Deepfake Technology, Media, and National Security: The Case of the German Chancellor's Deepfake Video*

Deepfake Teknolojisi, Medya ve Ulusal Güvenlik: Almanya Şansölyesinin Deepfake Videosu Örneği

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Abstract

Deepfake technology has become a powerful tool in shaping media narratives and public perception, particularly in the realm of political discourse. This study analyzes the impact of deepfake videos on media agenda-setting and national security, using the case study of a deepfake video featuring German Chancellor Olaf Scholz announcing a ban on the far-right party *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD). Through a qualitative content analysis of eight major German media outlets, the study identifies the frames used in reporting on the video, its ethical and political implications, and the role of the media in curbing misinformation. The findings reveal that while the coverage successfully debunked the deepfake, it also sparked discussions about the potential for AI-generated content to influence political discourse and undermine democratic integrity. By examining this case, the study contributes to ongoing discussions about the intersection of AI, media credibility, and political communication. Furthermore, it highlights the risks that deepfake technology poses not only to media and political communication but also to national security. This research helps to understand how deepfake content has the potential to legitimize narratives and outlines the need for a more systemic response towards addressing the threats posed by synthetic content in the digital ecosystem.

Keywords: Deepfake Technology, Olaf Scholz, AFD, Media Agenda, National Security

Öz

Deepfake teknolojisi, özellikle siyasi söylem olmak üzere medya anlatılarında ve kamu algısında etkili bir şekilde kullanılan bir araç haline gelmiştir. Bu makale, Almanya Başbakanı Olaf Scholz'un aşırı sağcı Almanya İçin Alternatif (AfD) partisinin yasaklandığını duyurduğu deepfake videosunu vaka çalışması olarak kullanarak deepfake videolarının medya gündemini belirleme ve bu bağlamda ulusal güvenliğe etkisini araştırmaktadır. Sekiz büyük Alman medya kuruluşunun nitel içerik analizinden yararlanan çalışma, videonun haberleştirilmesinde kullanılan çerçeveleri, etik-politik çıkarımlarını ve medyanın yanlış bilgilendirmeyi engellemedeki rolünü ortaya koymaktadır. Bulgular medyanın deepfake'i çürütmek için çok şey yapmış olsa da yapay zekâ tarafından üretilen içeriğin siyasi söylemi ve demokratik bütünlüğü etkileme potansiyeli hakkındaki tartışmaları da güçlendirmeye hizmet ettiğini ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Çalışma ayrıca, yapay zekâ, medya güvenilirliği ve siyasi iletişimin bir araya gelmesiyle ilgili güncel tartışmalara katkı sağlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, çalışma deepfake teknolojisinin yalnızca medya ve siyasal iletişim üzerinde değil, aynı zamanda ulusal güvenlik üzerinde yaratabileceği riskleri tartışmaya açmaktadır. Bu araştırma, deepfake içeriğinin anlatıları meşrulaştırma potansiyelinin nasıl olduğunu anlamaya yardımcı olmakta ve dijital ekosistemde sentetik içeriğin oluşturduğu tehditleri ele almak için daha sistemik bir yanıta duyulan ihtiyacı özetlemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Deepfake Teknolojisi, Olaf Scholz, AFD, Medya Gündemi, Ulusal Güvenlik

Introduction

Deepfake technology is a double-edged sword in modern media. It is a true breakthrough in artificial intelligence (AI) and recent advances in deep learning.[1] It also leads to hyper-realistic audio and visual content that people never created. This development poses a serious challenge to the ethics of information in the political domain, as the effects of deepfakes on public perception and their influence on democratic processes are becoming increasingly evident.[2] The impact of deepfakes is significant, as they have the potential to manipulate public perceptions, damage the reputations of political opponents, and cause confusion about the electoral process, which impacts national security. The impact of deepfakes is evident in the widespread circulation of deepfake videos featuring politicians. These videos, along with other AI-generated content related to political figures, have sparked intense debates in the field of political science. As an important example, the deepfake video of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in November 2023 went viral. This is a story that shows how media and stories are created, spread, and socially mined using this technology.

In the present example, a deepfake video of Olaf Scholz highlights not only national security concerns but also the complex relationship between deepfake technology and its ethical implications in the realm of political communication. This paper aims to reflect on the broader global implications of deepfakes, particularly in terms of media credibility, political communication, and national security. Various perspectives exist regarding the impact of deepfake videos and AI-generated content in the media and on national security. Concerning the disinformation campaigns, according to the studies, deepfake technology is readily available now, and there are ethical concerns that such disinformation campaigns may be weaponized in a politically charged environment.[3] Therefore, this technology has a significant impact on the political processes of various countries. However, while scholars have emphasized the importance and potential of deepfake technology in society and its potential impact on democracy, some argue that there is currently no verified example of a deepfake directly influencing the outcome of a democratic election.[4] This study acknowledges both perspectives to ensure a balanced view. In the case of the influence of deepfakes on media coverage and public life, some studies present that such content can be strategically implemented to achieve specific goals, thereby influencing not only media coverage but also public life.[5] This analysis demonstrates the need to address and minimize the spread of deepfakes. However, this also raises questions about the responsibility of journalists to ensure the accuracy of their content and the role of technology companies in preventing the spread of disinformation. Furthermore, studies have shown that the speed at which deepfake content is disseminated has the potential to erode the credibility of journalism and blur the line between factual and fictional content, ultimately impacting the public's perception of manipulated media sources.[6] Therefore, the impact of deepfakes on media credibility cannot

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1 Maria Pawelec, "Deepfakes and Democracy (Theory): How Synthetic Audio-Visual Media for Disinformation and Hate Speech Threaten Core Democratic Functions", *Digital Society*, 1, 19, 2022, 1-37.
2 Cristian Vaccari and Andrew Chadwick, "Deepfakes and Disinformation: Exploring the Impact of Synthetic Political Video on Deception, Uncertainty, and Trust in News", *Social Media + Society*, 6:1, 2020, 1-13.
3 Vaccari and Chadwick, "Deepfakes and Disinformation: Exploring the Impact of Synthetic Political Video on Deception, Uncertainty, and Trust in News".
4 Mateusz Łabuz and Christopher Nehring, "On the Way to Deep Fake Democracy? Deep Fakes in Election Campaigns in 2023", *European Political Science*, 23:4, 2024, 454-473.
5 Mika Westerlund, "The Emergence of Deepfake Technology: A Review", *Technology Innovation Management Review*, 9:11, 2019, 39-52.
6 Nicholas Diakopoulos and Deborah Johnson, "Anticipating and Addressing the Ethical Implications of Deepfakes in the Context of Elections", *New Media & Society*, 23:7, 2021- 2072-2098.; Twomey et al., "Do Deepfake Videos Undermine Our Epistemic Trust? A Thematic Analysis of Tweets That Discuss Deepfakes in the Russian Invasion of Ukraine".

be ignored. Concerning the impact of the deepfake video of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, there are studies that present the importance of media literacy to recognize the deepfake feature of the videos, and lower literacy of deepfake content in the case of Scholz's deepfake video is related to more emotional responses.[7] However, there is limited research on the impact of Scholz's deepfake video on the German media agenda and national security.

