CASE STUDY

From Aristotle to AI: Exploring the convergence of deepfakes and persuasion and their societal consequences

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Abstract: From the foundational tenets of Aristotle's rhetoric to the digital complexities of today's AI-driven technologies, the path of persuasive communication involves a variety of tools and tactics. At the center of this technological evolution are 'deepfakes', which are advanced AI-generated videos that are almost indistinguishable from real content. This study uses critical discourse analysis to examine how rhetorical techniques manifest in deepfakes, demonstrating how these videos not only exemplify Aristotle's rhetorical principles but also amplify them in an indistinguishable way. By doing so, this research raises pressing concerns about the spread of misinformation and the erosion of trust in media and political discourse. By juxtaposing classical rhetoric with contemporary AI technology, the study explores this new dimension of persuasion, offering insights into its broader implications while proposing pathways for handling the challenges of an increasingly AI-infused communication landscape.

Keywords: rhetoric, political communication, deepfakes, artificial intelligence

1 Introduction

Aristotle's philosophy has been one of the most influential frameworks for understanding rhetoric, laying the foundation for what we recognize today as persuasive communication. His work extended beyond just a handbook of rhetorical techniques, addressing matters of audience psychology, and style, and even critiquing Plato's perspectives on rhetoric, as seen in Gorgias and Phaedrus (Williams, 2013). Aristotle proposed that rhetoric is morally neutral, with its success dependent on three core elements: logos (the logical validity of the argument), ethos (the character and credibility of the speaker), and pathos (the emotional engagement of the audience) (Kennedy, 2007). In Aristotle's view, rhetoric is the art of persuasion – the ability to sway an audience's perception through available means (Williams, 2013).

While Aristotle's rhetoric provides a foundation for understanding human persuasion, the advent of AI-driven language models and communication systems has fundamentally shifted these conceptions. These technologies disrupt the traditional human-centric communication model as they go from being a medium of communication to an active participant that shapes the message itself (Gunkel, 2020; Guzman, 2018). This dynamic blur the historical boundaries separating humans and machines in communication (Guzman, 2020). A striking example of this phenomenon is deepfakes – AI-generated audio and video content that convincingly manipulates reality. But how do deepfakes exemplify Aristotle's rhetorical principles to create such persuasive and deceptive representations?

This paper examines how Aristotle's principles of rhetoric manifest in deepfakes to impact political communication. In doing so, the study extends rhetorical analysis beyond classical boundaries into the domain of modern technology. This research is critical for understanding the evolving role of rhetoric in a digital age and its implications for communication ethics and trust in AI-driven media.

1.1 Objectives of study

This study is guided by the following objectives:
(1) To examine how rhetorical techniques manifest in deepfakes;
(2) To highlight the socio-political implications of persuasive deepfakes.

1.2   Aristotle's rhetoric of persuasion

Aristotle's rhetoric is a theory of persuasion that was first introduced in the 4th century BCE, around 335-323 BCE in Ancient Greece. Some scholars have argued the dwindling influence of Aristotle's rhetoric over the years (Garver, 1996), and others have engaged in debates about Aristotle's audience (Clayton, 2004), and the use of rhetoric as a handbook of art or techne itself. However, Brummett (2022) posits that Aristotle's philosophy and rhetoric of persuasion are still prevalent today in the fields of communication, advertising, politics, technology, and other areas where persuasive communication abounds. It provides a framework for understanding how communication can influence people and how persuasive messages can be produced effectively (Kennedy, 2007).

Persuasion abounds in rhetoric, as does meaning in persuasion (Burke, 1964). It is the intentional art of convincing an audience to do or believe the messages of the speaker or source (Dehnert & Mongeau, 2022). This definition is hinged on the 'intentional art' of convincing and 'belief', which is achieved through rhetoric. Therefore, rhetoric gives a speaker an avenue to persuade an audience on a subject matter. Rhetoric, according to Aristotle, is the capacity to recognize the various persuasive strategies that could be used in a particular circumstance (Williams, 2013). Here, recognizing becomes an art, and persuasion is the intention. To do this effectively, Aristotle created three techniques of persuasion: ethos, pathos, and logos. This way, by understanding the different modes of persuasion, speakers can tailor their message to their audience and increase the likelihood of persuading them (Braet, 1992).

