium of choice among Gen Z (Cervi et al., 2023; Raza & Shah, 2024). Ethical issues and dangers of political deepfakes cause several problems and impact people and groups of people in various ways (Momeni, 2024).

Region-specific studies have examined the interplay between deepfakes, politics, and media in non-Western contexts. In South Asia, and particularly in Pakistan, the challenges are magnified by lower levels of digital literacy, polarized political environments, and nascent regulatory frameworks. Different Scholars argue that misinformation in South Asian digital spaces often exploits religious, ethnic, and political tensions, with deepfakes serving as potent tools for propaganda. The lack of robust media literacy campaigns and weak enforcement mechanisms further exacerbate the problem.

The role of social media platforms in the proliferation of deepfakes is another critical area of inquiry. Scholars criticize the opaque algorithms and moderation practices of platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok, which prioritize engagement over accuracy. Research by many scholars underscores the need for platform governance models that integrate ethical AI principles and user-centric transparency. TikTok presents a unique challenge due to its viral video culture and minimal contextual cues, which make it an ideal medium for the spread of emotionally charged, deceptive content.

The literature also addresses the legal and policy responses to deepfakes. Scholars advocate for legislative frameworks that balance freedom of expression with protection against harm, such as laws that criminalize non-consensual deepfakes and mandate labeling of synthetic content. In the Pakistani context, existing cybercrime laws, such as the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), have limited applicability to the nuanced threats posed by deepfakes. There is a growing consensus among legal scholars that comprehensive reforms are needed to address gaps in digital governance and safeguard democratic institutions.

Scholars have proposed various mitigation strategies, including media literacy education, technological interventions, and policy reforms. Scholars emphasize the importance of building “resilient publics” through digital literacy programs that enable users to critically assess online content. Simultaneously, researchers advocate for investment in AI-driven detection tools and the development of authenticity frameworks, such as blockchain-based verification systems. These strategies, however, require coordinated efforts across sectors and jurisdictions.

TikTok is on the edge of the problem of its data privacy policy, which has caused various governments to impose limitations on TikTok use, and even though there are some restrictions in the USA, it is extremely popular among younger generations and politicians (Fichman & Akter, 2025). The deepfake technology is related to technical, psychological, ethical, legal, and geopolitical issues. The threats from synthetic media are now better understood, but it is still important to investigate their consequences using data from different places. Location in the wider academic context allows the study to shape our views on the effect of deepfakes on politics and public trust today.

Although researchers have studied how TikTok affects young people’s political participation and misinformation, there aren’t many examinations of content created by AI for political figures. The current study responds to this gap by conducting a case study on Pakistani politicians and using qualitative methods to uncover how conversations are set up, what effect they have on their supporters, and the ethics involved.

Such writings on deepfakes provide a useful understanding of technology, ethics, and communication problems relating to synthetic media. Even so, it shows that regional research, analysis based on individual platforms, and studying audience feedback are all still lacking. The study goes further by studying the ethical and communication effects of deep-fake videos of politicians on TikTok, hoping to inform policy and platform design and promote awareness with users. By developing critical skills using media literacy knowledge in Gen Z users, they will become responsible in the consumption of digital content (Akram et al., 2024; Sharma et al., 2024).

Deepfakes and Political Communication

Deepfakes have changed how politics is communicated, allowing fake images of politicians to look real. They believe that the appearance of deepfakes can seriously damage discussions in society by allowing false claims

to proliferate. Deepfakes use advanced technologies to appear real, enough that what they do can influence political scenes through false information or slander.

Deepfakes allow political figures to produce phony images, suggest their competitors' statements and actions, and present fake endorsements. It can easily change the way people think during the election season. Because information can spread quickly on TikTok and similar platforms, these problems become even more serious. Deepfakes, False notes, can play a role in shaping elections by focusing on key voters using persuasive and stirring materials.

Where political beliefs are fixed and technology isn't well-developed, as in Pakistan, things become much more dangerous. Social media has emerged as a key place for people to get news, and deepfakes made by politicians could instigate community prejudice or increase sectarian unrest. Although these deepfakes are meant to amuse, they often mix satire with lies, so viewers struggle to determine their purpose or whether the videos are true.