The use of deepfake technology has far-reaching consequences beyond just the realm of media and journalism. It poses a serious threat to national security. As synthetic media becomes more realistic and accessible, malicious actors, including state and non-state actors, can exploit deepfakes to manipulate public opinion, interfere with democratic elections, or fabricate diplomatic incidents. These manipulated contents have the potential to escalate tensions between people, erode trust in national institutions, and even incite conflict based on false information. Therefore, deepfake technology presents not only a domestic political challenge but also a transnational threat that requires coordinated international responses. Recognizing this dimension is crucial to understanding the broader political stakes of emerging AI-driven disinformation tools.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how deepfake videos, especially one featuring German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, impact media agenda-setting and present potential risks to national security. The study poses the following research question: How did the German media portray the deepfake video of Olaf Scholz, and what consequences do these portrayals have for the discourse on national security? This research adds to the existing body of literature by offering a comprehensive qualitative analysis of a real-life political deepfake incident in a Western democracy, which is a subject that has not been extensively studied in prior research. While earlier studies mainly concentrated on the technical detection of deepfakes or their psychological impacts on individuals, this study specifically examines the aspects of media framing and national security related to a particular deepfake case. In doing so, it fills a significant gap among media studies, political communication, and security studies within the realm of synthetic media.

By examining the German media's coverage and reaction to Scholz's fake video and exploring the media's interpretation, this study aims to present the impact of the video on shaping the media agenda and its potential impact on national security in Germany. To do this, a content analysis of media articles about the deepfake video of Olaf Scholz was conducted to examine how the German media presented this video to the wider society. Eight news articles were selected from diverse German media and popular outlets, including *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Bayerischer Rundfunk, Stern, ZDF, Monopol, Heise, T3N, and Passauer Neue Presse*. The contents were analyzed based on the main emphasis of the articles. The first part of this article presents a theoretical literature review on the impact of deepfake videos. The second part outlines the research methodology used in this study. The third part presents the historical background that led to the deepfake video of Olaf Scholz for banning the AfD. The final part analyzes selected media content from mainstream German newspapers' websites. The aim of this paper is to encourage scholars, policymakers, and media professionals to engage in a critical dialogue about deepfakes and their potential impact on national security as technology advances. This paper aims to contribute to the dialogue about deepfakes and the development of synthetic media, as well as their impact on media content in the digital age, by examining the case of Olaf Scholz's deepfake video.

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7 Christopher Eynern and von, Olaf Scholz, Deepfake: How a Deepfake Impacts Public Trust, *Unpublished Bachelor Thesis*, University of Twente, Enschede, 2024, https://purl.utwente.nl/essays/101675, accessed 25.02.2025.

1. Theoretical Literature Review

Deepfake technology refers to AI-generated synthetic media, which contains video, audio, images, and text, among others, synthesized using sophisticated machine learning models, such as Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) and transformer models. An overall definition is given through the study proposed by Nait-Ali et al.,[8] who refer to this work as hyper-realistic media that can be deceptive and used to deceive. We should note here that different definitions are presented in the deepfake background in literature, and we will see the different views in the current debates about the technology.[9]

The emergence of deepfake technologies has been widely studied in this context, with several studies exploring their impact on the media agenda and national security. Few studies have explicitly focused on the impact of deepfake content to disseminate false information. Hwang et al.[10] expose how deepfake videos deceive the public and place a protective emphasis on media literacy education. Whyte[11] situates deepfake-aided disinformation as a multi-layered public policy issue and calls for regulation. Lee and Shin[12] also showed that the vividness of AI-generated content strengthens persuasive effects and may enhance its impact in digital contexts. Taken together, these studies emphasize the degree to which deepfake content threatens public confidence and democratic conversation. Drawing on existing research in the field, this theoretical literature review identifies key gaps in what we know about how fake videos of political leaders distort media narratives and shape public perceptions. It presents the role, definition, mechanisms, political effects, ethical dilemmas, and legal/regulatory pathways of deepfake technology. The last part of the literature review presents a conceptual review of how this research topic impacts the media agenda.

1.1. Definition and Mechanism of Deepfake Technology

Deepfake is a form of synthetic media in which a person in an existing image or video is replaced with someone else's likeness. The term also refers to the technology itself, which combines "deep learning", which a form of machine learning that makes use of neural networks for data processing and artificial intelligence with "fake," as in so-called fake be.[13] At its foundation, deepfake technology relies on algorithms that analyze large datasets of real images and sounds to fabricate an illusion of authenticity, often making it challenging for viewers to discern reality from creation.[14] Deepfake uses ultra-realistic video and audio content derived from advanced artificial intelligence (AI) and deep learning techniques. Deepfake is primarily based on generative adversarial networks (GANs) and consists of two neural networks that gradually produce realistic results.[15] The technology in question processes facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language to appear identical to the original informant. This type of media has observable effects: a prominent politician increases influence, is discussed in the media, and generates public opinion. For instance,

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8 Amal Nait-Ali, Mohammed Ridouani, Fatima Salahdine and Naima Kaabouch, "Deepfake Attacks: Generation, Detection, Datasets, Challenges, and Research Directions", *Computers*, 12:10, 2023, 216.
9 Enes Altuncu, Virginia N. L. Franqueira and Shujun Li, "Deepfake: Definitions, Performance Metrics and Standards, Datasets, and a Meta-review", *Frontiers in Big Data*, 7, 2024.
10 Yoori Hwang, Ji Youn Ryu and Se-Hoon Jeong, "Effects of Disinformation Using Deepfake: The Protective Effect of Media Literacy Education", *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 24:3, 2021, 188-193
11 Christopher Whyte, "Deepfake News: AI-enabled Disinformation as a Multi-level Public Policy Challenge", *Journal of Cyber Policy*, 5:2, 2020, p. 199-217.
12 Jiyoung Lee and Soo Yun Shin, "Something that They Never Said: Multimodal Disinformation and Source Vividness in Understanding the Power of AI-enabled Deepfake News", *Media Psychology*, 25:4, 2022, s. 531-546.
13 Taylor Matthews, "Deepfakes, Intellectual Cynics, and the Cultivation of Digital Sensibility", *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement*, 92, 2022, 67-85.; Nick Vera, "Between Realities: Information Sharing Practices of Deepfake Creators", *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 60:1, 2023, 1161-1163.
14 Don Fallis, "The Epistemic Threat of Deepfakes", *Philosophy & Technology,* 34:4, 2020, 623-643.
15 Westerlund, "The Emergence of Deepfake Technology: A Review".

in a case study focusing on the media representations during the COVID-19 pandemic, Mach et al.[16] demonstrate how the media narratives framed in the COVID-19 pandemic have amplified risk perceptions among the public and nudge the systematic constraining nature of policymakers' reliance to reinforce their health narratives from the top. Similarly, Anwar et al.[17] argue that the media can shape what the public adopts as an identity if they continue covering an issue for a long period of time.

