

## POLITICAL MANIPULATION THROUGH DEEPPAKE TECHNOLOGIES

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**Abstract.** The article analyzes the use of deepfake technologies for political purposes, provides specific cases, examines the responses of state institutions, and explores existing and prospective technologies for detecting manipulated content.

**Keywords:** deepfake, politics, falsification, detection technologies, state institutions, information security

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### Introduction

With the rapid development of artificial intelligence technologies, there has been an exponential increase in the number of deepfake videos, giving rise to a new category of informational threats, particularly in the political context. Technologies for the synthetic generation of audiovisual content, which were once confined to experimental use, are now becoming accessible to a wide range of users. This shift brings about profound transformations in the mechanisms of political communication and how information is perceived by society.

Deepfake videos, created using deep neural networks, possess a high degree of visual plausibility, making it difficult to promptly verify the authenticity of the content. This opens the door to the fabrication of statements by political leaders, fake confessions, accusations, or compromising behaviors—all of which can undermine trust in official institutions and provoke public outcry.

Especially dangerous are context-sensitive materials that can influence electoral preferences, the legitimacy of government, and the dynamics of protest activity. Deepfake content can simulate the involvement of public figures in unethical behavior or provocative statements, thus creating artificially constructed scandals with real political consequences.

The primary objective of this study is to assess the actual threat posed by deepfake technologies in the political sphere. The research aims to analyze the nature of deepfake use in political contexts, evaluate how audiences perceive such content, and explore potential scenarios of its destructive influence on decision-making processes, electoral behavior, and the legitimization of political actors.

The study employs qualitative content analysis combined with a comparative approach, allowing for a comprehensive examination of the deepfake phenomenon in the political context. It aims to identify key trends in the use of synthetic content for disinformation purposes and to highlight effective national and international practices for countering such threats.

**Results.** The conducted study analyzed well-known cases of deepfake technology use in political contexts, covering various regions and political systems. Examples from the United States, India, Myanmar, and several other countries demonstrate how synthetic audiovisual

content is used to exert a destructive influence on public opinion, electoral attitudes, and the stability of political regimes.

In the United States, instances of distributing falsified video materials—allegedly showing public figures, including presidential candidates, making controversial or provocative statements—have increased in the lead-up to elections.<sup>1</sup> Analysts note that the impact of such videos is especially significant during periods of electoral mobilization, when society is most susceptible to emotionally charged content.<sup>2</sup>

In India, the use of deepfake technologies has also taken on the character of an electoral tool. In several cases, videos were circulated in which opposition politicians were allegedly making provocative statements or appeared in compromising situations.<sup>3</sup> Examples from the Indian context illustrate how the visual plausibility of synthetic content is used to deliberately construct a false political reality, shaping a distorted perception of events among viewers.

Particularly significant are cases from Myanmar, where deepfake videos were used amid political instability.<sup>4</sup> They were used as a tool of propaganda aimed both at legitimizing the actions of the ruling authorities and at discrediting the opposition. In this context, deepfakes serve as a visual narrative that reinforces the official political agenda while simultaneously undermining the credibility of alternative forces—especially in environments with limited access to independent sources of information.

In addition to the above examples, the study also highlights a number of notable cases where deepfakes were used to create fake news, provocative content, and digital manipulation. This demonstrates that the dissemination of synthetic videos can occur not only as part of organized campaigns but also at the level of local initiatives. An analysis of the motivations behind the creation and dissemination of deepfake content shows that the main objectives include discrediting political opponents, manipulating public perception, and enhancing propaganda effects. Fabricating the statements and actions of political figures enables the creation of negative portrayals, weakens electoral support, and provokes public outrage.<sup>5</sup> The consequences of this type of interference extend beyond individual cases. First and foremost, societal polarization intensifies: fake videos—even after being debunked—continue to circulate in the media space,

<sup>1</sup> Storm-1516. (2024). Wikipedia. Retrieved March 22, 2025, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Storm-1516>

<sup>2</sup> Vaccari, C., & Chadwick, A. (2020). Deepfakes and Disinformation: Exploring the Impact of Synthetic Political Video on Trust in News. *Social Media + Society*, 6(1).

