


# ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN POLITICAL USE OF AI: CASE STUDY OF 2024 INDONESIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN



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**Abstract:** This research explores the ethical implications of integrating artificial intelligence (AI) within the 2024 Indonesian presidential election campaign, focusing on its deployment in visual and interactive political campaigns. By utilizing Donna Haraway's cyborg perspective, the study provides a broader view of AI's role in visual political campaigns. This approach highlights how AI blurs the lines between human and machine, influencing voter engagement and political narratives. The findings indicate that the ethicality of AI use in politics is context-dependent; AI can be seen as either an ethical innovation or an ethical concern depending on specific circumstances. This duality underscores the complexity of embedding AI in democratic processes and emphasizes the need for situational sensitive ethical assessments. In navigating the rapidly evolving technological landscape, the study calls attention to the importance of establishing ethical frameworks that can adapt to AI's transformative impact on political engagement and public trust.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence (AI); Cyborg; Donna Haraway; Ethics; Politics.

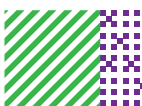


## Introduction

Rapid technological advancement has dramatically transformed nearly every aspect of modern life, with artificial intelligence (AI) at the forefront of this evolution. AI has become a driving force in reshaping how businesses operate, how people interact with technology, and how we envision the future. AI technologies are reshaping industries, revolutionizing decision-making processes, and influencing individual behaviour on an unprecedented scale. AI capabilities have unlocked new opportunities for innovation while also raising important ethical questions about privacy, employment, and the role of human agency. AI's impact on society grows and offers both unprecedented possibilities and complex challenges that require thoughtful consideration.

The benefits of AI and technological advancements are undeniable. However, they have also sparked significant fear and apprehension among many. According to Flavián and Casaló (2021), AI is not only replacing manual labour but also jobs requiring analytical, intuitive, and empathetic skills, which is affecting economies and the workforce in significant ways. The rapid pace of change that is combined with the increasing capabilities of machines has led to concerns about job displacement, loss of privacy, and the potential for AI systems to act beyond human control. These anxieties are not without merit as ethical implications arise in the development and deployment of such technologies. Issues such as algorithmic bias, surveillance, and the misuse of AI for malicious purposes highlight the darker side of technological progress. There is a growing need for ethical guidelines to ensure that technology serves humanity rather than undermines it. The tension between innovation and control has left many grappling with how to balance the promise of AI with the ethical responsibilities it brings.

In the field of art, AI's role has revolutionized creative processes. AI enables artists and even non-artists to generate unique visuals through algorithms that analyse and mimic various artistic styles. AI can analyse massive datasets of existing artworks, learning patterns, colours, and compositions to create



entirely new images. This technology has enabled tools that allow users to input simple prompts or sketches. The result is sophisticated digital artworks generated almost instantly ranging from realistic portraits to abstract pieces. However, this AI phenomenon has also raised ethical concerns and debates within the art community. Key issues include questions of authorship and copyright as AI often draws from vast databases of pre-existing works and sometimes without clear permission or acknowledgment. Additionally, the rise of AI art has led to worries about the future of traditional artists who may find it challenging to compete with the speed and accessibility of AI-generated pieces. As AI continues to evolve, the art world faces the complex challenge of balancing innovation with the protection of artistic integrity and creative labour.

AI applications in other fields reveal a similar transformative potential. AI use in politics brings similar ethical concerns into focus. The capacity of AI to produce tailored visuals and engaging content has made it an invaluable asset across various domains, particularly in influencing public perception and engagement. In the political sphere, AI has become an increasingly powerful tool. AI is able to provide campaigns with the ability to analyse vast datasets, craft targeted messaging, and influence voter behaviour with remarkable precision. Political organizations can identify key voter demographics, track public sentiment in real time, and adjust strategies almost instantaneously with tools like machine learning algorithms and predictive analytics. Still, AI raises complex ethical questions particularly regarding privacy, fairness, and the potential for manipulation.