Furthermore, Grimmelikhuijsen and Meyer[18] examine the impact of social media on the construction of perceptions of institutional legitimacy and show that being part of political narratives strengthens citizens' trust in state institutions. For example, in relation to infectious diseases, Zhuang et al.[19] highlight the impact of social media platforms such as WeChat on public awareness of health risks and the important role of political leadership in informing the public in such times of crisis. In short, taken together, these studies offer critical perspectives on the interrelationship between media and politics and the importance of awareness in shaping this relationship, as well as the need for communicators to build trust and promote democratic debate.

1.2. Political Implications and Public Perception

Deepfake videos of politicians have far-reaching effects, influencing election outcomes and severely undermining public trust in leaders.[20] According to Diakopoulos and Johnson,[21] such content reinforces political polarization, with supporters and opponents of policies interpreting videos in a manner consistent with their existing biases. Such videos are also often used in propaganda campaigns to hold political leaders accountable and change public opinion, as Karunian[22] explains how "political hoaxes" are used as weapons to reinforce populist messages and silence dissent. Examining disinformation campaigns during the COVID-19 pandemic in Ukraine, Patel et al.[23] show how political leaders use disinformation as a weapon to increase support and minimize opposition, especially in decision-making situations such as elections and crises.

Additionally, Babb et al.[24] explain that disinformation operations can exacerbate social divisions and political polarization. Taking together, these studies reveal the strategic use of disinformation in the political sphere and its ability to shape public opinion and weaponize democratic mechanisms.

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16 Katharine J. Mach et al., "News Media Coverage of COVID-19 Public Health and Policy Information", *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 8:1, 2021, 220.

17 Ayesha Anwar, Meryem Malik, Vaneeza Raees and Anjum Anwar, "Role of Mass Media and Public Health Communications in the COVID-19 Pandemic", *Cureus*, 12:9, 2020, e10453.

18 Stephan G. Grimmelikhuijsen and Albert J. Meijer, "Does Twitter Increase Perceived Police Legitimacy?", *Public Administration Review*, 75:5, 2015, s. 598-607.

19 Yue Zhuang, Tiantian Zhao and Xuanrong Shao, "Mechanism of WeChat's Impact on Public Risk Perception during COVID-19", *Risk Management Healthcare Policy*, 14, 2021, 4223-4233.

20 Rami Mubarak, Tariq Alsbou'i, Omar Alshaikh, Isa Inuwa-Dute, Saad Khan and Simon Parkinson, "A Survey on the Detection and Impacts of Deepfakes in Visual, Audio, and Textual Formats", *IEEE Access*, 11, 2023, 144497-144529.

21 Diakopoulos and Johnson, "Anticipating and Addressing the Ethical Implications of Deepfakes in the Context of Elections".

22 Alia Yofira Karunian, "The Imitation Game: Examining Regulatory Challenges of Political Deepfakes in the European Union", *Dissertation in Law Programme of Study*, 2024, 1-56.

23 Sonny Patel, Omar Moncayo, Kristina Conroy, Doug Jordan and Timothy Erickson, "The Landscape of Disinformation on Health Crisis Communication during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Ukraine: Hybrid Warfare Tactics, Fake Media News and Review of Evidence", *Journal of Science Communication*, 19:5, A02, 2020, 1-26.

24 Jeffry Babb, Kevin Mentzer and David Yates, "Introduction to the Minitrack on Data Analytics, Data Mining, and Machine Learning for Social Media", In: *Proceedings of the 56th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*, 2023, 2108-2109.

1.3. Ethical Dilemmas and Erosion of Trust

According to an article by Diakopoulos and Johnson,[25] such content undermines public trust in the media and government institutions and makes it increasingly difficult for viewers to distinguish fact from fiction. Creators, distributors, and platforms have an ethical imperative to mitigate the harm caused by such videos. While some emphasize the potential for technical creativity, the deliberate use of deep falsification to spread misinformation raises ethical issues related to restricting freedom of expression, such as concerns of abuse in political and social spheres. For example, Vardhan et al.[26] examine the dual nature of deepfake technology, stating that while this innovation demonstrates excellent application potential, it is also being misused for the purposes of fake news and malicious fraud. A similar argument is made by Chesney and Citron,[27] who state that there is an urgent need to develop effective detection systems, as deepfakes can be exploited in highly polarized or misinformed environments (such as political campaigns).

Furthermore, a study by Chesney and Citron[28] shows that deepfake technologies have significant potential to undermine trust in the media and public institutions, threatening privacy, democracy, and national security through hyper-realistic content. Deepfake technologies pose a significant threat, as the study indicates that their use is a major concern. In conclusion, the findings highlight the importance of an ethical and regulatory framework to address the challenges and impacts of this technology on society as a whole.

1.4. Setting and Framing the Media Agenda

Deepfake technology has revolutionized media agenda shaping, especially in politically charged environments.[29] Thus, the media has the potential to prioritize issues and affect public perceptions of them.[30] Fake videos showing political figures are reported in many media outlets because the purpose of the images is to make the target audience question their credibility in publishing such content or to criticize the misuse of technology in the consumption of contemporary digital space. Al-Khazraji et al.[31] show how deep silence feeds disinformation campaigns and further challenges journalists' ability to do real journalism. French et al.[32] distinguish between the intentions behind disinformation that can be used to mitigate risks. They observed that this can be done and advocated for being more focused and proactive in preventing the risks to national security posed by disinformation.

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25 Diakopoulos and Johnson, "Anticipating and Addressing the Ethical Implications of Deepfakes in the Context of Elections".

26 Harsh Vardhan, Naman Varshney, Manoj Kiran R., Pradeep R. and Latha n. R., "Deep Fake Video Detection", *International Research Journal on Advanced Engineering Hub*, 2:4, 2024, 830-835.