<sup>3</sup> Al Jazeera English. (2024, March 2). The deepfake wave in India's elections | The Listening Post [Video]. YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V\\_NN13Eu8yc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_NN13Eu8yc)

<sup>4</sup> Çoban, F. (2024). IV Uluslararası İletişim Sempozyumu: Dijital Çağda Dezenformasyon [International Communication Symposium: Disinformation in the Digital Age]. ResearchGate. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/387868540\\_IV\\_Uluslararası\\_Iletisim\\_Sempozyumu\\_Dijital\\_Cagda\\_Dezenformasyo](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/387868540_IV_Uluslararası_Iletisim_Sempozyumu_Dijital_Cagda_Dezenformasyo)

<sup>5</sup> Chesney, R., & Citron, D. (2019). Deep Fakes: A Looming Challenge for Privacy, Democracy, and National Security. *California Law Review*, 107(6), 1753–1819.

fueling conflict and fostering distrust between social groups. At the same time, trust in traditional mass media and political institutions is undermined. People become increasingly skeptical of official information, which destabilizes public consensus and complicates the political decision-making process. As for audience reach, the distribution of synthetic content through social networks, messaging apps, and video platforms ensures massive virality and rapid spread. Deepfake videos can reach millions of users within hours, particularly in countries where digital consumption is high and media literacy remains low. This makes deepfakes an extremely effective tool of political influence.

The political impact of such materials varies depending on the institutional resilience of the state. In democratic systems with developed media environments and a high level of digital awareness, the consequences may be limited; however, even under such conditions, public trust in a candidate or party may be undermined. In more vulnerable states, deepfakes can provoke waves of public protest, increase nationalist rhetoric, or even contribute to conflict escalation. In some cases, the spread of such materials affects the international agenda as well: falsified statements by high-ranking officials, once picked up by transnational media, may cause diplomatic incidents or deteriorate bilateral relations. In response, governments are attempting to develop effective countermeasures to address the challenges associated with deepfake content dissemination. Approaches vary depending on political regimes, levels of digital maturity, and legal frameworks, but in most cases, there is a clear tendency toward creating a multilayered regulatory system that combines legislative, technical, and institutional mechanisms.

In the United States, efforts to combat the deepfake threat are being implemented at the state level. For example, laws have been passed in California and Texas that establish criminal liability for the dissemination of synthetic videos intended to mislead in political or electoral contexts.<sup>6</sup> In addition, federal agencies are working on the creation of analytical units capable of promptly monitoring and responding to cases of the destructive use of deepfakes in the online space. At the national level, the United States is focusing on developing regulatory frameworks that strike a balance between the right to freedom of expression and protection against manipulative technologies.<sup>7</sup>

China demonstrates a different response model based on state control and preventive censorship. In this context, deepfakes are officially classified as a threat to national security, allowing the authorities to integrate control mechanisms into the existing digital monitoring system. The Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) has introduced regulations requiring both users and platforms to label synthetic content and prevent its distribution without prior authorization.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> California Assembly Bill No. 730, Chapter 493 (2019). Официальный текст доступен по ссылке: [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201920200AB730](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB730); Texas Senate Bill No. 751, Chapter 1244 (2019). См. текст закона: <https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/86R/billtext/html/SB00751F.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> Citron, D., & Chesney, R. (2020). Deep Fakes and the New Disinformation War. *Foreign Affairs*, 99(1), 147–155.

<sup>8</sup> Mozur, P., Zhong, R., & Krolik, A. (2023). China's New Rules on Synthetic Media. *The New York Times*.

The study confirmed the hypothesis that deepfake technologies are not merely a temporary hype, but rather a genuine threat in the political sphere. Examples of deepfake use in politics demonstrate that falsified video content can manipulate public opinion, discredit political figures, and intensify polarization within society. The response measures taken by states—including legislative initiatives, the development of technical solutions, and international cooperation—have not always kept pace with the rapid evolution of these technologies. This highlights the urgent need for a comprehensive approach that combines legal, technical, and institutional strategies to effectively counteract the growing influence of synthetic content in the political domain.

### Literature

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