In the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election, AI has played a transformative role in shaping the strategies of key political campaigns. Leading candidates like Prabowo Subianto and Ganjar Pranowo have utilized AI tools for a variety of purposes, from generating AI-driven art and personalized political content to creating interactive platforms that engage voters. Prabowo, for instance, has successfully rebranded his image through AI-generated cartoons that present him as a more relatable, “cuddly” figure, particularly appealing to younger generations like Gen Z voters. This AI-driven rebranding through digital cartoons has proven to be highly effective in engaging a tech-savvy audience and enhancing his appeal on social media platforms. However, this use of AI-generated art has raised concerns among many artists and art professionals who argue that AI appropriates artistic styles without proper credit or compensation. These critics highlight the ethical issues surrounding AI’s replication of artistic work. They are worried that the increasing reliance on AI for campaign visuals undermines the authenticity and economic livelihood of human artists.



Despite the concerns surrounding technological advancement, some scholars view it through a more optimistic lens. Donna Haraway, with her ground breaking *Cyborg Manifesto* (1985), offers a positive and provocative perspective on the intersection of technology and humanity. Haraway's cyborg theory challenges traditional boundaries between humans, machines, and nature, proposing that technology can be a source of empowerment rather than a fear. She envisions the cyborg as a hybrid entity that transcends conventional categories such as gender, race, and class, allowing for new forms of identity and resistance to oppressive systems. By embracing the integration of technology into our lives, Haraway argues that we can dismantle rigid binaries and build more inclusive and fluid societies. In her perspective, the advancement of technology offers opportunities for rethinking what it means to be human and expanding the possibilities for political and social transformation. Haraway's cyborg vision celebrates technology's potential to redefine relationships, identities, and power structures in ways that benefit society as a whole.

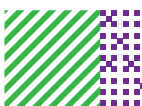
### **Research Method**

This research employs a descriptive qualitative method in exploring the ethical considerations of AI-generated visuals in the 2024 Indonesian presidential campaign, specifically focusing on Prabowo Subianto's use of AI-generated images to rebrand his public persona. This method allows an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon that is capturing the nuanced perspectives and concerns surrounding AI's role in political campaigns. Data were collected through two primary sources: internet-based media portals and social media platforms. News articles, opinion pieces, and digital publications were sourced from online media portals to provide context on the strategic use of AI-generated images in Prabowo's campaign and the public discourse surrounding it. Additionally, social media observations were conducted where these AI-generated visuals were widely circulated and discussed. The collected data were analysed thematically to identify recurring patterns, sentiments, and ethical concerns. Thematic coding was applied to categorize the content, focusing on (1) the strategies behind the AI-generated visuals and (2) public perception and reception, particularly among younger demographics. The analysis aims to provide a detailed account of how AI is influencing political narratives and public engagement, with particular attention to the ethical and societal implications.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Voter Demographic of 2024 Indonesian Election**

According to data from the Indonesian General Elections Commission (KPU) cited in Kompas (Harmadi, 2023), there are as many as 204,807,222 registered voters for the 2024 election, with a nearly equal gender split: 102,218,503 males



and 102,588,719 females. Millennials and Gen Z dominate the demographic, with Gen Z (born 1997-2006) comprising 22.85% (46.8 million people) and Millennials (1981-1996) making up 33.6% (68.8 million people). Additionally, more than 70.72% of voters are of working or productive age. Education levels are skewed low with nearly 60% having at most a junior high education and while only 6.8% have a bachelor's degree or higher. This year's Indonesian election marks a significant shift due to the dominance of Millennials and Gen Z in the voter demographic. These younger generations who have grown up with the internet and are deeply influenced by digital culture have different political preferences and priorities compared to older generations. Social media has become a crucial battleground where engaging and relatable content can significantly impact voting behaviour. Furthermore, a Jakarta Globe article (Jakes, 2024) highlights platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and other social media networks have become critical arenas for political messaging. Candidates utilize these platforms not only to disseminate their campaign messages but also to participate in viral trends that resonate with Gen Z's digital culture. This phenomenon demonstrates the unique role of social media in shaping electoral dynamics. This major shift in voter demographics and communication strategies underscores how vital it is for political figures to align with the interests and values of younger Indonesians to secure electoral success. This change has also led to greater demands for transparency and accountability in political discourse, which is reflecting a new era in Indonesian electoral dynamics that emphasizes progressive, tech-savvy, and socially conscious values.