27 Robert Chesney and Danielle Keats Citron, "Deep Fakes: A Looming Challenge for Privacy, Democracy, and National Security", *University of Texas Law, Public Law Research Paper No. 692, University of Maryland Legal Studies Research Paper No. 2018-21*, 2018, 1753-1820.

28 Robert Chesney and Danielle Keats Citron, "Deep Fakes: A Looming Challenge for Privacy, Democracy, and National Security".

29 Maxwell E. Mccombs and Donald L. Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media", *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36:2, 1972, 176-187.; James W. Dearing and Everette M. Rogers, *Studying the Agenda-Setting Process* In: Agenda-Setting. (Chapter 6), Sage Publication, Online ISBN 9781452243283.n6, 1996, 88-100.

30 Maxwell E. Mccombs and Donald L. Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media".; James W. Dearing and Everette M. Rogers, *Studying the Agenda-Setting Process* In: Agenda-setting.

31 Samer Hussain Al-Khazraji, Hassan Hadi Saleh, Adil İbrahim Khalid and Israa Adnan Mishkhal, "Impact of Deepfake Technology on Social Media: Detection, Misinformation and Societal Implications".

32 Aaron French, Veda C. Storey and Linda Wallace (2023). "A Typology of Disinformation Intentionality and Impact", *Information Systems Journal*, 34:4, 1324-1354.

Similarly, Garrett[33] examined the role of social media in reinforcing misperceptions, particularly in relation to political campaigns and the US presidential election, highlighting that the absence of reasoned discourse allows misinformation to spread without regulation. Subsequently, Niekerk and Ramluckan[34] propose a framework of standards to inform state producers' obligations against online disinformation, including the need to pay attention to echoes, gaps, and other information gaps that serve to reinforce false narratives. When read in conjunction with these studies, the important link between media representation and political discourse is highlighted and shown to be critical for journalists fighting disinformation efforts at a time when silence can be as powerful as information disseminated.

The emergence of deepfakes has fundamentally affected the media framework surrounding deepfake facial recognition technology. This section summarizes the existing literature on the topic, including the technical aspects of deepfakes, the impact of deepfakes on media narratives, the political aspects of deepfakes, ethical challenges, and legal solutions to mitigate the risks of deepfakes to national security. There is a significant gap in the literature on how fake videos of political leaders affect the stories reported by the news media and the resulting public opinion. Despite the power of deepfake technology, its role in shaping the media agenda remains unclear. Al-Khazraji et al.[35] show the broad social effects of deepfake technology but do not specify how it influences the media narrative. Similarly, Becker and Laycock[36] emphasize the scientific use of AI-generated content and overlook its implications for journalism and public discourse.

1.4.1. Impact on National Security

In addition to ethical, political, and media-related implications, deepfake technology increasingly poses risks in the realm of national security. Scholars emphasize that state or non-state actors may exploit synthetic media to destabilize national interactions, manipulate political narratives, and interfere in electoral processes.[37] As disinformation campaigns become more sophisticated and realistic through AI-generated content, the line between domestic propaganda and national psychological operations becomes blurred. Such an evolution raises the need to study deepfake content not only as a media or political issue but also as a political concern. The potential of deepfakes to provoke national incidents or escalate conflicts underlines the urgency for national and international legal frameworks, early detection systems, and diplomatic coordination to mitigate these risks.

Olaf Scholz's deepfake video is important to explore how the media represent and react to such events and how they influence public opinion and national security. Recent studies in literature suggest that the proliferation of synthetic media technologies like deepfakes deeply influences media narratives, public opinion, and politics among notables and public figures. However, more research is needed to understand how such content, especially in the media,

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33 R. Kelly Garrett, "Social Media's Contribution to Political Misperceptions in U.S. Presidential Elections", *PLoS ONE* 14:3, e0213500, 2019, 1-16.

34 Brett Niekerk and Trishana Ramluckan, "Towards Norms for State Responsibilities Regarding Online Disinformation and Influence Operations", In: *Proceedings of the 22nd European Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security, 22*:1, 2023, 500-509.

35 Al-Khazraji et al., Ibid.

36 Casey Becker and Robin Laycock, "Embracing Deepfakes and AI-Generated Images in Neuroscience Research", European Journal of Neuroscience, 58:3, 2023, 2657-2661.

37 Nitin Verma, "'One Video Could Start a War': A Qualitative Interview Study of Public Perceptions of Deepfake Technology", *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology,* 61:1, 2024, 374-385.

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affects agenda construction, which affects national security.[38] This data collection aims to improve our understanding of the social and political consequences of fake technology by parsing the mechanisms of deception and their effects, and asking what can be uncovered from fake videos of political leaders about their social and political impact.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative content analysis, using a purposive sampling method to obtain a diverse representation. The following research question was addressed: How does the German media frame the deepfake of Chancellor Olaf Scholz, and what are the implications of these frames for national security discourse? Eight news articles were selected from diverse German media and popular outlets, including *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Bayerischer Rundfunk, Stern, ZDF, Monopol, Heise, T3N, and Passauer Neue Presse*. This case was chosen as one of the few examples at the time that deepfake content had touched directly upon national level political dialogue within a Western democracy. Importantly, a deepfake video of Chancellor Scholz about the ban of the AFD is regarded as a serious threat to national security, with the potential of the formation of an uprising by the party's supporters, as the party achieved more than 20% of the votes from the German people. The time frame for data collection spans from November 27 to 28, 2023, which corresponds with the immediate aftermath of the release of the deepfake video of Chancellor Olaf Scholz. The origin of the papers was German, and they were passed by the bilingual researchers to retain context and reliability. Articles were manually accessed on the official websites of these outlets without using web scraping tools. According to Seeger et al.,[39] 47.9% of Germans regularly obtain their news from newspapers. Despite this modest percentage, newspapers continue to be influential agenda-setting organizations, receiving extensive media citations and thus serving as a valid and powerful source for qualitative analysis. This reasoning justifies their selection as the primary medium for this study. Informed by the thematic category codebook, the data were coded in themes such as disinformation and misrepresentation, artistic justification and political satire, national security threat, trust in media, and the official state response. This approach increases the study's credibility, transparency, and replicability rather than addressing shortcomings found in the existing literature of AI-generated media and national security. Themes were derived using an inductive coding methodology, which permitted categories to arise organically from the data rather than being predetermined. This strategy improved the capacity to recognize nuanced patterns and interpretive insights within various media representations.

3. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Deepfake Video: Historical Process

As a matter of fact, a deepfake video featuring German Chancellor Olaf Scholz focused on the closure of Germany's recently popularizing far-right party: *Alternative für Deutschland* -AfD- (Alternative for Germany). The party is known for its anti-immigrant stance and Eurosceptic arguments, supporting Germany's exit from the EU.[40] In the contemporary process, there has been a growing number of people protesting anti-immigrant and discriminatory views of

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38 Sami Alanazi, Seemal Asif and Irene Moulitsas. "Examining the Societal Impact and Legislative Requirements of Deepfake Technology: A Comprehensive Study", *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity,* 14:2, 2024, 58-64.

39 Cristof Seeger, Thomas Horky, Jörg-Uwe Nieland, and Peter English, "Social Media Publishing Strategies of German Newspapers: Content Analysis of Sports Reporting on Social Networks by German Newspapers—Results of the 2021 Social Media International Sports Press Survey", *Journalism and Media*, 4:2, 2023, 599-611.

40 Fatmanur Aşçı Kaçar, "Migrants as Floating Signifiers in and through Right-Wing Populist Political Style: The Case of the AFD", *Marmara Üniversitesi Avrupa Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 29:2, 2021, 209-228.

the party. Scholz's video was the latest action of these anti-AfD protesters, with the goal of raising public awareness about the party's illegal positions.

Various studies have previously documented the existence of anti-immigration sentiment in Germany.[41] However, the recent influx of migrants into EU member states due to uprisings in the Middle East, such as the Arab Spring, has further fueled anti-immigration sentiment in both the social and political spheres. As a result, negative discourses surrounding the migrants have dominated the media.[42] This negative portrayal of refugees from the Middle East has perpetuated the idea that they are disrupting social order. Consequently, these negative images have had a significant impact on the social and political spheres of Germany, with the perceived negative impact of refugees being a key determinant.

One significant example of the impact on German society is the emergence of protest groups such as Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West (PEGIDA). The group was formed in 2014 in response to the increasing influx of migrants to Europe, particularly in Germany, with the belief that it would fundamentally alter the country's cultural foundations. PEGIDA's protests were primarily concentrated in the East German city of Dresden. The group's excessive activities in Dresden have resulted in the city being associated with strong anti-immigration sentiments and linked to far-right political ideologies.[43] While PEGIDA's actions were primarily in Dresden; the underlying political ideology has spread throughout Germany.

Furthermore, another significant protest regarding the migration flow in Germany was the Chemnitz Protests of 2018. These protests began on August 26, 2018, in the city of Chemnitz in response to the killing of a German Cuban by an Iraqi and a Syrian immigrant. The protests were significant in demonstrating that not only marginalized far-right groups participated in anti-immigration protests, but middle-class Germans also took part in them.[44] This highlights the widespread circulation of anti-immigration sentiment in Germany over time.

In the political sphere, these anti-immigration discourses have emerged in the form of political parties, such as the AfD. The AfD was established in 2014 with the argument that the increasing migration flow is negatively affecting Germany's social and cultural features and that Germany should leave the EU and adopt national policies as a nation-state. AfD not only promoted anti-immigrant sentiment, but it also espoused nationalist and Eurosceptic ideologies.[45] The party gained significant support from former East Germany and became the first party in local and national elections in the East German federal states. It became the second largest party in some of the West German federal states' local elections. In the Federal Elections of February 23, 2025, the party received 20.8% of the votes, making it the second largest party in Germany.[46] This growing power of the AfD is evident in both local

41 Ahmet Görgen, "Immigrant Players in the National Football Team of Germany and the Question of National Identity", *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs*, 6:3, 2021, 24-37.

42 Ahmet Görgen, "The Origin of Refugees and Social Acceptance: A Comparative Analysis on Syrian and Ukrainian Refugees Migrating to Germany", B. Tunçsiper (eds.), *VI. Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimlerde Kritik Tartışmalar Kongresi* 4-5 Kasım, 2023. Tam Metin Bildiri Kitabı, 2023a,146-155. ISBN: 978-625-99413-8-7.

43 Ahmet Görgen, "Toplumsal Protestolar ve Kent Algısı: Dresden ve Chemnitz Protestoları Örneği", *Urban 21 Journal*, 1:1, 2023b, 16-29.

44 Ahmet Görgen, "Toplumsal Protestolar ve Kent Algısı: Dresden ve Chemnitz Protestoları Örneği".

45 Thomas Klikauer, "Germany's AfD – Members, Leaders and Ideologies", *Asian Journal of German and European Studies*, 4:4, 2019, 1-7.

46 Tim Niendorf, Sarah Wehrlin, Jens Giesel, "Die AfD ist Jetzt die Partei der Arbeiter – und Arbeitslosen. Frankfurter Allgeme ine Zeitung", https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/bundestagswahl/bundestagswahl-2025-in-der-analyse-afd-jetzt-partei-der-arbeiter-110316171.html, 2025, accessed 25.02.2025.

and national elections, raising concerns about the possibility of a resurgence of Nazism in Germany. Some scholars argue that the rhetoric of the AfD against immigrants resembles historical far-right ideology.[47]

After the success of the AfD in the elections, anti-AfD protests have been organized throughout Germany. These protests aim to bring attention to the AfD's connection to Germany's Nazi past. The discourse in these protests includes phrases such as "*Nie wider 1933* (Never again 1933)" and "*NAZIs Raus* (NAZIs out)". As the AfD's success continues to grow, fear and anger against the party have also increased. The anti-AfD protesters aimed to persuade AfD supporters to embrace liberal democracy. On 25 November 2023, a meeting was held by right-wing extremist groups, including the AfD, in Potsdam, Germany. The meeting included discussions about the mass deportations of foreign-born individuals in Germany, including German citizens.[48] After the investigative outlet *Correctiv* released information about the meeting to the public in January 2024, a public backlash emerged against the plan. Anti-AfD groups organized public protests against the deportation plans, and a public backlash has been visible against the AfD's policies. The closure of the party, aimed at securing Germany's democratic position, has been a topic of discussion among the public and in media outlets.[49]

In the current politically charged climate, *Zentrum für Politische Schönheit* (Center of Political Beauty) released a video on YouTube on November 27, 2023, titled "*Endlich: Scholz Verbietet die AfD* (Finally: Scholz Bans the AfD)". The video features Chancellor Olaf Scholz addressing the nation and announcing a plan to ban the political activities of the AfD in Germany.[50] Various channels present the video as an AI-generated deepfake. The deepfake video of Scholz has garnered significant attention in the German media. However, the Center of Political Beauty, an anti-AfD organization and the creator of the deepfake video, has faced accusations of using the video to gain support for anti-AfD protests in society.