The TikTok system, aimed at boosting content that's popular, only adds to the worry. Scholars found that the platform logic makes emotion and eye-catching visuals more important than getting the facts straight. So, even if a deepfake video is false, it can quickly spread everywhere, thanks to how naturally strong skepticism can be. In effect, TikTok hosts many instances of political messages that mix both humor and facts. The artificial intelligence applied in producing the video could alter the facial expression of a human being, facial expressions, and voice. Many people believed in the fake video, which became a shockwave of indignation and admiration, as it was underlined that the era of post-truth had arrived. The age of truth is uncontrolled and provisional, where the purity of media content as well as the presence of a media gatekeeper has lost validity, and there is nothing conclusive, even when we observe it with our own eyes. It is practically impossible to spot and check explicit videos or fake photos, taking into account the fact that those are mostly released on social media platforms, which are restricted in possibilities of moderation and fact-checking by their nature. Deepfake technology is developed with each passing day, and more and more individuals do not need high proficiency in programming and video editing as they can use it (Yessimova & Shevyakova, 2024).

There are many effects of political discourse experiences because of this situation. Sometimes, deepfakes add falsified news into the discussion, which can influence political priorities. At times, politicians can declare real accusations against them to be deepfakes, so they do not have to take responsibility. With weak journalism, the media loses the ability to question leaders and reduce accountability. Researchers argue that the presence of deepfakes increases people's doubts about others' claims. Because of synthetic content, people tend to mistrust everything online, which decreases democracy's ability to discuss and decide important issues. Simply put, deepfakes undermine the trust in particular political statements and the reliability of how politics is communicated.

Impact on Public Trust

The way people trust information in an age of deepfakes is very important. Individuals who come across deepfakes tend to lose trust in political content, even when the content turns out to be true later. This loss of trust is happening not only to individual videos but also to big media companies, politicians, software

companies, and democratic traditions. For a democracy to function well, the public must trust it when a crisis or a change in government is occurring. The threat of deepfakes is that we become unsure about whether outspoken political figures are who they claim to be. If people doubt what they hear or see, they may not take part in political matters or fall for conspiracy theories. When people disagree so much and spread false claims in Pakistani politics, deepfakes make it even more difficult to unite and act. Watching lots of false content can make people doubt politics, which usually results in reduced voter participation and weaker democratic involvement. These implications are also found in both offline and online media. Checking if viral content is genuine can be difficult for the press, and the rush to publish news means they publish some content that has not been checked. As a result, people may start believing other news sources that might not obey journalistic standards.

Systems with artificial intelligence are also capable of creating content that can result in a manipulative disinformation along with deep fake pictures, have the potential to damage individual privacy through the storage of personal information without the authorization of the individual, and potentially affect this process through influence voting in an election process not to mention that it can be utilized as the discourse of politics in another election process (Önder & Koç, 2024). Studies indicate that people are less likely to be shocked by misleading content when they see it often. Because of “deepfakes fatigue,” people may grow used to disinformation and not ask for answers from those in power.

Over time, it will be easy to create fake posts, photos and videos, and it will take much less information and images, than it does now, and the day will come, when people will be able to create fake (but it will appear very real) images simply with smart phone applications; it will be very hard (probably impossible) to see the fake; such aspects will escalate the number of parties, who will provide their services in creating and publishing fake contents, thus, will decrease the opportunity to punish all these people criminally, or to pay the cost of geopolitics (Rahman 2025). Artificial Intelligence (AI) increasingly proves to be a significant part of the contemporary election campaign, offering political actors a means of streamlining their communication with voters, operating with large amounts of data, and developing individualized the term AI denotes a vast array of computing systems and techniques that allow people to solve problems according to the wishes of user's strategies. Using AI, political campaigns can now go beyond mere expansion to using AI to target specific groups within the electorate by adjusting and tailoring the messages they convey that will match the specific needs and expectations of the various constituencies of the electorate. This position qualifies AI to be a significant element in the digital revolution of political communications (Rudnieva, 2024). Along with the democratization of access to information and opportunities for the expression of views that have a broader orientation that it provided, the digital age also contributed to new instances of manipulation that undermine the quality of public discourse (Ali et al., 2025; Kunnathully & Mission, 2025).

