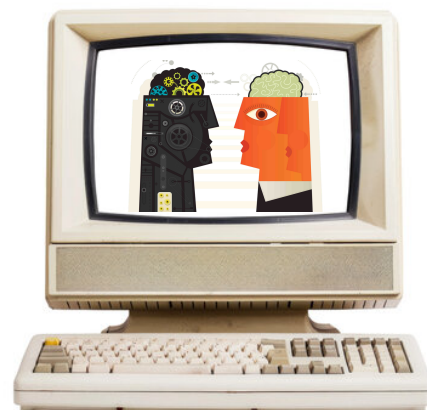




The ELECTION LEDGER



Vol II: From Editor's desk

Welcome to vol 1: Each week, we examine one facet of artificial intelligence's growing role in Africa's electoral processes. This is not another technology column. Treat it as intelligence brief for journalists, civil society, policymakers, and citizens who refuse to be outmaneuvered by the machine.

*In Volume I, we introduced four distinct roles AI can play in electoral influence operations: Legitimacy Forger, Content Laundromat, Future Historian, and Script Factory. In this Volume, we focus on **AI as a Legitimacy Forger**. We bring this framework to Kenya's 2025 by-elections and ask: Does Kenya have a public mood on X? Or is what we see manufactured consensus, laundered by AI into apparent legitimacy?*

AI as a Legitimacy Forger

Between late November and early December 2025, Election Ledger analysed **54,998 X posts** around the four by-election constituencies (Mbeere North, Malava, Kasipul, and Magarini). These posts generated **~17 million views**.

The analysis covered three phases: before the elections, immediately after, and the extended post-election period (28 November – 5 December 2025).

1. The core findings

In the extended post-election period alone (14,998 posts), researchers found only about **2,850 unique text strings**. This means roughly **84% of posts** were duplicates or near-duplicates of the same messages. The same sentences and paragraphs were being repeated across many different accounts. This is

a clear sign of **astroturfing** which is the coordinated effort to make manufactured messages appear as genuine grassroots opinion.

In the **2025 November by-elections**, the AI persona @grok appeared 663 times across the datasets; more than any other identified handle in our dataset. Its function was not to invent disinformation but to ingest script-saturated feeds and summarise them as 'what Kenyans are saying' or 'what the post argues,' laundering manufactured narratives as neutral technological analysis.

2. The scripts

A small number of centrally written scripts dominated the conversation across all three monitoring periods:

Script	Frequency
Mbeere nullification script	~2,119 times
Malava "imagine 2027" fear script	~433 times
Kasipul violence cluster	~741 times