4. Media Discourses on Olaf Scholz's Deepfake Video

As previously mentioned, Scholz's deepfake video, shared by the Center of Political Beauty, has garnered significant attention in German media. The deepfake aspect of the video has been extensively covered by various mass media agencies in both print and online news outlets. Moreover, the news has also included discussions about potential reactions from Scholz's government and the measures that may be taken in response to such videos. Some reports have even included warnings from Scholz's government urging the public not to believe manipulated videos. Additionally, news articles have been published to inform the public about the deepfake videos, how to identify them, and that Chancellor Scholz is not in the video. Expert opinions have also been presented, discussing whether artistic videos, including deepfakes, should be considered within the realm of freedom of artistic expression and how the art world should address this important societal issue. These all highlight the significant impact of Scholz's deepfake video on shaping the media's agenda and its potential impact on national security.

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47 Katrine Fangen and Lisanne Lichtenberg, "Gender and Family Rhetoric on the German Far Right", *Patterns of Prejudice*, 55:1, 2021, 71-93.
48 Correctiv, "Neue Rechte Geheimplan gegen Deutschland", https://correctiv.org/aktuelles/neue-rechte/2024/01/10/geheimplan-remigration-vertreibung-afd-rechtsextreme-november-treffen/, 2024, accessed 15.01.2025.
49 Jessica Parker, "AfD: Germans Float Ban on Elected Far-Right Party after Scandal", https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-68029232, 2024, accessed 25.01.2025.
50 Tagesschau, "Bundesregierung Verärgert über Satireaktion", *Tagesschau-video*, https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/satireaktion-kanzleramt-ki-video-100.html, 2023, accessed 25.01.2025.

4.1. Scholz's Deepfake Video as Not a Real Scholz

In the German media, following the release of Scholz's deepfake video, several articles highlighted the main feature of the video to demonstrate that it is not a real Olaf Scholz. One such article, written by Claudia Wieschollek for the *T3N* news page and titled "*Deepfake-Video: Olaf Scholz kündigt AfD-Verbot an* (Deepfake video: Olaf Scholz announces AfD ban)", highlights that despite some basic similarities, the deepfake video is not an accurate representation of the real Scholz.[51] It goes on to state that the video, released by the Center for Political Beauty, aims to demonstrate to the public that the AfD is unconstitutional. The article notes that the deepfake video is very convincing, featuring a voice that closely resembles Scholz's and high-quality visuals, as he typically shares his talks in front of the Reichstag building, adorned with German and European flags. However, the article mentions that upon closer inspection, it becomes clear that the video is a deepfake, as the movements of Scholz's teeth and mouth are not natural.[52] This lack of authenticity in the video makes it clear that it is not the original. Furthermore, the article points out that the title of the video, "Finally: Scholz bans the AfD!", is misleading, as it suggests that the Chancellor has the power to ban a political party, when in fact, only the Federal Constitutional Court has this authority.[53] Only those with knowledge of the German political system may understand this difference. Overall, the article aims to prove that the video is not a real representation of Olaf Scholz but a deepfake. The article explains that although the video may appear to be very similar to the original, the details, such as mouth movements, the position of the teeth, and the title of the video, reveal its deepfake nature.

The article published by *Bayerischer Rundfunk*, titled "*Manipuliertes Scholz-Video: 'Solche Deepfakes sind kein Spaß'* (Manipulated Scholz Video: 'Such Deepfakes are No Fun')", discusses the deepfake aspect of Scholz's video and highlights its deceptive nature.[54] The article mentions that the video is part of a political campaign by the Center for Political Beauty. It suggests that the release of Scholz's deepfake video aims to create the impression that he supports a ban on the AfD.[55] The article presents the video as deceptively real, and the language used is described as very natural. So, it argues that such videos make it difficult to distinguish fake and real content.[56] This has the potential to influence society and disrupt national security. The article also quotes government spokesman Steffen Hebestreit, who states that the federal government is actively working to combat the increasing spread of disinformation.[57] This emphasizes the importance of recognizing and preventing disinformation in the government's efforts. Overall, the article focuses on the fake aspect of Scholz's deepfake video and its contribution to the growing problem of disinformation in the online sphere. By referring to the federal government officials, the article provides basic information on how to identify and avoid fake content.

4.2. Official Sources as a Base of the Correct Information

In the case of German media, *the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* published an article on the same day as the release of Scholz's deepfake video, titled "*Fake-Kampagne gegen AfD: Bundesregierung warnt vor gefälschtem Scholz-Video* (Fake Campaign against AfD: Federal

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51 Claudia Wieschollek, "Deepfake-Video: Olaf Scholz Kündigt AfD-Verbot an", *T3N Magazin*, https://t3n.de/news/deepfake-video-olaf-scholz-afd-verbot-1592776/ 2023, accessed 25.01.2025.
52 Claudia Wieschollek, "Deepfake-Video: Olaf Scholz Kündigt AfD-Verbot an", accessed 25.01.2025.
53 Wieschollek, Ibid.
54 Bayerischer Rundfunk, "Manipuliertes Scholz-Video: „Solche Deepfakes sind kein Spaß", *BR24 Redaktion*. https://www.br.de/nachrichten/deutschland-welt/manipuliertes-scholz-video-solche-deepfakes-sind-kein-spass,TwokJPC, 2023, accessed 25.01.2025.
55 Bayerischer Rundfunk, "Manipuliertes Scholz-Video: „Solche Deepfakes sind kein Spaß".
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.

Government Warns of Fake Scholz Video)". The article discusses the German government's reaction to the sharing of the deepfake video featuring Chancellor Olaf Scholz.[58] The article states that the federal government does not consider this deepfake video approvable and warns people not to believe manipulative videos like this. It quotes government spokesperson Steffen Hebestreit, who states that the video is fake and sharing it will have legal repercussions.[59] The article also mentions the intentions of the Center of Political Beauty, which created the video to warn people about the dangers of the AfD. However, the article also acknowledges that there may be social consequences for sharing these types of videos. Overall, the article emphasizes the warnings of the federal government by citing statements from state officials, who state that Scholz's video is not real and sharing such videos could result in legal consequences.

In another article published by Falk Steiner on *Heise Online*, titled, "'*Scholz' kündigt AfD-Verbot an: Bundesregierung prüft Umgang mit Deep Fakes* ('Scholz' Announces AfD Ban: Federal Government Examines Handling of Deep Fakes)", the video featuring Olaf Scholz created by the Center for Political Beauty is regarded as having caused quite a stir, and the government is now considering legal action.[60] The article notes that the deepfake video of Olaf Scholz was created in his style of addressing the nation but with the added elements that reveal its deepfake nature, such as his lips moving in an unnatural way. It also points out the potential danger of deepfake videos for those who are not familiar with them.[61] The article includes statements from state officials, such as government spokesperson Steffen Hebestreit. It presents the challenge of authenticating deepfake videos generated by AI technologies. Therefore, it is important for people to consider the speeches of government officials published by original sources. The article aims to educate readers on how to identify deepfake videos and emphasizes the importance of relying on original sources for accurate information.