Deepfakes are created with AI to successfully edit videos, images, or audio to deceive viewers. Examples of audio manipulation technology are tools to produce false voices that will be very natural, and it will be hard to notice whether real-life audio was recorded or false. Audio editing and deepfakes have been established as some of the potent tools in the toolkit of disinformation campaigns. The latter technology enables bad actors to produce highly realistic and deceptive content, so that now it is difficult to distinguish between authentic and fabricated information (Ünver, 2023).

In addition, deepfakes make it easier to alter videos and can disrupt law and political outcomes. The use of audio-visual records in courts and legislative meetings may sometimes cause difficulties that could slow down investigations or debates. Therefore, urgent action is needed to improve how evidence is handled and how online governance functions.

For this reason, experts sometimes suggest starting confidence-building efforts through digital literacy efforts and programs to increase public education. Some say platforms like TikTok should have tougher ways to monitor user content and openness about their algorithms. Researchers point out the need to build digital environments that help users trust information and make good judgments while using them. Voter empowerment in the process of disinformation includes digital media literacy programs so that the audience can judge certain information based on the internet source. Simultaneously, online platforms are to introduce policies that are supposed to be responsible and transparent to reduce the dangers of algorithm-promoted information and disinformation. Policymakers, technology companies, and the general population must band together to address the problem of digital disinformation adequately. The above are the only means through which we can ensure the integrity of democratic systems as technology advances very fast (Akram et al., 2023; Ged & Affairs, 2024).

Therefore, the potential risks of deepfakes on public trust show that society should involve academics, civil groups, business, and experts in government policy. If people do not come together to stop it, the growth of deepfakes may damage individual credibility and the building blocks of democracy.

Research Objectives

- ▶ To examine various deepfake videos of popular Pakistani politicians on TikTok.
- ▶ To explore how people's trust in political leaders and institutions is changed by deepfakes.
- ▶ To study the problems that arise from this kind of content against popular politicians.

Research Questions

1. What kinds of fake content are developed by AI around political leaders on TikTok?
2. How much do deepfakes change people's beliefs about political leaders, the media, and various institutions?
3. What moral questions come up when deep-fake videos are viral against popular politicians?

Methodology

To explore the ethical and communication effects of fake AI videos, this study uses a qualitative method on popular political leaders' TikTok content, selecting 40 videos on TikTok, 10 of each politician. To explore themes, narratives, and viewer attention in response to deepfakes, qualitative content analysis is used in this research, in line with constructivist views that stress how individuals view things based on their context. This theoretical approach relies on Postmodern Media Theory and Media Ethics Theory, allowing for the viewing of identity change, the production of truths, and the problem of ethics in digital interaction.

Theoretical Framework

According to Postmodern Media Theory, the media world is coming to consist mainly of simulacra—duplicates with no original—that make it hard to tell real from unreal. They embody the postmodern era by making

content that seems real, although it is not. You can understand the effect of deepfakes on politics by looking at Baudrillard's idea of hyperreality.

It adds to this approach by focusing on what is expected from content creators, platforms, and customers. Besides Floridi (2013) and Donath (2020), the theory examines ethics in issues of consent, misinformation, and digital identity.

These methods together help with this research by allowing a detailed study of how deep-fakes impact trust in public figures, communications in politics, and ethical issues in today's media world.

Research Design

Qualitative content analysis is used in the study, allowing for a more detailed understanding of how media use symbols, emotions, and language. Such a design helps detect hidden meanings and subject details that standard quantitative approaches might miss.

We looked at 40 deepfake videos, with 10 videos focused on each politician: Shahbaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and Imran Khan. They were created using AI that helps the videos copy how humans look and sound. To try to attract people on TikTok, every video was tagged with political and cultural hashtags.

Videos were sorted and coded by hand into various groups, for example, misinformation, satire, motivational language, and manipulated debate or political speeches. Assistance with organizing data, American Standard on Data Organization (ASDO), and finding themes was made possible by using NVivo. The main questions guiding the development of this design were:

1. How are they being used and perceived by users on this social network?
2. What ethical problems are present when people use deepfakes to communicate in politics?
3. Do these videos influence people's trust in political and news organizations?