### **The Use of AI in Visual Campaign**

In previous election years, visual campaigns in Indonesia were largely conventional. The campaigns relied on billboards, posters, and television advertisements that featured straightforward slogans and traditional images of candidates. Campaign materials were often static with limited engagement through digital or interactive platforms. However, as voter demographics have shifted, so have campaign tactics. This year, the landscape has transformed, with candidates like Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming utilizing cutting-edge technology. Their use of AI-generated visuals marks a stark departure from past approaches that is signaling a new era where digital innovation plays a crucial role in captivating younger, tech-oriented voters.

As the 2024 Indonesian presidential election heated up, candidates utilized various strategies to capture voters' attention. Among the three major pairs—Anies Baswedan-Muhaimin Iskandar, Prabowo Subianto-Gibran Rakabuming, and Ganjar Pranowo-Mahfud MD—the Prabowo-Gibran team made a splash



by embracing AI technology. They utilized AI-generated images featuring both Prabowo and Gibran, which have been widely circulated and strategically used on digital platforms to captivate the younger electorate. Their campaign stood out for its use of AI-generated images of both Prabowo and Gibran, which were widely shared on social media. This tech-savvy approach aimed to resonate with younger digital-native voters, particularly Millennials and Gen Z, who were key to winning the election.

Astrio Feligent, a member of TKN Prabowo-Gibran (in Kompas, 2023), explained the strategic use of AI in their campaign and emphasized “AI is used as a symbol that the candidate acknowledges the changing times where AI has become an inseparable part of our lives.” This statement highlights a broader understanding of AI as more than just a technological tool—it represents recognition of societal evolution and the increasing integration of artificial intelligence in daily routines. By leveraging AI-generated images and content, the campaign not only demonstrates awareness of technological advancements but also seeks to connect with a modern and forward-thinking electorate. AI has reshaped various aspects of life from how people work and communicate to the broader influences on culture and governance. Therefore, the Prabowo-Gibran campaign is attempting to align itself with this technological era by signalling adaptability and a commitment to innovation. The strategic symbolism of AI also conveys the message that their leadership would be future-oriented, which is positioning them as advocates for progress and digital transformation. In a world where AI plays a pivotal role in industries and even in shaping social narratives, this campaign’s move reflects a bid to engage voters who see technology as a marker of progress. By doing so, they hope to appeal to a younger, more digitally connected demographic that values tech-savvy governance and sees an understanding of AI as critical to addressing future challenges.

Building on the symbolism of AI as a representation of modernity and innovation, the Prabowo-Gibran campaign has also used it to strategically reshape Prabowo’s public image. As reported by Reuters (Lamb et al, 2024), in previous elections, particularly in 2014 and 2019, Prabowo was characterized by a nationalistic and fiery persona, which was evoking strong and impassioned rhetoric meant to galvanize patriotic sentiment among voters. However, in 2024, the campaign has opted for a more relatable and playful image. This shift is marked by the use of the term “Gemoy,” a slang word meaning “cute and adorable” that emerged and gained traction on TikTok in response to the candidate’s social media presence. AI-generated content has played a significant role in crafting and amplifying this image with videos and memes showcasing



Prabowo in a light-hearted and endearing manner that contrasts sharply with his earlier intense persona. The campaign's use of AI created humorous and approachable content such as Prabowo participating in "gemoy" dances or displaying a charming demeanour. This strategy aims to appeal to younger generations and social media-savvy voters. This rebranding strategy not only reflected an understanding of evolving voter preferences but also leverages the viral nature of digital platforms like TikTok, which have become powerful tools for engaging a broader audience. By adapting to the playful and meme-driven culture of social media, the campaign seeks to humanize Prabowo and make him more accessible while also highlighting how AI can influence and transform political image making in the digital age.