4.3. AfD Ban as an Aim of the Center for Political Beauty

The media in Germany have also questioned the purpose of releasing Scholz's deepfake video. In an article published by *Stern*, titled "'*Zentrum für politische Schönheit' Initiative will AfD-Verbot mit Installation und Kanzler-Deep-Fake voranbringen – Regierung reagiert verschnupft* ('Center for Political Beauty' Initiative Wants to Push forward AfD Ban with Installation and Chancellor Deep Fake – Government Reacts Sniffily)", the main goal of the Center for Political Beauty in releasing the deepfake video of Chancellor Olaf Scholz is presented.[62] The article discusses the protest activities of the Center for Political Beauty, revealing their intention to influence the politicians. It reports that the Center for Political Beauty organized a protest featuring a poster depicting AfD politicians behind bars.[63] This

58 Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, "Fake-Kampagne gegen AfD: Bundesregierung Warnt vor Gefälschtem Scholz-Video". https://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/medien/scholz-in-fake-video-regierung-warnt-vor-deepfake-zu-angeblichem-afd-verbot-19343526.html. 2023, accessed 15.01.2025.
59 Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, "Fake-Kampagne gegen AfD: Bundesregierung Warnt vor Gefälschtem Scholz-Video".
60 Falk Steiner, „Scholz" Kündigt AfD-Verbot an: Bundesregierung Prüft Umgang mit Deep Fakes", *Heise Online*, https://www.heise.de/news/Scholz-kuendigt-AfD-Verbot-an-Bundesregierung-prueft-Umgang-mit-Deep-Fakes-9540945.html, 2023, accessed 25.01.2025.
61 Falk Steiner, 'Scholz' Kündigt AfD-Verbot an: Bundesregierung Prüft Umgang mit Deep Fakes", accessed 25.01.2025.
62 Stern, Zentrum für Politische Schönheit "Initiative will AfD-Verbot mit Installation und Kanzler-Deep-Fake Voranbringen – Regierung Reagiert Verschnupft". Available at: https://www.stern.de/politik/deutschland/afd-verbot-dank-scholz-fake---zentrum-fuer-politische-schoenheit--startet-aktion-34235180.html, 2023, accessed 15.01.2025.
63 Stern, Ibid. Zentrum für Politische Schönheit "Initiative will AfD-Verbot mit Installation und Kanzler-Deep-Fake Voranbringen – Regierung Reagiert Verschnupft", accessed 15.01.2025.

protest took place next to the Chancellery building prior to the release of Scholz's deepfake video. Additionally, the article includes statements from Philipp Ruch, a performance artist and the founder of the Center for Political Beauty. Ruch argues that Scholz already had the idea to ban the AfD, as the Federal Government is already opposed to the party and its ideology.[64] Therefore, the center's artistic performances are in line with Scholz's political stance. The article highlights the ideological similarities between Scholz and the Center for Political Beauty and presents the main motive of the center as influencing the political sphere in Germany.

Furthermore, a news article published by *ZdfHeute*, titled "*Satireaktion vor Kanzleramt: Deepfake-Scholz verkündet AfD-Verbot* (Satire Reaction in front of the Chancellery: Deepfake-Scholz Announces AfD Ban)", discusses recent actions taken by the Center for Political Beauty to ban the AfD.[65] The article highlights the use of a deepfake video featuring Scholz, created and shared by the Center for Political Beauty, as the latest form of protest. This is just one of the many artistic activities, such as photo montages, that have been displayed in front of the Chancellery in Berlin, depicting AfD politicians behind bars. One notable action took place in 2017, when the center hung a Holocaust memorial in front of the home of AfD politician Björn Höcke to send the message of the normalization of fascism in Germany. According to the article, the center's goal is to show that Chancellor Olaf Scholz supports the ban of the AfD, and they aim to help the spread of this idea in the public sphere.[66] The article states that the Center for Political Beauty continues its usual artistic protest activities against the AfD in a technologically advanced manner, utilizing AI-generated deepfake videos and other visual works. The article concludes by posing a question about what the next protest activity of the Center against the AfD will be.

4.4. Deepfake Videos of Politicians as Art Activism

The media coverage in Germany regarding the deepfake video of Olaf Scholz also included articles questioning the artistic motives behind its release. In the article written by Saskia Trebing for *Monopol* magazine, titled "*'AfD-Verbot' des Zentrums für politische Schönheit: Sind Politiker-Fakes ein legitimes Mittel für Kunst-Aktivismus?* ('AfD ban' by the Center for Political Beauty: Are Fake Politicians a Legitimate Means of Art Activism?)", the legitimacy of using deepfake videos for art activism is explored.[67] The article highlights the Center for Political Beauty's history of provocative actions against the AfD, such as painting and media campaigns that depict refugees fighting tigers if the AfD were in power. It portrays the deepfake video of Olaf Scholz as the latest attempt to manipulate public opinion.[68] The article notes that the Center for Political Beauty claims the video features the real Olaf Scholz, but his mouth movements reveal that it is AI-generated content and not the real Scholz. The main question raised by the article is whether fake news and AI-generated content should be used in art activism. The article points out that the AfD also uses AI-generated photos and videos to gain support for their political agenda, such as in their messages about refugees, the

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64 Ibid.

65 ZdfHeute, "Satireaktion vor Kanzleramt: Deepfake-Scholz Verkündet AfD-Verbot". Available at: https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/politik/aktion-gefaengnis-afd-verbot-100.html, 2023, accessed 15.01.2025.

66 ZdfHeute, "Satireaktion vor Kanzleramt: Deepfake-Scholz Verkündet AfD-Verbot", accessed 15.01.2025.

67 Saskia Trebing, "„AfD-Verbot" des Zentrums für Politische Schönheit: Sind Politiker-Fakes ein Legitimes Mittel für Kunst-Aktivismus?", *Monopol Magazin für Kunst und Leben*, https://www.monopol-magazin.de/zps-afd-verbot-scholz-ki-fake-kommentar-sind-politiker-fakes-ein-legitimes-protestmittel, 2023, accessed 25.01.2025.

68 Trebing, "„AfD-Verbot" des Zentrums für Politische Schönheit: Sind Politiker-Fakes ein Legitimes Mittel für Kunst-Aktivismus?".

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coronavirus pandemic, and the Ukraine war.[69] This raises concerns about the potential threat AI-generated content poses to future democracies. The article argues that while AI-generated videos and visual arts can be used for a beneficial cause, using them for political purposes can be dangerous for democratic societies.[70] In this sense, the potential for moral and ethical standards shifts based on one's political stance. Overall, the article raises concerns about the artistic intentions behind the deepfake video of Scholz and the potential danger it poses for future democratic societies.