Data Collection

Part of the data collection involved publishing 40 TikTok videos, each featuring a political leader. All the videos were intended to represent various styles of political communication, including motivational speaking, talking to reporters, campaign events, using emotions, satire, fake controversies, reaction to a crisis, patriotism messages, policy analysis, and conversations with citizens. As a goal, this variation was formed to incorporate the many aspects of political talk.

We selected each video from different, neutral TikTok accounts. The presence of tags including #PakPolitics, #ImranKhanDeepfake, #MariyamNawazAI, and #DigitalDemocracy was key to being found online. View count, likes, comments, and shares for each engagement were counted for 15 days. Comments written by TikTok users were gathered and anonymized with Python code for user privacy and compliance. Sentiment was assigned as positive, negative, or neutral, and various patterns were discovered throughout the data.

Video duration, posting time, and follower numbers on accounts were collected to complete the picture of engagement. In addition, we checked which videos were promoted and which were taken down by the

platform's algorithms. The dataset was saved and studied using NVivo, mainly to highlight trends related to deception, satire, trust, outrage, and political support.

Sampling Technique

We used purposive sampling to choose content that displayed a large and diverse variety of political statements. The reason for using this technique was that it makes it possible to focus on types of content that are directly connected to the research questions.

Four main areas of focus shaped what the video sample contains:

1. **Satire and Humor:** Videos that imitate political figures and sometimes overstate their personality or opinions.
2. **Misinformation:** Videos containing scenarios or remarks that didn't take place, designed to see how easily viewers can detect false news.
3. **Motivating or Nationalistic Videos:** Movies showing heads of nations giving inspiring speeches to measure their impact on viewers.
4. **Edited Renderings of Real Speeches:** Political messages are changed to include opinions that represent opposing or controversial thoughts.

Viewers' engagement with news was examined by looking at user profiles grouped by age, the language they use, and political views.

Video inclusion was based on being able to output at high resolution, having clear speech synthesis, lacking clear signs of manipulation, and staying in line with Pakistani politics. Videos and content with poor quality or that might have broken community guidelines were excluded from the process. Thanks to purposive sampling, the study allowed the analysis of both the communicative and ethical dimensions that are discussed. The method helped analyze important themes and revealed fine viewer reactions, allowing for a thorough study of the social effects of political deepfakes. After that, detailed findings and analysis will be given, showing how these results support what was found in the literature and the applied theory.

Analysis

We discuss the analysis of 40 deepfake videos created for the four selected Pakistani political figures in detail. The videos were sorted and tagged into groups: Satirical Parodies, Fake Political Statements, Manipulated Campaigning, Inspirational Leadership, and Negative Propaganda.

1. **Satirical Parodies:** Abundant satirical parodies were simply humorous acts that made people imitate or overdo certain gestures, the way they normally spoke, or their belief systems. Videos were made to bring laughter and mockery by copying artificial or lively ways of communicating. For example, deepfakes created a scene where Maryam Nawaz enters the kitchen, a way of mocking male dominance in politics as well as traditional gender roles at home. Shahbaz Sharif's videos involved showing himself speaking exaggeratedly like someone in parliament to present serious things in a silly way. These memes attracted young people, who liked, shared, and made funny comments on them, showing that satire helps people get involved in politics, though the jokes can sometimes make things less serious.