1.3   Ethos

The concept of ethos in persuasion revolves around the character appeal and credibility of the speaker, which plays an important role in influencing an audience's perceptions and decision-making. Credibility is ascertained by considering the source of the information; if credible, then, reliable (Sundar, 2008). It is conferred by the audience to the speaker. It's the audience's judgment of whether the speaker can be relied upon, whether their words carry weight, and whether their suggestions merit consideration. Therefore, to effectively establish ethos, a speaker must demonstrate intelligence, integrity, and goodwill.

According to Baumlin and Meyer (2018), these qualities, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, are the building blocks of credibility. Intrinsic ethos resides within the text itself, shaped by the clarity of the argument, the depth of research, and the coherence of ideas presented. On the other hand, extrinsic ethos derives from the speaker's personal qualities such as appearance, reputation, enthusiasm, and even conduct. If a speaker fails to exhibit these attributes, the audience will find the speaker less credible, and could doubt whether they are giving the best suggestion or not (Fortenbaugh, 1992). Conversely, when a speaker successfully embodies intelligence, integrity, and goodwill, it becomes logically undeniable that their speech can be deemed reliable. In such cases, the audience can readily accept the speaker's message as trustworthy and valuable. However, it's important to understand that the persuasive impact of ethos doesn't solely rely on the presence of these qualities; rather, it hinges on the shared meaning and connection between the speaker and the audience, which can be enhanced through these qualities. The audience must perceive common ground, whether in terms of intelligence or shared values, for ethos to truly take effect. It's through this shared meaning that the speaker's character appeal becomes powerful in swaying opinions.

1.4   Pathos

Pathos refers to the use of emotional appeals to reinforce, shape, or convince an audience to accept a proposed point of view or take specific action. It depends on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind (Ingram, 2009) through the speech effect (Nichols, 1987). At its core, the efficacy pathos rests on the supposed audience's emotional status such as anger and pity and how these emotional states subsequently shape their judgments (Weber, 2012). Emotion is embedded in identity anchors. These anchors can be formed through shared experiences, either towards others within the same socioeconomic class, age group, ideological alignment, or other identity motives. Pathos is achieved through the use of language and rhetorical techniques like vivid imagery, metaphors, gestures, voice tone, and other forms of expressive communication, that are meticulously selected and artfully deployed to evoke the desired emotional response in the listener. A speaker's empathetic tone for instance, can convey sincerity and understanding. Vivid imagery can move the audience into the heart of a narrative, allowing them to experience emotions firsthand. When effectively used, pathos has the power to not only sway opinions

but also create deep connections between speakers and their audiences, making it an important persuasive technique.

1.5   Logos

Logos refers to the art of employing reason and logic to present a compelling argument. It is the embodiment of rationality in persuasion, a means of guiding an audience toward accepting a particular viewpoint or conclusion through the presentation of evidence and examples. The effectiveness of logos lies in its ability to create a clear and compelling link between the proposed conclusion and the existing beliefs and knowledge held by the audience (Mirhady & Garver, 1996; Fortenbaugh, 1992). This is important, because each speech involves a speaker's claim, and proof to support this claim. Therefore, logos revolve around the principle that persuasion is fundamentally an exercise in argumentation. According to Aristotle, persuasion comes through arguments, that is, by proving or, at the very least, creating the illusion of proving that something is indeed the case. When an audience is led to believe that a proposition has been proven, then they are most readily persuaded. In essence, logos seek to construct a logical bridge between the speaker's claim and the audience's preexisting beliefs.

Crucial to the concept of logos is the idea that persuasion hinges on the presentation of appropriate and valid evidence while simultaneously avoiding the pitfalls of logical fallacies (Kennedy, 2007). Logos rest upon the body of proofs, often conveyed through enthymemes, which are essentially truncated syllogisms. An enthymeme provides the audience with a conclusion and one or more supporting premises, inviting them to fill in the missing logical steps. This engages the audience's reasoning abilities, making them active participants in the persuasive process.

1.6   The interplay of logos, ethos, and pathos

Humans, by nature, are rational beings (Aristotle, 1984/1931; Ingram, 2009). This innate rationality prompts individuals to question the logic behind various activities and ideas that surround them. It is this very inclination toward logic that lays the foundation for persuasive discourse. Interestingly, it can be difficult to convince individuals about new ideas based on purely logical arguments. This uniqueness highlights how persuasion is complex and has different techniques. Halloran (1975) believes that Aristotle considered ethos as the most important of the three techniques – logos, ethos, and pathos. Because ethos revolves around the speaker's embodiment of virtues and qualities held in high regard or revered by the audience. Consequently, when a speaker is perceived as lacking credibility, the entire premise of their speech is highly likely to be unacceptable (Kennedy, 2007).