Continuing from the campaign's strategic use of AI to craft Prabowo's "Gemoy" image and engage voters on social media, Reuters (2024) further elaborates on the sophisticated AI technologies employed. The Prabowo-Gibran campaign has tapped into advanced resources from Midjourney Inc., a generative AI company based in the United States. This cutting-edge AI technology is utilized to produce campaign artwork that captures attention across digital platforms which is blending creativity with strategic messaging. In addition to visual content, the campaign uses AI to track social media sentiment and ensure they stay attuned to public opinion and adjust tactics in real time. This allows for a more responsive and adaptive campaign strategy. AI-driven tools also include interactive chatbots to engage with potential voters directly and make the campaign feel more personal and accessible. Moreover, AI is instrumental in targeting specific voter groups by analysing vast amounts of data to craft messages that resonate with different demographics. This integration of generative AI reflects a significant advancement in campaign strategies, which is emphasizing how political movements are leveraging technology to maximize their reach and effectiveness in a highly digital and data-driven electoral environment.

### **The Cons and Its Dynamics**

Despite the innovative appeal of Prabowo-Gibran's AI-generated images, this strategy has sparked significant controversy. Critics argue that using artificial intelligence to create campaign visuals lacks genuine artistic value, as it relies on algorithms rather than human creativity and cultural depth. Local artists and illustrators have voiced concerns that the campaign's decision to use AI undermines the value of traditional artistry and fails to support the domestic creative industry. By choosing AI over local talent, the campaign faces accusations of neglecting Indonesia's rich art community, which has long been a cornerstone of cultural expression and national pride. Many artists feel that





this approach not only diminishes their role but also disregards the economic impact of supporting local illustrators. These concerns have fuelled a broader debate about the implications of AI in art and the ethical responsibilities of political campaigns to support homegrown talent and preserve artistic traditions.

The controversy surrounding the Prabowo-Gibran AI-generated campaign images has ignited a heated debate across social media platforms, leading to a virtual battleground between supporters and detractors. Those critical of the campaign have taken to platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok to voice their frustration by arguing that AI-generated art lacks authenticity and disrespects the craftsmanship of local artists. They emphasize the need to support Indonesia's vibrant creative industry and accuse the campaign of prioritizing technology over homegrown talent. On the other side, supporters of the campaign defend the use of AI by highlighting its relevance in engaging a tech-savvy generation and pointing to the efficiency and modernity AI brings to political messaging. This clash has given rise to viral threads, memes, and heated exchanges with both sides passionately defending their views. As posts circulate rapidly, the debate reflects broader anxieties about the role of AI in society and the tension between technological progress and cultural preservation.

Recognizing an opportunity to engage with voters amid the social media uproar, rival presidential candidates Anies Baswedan and Ganjar Pranowo have tactfully joined the conversation. Both candidates and their teams have amplified tweets and social media posts expressing support for local artists. Anies and Ganjar's social media accounts have shared statements highlighting the importance of Indonesia's creative community and even showcased artwork by local illustrators to reinforce their stance. By positioning themselves as champions of homegrown talent, they aim to appeal to voters who are disillusioned with the Prabowo-Gibran campaign's perceived disregard for the nation's artistic heritage. This tactic has led to an influx of supportive comments and shares from those who feel strongly about preserving and promoting Indonesia's cultural identity and adding another layer of complexity to the 2024 election narrative.

In his tweet, Anies Baswedan emphasizes the vital role of creative workers in shaping Indonesia's present and future. He describes them as a national strength that is contributing not only to cultural vibrancy and public happiness but also enriching the country's identity and strengthening Indonesia's soft power. Anies highlights his campaign's mission to honour, protect, support,





and improve the welfare of creative workers. He shares a visual breakdown of these commitments, urging voters to read the full document detailing his plans for this sector on his campaign website. The hash tags #AMINAJaDulu and #VisiMisiAMIN underscore his message.



