

Democracy and AI

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Automated political decision-making

- ▶ Should we seek to automate political decision-making?¹
- ▶ The majority of Europeans (51%) support replacing at least some politicians with artificial intelligence (AI).²
- ▶ China: 75%
- ▶ USA: 40%
- ▶ UK: 31%
- ▶ Overall there seems to be significant support for using AI in politics.

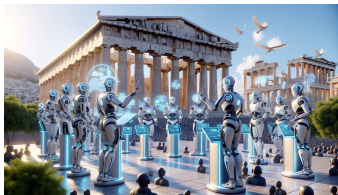


¹These slides are based on Lechterman (forthcoming).

²Shead (2021).

Overview

- ▶ There are many different ways of integrating AI into politics.
- ▶ I'll briefly talk about three ideas:
 1. Personalized bots
 2. Data democracy
 3. Algocracy



Personalized bots

Representation and direct democracy

- ▶ One idea: Give each citizen a personalized bot that's trained on the citizen's own inputs and negotiates with other citizens' bots to design and approve legislation.³
- ▶ This proposal challenges the idea of representation.
 - ◇ True democracy=direct democracy?
 - ◇ Direct democracy=citizens decide directly on all policies.
 - ◇ Direct democracy has been impractical in large societies, where citizens cannot easily convene and vote on every matter.
 - ◇ But technology now makes this possible.



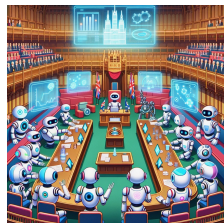
³Hidalgo (2018).

Personalized bots

- ▶ Citizens could train their bots to represent their political preferences by answering surveys and sharing data with personal bots.
- ▶ These bots could then negotiate with each other to reach agreements on legislation.
- ▶ Legislation would be the product of everyone's inputs, rather than the product of officials elected by the majority.



Training bots



Bots negotiating

Professional politicians

- ▶ Are politicians just a mechanism for processing our political preferences?
- ▶ Professional politicians may have more expertise on political questions than ordinary citizens.
- ▶ Delegating policymaking to qualified professionals may result in better outcomes than if all citizens participate equally in all policymaking decisions.

Data democracy

Aggregative democracy

- ▶ For proponents of *aggregative democracy*, the legitimacy of political power requires that decisions fairly satisfy the preferences of those subject to them.
- ▶ The goal of a political system: to measure, combine fairly and satisfy the preferences of its subjects.
- ▶ In democracies, the expression of preferences is mainly limited to voting, which occurs infrequently, provides limited information and is subject to cognitive biases.
- ▶ If the purpose of politicians is simply to process citizen's preferences, this function might be done better by AI.

Data democracy

- ▶ An alternative to electoral democracy: *data democracy*.⁴
- ▶ Based on the idea that data generated throughout our daily lives (travel patterns, online purchases, metabolic rates and so on) better reveal what citizens want than votes do.
- ▶ So, we could replace voting with a centralized system for measuring and analysing inputs from citizens.
- ▶ This system would aggregate the data from citizens to create a profile of public opinion.



Data collection



Centralized system

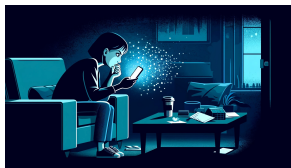


Profile of public opinion

⁴Susskind (2018).

Objections

- ▶ The preferences we reveal through our economic decisions or online activity may only weakly correlate with what we really want.
- ▶ For example, doom-scrolling, trolling and impulse-buying might reflect our vices more than what we value.
- ▶ Also, many preferences are irrational or unreasonable.
- ▶ Should these preferences be given equal treatment in data democracy?



Objections

- ▶ A fundamental objection to data democracy: it neglects deliberation.
- ▶ Only through the public exchange of reasons can we fully develop and validate our preferences.
- ▶ Deliberation helps separate impulses, prejudices and mistakes from higher-order desires and beliefs.

Algocracy

Algocracy

- ▶ An even more radical proposal for involving AI into governance: *algocracy*.
- ▶ Algocracy is similar to data democracy in that it involves a powerful autonomous system governing on the basis of large data flows and complicated calculations.
- ▶ However, the algocrat would not be bound by popular

preferences, but instead, be guided by its own judgments about the common good.



Justification of democracy

- ▶ Algocracy challenges prominent views about democracy's justification.
- ▶ Most contemporary philosophers agree that a democracy is the most legitimate way of making coercively-binding decisions.
- ▶ But philosophers disagree about the justification of democracy.



Instrumentalist justification of democracy

- ▶ Instrumentalists: democracy is justified because it tends to produce better results.
- ▶ Democracies tend to respect human rights, resolve conflicts peacefully, achieve prosperity, moderate inequality and realize the preferences of their subjects.
- ▶ Algocracy poses a challenge for instrumentalist justifications of democracy, as it seems plausible that it could better achieve many of the outcomes associated with democratic systems.



Democracy



Peace

Non-instrumentalist justification of democracy

- ▶ Non-instrumentalists: democracy is valuable apart from its consequences.
- ▶ On one view, democracy is valuable because it is part of an ideal of social equality.
- ▶ Alternatives like monarchies and aristocracies grant differing amounts of political power to different individuals.
- ▶ This sends a message that some people are inherently wiser or worthier of consideration than others.
- ▶ To recognize each other as moral equals, we must accept democracy.



Non-instrumentalist justification of democracy

- ▶ However, the algocrat would possess a vastly superior intellect.
- ▶ And unlike a dictator, it would not live among us as a member of human society, receiving social privileges due to political power.
- ▶ If algocracy results in much better outcomes and does so without creating social inequalities, even a non-instrumentalist might find it hard to resist algocracy.



Autonomy and self-determination

- ▶ Some have argued that autonomy and self-determination explain why democracy is valuable.
- ▶ In an algocracy, the resulting policies would not issue from our own agency, so we would find ourselves alienated from the world they create.
- ▶ However, we might be willing to trade autonomy and self-determination for dramatically better results.



Conclusion

- ▶ Involving AI into governance may help us produce outcomes that better reflect citizen's preferences.
- ▶ I talked about three ways of doing so:
 1. Personalized bots
 2. Data democracy
 3. Algocracy
- ▶ I discussed some advantages of these ideas and problems they face.
- ▶ I also discussed how these ideas challenge the philosophical justifications of democracy.



Discuss

- ▶ Do you support AI-driven governance?
- ▶ What is the most promising way of involving AI into governance?
 1. Personalized bots
 2. Data democracy
 3. Algocracy
- ▶ What do you think are the main benefits of this proposal?
- ▶ What are your main worries?



Lähteet I

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