In essence, credibility anchors the acceptability of the speaker's message. It can then be said that the power of emotional and ethical appeals appears as effective tools for enhancing the possibility of successful persuasion. Emotional appeals or pathos tap into the audience's sentiments and emotions, taking advantage of the human capacity for empathy, compassion, or shared experiences. Ethos, on the other hand, appeals to the audience's sense of morality and values, helping the speaker to position their message with the audience's deeply held beliefs and principles. Yet, the key to effective persuasion, as drawn from Aristotle's golden mean theory, lies in achieving a balance among these modes of persuasion. A lack of balance can make a speech too emotional, overly obscure, or banal, diminishing its impact. Therefore, Aristotle suggests that every persuasive speech must have a blend of these three artistic proofs - ethos, logos, and pathos in equal proportions (Williams, 2013).

1.7   Deepfakes and politics

The term 'deepfake' is derived from the combination of the words - "deep" and "fake." Here, "deep" refers to an advanced intelligence technique known as "deep learning". Deepfake, also called synthetic media (Vaccari & Chadwick, 2020) is a method that substitutes or combines facial features and text to generate false information, by digitally impersonating a person engaging in an activity that they did not participate in, using AI technology known as Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) (Goodfellow et al., 2020; Fletcher, 2018). Deepfake made its first appearance in 2017 on Reddit (Westerlund, 2019). This endeavor marked a notable example of employing deep learning techniques to create manipulated media content, raising concerns related to digital impersonation and privacy. As deepfake technology advances more in scope, scale, and sophistication, its expression becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish from authentic media content. For instance, early iterations of deepfakes were discernible through anomalies like unnatural blinking patterns or misaligned facial features (Agarwal et

al., 2019; Rossler et al., 2019). However, subsequent algorithms have refined these glitches, making detection difficult even for experts (Fletcher, 2018), particularly with the emergence of generative AI, which is capable of generating these visual contents from prompts or trained datasets. Moreover, tools to produce deepfakes have become more accessible to the public, thus democratizing the ability to generate potentially misleading content (Rossler et al., 2019).

Within the context of politics, deepfake videos have become a tool for manipulating public opinion, spreading misinformation, and aiding political polarization. Deepfake has made its way into the political domain. As reported in (Westerlund, 2019), Jordan Peele, a filmmaker crafted a deepfake featuring Obama, in 2018 addressing fake news and making jest of Trump. Trump also appeared in another deepfake video discussing climate change. Simultaneously, Nancy Pelosi was also featured in another derogatory deepfake in 2019 – all of which are demonstrative of how powerful deepfakes can be in disseminating disinformation and distrust in the media. As political actors continue to exploit this technology to manipulate public opinion, it becomes vital to apply critical discourse analysis to understand their mechanisms of influence. Deepfake persuasion operates on multiple fronts. Linguistically, these videos meticulously mimic the voices and rhetoric of politicians, creating a false sense of authenticity (Vaccari & Chadwick, 2020), and further blurring the lines between truth and fake news. The visual dimension of deepfakes is equally persuasive. Westerlund (2019) demonstrated that the lifelike visual rendering of political figures in deepfake videos creates an innate connection with the audience. Because people tend to process visual information more quickly than words (Stenberg, 2006). This visual precision, especially if they portray familiar public figures, fosters emotional resonance, enhancing the videos' power to sway public opinion.

2   Method

Deepfakes are inherently multimodal, integrating visuals, audio, and sometimes textual elements. These elements are embedded in languages that often carry narratives, whether through spoken words, captions, or associated commentary. To analyze these complex constructs, this study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as outlined by Fairclough (2013), which provides a comprehensive framework for dissecting language, not just assessing the content but uncovering hidden meanings and ideologies. Fairclough's model is particularly useful for examining vocabulary choices, sentence structures, and thematic progression in deepfakes This approach is supported by Machin and Mayr (2012), who emphasize CDA's capability to interrogate textual and semiotic constructs, revealing persuasive strategies and broader societal implications. Wodak and Meyer (2015) further enrich this standpoint by integrating linguistic analysis with social theory, which offers a holistic examination that considers both the technical construction of deepfakes and their societal impacts.