Source: Anies Baswedan's X (2024)



Source: Ganjar Pranowo's X (2024)

Ganjar Pranowo acknowledges the appeal of AI-generated images but emphasizes that hand-drawn artwork by human illustrators carries more heart and life. He thanks an artist named Jeje and he encourage illustrators to continue creating impactful works. By showing appreciation for human artistry and highlighting the value of authentic handmade illustrations, Ganjar aligns himself with those who criticize the use of AI in the arts. This gesture positions him as a supporter of local artists and reinforces his commitment to cultural appreciation, likely resonating with many in the creative community.

The controversy over Prabowo-Gibran's use of AI-generated images has sparked widespread debate with opponents arguing that AI lacks true artistic value and undermines local creative talent. This backlash has been amplified on social media where rival candidates like Anies Baswedan and Ganjar Pranowo have capitalized on the situation. Anies emphasized the importance of supporting Indonesia's creative workers, while Ganjar highlighted the irreplaceable warmth of human-made art. These statements have intensified the discussion and tapping into the broader concerns over technology's impact on culture and tradition.

## **Ethical Considerations: AI and Political Campaign**

From Haraway's perspective, both humans and machines are active agents with their own forms of autonomy. It means that both possess the capacity to contribute meaningfully to creative processes. This framework allows for a nuanced discussion of the ethical implications of using AI in visual political campaigns. In the case of the Prabowo-Gibran campaign, their explicit admission of employing AI technology for generating images reflects a degree of transparency that is essential for maintaining public trust. In political contexts where visual representation has immense influence, honesty about the use of AI is crucial to prevent any misleading or manipulative effects. The responsibility lies in ensuring that AI is not used to alter reality maliciously considering that AI technology has a well-documented potential for producing deep fakes and distortions that can mislead or deceive. The Prabowo-Gibran images, while generated by AI, do not attempt to deceive; rather, they are realistic representations meant to engage audiences without distorting facts. As long as these AI-generated visuals serve constructive purposes and are presented transparently, they align with ethical standards, which is contributing to a campaign's creative strategy in a way that acknowledges the evolving role of technology. This approach legitimizes the use of AI in political marketing, provided it prioritizes ethical considerations, which reinforces the authenticity of the message and ensures that AI remains a tool of augmentation rather than deception. In this balance, Haraway's view of humans and machines as collaborative entities is evident by highlighting the shared responsibility in shaping ethical and socially constructive digital narratives.

Haraway's critique of technology highlights how it can reinforce existing power structures and exacerbate social inequalities, often to the detriment of marginalized groups. In the context of AI usage in political campaigns, there is a risk that such technology might inadvertently or deliberately marginalize communities whose livelihoods depend on traditional artistic work. With 71% of Indonesian voters being part of the workforce who includes a substantial number of creative and art workers, integrating these artists into the campaign could symbolize genuine support for the creative industry and demonstrate a commitment to improving their economic well being. This inclusive approach would be impactful as elections are meant to reflect the interests and contributions of the entire nation, including the vibrant cultural and creative sectors. Promoting local artists during the campaign could invigorate the industry, which means creating broader societal benefits. Conversely, if AI is used solely to enhance a candidate's image without involving or supporting local creative, it suggests that the technology is being employed as a mere tool to consolidate power rather than contribute meaningfully to national development.



In such cases, AI's role becomes a symbol of ideological reinforcement rather than a medium for genuine social and economic progress.

### **Conclusion**

Assessing the ethics of AI use is deeply dependent on the context in which it is applied and the intentions behind its implementation. AI can be considered ethical when it prioritizes principles like transparency, fairness, and inclusiveness. This requires using AI to drive positive and socially responsible outcomes, such as enhancing accessibility, supporting creative industries, or promoting societal welfare. Ethical AI should minimize harm and be deployed in ways that respect the rights and contributions of various communities. However, AI becomes unethical when exploited to reinforce power imbalances, push ideologies that do not contribute to societal growth, or marginalize specific groups. In political contexts, this could mean using AI not to serve the public interest but rather to gain strategic advantages without supporting meaningful community development. Ultimately, ensuring ethical AI involves not only careful consideration of its potential benefits but also a strong commitment to preventing its misuse. The key lies in implementing AI with accountability and an awareness of its societal impact, emphasizing how technology can be a force for good when used thoughtfully and responsibly.



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