2. **Fake Political Statements:** Some of the most questionable deepfakes were those videos where people recorded false statements from leaders. One purportedly described Bilawal Bhutto as supporting the very privatizations he spoke out against, and Imran Khan was shown standing beside other political parties he had opposed. By using hyperrealism, such content aimed to make people unsure if it was true or not, which many think could result in misinformation and help sway voters. Based on comments received, it appears many viewers were anything but doubtful about these videos’ authenticity until user corrections or truthful reports were mentioned. They show a serious weakness in understanding digital content and make clear that we desperately require verification tools as well as more accountable platforms.
3. **Manipulated Campaigning:** In this category, there were cases where leaders seemed to favor a cause but had not supported it in public, and similarly with attacking opponents. Shahbaz Sharif commended the plans from the opposition party, which caused confusion and led to heated debates online. By using the authority in a political party’s symbol, it becomes hard for viewers to figure out which content is genuine. Research showed colony members were not very engaged with such videos, but shared them more frequently, suggesting that anything controversial is spread much more easily.
4. **Inspirational Leadership:** Inspirational Leadership was about making leaders appear to do grand things like giving rousing speeches, talking to citizens openly, or pledging great changes. In most cases, those videos made people remember the past and encouraged patriotism, thanks to exciting music and images. Such videos showed a tough hero, and many of their followers reacted emotionally to what they said. Though the views about politicians were positive, there are still doubts about their morality because they suggest unrealistic images and may not give viewers a clear idea of what politicians can achieve.
5. **Negative Propaganda:** In this category, a type of video appeared meant to undermine political leaders by using inaccurate reports, strong statements, or personal insults. For example, Shahbaz Sharif was accused of taking bribes, Maryam Nawaz gave hate speeches, Bilawal Bhutto was claimed to be involved in undercover plots together with other politicians, and at the same time, Imran did other activities. They made use of public doubts and opinions about certain politicians. People had strong reactions to the videos: those against them said they represented fake incidents, but those for them believed them to be real. This means that deepfakes often strengthen political disputes instead of bringing people together to talk.
6. **Results Summary (Content Distribution):** The information was summarized in a content matrix to show how each political figure covered the main themes:

Table 1

Description	Shahbaz	Maryam	Bilawal	Imran
Satirical Parodies	2	3	2	1
Fake Political Statements	3	2	3	4
Manipulated Campaigning	1	2	2	2
Inspirational Leadership	2	1	2	2
Negative Propaganda	2	2	1	1

Among other types, fake political statements turned up the most, and Imran Khan was the most frequently targeted figure. Most satire for Maryam Nawaz comes as parody, likely related to generic prejudice that makes her a regular target. The balance between categories shows that the maker wanted to test various ways people could respond.

Generally, the study reveals that deepfakes vary greatly in what they intend to do and what results they achieve. They exist on a wide scale, going from entertainment to satire, to misinformation or propaganda, with their meanings carrying certain moral and political obligations. With these results, the applied theories are important, and now we must address broader effects and what new regulations may emerge.

Key Findings

False Political Words by Imran Khan and Shahbaz Sharif

Imran Khan and Shahbaz Sharif appeared four and three times, respectively, in deepfakes due to their eminence in Pakistani politics. They are the usual targets of deepfakes, when they create odd poses and provide false information on serious subjects. The audience was disoriented by this content, and the majority reacted by either becoming angry or skeptical and the deepfakes phenomenon has the capability to become an instrument of political polarization and corrode trust. These findings work with the Postmodern Media Theory and Baudrillard in the hyper reality, i.e., the simulations which are more predominant than the reality itself. Deepfakes represent a breach of the code of ethics of communications, in particular, the principle of consent and truthfulness, but their growing awareness is an indicator of the increasing impact of technology, as well as the fact that digital devices are increasingly beginning to display, consume, and communicate.

Maryam Nawaz Satire and Doctored Campaigning

Satire was also widespread in most of those manipulated videos of Maryam Nawaz doing something ridiculous, as gendered as to point out. Those kinds of videos contained some political slanders against her, and they took advantage of her status as a big female in politics, and they used that kind of material to both demean her and misrepresent her. Such deepfakes of her are evidence of the overlap between gender stereotypes and media principles, as certain satirical effects can be true-to-life on some occasions and contribute their part to a system of prejudices. These videos influenced the perception of people, and some of the people began to believe the things they see are the truth, and this is another common ethical issue where people get their names ruined without a trial.

Bilawal Bhutto: Deepfake Balance Representation

His deepfake content had both positive and negative pictures of Bilawal Bhutto. Some of the videos presented him as an inspiration, whereas there were those that tended to proclaim false statements. Such a fragment of the neutral representation suggests that, on the one hand, there is a possibility of good control over a digital image of Bilawal, and on the other, there is the symbolic disorder that distorts political communication. His case demonstrates that even in situations when deepfakes seem to be neutral, these technologies can mislead the audience and, respectively, become a factor affecting the politically stable situation. They lacked a strong emotional reaction to what he produced, and this convinced the audience of manipulation.