In providing a thorough understanding of how deepfakes function as instruments of persuasion in politics, this study uses CDA to explore their implications for democracy and societal trust. This integration provides for a holistic examination that not only looks at the technical construction of deepfakes but also weighs in on their implications in society. Further, Van Dijk (1993) underlined the significant role of discourse in molding societal structures and steering collective consciousness. Thus, as deepfakes permeate and influence discourse, understanding their layered roles and impacts becomes important. This study leveraged the field of politics to uncover the socio-political implications of deepfakes, because persuasion has always been tangible and abundant in politics (Burke, 1964), as Aristotle termed it the 'masquerade of political science'. Additionally, politics today happens in speech actions primarily concerned with pathos which is used as both a means and an end (Nichols, 1987; Cobb & Kuklinski, 1995). Drawing inference from Aristotle's rhetorical theory, one way that deepfake can be persuasive is by learning or incorporating human values- through the use of ethos, pathos, and logos. Therefore, in this chosen political context, each mode of persuasion will be applied to the deepfake using CDA to provide a good understanding of how deepfakes serve as instruments in perpetuating and reinforcing certain ideologies and shaping societal perceptions.

3   Case study: Deepfake video

To illustrate the practical application of these theories, the study examines a deepfake video shared on Twitter (now X) by Alex Thomp, an Axios news correspondent. The video, produced by the Republican National Committee (RNC), satirically predicts the consequences of a hypothetical Biden victory in the 2024 U.S. presidential election. The tweet has garnered significant attention, with about 4.2 million views, 665 retweets (reposts), 741 quotes, 2,293

likes, 391 comments, and 823 bookmarks. The video stands out as one of the first political ads completely generated by modern AI, designed to appear realistic to viewers. A preliminary analysis of the first 100 comments (excluding follow-up remarks by the poster and unrelated advertisements) and the first 100 quotes reveals that many reactions expressed fear and concern about the integration of AI into American political campaigns. This sentiment underscores the anxiety surrounding the potential misuse of such technology to manipulate public opinion. Adding to the discourse, CNN correspondent Donie O'Sullivan presented this deepfake video to American voters, many of whom expressed terror upon learning midway through the viewing that AI had generated the content. The tweet also notes that the RNC intends to use this technology throughout the campaign, which could significantly blur the lines between human- and AI-generated content. More compelling are emerging calls for legislative action. Many commentators have suggested that President Biden should push for laws mandating the disclosure of AI-generated content in political advertising. These calls highlight the urgency of addressing AI technologies' ethical, regulatory, and transparency challenges in political communication. By analyzing this video, the study sheds light on how AI-driven deepfakes leverage rhetorical principles to influence public perception, while also prompting important conversations about their ethical and societal implications.

3.1   Content and narrative construction

This video had a mixture of dramatic background sound and a lively voice-over with heightened effect which conveyed the actions in the video featuring statements such as "We can now call the 2024 Presidential race for Joe Biden...," "My fellow Americans...," "Financial market in free fall...," "China invades Taiwan...," "...City overrun by 80,000 illegal migrants," and "Escalating crime rates in San Francisco..." These spoken words are complemented by motion pictures that vividly depict the scenarios described, creating a visually and emotionally engaging experience. Additionally, hovering text overlays, including phrases like "What if the weakest president we ever had were re-elected?", "What if the financial system crumbles?", "What if international tensions escalate?", "What if our border is gone?", "What if crime worsens?", and "Beat Biden!", reinforce the narrative's intended message.

This blend of audio, visuals, and text exemplifies the strategic use of logos, ethos, and pathos – the three techniques of rhetorical persuasion—to influence political perceptions. Pathos is evident in the emotionally charged scenarios designed to evoke fear and urgency. Ethos is subtly embedded in the authoritative tone of the voice-over, which lends an air of credibility to the content. Logos is employed through speculative but seemingly logical "what if" questions that frame potential outcomes in a way that aligns with the video's agenda.

Analyzing these rhetorical elements sheds light on how they are used in deepfakes to manipulate the audience's emotions, trust, and reasoning to achieve its political objectives. This insight not only reveals the potential dangers of such manipulative strategies in shaping public opinion but also underscores the need for ethical vigilance, transparency, and regulatory frameworks to address the misuse of AI-driven media in political communication.