Additionally, several articles discuss the comments made by various experts regarding the potential threats posed by deepfake videos. One such article, published by Christian Eckl in a local media group, *Passauer Neue Presse* (PNP), located in Passau but also publishing online articles accessible worldwide, titled "*Fakenews: Falscher Kanzler über AfD-Verbot: Experten warnen vor den Gefahren von Deepfake-Videos* (Fake news: Fake Chancellor on AfD ban: Experts warn of the dangers of deepfake videos)", presents scientific evidence of the dangers posed by sharing deepfake videos.[71] According to the article, regulation is necessary for AI-generated content to prevent potential harm to society. The article includes expert opinions from a communication scientist and expert on deepfake content, Rahl Hohlfeld, who states that the quality of AI-generated content is difficult for average individuals to recognize and that there is a potential for social problems that could affect national security due to these videos.[72] Hohlfeld also mentions that AI experts are constantly improving technology to make the head movements and mouth movements of AI-generated content more realistic, making it even more difficult to detect these types of videos in the future, even for experts.[73] The article not only presents the perspectives of various experts and scientists on AI-generated content but also reveals their expectations for state and EU-wide regulations. This shows that deepfake videos are not just a problem in Germany but also in other EU member states, such as those about the Ukraine War and political processes. Overall, the article highlights the experts' belief that political regulation is necessary to address the issues of deepfake content. As AI technology continues to advance, it will become increasingly challenging for even experts to detect deepfake videos.

Overall, the coverage of the deepfake video of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in the German media has been varied. Firstly, the video, released by the Center for Political Beauty, has been widely presented as a deepfake video by all the media outlets and in their news articles. This demonstrates the media's awareness of deepfake technology and AI-generated content. This awareness is in line with the increasing use of AI-generated content in the political sphere, such as by the AfD and the Center for Political Beauty. Secondly, there has been a trend in the media to only trust videos released by official sources. The news coverage of Scholz's video highlights its design and how closely it resembles the real video. The media also raises concerns about the potential danger to national security, as advancements in deepfake technology could make future videos even more realistic.

Third, media coverage of the Center for Political Beauty has primarily focused on their goal of banning the activities of the AfD. The articles showcase the Center's previous AI-generated activities and other practical works. The Center presents the deepfake video as

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69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 Cristian Eckl, "Fakenews: Falscher Kanzler über AfD-Verbot: Experten Warnen vor den Gefahren von Deepfake-Videos", *PNP*, https://www.pnp.de/nachrichten/bayern/falscher-kanzler-ueber-afd-verbot-experten-warnen-vor-den-gefahren-von-deepfake-videos-14905569, 2023, accessed 15.01.2025.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.

their latest effort, complementing their previous actions. This raises questions about whether these videos are serving only the interests of certain groups. Fourth, some of the news articles about Scholz's deepfake video also discuss its artistic features. These articles question the impact of using AI-generated technology in artistic works on national security. Specifically, in the case of Scholz's deepfake video, there are concerns about potential social upheaval. As a result, many of these articles emphasize the importance of considering the common good before sharing such videos.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, the use of AI technology in visual and artistic activities has not only impacted on the area of art, but it has also begun to influence the political sphere by addressing socially constructed political issues. This is evident in the increasing use of deepfake videos generated by social and political organizations to address these problems. These videos have the potential to shape the media's agenda, as the media is a primary source of information for the public. However, the growing prevalence of AI-generated content, such as deepfake videos, increasingly affects public opinion in relation to how these are presented in the media. In many countries, AI-based technologies are being used in the public sphere to address political issues. In Germany, social groups, individuals, and political parties are utilizing AI tools to create visual works that aim to influence society. However, when these AI-generated works involve political figures who hold executive power and whose words have a significant social and political impact, it sparks a critical debate on the potential impact of these works on national security. Chancellor of Germany Olaf Scholz's deepfake video calling for a ban on the activities of AfD in Germany, released on 27 November 2023 by the Center for Political Beauty, sparked a critical debate in this way.

Beyond its influence on national political discourse and media agenda-setting, deepfake technology has also emerged as a growing concern in the field of national security. AI-generated content can be weaponized in political conflicts to spread disinformation, manipulate political communications, and provoke national tensions. In an era marked by hybrid warfare, cyber threats, and psychological operations, deepfakes introduce a new layer of complexity to national security dynamics. As seen in the case of Olaf Scholz's deepfake video, a synthetic message within the country can resonate with wider society, challenging political norms and trust among the public. Therefore, the regulation of deepfake technologies and the development of domestic and international cooperation mechanisms are essential not only for safeguarding domestic democratic processes but also for ensuring national stability and peace.

In the German media, a video featuring Olaf Scholz, released by the Center for Political Beauty, presented a deepfake feature. It is possible to argue that the media's approach has been to fact-check the video thoroughly and inform society about its authenticity. It is evident that there is a control mechanism in place within the German media. The news articles covering Scholz's deepfake video were quick to identify it as fake, as the person depicted is not the real Olaf Scholz. They highlight discrepancies in the mouth movements and lip shape as proof of the videos' inauthenticity. Furthermore, some articles point out that it is not Olaf Scholz since Scholz does not have the power to ban any political party in Germany, and such a decision would require the involvement of the Constitutional Court. These articles serve to increase public awareness about the political process. Some articles also mention that the Center for Political Beauty aims to ban AfD in Germany. The articles presented that the recent deepfake video created by the Center aligns with their other AI-generated activities,

as it frequently utilizes this feature to combat AfD. Additionally, some articles suggest that Scholz agrees with the Center's ideas, which is why his image was used in the video. In addition, some of the articles also criticized the idea of artistic activities on political issues and political figures by using AI-generated tools. These articles suggest that the potential of social upheaval exists due to the impact of AI-generated works and deepfake videos, which pose a danger to national security. Moreover, the articles highlight that there can be more danger for the public in the future since AI technology is still advancing, and more convincing fake videos and images can be created in the future, which can impact public trust. These articles call for responsible behavior from artists when using AI-generated works. Overall, as presented in this article, the main approach of the news articles in the German media has been to present a unified perspective on the deepfake video of Scholz. A common perspective is presented in the media by trusting only official sources and being aware of the potential threat to national security of fake videos of politicians. Future investigations could expand on this study by scrutinizing the portrayal of deepfake videos across various media systems or distinct cultural contexts. Furthermore, employing mixed-methods approaches could offer deeper insight into the perceptions and psychological effects of synthetic political content.

Conflict of Interest Statement:

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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