Discussion

The paper will investigate the matter of deep fakes and ethical concerns related to deep fakes with regard to political discussion on the basis of four noteworthy individuals in Pakistan. The analysis indicates that among the deepfake videos of such individuals, there are common themes, which can be associated with political communication, democratic participation, and the reality of faith in online systems.

Ethical Implications of Deepfake Deepfake Technology Moral Implications of the Deepfake

Ethically, the privacy of the deepfake remains doubtful, so when there is no agreement on the representation of people portraying images and actions of such individuals, it remains doubtful. With the help of deepfakes, it is observed that most of them, especially those with Imran Khan and Shahbaz Sharif, went to the limit between satire and misinformation and might therefore distort the masses and result in a loss of trust in political speech. The issues pose a threat to democratic representation and responsibility.

Gendered Aspects of Political Deepfakes

The deepfakes have been applied to Maryam Nawaz, depicting the gender biases that are still present in political discourse. Stereotypical portrayals of her conspire to discredit the roles of women in superior positions. This notion is triggered by Feminist media theory, which shows that online sources of media influence the biases that already exist in society and strengthen them; hence, the need to advocate social education and control of advanced technologies is a vital requirement.

Hyperreality as The Political IDENTITY

The concept of deepfakes can be explained as the concept of hyperreality formulated by Jean Baudrillard, because of which politics are implemented with unreality regarding political identity. Deepfakes depict fake occurrences in the form of reality; in contrast to Imran Khan and Shahbaz Sharif, the political involvement and awareness become fake. The question of media literacy is crucial in warding off the confusing effects of such digital fakes.

Impact on the Religion of Media and Institutions

The dangerous nature of deepfakes is that they are used to distort those things that people trust, the media, and the government. The implication of the portrayal of false events as facts can be a detrimental process of political involvement and trust among the people. The use of deepfakes makes the task of the audience noting what is real or false even more challenging, and this factor shows that the audience needs more media literacy.

Digital Platform Roles

Social media, especially TikTok, is an effective means of transmission of deepfake content since its algorithm does not verify information before it goes viral. This is due to the reason that such information that arouses emotions that make people angry tends to thrive on these platforms. The thing is that a stronger law should be put in place, and resilience is required to eliminate information that harms the person, and the freedom of expression will not be broken.

Regulation, Reinforcement, and Media Literacy

Media literacy should thus be enhanced with the objective of reducing the impact of deepfakes. Among the means of reducing the amount of damage deepfakes do is education of the population as to how to evaluate the digital matter and how to change the laws and regulations that will help bridge the gap in the questions raised by the popularity of synthetic media. New legislation should be developed to deal with digital avatars, and any malicious deepfake that can harm someone must be punishable.

Conclusion

We focused this study on the ethical, communicative, and social impact of deepfake technology when representing political leaders on TikTok. Reading through the qualitative analysis of 40 videos, featuring Imran Khan, Shahbaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the research exposed the refined effects of artificial media on people's views, politics, and trust in Pakistan.

The results demonstrate that deepfakes can be used for satire, as well as to support outright propaganda. The combination of these themes for each politician was influenced by their role in public, their identity, and how much others cared about their politics. Many raunchy political TV shows picked on Imran Khan and Shahbaz Sharif, demonstrating that they often became victims of misleading and ambiguous claims. Nawaz's image in satires and doctored campaign content seems to demonstrate how female politicians are often treated unfairly online. This indicates that deepfakes can help artists look critically at or admire public figures.

Thanks to Postmodern Media Theory, mainly Baudrillard's hyperreality, we found out that deepfakes imitate and play a role in shaping political reality. As a result, these hyperreal shows typically displace actual reality, pushing forward a political view where online inventions have as much weight as proven truths. As politicians blend reality and manipulation, people become unsure about how to judge, accept, and spread the truth. This is especially important for democratic discussion, as there are many places where the public is not very skilled at critically using online information.

Our analysis was aided by Media Ethics Theory, which pointed out that the creation and sharing of deepfakes break privacy, truthfulness, and principles of professionalism. While typical satire and parody take aim at pointing out errors, deepfakes mostly exist to mislead and fabricate things that look real. They can compromise politicians' reputations, fool many voters, and influence public opinion, roles carried out by propaganda.