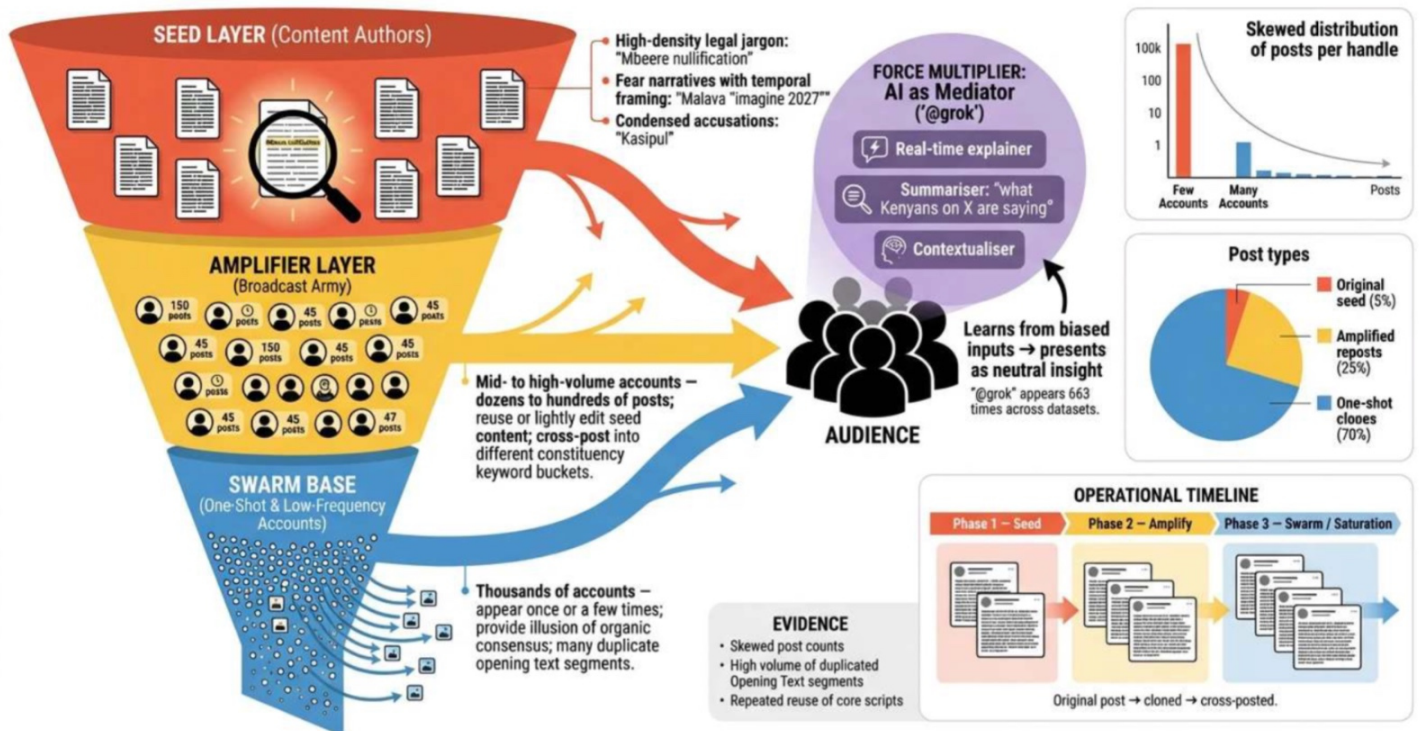
What looks like public debate was often an industrial broadcast with a limited set of messages written in one place and repeated thousands of times by networks of accounts.

3. The actor structure

These operations follow a clear three-layer structure:

- **Seed Layer:** A small number of accounts that create the original, carefully worded messages.
- **Amplifier Layer:** Accounts that repeatedly post and spread these messages across different hashtags and communities.
- **Swarm Base:** Thousands of low-activity accounts that post a script once, creating the appearance of widespread support.

DIGITAL INFLUENCE OPERATIONS: THE FUNNEL, THE MULTIPLIER, AND THE EVIDENCE



Crucially, @grok is downstream of the same feeds being saturated by scripts. It learns from a biased environment and then presents that skew as neutral insight."

This gives AI a dual role:

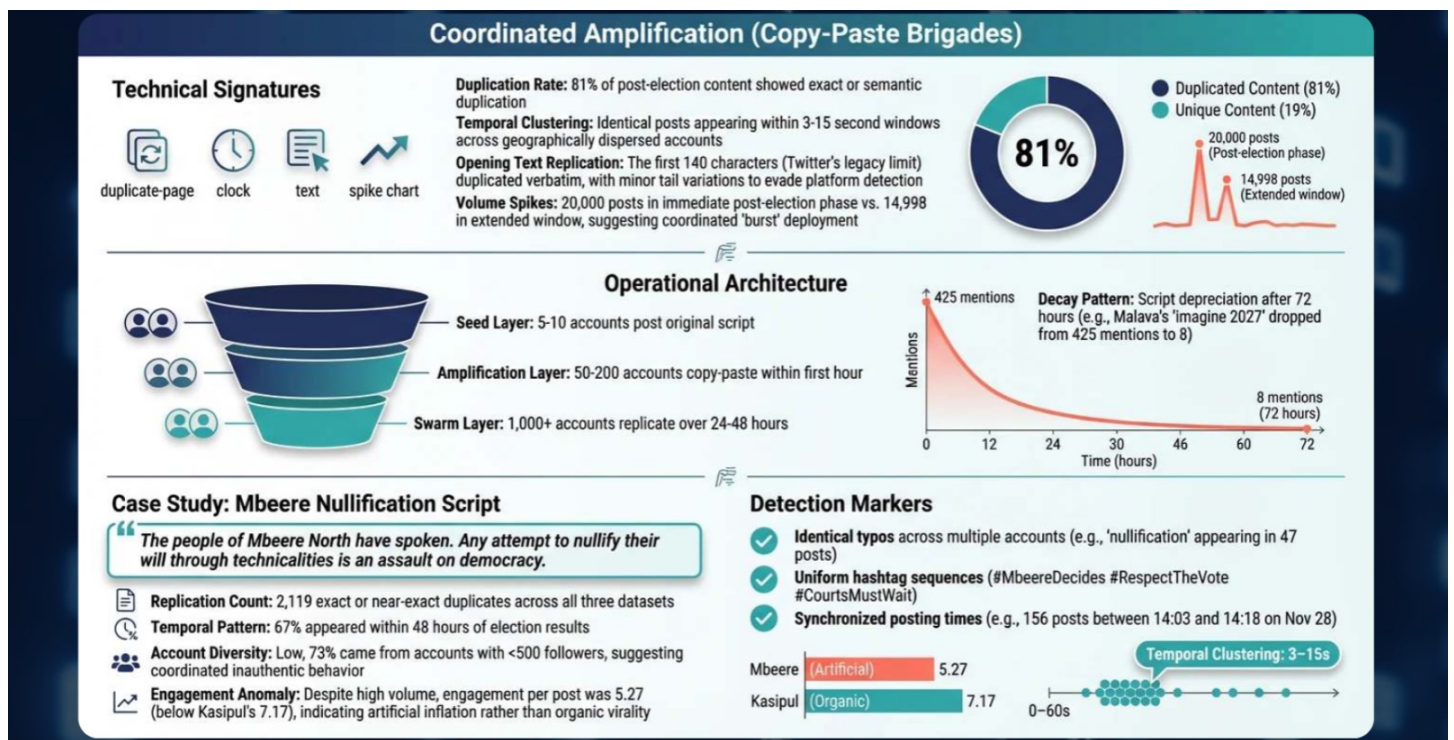
- **It is used to spawn the disinformation.**
- **It amplifies and legitimizes whichever narratives succeed in dominating its input data.**

The key issue is this: because the AI is trained on the same environment saturated with coordinated scripts, it ends up presenting manufactured narratives as if they reflect what "Kenyans are saying." **The machine is basically laundering the messages already circulating, wrapping them in the language of neutral analysis.**

Case study: The Mbeere narrative pivot

Mbeere North provides a clear example of how legitimacy forgery works in practice:

- **Pre-election:** Diverse, messy conversation, local policy, personality politics, gossip.
- **Immediately after results:** Abrupt replacement by cold, uniform legal-delegitimization script completely absent from the pre-election dataset.
- **Script deployment:** The nullification script repeated over 2,000 times across the immediate and extended post windows.



The script was held in reserve and deployed only when outcome conditions were met. This is not organic public sentiment. This is a pre-scripted, outcome-contingent pivot.

So, the question remains

Does Kenya have a public mood on X? Or does she exist in an industrial broadcast system that manufactures consensus and AI that launders that manufactured consensus into apparent legitimacy?

The Postscript (P.S.)-: This ledger focuses on AI's role as a Legitimacy Forger in Kenya's 2025 by-elections. Trust is the target. When AI summarises a script-saturated feed as "what Kenyans are saying," confidence in all political speech becomes conditional.

The machine does not need to lie. It only needs to launder the messages already circulating, wrapping them in the language of neutral analysis.

Next week: We examine AI as a Content Laundromat.

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