3.2   Logos

The deepfake video uses logical reasoning by presenting a series of hypothetical scenarios that might occur if Joe Biden were to be re-elected in the 2024 presidential race. The use of "What if" questions appeals to reason and critical thinking, attempting to persuade by suggesting a sequence or a logical progression of ideas or events, and prompting viewers to consider the potential consequences of an action. Combining phrases like "We can now call the 2024 Presidential race for Joe Biden" and "What if the weakest president we ever had were re-elected" employs logical reasoning to stimulate thought about potential outcomes. By highlighting these scenarios, the text aims to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between Joe Biden's victory and the scenarios presented, appealing to viewers' sense of rationality. The logical appeal here is to persuade viewers to envisage potential negative consequences of electing Biden, and doing otherwise will prevent these outcomes. In political discourse, clear and skillful utilization of logos within the deepfake becomes a powerful tool in a narrative that aligns with viewers' preconceived notions or offers a seemingly rational perspective, the deepfake can subtly, yet effectively, steer public opinion.

3.3   Ethos

The video employed ethos by utilizing evocative labels like "my fellow American" to establish a connection between the speaker and the viewers, invoking a sense of shared credibility

and identity, to influence the audience's perception of Joe Biden's victory and the potential implications. This attempt to frame the message as coming from a source that identifies with the audience's values, concerns, and benefits is designed to create trust and promote credibility in the information being presented, thereby persuading viewers to align their beliefs with the message.

Ethos was also established in the video through the use of authoritative language, such as "We can now call," which implies a sense of informed certainty. The video positions itself as a reliable source of information, thus enhancing its credibility. Furthermore, by foregrounding Biden while simultaneously maligning him, the video leverages viewers' familiarity with him. Those who already have an opinion about Biden might be more inclined to share this content, influenced by their pre-existing perceptions and trust in his public persona. This lends credence to the stance of Westerlund (2019) on the lifelike visual rendering of political figures in deepfake videos, which creates an innate connection with the audience.

This manipulative borrowing of ethos is especially potent because it plays on the viewer's trust in established figures. In the age of information overload, where discerning fact from fiction becomes increasingly challenging, the misuse of ethos in deepfakes can sow seeds of doubt, even when faced with genuine content, as demonstrated by Ternovski et al. (2021). Moreover, the emotional appeal generated by these lifelike portrayals can manipulate public sentiment and influence political opinions, further complicating the media landscape. The sophistication of deepfake technology, as noted by Chesney and Citron (2019), poses significant risks to the integrity of democratic processes by potentially eroding public trust in authentic media sources. Therefore, understanding and addressing the ethical implications of deepfakes is important in maintaining the credibility and reliability of political communication.

3.4   Pathos

Throughout the video, there is a careful orchestration of emotional cues. The video strategically places emotionally charged words by linking these scenarios to the potential outcome of Biden's victory, the video appeals to emotions through language like as "weakest president", "national security" "protecting our borders,", "financial system crumbles," "city overrun by 80,000 illegal migrants", "China invades Taiwan", "crumble," "gone," "worsens," "escalates," and "invades." The video portrayed these negative scenarios that tap into viewers' fears and concerns to sway their opinions and behavior by mentioning a crumbling financial system, an overrun border, worsening crime, and escalating international tensions. By painting a vivid and distressing picture of these scenarios with emotionally charged words, the video appeals to viewers' emotions, aiming to evoke fear, anxiety, and a desire for safety and stability. The vivid imagery of a nation in crisis referencing China invading Taiwan is intended to elicit a strong emotional response, further solidifying the urgency of the message. This means that these emotional cues are capable of being used in deepfakes to elicit emotional responses from humans (Beattie et al., 2020; Ling & Bjorling, 2020).

Given the important role emotions play in shaping opinions and influencing decisions, especially in political domains, the strategic employment of pathos in deepfakes is of particular concern. By tapping into and manipulating viewers' emotions, deepfakes can mold perceptions.

4   Discussion and consequences of deepfakes in politics

This analysis exemplifies the potential for manipulation, exploiting cognitive biases and emotional triggers to mold political behavior and opinions. The strategic orchestration of logos, ethos, and pathos can warp public discourse and perception, erode trust in information sources, and perpetuate misinformation. Foremost, emotions are significant elements in every aspect of human interaction and communication (Vincent & Fortunati, 2009), and are communicated via language, gestures, voice tone, and other physiological channels (Yumak, 2014). Additionally, humans are driven by emotions in making decisions, particularly in politics where emotions drive action (Brader, 2005). Deepfakes are not just about deceiving the eye; they aim to resonate emotionally. By providing an undetectable medium through which these narratives can be visualized, deepfakes tap into this realistic portrayal powerfully, cutting through pre-existing emotions, and amplifying feelings of affirmation or fear. These emotional triggers, when generated using AI, can cloud judgement and affect the decision-making process by making viewers even more vulnerable to accepting and acting on biased views, without critical questioning. It therefore becomes difficult to discern misleading information.