A further observation is that many people are losing trust in both the government and the press. Research in the field confirms that seeing a deepfake, whether you believe it, makes you less trusting of all political material. Because of this condition—made worse by the liar's dividend—truthful news can also be ignored, weakening democracy and wise voting. Once all people doubt the truthfulness of communication, participation in public affairs drops, and space becomes a battle for those who can dominate with stories.

At this point, digital platforms such as TikTok are very important. The main reason deepfakes gain popularity on this platform is that the algorithm favors videos that hold people's attention. Because the most mistaken or exaggerated content is noticed the most, it encourages more of it to be released. Because audiences may not know how to spot good from bad deepfakes, the efforts to curb their spread through current policies and tools are still not enough.

The results call for multiple kinds of interventions to address these problems. Everyone needs to learn media literacy to deal with the many challenges found in the media world. Government-run schools, colleges, and major TV broadcasters should help people become more secure online. At the same time, platforms must deal with the ethical implications of how their algorithms work. Transparent guidance, reliable filtering of posts, and cooperation with people who investigate news are key to addressing harm.

Besides, governments and regulators should change their laws to handle challenges related to synthetic media. Government and international organizations should make rules that can distinguish between satire that is okay and harmful misinformation from those who misuse it and assign real consequences to wrongdoers. Even so, such laws should keep in mind both the freedom to speak openly and the obligation to shield the conversation from false information.

The study further suggests an area where future research is urgently needed. Since this analysis looked at the content and reactions to deepfakes, it is important to examine what repeated exposure to them does to political action, trust in democracy, and how people vote. Such studies could reveal how various societies react to and view artificial media. To properly develop these tools and standards, technologists, ethicists, and social scientists ought to cooperate closely.

Through this work, we have found that deepfakes can seriously affect politics, ethics, and the larger society. Because it is getting easier and more futuristic, synthetic media makes everyone responsible for vigilance, critical thinking, and ethical behavior. We must all come together, through education, lawmaking, technology, and cultural change, to sustain the honesty of political communication. We can maintain open public conversations and truth only if we address the dangers of deepfakes.

Results of the Research

The comprehensive qualitative analysis of the TikTok deep fake videos of Imran Khan, Shahbaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari discussed the role of the videos in shaping and constructing political narratives and perceptions, the future at hand in political trust and safety within online platforms. The paper indicates how technology, politics, and ethics interconnect to modify the online images of the politicians and democracy.

Thematic Distribution

The videos were categorized into the following five categories: Satirical Parodies, Fake Political Statements, Manipulated Campaigning, Inspirational Leadership, and Negative Propaganda.

The Satirical Parodies ridiculed the behaviour or speech of politicians to criticize them. Third of the clips made by Maryam Nawaz were at the expense of satire with much gender stereotyping, whereas Imran Khan had the least, and they were less comic-oriented.

The most watched ones were Fake Political Statements, and most of them contained Imran Khan and Shahbaz Sharif, leading to awareness about deepfakes and their possible damage to the population.

Manipulated Campaigning portrayed the stance of politicians to make the voters misinformed, and Maryam Nawaz suffered the most. Some were also done by Bilawal and Imran; this is an indicator of how campaigns can be rigged.

Inspirational Leadership deepfakes promoted positive images of politicians with the appearance of heroes or unifying individuals, such as Bilawal and Imran.

The Negative Propaganda caused distrust and dislike, following Shahbaz, Maryam, Bilawal, and Imran, all being the targets to serve their reputations.

Political Personalities and Topics

The deepfakes that Imran Khan mostly made were statements that needed to be faked and, therefore, both controversial and polarizing, as well as charismatic. The video produced by Shahbaz Sharif was neither too positive nor too negative, which tended to depict him as an unreliable person. The deepfakes created by Maryam Nawaz concentrated on satire and pseudo selection, due to which gender bias was escalated. The videos of Bilawal were balanced, containing both inspirational and manipulative material, which demonstrated that through deepfakes, it is possible to create and develop intricate political images.

Viewer Interaction

Deepfakes were highly popular and brought significant interaction on TikTok as citizens either laughed, supported, or were suspicious of politicians. The satire by Maryam made gendered jokes. The falsehood of Imran and Shahbaz also divides the audience, hardening the political lines. Part of the audience even mistrusted any political information, which indeed validated the concerns about deepfakes reducing the overall trust in actual information. More support was given in the inspirational videos that reflected the hopes of loyal followers.

Ethical and Social Effects

Ethical concerns are associated with deepfakes since they forge realities and strengthen stereotypes, particularly those directed toward women. Mixed presentations of Bilawal indicate the ability of deepfakes to stir up interest but fuzz up facts. The loss of faith in political communications is bad in terms of democracy, as they doubt reality as well.

Larger Theories and Lessons

The notion of replacing real facts with plausible fakes through deepfakes is why Postmodern Media Theory and hyperreality have been introduced. Deepfakes endanger the aspect of honesty embedded in political discourse (Media Ethics Theory). Unless something is done, deepfakes will continue to disrupt the world of politics and undermine enlightenment, and the necessity of media literacy and ethical standards.

Recommendations

Firm up Digital Media Literacy and Awareness

Human beings can find it difficult to distinguish true political facts from deepfakes. Government, school, and civil society must develop robust digital literacy. The citizens need to understand how to identify deepfakes, sources, and interrogate shocking or viral political materials. Media literacy must be introduced into the classrooms with encounters into tech ethics and how one should behave when discussing politics. Awareness

can be run on social media (instead of TikTok, YouTube, and Twitter) with reminders and collaboration with fact-checking organizations, and can be used to inform people about deepfakes. More knowledgeable individuals will prevent the dangerous deepfake materials and decrease polarization.

Design and Impose Tough Regulatory Policies

Lying, impersonation, and defamation may be brought about by unregulated deepfake content. Defamation and misinformation legal acts have to be updated regarding deepfakes, and publishing and making deepfakes of false political videos should be forbidden. Satire and dangerous disinformation must be well distinguished by clear rules. A good regulation must be able to obtain a balance between free speech and satire, and safeguard the confidence of the people and democracy.

Publish Better Community Spaces and Moderation

Consumers can find deepfakes on social media and short-video apps such as TikTok. AI ought to be utilized by the platforms to identify and tag phony videos. Any content that antagonizes people should also be warned or censored, especially in cases where the content poses a threat to elections or democracy. The users ought to be able to specify and report suspicious posts easily and reach the fact-checkers. Algorithms have to be modified so that they do not boost manipulative content. A quick response has the potential to curb the spreading of falsehoods without shielding real political speech.

Put in Place the Ethical Creation Code on Deepfakes

With the rise of synthetic media, content creators require an objective to be released. They are expected to seek approval, uphold rights, and not deceive people. Juvenile producers ought to reveal AI-generated content. Satire must not be disseminated along stereotypes or fake statements. Ethical deepfakes may be created with the guidance of workshops and certification, with the help of which creators can reduce risks and still use them positively in the political sphere.

Christianize Gender Bias and Stereotypes

Deepfakes are used against female politicians many times with misleading information, enhancing the prejudice. These gendered patterns should be brought to light through media literacy. Policies are supposed to protect against harassment and discrimination. There should be research on the impact of the synthetic media on gender bias. Women politicians should be backed by legal and technical assistance in order to fight evil campaigns.

Promote Interdisciplinary Tools

Promote interdisciplinary tools and research. Facilitate Interdisciplinary Research and Tools. This cooperation is essential; researchers are advised to develop more efficient methods of identification and investigate the consequences of this technology on beliefs on a global scale. Publicized databases will assist in training tools and will teach members of the populace.

To Involve Involved Parties

The collaboration should include governments, technological companies, civil societies, scholars, and politicians. They have to develop the policies, educate people, develop detection tools, and support ethical communication.

Advance Open News

Companies ought to authenticate viral political videos fast. The political figures are needed to aid in rectifying the lies and provide credible facts. The journalists ought to sensitize the historical truths to de-confuse.

Enact Policies That Cocoon Democracy

There should be new regulations that restrict the use of synthetic media in elections, and political advertisements should be clearly labeled. Protection of deepfake victims by means of legal assistance is necessary to maintain faith in democracy among the people.

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