Further, deepfakes appear to be more dangerous than 'traditional' fake news because they are

often harder to spot due to their usage of 'real' faces (Westerlund, 2019). By giving fake news a 'real' face, deepfakes offer an authenticity that written or oral fake news might initially lack. According to Mayer and Moreno (2003) and Kietzmann et al., (2020), the human brain has an inherent predisposition to trust visual content over audio or textual information. This rapid advancement of technology, particularly in the domains of AI and deep learning, has reshaped the digital media space, pushing the boundaries of what can be perceived as real, and how we interpret and trust visual content. This means even genuine videos presenting factual, unbiased information can be dismissed as fake (Ternovski et al., 2021), further polarizing debates, and creating paradoxical fake truths. In other words, because the human brain inherently trusts what it sees, this trust is harnessed in deepfakes, with genuine visuals being replaced by fabricated narratives that align with certain political biases. This resultant perceptual reality, even if false, becomes the narrative that many believe, especially when it aligns with their pre-existing beliefs.

Also, credibility plays an important role in political discourse. By generating videos that depict political figures engaging in actions or speech that are inconsistent with their known beliefs or character, deepfake as this, can systematically diminish their credibility (Ternovski et al., 2021). This visual rendering further provides endorsement and legitimacy to the biased narrative of this deepfake, that it often goes beyond the initial deception of the content but the subsequent distribution by individuals who believe they're sharing genuine content (Marwick & Lewis, 2017). Not to mention that in today's hyper-connected digital sphere, individuals often find themselves in information silos or echo chambers, where they are only exposed to views aligning with their pre-existing beliefs (Sunstein, 2017; Rhodes, 2022), thanks to algorithmic recommendations, deepfakes cater perfectly to these echo chambers. Tailored deepfake content can be disseminated within these chambers, further feeding biases, and making it challenging to foreground counter-narratives. Again, if viewers can't differentiate between genuine videos and deepfakes, even trustworthy can be termed fake (Ternovski et al., 2021).

To finalize, fake news travels fast on social media and can reach and influence millions of people (Figueira & Oliveira, 2017). This phenomenon has created what Qayyum et al., (2019) referred to as a "post-truth era", where objective facts are overshadowed by emotionally charged fake news. Considering this rapid dissemination of information through social media, it becomes challenging to manage compelling deepfake narratives when millions of individuals have already been exposed to a deepfake, often without awareness, and are likely to base their decisions on such content. The video in this study went viral with about 4.2 million views globally, aided by shares on social media platforms, and was even picked up by some news outlets. The immediate aftermath saw polarized reactions: supporters of stricter immigration controls used it as validation, while others decried it as fake news.

How, then, can technology be trusted if it exemplifies persuasive techniques used in human communication, effectively blurring the lines between real and artificial interactions? The trust traditionally placed in human interactions is now exploited in technology, making it challenging to differentiate between genuine and fabricated narratives. We must, therefore, be mindful of these consequences in our integration of deepfake technology for political communication. There should be increased public awareness about the potential deceptions of digital media, to promote a critical approach to content consumption. This awareness is necessary to make sure that the public remains vigilant and discerning, to help maintain the integrity of political discourse.

Additionally, technology companies and researchers have a vital role to play in developing strong detection tools to ensure the integrity of digital information. These tools should leverage advanced machine learning algorithms that continually adapt to new deepfake techniques to remain effective. This collaboration can also enhance the development and deployment of these detection systems. Furthermore, implementing robust verification processes and promoting digital literacy among users can aid in identifying and mitigating the impact of deepfakes.

5 Conclusion

The application of Aristotelian principles in AI-generated deepfakes highlights both the potential benefits and significant risks inherent in their use for political communication. These techniques, while capable of enhancing the persuasiveness of messages, raise concerns about their long-term societal implications. When deepfakes establish doubt, individuals become skeptical of genuine statements by politicians. This concern is exemplified in the analyzed video that prominently featured Biden, showcasing the peril of confirmation bias – where audiences are inclined to accept content aligning with their existing beliefs, especially when such videos present realistic representations of familiar faces. This study highlights the urgent

need for vigilance, transparency, and ethical oversight in leveraging AI's persuasive capabilities. Intentional regulation of this technology can pave the way for deepfakes to be used for the public good while avoiding the damaging effects of manipulative political rhetoric. As AI continues to shape the future of communication, it is important to remain mindful of these consequences and strive to use these technologies responsibly and effectively.

Conflicts of interest

The author reports there are no competing interests to declare.

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